A Highline student, Shemara Lakin looked surprisingly serene and calm despite the darkness of the events she was describing.

"They will apologize, they will say I'm so sorry, they will promise to change, they say they will get counseling and enter programs. But they won't," said Lakin.

A domestic violence survivor, she sat and painted a t-shirt at one of Highline’s Domestic Violence Awareness events last Thursday. She bared a small smile as she described her painful experience with her ex-husband.

"I went through domestic violence 17 years ago," said Lakin.

"The counselors said it usually takes about eight times to try to leave before victims can actually leave their abuser, but I said no to that," she said.

Lakin prepared herself and her children and left her abuser during her first escape attempt. Then she educated herself.

Education was one of the themes stressed during Highline’s observation of Domestic Violence Awareness month.

On Wednesday, Oct. 13th and Thursday, Oct. 14, Women's Programs hosted a two-day Clothesline Project event, a national event in which participants decorate t-shirts to spread awareness about domestic violence.

In conjunction with the Clothesline event, a seminar called Domestic Violence 101 was presented Wednesday.

The events were meant to be a safe place for survivors to feel comfortable enough to share.

Domestic Violence is a hard thing to talk about, but when people were painting, that puts their guard down and people are more comfortable opening up, said Maria Toloza-Meza, one of the Women’s Programs events coordinators.

"We talked to so many people and so many survivors. All day long little groups of people were sharing their stories with each other. It was really amazing," said Toloza-Meza.

At Wednesday's Domestic Violence 101 seminar, Kayla, a representative of from D.A.W.N. (Domestic Abuse Women's Network) had a presentation about what domestic violence is and what we can to stop the cycle of abuse.

"When people think of domestic violence they usually think of a man physically beating a woman," said Kayla. "In actuality it is so much more than just that."

Domestic violence is all about Power and control. It can happen in every relationship family, friendships, work, dating, marriage and more, she said.

Kayla used a diagram of a tire to show how abusers use power and control on victims.

"On the outside of the wheel, the black tire part, you will see physical and sexual violence. Just like a tire on a car that is usually the only part people can see, " said Kayla.

“But inside of the wheel, the spokes, the part of the wheel people can't see, you will find things like intimidation, isolation and economic abuse," she said. "And at the center of the wheel keeping everything together, keeping the wheel going, is power and control."

These pieces of the power and control wheel make it hard for victims to leave, Kayla said.

"If someone is abusing you and for example not giving you access to bank accounts and funds or is isolating you from your friends and family so you have no support system to help you escape," she said. "Things like this make it very hard to leave."

Leaving is very complicated.

"As an advocate 'Why don't you just leave?' is the worst question to ask a victim," she said.

The D.A.W.N organization had been helping people in abusive relationships for 36 years. They offer a 24-hour crisis hotline, emergency shelter assistance, support systems, safety planning, counseling, legal advocacy, community outreach and awareness and much more.

“Domestic Violence Awareness Month is about spreading the word and saying we are not going to condone violence in our community,” said Kayla.

While adding decorations to her t-shirt, Lakin said the same.

"People think it's none of my business, I don't want to step in. It's not my place to say something,” she said. “But domestic violence is everyone's business."