

# Academy Forum

*Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy*

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #46- January 2018

**Just a Thought**

*Working with victims of crime is one of the most rewarding but also one of the most difficult jobs. The physical and emotional toll it takes can be significant. The key to self-preservation is consistent self-care. Learn a few healthy ways to manage your stress from Lisa Ferentz*  
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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.*  
**Page 2**



**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 3**

**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.*  
**Page 4**

**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**

*Time and energy spent doing our jobs is a constant balancing act. Both are finite resources, and if we run out of either, we're no longer effective. Ellen Bard provides a roadmap on how to refill your energy bottle each day through self-care.*  
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## Just a thought...

### How are YOU doing?

#### *Self-care and vicarious traumatization*

As a mental health professional working with victims of trauma, abuse, or neglect, you probably understand the inherent vulnerabilities of your job, and recognize the need to balance your work with acts of self care. Insight and awareness are clinician strengths, but translating that knowledge into behaviors that genuinely allow for rest, renewal, and re-energizing is often more challenging to achieve. Ironically, the ways in which you “unwind” can actually be triggering and exacerbate an already agitated state. Given your attraction to highly stimulating, even crisis-driven situations, you might gravitate towards activities that evoke fight/flight/freeze responses. “Relaxing” can take the form of binge watching television pro-

grams like “Law and Order” or “Special Victim’s Unit” or “Criminal Minds,” or reading novels that are action-charged and often depict people in peril; helping out friends and family who are in crisis or lead complicated lives; surfing the Internet for hours at a time; or obsessively following news stories. These activities, although appealing and seemingly “mindless,” can produce high levels of stress, emotional overwhelm, dissociation, and exposure to toxic narratives and imagery. Honest attempts to step away from trauma and calm the mind and body wind up having the opposite effect, negatively impacting your physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing.



It is a privilege and a challenge to be a compassionate witness to someone else’s pain. In your work as advocate, educator, supporter, and navigator, you can be adversely affected and vulnerable to burn-out. If you want to make a genuine commitment to counteract the potential for

vicarious traumatization, consider the strategies suggested below as they can help you create a new practice for self-care. These behaviors are designed to not only slow you down and create much needed stillness, they can also soothe the feelings of sadness, fear, anxiety, anger, powerlessness, self-doubt, or hopelessness that often accompany such difficult work.

Give yourself a hand massage with soothing lotion.

Pick out a beautiful card, write a loving note and mail it to yourself.

Go to bed one hour earlier for an entire week.

Power down from all digital technology two hours before going to bed.

Buy yourself a bouquet of your favorite flowers.

Get the ingredients for your favorite meal or dessert, cook it to musical accompaniment, and then enjoy eating it with a loved one.

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**EDITOR'S CORNER**

Greetings Alums!

I hope that you all had a wonderful holiday season and are feeling refreshed as you start off the New Year. I'm sure many of you have made a host of resolutions, vowing to go to the gym more, eat healthier, get more sleep, etc. But have you actually sat down and written down your goals? This is such an important step in planning. You don't have to change everything at once - in fact, that's a sure fire way to get frustrated and to give up altogether. Instead write down 2 or 3 goals that you would most like to accomplish this year. It can be something related to your family/relationships, your health, your work, etc., Then set a specific deadline for each one. One may be a short-term goal - something you can achieve in the next 30 or 60 days; while the other may take the entire year. Now, write down specific steps (think small!) you can take each day to help you reach each of your goals. Will you need to gain some new knowledge, information, or skills? If so, how/where are you going to attain that? Who in your social network (family, friends) can you ask to help you to stay on track with your goals. Is it a work out buddy you need, or a "coach" who will be there to cheer your successes and to encourage you when you stumble? The point is, you're more likely to stick with your plans if there is someone else that will be there on your journey to hold you accountable. Finally, take a moment and identify potential obstacles that are likely to pop up now and again that you are going to have to overcome (e.g., you get sick, you have to travel, you have to work late, etc.). Now write down some specific strategies you can follow when those circumstances arise that will still enable you to move closer to your goal.

*The point is, if you take a moment to map out a contingency plan before those bumps occur, you're less likely to go off course.*

*Taking the time to sit down and write down your specific plan for the New Year is so important because we tend to get so wrapped up in our work and lives that we often forget to make time for ourselves. But, in order to succeed, we have to make a plan. So, whatever it is you want to accomplish this year, I challenge you to start by setting your goals today, and taking the time to write up your plan. And, don't forget that if one of those goals is to become a certified Victim Assistance Specialist, don't hesitate to contact me with any questions you have about the process. I'm here to help you achieve that goal!*

Until next time~

**Debbie Bradley, C.A., VASIII**

[bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org](mailto:bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org)

*The tragedy in life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goals to reach. ~ Benjamin Mays*



**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!*

**Office for Victims of Crime - Technical Assistance and Train-**

**ing Center: Module 10 - Compassion Fatigue and Self-Care**

This one hour online training module can help victim service professionals learn about compassion fatigue and its effects, learn how to maintain healthy boundaries, and learn how to develop a personalized self-care plan. To learn more, go to: <https://www.ovcttac.gov/SAACT/module10.cfm>

**Office for Victims of Crime - Vicarious Trauma Toolkit**

This state-of-the-art repository of nearly 500 resources was compiled to assist victim services and first responder agencies and organizations in raising awareness about and addressing vicarious trauma, on both an individual and organizational level. For more information, go to: <https://vtt.ovc.ojp.gov/>

**Melissa Institute**

This article provides a framework for how to discuss vicarious trauma, and outlines different individual, social, and organizational interventions. It also includes a list of risk assessment tools to measure vicarious trauma, as well as a list of questions for self-assessment. To learn more, go to: [https://www.melissainstitute.org/documents/Melichenbaum\\_SelfCare\\_11thconf.pdf](https://www.melissainstitute.org/documents/Melichenbaum_SelfCare_11thconf.pdf)

**Ted Talks - Self-care**

A compilation of nine videos on the significance of self-care, Ted Talks presents topics on mindfulness, emotional first aid, and how to be grateful. Each video varies in length from three to 20 minutes, and can be watched all in one sitting, or you can pick a topic most suitable for your current needs.

[https://www.ted.com/playlists/299/the\\_importance\\_of\\_self\\_care](https://www.ted.com/playlists/299/the_importance_of_self_care)

## Stress-Monitoring Diary

Dr. David Purves developed a unique worksheet to monitor one's stress level on daily basis. Stress is classified by three levels – green (less stress), amber (distressed), and red (high stress). Following his color coded system, users can monitor when they are the most and least stressed during various days and time segments of the week, and allows users to record Do's and Don'ts (e.g. DO take a bath, DON'T take on more tasks), thereby creating a mini action plan to help manage daily stressors. Dr. Purves also presents his Stress Monitoring Diary via a YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g53-PLiUz2Oo>)

<http://drpurves.com/stress-monitoring-diary/>

## 6 Dimensions of Vicarious Trauma-Free Life

Olga Phoenix, a recognized expert on vicarious trauma and other trauma related disorders, has compiled an on-line workbook titled, 6 Dimensions of Vicarious Trauma-Free Life. Ms. Phoenix explains what vicarious trauma is and how it can negatively affect one's life. On page 5 of the workbook, Ms. Phoenix has created a "Self-Care Wheel" which readers can then use to develop an action plan using her six dimensions. A YouTube video of Ms. Phoenix explaining the Self-Care Wheel can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLkzA7EE6DY>

<http://www.olgaphoenix.com/wp-content/themes/olg/pdf/vt%20Starter%20Kit.pdf>



## SAVE THE DATE!

*Maryland Safe at Home Address Confidentiality*

### *Program Training*

*Wednesday, February 7th, 2018, 10:30am, Secretary of State's Office, Annapolis, MD*

The Maryland Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) is administered by the Office of the Secretary of State and provides an important service to victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. The goal of the ACP is to help those individuals, who have relocated or are about to relocate, in an effort to keep their perpetrators from finding them. The ACP is not for everyone. A trained professional from a domestic violence program can help determine if ACP should be part of the individual's safety plan. For more information, please contact Brittany Luzader at [brittany.luzader@maryland.gov](mailto:brittany.luzader@maryland.gov)

### *2017 RVAAM Academy*

*June 5th-9th, 2017, Bon Secours Spiritual Retreat Center, Marriottsville, MD*

Mark your calendars! The 14th annual RVAAM Academy is scheduled for the first week of June at the beautiful and peaceful Bon Secours. To register, go to [www.rvaam.us](http://www.rvaam.us) and download an application.



## 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...*



- **Jessica Dickerson (Class of 2004)** - Be sure to give Jessica a belated birthday hug the next time you see her; she celebrated her birthday on December 11th. We hope you had a wonderful time with family and friends to mark this special day!
- **James Dixon (Class of 2017)** - James just celebrated his one year anniversary in his position as a Victim/Witness Advocate at the Baltimore Police Department. Congratulations James for all that you have accomplished thus far! We look forward to hearing more about your successes in the years to come!
- **Dorothy "Dot" Holley (Class of 2013)** - Dot recently accepted a new position as Clinical Supervisor with The Mentor Network. Wow, congratulations!! And she's still drumming too. She joined a local band, Roses 'n Rust, as a drummer and singer. Go check her out when you have the opportunity - we guarantee she'll fill the place with tons of positive energy. Keep rockin' it Dot!
- **Tina McKnight (Class of 2005)** - Be sure to give Tina a belated birthday hug the next time you see her; she celebrated her birthday on December 16th. We hope you had a wonderful time with family and friends to mark this special day!!
- **Anna Stephens (Class of 2017)** - Anna earned her Bachelors degree in

Criminal Justice, with a minor in Victim Studies, from the University of Baltimore in December. Congratulations Anna! We can't wait to see what your next journey is!

- **Debbie Tall (Class of 2004)** - On October 10th, Debbie welcomed her second grandchild, Carter Davies Hasbrouck, into the family. His older brother will be 2.5 years old later this month. Wow, time sure does fly, especially when it comes to grandchildren. Congratulations Debbie, and enjoy every precious moment with them!
- **Divita Washington (Class of 2017)** - Davita accepted a new position as a Victim Advocate with the Baltimore Police Department in their Family Crimes Unit. Congratulations Divita! We wish you much success!
- **Robin Washington (Class of 2017)** - On November 19th, Robin earned her credentials as an advocate through NACP, and then celebrated her birthday on December 26th. To top that off, she's expecting her third great grandchild soon. Wow! That's how you live life to the fullest! Congratulations Robin!

## CERTIFICATION NEWS

*Do you want to be more recognized in the field of Victim Services? Do you want to show people that you are a cut above the rest? Then become a certified Victim Assistance Specialist in the State of Maryland! Social Workers started here too and look how far they have come over the past 10 years! Victim Service Professionals need to unite and do the same thing - so take this important step for your career. Go to [www.rvaam.us](http://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) multiple choice exam; 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/short answer exam; 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 Victims' Rights training and 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 Victims' Rights training and 3 hours of Victim Services Ethics training; b) complete written exam; 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 Victims' Rights training and 3 hours of Victim Services Ethics training; b) complete oral presentation; and c) submit renewal application packet and pay \$75 fee.

All application materials are available online at [www.rvaam.us](http://www.rvaam.us) (click on the Certification tab at the top of the page). Keep an eye out for upcoming prep classes, as well as classes on ethics for renewals. For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Debbie Bradley at [bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org](mailto: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**

Elizabeth Baran

**Level II Victim Assistance Specialist**

Carolyn Hutchings

**Level III Victim Assistance Specialist**

Ariel Ervin

## Just a Thought (Cont.)

Put aside the time to purchase and enjoy a spa product in the quiet of your own home.

Give yourself extra time to enjoy a morning cup of coffee or tea.

Leave yourself a voicemail message of encouragement - play it a few times during the day.

Look in the mirror and say out loud three things you are proud of about yourself - repeat a few times a day.

Download that song you love and play it while taking a walk.

Keep a gratitude journal. Start by writing down 3 things you are thankful for each day, for 21 days. Do not repeat any of your entries, instead look for something new each day.

Look for ways to bring humor into your day.

Connect spiritually and communally.

Get support from a trauma-informed therapist.

Remember the most effective acts of self-care for professionals who deal with trauma on a daily basis are the ones that don't rev up the body or mind. They help to create a necessary sense of inner peace, reduce distractions, strengthen a sense of self-worth, promote social connections with safe and loving people, and remind you that there is still goodness and kindness in the world.

*Essay contributed by Lisa Ferentz, LCSW-C, DAPA. Lisa is a recognized expert in the treatment of trauma and has been in private practice for over 34 years. She is a national and international speaker and consultant, the founder of The Ferentz Institute, and the author of three books, including "Finding Your Ruby Slippers: Transformative Life Lessons From the Therapist's Couch." You can follow Lisa's work at [theferentzintstitute.com](http://theferentzintstitute.com)*

## 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:*

**Criminal Procedure - Victims Services Unit - Victims Compensation** - Establishing a Victim Services Unit in the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention; transferring the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to the Victim Services Unit; transferring the program for sexual assault forensic examinations from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to the Victim Services Unit; requiring, each year, the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention to report on matters related to crime victims by December 31st. This bill has been proposed for the upcoming legislative session in 2018.

**Chapter 159 (House Bill 255) Criminal Procedure - Sexual Assault Victim's Rights - Disposal of Rape Kit Evidence and Notification** - Requiring a specified health care provider to provide a victim of

sexual assault with written information describing the laws and policies governing the testing, preservation, and disposal of a sexual assault evidence collection kit; requiring a hospital or child advocacy center to transfer a sexual assault evidence collection kit to a law enforcement agency within 30 days of the exam; prohibiting a law enforcement agency from destroying or disposing of specified evidence of sexual assault within 20 years of its collection. This bill was approved by Governor Larry Hogan on April 18, 2017, and went into effect on October 1, 2017.

**Chapter 152 (House Bill 152) Child Abuse - Sex Trafficking (Protecting Victims of Sex Trafficking Act of 2017)** - Altering the definition of "sexual abuse" in provisions of law relating to child abuse to include the sex trafficking of a child by any individual; defining the terms of "sexual molestation or exploitation" and "sex trafficking" in provisions of law relating to child abuse. This bill was approved by Governor Larry Hogan on April 18, 2017, and went into effect on October 1, 2017.

**FYI! The Victim Information & Notification Everyday (VINE) and VINE Protective Order programs has been transferred from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention to the Department of Public Safety & Correctional Services** - For inquiries regarding either program, or to request brochures, please contact Stanley Lofton at DPSCS.

## Best Practices

*A Self-Care Cheatsheet: 4 Unusual Tips to Help You Take Better Care of Yourself*

In this busy modern world, it's critical we take the time to look after our-

selves. Our time and energy are finite resources. To help you imagine this, think of two beautiful colored glass bottles filled to the brim with liquid. One bottle is labeled 'time,' and one is labeled 'energy.'



Every time you engage in an activity, whether it's for yourself, or for someone else, pour out the appropriate amount from the time bottle. That's straightforward. The full bottle represents all the time you have across your lifetime, and every activity takes a little time. The bottle becomes steadily more empty as your life progresses ...

The energy bottle is less straightforward. Some activities deplete your energy, and others replenish it. Many of the activities that increase the fluid in the energy bottle are self-care activities - and those activities are likely to differ for everyone. But if you only engage in activities that deplete your bottle, that is, all the activities that you take part in pour a little of the liquid away, eventually you will have no energy left for you, or anyone in your life. You'll be empty. And you'll feel unhappy, exhausted, and have had enough. But you can prevent yourself from depleting your energy bottle altogether by engaging in a couple self-care activities on a regular basis. Here are 5 tips to try this week:

1. **Write a self-care journal** - what gets measured gets managed. You need to pay attention for a little while to how your energy and time bottles are getting depleted and, in the case of the energy bottle, re-filled. Buy a nice notebook, and scribble in it each day the things you do to take care of yourself, and

how you feel after different activities. Use your notes to get to know yourself better.

2. **Tackle a tough task** - Positive psychology research shows that when we set goals and achieve them, we feel happier. You probably have an 'elephant' (a big/dream project) or a 'frog' (an unpleasant task) on your list. Pick one, and get out everything you need for the task. Set a timer for just 15 minutes. Now ask yourself two questions - a) what are you trying to achieve (what's the end goal)? b) what's the first thing you can do that will move you a step closer to that goal? For example, if you wanted to organize your closet (a common 'frog' task), then the first thing you might do is take some garbage bags and/or boxes to your room. Once you've answered the two questions, then press 'go' on the timer and start on that 'first thing.' At the end of 15 minutes, reward yourself by doing a different activity for 5 minutes. Then if you feel like it, carry on for another 15 minutes.

3. **Say no** - while it's good to help others, boundaries are a critical part of self-care, and many people find it challenging to maintain these. It can feel counter-intuitive to say no as we often feel as if we 'should' be open to new possibilities and whatever comes along. Consider the things you have been asked to do over the next week. Ask yourself the following about all of the things that 'weigh' on you and give you a bad feeling - a) is it part of something you've already agreed to do (e.g., part of your job description)? b) do you want to do it? c) why do you want to do it? d) what will you learn from the experience? e) what have you currently got on your plate? f) is it physically possible for you to do the activity in the timeframe allotted to the appropriate quality? Now, choose one of the things on your list that you

feel comfortable should be a 'no.' Now say it - and when you do, be clear and specific, but don't apologize or over-explain. For example, you could say something like, "Thank you for the opportunity. I'm not available that evening, so I'm going to have to decline."

4. **Say yes** - Ironically, some of us may need to focus on how to 'say no' and how to 'say yes' at the same time. Many times we bypass opportunities for self-growth because of fear. Fear of trying something new, fear of failure, fear of rejection. But many of those opportunities that may push you out of your comfort zone a bit are the things that can help you grow as an individual, and actually will support your self-care. So, this week, say yes to something you wouldn't normally say yes to. It can be something small (e.g., "would you like to try a sample of [fill in the blank]?") or something bigger (e.g., "would you like to join us for a drink after work?" or "would you like to take the lead on this project?"). The point is, take a chance and say yes to a new opportunity. The outcome may surprise you.

Remember, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOU! It's good to want to help and support others, but there is nothing selfish about self-care. If you want to be able to give your best to the world, the mature and responsible thing to do is to take care of your own needs. There's not much you can do about the fluid in your time bottle, but the energy bottle, that you have control over. So make sure you top off that bottle regularly.

*Essay adapted from material published by Ellen Bard (<http://ellenbard.com>). Ellen is an Associate Fellow of the British Psychology Society, and registered with the Health Professions Council (HPC) in the UK, and for several years she wrote a popular blog and resources hub to provide evidence-*

*based advice and support to people on dealing with the challenges and demands of today's working environment. She has been featured in several high profile publications – including the Huffington Post, The Guardian, BBC Radio 4 and the Financial Times – as a thought leader in productivity, and the challenges of work-life balance in the modern fast-paced, technology-enabled world.*

Debbie Bradley via email at [bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org](mailto:bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org) or by phone at (410) 638-4905.



## 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](mailto: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!

## NEW RVAAM WEBSITE!!

If you have not yet seen RVAAM's new website, be sure to take a moment and do so! If we don't say so ourselves, we think it's top notch! Check it out at: [www.rvaam.us](http://www.rvaam.us)

## Alumni Directory

The 2017 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

## Editorial Board

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**Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in April 2018**

