May 2025

STANDING FIRM Team News

- May 6th: Megan joined together with the Family Care Coalition, the Maternity Care Coalition, Moms Rising, and the Chamber of Mothers in Harrisburg to advocate for paid family and medical leave in Pennsylvania. Read more here about the status of the legislation.

- May 8th: Karen & Mary attended Rep. Dan Miller's Disability & Mental Health Summit where Karen participated in a panel discussion with the Alliance for Access & Assets providing information and an invitation for all attendees and interested individuals to become members of the Alliance. The summit brought together government and independent service agencies along with the families and individuals they serve to discuss key issues. The summit opened with a keynote presentation on the Importance of Medicaid and offered individual breakout sessions that featured topics on disability rights, community engagement and inclusion, and a legislative panel to hear testimony from community members on important legislative issues.

- May 12th: Karen participated in the bi-monthly Level Up Campaign planning committee meeting. Pay equity is critically important to the sustainability of both businesses and the financial stability of women. We want to hear your stories and invite you to participate. Use the link below to **Share Your Story.**

Share Your Story Submissions

– What to share: "We are collecting stories to share on YWCA Greater Pittsburgh's social media and for their advocacy efforts. Whether you've advocated for yourself, supported others, or worked to change policies in the workplace, we want to hear from you!

In this form, you'll be asked to:

1. Share your thoughts on pay equity,
2. Tell your personal or workplace advocacy story
3. Upload a photo (optional)
4. Grant permission for us to share your story
5. Submit HERE!"

- May 13th was a day of strategic planning for the Department of Economic Impact (STANDING FIRM & Immediate Needs Coordination).
- May 14th and 15th Training sessions.
- May 17th: the team attended WC&S' Celebrating Survivors gala. It was wonderful to see many of our employer members in attendance for an amazing evening honoring survivors.

- May 18th: Karen represented WC&S at a vendor fair at Southern Tier (who donated a portion of the proceeds to WC&S—thank you).

Mental Health Awareness Month

Raising awareness of the connection between domestic violence and mental health is crucial for dismantling stigma, fostering healing, and empowering survivors. This effort involves educating the public, professionals, and policymakers about current issues. This includes trauma-informed mental health care, survivor-centered systems, and addressing the root causes of partner violence such as power and control.

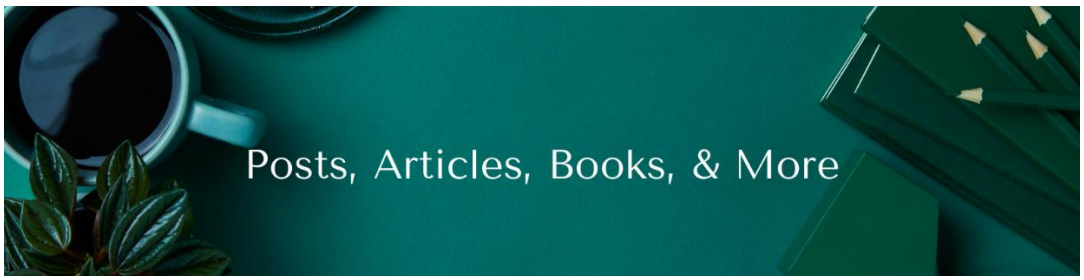
"Domestic violence — a pattern of coercive, controlling behaviors that may include physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse — often leaves invisible scars. Survivors may experience depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other lasting mental health effects. At the same time, individuals living with mental health conditions may be at greater risk of experiencing abuse.

The numbers are staggering. The National Domestic Violence Hotline reports that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men in the United States have experienced severe intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or stalking. Survivors are left not only to heal physical wounds but also to navigate the long-term emotional and psychological consequences of abuse.

Understanding the intersection between mental health and domestic violence is critical. It demands that we approach support services holistically — offering trauma-informed mental health care, advocating for survivor-centered systems, and addressing the root causes of violence, including power and control." [1]

For more than 50 years, Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh has been there to provide emergency shelter, legal assistance, medical advocacy, and other programming to guide survivors on their safety and healing journey.

For 15 years, STANDING FIRM has provided consultation, training, and resources to employers educating them in the important role they play in impacting a survivor's economic stability, safety, and well-being. To learn more about STANDING FIRM, contact us to set up an information session.



About NAMI

NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

Maternal Mental Health Alliance

Citations

[1] New York State Coalition on Domestic Violence