

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #48- Nov 2018

Just a Thought

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) affects over 10 million individuals in the United States annually, yet remains one of the most misunderstood types of victimization in the community. Explore the concepts of “power and control” that are typically found within these relationships, and how those dynamics prevent victims from breaking free from their abuser.

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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!

Page 2

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

What is required to best serve victims of Intimate Partner Violence? Read a thoughtful essay by Keith Gethers on the challenges to working with IPV victims.

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Just a thought...

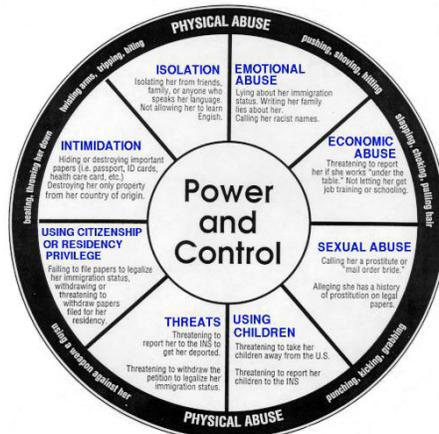
Why Don't They Just Leave?

Working with victims of domestic violence

On average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. This equates to more than 10 million women and men every year. And on a typical day, there are more than 20,000 phone calls placed to domestic violence hotlines nationwide. However, less than two-thirds of victims of intimate violence who sustain injuries will seek out medical care. Why do so many of these individuals remain silent about their abuse, and refuse to leave their abuser? While it may seem pretty

cut and dry for you or I, for victims of intimate violence, it’s a lot more complicated.

The most important thing to understand about domestic violence are the power and control dynamics between the perpetrator and the victim, and the cyclical nature of the relationship. There are a myriad of ways in which this dynamic is demonstrated in the relationships, as illustrated by the power and control wheel.



These set of behaviors focus around *coercion and threats, intimidation, emotional abuse, minimizing/denying and blaming the victim, using children, controlling finances, and promoting male privilege.* The cycle of abuse has similarly been found to follow a predictable pattern. This cycle has three parts. The first stage is the *tension building phase* - tension builds over common domestic issues, such as money, children, or jobs. Verbal abuse begins. The victim tries to control the situation by pleasing the abuser, giving in or avoiding the abuse. However, none of these strategies will stop the violence. Eventually, the tension reaches a boiling point and physical abuse begins. The second stage is an *acute battering episode* - when the tension peaks, the physical violence begins. This is usually triggered by an external event or by the abuser’s emotional state - not by the victim’s behavior. Thus, when this threshold is crossed is beyond the victim’s control.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Hello Alums!

Can you believe that autumn is here and the holidays are right around the corner?! It seems like only yesterday that we were enjoying beautiful summer weather. Let's keep our fingers crossed that Old Man Winter is kind to us this year.

We've had some great training over this past year, I hope you were able to join us. If not, we will have more to come in the New Year - so keep a watch on your inbox for RVAAM emails so you don't miss out on any opportunities. Please also share with us any trainings your agency or other agencies in your community are offering that are open to outside parties, so we can help pass along the information to the rest of the alumni. We all need to share as much information as possible so that we can better serve our victims.

And with that said, this quarter's newsletter is on intimate partner violence. For those of you who work in this domain of Victim Services, I praise you. This can be such a frustrating aspect of victim services. We all know that many victims will continue to go back to their abuser over and over again; but, we also know the reasons surrounding their decision to do so. This newsletter will give everyone a bit more insight into the work of domestic violence advocates. I hope you will take the time to read the articles and explore some of the websites we provide to learn more about this field, as I'm sure each and every one of us probably knows someone who is being abused or has been abused. Knowledge is power - so, arm yourself with as much of it as possible.

I wish you and your family all of the best in the upcoming holiday season - until next time ...

Debbie Bradley, C.A., VASIII

bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org

No thief, however skilled, can rob one of knowledge, and that is why knowledge is the best and safest treasure to acquire. ~ L. Frank Baum

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!



National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

The NCADV serves as a voice of victims and survivors of domestic violence and strives to eliminate this problem by affecting public policy, increasing understanding of the impact of domestic violence, and providing programs and education that drive change. For more information about NCADV, go to: www.ncadv.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

This website provides support and resources for domestic violence victims, including a 24 hour hotline and a private online platform to ensure the safety of victims while browsing. For more information, go to <http://www.thehotline.org>

House of Ruth Maryland

The House of Ruth Maryland is one of the nation's leading intimate partner violence centers, helping thousands of battered women and their children find the safety and security that so many of us take for granted. The organization offers prevention, intervention, and advocacy programs, as well as a 24 hour hotline and a separate legal hotline. To learn more, go to: <http://www.hruth.org>

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV)

The MNADV promotes awareness and prevention of domestic violence by providing a statewide Helpline for survivors, offering domestic violence programs access to a language interpretation service for survivors who speak languages other than English, maintaining an informational website, disseminating e-newsletters, participating on social media platforms, disseminating brochures for the public, tracking the loss of life caused by domestic violence through a statewide fatality database, and holding an Annual Memorial Service and Annual Meeting and Awards event.. To learn more, go to: <http://mnadv.org>

Maryland Department of Health, Intimate Partner Violence Resources

This website provides a list of organizations/programs, websites, and phone numbers for domestic violence victims, as well as health care providers. For more information, go to: <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDPCS/CSTIP/Pages/Intimate-Partner-Violence.aspx>

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 Re-
treat Center,
Marriottsville,
MD



AND

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

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



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

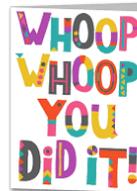
July 22nd-25th, 2019, Phoenix, AZ

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...



- **Leisa Anderson (Class of 2018)** - Leisa just launched her new website for her 501-c3 non-profit, www.when-traumahurts.com - make sure to check it out!
- **Lakendra Schwendig (Class of 2014)** - Lakendra received a Leadership Award at the In Plain Sight DV Conference for her continued dedication and service to domestic violence victims. Congratulations Lakendra! We are so delighted that you have been recognized for all of your hard work, as well as the level of compassion you continuously show to those you serve.

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 based your decision on their credentials, such as the school they'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 (VASID)** - 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 (VASIID)** - 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

Laurelle Blair Valerie Brice
 Marianne Camino
 Neijma Celestine-Donnor
 Kara-Sue Harriott Angela Wharton

Level II Victim Assistance Specialist

Aida Alajbegovic Carmen Alvarez-Diaz
 Kadovia Baublitz-Smith Paulette Carroll
 Camden Heath Elaine Jenkins
 Monique Mitchell Evelyn Vargas

Level III Victim Assistance Specialist

Heather Courtney Ariel Ervin
 Robin Haskins Kim Holmes
 Linda Shaw

Just a Thought (Cont.)

The third stage is commonly referred to as *the honeymoon phase* - initially, the abuser may feel ashamed of his or her behavior and may express remorse, but may also try to minimize the abuse and might even blame it on the victim. The abuser may then exhibit loving, kind behavior followed by apologies, generosity and helpfulness. He or she will also genuinely attempt to convince the victim that the abuse will not happen again. This loving and contrite behavior helps to strengthen the bond between the partners, and will probably convince the victim, once again, that leaving the relationship is not necessary.

Sadly, this cycle continues over and over again and may happen in the

same day, or it might happen over the course of a few weeks, or over the course of a few months or even years. It is different in every relationship, and not all relationships follow the same cycle. Sometimes the cycle is disrupted because the abuser is arrested, or the victim leaves the situation. When that disruption occurs, it is particularly dangerous for the victim.

Domestic violence knows no boundaries and affects nearly all segments of the population. But the shame and humiliation of living under these conditions often times keep a victim silent for years, enduring abuse most of us cannot fathom. Adding to the complexity of these crimes is the recent increase in number of mass shootings which emanated out of a domestic disturbance. Thus, emphasizing further that any agency or group that deals with these types of cases and victims is well-served to treat them with the highest priority and care. Domestic violence calls for service are some of the most dangerous for law enforcement to respond to, and as such, training officers how to respond to such calls is key. The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence is a great resource for this type of training, and often times, their trainings are offered at a nominal cost or are free.

Victim advocates also play a critical role, however not every victim advocate will provide the same types of services. For example, an advocate who is embedded within a service provider (e.g., battered women's shelter / program) will have a different set of roles and responsibilities than a victim advocate who works in a prosecutor's office or a police department. This sometimes puts these groups at odds with one another, but if everyone finds a mutual set of goals to work towards and collaborates with one another, the outcome is much better (and safer) for the victim. One such collaborative effort has been the establishment of Family Justice Centers throughout Maryland. This model cre-

ates a “one stop shop” for victims of domestic violence and their children, allowing them to receive most or all of the services they require under one roof. Typically, such centers house law enforcement, prosecutors, counseling, and crisis intervention services in one building. This approach helps to minimize the trauma to the victim as much as possible, as well as help to preserve the victims safety by helping them get out of their violent environment. The first such center was established in Harford County in 2006. Since then, centers have opened in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. Hopefully, more counties will follow suit and open more of these centers across the rest of the state.

Having spent nearly 19 years working in the field of domestic violence in a State’s Attorney’s Office, I can certainly validate how stressful and challenging the work can be. On the other side of the coin, however, is the satisfaction of knowing that we have helped thousands of victims and their children over those years either be safe in their own homes, or help them transition to a different and safer environment. The good outcomes don’t come in any great quantity, but when things go right, you feel the full measure of a job well done.

Essay contributed by Tammy Fitzgerald, Paralegal, Harford County State’s Attorney’s Office - DV Unit Family Justice Center, Class of 2018.

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 2017, and what is in the works for 2018:

HB75 - State Board of Cosmetologists - Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Awareness Training Requirements

- For the purpose of requiring the State Board of Cosmetologists to adopt regulations that establish certain curriculum standards for a certain domestic violence and sexual assault awareness course as part of a certain training program; requiring the Board to adopt regulations that set standards for a continuing education course that, at a minimum, requires an hour of domestic assault and sexual assault awareness training; altering the qualifications for a license to practice cosmetology and to provide esthetic services, hair services, or nail technician services; requiring a certain license to complete the domestic violence and sexual assault awareness training as a condition of license renewal; specifying that a licensee who completes domestic violence and sexual assault awareness training to comply with certain continuing education requirements may not be held civilly or criminally liable for certain actions or inactions; and generally relating to domestic violence and sexual assault awareness training for cosmetologists. The bill was first introduced on January 11, 2018 and could take effect October 1, 2018.

HB1523 - Criminal Procedure - Domestic Violence Registry

- For the purpose of requiring the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to establish and maintain the Domestic Violence Offender Registry; requiring the Registry to be updated in a certain manner and to include certain information; specifying the contents of the Registry; requiring a certain person convicted a certain number of times of a domestically related

crime to register with a certain county sheriff; exempting a person from registration under certain circumstances; requiring a person who is required to register under this Act to register within a certain period of time; requiring a registrant to provide certain information for the registration; requiring the county sheriff to obtain a certain digital image of a person registering under this Act; requiring a registrant to update certain information in a certain manner; establishing that a certain registration shall remain in effect for a certain period of time; requiring the county sheriff to forward certain registration information to the Department; requiring Registry information to be made public in a certain manner; establishing a procedure by which a person may obtain an order exempting the person from a certain registration requirement; prohibiting a person who is subject to registration under this Act from knowingly failing to register or provide accurate information when registering; establishing penalties for a violation of this Act; defining certain terms; and generally relating to the establishment of a domestic violence offender registry. This bill was introduced and first read on February 9th, 2018. The bill could take effect on October 1, 2018.



HB30 - Domestic Violence - Education and Definition of Abuse

- For the purpose of requiring the State Board of Education to encourage county boards of education to incorporate age-appropriate lessons on domestic violence into certain curriculum; altering the definition of “abuse” for purposes of certain provisions of law relating to domestic violence to include

harassment and malicious destruction of property; defining certain terms; and generally relating to domestic violence. The bill was first introduced and read on January 11th, 2018.

Best Practices

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Changes within different patterns of social interactions has expanded the classifications of different types of crimes, which underscores the importance of expanding one’s professional competencies when working in the criminal justice field. This is particularly true for victim advocates. For instance, domestic violence once accounted for acts of violence between persons involved in a relationship, most notably, co-habitants including husbands and wives. However, the growing presence of domestic violence between other types of intimate partners has expanded the definition. Currently, intimate partner violence (IPV) refers to violence or hostility that occurs in a *close relationship*. The term “intimate partner” includes present and prior spouses, girlfriends, boyfriends (including same gender partners), regardless of living arrangements. Therefore, what was previously considered dysfunctional relationships even among school-aged children is now classified as IPV.

Intimate Partner Violence can include any of the following behaviors:

- Physical violence - when a person injures or attempts to injure a partner by striking or utilizes the aid of an object to strike their partner.
- Sexual violence - involves the force or attempt to compel a partner to take part in a sexual act or sexually orientated actions.
- Stalking - a pattern of repeated harassing, unwanted contact by a part-

ner that causes fear or concern for one’s own safety or the safety of someone close to the victim.

- Psychological abuse - involves various forms of communication and intimidating behaviors meant to create mental or emotional distress for a partner.

Intimate Partner Violence is found among individuals of all ages, all racial and ethnic backgrounds, and all socioeconomic brackets. In fact, according to a recent national survey of youth conducted by the Center for Disease Control, approximately 8.5 million girls and 4 million boys reported experiencing some type of physical violence, sexual violence, or stalking by an intimate partner prior to the age of 18. Similarly, more than 1 in 3 women (35.6%) and more than 1 in 4 men (28.5%) in the United States have experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

The cost of IPV to the individual and society at large is significant. Nearly 8 million days of paid work each year is lost due to domestic violence issues – the equivalent of more than 32,000 full-time jobs. Moreover, 64% of the respondents in a 2005 survey who identified themselves as victims of domestic violence indicated that their ability to work was affected by the violence. More than half of domestic violence victims (57%) said they were distracted, almost half (45%) feared getting discovered, and two in five were afraid of their intimate partner’s unexpected visit (either by phone or in person). The cost of intimate partner violence is astronomical. Each year, IPV costs the U.S. economy between \$5.8 billion and \$12.6 billion from lost wages, increased healthcare costs, and costs associated with the criminal justice system.

But of greatest concern is the fact that IPV victims are disproportionately higher risk for being murdered by their partner. According to the CDC,

approximately 1 in every 6 murder victims are killed by a intimate partner, and 72% of all murder-suicides are perpetrated by intimate partners. Thus, the CDC, as well as many other authorities have classified IPV as a major health crisis.

To properly assist victims of IPV, service providers and victim advocate need to be able to set aside their own assumptions and prejudgments in order to able to listen to the victim with empathy. They must also arm themselves with the appropriate information and resources so they are prepared to provide victims with the information and referrals for services that they actually need. In order to achieve these objectives, it is essential that those who work with IPV victims stay abreast of the research, as well as continue to refine their knowledge and skills through continuing education and training. They must also work diligently to establish relationships with other professional allies in the community who will be able to provide the services IPV victims need.

The reality is, the stakes are extremely high when working with this population. However, no one has to try to manage things alone. There are countless others and a host of resources available to help. It is our responsibility to ask for help when needed, and to be diligent in pursuing opportunities that will help to expand our knowledge and skills to better serve victims of IPV.

Essay contributed by Keith Gethers

Alumni Spotlight

I am the program director for the Division of Parole and Probation Victim Services Unit. My team and I provide services to all types of victims, including victims of intimate partner violence. Our three primary responsibilities are to respond to victims’ questions and concerns that come through

VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday); to update information in our case management system (OCMS) to allow the agent of record to know there is a victim associated with a supervision case; and to send out communications to victims to provide updates regarding the supervision status of their offender, as well as to make referrals to services they might need.

Over the years, I have witnessed several positive changes in how the criminal justice system interacts with victims. One notable improvement has been the increase in the number of victim advocates in State’s Attorney’s Offices. This has made communication between our two agencies much more efficient as these advocates notify us of the date of release for an offender, which we in turn can then share with the victim. Another improvement has come from the Victim Services Unit in the Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention which has been very effective in lobbying the legislature to increase the sentence length for particular crimes, including intimate partner violence, which has resulted in offenders being supervised for longer periods of time. Both of these changes have helped to increase the safety for victims of crime, which ultimately, is the mission of the criminal justice system.

Yet, there still remains numerous barriers in the system that impede our ability to help victims. For example, because of HIPPA laws, many health and social service agencies will not release the contact information (e.g., address, phone number) for a victim. As a result, my team and I are delayed in our efforts to notify a victim of a change in the status of their case (e.g., the court enters a No Contact Order, or orders restitution, etc.). Thus, the victim may not know who to contact or what the order should look like. It is those sorts of policies and practices that disempower victims and increase their frustration with the system. That works against all of us, because it

erodes their trust in the system and dissuades them from wanting to participate in the process.

Yet, despite those challenges, I know that I have the ability to offer something invaluable to every victim I speak with - my undivided attention. Many times, they just need someone to listen to their story and to air their frustrations. While it definitely isn’t easy to listen to so many stories of despair and hurt over and over again, I know my discomfort is nothing compared to the pain and suffering these victims have experienced. But the fact of the matter is, that simple act of listening can help to reestablish their trust in the system. So, if there is one piece of advice I could share with those who work with victims or who encounter a potential victim/survivor - think about how you would like to be treated. Be kind, be patient, and just listen. Your presence alone can make all the difference in the world.

Essay contributed by Karen Darby (Class of 2015)

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@harfordsheriff.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 January 2019

