



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HelpLine to Participate in Sexual Assault Awareness Month Campaign 2018 Theme, “Embrace Your Voice,” Focuses on Expanding Prevention Efforts

As part of the national 2018 “Embrace Your Voice” Campaign HelpLine calls on individuals to use their voice to make an impact when it comes to prevention

Delaware, OH – This April, HelpLine will engage the broader community as part of its annual Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) campaign. This year’s theme, “Embrace Your Voice,” builds on the idea that how you talk about sexual violence matters. Individuals can embrace their voices to show their support for survivors, stand up to victim blaming, shut down rape jokes, correct harmful misconceptions, promote everyday consent, and practice healthy communications with children.

HelpLine will bring the theme of “Embrace Your Voice” to life by providing therapeutic events for survivors, families and friends to connect, heal and use their voices to share their experience and solidarity. Throughout SAAM, we will host and partner with local organizations to share resources and prevention education through the following programs:

- Ohio Wesleyan University, Take Back the Night, March 29, 6 p.m.
- HelpLine Sexual Assault Response Network, Journaling Workshop, April 21, 10 a.m.
- Delaware Co. Coalition of Victim Services, Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, May 4, 6 p.m.

The Village of Mount Gilead and City of Delaware City Councils will proclaim April as Sexual Assault Awareness and Child Abuse Prevention Months, while also recognizing the Day of Awareness to support the Day of Silence – a bringing attention to the harassment and bullying faced by LGBTQ youth in schools on April 2 and 9, at 7 p.m., respectively, during council proceedings.

“We all have a unique role to play in prevention and changing the culture,” said Lauren MacDade, HelpLine Sexual Assault Services Director. “When we reflect on and change how we think and talk about the issue of sexual violence and consent, we can create a culture of respect, equality, and safety. All of our voices have power. It’s time for everyone to find that voice and embrace it.”

MacDade said that sexual assault is a serious and widespread problem, and is one of the most under reported crimes. It affects women, men and LGBTQ individuals, across all demographics including children, teens, adults, and seniors. Most survivors are assaulted by someone they know, such as acquaintances, family or other trusted individuals.

Beyond SAAM activities this April, HelpLine leads a wide range of initiatives and services to



support sexual assault survivors, mainly through its trauma-informed Sexual Assault Response Network (SARN) program offered in Delaware, Morrow, Crawford and Wyandot counties. Available to all survivors, SARN offers healing workshops, one-one-one crisis intervention and advocacy - regardless of when the assault occurred - and an annual retreat.

Additionally, trained SARN advocates are available to assist survivors at the hospital and with law enforcement immediately following an assault, and connects survivors to resources at HelpLine and in the broader community. SARN also offers a free, confidential 24-hour support, information and referral telephone and texting line at **1.800.684.2324** or text **helpline** to **898211**.

MacDade believes that we are in a watershed moment. “With the country focused on this very important issue through the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements, we have an unprecedented opportunity to improve understanding and change behaviors. The time to rally communities and the broader public is now.”

To learn more about SAAM events, visit <http://helplinedelmor.org/saam/>. If you or someone you know has been sexually assault, contact our 24/7 support and information line at 1.800.684.2324 or text helpline to 898211.

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About HelpLine

HelpLine is a private, non-profit organization that provides 24-hour, crisis, support, & information about community services via hotline and texting; sexual assault advocacy; suicide and violence prevention education; and a volunteer center. Committed to connecting people to knowledge, support, and resources, HelpLine facilitates stability and self-sufficiency through linkage to services, crisis management, and mental health related and violence prevention education.

HelpLine is a contract provider of the Delaware-Morrow Mental Health and Recovery Services Board and partially funded by SourcePoint. A United Way Partner, HelpLine is accredited by the American Association of Suicidology, National Alliance of Information & Referral Systems and certified by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. For more information, please visit: www.HelpLinedelmor.org.

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