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October 2024 Newsletter

Welcome to Our Journey: A Message from the Founder

Namaste,
Welcome to the HFSS newsletter! Our organization was born in 2017 after noticing an acute need in our community. We are a volunteer-run 501(c) non-profit dedicated to empowering South Asian survivors of domestic violence in the Tampa Bay region. Through the years, we have helped over 300 clients. It started as a small initiative, but with passion and dedication, we have grown committed to empowering survivors of gender-based violence in the South Asian diaspora through awareness, advocacy, and economic agency.

As the founder of HFSS, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for your support of our mission. In honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we are excited to introduce this newsletter as a way to raise visibility and foster dialogue around these important issues. Together, we are embarking on a journey to make a positive impact in our community. In each issue, you'll find inspiring stories, updates on our initiatives, information on domestic violence, and ways you can get involved. Your engagement is vital to our success. We warmly encourage you to share this newsletter with your friends and family, helping us connect with more individuals who can benefit from our work.
We look forward to sharing this journey with you.
Warm regards,
Dr. Venkataram
Founder, HFSS



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Survivor Spotlight

We proudly highlight a 43-year-old survivor who transformed her life after leaving an abusive marriage. With limited education, she took IT courses and successfully secured a job with an IT company, aided by one of our supportive volunteers who serves as a senior manager. We congratulate her on this amazing achievement!

Urgent Survivor Requests

We have a physician survivor who has completed all requirements for residency placement in the U.S. She urgently seeks connections to residency programs to further her career.

We have a 39-year-old survivor who has an MBA in HR Management. With over seven years of experience in HR recruitment, she is skilled in Microsoft Office tools but is facing challenges in finding a job placement.

If you can offer assistance, job leads, or mentorship, please contact us at hfssusa.org/contact/

Recognizing the Signs of Intimate Partner Violence
Insights from The Spring of Tampa Bay

Author: Christine Meister

When you hear the phrase "domestic violence", it's typical to think of bruises, black eyes, and a weak woman fleeing from a wild and monstrous man. The truth, however, is that not all violence is physical, not all victims are submissive, and not all abusers outwardly appear as monsters. Domestic violence occurs when one partner uses a pattern of behaviors against the other to gain and maintain power and control. These patterns typically start as verbal or emotional insults that make the victim feel dumb, belittled, embarrassed, unwanted, or unloved. Over time, these abuses begin affecting the victim's coping responses, self-esteem, and sense of safety in the relationship. Sometimes abuse will escalate to include threats, physical and/or sexual violence. Healthy relationships are partnerships. They should be founded on principles of trust, support, and equality.

Common red flags for an abusive relationship include:

- **Pushing for a quick relationship**
- **Overly jealous and possessive**
- **Blaming others for their problems, feelings and mistakes**
- **Monitoring your texts and call history**
- **Isolating you from friends and family**
- **Forced sex/intimacy**
- **Controls access to family finances**
- **Takes your money and runs up your credit cards**
- **Cruelty towards animals and children**
- **Controlling access to or information about important documents (SS cards, licenses, immigration papers, etc.)**
- **Threatening to take children away**

People who abuse are often skilled at isolating their partners from support systems and justifying their actions. You are not alone, and the abuse is not your fault. Agencies like The Spring of Tampa Bay in Hillsborough County offer free and confidential support for victims of domestic violence. Whether you are seeking information and referrals, planning for safety, or looking for emergency shelter, an advocate is available on the 24-hour domestic violence crisis hotline:

813-247-SAFE (7233).

Support & Resources

- Call HFSS: **(813) 591-0250**
- Call National Domestic Violence Hotline: **1-800-799-7233**
- Call The Spring of Tampa Bay: **(813) 247-7233**
- Call Tampa Police Department Victim Advocacy Unit: **(813) 276-3622**
- Call Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services: **(727) 479-1800**

Interested in Getting Involved?

Join us in making a difference! We're seeking donations and volunteers to support survivors in our community. Your help is invaluable!
hfssusa.org/get-involved/

Empowering survivors through **awareness**, **advocacy**, and **economic agency**.

Interested in contributing to our newsletter?
Contact media@hfssusa.org
Editors: Sakshi Wagh & Esha Bhat

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