



Victims' Voice NEWSLETTER

Volume #1 | Issue #4 | Montana Department of Corrections Victim Services



ANNOUNCEMENT

During this quarterly issue of Victims' Voice, we highlight DOC Interstate Compact, provide information regarding human trafficking in Montana, honor an incredible victim impact speaker, touch on stalking and share insight into the trauma informed practices of DOC Victim Services.

The weekly educational hour continues to expand with exceptional speakers and participants each week! If you are interested in participating or speaking at a future event, please let us know.

As we develop every issue of Victims' Voice, I am reminded of the amazing collaborations and partners throughout Montana who strive to ensure safe communities and actively promote victims voices. Thank you!

We welcome any feedback, content requests and ideas for future topics. Please email CorVictimLiaison@mt.gov.

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Victim Impact Panel Speaker Highlight



Sharon Wilson

We would like to recognize one of our talented Victim Impact Panel speakers, Sharon Wilson, for her incredible dedication and devotion to the VIP program and her community. Sharon's willingness to speak at a moments' notice with a positive, enthusiastic attitude, is nothing short of amazing. She strives to create positive change in her community and continues to help victims of crime in her everyday life. Sharon manages a crime victim support Facebook page, *Living Our Story*, and has a passion for helping others grow and heal from their trauma.

Home Base: Butte, MT

Years Speaking: 9+

Crime Victimization: Robbery with a Weapon

What do you want other victims of crime and victim services providers to know about VIP?

"I want others to know that VIP is therapeutic for me. I believe you get out of it, just as much as you put in. It's a safe place to be yourself. Happy, sad, angry, and confused self. There are no expectations put on you. And it's been a place of connection, acceptance and learning. I'm forever grateful for VIP."

What encourages you to keep speaking?

"What encourages me to keep speaking is the silence from victims. The ones that are not ready, or are too afraid. I speak because if I can change the direction of one offender from committing another crime, or if I can show other victims how to use their voice, then I can say I've accomplished something. I've learned to find and use my voice, now, I just want to help others find theirs."

Thank you Sharon!



Saving a Place at the Table

MONTANA STATE CAPITOL
APRIL 5-6, 2021

DOC Victim Services will be displaying an exhibit in the Capitol rotunda on April 5 & 6, 2021, during the legislative session. The exhibit is called "Saving a Place at the Table" also known as "Empty Place at the Table" and will feature place settings in honor of those affected by crime in Montana.

Each place setting is a memorial to the victims and tells their personal story. The memorial will consist of a dining table surrounded by empty chairs, adorned with personal items belonging to local victims. This serves as a powerful reminder that the tragic deaths and even the loss of oneself, leave an empty place not only in the lives of their families but in the community as well. The idea behind these place settings is to articulate how there is never a single victim of a crime. When you consider the impact beyond the victims—crime has a ripple effect that touches not just the victim but their family, friends, neighborhood, and community.

Please join us in honoring Montana victims and increase awareness and understanding of the impacts of crime in our state.

Interstate Compact Office

<https://cor.mt.gov/ProbationParole/ProbationParoleHome#interstate>

COMPACT COMMISSIONER

Cathy Gordon, the Montana Compact Commissioner, and three agents, coordinate the movement and data tracking of more than 1,600 adult and youth offenders among states and monitors compact rules and regulations related to the supervision of interstate offenders.

The section provides Montana P&P officers with technical expertise and assistance in interpreting laws and potential liability issues related to the interstate compact. The section also answers questions from the public and works closely with the 23 P&P field offices, five prisons and their institutional P&P officers, and 65 adult interstate compact offices throughout the United States.

Purpose of Interstate Compact

1. To enhance public safety and provide a continuum of supervision mechanism for individuals who travelled outside their resident state, committed a crime and were sentenced, but have no other reason to remain in the non-resident state. Offenders can continue their employment and pay their financial obligations help the economy
2. To protect the rights of victims through the control and regulation of offender movement and provide for better tracking of offenders and enforcement of policies and rules. Each state has a council of representatives from victim groups; legislative, executive, and judicial branches; and law enforcement.

Top Receiver States (From MT)

Washington, California, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon

Top Sender States (To MT)

Idaho, North Dakota, Oregon, Colorado, Wyoming

For more information about the national compact, go to the [Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision \(ICAOS\)](#).

VICTIMS' RIGHTS

The Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision (ICAOS) is proud to partner with the National Organization for Victims Assistance (NOVA) to ensure victims of crime are treated with dignity, fairness and respect, and to promote victim's rights and safety when probationers and parolees are transferred across state lines.

An ICAOS victim representative is available in every state to assist victims and family members with questions regarding these rules and victim notification.

VINE notifications registered in Montana will no longer send notifications once an offender has successfully interstate compacted to another state.

Victims may still receive notifications from another state but must contact the receiving state NOVA victim representative.

NOVA and ICAOS have collaborated to establish a new resource for victims of crime and family members who are seeking support and advocacy when offenders are moved across state lines.

You may email ICAOS-help@trynova.org and a NOVA victim representative will reach out to you within one business day. Together, NOVA and ICAOS are committed to promoting victims' rights and safety.

ICOTS offers a Public Web Portal which allows the public to search for information about offenders who have transferred supervision to another state or are in another state with permission while the transfer of supervision is under consideration.

To access the portal, visit <https://pwp.interstatecompact.org/PWP/searches>



VIEWING THE WORLD FROM A TRAUMA-INFORMED LENS

BY: JAMIE ROGERS, VICTIM PROGRAMS MANAGER, MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

With the contention, division and hostility broadcast through the media and social media, a little kindness and compassion go a long way. Kindness and compassion are fundamental to viewing the world, and our jobs, through a trauma-informed lens. In the criminal justice system, this requires a culture shift.

In the victim services world, a trauma-informed lens teaches us that trauma is prevalent. Trauma presents itself in victim stories, sometimes through anger, hypervigilance, and hopelessness.

As seasoned victim service providers, it is our priority to ensure we meet victims where they are. That means acknowledging trauma is present and the victim gets to “own their story.” One of my wise team members, Kim Doherty, made a very valuable comment, “We do not expect victims to follow our narrative.” We don’t tell victims how to tell their story because we know that the sharing of the story promotes healing for the victim and stories change and evolve, ultimately resulting in a survivor. We try not to judge words or perceptions, instead, we offer support, resources and healing opportunities. This is trauma-informed practice. Through this, we often see perceptions change.

Working through a trauma-informed lens is the ability to understand that others’ perspectives may differ from our own and are still valuable. It’s the willingness to remain open to learning from one another and creating a more cohesive system for victims despite differing experiences and opinions. It promotes the willingness to be inclusive and creates a rich, collaborative community of people whose intent is to serve others. You are an essential part of

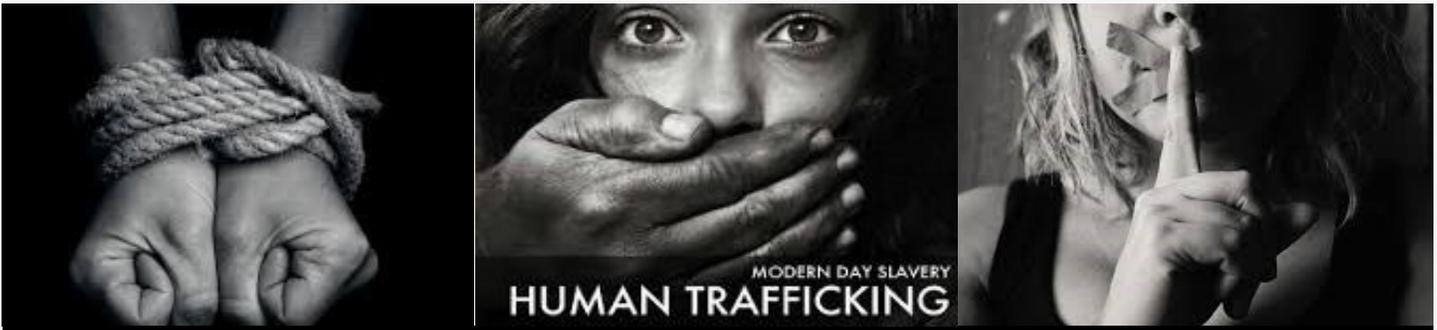
this community. Together we make communities safer and promote the voices of victims.

Let’s be honest, some of us are skeptical when we look at this list. That’s okay. Our life experiences shape how we view situations, information and people. A trauma-informed lens does not excuse behaviors or negate consequences. It looks at the behaviors, acknowledges that trauma is prevalent, and recognizes that this moment in time is not the end of the story— not for victims, not for staff, and not for offenders.

Thank you to all the staff, victims, victim service providers and criminal justice stakeholders who understand trauma prevalence and strive for safer, healthier communities through a trauma-informed lens.

Non-Trauma-Informed	Trauma-Informed
Power Over	Power With
You can’t change	Your brain is plastic
Judging	Observing
People need fixing first	People need safety first
Operate from the dominant culture	Culture humility
People are out to get you	People live up to the trust you give them
Right/Wrong	Multiple viewpoints
Helping	Learning
“You’re crazy!”	“It makes sense.”
Compliance/Obedience	Empowerment/Collaboration
Need to know basis for info	Transparency and predictability
Presenting issue	Whole person and history
“Us and Them”	We’re all in this together
Labels, Pathology	Behaviors as communication
Fear-based	Empathy-based
I’m here to fix you	Support healing
Didactic	Participatory
People make bad choices	People who feel unsafe do unsafe things
Behavior viewed as problem	Behavior viewed as solution
What’s wrong with you?	What happened to you?
Blame/Shame	Respect
Goal is to do things the right way	Goal is to connect
Prescriptive	Choice
People are bad	People are doing the best they can
Consider only research and evidence	Consider also lived experience

Source: ACES Connection



HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN MONTANA

January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Human trafficking is a crime in which force, fraud or coercion is used to compel a person to perform labor, services or commercial sex. It affects all populations: adults, children, men, women, foreign nationals and U.S. citizens, and all economic classes.

Human trafficking can happen to anyone but some people are more vulnerable than others. Significant risk factors include recent migration or relocations, substance use, mental health concerns, involvement with the children welfare system and being a runaway or homeless youth. Often, traffickers identify and leverage their victims' vulnerabilities in order to create dependency.

In September 2019, Montana Department of Justice (DOJ) hired two full-time agents to work solely on human trafficking investigations. The team is housed under DOJ's Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) and is based in Billings. These positions mean for that the first time, Montana has state-level law enforcement dedicated exclusively to working human trafficking cases.¹

What Can You Do?

- **Know the signs and pay attention**
- **Report a tip** : National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888 or text HELP to BEFREE (233733) or email help@humantraffickinghotline.org
- **Spread the word**: About awareness and resources in your community
- **Think before you shop**: Consider how you shop and eat. Who made your clothes? Who prepared your food?

Local Resource in Montana

Hope Line
(844) 765-HOPE

Info:
(406) 598-5674
info@hercampaign.org

P.O. Box 51451
Billings, MT 59105

Office:
1536 Mullooney Ln #201
Billings, MT 59101



The mission of the HER Campaign is to help HER heal, grow, and find purpose. The group located in Billings does this through bringing awareness, building community, and providing opportunity for restoration. Together, they are creating a World where FREEDOM gets the final say.

The HER Campaign partners with Rescue America, providing a 24/7 hotline with real people waiting to assist callers. The 24/7 hotline will facilitate your safe and secure exit from the life, as well as next steps to begin your new life journey.

The HER Refuge Family Alliance is a network of families mentored and trained by HER Campaign to integrate survivors into their families to provide long term residential care throughout the journey of healing.³

SINCE 2007 

Total Contacts: 650
Total Cases: 164

Total Victims - Moderate: 241 
Total Victims - High: 111

2019 statistics are current as of 12/31/2019.



2019 Statistics

Gender:
Female: 29 Male: 8

Age:
Adult: 25 Minor: 13

Warning Signs of Human Trafficking

- Fearful of police/authorities
- Have little freedom of movement
- Living with employer
- Poor living conditions
- Multiple people in cramped space
- Inability to speak to individual alone
- Answers appear to be scripted and rehearsed
- Employer is holding identity documents
- Signs of physical abuse
- Submissive or fearful
- Unpaid or paid very little
- Under 18 and in prostitution

Type of Trafficking:

Sex Trafficking: 19
Sex and Labor: 4
Labor Trafficking 4
Not Specified: 11

Top 5: Sex Trafficking Venues in Montana

1. Commercial-Front Brothels
2. Hotel-/Motel-Based
3. Other Venues
4. Pornography
5. Residential Brothels

1. Montana Department of Justice, Human Trafficking <https://dojmt.gov/agooffice/human-trafficking/>
2. National Human Trafficking Hotline <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/state/montana>
3. HER Campaign <https://hercampaign.org/about/>

“Trauma is personal. It does not disappear if it is not validated. When it is ignored or invalidated the silent screams continue internally heard only by the one held captive. When someone enters the pain and hears the screams, healing can begin.”— Danielle Bernock, Emerging with Wings

UPCOMING Events

Statewide Weekly Education Hour

Every Tuesday 9:30-10:30a.m.

January

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day (Jan. 11)

National Stalking Awareness Month

Jan. 5: Crime Victim’s Compensation

Jan. 12: Indigenous Issues

Jan. 19: Missoula Victim/Witness Coordinator

Jan. 26: MCASDV Legislative Update

February

Love without Fear Week (Feb. 14-20)

Feb. 2: The Journey of a Childhood Sexual Abuse Survivor

Feb. 9: Post-Conviction Relief Process

Feb. 16: Vicarious & Secondary Trauma

Feb. 23: Communication & Empathy: How to Handle Verbal Abuse

March

March 2: Fatality Review Commission/HOPE Cards

March 9: CASA

March 16: Jane Do No More

March 23: Human Trafficking

March 30: Fergus County Victim Witness Coordinator: A Rural Perspective

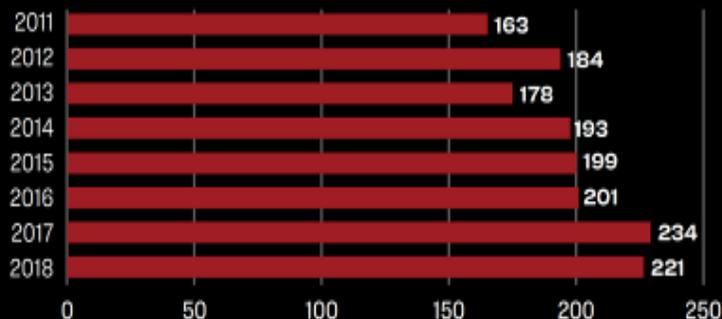
For a schedule of the weekly speakers, please email CORVictimLiaison@mt.gov or visit www.cor.mt.gov/victims

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)
+1 406-318-5487 United States, Billings (Toll)
Conference ID: 108 988 550#

Subject to change

JANUARY IS NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS MONTH KNOW IT NAME IT STOP IT

STALKING INCIDENTS IN MONTANA



National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) stalking incidents with violation of MCA 45-5-220

HOW TO CONTACT US

Our victim program office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (MT) Monday through Friday except state and federal holidays. It is our practice to return calls within 48 business hours. Please leave a voicemail including your name, number, and any pertinent information you can provide.

Address: 5 S. Last Chance Gulch
Helena, MT 59601

P.O. Box 201301

Helpline: (406) 444-0447 or

Toll Free (888) 223-6332

Fax: (406) 444-4920

Website: <https://cor.mt.gov/victims>

Email: CORVictimLiaison@mt.gov



Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/MTDeptCorrections/>

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGfBIY9Dcf-3hfWqfqnu4wi274Tcpxeyw>