

SafeNest CEO Liz Ortenburger Shares a Different Approach to Breaking Cycles of Domestic Violence

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Liz Ortenburger, CEO of [SafeNest](#), joined the [Public Defenseless](#) podcast to discuss why reducing domestic violence requires addressing not only the needs of survivors, but also the people causing harm and the childhood trauma that can contribute to cycles of violence.

SafeNest, Nevada's largest domestic and sexual violence agency, takes an approach that differs from the traditional model by providing services to survivors, children and abusive partners. Those services can include counseling, housing assistance, workforce development, intervention programs and other support designed to address factors contributing to violence.

During the conversation, Liz argued that decades of relying heavily on incarceration and the criminal legal system have not produced meaningful reductions in domestic violence or related homicides.

"We are not changing systematic domestic violence in the domestic violence movement," Liz said. "That's hard for people to hear."

For Liz, one of the missing pieces is addressing what happens to abusive partners rather than focusing exclusively on survivors after violence has already occurred.

SafeNest offers services to abusive partners that extend beyond court-mandated intervention. The organization provides individual and couples counseling, housing and workforce support, and connections to other resources such as substance abuse treatment.

That work is particularly important, Liz explained, because many survivors ultimately return to their relationships for financial, religious, cultural and other reasons. SafeNest aims to give





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survivors greater agency while creating opportunities for abusive partners to address their behavior and underlying needs.

The organization applies the same philosophy from the moment someone seeks help. Rather than making assumptions based on gender or immediately categorizing people as victims or perpetrators, SafeNest staff ask what the individual needs and connect them with appropriate

services.

Liz said everyone who walks through the door is treated with dignity and respect.

The episode also explored opportunities to intervene before families ever become deeply involved in the criminal legal system. Liz said Clark County receives approximately 100,000 domestic violence-related 911 calls each year, with about 30,000 resulting in arrests.

She sees the remaining calls as a significant opportunity to reach families earlier with resources that could help prevent future violence and the consequences that can follow an arrest, including job loss, housing instability and additional trauma for children.

Children are another major focus of SafeNest's prevention work. Liz discussed the long-term effects of childhood trauma and the importance of helping young people understand that the violence they witness does not have to determine their own futures.

Through SafeNest's Pathways to Hope program, children affected by domestic violence participate in experiences designed to build hope, connection and a vision of life beyond the circumstances they have experienced.

Liz also called on adults, particularly men, to mentor boys and model healthy relationships, emotional regulation and alternatives to violence.

The conversation emphasized that breaking cycles of domestic violence requires intervention at multiple points: supporting survivors, helping people who have caused harm change their behavior and reaching children early enough to show them a different path.

The full conversation with Liz Ortenburger on the Public Defenseless podcast can be found here: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/504-by-helping-victims-and-perpetrators-domestic/id1600528975?i=1000780221284>

About Liz Ortenburger

Liz Ortenburger is the CEO of SafeNest, Nevada's largest and most comprehensive nonprofit addressing domestic and sexual violence, and a thought leader redefining how communities prevent and respond to abuse. For more than two decades, she has championed the safety of women and children, bringing bold vision to a field often shaped by reactive solutions.

At SafeNest, Liz leads a multi-million-dollar organization delivering an integrated continuum of care—including emergency response, prevention education, housing, legal advocacy, and offender intervention—designed to disrupt cycles of violence at their roots. Under her leadership, SafeNest has expanded beyond traditional service delivery to address the broader epidemic through strategic partnerships with law enforcement, policymakers, healthcare systems, and community leaders.

Known for challenging conventional narratives, Liz advocates for a shift from punishment to prevention, from survivor-only approaches to system-wide accountability, and from silence to truth-telling. She is a Ph.D. candidate in Public Policy and Administration at Walden University and holds an MBA from IESE Business School in Barcelona.

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