

WHAT'S WITH THE GREEN DOT?

Visualize for a moment that unforgettable image of small red-dots spreading across a computer generated map of the US, symbolizing the spread of some terrible epidemic – with each tiny red dot representing an individual case. With disturbing speed, the three or four single dots multiply and spread until the whole map emits a red glow comprised of a zillion tiny dots.

NOW IMAGINE FOR A MOMENT A MAP OF KENTUCKY. Each red dot on this map represents an act of power-based personal violence (interpersonal violence, sexual violence, child abuse or stalking)

– or a choice to tolerate, justify or perpetuate this violence. A red dot is a rape – a red dot is a hit – a red dot is a threat – a red dot is a “blame the victim” statement – a red dot is an individual choice to do nothing in the face of a high risk situation. Power-based personal violence in Kentucky is not a huge, solid mass that can simply be removed with one swift action or policy. Rather, it is the accumulation of individual decisions, moments, values, and actions made by the men and women from every corner of our state – from the most rural part

of Eastern Kentucky to the Capitol in Frankfort. It’s hard to know exactly how many red dots are on our map at any given moment – but we do know there have been enough red dots to create a culture that sustains a rate of 36.5% of Kentucky women becoming victims of interpersonal violence during their lifetimes and 61,176 reports of child abuse in a year’s time.



NOW IMAGINE ADDING A GREEN DOT IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THOSE RED DOTS ON OUR KENTUCKY

MAP. Imagine that a green dot is any behavior, choice, word, or attitude that promotes safety for all our citizens and communicates utter intolerance for violence. A green

dot is pulling a friend out of a high risk situation – a green dot is responding to a victim blaming statement with words of support

– a green dot is donating a few dollars to your local center – a green dot is displaying an awareness poster in your store or office

– a green dot is noticing a change in a child’s behavior and making a referral – a green dot is striking up a conversation with a friend or family member about how much this issue matters to you. A green dot is simply your individual choice at any given moment to make our state safer.

HOW MANY GREEN DOTS WILL IT TAKE TO BEGIN REDUCING POWER-BASED PERSONAL VIOLENCE IN OUR STATE?

How many of us need to add 2 or 3 or 7 or 50 dots to this map to begin to make a difference and begin to outshine and displace those red dots? We cannot

know the exact number, but we do know this: if most of us

choose inaction – if most of us choose to close our eyes to this issue – if most of us choose apathy and indifference – then the red dots stand! If we do not begin replacing moments of violence and victim blaming with moments

of support and safety, then we will surely continue to have more than 1 in 3 women and countless children become victims of violence. That is not OK. That must not be OK with any of us.

