



Victims' Voice NEWSLETTER

Volume #2 | Issue #3 | Montana Department of Corrections Victim Services



ANNOUNCEMENT

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

The impact of domestic violence can be seen in our work environment, the criminal justice system, and in our personal lives. Domestic violence is the exertion of power and control. It is not an anger issue. In fact, victims are often not believed because their perpetrator is personable and well liked at work and socially. How can you help? First, believe. Second, become familiar with the characteristics/dynamics of domestic violence and the services available.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Victims' Voice newsletter. We welcome any feedback, content suggestions, and ideas for future publications. Send those to CorVictimLiaison@mt.gov.

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2021 MONTANA CRIME PREVENTION CONFERENCE

MULTIDISCIPLINARY SOLUTIONS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

Montana Board of Crime Control

Victim Liaison Project: The Road to Supporting Victim Services

Tawny Rogers, state victim liaison, provided an overview on of the Victim Liaison Project recently at the Montana Board of Crime Control Conference. Tawny and Jennifer Buckley, tribal victim liaison, identify the project's goal as seeking and collaborating with Montana victim service providers and victims to identify and address gaps that victims encounter throughout Montana. The objective is to make services available to all victims despite their geographic location. It is important to identify the service gaps, flow of information and other critical components of victims' rights from the moment a victim experiences victimization, seeks services, determines to move forward (or not) with reporting the crime, enters the criminal justice system, navigates post-conviction processes and beyond.



The data collected from this project will allow the Montana Board of Crime Control (MBCC) to identify which regions have access to victim services and which do not, which victim service providers have access to essential trainings, and which still need access, and more. With this information, MBCC can map the gaps and overlaps pertaining to victim services and propose evidence-based recommendations to the board. The board can then determine whether existing resources can be reallocated or if new services need to be created, prioritize funding in areas with the greatest needs, and avoid duplicating efforts where services already exist.

"We are hoping to form strong working relationships with and between service providers to implement a Montana Victim Services Network and create an updated map of victim services in Montana..." - Tawny Rogers

If you are interested in more information about the project, or want to provide input regarding the needs assessment and gaps in victim services, please contact Tawny Rogers at Tawny.Rogers@mt.gov or Jennifer Buckley at Jennifer.Buckley@mt.gov.



Domestic Violence Post Separation

Post-separation abuse is often what we encounter in courts and in the post-conviction portion of the criminal justice system. It does not just affect the victim; it has both immediate and long-lasting effects on children resulting in high adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). ACE's is a term used to describe any traumatic event during childhood such as divorce, violence, emotional abuse, neglect, substance abuse or even an environment that undermines a child's sense of bonding or stability.

SIGNS OF ABUSE

www.ncadv.org

Anyone can be an abuser. They come from all groups, all cultures, all religions, all economic levels, and all backgrounds. They can be your neighbor, your pastor, your friend, your child's teacher, a relative, a coworker -- anyone. It is important to note that the majority of abusers are only violent with their current or past intimate partners. One study found 90% of abusers do not have criminal records and abusers are generally law-abiding outside the home.

What Traits Do Abusers Have in Common?

There is no one typical, detectable personality of an abuser. However, they do often display common characteristics.

- An abuser often denies the existence or minimizes the seriousness of the violence and its effect on the victim and other family members.
- An abuser objectifies the victim and often sees them as their property or sexual objects.
- An abuser has low self-esteem and feels powerless and ineffective in the world. He or she may appear successful, but internally, they feel inadequate.
- An abuser externalizes the causes of their behavior. They blame their violence on circumstances such as stress, their partner's behavior, a "bad day," on alcohol, drugs, or other factors.
- An abuser may be pleasant and charming between periods of violence and is often seen as a "nice person" to others outside the relationship.

How Does Abuse Affect Victims?

Domestic violence affects all aspects of a victim's life. When abuse victims are able to safely escape and remain free from their abuser, they often survive with long-lasting and sometimes permanent effects to their mental and physical health; relationships with friends, family, and children; their career; and their economic well-being.

Victims of domestic violence experience an array of emotions and feelings from the abuse inflicted upon them by their abuser, both within and following the relationship. They may also resort to extremes in an effort to cope with the abuse. Victims of domestic violence may:

- Want the abuse to end, but not the relationship
- Feel isolated
- Feel depressed
- Feel helpless
- Be unaware of what services are available to help them
- Be embarrassed of their situation
- Fear judgement or stigmatization if they reveal the abuse
- Deny or minimize the abuse or make excuses for the abuser
- Still love their abuser
- Withdraw emotionally
- Distance themselves from family or friends
- Be impulsive or aggressive
- Feel financially dependent on their abuser
- Feel guilt related to the relationship
- Feel shame
- Have anxiety
- Have suicidal thoughts
- Abuse alcohol or drugs
- Be hopeful that their abuser will change and/or stop the abuse
- Have religious, cultural, or other beliefs that reinforce staying in the relationship
- Have no support from friends or family
- Fear cultural, community, or societal backlash that may hinder escape or support
- Feel like they have nowhere to go or no ability to get away
- Fear they will not be able to support themselves after they escape the abuser
- Have children in common with their abuser and fear for their safety if the victim leaves
- Have pets or other animals they don't want to leave
- Be distrustful of local law enforcement, courts, or other systems if the abuse is revealed
- Have had unsupportive experiences with friends, family, employers, law enforcement, courts, child protective services, etc. and believe they won't get help if they leave or fear retribution if they do (e.g. they fear losing custody of their children to the abuser)

These are among the many reasons victims of domestic violence either [choose to stay](#) in abusive relationships or feel they are unable to leave.

Full article at ncadv.org

“It has been said, ‘time heals all wounds.’ I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time, the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens. But it is never gone.”

-Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy

Thank you for remembering all crimes have an impact.

Being the victim of any crime can elicit a variety of reactions. Many of us have encountered, angry, hostile victims; hurt, emotionally devastated victims; and determined, resilient victims. All crimes have an impact we don't always see or know.

Losing a loved one to violence is devastating. Grieving is personal, and each individual grieves differently. The trauma of loss is often compounded by participation in a court process. While it may be easy to see the impact a crime such as murder can have on family and friends of the victim, other crimes can also have deep and lasting impact.

In the aftermath of crime, many individuals experience fear, anger, resentment, depression, self-blame, and/or a sense of loss. They may ask, "Why me?" or second-guess their reaction during the crime. The victim of crime may begin to doubt their judgment and ability to assess others' characters and their intentions, causing them to reassess those around them, even family and friends.

The survivor may also be skeptical of the criminal justice system and those who work within the system. They typically have limited knowledge of criminal justice system processes.

Despite the differences among all crimes, they have one trait in common for the victim—the event is unexpected, uncontrollable, and can create a traumatic reaction. We only have control over how we respond to these reactions. We have the power to change the experience victims of crime have during the post-conviction portion of Montana's criminal justice system. And we do.

Thank you to all corrections staff, criminal justice stakeholders, and victim service providers who understand the impact of crime and do your part in making sure the voices of victims are heard and recognized.

- DOC Victim Services

HOW TO CONTACT US

The Victim Services 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 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=PLGfBLY9Dcf-3hfWqfqnu4wi274Tcpxeyw>

UPCOMING Events

Statewide Weekly Education Hour

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

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

OCTOBER

*Domestic Violence Awareness Month
National Crime Prevention Month*

October 5: Montana National Guard Victim Services– SHARP

October 12: Sexual Assault Response/ Reality of Rape Kits

October 19: NCADV– Stephanie Paizanski

October 26: Duluth Power and Control Model

NOVEMBER

National Native American Heritage Month

November 2: Ten Men– The Fight Against Violence

November 9: the MMIW Series– Why? Who? What can we do?

November 16: Montana Legal Services Attorney– Providing Legal Services to the Elderly

November 23: Missoula Project Beacon

DECEMBER

Universal Human Rights Month

Schedule is TBD

SCHEDULE

For a schedule of the weekly speakers, or if you would like to speak, please email CORVictimLiaison@mt.gov or visit www.cor.mt.gov/victims

HOW TO ACCESS

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

CONTACT INFORMATION SURVEY

Please fill out this SurveyMonkey link to provide your contact information to be available to the statewide education hour attendees:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6RMM2F8>



Empty Place at the Table

The DOC's Victim Services team will be displaying an exhibit a community near you, in the coming months and would like to extend the healing opportunity to Montana victims of crime. The exhibit is called "Saving a Place at the Table" also known as "Empty Place at the Table" and features place settings provided by victims and survivors of crime representing the loss of loved ones or some part of themselves as a result of a criminal act.

The trauma of a crime does not end when there is a conviction. The struggle for victims and survivors is a lifelong journey to healing. We hope to raise awareness about the impact of crime on Montana families and communities and foster understanding about the journey they face.

If you or someone you know would like to participate in this event, please contact us at CORVictimLiaison@mt.gov.



Empty Place at the Table held at the Montana Capitol in 2020
Kim Doherty, Monica Huffman, Allison Smaaladen & Jamie Rogers