

## Cobourg Daily Star

### Program seeks to mobilize people against domestic abuse;

Cobourg Daily Star (ON)

Tue 10 Feb 2009

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Section: News

Byline: BY VALERIE MACDONALD;

A provincial initiative to get people to act when they see a woman being abused will stage an interactive information session at the Cobourg Public Library next week.

Neighbours, Friends & Families is sponsored by the **Ontario** Women's Directorate and has a special program for presenting the information, Northumberland Domestic Abuse Monitoring Committee chair Donna Harris said in an interview yesterday.

The program, planned for 9:30 a. m. to 12:30 p. m. Thursday, Feb. 19, includes discussion surrounding public service announcements and offers answers to difficult domestic abuse questions, Ms. Harris said.

The program's purpose is to inform and mobilize people.

According to the Neighbours, Friends and Families website, those in social work don't know all the potential victims while those closest to the victims may have observed earlier signs of a dangerous situation. Some of those signs include a male abuser acting as if he "owns" his domestic partner. The abuser frequently lies and acts superior; he tries to suggest he is the victim and he "acts depressed."

The website also suggests talking directly to the abuser but cautions it be done when he is calm and there is opportunity for a "full discussion."

Among the messages to give an abuser is that his behaviour must stop. The website advises "never argue with him about his abusive actions. Recognize that confrontational, argumentative approaches may make the situation worse and put her at higher risk."

Neighbours, Friends & Families offers the opportunity for training so individuals can speak to other groups, Ms. Harris said.

This is all part of the new approach in public education to "raise awareness of the signs of **woman abuse** so that those close to an at-risk woman -- or an abusive man -- can help."

One woman has died in Northumberland in recent years from domestic abuse. Last year in neighbouring Durham there were at least three deaths.

In 2005, the most recent statistics available to Ms. Harris, domestic abuse was the cause of 38 deaths across **Ontario**.


To register to take part in the workshop at the Cobourg library call 905-377-8702 or e-mail [donnalifewalk@cogeco.ca](mailto:donnalifewalk@cogeco.ca).

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Idnumber: 200902100020

Edition: Final

Length: 350 words

Tone: Strongly Negative 

Ad Value: \$179.52 Circulation: 4,500