



What is 21 Days of Questions/365 Days of Action?

**21 Days of Questions/365 Days of Action** is a Cambridge-wide multimedia and engagement campaign to **inspire** people to think, talk and ask questions about domestic violence, violence in relationships, dating violence, and abuse people of all ages experience, know about, or witness in our community. The end goal is less violence, more awareness, more information about what our community needs and very thoughtful action planning to mobilize resources and policy decisions to make Cambridge **a safer and healthier place for all of us.**



**D**omestic violence impacts every community. The City of Cambridge over the years has worked to identify ways to prevent domestic violence, as well as support victims. In addition to many victims being afraid of reaching out for help or not knowing what resources are available to them, domestic violence victims may not even know if they are in fact victims.

Local government has an obligation to domestic violence victims, including making sure they feel safe and know that there are resources available to them. Because domestic violence takes many forms, efforts to combat and eradicate it should not focus solely on one form of abuse but should include whatever forms of abuse are relevant, for example: physical abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse, stalking, and instilling fear.

Anything that makes a person feel unsafe or uncertain in their home should be defined as domestic violence.

While Cambridge has made progress in reducing

domestic violence over the years, every so often, a novel approach to reinvigorate and reexamine a community's response to a problem presents itself.

The **21 Days of Questions 365 Days of Action** campaign began when Cambridge City Councillor Marjorie Decker was contacted by a Board Member of Transition House, a prominent resource for victims of domestic violence in Cambridge. After a Transition House visit, Councillor Decker recognized the need to explore the problem of domestic violence in Cambridge through a new lens and examine what role government can play to improve the quality of service to those impacted by domestic violence, and to help educate and engage the broader community to work together to end domestic violence in Cambridge and make it a safer and healthier place for all.

To reinvigorate the charge against domestic violence Councillor Decker held a summit, with more than 100 attendees, at the Kennedy School of Government entitled

### **The 21 Days campaign involves the entire community as stakeholders:**

City of Cambridge  
Transition House  
Engage the Power  
Cambridge Women's Commission  
Cambridge Public Health Department  
Cambridge Community Development Department  
Cambridge Department of Human Services  
Cambridge Community Television  
Youth Action Corps  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Emerge  
Harvard University  
Cambridge Police Department  
Community Engagement Team  
Cambridge Public Schools  
Cambridge College  
Violence Transformed  
Eastern Bank  
Lesley University

*“UNSAFE at Home: A Strategy Summit on Domestic Violence in Cambridge”* on October 11, 2011. The summit convened stakeholders within the domestic violence prevention community to find new ways to move ahead. The summit resulted in numerous takeaways including a planning committee to review and decide on the best course of action to improve the situation: a campaign to reinvigorate the Cambridge community from the top down and at a grassroots level.

The planning committee then met with a MIT professor, Dr. Ceasar McDowell, who presented the committee with a public awareness tool known as a “Question Campaign”. The concept behind the *21 Days of Questions 365 Days of Action* campaign was created by a project he runs called Engage the Power (EtP).

On December 6, 2011, Councilor Decker and the planning committee hosted a second summit at Lesley University with a room full of stakeholders and organizations who work to address domestic violence. The purpose of the summit was to introduce the Question Campaign and decide if it was a tool that stakeholders

thought might be useful in conducting a public education and engagement campaign. A small scale Question Campaign was simulated at the summit. Summit results were captured and later used as part of the promotion, organizing, design, and implementation of a city-wide Question Campaign to end domestic violence.

In analyzing feedback from the two previous summits, the campaign planning committee decided a Question Campaign focused on ending domestic violence would be an appropriate tool to achieve its goals: to increase public awareness, create synergy among organizations involved in the field of domestic violence, and strengthen resources to invest in domestic violence prevention and intervention. The planning committee agreed that once the public’s top questions and responses to them were collected and analyzed, follow up discussions would be initiated to bring together decision makers who are responsible for finding solutions to the questions and recommendations raised by the public.

**A question campaign  
is an approach to jump-start  
a community thought process.**

It is a communication and engagement strategy that promotes the practice of asking questions to engage the creativity and ideas of all people to improve the world, and in this case, the world of domestic violence prevention and intervention.

Question Campaigns encourage people to donate the question they feel is most important.

Once the public submits their question, they are connected with others who have similar questions and are supported through an online environment and face to face activities, share what experiences in their life have led them to this question; connect with others who are working on the same question; generate and test ideas and organize for action.

# Domestic Violence Free Zone: Background

On March 7, 1994, the Cambridge City Council passed a resolution defining the city as a Domestic Violence-Free Zone (DVFZ) directing all municipal and city-affiliated organizations to work collaboratively to reduce family violence.

This concept of a city as a Domestic Violence-Free Zone represented a long-term commitment to decreasing incidents of domestic violence and promoting systemic changes to accomplish this goal. As a concept, it struggled to answer the question, “What is the role of local government when home is not safe?” The resolution was followed by the installation of signs posted throughout the city at major intersections, at the access points for public transportation and in front of every municipal health center, library, and school.

In April of 1995, the first Domestic Violence-Free Zone Summit took place. During that first Summit meeting, more than fifty community leaders, activists, and agency representatives pooled their knowledge of city needs relative to domestic violence and suggested measures for reducing the prevalence of domestic violence in Cambridge over the next one to five years.

In July 1996, the City Manager created the DVFZ Implementation panel, which met from Sep 1996- Feb 1997 to identify 1, 3, and 5 year goals. The DVFZ initiatives comprise 11 different projects in four broad focus areas, each designed to reduce the incidence of domestic violence. It was officially adopted by the City in 1997.

In September 2001, the DVFZ leadership hired an independent consultant to evaluate the DVFZ’s progress on six of the original initiatives, and to provide information to the City about the overall impact of DVFZ on the prevalence of domestic violence in Cambridge.





# Timeline

## April 2011

Councillor Decker meets with leading DV advocates to better understand the range of DV issues impacting Cambridge

## Summer 2011

Councillor Decker leads a planning committee of community stakeholders and city staff to organize and develop a domestic violence summit

2011

## October 2011

UNSAFE at Home: A Strategy Summit on Domestic Violence in Cambridge is held at the Kennedy School of Government for stakeholders from different fields to advance community prevention and intervention practices.

## December 2011

A follow up to the summit is held at the Episcopal Divinity School with Ceasar McDowell, from MIT, presenting his Engage the Power social change model that invites a community to ask questions, learn, and take action.

## Summer 2012

Planning begins for the newly named *21 Days of Questions/365 Days of Action* campaign. The approach will enable the diverse participation of folks in a city-wide effort to raise awareness and bring about change.

## Summer 2012

Ambassador Strategic Planning Sessions are held at Lesley University to train community members in outreach in order to collect questions for the campaign from various populations within the city.

2012

## November 2012

The *21 Days of Questions/365 Days of Action* Question Review Assembly is held at MIT with key cross-sector community leaders and others gathering to review the more than 1200 questions collected during the campaign. Themes emerge and a path forward is charted.

## October 2012

The *21 Days of Questions/365 Days of Action* campaign is successfully launched at Cambridge College. Participants from various sectors of the city come to ask their questions.

## February 2013

The *21 Days of Questions/365 Days of Action* campaign holds a second Question Review Assembly at Cambridge College to ensure that all voices from the community are represented and included in the review process.

## Spring/Summer 2013

Planning Committee members close out their work with the campaign and help to select a dynamic Steering Committee to lead the campaign in its final forum.

2013

## March 2013

Councillor Decker hosts White Ribbon Day, a time for men from all over the city to stand together and support an end to violence.

## November 2013

Creating Community Solutions: moving forward with *21 Days of Questions/365 Days of Action* Forum held at Cambridge College.

# Question Campaign Preparations

July, August, and September of 2012 were spent preparing and planning for the campaign's October launch event.

An enormous amount of work, time, and effort was dedicated to recruiting, training, and preparing Campaign Ambassadors; creating posters, billboards, and public service announcements; developing and launching web and social media sites; and preparing for the October 17, 2012 launch event.

All of the preparation was to create the framework to answer the larger campaign question of:

*“What can happen if every one of us in Cambridge started to talk about domestic violence, dating violence and different forms of abuse in relationships?”*

## Social Media and Web Sites:

WEB: [www.21dayscambridge.gov](http://www.21dayscambridge.gov)  
FACEBOOK: [www.facebook.com/21cambridge](http://www.facebook.com/21cambridge)  
TWITTER: [www.twitter.com/21dayscambridge](http://www.twitter.com/21dayscambridge)  
YOUTUBE: [www.youtube.com/21dayscambridge](http://www.youtube.com/21dayscambridge)

This campaign used the **vojo.co platform** to gather and store questions. Vojo.co is a micro-blogging platform that allows people to text, e-mail, or leave voicemails to the site from any type of cell-phone (it does not need to be a smart phone). The hope in using this type of technology was to capture more questions and give people the opportunity to submit in a way that was comfortable to them. Members of the core planning team manually inputted the questions on to the vojo site, which were submitted on hand-written cards.



1 in 7 men will experience an abusive relationship in their lifetime.  
(National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS))



**What is your question about domestic violence?**



1 in 4 women will experience an abusive relationship in their lifetime.



Why do men rarely talk about domestic violence?

**What is your question about domestic violence?**

Text your question: [21days@vojo.co](mailto:21days@vojo.co)  
Record your question: (617) 981-4731  
Email your question to: [questions@21dayscambridge.org](mailto:questions@21dayscambridge.org)  
[www.21dayscambridge.org](http://www.21dayscambridge.org)



How does domestic violence affect seniors?

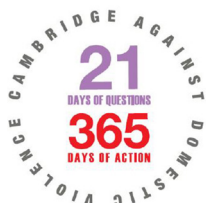
Text your question: [21days@vojo.co](mailto:21days@vojo.co)  
Record your question: (617) 981-4731  
Email your question to: [questions@21dayscambridge.org](mailto:questions@21dayscambridge.org)  
[www.21dayscambridge.org](http://www.21dayscambridge.org)



Is domestic violence an issue across all income, education and immigration status levels?

**What is your question about domestic violence?**

Text your question: [21days@vojo.co](mailto:21days@vojo.co)  
Record your question: (617) 981-4731  
Email your question to: [questions@21dayscambridge.org](mailto:questions@21dayscambridge.org)  
[www.21dayscambridge.org](http://www.21dayscambridge.org)



Informational Ambassador Strategy meetings were held to allow the participants, who included city agencies, city employees, colleges and universities, hospital employees, the police department and other members of the community, to learn more about the public awareness and community building Question Campaign regarding domestic violence.

The meetings explained more about the planning process, the campaign itself and how each organization could get involved.



# Question Campaign Launch

*Pre-Campaign Launch Press/Public Relations:* A great deal of thought and effort went into how to publicize the launch of the Question Campaign in an effort to excite and engage the community for the 21-Day Question period.

Councilor Decker was featured on FOX25 News, in a feature article in the Cambridge Chronicle and on YouTube to facilitate getting the word out about the *21 Days of Questions/365 Days of Action* campaign. Also, 22-CityView, the municipal cable channel, helped the campaign to produce a public service announcement and the City Manager's office produced large display boards for the front lawn of City Hall.



## What's Your Question? PSA

*Campaign Launch:* On October 17th, 2012, the City of Cambridge launched *21 Days of Questions/365 Days of Action*, the innovative public awareness campaign against domestic violence, at Cambridge College. Through resident organizing, cultural events, discussion groups, public service announcements, social media, drop boxes, tabling, flyers, and billboards the campaign encouraged Cambridge residents and community members to ask questions they had about the issue of domestic violence. Aside from submitting hand-written questions to ambassadors of the campaign, people could also text, e-mail, or phone in their questions using vojo.co, a micro-blogging platform from the MIT Center for Civic Media. The campaign ultimately collected more than 1,000 questions in several languages.





Throughout the *21 Days of Questions* the campaign team focused on community outreach in an effort to collect as many questions from the most diverse populations as possible. The team held multiple events in many of Cambridge's squares, businesses, libraries, public and private schools, and community events.

Cambridge's **Department of Human Services Programs** contributed to the campaign by offering the services of the Community Engagement Team's Outreach Workers. These Outreach Workers reach out to underserved Cambridge families and connect them to community events and resources, develop community leaders, and support agencies in working with a diverse community. The outreach workers set up and staffed a table at the Community Learning Center while classes were in session and went into the community to have people ask their questions. They distributed campaign posters to approximately 50 sites around Cambridge that are often visited by people from their home countries – laundromats, corner stores, restaurants, etc. Approximately 200 questions were collected this way.

The **Youth Action Corps (YAC)** through **Transition House** also played a large role in the engagement strategy of the *21 Days of Questions* campaign. During the summer of 2012 they gathered questions in Harvard Square (specifically "the pit"). They also did "flash mobs" to attract attention to the campaign and create public awareness in Davis Square (both outside at "the plaza" area and inside the T station), twice inside the Harvard Square T Station, and outside in Central Square next to the Farmer's Market. The YAC members were present and active at the Campaign Launch Event on October 17th. They also set up tables for collecting questions at the various locations through the 21 days.



### *Youth Action Corps (YAC)*

In the early planning stages of the campaign, Transition House organized two design workshops with teenagers from their Youth Action Corp. The purpose of these workshops was to allow teens to actually design and create posters for the question campaign, and in the process, facilitate a sense of ownership among the teens for the campaign.

The Youth Action Corps helped shape a lot of the initial planning of the campaign such as:

- planning details for the Ambassador meeting in July;
- the design of the campaign posters (images, text);
- the youth perspective for flyering (where to put the flyers up); and
- put up flyers throughout Central Square advertising the campaign launch.



Also, some Youth Action Corps members documented the campaign launch and other question gathering sessions by taking photographs of the events.



# Question Review Process & Next Steps



More than 1000 questions were submitted to the campaign. Approximately half of the questions were gathered in paper form, with the balance being submitted electronically via text, e-mail, or phone.

Each member of the **Core Planning Committee** perused at least 300 questions and recommended emerging themes or categories to help organize them. The Core Planning Committee identified four key themes as the organizing framework for all the questions that had been generated by the public:

- Defining and Understanding Domestic Violence
- Support for Stopping Domestic Violence and Recovering from It
- Children and Teens and Domestic Violence
- Prevention and Eradication of Domestic Violence

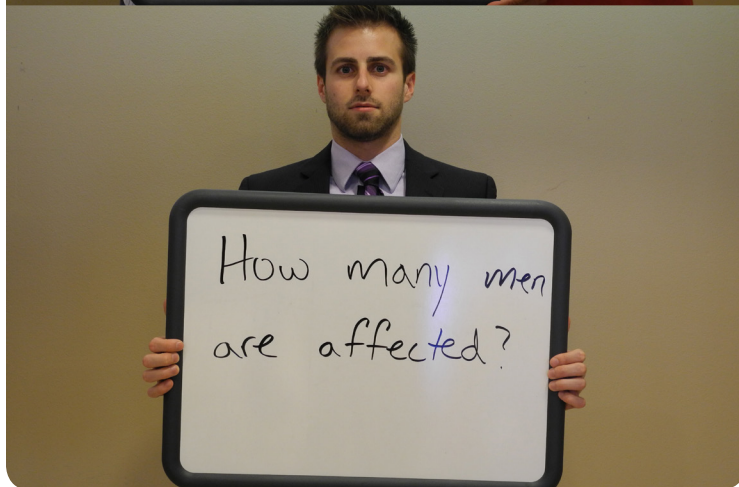
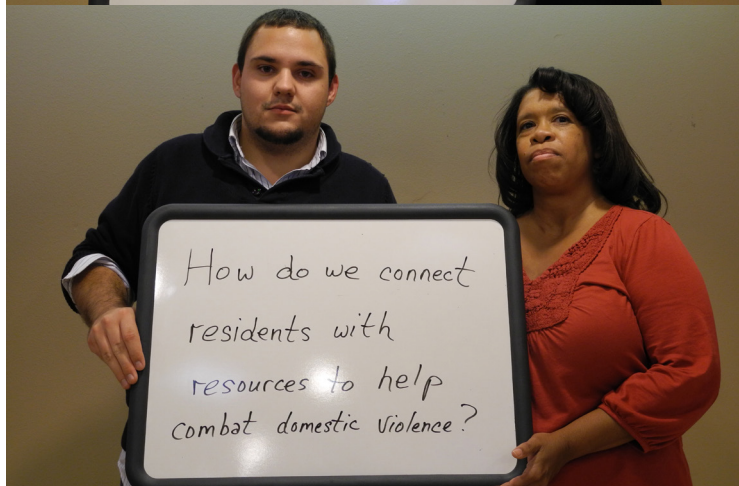
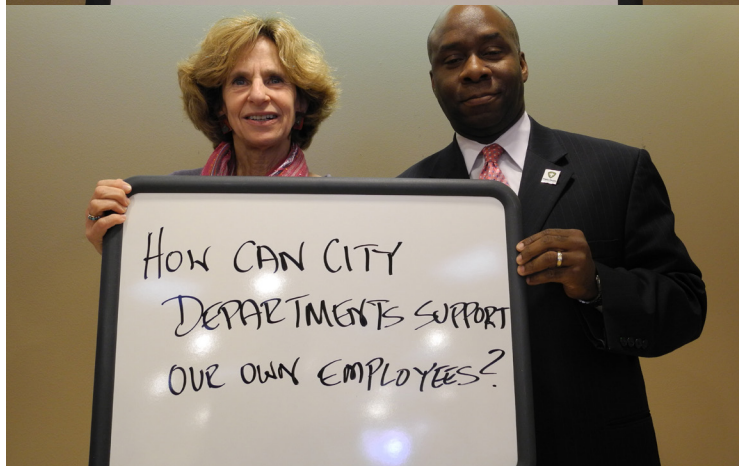
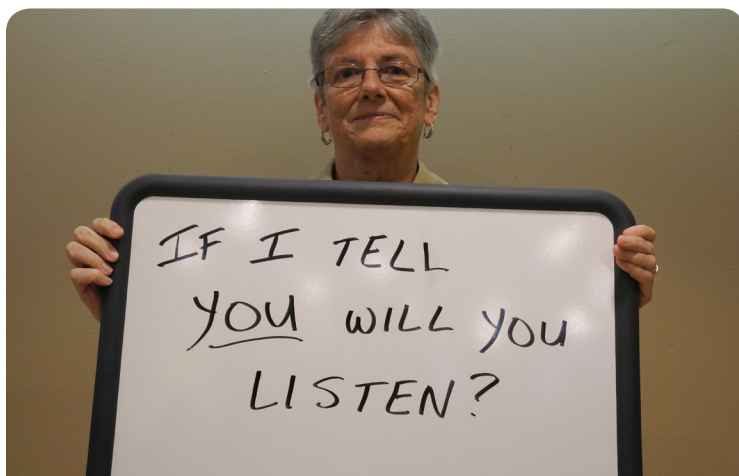
On November 29, 2012 and again on February 26, 2012 community **Question Review Panels** took place at first MIT and then at Cambridge College. The Core Planning Committee invited civic and community leaders from the business, government, non-profit, arts, health, and faith sectors. The first event took place during the day, sought to attract key leaders across sectors, and was by invitation only; the second event took place in the evening, sought to attract a diverse community and was open to the public. Approximately 50 people attended the first event, and approximately 100 people attended the second event. A key theme was represented at each table and people self-selected the tables they wanted to join. Each table reviewed a list of questions relevant to its theme. Through dialogue, each table identified two or more top questions that represented the entire list. The top questions from all tables were reported back to the larger group.

For several months following the Question Review Panel, working groups, the Core Planning Committee, and a coordinating committee held meetings to discuss the outcome, to think about strategies for addressing the questions and to evaluate the progress of the campaign thus far. On July 9, 2013 the Core Planning Committee met for a final time to discuss the plan for creating a new Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee was recruited during the summer of 2013 and their first event, the Creating Community Solutions: moving forward with *21Days of Questions/365 Days of Action* forum was held on November 7, 2013.



# Top Questions from the Question Review Panels



## Defining and Understanding Domestic Violence

- What is domestic violence?
- How does it get defined within different cultures?
- Why don't domestic violence victims find a way out and break the pattern?
- What are the impediments to breaking away?
- What are the stressors that contribute to and aggravate domestic violence?
- Who is involved in domestic violence?
- Why does domestic violence occur?
- How do we educate ourselves and each other about domestic violence?

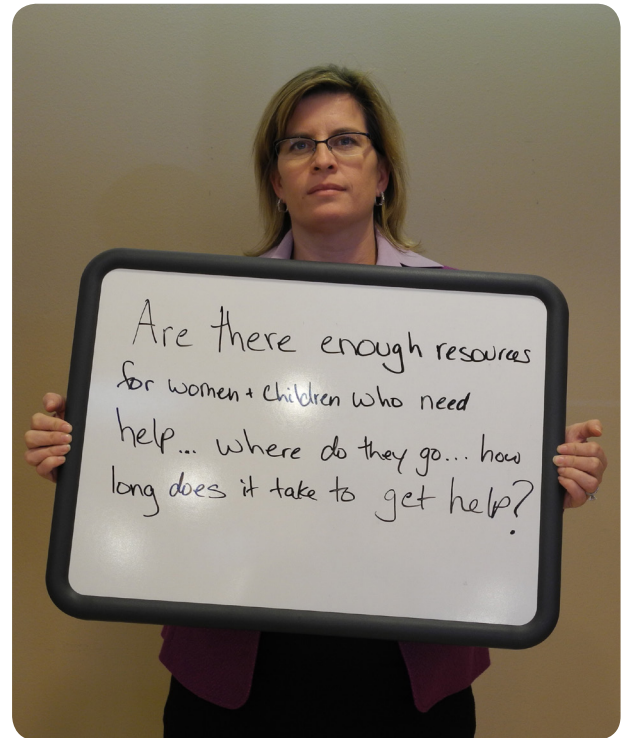
## Support to Stop and Recover from Domestic Violence

- What are the early warning signs of domestic/relationship violence and how can we define them in relationship to a range of communities?
- How do we communicate them to people with basic beliefs as norms change?
- What are the different types of strategies and resources available for victims, families, friends, teachers, providers, and abusers in domestic violence situations? What informal and formal resources are available? What type of assistance is available and where can we get help?
- Who do I call and what happens next?
- How can we make sure that women and men know they can heal from the trauma of domestic violence and what makes it so difficult?
- How does a woman fully recover and regain her self-esteem and self-confidence after surviving years of physical, mental, and verbal abuse?
- Why are abusers punished in an inappropriate way or don't get punished at all?
- Are there any specific treatments or approaches that help abusers stop their violent behavior and become better partners?

# Top Questions from the Question Review Panels *(continued)*

## Children, Teens and Domestic Violence

- How prevalent is domestic violence among kids either as victims, witnesses or abusers and what is the impact?
- When children are either participants or witnesses to domestic violence in a family/household how might the community help?
- How can a community help children foster healthy peer relationships?
- What will empower teens and children to see, respond to, and prevent abuse in relationships?
- What can a child or teen do who is being abused?
- How can we support/introduce /create honest discussion/education about DV in school -emphasizing non-violence, building healthy relationships, recognizing unhealthy ones, and how to get help?
- How can we help young children and teens grow into adults who don't abuse or are subjected to abuse?
- What empowers young people to hold their peers accountable?
- What resources are available or needed for children/teens being affected by violence?
- What does school do for children when the teacher perceives that there is violence in their lives?



## Preventing and Eradicating Domestic Violence

- How can we work together to help young men and women along with their families learn skills to develop healthy relationships and recognize unhealthy relationships?
- How do we, as a community, get children to feel safe and learn about healthy relationships starting at an early age? How can the educational and support systems infuse healthy relationships and conflict resolution skill development beginning in early years? How do we employ social media to further this goal?
- How can city agencies and their employees better support victims of domestic violence?
- How can all institutions including employers, community agencies, universities, religious institutions and government be active partners in efforts to prevent and eradicate domestic violence?
- What is needed to strengthen local, state, and federal laws about domestic violence and their enforcement?
- How do we change the culture that condones domestic violence against women and in general?
- How do we overcome cultural and societal barriers in an effort to eradicate domestic violence? How can we change cultural norms that accept domestic violence in dominant and subordinate cultures? And how can we engage everyone, both potential victims and abusers, in this process?
- How do we break the multi-generational patterns of domestic violence?
- How do we change the system through policy?
- How can we broaden the conversation about domestic violence and get more people involved in advocating against violence?