



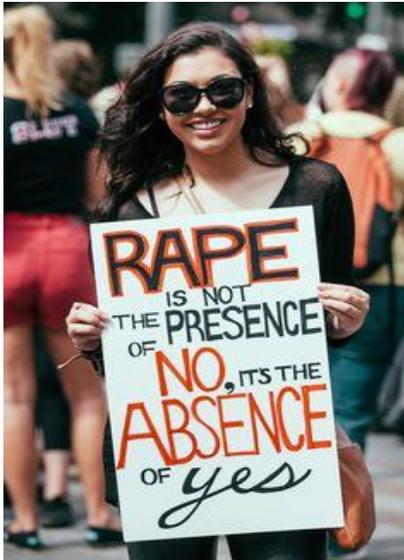
Living Well

A QUARTERLY NEWS AND EVENT PUBLICATION of LIFE & WELLNESS COUNSELING AND CONSULTING

Life is beautiful!

Volume 1, Issue 2

April 7, 2017



April is **SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS Month!**

If we prevent ONE attack, it's worth it!

Every 98 seconds, an American is sexually assaulted and every 8 minutes, that victim is a child. Only **6 of every 1,000** perpetrators will end up in prison.

Life & Wellness Counseling and

Consulting takes an active part in the crusade against sexual assault. Starting this month, we will begin a bi-weekly group for victims of sexual assault to share their stories and support each other while traveling the road to recovery. We will also sponsor the first annual ***Life & Wellness Presents: unMASKED***, a collection of sexual assault survivor monologues that detail individual experiences to unite survivors and help them find strength. We encourage community members, businesses, and organizations in the *Lake Norman area* to take a stand against sexual violence. We invite you to connect with us and discover ways to promote safety and support for those who may be experiencing the trauma created by sexual violence.

Rape on Campus

An account from a real survivor

"I was at a party on campus with friends... yes, I was drinking even though I was underage, and thinking about it in hindsight that was probably my biggest mistake. There was this guy, he was cute and funny and he seemed really into me and we were having such a good time. He said that he had seen me around campus but he was always too shy to come and ask me out... he was good, he got me with that one line. It made me feel sexy and mysterious and confident and he made it seem like I had the upper hand. He asked questions about my family and school. I told him everything he needed to know... my family lived far away, I didn't know anybody on campus or even in this state and I was just starting to make friends here... I guess in his eyes I was the perfect prey.

The Bible and Domestic Violence

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"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple."

I Corinthians 3:16-17



Any form of domestic violence/abuse is in direct opposition of God's plan for families. He specifically casts down anger, wickedness, and cruelty because they are unrighteous and unholy. God knows the burdens of his children and He promises to bear those burdens and deliver the ones who suffer.

Life & Wellness understands the trauma that can occur from sexual and domestic abuse. We can help victims find their voice. They may then choose to use that voice to call out to the Lord for help.



At the end of the night, he offered to walk me back to my dorm, you know, because the campus is an open campus and someone might see me as vulnerable and try to take advantage of me... yeah right. So we get to my dorm and he asks if I want him to come inside... I remember saying that I didn't want him to come inside... then I remember thinking *I don't want him to kiss me... I don't want him to take off my clothes... no, I don't want to have sex with this guy...* but I don't remember if I said any of that out loud. At some point while he was thrusting on top of me I passed out. I remember waking up on the floor of my bedroom... I was so disgusted with myself, I felt filthy. I called him and texted him and tried to convince myself that we were in a relationship because there's no way I would have sex with some random guy that I just met at a party and there's no way he could've raped me after being so sweet. I asked if he wanted to hang out or come over or I could come to him. He told me to *stop harassing him*. Months passed and I finally decided to report him to the school. It's this council of students that judges student complaints based on the school's moral code. We had a hearing... but at the hearing he showed all the texts I sent about enjoying the time we spent together and all the little flirty things I said. The counsel put me on academic probation for drinking on campus and being underage... I was humiliated. After talking to peers I

found out that several other girls on campus had accused this guy of raping them. I see him. My rapist. I see him everywhere. I see him in the café, I see him walking around on the campus, I see him... and he sees me. I have a class that has big open windows where you can see the campus. Sometimes he just stands out there and watches me... sometimes he smiles at me. The semester I was raped I

flunked all my classes. I stopped going to them because I didn't want to see him... I was a mess emotionally. I finally got help. I'm getting better but everyday it's a struggle... I'm still struggling to get my life back. I am recovering. I am a survivor. I'm also part of a group now that goes to parties on campus and we usher girls home safely to protect them from predators like him."

Anonymous



It's More Prevalent Than You Know **Sexual Assault / Domestic Violence in the Lake Norman Area**

Mecklenburg County Victims Assistance published a community report on domestic violence for July 2014 – July 2015 with information collected from Cornelius Police Department (PD), Davidson PD, Huntersville PD, Mathews PD, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg PD. The report stated that there was a total of 85 reported rapes, 173 reports of forcible fondling, 389 50-B Violations, and 9053 incidents of domestic violence-related incidents. Out of the number of domestic violence-related incidents reported, Victims Assistance reported helping only 1333 clients in Mecklenburg County, to include the Lake Norman area, for July 2014 – July 2015. The

Cornelius PD disclosed that they have responded to 26 reports of domestic violence and 6 reports of sexual assault since January 2017. These findings are only of the incidents that have been **reported**, and they are alarming. Sexual assault and domestic violence thrive in secrecy; education and awareness are the most effective tools we have to employ against this criminal and inhumane treatment of others. **Life & Wellness** continues to encourage people to seek emotional healing for themselves and their families. We provide a safe and supportive place that helps restore mental wellness.

Keeping Your Children Safe

What to look for...What to avoid

Many of us remember the term “*stranger danger*” from childhood. Whenever we encountered someone who looked a little suspicious, this term immediately sent up a **red flag** and we fled the scene to safety. Well, unfortunately today, predators have become more cunning and they have a new approach that’s often friendlier and more subtle. Here are 7 tips that can help **keep your children safe**:



1. Let children know that not all strangers are dangerous and not everyone they know can be trusted easily. Teach them *boundaries* and *comfort zones* to help increase their awareness of what others are doing around them.
2. Make time to *talk* to your children *one-on-one*. If there is a problem, this will give them a safe opportunity to let you know.
3. Tell your children that it’s okay to *talk* to a parent *about their body parts*. Making their body a taboo subject can make them feel ashamed and hesitant to let you know if there is a problem.
4. Investigate everything. Often times small children don’t have the vocabulary to articulate what’s happening to them so they may *say one thing* when they actually *mean another*.
5. Create a code word for family and close friends and make sure your children know not to leave with *anyone who does not know the code word*.
6. Teach your children that adults are not friends. When children see a predator as their friend, it makes it easier for the predator to *violate boundaries* and makes the child *less likely to report* the behavior.
7. Monitor all of your children’s social media accounts. People in general are more likely to *divulge personal information* online than in person and are *more susceptible* to predators.

What to DO. Where to GO. Who to Call.

We are here to support you

If you have ever been sexually assaulted or experienced abuse/domestic violence in a relationship, you know that the situation can become so overwhelming so quickly that you have no idea how to even *begin* to seek help. The embarrassment, the fear of having people not believe you or blame you, the reality of having to adjust to major changes or perhaps even a new life; we understand that these things have to be considered and it helps to have a trained professional support you while you’re trying to work through all the possible situations and outcomes. You can get immediate support 24/7 by contacting the *National Domestic Violence Hotline* at 1-800-799-7233 or you can text *CONNECT* to 741741 for support with sexual assault and abuse. If you need to make a confidential report, you can contact the *Charlotte-Mecklenburg PD* at 704-336-7600, the *Huntersville PD* at 704-464-5400, the *Cornelius PD* at 704-892-1363, or *Davidson PD* at 704-892-5131.

Experiencing Trauma from Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

The trauma of sexual assault and/or domestic violence can affect different people in different ways. Some people may experience symptoms immediately while others may go for years without any symptoms. If you have been sexually assaulted and/or experienced abuse/domestic violence and you experience any of the following symptoms, you may have trauma-related mental health concerns:

1. *Distressing/intrusive thoughts or memories.*
2. *Flashbacks/nightmares.*
3. *Avoiding events or places related to trauma.*
4. *Depression/other changes in mood.*
5. *Persistent negative distortions of thought.*
6. *Isolation/feelings of detachment.*

If you have experienced any of these symptoms in the last 6 months and you would like support addressing them, please contact us so we can assist you with locating the resources you need to begin healing.

Life & Wellness Counseling and Consulting helps people discover that "*Life is beautiful!*"



Calendar of Events

April 1 – April 30, 2017

- Alcohol Awareness Month
- Ankylosing Spondylitis Awareness Month
- Autism Awareness Month
- Child Abuse Prevention Month
- Month of the Military Child
- National Autism Awareness Month
- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) Alcohol Awareness Month
- STD Awareness Month
- Sexual Assault Awareness Prevention Month
- Stress Awareness Month
- Youth Sports Safety Month
- **April 3-7, 2017**
 - National Youth Violence Prevention Week
- **April 23-29, 2017**
 - National Infertility Awareness Week
 - National Family Volunteer Week
- **April 2, 2017**
 - World Autism Awareness Day
- **April 6, 2017**
 - National Alcohol Screening Day
- **April 7, 2017**
 - World Health Day
 - National Alcohol Screening Day
- **April 10, 2017**
 - Siblings Day
- **April 16, 2017**
 - Easter
- **April 21, 2017**
 - Day of Silence
- **April 27, 2017**
 - Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day

May 1 – May 31, 2017

- Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month
- Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month
- Family Support Month
- Global Youth Traffic Safety Month
- Huntington's Disease Awareness Month
- Mental Health Month
- Military Appreciation Month
- National Foster Care Month
- National Maternal Depression Awareness Month
- National Mobility Awareness Month
- Physical Fitness and Sports Month
- Self-Discovery Month
- Skin Cancer Awareness Month
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month
- **May 1-7, 2017**
 - Screen-Free Week - unplug from digital entertainment
- **May 7-13, 2017**
 - National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week
- **May 14-20, 2017**
 - National Women's Health Week
 - National Prevention Week by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administrations (SAMHSA)
- **May 14, 2017**
 - Mother's Day
- **May 20, 2017**
 - Ankylosing Spondylitis Awareness Day
- **May 25, 2017**
 - National Missing Children's Day
- **May 31, 2017**
 - World No Tobacco Day

June 1 – June 30, 2017

- AIDS Awareness Month
- Children's Awareness Month
- Gay and Lesbian Pride Month
- National Hunger Awareness Month
- PTSD Awareness Month
- Student Safety Month
- **June 12-18, 2017**
 - National Men's Health Week
- **June 18, 2017**
 - Father's Day