

THE HARMONY PRESS

A Quarterly Newsletter from the Coalition for Family Harmony
Winter 2020

PREVENTION & PARENTING DURING TIMES OF COVID-19

Celia Laguna, Family Harmony Coordinator, has been working to empower and strengthen Spanish-speaking families in Ventura County for 17 years. Family Harmony has a long history of offering family-strengthening programming to the Oxnard, Ventura, and Santa Paula communities, and while she has moved to offering virtual support, her program is continuing to grow.

In November 2020, Family Harmony will add domestic violence prevention groups for couples to their program lineup. Using the evidence-based PREP curriculum, this group will help support couples on topics of trust, communication, partnership, conflict resolution, marriage support, mapping resources, and love. This group will be free to couples thanks to grant funding through the California Office of Emergency Services. Celia and two therapists will be facilitating the free groups, which will be offered in both English and Spanish.

(continues on Page 2)



Above: Celia Laguna, Family Harmony Coordinator, provides virtual counseling.

Below: Celia interviews Mexican Consul Euclides Del Moral on her radio program on Radio Indigena 94.1 FM.

Parenting & Prevention, continued

Helping parents become stronger is also Celia's passion. "When I see the changes in the family it motivates me," Celia describes. "I know that when I am helping the parents, I'm helping their children. If the parents are OK, the children will be OK." This support has been even more important during the pandemic. Family Harmony has worked hard in the past eight months to help parents build patience and support for their children throughout stay-at-home orders, as well as help parents navigate changes in their children's behavior. Celia says what makes her parenting groups unique are all in its focus. "Other parenting groups focus on the negative behaviors of children. People ask me how to fix their children. Our groups focus on strengthening the parent to be prepared for anything. If the parent understands their child's unique needs, they will be the expert in their child."

Along with parenting support, however, Family Harmony has developed a group curriculum aimed at supporting youth, which they also plan to open this winter. The group will cover topics like self-esteem, grief, communication, motivation, bullying, grief, and more. The group will also be offered through the Oxnard Union High School District for international students. Family Harmony hopes to continue to grow the program through community partnership.

Interest lists are now forming for both the Couples Support and Youth Groups. Please contact Celia at (805) 983-6014 for further information!

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER WISH LIST

Contact Laura Morales, Housing Services Manager, at (805) 654-1111 to give!

(Due to upgraded COVID-19 spread prevention, we are only able to accept new items at this time.)

- Hand sanitizer and household cleaner
- Non-latex gloves
- Adult and children's toothbrushes
- Twin-size sheet sets and comforters
- Throw blankets
- Adult and children's bicycles
- Reusable masks for adults and children
- Hair brushes and hair elastics
- Socks
- Sweat shirts/pants of all sizes
- Plastic storage containers
- Single and double strollers
- Family board games
- Spiral notebooks
- Uber/Lyft Gift Cards
- Target/Walmart Gift Cards





A STORY OF SURVIVAL: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TOWARDS HEALING

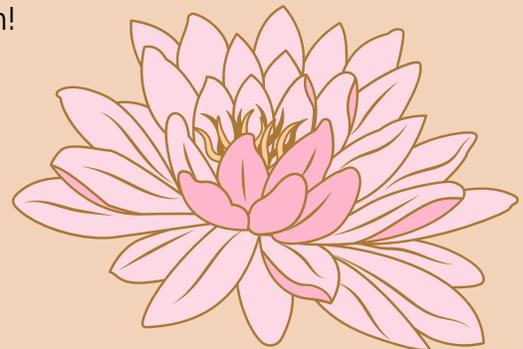
One evening, while her husband was at work, Jocelyn* decided to call our domestic violence hotline. She had no idea what to expect when the advocate picked up the phone and felt overwhelmed by the idea of leaving. Jocelyn described to the advocate, Laura, the violence that seemed to be getting worse every day, including being strangled to the point of passing out. Laura answered all of Jocelyn's questions and concerns and even made a plan with her of how she could leave safely. After some careful planning, Jocelyn met Laura at the police station parking lot.

There was a lot of work to do to get back on her feet, but the most intense work happened in her sessions with Laura. She unraveled her history of leaving her family in her country of origin after her husband swept everyone off their feet describing how well he would take care of her and her son in America. However, the abuse began shortly after arriving to the United States. Even though she was safe at the shelter, Jocelyn feared her husband retaliating against her, including contacting immigration officials to attempt to deport her. Every day Jocelyn felt more determined to become independent. The possibilities seemed endless after securing a job at a large retail chain, childcare, and even a car. She applied for Coalition's Transitional

Housing Program for rental assistance. The Transitional Housing Coordinator, Yadira, advocated with a local landlord and was able to negotiate a rental Jocelyn could qualify for. With everything going so well, Jocelyn decided to seek help with our Legal Department to reclaim the personal safety of herself and her son after leaving shelter.

The Coalition's Family Law Attorney, Shannon, let Jocelyn know she could help her with a restraining order, but encouraged her to talk to the Immigration Attorney as well. Jocelyn was surprised to learn about what protections the law had for immigrant survivors of violence and worked hard to collect evidence and required documentation. Jocelyn worked diligently with the Coalition's Immigration Attorney, Mariela, and a year and a half later, Jocelyn became a citizen of the United States.

This is just one of the many stories the Coalition has been honored to be a part of, and make up the fabric of the lasting, generational change that can occur when cycles of violence are broken!



*the survivor's identifying information has been changed to preserve her confidentiality.

DO YOU NEED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER?



Pictured: Shelter Client Advocate Adriana is reading a form while wearing a visor and mask.

We know leaving your abusive partner can feel frightening and overwhelming - and the idea of entering a shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic may cause you even more concern.

Our Housing Program has new policies in place to ensure you and your family are safe while in shelter. This includes personal protection equipment for your family during your stay, virtual therapy appointments, and plenty of space to have safe, socially-distanced meetings with your personal case worker.

If you are living with an abusive partner and need shelter, contact us 24-hours a day at

1-800-300-2181.



Coalition for Family Harmony invites you to engage with us on how you can be impactful in the lives of survivors of violence.

Call us to find out how you can donate time, resources, or funds to our array of programs working directly with Ventura County community members who have experienced violence.

Main Office: (805) 983-6014



JOIN US IN ENDING

intimate partner & sexual violence