



*Knoxville* FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS CONFERENCE 2025



Thank you to our event partners:



# A day to listen, learn, and advocate

Friends,

Welcome to this year's Domestic Violence Conference. I'm truly grateful you're here. This day is a powerful reminder of why we do this work — to listen, to learn, to advocate, and to build a community where safety, healing, and justice are possible for everyone. It's also a chance to reconnect with one another, share ideas, and renew the energy we need to keep moving forward.

I want to offer a heartfelt thank-you to our partners at the University of Tennessee College of Social Work and the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences. Their continued support and leadership — especially through their recent Domestic Violence Needs Assessment Study in Knoxville — are helping illuminate the realities survivors face and guiding our collective path toward more responsive, equitable care.

We are honored to begin today with a keynote address from Emily Rodriguez, LCSW, Clinical Assistant Professor at the UT College of Social Work. Emily is a deeply respected clinician, educator, and advocate whose work bridges the worlds of research, teaching, and direct service with clarity, compassion, and integrity.

With over a decade of experience in mental health care, Emily specializes in trauma treatment, using a resilience-based approach that centers healing, empowerment, and long-term well-being. She has worked closely with youth and families in the child welfare system, and with individuals impacted by substance misuse and domestic violence — meeting people at some of the most difficult crossroads in their lives, and helping them find a way forward.

What sets Emily apart is not only her clinical expertise, but her unwavering commitment to justice. She brings heart and humanity to everything she does — whether she's working one-on-one with a client, guiding future social workers in the classroom, or advocating for systems that truly support survivors.

It is a privilege to learn from her today, and I know her words will stay with us long after this conference ends.

Thank you again for being here. Your presence matters, and this space wouldn't be the same without you.

With gratitude,



Executive Director of the Knoxville Family Justice Center

# Event Agenda

United in Faith Breakfast	8:30 a.m.
Networking	10:00 a.m.
Morning Session 1 - Upstairs Room A Domestic Violence Can Happen to Anyone, Right?	10:45 a.m.
Morning Session 2 - Upstairs Room B Children's Exposure to DV Through Trauma-Informed Care	10:45 a.m.
Lunch & Keynote - Emily Rodriguez	12:00 p.m.
Afternoon Session 1- Upstairs Room A Weaponizing the Legal System	12:45 p.m.
Afternoon Session 2 - Upstairs Room B DV in Immigrant Communities	12:45 p.m.
Evening Session - Conference Room	6:00 p.m.

*Dr. Kristen Ravi is an Assistant Professor in the College of Social Work at the University of Tennessee. She is also a licensed master social worker with over 15 years of research and practice with children and families. Her research focuses on the impact of intimate partner violence (IPV) on survivors and their children and identifying protective factors. Her primary focus is on children's exposure to parental IPV and their proximal and distal social, mental health, and academic outcomes. Presently, she is evaluating the efficacy of an intervention to support IPV survivors and their children exposed to IPV, and build IPV provider capacity across Tennessee.*

*Dr. Megan Haselschwerdt is an Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences at the University of Tennessee. She is an interpersonal violence and family science scholar who studies intimate partner violence (IPV) from the perspective of victimized adults, young adults with childhood IPV exposure histories, and professionals who provide support to individuals and families victimized by IPV. She has published 30 peer-reviewed research articles on IPV. She is evaluating the efficacy of an intervention to support IPV survivors and their children exposed to IPV and to build IPV provider capacity across Tennessee.*

## **Domestic Violence Can Happen to Anyone, Right?**

### **Domestic Violence in Affluent Families**

Despite the belief that “domestic violence (DV) can happen to anyone,” society rarely envisions DV occurring in more affluent families and communities. In this presentation, Dr. Megan Haselschwerdt will present contemporary research on DV in affluent communities, highlighting common misconceptions and providing practical recommendations to support victimized people and their children. She will also share findings from an extensive study in a highly affluent community outside a major metropolitan city that draws upon in-depth interviews with victimized mothers and professionals who work with this population.

---

### **Weaponizing the Legal System:**

#### **The Complexities of Post-Separation Domestic Violence**

“Why doesn’t she just leave him?” is a common question asked of victimized women, yet this question masks a serious reality: for many victimized women, leaving does not mark the end of violence and abuse. In this presentation, Dr. Megan Haselschwerdt will present contemporary research on post-separation DV. She will address post-separation measurement and assessment strategies for researchers and professionals, and the weaponization of the legal system through divorce and custody proceedings, along with recommendations for legal system professionals working with and/or representing victimized parents inside and outside the courtroom. Dr. Haselschwerdt will be joined by a legal system professional with expertise in navigating and preventing post-separation abuse.

---

### **Understanding and addressing children’s exposure to DV using trauma-informed care (CLE Certified Course)**

This presentation provides an overview of children’s exposure to DV and the impacts of DV on children. It also discusses dual DV and child maltreatment exposure and how experiencing multiple types of exposure is related to more adverse outcomes. The assessment portion of the session provides an overview of the different assessment tools for children’s exposure to DV. Several interventions for children exposed to DV and violence more broadly will be discussed. The final portion of the session will include a discussion of what trauma-informed care is and how it is applied to children.

---

### **Domestic Violence in Immigrant Communities:**

#### **Survivor Experiences Utilizing the Violence Against Women Act (CLE Certified course)**

In this presentation, Dr. Kristen Ravi and a practitioner from the community will discuss the prevalence and types of domestic violence in immigrant communities in the U.S., barriers to legal help-seeking, and provide an overview of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), including provisions specific to immigrants.