Domestic Violence

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Abstract

 Throughout the years, there has been a change to Domestic Violence. Even though it is an ongoing issue on Saipan, the community has done so much to decrease the violence. The report has been made to answer a question that was made at the beginning of the class. The research question is; “Has there been a decrease/increase in domestic violence compared to the past? And how so?”, In order to answer the question, interviews were done, surveys were made for students to answer, and books were read to understand more on the topic. The reporter has gained more knowledge on the topic from the interviews, articles, and books on Domestic Violence.

Introduction

 “Domestic Violence and abuse can happen to anyone, yet the problem is often overlooked, excused, or denied” (Smith & Segal, 2013). This problem is unfortunately ongoing, either the victim thinks it will not happen again, they are scared, or the abuser says it was an accident. Many women will often stay in the relationship for various reasons, although from the years that has passed women has taken the courage to take a stand and report it. Rose Kaipat, a President of the community advocate for victims, was once a victim herself in domestic violence (Eugenio, 2012). She had earned an associate’s degree in Criminal Justice at the Northern Marianas College, by giving a human face to the social problem she hopes many will recover from. Women have lost their lives due to Domestic Violence and in order to have an end to this will have to gain the support of the whole community.

Background

 Domestic Violence comes in three different types of abuse; emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. Although all types of abuse may fall under Domestic Violence, they are all different acts that cause different results to the victim that are being abused.

 Emotional abuse is the type of abuse that requires screaming, putting the other person down, intimidation, guilt, and etc. The reporter knows someone who has been through emotional abuse and it changed her. She had become very silent around others and does not talk as much as she used to when her abuser is around or with her. Emotional abuse is another way as brainwashing someone, bringing their confidence down, sense of self-worth, and trust in their own perceptions.

 Physical abuse is basically hurting a person physically. Whether it is kicking, scratching, punching, or pulling of the hair, it is all physical abuse. On Saipan, there has been a case of physical abuse; a man beats and chokes his wife with a pipe. A great way to prevent physical abuse is to try taking self-defense classes. This way the women will be able to defend herself, and if necessary, fight back.

 “Sexual abuse is any sort of non-consensual sexual contact.” (Pandora’s Project, 2009). Whether it is forcing someone to have sex, causing unwanted physical pain, and using toys or any supplements without the other persons consent, sexual abuse basically deals with sexual intercourse. In one of the cases of sexual abuse on Saipan, a man had sexually abused a fifteen year old girl more than five times. He would go in her room and force her to have sex with him, and even though she refused to, he insisted and sexually abused her (De la Torre, 2013).

Literature Review

 Domestic Violence has been an issue for many years already. Due to statistics, men seem to be more impatient and shorter tempered, so they stand as the usual abuser in the relationship. Although women may be also abusive, men are the more masculine and act as if they are “in charge”. In one of the interviews of a Department of Youth Services employee “DYS”, Maria Taitano, she said that in most cultures it is normal for the men to abuse women. But now that the Government has taken this issue more seriously, the law has become more strict on domestic violence cases. One of the ways to prevent domestic violence, the community has marked October as the “Domestic Violence Awareness Month”. Many activities are held during the month such as the Men’s Walk Against Domestic Violence which is held by the Department of Public Safety and other men officials. Not only do they walk for one day but for every Wednesday of October to either mourn the lives that had been lost to domestic violence or celebrate those who survived it. Another would be a candle light vigil and cultural performances by many different groups.

 In the past, there was never a law dealing with domestic violence. Now the government had become strict and did what was right by letting the abuser immediately go to jail, pay a fine, and also take counseling. The community has also gathered a place to help women that have become victims to domestic violence such as “Karidat” and “Guma Esperansa”, which is a place for women who need help to file and prepare restraining orders, a hotline where callers will receive both consolation and referrals for follow up help, and also a shelter for victims (Jane, 2010). Ever since the case of a girl being kidnapped and raped, the community has also gathered a community watch for certain villages.

Barack Obama said, “People realize we’ve got to rally around victim, make sure they’ve got the support they need, the medical care they need, the counseling that they need. But most importantly that we recognize what’s happened to them, that we insist on justice…so they can stop feeling like victims and feel like they‘ve got some power.”

By doing so, the CNMI has decided to give the victims the justice they deserve by letting their abuser serve the right amount of time in jail. The Government has done its very best to make sure that every case of domestic violence has been solved just to make sure the victim will feel safe and know she would not encounter anything like that again.

 There are many different cultures on Saipan and one may be able to let them face time in jail. Maria Taitano said that it is part of her job to follow her clients to all their court hearings, and in one of the cases of domestic violence the man told the judge that it is part of their culture to slap, hit, and beat the wife. She also said that if the family witnesses someone being abused by one of the family member, they would not report it because they don’t want their family to go to jail. It seems to be normal for anyone for anyone to be abused before, but now that has changed in a positive way. It does not matter anymore if it is part of the culture or if that person is family, domestic violence had become a big issue and is now taken seriously.

 Although domestic violence is still ongoing, there has been a drastic change in the percentage of domestic violence here on Saipan. The decrease of violence shows that the community has done its part by showing others the right thing to do. Maisie Tenorio said, “We have to make the choice to choose peace. We have to consciously do that every day.” (David, 2012). By choosing peace, the environment would be violent-free and a much better place.

Research Question

* Primary Research Question: Has there been a decrease/increase in domestic Violence compared to the past? How so?
* Secondary Research Question: Is there a chance that domestic violence will come to an end?

Methodology

 Pilot Survey

During the class time, a survey was asked to be made by the instructor so there will be added knowledge to the topic that has been chosen. This was done through a site called surveymonkey, where all the questions are to be made and organized. This way, the reporter will get feedback and answers from other students in the English class. The reporter also got comments on how to revise the questions so it can be more understanding. For example on one of the feedbacks were, “Do you have other sets of questions for domestic violence victims?” and “add more open ended questions about people’s experience with abuse (why it happened, did it stop, if so why?)”. Then a question was altered after that to; “Do you anyone that has been through Domestic Violence? If so, how long has she/he been through it?” and “Have you ever been through domestic violence? If so, what made it happen and did it stop?” (See Appendix A). The survey helped a lot because the reporter gained knowledge not only from online sites, but also from locals on the island.

 Interviews

After the survey, the reporter prepared five questions that were used to interview experts and locals on Saipan that had either experienced abuse or just elders that have seen the changes in domestic violence throughout the years. The interview was with a Department of Youth Services employee, Maria Taitano, and local resident; Antonette Sablan. The whole interview was recorded on the reporter’s cellphone.

Findings

 It has been shown that there is not only a decrease on domestic violence, but also more support to prevent it. The community has joined together different ways to help the victims, combine a group to watch the neighborhood, and to also be more strict on the abusers. It is also interesting to find that those who are abusive will not only go to jail, but to also go through counseling. For the past few years, Saipan has dealt with many domestic violence cases but the numbers shows to be decreasing by the year. One of the questions on the survey was “Has Domestic Violence change from the past? If so, how has it changed?” and some answered saying that now that abuse is more “out there”, many are hiding. The acts of locals have changed now since they know that abusing a woman is not right anymore.

Conclusion

 Although domestic violence is still ongoing, the help of the community had made the percentage of violence go down. Not only has the law been strict, the family of the person being abused will help her in every way by being the one that reports it if the victim is too afraid. Another method that helped decrease domestic violence is the Domestic Violence Awareness Month, October. Many have gathered to show a cause and it has definitely worked. The only way to make a change is to start by every individual, let them realize that abuse is wrong and will only bring trouble—jail.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Pilot Survey

1. What is a possible solution for Domestic Violence?
2. How have women changed that has been through Domestic Violence?
3. Do you know anyone that has been through Domestic Violence? If so, how long has she/he been through it?
4. Have you ever been through Domestic Violence? If so, what made it happen and did it stop?
5. Is there a rise in domestic violence more now, than from the past? Why or why not?
6. Has domestic violence change from the past? If so, how has it change?
7. What are some things to do to avoid Domestic Violence? Explain.
8. Do you think men are the usual suspect for Domestic Violence? Why or why not?
9. What do you think is the prime reason of domestic violence?

Appendix B

Interviews

Name: Maria Taitano, DYS employee

Interview date: December 08, 2013

1. What has the community done to decrease domestic violence?

- The public awareness of domestic violence and all the activities that has been provided throughout the month of October. We have sessions every week and every Wednesday of the month we walk to prevent domestic violence. Many people come to support and it has gotten bigger every month.

2. Do you think ads/commercials/stories are an effective way to end domestic violence? Why?

- Yes, through all the commercials and advertisements that go through the media lets the community know everything about domestic violence. So during the proclamation the governor and the DPS commissioner really emphasizes the advocates on domestic and we are trying our best to do something about it.

3. Has the law been more strict on domestic Violence?

- Yes, before there was never a law on domestic violence. So what’s happening now, when there is a domestic violence report, the person goes straight to jail and pays a fine and fee. But it really depends on the violations.

4. Has there been a decrease or increase in Domestic Violence? How so?

- It has decreased. Now we see that more people are reporting it unlike before. According to our statistics there has been a decrease in the domestic violence.

5. Is there a chance that those who witness someone being abused will report it or hide?

- Some would hide it because some may still be afraid but not like the past, mostly anyone who witness abuse will hide it. For example, within the family there was a happening last time that one of our family members beat up the girlfriend and we were right there but we didn’t want to report it because that’s our family. But now when someone sees it, it is most likely they will report it.

Name: Antonette Sablan, Local Resident

Date of Interview: December 08, 2013

1. What has the community done to decrease domestic violence?

- Promoting Zero Tolerance on domestic violence issues, reporting it for family and friends who are afraid to come forward.

2. Do you think ads/commercials/stories are an effective way to end domestic violence? Why?

- It is an effective way to deter domestic violence but it won’t end it. Why? Because it is up to the victim to have the courage to speak up and do something about it.

3. Has there been a decrease or increase in domestic violence?

- I think there have been a decrease on domestic cases but there are still unreported domestic violence.

4. Is there a chance that those who witness abuse will report it or hide?

- Most witness will call to make a report but later on drop the charges fearing that the abuser would come back to retaliate. And the rest would hide it because they don’t want to make a scene, being abused more if she said anything, the abuser would threaten to take the kids from her, or she doesn’t want to bring shame to her family.

5. How do the Government officials control/hide cases on domestic violence two decades ago?

- The Government has been more strict on domestic violence making it harder for a victim to drop charges