

NEWSLETTER

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS REMAINS AT THE HEART OF THE WOMENSPIRIT COALITION'S MISSION.

DV Awareness is not limited to a single month or event. It is an ongoing commitment to:

- Uplift survivor voices
- Promote culturally grounded advocacy
- Strengthen Tribal legal pathways to safety
- Support families navigating trauma with dignity and respect

By showing up, speaking out, and supporting one another, we help break cycles of violence and reinforce that safety and justice are fundamental rights for all Tribal communities.

We remain committed to working alongside Tribal communities, partners, and survivors to build safer futures rooted in culture, resilience, and collective empowerment.

As we close out 2025, WomenSpirit Coalition is honored to continue supporting survivors, Tribal communities, and partners across Washington. This quarter has been filled with impactful events, strengthened collaborations, and meaningful advocacy efforts.



HONORING STRENGTH AND HEALING: TRIBAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS

Domestic Violence Awareness efforts in Tribal communities carry a deep and powerful meaning. For many Native Nations, addressing domestic and intimate partner violence is not only about safety—it is about healing generational trauma, restoring balance, and protecting the sacredness of our families and future generations.

Domestic violence affects Native people at disproportionate rates, often tied to historical trauma, loss of traditional family structures, and the impacts of colonization. Yet Tribal communities continue to show incredible resilience through culture, language, ceremony, and community care.

Restoring Traditional Teachings

Long before colonization, many Tribal nations upheld teachings of respect, reciprocity, and protection. Domestic violence is not a traditional practice. Today, cultural teachings and ceremonies play an essential role in helping survivors heal and reconnect to their strength. Community walks, gatherings, and vigils remind us that we stand together—elders, youth, families, and ancestors.

Supporting Survivors

Survivors in Tribal communities show tremendous courage as they navigate healing and safety, often while overcoming barriers to resources and support. When we honor their stories, we support their path forward. Tribal programs, advocacy services, and culturally grounded healing practices are vital lifelines.

Community Responsibility

Ending domestic violence requires all of us. We can help by:

- Learning the signs of abuse
- Supporting Tribal DV programs and advocates
- Sharing resources with relatives and community members
- Speaking up to challenge harmful behaviors
- Teaching youth about healthy, respectful relationships

Every action strengthens our circle of protection.

A Call to Unity

Together, we can uplift survivors, restore balance within our families, and return to the teachings that remind us that every person is worthy of safety, dignity, and respect. By working as a community, we honor our ancestors and safeguard the generations yet to come.

SPOTLIGHT: ADVOCACY & IMPACT



Lower Elwha DV Awareness Walk

Our team participated in the Lower Elwha DV Awareness Walk in Port Angeles, standing alongside survivors, families, and advocates to honor resilience and raise awareness. This event remains a powerful reminder of the strength found in community healing.

Training Provided for Port Gamble S'Klallam

On September 5th and 12th, 2025, Michelle Williams, Program Director of WomenSpirit Coalition and the Sayu' X Wey Family Safety Center, participated in a cross-departmental training at the 7 Cedar Hotel for local law enforcement and tribal partners. Michelle shared the mission and services of WomenSpirit Coalition and Sayu' X Wey Family Safety Center, emphasizing trauma-informed and culturally specific responses to Native survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking. Participants learned practical strategies for danger assessment, evidence collection, and survivor engagement, while strengthening collaborative partnerships across tribal and law enforcement agencies. In recognition of her contributions, Michelle was honored in a traditional Native wrapping ceremony by Port Gamble advocate Teresa Swope, a gesture of gratitude for her dedication and acts of good within the community.



SPOTLIGHT: ADVOCACY & IMPACT



2025 Access to Justice Conference in Yakima, WA

Access to Justice Conference
Michelle Williams, Program Director of WomenSpirit Coalition and the Sayu' X Wey Family Safety Center, and Erin Lopez Neskahi, Project Coordinator - Paralegal Services, attended the 2025 Access to Justice Law Conference in Yakima from September 17–19. Themed “Finding Joy in Justice Work: Centering Hope in Community Care,” the conference brought together legal professionals, advocates, and community leaders to explore innovative strategies for supporting justice, equity, and hope in their communities. Michelle and Erin participated in sessions focused on centering community care, trauma-informed practices, and culturally responsive approaches, enhancing their capacity to support Native survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking across Washington State



SPOTLIGHT: ADVOCACY & IMPACT

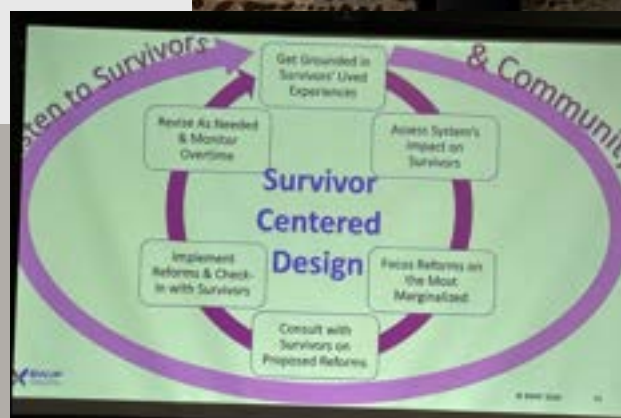
Reflections from the IVAT Conference in San Diego

In August, I had the privilege of attending the International Conference on Violence, Abuse, and Trauma (IVAT) in San Diego. The gathering brought together advocates, researchers, legal professionals, service providers, and community leaders from across the nation and beyond.

What stood out most was the shared commitment to advancing trauma-informed practices and addressing violence in all its forms. Sessions ranged from cutting-edge research on prevention, to innovative approaches in direct services, to powerful survivor-led discussions that reminded us why this work matters so deeply.

For me, one of the most meaningful aspects of IVAT was the opportunity to connect with others who are equally dedicated to building safer, healthier communities. The conversations, both in the workshops and in the open areas, were rich with ideas, encouragement, and the kind of solidarity that fuels ongoing work.

As I return home, I carry forward renewed energy and fresh perspectives to strengthen the work we're doing in our communities. IVAT was not only a conference but a reminder that healing and justice require collective effort, learning, and compassion.



WSC 16TH ANNUAL AMETHYST INDIVIDUAL AWARD RECEIPTIANTS

Nikki Finkbonger

Life-time Achievement - Enduring Spirit
Award



Suquamish Tribal Police Chief, Mark Williams

Outstanding Leadership &
Commitment to Justice for Indigenous
Survivors Award

Anna Mayes

Outstanding Service Award - VOICES
volunteer/lived experience/ed
materials author.



16TH ANNUAL AMETHYST PROGRAM AWARD RECIPIANTS



Snoqualmie Indian Tribe – Housing Department

Accepting on behalf of the program is Housing Manager Angelina Holverstott. The Snoqualmie Housing Department has been a powerful advocate for survivors, recognizing that safe housing is one of the most critical needs in escaping violence. Their work ensures survivors have not only a roof over their heads, but also dignity, stability, and the opportunity to rebuild their lives in safety.

Puyallup Tribe – Community Domestic Violence Advocacy Program

Receiving this recognition for the program is Program Director Roxanne Moses. The Puyallup program works tirelessly to provide immediate advocacy, crisis response, and ongoing support to survivors of domestic violence. Their team not only responds to emergencies but also walks with survivors through the long journey of healing and justice. They are a trusted presence for the community, creating spaces where survivors know they are safe and believed.



Quileute Tribe – Health Center, New Beginnings Program

Receiving this award is Manager Sandra Kint. The New Beginnings Program stands as a refuge for survivors of violence, offering advocacy, counseling, and prevention programs. With a strong commitment to both crisis response and long-term healing, they help survivors reclaim their voices and begin new chapters of strength and resilience.



16TH ANNUAL AMETHYST PROGRAM AWARD RECIPIANTS



Tulalip Tribes – Children’s Advocacy Center | Legacy of Healing

Represented today by Director Malory Simpson. Legacy of Healing provides comprehensive services to survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, with a special focus on protecting children and supporting families. Their work brings together legal advocacy, counseling, and cultural healing practices, making sure survivors are not only safe but supported in body, mind, and spirit.

Skokomish Indian Tribe – Tuwaduq Family Services, Domestic Violence Support Program

Accepting this award on behalf of the program is domestic violence advocate Linda Charette. This program centers family wellness and holistic healing, providing culturally grounded advocacy and safety planning for survivors. They address domestic violence through prevention education, victim support, and community awareness, reminding us that healing belongs not just to individuals, but to the whole community.



Hoh Indian Tribe – Crime Victim’s Advocate Program

Represented by Crime Victim’s Advocate Program Manager Tracy Gillette. This program provides direct advocacy and support services to victims of crime, including domestic violence and sexual assault survivors. With compassion and dedication, they walk beside survivors as they navigate crisis, legal systems, and healing, ensuring that no one has to go through the journey alone.



16TH ANNUAL AMETHYST BOARD & STAFF RECOGNITION



Beatriz Arakawa:

carries with her a passion for uplifting voices that are too often unheard. Through her diligence and compassion, she strengthens our mission to create safe, supportive spaces where survivors know they are not alone. Her heart for service shines in all that she does.

Crystal Esquivel:

brings creativity, clarity, and courage. She reminds us of the importance of resilience and the power of community partnerships. Her leadership reflects both strength and compassion, ensuring that our work remains responsive and relevant to the needs of our people.



Dee Rhodes-Koester

Dee's steady leadership and knowledge guide us through the most complex challenges. She has a remarkable ability to hold the bigger picture in mind while also caring for the smallest details that matter most. Her commitment keeps us strong and steady, no matter how difficult the path. As a proud member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, she carries forward generations of fortitude into her leadership.

16TH ANNUAL AMETHYST BOARD & STAFF RECOGNITION



Cheryl Coan

Cheryl, a proud member of the Navajo Nation, as a (Diné) she brings dedication and heart into every part of her work. Her careful attention ensures that every effort reflects excellence and care. She reminds us that small acts of diligence and thoughtfulness build a strong foundation for the larger vision we carry. Cheryl's steady presence and pride in her heritage enrich our coalition deeply.

Michelle Williams

Michelle's vision and unwavering drive remind us why we do this work — to create change, to protect, and to restore balance. Her leadership helps carry the organization forward with clarity and hope, ensuring that WomenSpirit Coalition stays true to its mission while always reaching for greater impact.



Erin Lopez Neskahi

Erin, a member of both the Navajo and Ute Tribes, brings a passion for culture, healing, and community that strengthens the spirit of our work. She has shown an incredible willingness to pivot her roles within the organization, adapting to whatever is needed. Erin is a rule follower in the best sense — she brings structure and consistency — and she has been instrumental in helping create the WSC Tribal Civil Court Advocate Program, a legacy that will impact our communities for generations.

16TH ANNUAL AMETHYST BOARD & STAFF RECOGNITION



Delphine McInerney

Delphine is strong, steadfast, and my right hand in many ways. I can always count on her, and she never falls short. Her compassion for our clients and her willingness to always meet survivors where they are at is a testament to her heart and her character. She embodies the spirit of walking alongside survivors with respect, patience, and dignity.

Andee Gale

As our Administrative Assistant, Andee is strong, smart, and incredibly organized. She works tirelessly behind the scenes, quietly ensuring we all stay on track, that the pieces fit together, and that nothing is overlooked. Her consistency, reliability, and calm presence keep our programs moving forward and our entire team deeply relies on her.



Diane Good

Diane, who oversees our accounts and billing, is a true genius with numbers. She ensures the financial stability of our organization, carefully stewarding our resources so that we can continue this critical work. Her wisdom and experience remind us to always stay grounded in our values, while her attention to detail protects the integrity of everything we do.



HONORING THE SEASON: WELLNESS AND SELF-CARE THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

As we approach the fall and winter holidays, many of us feel a mix of emotions—joy, reflection, grief, and sometimes stress. These seasons can bring connection and celebration, but they can also stir memories and challenges.

At Sayu' X Wey Family Safety Center, we encourage everyone to take time for intentional self-care. This can look different for each of us, but here are a few practices that may support your wellness:

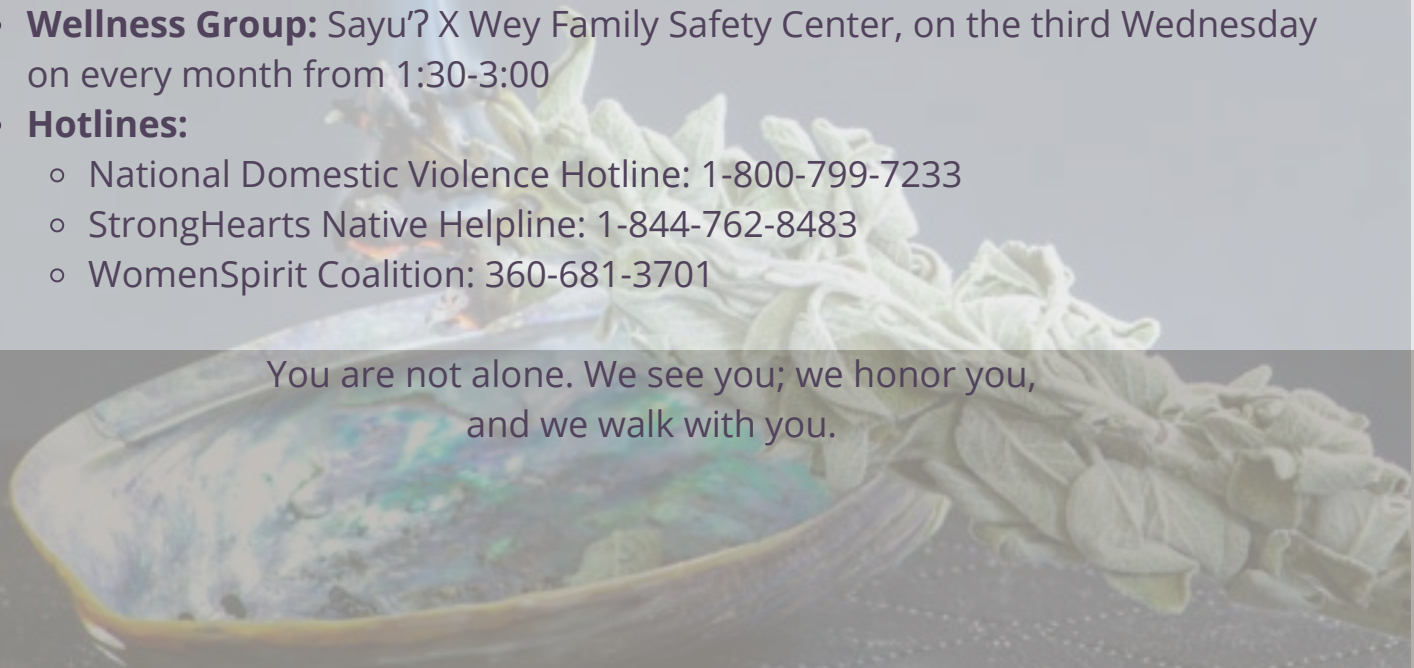
- **Smudging** with sage or sweetgrass to cleanse and center yourself.
- **Spending time on the land**—walking, gathering, or simply being in nature.
- **Storytelling** with elders or youth to strengthen intergenerational bonds.
- **Creating art or beadwork** as a form of meditation and expression.
- **Participating in ceremony** or prayer in ways that feel meaningful to you.

We also invite you to join our monthly Wellness Group, where we hold space for healing, sharing, and community care. Whether you're seeking connection or simply a quiet moment to breathe, you are welcome.

If you or someone you know needs support, please reach out:

- **Wellness Group:** Sayu' X Wey Family Safety Center, on the third Wednesday on every month from 1:30-3:00
- **Hotlines:**
 - National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
 - StrongHearts Native Helpline: 1-844-762-8483
 - WomenSpirit Coalition: 360-681-3701

You are not alone. We see you; we honor you,
and we walk with you.



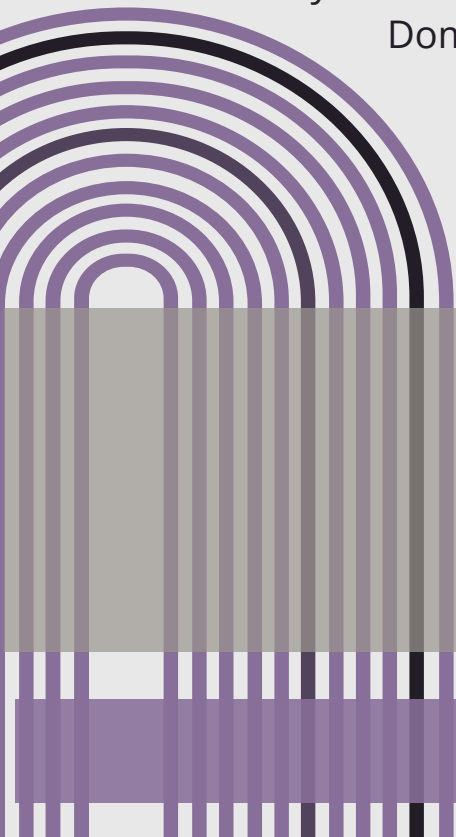
MESSAGE FROM WOMENSPIRIT COALITION COO, DEE RHODES-KOESTER:

Welcome to the Fall season at WomenSpirit Coalition! I am feeling a sense of renewal and redirection as we speak!

I am experiencing a desire to return to our grassroots and focus once more on our victim/survivor centered work as we move closer to the new year. This season has come early this year- it is usually during the winter months and the inevitable slowing of activities that I have time to vision for WSC. Visioning usually requires peace and solitude for reflective thinking and dreaming. August and September have been very busy for staff and management, ending grants, starting grants, ending services, starting new services, resigning staff duties. Meeting new partners in our work is always very exciting, we see on a daily basis the dedication and compassion people have for the advocacy work we do and for Indian Country, in general. We look forward to sharing our vision with you and yours, we invite you to join us in our efforts to eliminate violence in tribal communities and to support victims/survivors in their reclaiming of their lives and spirit. This is our 16th year honoring the courageous and giving people who support victims every day. We see you, we create safe spaces for you and we honor you- everyday! The Amethyst Awards are held as a part of WSC's Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October.

Be well, peace to you!

Dee



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