

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #23 - July 2011

Just a Thought

Stalking has been described as a "hidden crime" because so many victims remain silent out of fear or because they do not think they will be taken seriously. Learn more about this crime and how you can help these victims regain a sense of safety and control

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Web Links

You never know what resources await you on the world-wide web ...come see what our latest surfing expedition uncovered

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Save the Date!

Find out what trainings and events are just around the corner. It looks like there are lots of ways to keep you busy this summer and fall!

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Alumni Updates

Always find yourself thinking, "I wonder what happened to..." Check out what your fellow Alumni are up to!



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Best Practices

Not sure what resources or trainings are available on stalking? Check out the Stalking Resource Center and learn more on how it is helping to educate both professionals and the public about the nature of this crime and how we can prevent and stop it

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The 20/20

Each newsletter get an inside look at one of the RVAAM peers - 20 questions, 20 unique answers

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Just a thought...

Stalking

Lisa Nordan-Haller (Class of 2010)

Stalking was recently described as a "hidden crime" by President Barak Obama during a speech he gave during National Stalking Awareness Month. This proclamation brought further attention to the personal plights of millions of Americans who are victims of these crimes that are all too often mischaracterized by others in the community, and even in the system, as "harmless." Yet as both victims and criminal justice professionals who work on these cases will attest, stalking is a pattern of behavior that can cripple the life of the person who is being targeted.

For many stalking victims, fear becomes a common presence in their lives. Reportedly, 46% of stalking victims report they live in a constant state of fear because

they do not know what will happen next; another 29% report that they are scared that the behavior will never cease. The unpredictability of a stalker's actions, coupled with the unwanted attention of another person, all but eliminates the victim's sense of personal space. Frequent surprise visits, constant phone calls and/or emails, and unwelcome gifts are just a few of the tactics stalkers use to intimidate and control their victims. According to research, 78% of stalkers have used more than one of these means to harass their victims.

Yet with the attention and support from victim service providers, as well as criminal justice professionals, the victim can regain a sense of control and security in his or her life. However a collaborative effort between these professionals is necessary in order to provide a successful support system that will address the victim's safety, legal recourse, and emotional well-being.

Generally the legal avenues available to a stalking victim are determined by the

actions of the perpetrator. The following statutes may be applicable:

Stalking - Section 3-801. "Course of conduct" defined; **Section 3-802.** "Stalking"

Harassment - Section 3-803

Related Offenses - Section 3-804. "Misuse of telephone facilities and equipment"; **Section 3-805.** "Misuse of electronic mail"; **Section 3-902.** "Visual surveillance with prurient intent"



Other laws may apply to the actions taken by a stalker,

therefore it is important to help the victim recount every nuance of their experience. The more details they can provide, the greater options they may have for legal recourse. It is also important to educate the victim on safety planning and refer them to other services to address their mental distress.

Approaching each instance of stalking with an educated and comprehensive approach can help to empower victims by

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Welcome Class of 2011!!

I had such a great week getting to know some of you better and watching you all form such awesome relationships with one another. I just love what the Academy does for our field of victim services. Graduation was a wonderful time and it was so great to see how excited you all were! I very much look forward to working with you all in the future and hope to see you all at next year's Academy as well.

We are looking forward to another exciting year in the Victim Services Professional Network and hope you all will be participating. The only way to make this the best State Academy and Alumni Association in the country is for all of us to come together for one cause - assisting victims the best way possible by utilizing all avenues available to us.

There is some more very exciting news to share with you! The certification process is moving forward as planned and in fact, several people have pilot-tested the process already! There are a few more things that need to be implemented and then we will be ready to have everyone apply for certification!! This has been such a long time coming, but I think it will have been worth the wait. Having certification is so important in getting the field of victim services recognized as a professional career choice. There will be three levels of certification: Level I (Basic) will be for those with at least two years of experience in the field of victim services (paid or volunteer); Level II (Intermediate) will be for those who have at least five years experience in the field of victim services (paid or volunteer); and Level III (Advanced) will be for those with at least eleven years of experience in the field of victim services (paid or volunteer). Watch your emails for more information as the process rolls out.

I hope you will mark your calendars now for the January 12, 2012, general Alumni meeting. I would love to see everyone from all the past Academies get together again - it really has been too long since I've seen many of you.

Wishing you all the best and I hope you enjoy the remainder of your summer!

Debbie Bradley, C.A., Editor
bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org



Web Links

Although we have a virtual library at our fingertips every time we turn on the computer, we

often lose sight of the forest through the trees just trying to navigate the world-wide web. Here are a few sites that relate to this issue's "Just a Thought" ... happy surfing!

Stalking Resource Center - The Stalking Resource Center (SRC) was developed by the National Center for Victims of Crime and the U.S. Department of Justice on Violence Against Women to provide training opportunities for professionals and technical assistance to communities to enhance their response to stalking. The mission of SRC is to promote Awareness, Action, and Advocacy.

Note! The National Conference on Stalking on Campus will be held in Denver, CO, on August 2nd - 3rd. To learn more about this training event, as well many of the other trainings sponsored by SRC, go to <http://www.ncvc.org/src/Main.aspx>

Working to Halt Online Abuse - Working to Halt Online Abuse is a volunteer organization founded in 1997 to fight online harassment through education of the general public and law enforcement personnel, as well as to empower victims. WHOA lobbies for better federal and state laws to deter cyberstalkers and to give victims more options to stop this

kind of harassment. To learn more or to explore all the resources WHOA has on cyberstalking, go to <http://www.haltabuse.org>

COPS: Community Oriented Policing Services - The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services is housed in the U.S. Department of Justice and focuses on ways to advance the practice of community policing in America's state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies. One of the community issues COPS has targeted is stalking, and has developed resources and programs to help educate communities on how they can respond to and prevent stalking in their community. For more information, go to <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/default.asp?Item=1073>

Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Abuse - The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Abuse website provides individuals who feel they are being stalked with an array of resources and a guide on what steps they can take to protect themselves and to help halt the behavior. To learn more, go to www.mcasa.org/



Save the Date

Working with Victims of Sexual Violence

*Tuesday, August 23rd, 9:00am - 1:00pm
 Carroll County Health Department,
 Multi-Purpose Room, 290 South Center
 Street, Westminster, MD*

This training sponsored by the Rape Crisis Intervention Service of Carroll County is designed to provide attendees with the latest information on how to assist victims of sexual violence when they make a disclosure and how to ensure the victim is taken care of from the beginning to the end of their recovery process. Topics will include: trauma informed care, cultural competency, psychological first-aid for victims of sexual violence.

The training is targeted to health professionals, counselors, social workers, law enforcement, teachers, school personnel, and others who might have the occasion to work with victims of sexual violence.

Registration Fee: \$10.00 Pre-registration and payment is required by August 18th.

For more information, please contact Sarah Hund-Brown at (410) 857-0900, or by email at communityed@rapecrisiscc.org

5th Annual Domestic Violence Conference - "In Plain Sight"

Friday, September 23, 2011, 8:30am - 4:00pm, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2004 Greenspring Drive, Timonium, MD

Registration is now underway for the 5th Annual Domestic Violence Conference - "In Plain Sight." This year's keynote speakers will be Congresswoman Donna Edwards and survivor Lisa Spiknail. Be sure to register early to take advantage of the early-bird special! Group rates are also offered this year.

Early-bird Registration Fee: \$45 (ends August 1st); thereafter the registration fee is: \$55. Registration deadline is September 9th.

For more information, please contact Dianna Abramowski at (410) 853-3163, or by email at dabramow@dhr.state.md.us

Death Notification: Delivering the News with Compassion

Friday, September 23, 2011, 8:00am - 4:00pm, Harford County Sheriff's Office, Training Academy Room #123, Harford Community College, 401 Thomas Run Road, Bel Air, MD

Death notification is acknowledged to be one of the most difficult tasks faced by law enforcement officers and other professionals because learning of the death of a loved one often is the most traumatic event in a person's life. However few professionals have received either classroom or experiential training in death notifications.

This FREE training is designed to give you the necessary tools to perform a proper death notification and to deal with the aftermath of such news. It is important to understand that a death notification is only given one time - this means that you only have one chance to say the right words, in the right tone, and with just the right degree of compassion.

For more information or to register for this training, please contact the Harford County Sheriff's Office Training Academy at (410) 638-3860.

VSPN Executive Board Meeting

October 13th, 2011, 12:00 - 4:00pm, University of Baltimore, Baltimore, MD

2012 RVAAM Academy

June 4th - 8th, 2011 at Bon Secours Spiritual Center, Marriottsville, Maryland

Be sure to check back on the Academy website for the 2012 application in the next few months.

If you have any further questions, please email Dr. Debra Stanley at dstanley@ubalt.edu.



Alumni Updates

It seems like only yesterday when we were all together at the Academy. But in a blink of an eye another year has passed us by. Here's just a snapshot of some of the special events and milestones our alums have experienced since we last met...

Look at Our Movers & Shakers!

Heather Courtney (Class of 2006) -

Heather and her husband welcomed a new baby girl, Emily, this past spring to their family. Baby Emily joins her big brother Blake, and everyone is happy and healthy. Congratulations Heather!!

Tina McKnight (formerly Tina Shankle, Class of 2005) -

Tina was recently married, and just two days prior to her wedding, welcomed her third grandchild! Congratulations Tina, two joyous occasions at once - double the happiness!

Rev. Brian Murray (Class of 2006) -

Brian is in the process of getting qualified to start a new church and his privilege of call (e.g., the process of transferring your ordination). Congratulations Brian on such a meaningful undertaking - we wish you all the best in your endeavors!

Bonita Spikes (Class of 2010) -

Bonita was recently appointed to serve as the criminal justice chair for the State of Maryland's NAACP. What an honor and an accomplishment Bonita, congratulations!!

Diane Wilkins (Class of 2007) -

On July 29th, Diane and her sweetheart, Charles Laurent, will be exchanging wedding vows on the beach in the Dominican Republic. Congratulations Diane, we wish you and Charles all the love and happiness!

News From the Field



Everyone knows that the field of victims services is always evolving. The challenge is to find a way to keep on top of all the changes ... we're here to help! Here's an overview of just some of the most recent legislative changes:

Proposed change to HB 1018 - Family Law - Protective Orders - Additional Relief

This bill, as amended, would authorize a judge, in a final protective order, to order the respondent to remain a specified distance away from a person eligible for relief. The bill was introduced by Delegate Glen Glass.

HB 801 signed into law!

HB 801 was signed into law by Governor O'Malley on May 10, 2011. The law requires that judges ensure that victims are afforded the rights provided to them by law and expands crime victims' ability to enforce their rights, including their right to restitution.

More specifically, a victim of violent crime will be able to request a court to reconsider its decision when one of his or her restitution rights is violated. A victim may make this re-request within thirty days of the alleged violation. If a court finds that a request for restitution was inappropriately denied or not considered, the court may enter a judgement of restitution.

HB 135 and HB 922 defeated

These bills both proposed to raise court costs for offenders and to use those funds to assist innocent victims of crime.

Best Practices

The Stalking Resource Center: Offering service providers effective tools for stalking victims

"There are very few communities that have dedicated services for stalking victims. Often these victims do not know where to go, and when they go to traditional resources, the providers are not equipped to work with them," says Michelle Garcia.

Ms. Garcia, Director of the Stalking Resource Center (SRC) of the National Center for Victims of Crime, has been working at the SRC for the past five years. While it does not provide direct services to victims, the SRC focuses on enhancing the capacity and ability of law enforcement, prosecutors, victim service providers, and other allied professionals in the field, to work with stalking victims.

Ms. Garcia notes, "The work we do is critical because we are enhancing all professionals' understanding of the complexity of the crime of stalking, and how to effectively respond and intervene."

Since its inception in 2000, the SRC has trained over 40,000 professionals who work with victims in 43 states and the District of Columbia. Their work even extends internationally to the United Kingdom and Germany, where the SRC strives to achieve their mission "to enhance the ability of professionals, organizations, and systems to effectively respond to stalking."

Because many communities lack information and resources to respond to stalking victims, the SRC's existence is vital for providing technical assistance to hundreds of areas responding to stalking crimes. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 3.4 million people are stalked in the U.S. each year. The SRC is committed to continuing its national effort to promote awareness, action, and advocacy on the crime of stalking and teach agencies how they can assist this population of victims. As such, training and technical assistance is available to criminal and

civil justice practitioners, community-based agencies, the media, as well as the general public.

All of the SRC's efforts are carried out with the vision that one day there will be a criminal justice system where victim professions have the best tools to effectively collaborate and respond to stalking, will improve victim safety and well-being, and will hold offenders accountable.

"If you want to best serve stalking victims, training is so critical," Ms. Garcia notes. "Stalking is still a relatively young crime - as a behavior, it is as old as time - but as a crime, it is relatively new. Advancing technology requires constant upkeep and retraining on how stalkers are changing tactics, and how the system can respond to those tactics."

If you or your agency is interested in what trainings are available from the SRC, you can contact the agency at src@ncvc.org or call them at (202) 467-8700. Agencies providing assistance to stalking victims are encouraged to request training through the SRC by completing the Training Request Form found on their website, <http://www.ncvc.org/src/Main.aspx>

** Essay contributed by Bridgette Harwood*

Just a Thought (Cont.)

offering them the tools to help regain a sense of control over their lives and enhance their sense of security. Most importantly, such an approach will serve as an acknowledgement that what they are experiencing is both real and valid.

For more information on stalking, check out these resources:

Blauuw, E. (2002). The toll of stalking. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 17(1), 50-63.

Mohandie, K. (2006). The RECON typology of stalking. *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 51(1).

The 20 / 20

Each newsletter we pose twenty questions to one of our members to get an inside look at who they are ... this month get to know Sade Brooks, a graduate of the 2011 Academy

My favorite flowers are ...
tulips

My favorite movie is ... "A Beautiful Mind"

My favorite colors are ...
Lime green and Orange

My favorite professional sports team is ... the Washington Redskins

The best piece of advice I ever received was ... from the Bible, Philippians 4:6, which says "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done."

The animal I think best represents my personality is ... something from the feline family because I'm observant, quiet, and nimble

When I was little, when I grew up I wanted to be ...
A pediatrician

The most adventuresome thing I've ever eaten was ...
Octopus when I was traveling in Greece - it was delicious!

The one technological device I would hate to have lost and/or broken is ...
my phone! It is always by my side and it contains my schedule, so without it I feel unorganized

If I could see anyone in concert, it would have to be ...
the late Michael Jackson, maybe Janet would suffice

The most challenging thing about my job is ... memorizing all the acronyms for organizations and agencies!

My favorite thing to do when I need to unwind is ... go do a nice workout at the gym or a session of Pilates

The occupation I would love to work in is ... an attorney who specializes in child advocacy and juvenile law

The quality I like or appreciate most in others is ... an optimistic attitude

The quality I like least in others is ... a pessimistic outlook

One of my best qualities is ... I believe I am an encourager of others because of my optimistic personality. I always cheer on others to perform to the best of their abilities

What I like best about my job is - and what I like least is ... Interning at the Governor's Office has been an invaluable learning experience, the only downfall is that it is only for the sum-

mer and then I have to return to school.

The three adjectives that best describe my personality are ... Animated, Courageous, and Victorious

My favorite sound is ...
acoustic instruments, the guitar is my favorite

One of my goals for 2011 is ... to graduate Summa Cum Laude from Barry University

Alumni Directory

The 2011 Alumni Directory, which includes the addition of the most recent Academy class members, will soon be available for distribution. However, we still would like your help to keep the Alumni Directory up to date! If any of your personal and/or professional information changes, please contact Debbie Bradley via email at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org or by phone at (410) 836-5490.

Editorial Board

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Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in October 2011