



NAPA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

1127 First Street, Suite C
Napa, CA 94559

Main: (707) 253-4211
Fax: (707) 253-4041
www.countyofnapa.org/da

ALLISON HALEY
District Attorney

For Immediate Release
March 2, 2021

PRESS RELEASE

NAPA DISTRICT ATTORNEY AND LGBTQ CONNECTION PARTNER TO OFFER OFFICE HOURS

Napa County District Attorney Allison Haley and LGBTQ Connection announced today:

In an effort to increase ease-of-access support for Napa County's LGBTQ people, the Victim Witness Services Division of the Napa County District Attorney's Office will be holding office hours at LGBTQ Connection's Napa community center during the afternoon of every fourth Monday of each month.

Napa County District Attorney, Allison Haley, shared, "Historically DA's offices silently went about our business and served those victims who came to us and asked for help. It's clear this method has inhibited access to our most vulnerable communities. This is the first of our efforts to bring services out into the community and to meet those in need in spaces that are comfortable and safe to them. This is particularly important in providing compassionate and sensitive service to our LGBTQ community."

This new partnership between LGBTQ Connection and the Napa County District Attorney's Office has been taking shape since Napa County's Board of Supervisors partnered with LGBTQ Connection to convene an LGBTQ community input meeting in October of 2018. Crime and Safety was one of the identified issues of importance to the large group of attendees, and the lively conversation and feedback was facilitated by District Attorney Haley.

According to reporting from PBS News Hour, a recent study published in the multidisciplinary Science Advances journal found that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or gender non-conforming people are almost four times as likely to be victims of violent crime compared to those who are not LGBTQ--confirming long proved findings with comprehensive, national, and up-to-date research. While the high rate of crime against LGBTQ people has long been known, one finding from the study surprisingly showed that LGBTQ people are much more likely to be victimized by someone they know well.

Yuen Y. Chiang, Victim Services Manager of the Napa County District Attorney's Office, explained that members of the LGBTQ frequently cite law enforcement as unhelpful sources of assistance, prompting us to want to change that narrative. We hope this partnership will send the message to the LGBTQ community that they can and will get protection with the same level of support as opposite sex couples when it comes to intimate partner violence, sexual abuse, as well as all other crimes.

Belinda Ruiz, Victim Advocate of the Napa County District Attorney's Office, will be at LGBTQ Connection every fourth Monday of the month from 1pm to 3pm, answering drop-in questions and providing support such as information about what to expect after you've called the police, the criminal justice system, case status on charged cases, how to file a civil restraining order, accompaniment to criminal justice proceedings and other information and referrals.

Belinda clarified that her support is available to anyone that needs it, regardless of immigration status. In many cases, Belinda is even able to answer basic questions and make referrals to supportive services even when a police report has not been filed.

LGBTQ Connection's Napa center is located inside of the VOICES building at 780 Lincoln Ave, Napa. While appointments are not required, because of the changing nature of the current COVID situation, it is recommended that those interested in connecting with Belinda call ahead to 707-648-9440 or email ian@lgbtqconnection.org. Both LGBTQ Connection and Napa County District Attorney Victim Services are available in English, Spanish, French, and Arabic.