

Tips for Exhibits on Domestic Violence

How can I make my display visually interesting?

- Choose a theme. What exactly are you trying to convey to your patrons about domestic violence? Encouraging them to become aware and learn a bit? Pointing out the overall social impact? Leading them towards volunteering for or otherwise supporting local agencies? Looking at teen violence?
- Consider building your exhibit around a single visual. You can use a poster from an organization or a blow-up of a newspaper headline. Consider using oversized pictures be the foundation of your exhibit and, layer text on top of that.
- Think about incorporating objects such as bumper stickers, t-shirts, posters, and three-dimensional objects. Some local agencies will even give you a supply of brochures or other handouts.
- Attempt to move away from the pre-made supplies, such as pre-cut letters or bulletin board borders. The convenience is undeniable, but this is a powerful subject. Taking a more visceral approach can enhance your point.

Where can I find good resources for display items?

- Local shelters usually have brochures. Some shelters may sell t-shirts or other items for fundraising purposes, too. Tell them what you're doing - they may let you have items for free.
- National domestic violence agencies often have online stores. Check out the National Coalition for Domestic Violence (<http://www.ncadv.org/>) or Break the Cycle (<http://www.breakthecycle.org/>) for materials. You can use these again over the years, particularly in a "Domestic Violence Month" display.
- Police departments can be a great source for print materials on domestic violence, and some departments already have educational material for local workshops that they may let you borrow.

What are other items that I can include in a display or exhibit?

- Quotes from local notables can add to any display. Pick one or two that work within the scope of your exhibit. Email your mayor, Chamber of Commerce director, Rotary director, church leaders, and other community leaders and ask for a quote you can post. What does the local football coach want to say about teen violence? What does the local emergency room doctor want to say about the harm caused by domestic violence? People will remember and discuss the statements of people they know -- and the library will be integral to those discussions.
- Talk to your local agencies and focus on the immediate impact of domestic violence on your community. Some shelters have a community education speaker who shares her story. Consider making an audio file to go with your online version of the exhibit. Also, include written success stories from shelters about raising money or expanding area services. This adds a hopeful note to an otherwise grave topic.
- In the same vein, think about enlarging newspaper clippings of domestic

violence headlines from around the country. Layering many of these stories over one another might be a visually appealing way to heighten awareness – a simple tool for greater impact.

What's the best way to involve my patrons with an exhibit?

Interaction can take many forms. Think about the following ways to include your patrons:

- Conduct giveaways of items such as bookmarks, brochures, or bumper stickers
- Include a donation box for a local shelter and/or place such boxes at the various desks with a sign pointing people to the exhibit
- Sponsor a raffle for a prize created by a local artist, with all proceeds going to the shelter
- Have note cards available for people to anonymously write words of encouragement for survivors, praise local social service staff, or share their own experiences with domestic violence

For further display ideas, don't be afraid to search the Internet. Certainly the Internet has additional resources on creating effective displays. Typically, these websites may not pertain to domestic violence, but these communities are willing to share impressive visuals for anyone trying to create a bulletin board display. Some favorite websites and blogs include:

- Creative Library Displays, a blog by a New Zealand librarian (<http://www.creativelibrarydisplays.com/>)
- School Library Displays, a blog by Elaine Pearson (<http://schoollibrarydisplays.blogspot.com/>)
- Flickr group for school library displays (http://www.flickr.com/groups/school_library_displays/)
- Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators (<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/bulletin/index.html>)