

Stop Family Violence: Online Organizing Against Abuse

Stop Family Violence, a project of Tides Center, is a recognized leader and advocate in the family violence field. They employ grassroots organizing via the internet to amplify victims' voices.



Stop Family Violence came into being in July 2000 when \$3.5 billion in federal funding from the Violence Against Women Act was at risk of being lost. Using the power of the Internet to mobilize a broad citizenry, Stop Family Violence coordinated over 164,000 messages and phone calls to Congress to re-authorize the Act—and succeeded.

Stop Family Violence is now a recognized leader in grassroots advocacy in the family violence field, collaborating and coordinating efforts with leading domestic violence agencies to advance political efforts.

“Broad scale social change around family violence will not occur simply from the good efforts of a few government agencies, nor as the result of legislation or education alone,” says Irene Weiser, the project’s director. For that reason, Stop Family Violence uses the internet to organize citizens and promote civic involvement. StopFamilyViolence.org has had tremendous impact in educating the public about policy issues and collecting stories of abuse—giving victims a forum to raise their

Mission

The mission of Stop Family Violence is to organize and amplify the nation’s collective voice against family violence.

Challenge

Millions of women and children are severely abused in this country every year, yet no organization exists to organize and amplify their voices.

Goal

Develop online content and tools to organize, promote, and support community activism against abuse.

Results

More than 53,000 people made over 164,000 phone calls and emails to Congress that led to re-authorization of the Violence Against Women Act—landmark legislation that provides life-saving hotlines, shelters, services, and laws to protect victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking.

Thousands of members respond to calls for civic action and hundreds share their stories of abuse.

Impact

Victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking are able to access services and resources.

Stop Family Violence is ensuring a new generation of families and justice system professionals understand that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking are crimes that our society will not tolerate.

Tides Center Project Case Study

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voices. Stop Family Violence was awarded the American Association of Political Consultants' prestigious Pollie Award in 2001 for the best issue advocacy website and was a finalist for the 2007 NetSquared competition recognizing projects that utilize the technologies, tools and communities of the social web to create societal impact in a sustainable fashion.

Stop Family Violence initiated online action campaigns that have been instrumental in securing re-authorization of the Violence Against Women Act, blocking dangerous "fathers' rights" legislation, influencing U.S. Attorney General decisions on refugee status for battered immigrant women, and helping ensure safety provisions in welfare reform legislation. From victims of abuse Stop Family Violence collects "survivor stories," some of which have been read into the Congressional Record, incorporated into a brief to the U.S. Supreme Court, and used to shape national policy guidelines. Here are excerpts from these stories.

"I am proud to be part of this organization. It has changed my life. Now I have a voice: I am not ashamed anymore and I am determined to do whatever I can to make other people aware. **I have become an activist.**"

- Domestic violence survivor

"When I got married, it was less than a year before I started being pushed, slapped, held down, spit on, and bitten."

"I left him, only to find another who promised he would never treat me that way. He broke my nose, put a hole through my forehead with his knuckle and busted out my teeth."

"He choked me, threatened to chop my head off with a rusty hatchet he held to my throat and threatened to burn the house down with me and the kids in it. My youngest was four months old."

"Today, 10 years later, thanks to counseling, and the grace of God, I live in violence-free home and advocate for domestic violence victims."

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StopFamilyViolence.org

- The website aggregates news, publications, and statistics on the issues of family violence, child sexual abuse, and custody and abuse.
- The site offers hotlines, an email newsletter, and an RSS feed of information.
- One of the most visited areas of the website collects and publishes stories from survivors of abuse.
- Visitors to the website can look up their elected representatives and send them communications on family violence issues by email, fax, or letter; via the website residents of most states can register to vote.
- A thorough media database provides the means to easily contact local and national media.
- The website contains information and tips for safe internet browsing for abuse victims looking for resources or formulating an escape plan.
- An Emergency Escape button floats to remain within reach in case the website visitor is being abused, is surprised by the abuser, and needs to exit the website in a hurry; pressing the "Esc" key has the same effect.

For More Information

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