

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Just a Thought
While we often think of
the immediate
consequences of trauma,
many individuals
silently suffer for years,
even decades after the
event. Rev. Dr. Janae
Moore explores what
happens when the
wounds from trauma
run deep.

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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 during the next few months!

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Certification News

Want to learn how to become a certified victim service professional in the state of Maryland? This section explains each level of certification, and what are the specific requirements for each.

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News From the Field

It's important to stay abreast of what legislation is working its way through Annapolis. This section highlights what recently passed, or is currently under consideration.

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Best Practices

Issue #49- Jan 2019

Sometimes getting at the root of someone's trauma requires a more holistic approach. Stephanie Mwangaza Brown explains how acupuncture is used to help trauma victims in their road to recovery.

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Just a thought...

When Wounds Go Deep

Healing the long-term effects of trauma

The greatest tragedy about unhealed trauma is that is has the potential to continue, without cease, to destroy that which has been created for good - our very Beings. Trauma in its many forms domestic and social violence, rape, homicide, the ravages of war, etc. - is antithetical to our ultimate purpose and reason for existence, which is to love and to be loved. Hence, trauma shocks and shatters our internal senses and leaves us reeling and staggering mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, to try to reclaim, redeem, and restore balance and sanity in our lives. Despite our yearnings for things to be as they were, we know deep down in our core that life, as we have formerly known it prior to our trauma experience(s), will never again be

the same. While most of the physical wounds we suffered as a result of the trauma will heal, the knowing, or the psychological toll, of the trauma does not leave us. If left ignored and unaddressed, those wounds will continue to haunt us and interfere with every aspect of our lives, especially the relationships we have with ourselves, others, and our God.

While the personal experience of trauma can cause us to want to retreat into ourselves to grapple the array of thoughts and emotions (shock, hurt, anger, pain, guilt, shame, mistrust, etc.) that stem from our experience, isolation, however, will not lead to our healing. Healing - the conscious and courageous commitment to be our ontological Truth - must take place in community. Ideally, as traumatized persons, our healing needs are met in the context, covering and caring of a beloved community; a community with others who are compassionate, sensitive, and heart-skilled in their ability and willingness to embrace us in our broken, bruised, battered, traumatized states. A community of people who know how to and want to gently hold the sacred space necessary for us to engage in what can be (and actually should be) a one-day-at-a time process of inner work and healing.

In community we get to be a witness, not just to each other's trauma experiences, but even more importantly to the miraculous healing journeys we are able to engage together as we work through the deep soul scarring that comes from the existential violation against our very Beings that trauma is. In community we are supported to utilize and live from the greatest internal weapon we have to counter trauma and its potential longterm negative affects upon our lives: remembering and being the truth of who we are as fearfully and wonderfully made human Beings - Beings with God-bestowed innate capacity to rise, like the Phoenix bird, out of the ashes of trauma, and still have life even greater than before. Why? Because the horrendous pain and wounds of our trauma force us to look at ourselves, life, and others in ways that we dared not, and perhaps, knew not how to look before. In our looking, we are also forced to embrace a deeper awakening about ourselves as we come face-toface with the awesomeness of our

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Happy New Year Alum!

I hope each of you had an enjoyable holiday season with family and friends and found a way to even take a little time for yourself to rest.

So now that it's January, many of us decide on a New Year's Resolution. What's yours? Have you thought about how you will go about achieving that goal? Setting a goal for oneself is more than just saying it out loud - you have to have a plan to achieve it. In fact, there are six proven steps to goal setting:

- 1. You must identify a specific goal
- 2. You must have a specific timeframe in which to achieve your goal
- 3. You must write down your goal
- 4. You must develop a plan to achieve your goal
- 5. You must decide the price you're willing to pay to achieve your goal
- 6. You must think about your goal each and every day

So, take some time today to figure out where you want to be this time next year, and then make a plan to make it happen! If you haven't become certified as a Victim Assistance Specialist in Maryland yet, that's a fantastic goal to set! If you need an accountability partner, just send me an email and I would be happy to help you reach your goals!

I wish you a great start to YOUR New Year - until next time ...

Debbie Bradley, C.A., VASIII

bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org

Your goals are the road maps that guide you and show you what is possible for your life. ~ Les Brown

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! The Ferentz Institute provides support and resources for clinicians to better serve clients who have a history of trauma. The Institute provides information and resources on best-practices and tools, as well as facilitates trainings that are trauma-informed. To learn more, go to: https://www.theferentzinstitute.com

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

The NCTSN promotes awareness of childhood trauma and abuse and of its impact on victims and survivors, and strives to eliminate this problem by affecting public policy and providing treatments, practices, and education that drive change. The website also provides screening and assessment tools, as well as information on best-practices, and national resources for survivors of childhood abuse and trauma. For more information about NCTSN, go to: https://www.nctsn.org

Trauma Services Adaptation Center

This website provides support and resources for schools and educators on how to recognize the signs of children who have been affected by trauma, and includes a child trauma toolkit and a basic fact sheet of educational tips that educators can use to better identify and help children who have a history of trauma. For more information, go to https://traumaawareschool.org

Ferentz Institute - Advanced Psychotherapy Training and Education



SAVE THE DATE!

2019 RVAAM Academy

For the first time, RVAAM will be offering TWO Academies this year - a winter session and a summer session! Space is limited, so apply soon!

February 11th-15th, 2019, Bon Secours Spiritual Retreat Center, Marriottsville, MD

AND

June 3rd-7th, 2019, Bon Secours Spiritual Retreat Center, Marriottsville, MD

Both Academies will be hosted at the beautiful and peaceful Bon Secours. To register, go to www.rvaam.us and download an application.

"I cannot say enough good things about the Academy. I was really lost in my profession and the Academy really helped me gain so much knowledge. Since the training, I have reached out to many of the presenters as well as other agencies for guidance, and I now feel a lot more confident in my job. Just before I was accepted to attend the Academy, I put in for another position at DSS. After I returned from the Academy, I was told I had been selected for the position. While it

would have been an easier and less stressful position, I now knew I had found my true calling and this is what I want to do for the rest of my life. The Academy gave me the confidence I needed and helped me to see how what I do is so important to the families I work with. So, I turned down that other position and have not once doubted that decision since. Thank you all so much!" Shirley Jensen (Class of 2018), Child Crime Victim Advocate, Allegany County Department of Social Services; Service Coordinator, Allegany County Infant



National Organization of Victim Assistance (NOVA) 45th Annual Conference

July 22nd-25th, 2019, Phoenix, AZ

Join over 1,700 victim assistance professionals from around the world at this premiere training event to learn from dynamic subject matter experts in victim assistance and crisis response. Attendees can choose from over 110 workshops on emerging trends and best practices. To learn more about this event, go to: www.trynova.org



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...

- Beverly Brooks (Class of 2004) -Beverly wanted to share that she received the perfect birthday gift this past October - she got engaged! The big day is set for July 27th, 2019. We are so very happy for you Beverly!
- Siobhan Copeland (Class of 2018) The RVAAM family is going to add another member to its ranks Siobhan recently announced that she is expecting! Congratulations Siobhan we wish you all the best with your pregnancy.
- Jessica Dickerson (Class of 2004)
 We are saddened to announce that Jessica's mother, Catherine Ardella Clinton, recently passed away. We share our heartfelt wishes for Jessica to be comforted by all who love her and her mother. If you would like to extend a personal condolence to Jessica, you can reach her at jessica.dickerson@maryland.gov.
- •Sherry Jones (Class of 2015) Sherry ended 2018 on a very high
 note first, her son, Bryon Westmore,
 graduated with his Bachelors degree
 in journalism; and then, she also welcomed a new grandson, Tyler Byron.
 You can check out Sherry's Facebook
 page to see the little bundle of joy.
 Congratulations Sherry!!
- Rosemary Raiman (Class of 2004) Despite only recently retiring from the Charles County State's Attorney's Office as their Domestic Violence Coordinator, Rosemary just renewed her credentialed advocacy through NOVA, and was the recipient of an Individual Friendship Award this past October from the Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy. Never one to sit back, Rosemary continues to serve on the

- Charles County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team, and is running a DV support group for Lifestyles of Maryland. We are amazed at your continued energy, and are so blessed that you continue to advocate for victims and their families. You are a true leader Rosemary!
- Well wishes go out to Marzana Hasan (Class of 2014) and Jessica Roman (Class of 2014) who are both recovering from surgery. We wish each of you a speedy recover, and hope to see your smiling faces in person soon. If you would like to send a personal get-well wish to either Marzana or Jessica, you can reach both by email at mariana.hasan@maryland.gov and iroman@stattorney.org

CERTIFICATION NEWS

Why aren't you certified in victim services yet? When you pick a doctor or a lawyer to work with you, you almost always certainly base your decision on their credentials, such as the school the've attended and the cases they have worked on. After all, you want to make sure that you choose someone who knows what they are talking about and who has the most experience in the appropriate domain. The same applies to victim services the right certification not only helps you to bolster your knowledge and skills that you can use when working with victims, but also provides quantifiable evidence of your competence in this challenging and competitive field. So, what are you waiting for? Go to www.rvaam.us to learn more about the certification process and download a copy of the application today!

There are three levels of certification in Maryland, each require a specific set of qualifications and are described in detail below:

- * Level I (VASI) a) complete application packet; b) minimum of two years experience (paid or unpaid); c) 40 hours of training (RVAAM, NVAA, or other SVAA); d) interview; e) \$50 application processing fee
- * Level II (VASII) a) complete application packet; b) minimum of five years experience (paid or unpaid); c) 80 hours of training (40 hours RVAAM, NVAA, SVAA and 40 hours advanced training and/or University level coursework in victim services, including 3 hours of Victims Rights training and 3 hours of Ethics in Victim Services training); d) written essay on what changes are needed in victim services; e) \$75 application processing fee.
- * Level III (VASIII) a) complete application packet; b) minimum eleven years experience (paid or unpaid); c) 120 hours of training (40 hours RVAAM, NVAA, SVAA and 80 hours advanced training and/or University level coursework in victim services, including 3 hours of Victims Rights training and 3 hours of Ethics in Victim Services training); d) oral presentation on approved topic in Victim Assistance; e) \$100 application processing fee.

There is also a similarly tiered renewal process in place for those advocates who want to remain current with their certification:

- * Level I a) complete 40 hours of continuing education (completed within the past 3 years) which must include 3 hours of Victim Services Ethics training; and b) complete renewal application packet and pay the \$25 renewal fee.
- *Level II Without an upgrade same as Level I. To upgrade from Level I to Level II - a) complete 40 hours of continuing education (completed within past 3 years) which must include 3 hours of Victim Services

Ethics training; b) written essay on what changes are needed in victim services; and c) submit renewal application packet and pay \$50 fee.

*Level III - Without an upgrade - same as Level I. To upgrade from Level II to Level III - a) complete 40 hours of continuing education (completed within past 3 years) which must include 3 hours of Victim Services Ethics training; b) oral presentation on approved topic in victim assistance; and c) submit renewal application packet and pay \$75 fee.

All application materials are available online at www.rvaam.us (click on the Certification tab at the top of the page). Keep an eye out for upcoming classes on ethics. For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Debbie Bradley at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org or by phone at (410) 638-4905.

CONGRATULATIONS! Check out the newest certified Victim Assistance Specialists for the State of Maryland:

Level I Victim Assistance Specialist

Margaret Henderson

Kenya Pope

Melissa Olschewske



Just a Thought (Cont.)

creation and our inner capacity to heal, even from the deepest trauma wounds.

As a person who was formerly traumatized by domestic violence and social (racial) violence (the latter of which is still occurring), I have come to know the power of healing. For true healing is evolutionary, transcendent, transformative, and liberating. And while healing usually requires us to embark upon a Sankofa journey where we return to recall and recount the original source of our trauma experience(s), the going back can, will, and should result in a paradoxical outcome: the ability to go forward, as well as higher, as we come in to greater wisdom and understanding of the miraculous intricacies and delicacies of life that make healing possible, including our own. For me, this paradox is what is meant by God working everything out for good. And while trauma itself is never good, our innate ability to heal from trauma and its potential long-term effects is indeed just that good!

Essay contributed by Rev. Dr. Janae Moore.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

It's important we all keep abreast of changes to laws and/or policies that have a direct affect on victims of crime. If you hear of new law or policy being proposed at the local, state, or federal level, be sure to share it with us!

Here's a look back at a few key pieces of legislation that the Maryland Legislature proposed and approved in 2018, and what is in the works for 2019:

On January 1, 2019, Maryland became the second state in the country to offer safe, confidential real property transactions to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking. Survivors who participate in the Address Confidentiality Program will be able to purchase or inherit property and shield their information from public record. In addition, the Address Property Confidentiality Program will expand to cover private entities, so program participants can request anyone, no longer just State and local government agencies, to use their substitute address to protect their information.

HB1601 - State Department of Education - Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative, Program, and Fund (*introduced by Delegate*

Wilkins)- For the purpose of establishing Trauma-Informed Schools initiative in the State Department of Education; requiring the State Department of Education, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health and the Department of Human Services, to develop certain guidelines on a certain trauma-informed approach and offer certain training to each local school system; requiring the State Department of Education to distribute certain guidelines to each local school system and to develop a certain website; requiring the State Department of Education, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health and Department of Human Services, to establish the Trauma-Informed Schools Expansion Program; stating the purpose of the Program; requiring the State Department of Education to select certain schools to participate in the Program on or before a certain date; requiring the State Department of Education to take certain actions in implementing the Program; requiring the State Department of Education, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health and the Department of Human Services, to study certain matters at the end of certain school years;

requiring the State Department of Education to report its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before a certain date for a certain number of years; establishing the Trauma-Informed Schools Expansion Program Fund as a special, no lapsing fund; specifying the purpose of the Fund; requiring the State Department of Education to administer the Fund; requiring the State Treasurer to hold the Fund and the Comptroller to account for the Fund; specifying the contents of the Fund; specifying the purpose for which the Fund may be used; requiring interest earnings of the Fund to be credited to the Fund; exempting the Fund from a certain provision of law requiring interest earning on State money to accrue to the General Fund for the State; defining certain terms; and generally relating to the Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative, Trauma-Informed Schools Expansion Program and Trauma-Informed Schools Expansion Fund. The bill was first introduced on February 9, 2018.



Best Practices

Building a Road to a New Life

As an acupuncturist, I often see the telltale signs of trauma. Trauma does not only present in an obvious way that we and others around us can acknowledge that there is something wrong, but also as an invisible force that is wreaking havoc in our daily life. Often, my clients haven't made the connection that their stomach pain, hip pain, or chest pain is really about something that happened a long time

ago. They don't realize that the repeated car accidents, falls, migraines, or worse, are not just simply coincidences, but are our energetic systems' way of trying to work out something that was triggered from the past.

Often times, the pattern of trauma was set up in our childhood. Something happened and from that day forth, everything was different. We were different. It might have been something mom, dad, a teacher, a coach, or some other respected person or a complete stranger did, or it might have been something small that no one would recognize as life-changing. But, what you need to understand is that events and experiences have an energy that gets stuck in us.

All of us have had the experience of reliving a negative situation that is long gone. When that occurs, we can experience the fear, the anger, the sadness, the anxiety, or the pain of an event that occurred a decade ago like it happened only yesterday. Our thoughts and emotional energy are trapped in our body in a dysfunctional way. As a result, several things can happen. On an emotional level, our biochemistry may change, and we may begin experiencing depression, anxiety or other emotional disturbances. On a mental level, we may experience a cognitive shift and begin to see everything through the lens of that old situation, thereby robbing ourselves of peace of mind. On a physical level, dysfunctional energy may be stepped down to the frequency of our physical body and cause a myriad of imbalances and health problems.

This viewpoint is very different from that of Western medicine. This approach adopts a holistic view and views the individual as one thing: Energy. Meaning, our emotions, our thoughts, and our bodies are various densities and frequencies of energy. We are comprised of both light and delicate vibration of thoughts, as well as dense and solid vibration of our

bodies, and everything in between. A high vibration of thought or emotion contains a lot of energy. As this vibration lowers to the frequency of the body, the volume of energy becomes tremendous, and the volume becomes so large, it is difficult for our bodies to manage it.

But our bodies are amazing. They are our most obedient, innocent, and honest servants. They work for us day an night, unceasingly. Our bodies will take on an oversized volume of dysfunctional (stepped-down emotional) energy and practically cripple itself in

attempt to save our minds from our disturbances. But taking on this massive amount of energy can damage our physiology and anatomy, and cause a significant amount of pain, imbalance, and disease. Many of the chronic diseases I witness in my practice (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, fibromyal-

gia, migraines, etc.) can be attributed to untreated trauma. And sadly, I also see many of my clients stuck in repeat patterns of continued trauma.

There is a saying - "trauma begets trauma." We all have trauma in our background. It is part of the human experience. Unfortunately, if we don't recognize it, work to release it, and move back into a healthy lifestyle, we will probably find ourselves in a situation where we face the same type of trauma repeatedly. Each time we experience it, our energetic system is asking for a resolution, asking for permission to release that dysfunctional energy that continues to trouble our nervous system, our essence, our spirit. So, what do we do?

First, we take responsibility for the ugly part that we may have played in our own victimization. It's best to have the help of a trained health professional here. There is a vast difference be-

tween being accountable and blaming ourselves. Being accountable is the way to move out of trauma into a healthy life. Blaming, on the other hand, only sets us up to be revictimized. With professional support, we can carefully look at our past, look for patterns, examine our thought processes and beliefs, and explore our behaviors/reactions. Armed with this new information, individuals can begin to map a new path forward. Sometimes, however, they may need to take an additional step.

Since trauma lives on the body and

impedes one's energy, it may be beneficial to work with professionals who focus on energy-based modalities. One such modality is acupuncture. An acupuncturist is trained to interpret the human energy field and how it interacts with the autonomic nervous system. The autonomic nervous

system is a sub-system of the brain which controls all of the involuntary functions of the human body (e.g., breathing, digestion, hormone regulation, fight-flight-freeze responses, etc.) and can be influenced by the subconscious mind. It is here, in the soma, that dysfunctional energy is trapped. Acupuncture works with clients to release this discordant energy, thereby helping their mind and body to heal.

Untreated trauma will continue to reverberate through our life as persistent physical and mental maladies, as long as we fail to address it. But when we finally choose to take the difficult and sometimes painful measures to put a stop to it, will we finally unburden ourselves and open the way to a new life.

Essay contributed by Stephanie Mwangaza Brown. Stephanie is a licensed Acupuncturist, Certified Herbalist and Energy Worker. She has a private practice in Silver Spring, MD.

Alumni Showcase

My current role as an advocate for victims of sexual assault is the result of a career honed over several decades of service, training, observation, and direct contact with individuals experiencing trauma. I served in the Air Force for nearly 25 years as an Education and Training Non-Commissioned Officer. I was stationed at bases in the United States and throughout Asia. While in the military, I served as a victim advocate at one of the Rape Crisis Centers in Texas, the Sexual Assault Coordinator for one of the military bases in Iraq. During this time I also earned my Masters degree from the University of Oklahoma in Human Relations, with a concentration in Crisis Intervention. When I retired from the Air Force in 2011, I became an Army Sexual Harassment/Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Instructor, and then joined the Veterans Affairs Acquisition Academy in 2014 as a Training Specialist/Project Manager. Currently, I serve as a Sexual Trauma Advocate & Resource Volunteer (STAR) for the Rape Crisis Intervention Services of Carroll County. As a STAR team member, I provide support to victims of sexual violence via the 24/7 hotline, as well as accompany victims to court and appointments with law enforcement.

As a result of my many years of experience, I have observed firsthand how trauma affects every aspect of an individual's life - from how they manage their feelings, to how they struggle and/or second-guess their own judgment, to how their beliefs about trust or safety are substantively altered. Really, no area of their life is untouched.

While there is a great number of moments in my work that I find gratifying (such as when an individual has the courage to come forward to report their assault, or when a survivor learns

a new coping mechanism/process that enables them to take control of their life again), there are still many things that frustrate me about how the criminal justice system, and society as a whole, treat sexual assault victims. At the top of my list of frustrations would be how too often when a victim steps forward to tell their story, they are met with blame and reproach - by both the justice system and the community. Instead of focusing on how to help the individual, the person is met with skepticism and blame - what did S(he) do to warrant the assault?

Fortunately, I have noticed a shift in how society, as well as the justice system, are beginning to view and to understand trauma. In my own community, I have seen more outreach programs targeting schools and first responders to help expand their awareness of how trauma affects individuals; how to provide resources to individuals who are seeking help; and how to be more supportive of victims' needs. There has also been increased effort in educating members of the community on how to become active bystanders. Meaning, how to recognize the signs of when someone is in danger, and then how and when to (safely) step in to possibly prevent a sexual assault. As a result of these initiatives, we are seeing more people in my community come forward to report sexual assault, and also more victims and their families to reach out for help. All of these changes are encouraging, as more victims have begun to realize they are not alone.

I believe my participation in the Roper Academy has made me a better counselor at Veterans Affairs and a better victim advocate in the STAR program in Carroll County. The activities throughout the week enabled me the time to reflect on my own thoughts and feelings about my journey. Over the course of my life, there were many situations where I felt alone. But when I thought about how I overcame those challenges, I realized there was always

someone who provided me a helping hand, whether it was personally, professionally, or spiritually. My time at the Roper Academy reinforced that fact - my peers and I developed a special bond during that week, and it reinforced my belief that there is power in numbers. So, as my fellow classmates at the Academy were there to lift and support me, I too know I am there to lift and support the individuals who reach out to me for help.

My two final thoughts I'd like to share for all who have chosen this calling to serve is don't forget to take care of vourselves. You can't take care of others, if you yourself are running on fumes. Develop a self-care plan and stick with it. You owe it to yourself, as well as to the people you rely on you. And finally, be fully present whenever you sit down and talk with someone. Listen not only to their words, but to what they are sharing with you nonverbally. Everyone communicates differently, and we need to remember to allow them to share their story in a manner that best meets their needs. If you do that, you will earn their trust and their road to healing can begin.

Essay contributed by Houston P. Keil (Class of 2016)

Thoughts, Ideas, Suggestions?

Are you looking for more information about a particular issue in the field of victim services? The Editorial Board is always looking for new topics to profile in the newsletter that can assist our Alums both personally and professionally. Please send any suggestions you might have for a future topic to Debbie Bradley at bradleyd@harford-sheriff.org. And remember, we are also happy to share any information you have about job openings and professional trainings you might think your fellow Alums would benefit from!

Alumni Directory

The 2018 Alumni Directory, which includes the addition of the most recent Academy class members is now 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) 638-4905.

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Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in April 2019

