

Crime Victims Resource Center

Serving victims in Mower County since 1977



Community Impact Award

Crime Victims Resource Center was nominated by the Zonta Club of Austin for their District 7 Community Impact Award. This award recognizes an agency, business, or individual for their outstanding commitment and significant contribution to the empowerment of women.

Out of 12 total nominations from the district, Crime Victims Resource Center placed 3rd. We received this award at the Zonta Club of Austin's Centennial Celebration, along with More than Pink, who placed 2nd out of 4 nominations, and Lia Culbert for her work with Mission 21, who placed 3rd out of 15 nominations.

CVRC staff member Linnea Garness was also presented the "Zonta Woman of the Year" award at this event. The award recognizes outstanding service and those who epitomize the ideals of the club. Linnea has been a member of the club for three years, joining in 2016. She is currently serving on multiple committees and their Board.

We thank Zonta for the recognition and all the work they do to support Crime Victims Resource Center!

Suicide as Emotional Abuse

“You don’t really care if I live or die. Why don’t I just kill myself – then everyone will be happy.”

Emotional abuse can take many forms. It can include verbal abuse, constant criticism, intimidation, and manipulation. One form of emotional abuse that abusers utilize is threats – they know what will make their partner react. These threats can vary throughout a relationship, but may especially be present if a victim is trying to leave their abusive partner. If the abuser starts to feel like they are losing control, they will do anything to get them to stay, including threatening self-harm. They try manipulating their partner into doing exactly what they want them to do – stay with them and be too fearful to leave. This is described as emotional blackmail. They will threaten, directly or indirectly, to punish the victim if they don’t do exactly what they want. An abuser will use fear, obligation, and guilt to ensure their victims cannot leave them, and are playing on the emotions of love and feelings of care and fear that they have for their partner. Abusers hope that those will be enough for the victim to stay – whether they are truly contemplating suicide or not.

A victim may feel trapped – like they have no choice but to do exactly what the abuser says in order to avoid a tragedy. No one wants to be responsible for or have the guilt weighing heavily on them if the abuser self-harms. It’s important to remember that we are each responsible for ourselves and our emotions and actions. We decide how we feel. We are not responsible for them, and likewise, they are not responsible for us.

”
If you leave me, I will kill myself.

”
If you loved me, you would do what I tell you.

”
I will die without you.

Protect Yourself

There are things that a partner can do to protect themselves, and possibly the abusive partner as well:

- Tell your partner that you care about them (if that’s true), but stick to your boundaries. Staying in a relationship or giving in due to threats does not make a relationship healthy – it only allows anger and resentment to build.
- Put the choice to live or die where it belongs – on your partner. You can’t be responsible for another person’s actions.
- Remember that no matter what your partner says, you don’t have to prove anything. If these types of threats are being made, there are unhealthy patterns in the relationship. Giving into these threats will not address the unhealthy and abusive aspects of the relationship.

If you or someone you know has experienced or is currently experiencing this type of behavior, encourage them to reach out for help and call 507-437-6680. We can provide them with crisis counseling, education, and safety planning.

Breaking a Lease

In Minnesota, victims/survivors can break their residential lease if they fear imminent violence due to domestic abuse, stalking, or criminal sexual conduct. There are specific steps they need to follow and documentation that needs to be submitted in order to follow statute guidelines. If a victim/survivor has subsidized housing, there may be additional laws, rights, and options to end the lease if they fear for their safety.

Victims/survivors need to give written notice of their intent to move out to their landlord, but there are no requirements regarding the time frame or amount of notice given. They could give any amount of notice that they are comfortable with. They would, however, still be responsible for the full rent for the month that they give their notice, even if they plan to move out a few days into a new month.

There are many important things that the victim/survivor needs to be aware of before deciding to break their lease. In breaking their lease and submitting the paperwork to their landlord, the tenant is forfeiting the right to their security deposit and the landlord is legally

able to keep the full amount. If there are other tenants on the lease, their lease will end on the last day of the month that the victim/survivor moves out, however if the landlord is willing, they can sign a new lease.

This information is confidential! A landlord cannot tell anyone that a tenant is a victim of violence, or share any of the information that is provided in the written notice without a victim/survivors written permission. There is only one exemption to this, which applies when a landlord needs the information to present in court in relation to an eviction process.

Crime Victims Resource Center can assist victims/survivors by explaining this process, helping them complete the required paperwork, and understanding the different provisions of the law. Minnesota Statute states that a statement from a “qualified third party” can suffice for documentation of the abuse occurring. All staff members at CVRC meet the requirements to be considered a “qualified third party.” If you know someone that may benefit from this information or process, please encourage them to contact our office.

Transitional Housing Grant: “Adopting a Family”

The Zonta Club of Austin applied for a grant through the Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services to support Crime Victims Resource Center’s Transitional Housing Unit by “Adopting a Family.”

This grant is funded by Operation Round-Up and comes from contributions from participating members of the cooperative. They are used to give back to the community through charitable and educational programs in Freeborn and Mower counties.

CVRC partners with the Housing and Redevelopment Authority to provide two transitional housing units for victims of domestic violence that are fleeing an unsafe situation. These individuals and children generally leave violent homes with very little personal belongings or money. This can cause extreme stress and financial

insecurity for these families who cannot afford anything outside of their basic needs, beyond housing and food.

This grant would help support families residing in those units. The funds will be utilized depending on a family’s unique needs or wants. Examples could include purchasing a backpack and school supplies for children, a gift card for a haircut or food, purchasing clothing, or a book or toy for a Christmas gift, when they otherwise may not receive any. This grant will allow these families to feel a sense of pride in being able to purchase items for themselves or their children, that they would otherwise not be able to afford, and would think of as a “luxury.”

The Zonta Club of Austin supports CVRC in a variety of ways and we appreciate their hard work and dedication to supporting women and children in our community!

Gaslighting . . .

A form of emotional abuse where the abuser manipulates situations repeatedly in order to cause a victim to question their own feelings, instincts, and sanity.

Gaslighting gives the abusive partner the power in the relationship, and once they have broken down the victim's ability to trust their own perceptions, the victim is more likely to stay in the abusive relationship.

The term originated from a play in 1938 called *Gas Light*, in which a husband slowly manipulates his wife into believing that she is going insane. The title explains one of the ways he manipulated his wife; he would dim the lights that were powered by gas, and when his wife would point it out he would tell her he didn't see anything and convinces her that it's all in her head.

Gaslighting typically begins gradually – a snide comment or critical remark that is disguised as a joke. Over time, the comments and severity of gaslighting continues, and a victim can lose all sense of what is actually happening – effectively manipulating their perception of reality. They then start relying on the abusive partner to define reality and ensure that the victim will believe whatever the abuser tells them, regardless of their own experience of the situation. The victim may become scared to bring up any topic for fear they are 'wrong' about it or are not remembering the situation correctly. Gaslighting a victim can cause them to become confused, anxious, isolated, and depressed.

Gaslighting Techniques

- **Withholding** – the abusive partner pretends not to understand or refuses to listen.
Examples: "I don't want to hear this again," or "You're trying to confuse me."
- **Countering** – the abusive partner questions the victim's memory of events, even when the victim remembers them accurately.
Example: "You're wrong, you never remember things correctly."
- **Blocking/Diverting** – the abusive partner changes the subject and/or questions the victim's thoughts.
Examples: "You're imagining things," or "They are all lying to you and trying to turn you against me!"
- **Trivializing** – the abusive partner makes the victim's needs or feelings seem unimportant.
Examples: "You're going to get angry over a little thing like that?" or "You're too sensitive."
- **Forgetting/Denial** – the abusive partner pretends to have forgotten what actually occurred or denies things like promises made to the victim.
Examples: "I don't know what you're talking about," or "You're just making stuff up."

Looking for a speaker for your service/civic or professional organization?

CVRC offers education/information presentations on the nature and scope of victimization, prevention strategies, and the services we provide.

All services of Crime Victims Resource Center are provided free of charge.



Crime Victims Resource Center

101 14th Street NW, Austin • 507-437-6680

Any person, regardless of age, gender or life circumstances can be a victim of crime.

The Crime Victims Resource Center (CVRC) is here to serve you and those close to you with support and options. Growth and recovery are encouraged by caring and skilled people in a nonjudgmental setting.

Our job is to work for changes which will enable all citizens to live in a community free of fear and violence through advocacy, actions and education.

The Crime Victims Resource Center will help individuals who have been victims of many different types of crime. Some of the specific crimes we work with are:

- *Accidents involving intoxicated driver*
- *Assault*
- *Burglary*
- *Child Abuse*
- *Domestic Abuse/Assault*
- *Elder Abuse*
- *Harassment*
- *Sexual Abuse/Assault*
- *Stalking*
- *Terroristic Threats*
- *Theft*



Tori Miller
Director



Mandy Cain
Victim Advocate



Linnea Garness
Victim Advocate

Victim Support Services

- 24 hour crisis hotline
- Crisis counseling
- Safety planning
- Arranging emergency shelter
- Support groups
- Referrals to other agencies
- Emergency transportation
- Support during hospital examinations
- Support during police reporting
- Assistance with Orders for Protection and Harassment Restraining Orders
- Assistance with understanding the criminal justice system
- Accompaniment to court proceedings for support
- Updates on the progress of court proceedings
- Notification of victims' rights

Crime Victims Resource Center is a free and confidential service funded by The Hormel Foundation, Minnesota Department of Public Safety-Office of Justice Programs, and United Way of Mower County.

Find us Online:
crimevictimsresourcecenter.org

Find us on Facebook:
facebook.com/CrimeVictimsResourceCenter