

Breaking The Cycle Of Abuse

BY VAL FARMER
 www.valfarmer.com

Why do abuse victims go back to abusive relationships? In order to understand this, one has to recognize the nature of the bond that has developed between the abusive partner and the victim. Understanding the dynamics of abuse and bonding gives both victims and those who want to help them a framework for stopping the cycle of abuse.

These bonds develop when the following four conditions are present.

- Isolation from perspectives other than those of the abuser.
- A perceived threat to survival and the belief that the abuser is willing to carry out that threat.
- A perceived inability to escape.
- The victim's perception of some small kindness from the abuser within a context of terror.

Anything that friends, family or society can do to combat these conditions will help weaken the bond between the abuser and the victim. Let's look at these four factors one by one.

Stopping the isolation. An abuser isolates his victim from friends, family and other sources of support. This increases his power over her.

The victim can gain understanding about the dynamics of abuse by going for counseling, participating in group therapy or joining a self-help group. They can read materials about abusive relationships. Friends, family members, counselors and support group members can give her the emotional support and validation necessary to develop the personal strength necessary to act for herself.

This can be a frustrating role because of the victim's willingness to stay in a destructive relationship. The process of breaking free may involve false starts before she is able to decisively leave.

Labeling and defining violence and abuse. A victim's minimization of violence is a survival strategy to cope with her perception of danger. She needs assistance in labeling and identifying abusive aspects of her relationship with the abuser.

She needs to learn to emotionally detach



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and label what is happening to her while it is happening. The pace of reducing denial shouldn't be so overwhelming so as to break the relationship the victim has with her newly found sources of help.

A victim can also gain strength to deal with the abuse by keeping a journal or a diary, developing assertive communication skills, identifying and expressing her anger (not to the abuser) about the abuse, and working through the potential loss of the relationship to her abusive partner.

If there are children involved, a mother may experience ambivalence about the loss of income, housing, and worry about depriving the children of a relationship with their father. Threats about custody may paralyze her willingness to take decisive action. Mothers need to learn how much harm is done by exposing their children to domestic violence. Children may feel disgust that she is unable to protect herself — or them. Because children can't defend or protect their mother, they feel powerless, guilty, depressed and afraid. They hang back. In their confusion and anger, they can't fully identify with an aggressive, violent father or the passive and helpless mother.

Finding avenues of escape. Because of high anxiety, a victim may not appreciate her alternatives for escaping violence. The laws, attitudes and consequences regarding women in violent relationships have become more protective and effective.

Resources such as crisis hotlines, shelters, restraining orders, and legal assistance have been developed to provide ways of escape. Victims need to have confidence that they will get the protection they need from abusers who persist in trying to re-establish the relationship or demonstrate their control.

A victim's sense of safety has to extend beyond freedom from immediate danger to long-term security.

Victims also need coaching and rehearsal about escape strategies that fit her abusive partner's patterns of violence and the living arrangements she is in.

A well thought out plan can be put into effect when she is ready to act. This also gives her hope in believing she really can escape.

Finding genuine kindness. Small acts of kindness or promises from an abuser convince a victim that her abusive partner may change. Terror is followed by signals that the abuser is no longer angry and, in fact, cares for and loves her.

This is in direct contrast to the violence. The relief and hope following abuse have addictive qualities. The kindnesses expressed during the makeup period in the aftermath of abuse are the source of the bond between the abuser and the abused.

To survive, the victim has had to focus on the needs of the abuser at the expense of her own thoughts, needs and feelings. The abuser's occasional love and attention fill this void, however sporadically they are given. The bond she feels with her abusive partner gives her a sense of identity that isn't able to develop normally under conditions of terror.

To have credibility, helpers of abuse victims need to acknowledge the role of kindness and caring in the bonding process between abusers and their victims. The victim needs to be able to understand and integrate the good side of the abuser's behavior with the bad. Then she will be able to see and accept her victim role more clearly. She begins to understand how remorse, apologies, loving actions, promises of reform are a part of the cycle of abuse.

By turning to resources like family, friends, hotlines and crisis centers, the victim gains the emotional support she needs. She does need kindness, but not from the abuser.

For more information on abuse and relationships, visit Val Farmer's website at www.valfarmer.com.

Val Farmer is a clinical psychologist specializing in family business consultation and mediation with farm families. He lives in Wildwood, Missouri and can be contacted through his website.

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VISITING HOURS

Hospice And Palliative Care: We Listen, We Care

BY MARY PISTULKA, RN
 Avera Sacred Heart Hospice Program

This month I'd like to invite you to learn more about Hospice and Palliative Care. Ask your friends and neighbors if they know anyone who has benefited from the services of hospice, or if perhaps they themselves have. If so, ask about that experience. Don't be afraid. I suspect that you might be surprised about how much you didn't know regarding what hospice is all about and what it actually means to have the support of an expert and compassionate care team providing a much needed layer of support during such an emotionally and physically stressful time.

You may discover that while hospice care is for people living with a terminal illness, it's not about "giving up" or even "giving in" but rather about shifting the focus of care from disease modifying treatments to an intense approach to symptom management and support of patients and their families. Coping with a life-limiting illness is not easy. It's about the most challenging thing a person will ever do. It generally requires frequent communication with doctors and hospitals, navigating the maze of care needs, figuring out insurance coverage, all in addition to helping his or her loved ones face the challenges of care giving... it can be overwhelming.

Hospice and palliative care providers take the time to talk with patient and family caregivers, listen to their concerns and work to ensure they get the care they want. By focusing on the individual, not the illness, hospice care brings comfort, dignity and peace to patients and their loved ones. Hospice care provides expert pain management, symptom control, psycho-social support and spiritual care to patients and families when a cure is not possible. All the necessary medicines and

equipment needed to keep a patient comfortable are provided. And hospice is covered by Medicare, Medicaid in most states, and by most insurance plans and HMOs.

Hospice has always been about providing this kind of comfort and support or "palliation" of symptoms. In more recent years many hospitals, including Avera Sacred Heart, have begun to offer palliative care services to patients other than hospice patients. Palliative care brings these same skilled care services to patients earlier in the course of an illness and can be provided along with other treatments a patient may want to pursue. Palliative care is provided by a team of doctors, nurses and other specialists who work with a patient's other doctors to provide an extra layer of support. This care is patient- and family-centered care directed at optimizing quality of life by anticipating, preventing and treating suffering while providing access to information and facilitating personal choices.

More than 1.5 million people with a life-limiting illness receive help from the nation's hospice and palliative care providers every single year. Avera Sacred Heart has been providing Hospice Care for over 20 years and our experienced staff and volunteers know it's about quality of life. With the help of hospice and palliative care, patients and families can focus on what's most important: living as fully as possible in spite of illness.

For more information, contact Avera Sacred Heart's Hospice Clinical Coordinator, Mary Pistulka, RN, at (605) 668-8309.

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Area Students Recognized As Heisman State Finalists

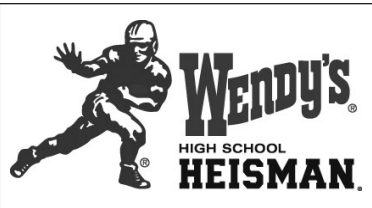
SIOUX FALLS — Two of South Dakota's most outstanding high school seniors were honored with distinguished recognition as State Winners of the 2011 Wendy's High School Heisman Award. Paxten Johnson of Gregory High School in Gregory and Alexander Schultz of Lincoln High School in Sioux Falls will now go on to compete for the national award that celebrates their hard work, dedication and exceptional records in academics, athletics and community leadership.

"The Wendy's High School Heisman Award celebrates high school seniors across the country who excel in academics, athletics and community service," said Archie Griffin, two-time

collegiate Heisman Trophy winner. "Paxten and Alexander are inspirations to others in their school and community, and we're honored to welcome them into the Heisman family."

Awarded in conjunction with the collegiate Heisman, the Wendy's High School Heisman, now in its 18th year, has set the standard for high school student-athletes and gained tremendous prestige among universities and colleges nationwide.

Johnson and Schultz were chosen from 48,000 applicants, surviving rounds that narrowed contenders to one male and one



female winner from each school, and then to South Dakota's respected group of 20 State Finalists.

South Dakota's

Wendy's High School Heisman State Finalists:

- Anna Leloux Parker High School, Parker
- Elizabeth Bye Vermillion High School Vermillion
- Matthew Jensen Viborg High School Viborg
- Logan Smith Yankton High School Yankton

Johnson and Schultz will compete against winners from other regions across the country for a

chance to be named one of 12 National Finalists in Wendy's annual quest to find the nation's top scholar-athletes. These 12 outstanding students will go on to compete for the National Winner title in New York City on December 9. National Finalists will be featured during a televised ceremony on ESPN networks and will receive gold medals and \$2,000 awards for their high schools. One male and one female National Winner will each receive a Wendy's High School Heisman trophy and a donation from Wendy's in the amount of \$10,000 to their respective high school. Additionally, the winners will be recognized during the collegiate Heisman Trophy broadcast December 10 on ESPN.

Buckle-Up, Message Of Holiday Enforcement

LINCOLN, Neb. — Troopers with the Nebraska State Patrol will join their law enforcement counterparts from across the nation in a Thanksgiving holiday campaign designed to save lives by enforcing seat belt usage.

Monday, Nov. 21, through Sunday, Nov. 27, troopers and communication specialists will put in extra hours as part of the "Click It or Ticket" enforcement campaign. A \$15,000 grant from the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety (NOHS) helps to pay for the additional enforcement.

"There are consequences to be paid when you don't wear your seat belt," said Colonel David Sankey, Superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol. "You may end up with a citation or warning, or you could be injured or even killed in a motor vehicle crash. The Patrol hopes to prevent the latter by getting motorists to buckle-up."

During the "Click It or Ticket" enforcement period, troopers will concentrate on reducing

crash causing behaviors such as speeding, following too closely, impaired or distracted driving and failure to buckle-up."

Statistics from the NOHS show motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for people between 5 & 34 years of age. Seat belts reduce the likelihood of injury or death in a crash by up to 50%.

Colonel Sankey said, "By making sure everyone in your vehicle is wearing their seat belt, you are putting the odds of surviving a crash in your favor."

For more information on specific enforcement activities during the special campaign, call your nearest Nebraska State Patrol Troop Area Office or view a calendar of selected NSP enforcement activities at <http://www.statepatrol.nebraska.gov/CustomCalendar.aspx>.

State Of South Dakota Unveils New Homepage

PIERRE — As part of Gov. Dennis Daugaard's Better Government Initiative, an improved South Dakota homepage was launched today.

"This new homepage engages users and is a more convenient portal to state government information and services," the Governor said. "We serve the people and put their needs first. I want our citizens to be online, not waiting in line when they interact with state government."

The revised homepage provides user-focused content and efficiencies that allow people to more easily obtain state government information and conduct business with the state, Gov. Daugaard said.

Key upgrades to the new www.sd.gov homepage include:

- Search engine functionality: The advanced search engine provides easy access to all state government information and services, allowing users to simply type in a keyword or phrase rather than clicking several times to locate a specific topic.
- Less clutter and more visual: Beyond the homepage, content exists with fewer distractions and more-detailed information. The new site is also more visually appealing with upgraded graphics featuring numerous picturesque South Dakota locations.
- Open Government: Direct access is available for government records and contract information through Open SD. Access is also available for open meetings.

• Online Services: Improved state government online operations allow users to more easily complete actual transactions, such as applying for hunting or fishing licenses, planning their South Dakota vacations, making child-support payments or renewing vehicle registrations. All of the online transactions represent significant efficiencies in state government; this section of the site will continue to grow.

• Social Media: Many government agencies are creating social media sites to interact and converse with online visitors. Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, YouTube channels and Flickr albums can all be found at the bottom of the South Dakota

homepage. Social media outlets improve the availability, transparency and visibility of state government.

"I encourage citizens to visit the new homepage," Gov. Daugaard said. "As my Better Government Initiative is expanded, there will be new features and updates that will increasingly shift government services and information online."

View the new State of South Dakota homepage at: <http://www.sd.gov/>.

Follow Gov. Daugaard's progress on e-government opportunities at: <http://www.sd.gov/bettergovernment/>.

WANTED

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