



Victims' Voice NEWSLETTER

Volume #2 | Issue #1 | Montana Department of Corrections Victim Services



ANNOUNCEMENT

Remember, April is a busy month for awareness. It is Crime Victim Rights Week, Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, and National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Why do we need a month to recognize these issues?

Montana really is a small community. Circumstances that create crime victim survivors, sexual assault survivors, and child abuse and neglect survivors aren't events that only happen to other people, in different cities and towns. Instead, these survivors are our neighbors and members of our community. In April, we honor the right to safe, protected communities. From the DOC's team of victim liaisons to survivors and those individuals who serve and protect them – thank you.

Please 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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VICTIM IMPACT PANEL SPEAKER OF THE QUARTER



CRAIG CRAWFORD

Home Base: Helena, MT

Years Speaking: 7+

Crime Victimization: The elementary school, where I was principal, was robbed by three kids high on meth on a Saturday night. They stole more than just electronics. They stole trust, safety, and security.

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

It makes a difference –both for victims and the offenders we get to talk to. I believe each of us “owns” our stories more and more each time we give a talk. It’s therapeutic for victims and the offenders to own their crimes a little more each time. I believe these panels help the offenders grow and lessen their chances of recidivism.

What is a favorite memory of VIP thus far?

I did a talk at Elkhorn Treatment Center one time. As I walked in, one of the residents, not on the panel of offenders I was addressing, recognized me. She had been one of the parents in my elementary school. I had her arrested in the lobby of the school when she came to the school high on meth and wanted to pick up her daughter.

“ (Offenders) are people in my world....my community. My world does better if they do better.”

She was on probation already. The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services took her daughter away from her on the spot. It was an incredibly difficult decision for me, but was the right decision. She wrote me a letter about having seen me and how she was ashamed of herself. She was a part of the next panel I did at Elkhorn and it was great for both of us. She thanked me for what I did and how I cared for her daughter and pledged her focus on remaining clean and getting her daughter back.

Another situation like this happened just last month. I went to get my hair cut. She told me she was an offender on my panel that day and that she was out, clean, and was now the manager of the hair salon. She said my talk really hit her hard and helped her successfully complete the program. She said she didn't want to go backwards. I told her how proud of her I was and how she made my day. She was very kind and complimentary and gave me a great haircut!

What encourages you to keep speaking?

Truthfully, the kids I work with that have incarcerated parents. I want offenders to know the impact they have on their children by being incarcerated and how much it impacts the entire educational system. I want them to fully appreciate the ripples of their crimes and be able to look at their victims in a different and more empathetic way. And the offenders. These are people in my world....my community. My world does better if they do better.

How has speaking helped you?

I am a victim of extreme abuse from a drug addict older sibling as I grew up. My educational career is built on not having bullies in my schools. I fight for kids. The panels have helped me release the guilt I felt about this crime happening at my school and the impacts upon my staff, kids, and families. It has also helped me let go of the anger toward my brother for the years of violent abuse I endured.

I have also started a consulting/public speaking business, focusedconsulting.biz. Each time I get to speak, it helps me hone my abilities. I think if you can get comfy speaking in front of offenders, you can speak to any group. I’ve started writing a book about victimization and ripple effects. These panels have helped me have the confidence that it is a book that needs to be written.

Thank you, Craig!



SUPPORT VICTIMS. BUILD TRUST. ENGAGE COMMUNITIES.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week | April 18–24, 2021

WHAT RIGHTS DO CRIME VICTIMS HAVE IN MONTANA?

MONTANA LEGAL SERVICES | 1-800-666-6899 | WWW.MTLSA.ORG

History: The first Crime Victims Week (later renamed National Crime Victims' Rights Week) was established by Ronald Reagan in 1981 as a part of an expanding initiative to provide for victims of crimes (later manifested in Executive Order 12360, signed in 1982, which established the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime).

Crime Victims' Rights Week is a perfect time to reflect the following rights:

Right to Information and Notification

- ◆ Ask your Law Enforcement agency for a Victims' Rights packet
- ◆ You have a right to obtain contact information for the investigation officer and the prosecuting attorney. You may obtain certain documents related to the investigation of the crime. You have a right to one free copy of public documents in the court file.
- ◆ You have a right to be notified of arrests, the release of the accused, any charges filed, the time and place of hearings, plea negotiations, and information on sentencing.

Right to Confidentiality

- ◆ You can request the address, phone number, workplace of you and your family be kept confidential. If the crime was a sex offense, your identity cannot be disclosed.

Right to Fair Treatment

- ◆ Victims and their families cannot be fired for participating in criminal proceedings. You can get help notifying school, work, or creditors about your situation.
- ◆ You have the right to have an advocate present during interviews.

Right to be Present

- ◆ You and your family cannot be excluded from court hearings, with a few exceptions.

Right to Consultation with Prosecuting Attorney

- ◆ The prosecutor must consult with you about certain parts of the case.

Right to be Heard

- ◆ You can tell your story and give your opinion about the offender's sentence.

Right to Restitution

- ◆ You can recover money from a convicted offender for damages such as medical bills, damaged property, and lost wages.

Safety

- ◆ You can apply for a protective order to keep the offender away from you and your family.

18 U.S. Code § 3771 - Crime victims' rights
MCA 46-Chapter 21: Treatment of Victims and Witnesses

The DOC Victim Services team works to educate victims about their rights throughout the criminal justice process. We strive to support victims, build trust, and engage communities to honor and assist victims of crimes.

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If your rights are being violated, call Montana Legal Services at 1-800-666-6899 or visit www.mtlsa.org

LISTEN.
BELIEVE.
SUPPORT.

EVERY
73
SECONDS
an American is
sexually assaulted.



**YOUR VOICE
HAS POWER.**
USE IT TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS

Sexual Assault
Awareness Month

#SAAM

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

ASK A SEX ABUSE SURVIVOR

In his interactive show, Ask a Sex Abuse Survivor, childhood sexual abuse survivor, Michael Broussard, shares the story of the abuse he suffered as a child and of his path to healing as an adult. Along the way, he also invites audience members to ask questions, make observations, and share their own stories. Ask a Sex Abuse Survivor is Michael's way of taking back the power from his abuser and reaching out to his fellow survivors to tell them they can do the same.

Email: Askasurvivor@gmail.com | Website: <http://sexabusesurvivor.com/>

Jane Doe
no more

AUTHOR: BARBIE JENKINS

Jane Doe No More (JDNM) is a survivor led organization launched in 2007 in Connecticut that empowers survivors to share their stories, advance their healing and educate the public about the complexities of sexual assault.

Founder Donna Palomba was the victim of an in home invasion which resulted in a brutal rape and further re-traumatization by her local police department. Her experience is the platform on which JDNM was built. JDNM offers the Safe Student Initiative educating students from middle school to college through age-appropriate, survivor-led interactive programs including safe and unsafe touch, sexual respect, healthy relationships, consent, bystander intervention and rape culture. JDNM's video, "Duty Trumps Doubt," changes perspectives through our trauma-informed video and survivor-led presentations. These are specifically designed to help law enforcement, medical personnel, legal professionals and society have a better understanding about the devastating effects sexual crimes have on victims.

Barb Jenkins is a trained NW Regional Survivor Speak representative and responsible for bringing this dynamic program to MT. This organization is a valuable asset to give more survivors a platform to heal by using their voices to affect change in this sensitive arena. Presentations can be either in person or virtual.

Please visit www.janedoenomore.org for more information.

VICTIM-SHAMING MYTHS

Myth 1: "You are not a victim! Get out of a victim mindset."

- You have been a victim, and that is a fact, not a manufactured identity. There is no shame in being a victim and it does not take away our ability to realize we are one or have been one. We can be both victims and survivors. We can make steps toward recovery even while acknowledging and honoring the adversity we have endured.

Myth 2: "You must forgive an abuser in order to heal. Don't be bitter or angry."

- Forgiveness is a personal journey and skilled trauma therapists understand that forcing premature forgiveness, especially before traumas are processed, can actually hinder the healing journey.

Myth 3: "Abusers just need love, understanding and more hugs."

- While we'd all love to live in a world where everyone is capable of change so long as we give them a chance, this belief completely dismisses the reality of predators who never change their ways and actually further exploit us when we continue to let them back in our lives time and time again.

Myth 4: "What about the abuser? They had it so rough! We are all interconnected, so we have to help each other."

- Regardless of someone's childhood upbringing, abuse is never justified. Remember: there are many victims who have also had rough childhoods, past traumas and self-esteem issues, but never used that as an excuse to abuse another person.

Myth 5: "Everything is a mirror. Send positive energy to this person and situation and it will be reflected back to you!"

- When spirituality is misused to blame ourselves, free abusers from accountability and repress our emotions, it can become dangerous to our mental health. It's far more healthy to process your trauma with a trained professional before even thinking about sending love and positivity to anyone who has violated you.

<https://themighty.com/2019/07/victim-shaming-myths-trauma/>

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month



WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

Child abuse isn't just about black eyes. While physical abuse is shocking due to the marks it leaves, not all signs of child abuse are as obvious. Ignoring a child's needs, putting them in unsupervised, dangerous situations, exposing them to sexual situations, or making them feel worthless or stupid are also forms of child abuse and neglect—and they can leave deep, lasting scars on kids.

Regardless of the type of abuse, the result is serious emotional harm. But there is help available. If you suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect, it's important to speak out. By identifying the problem as early as possible, both the child and the abuser can get the help they need.

WARNING SIGNS

Emotional Abuse:

- Be excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong
- Show extremes in behavior
- Not seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver

Physical Abuse:

- Be always watchful and "on alert," as if waiting for something bad to happen
- Shy away from touch, flinch at sudden movements, or seem afraid to go home
- Wear inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries

Child Neglect:

- Wear ill-fitting, filthy, or inappropriate clothing for the weather
- Have consistently bad hygiene
- Be frequently unsupervised or left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations

Sexual Abuse:

- Have trouble walking or sitting
- Display knowledge of sexual acts inappropriate for their age, or even exhibit seductive behavior
- Make strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reasons
- Not want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities
- Try to run away from home

HOW TO HELP AN ABUSED OR NEGLECTED CHILD

Avoid denial and remain calm. A common reaction to news as unpleasant and shocking as child abuse is denial. However, if you display denial to a child, or show shock or disgust at what they are saying, the child may be afraid to continue and will shut down. As hard as it may be, remain as calm and reassuring as you can.

Don't interrogate. Let the child explain to you in their own words what happened, but don't interrogate the child or ask leading questions. This may confuse and fluster the child and make it harder for them to continue their story.

Reassure the child that they did nothing wrong. It takes a lot for a child to come forward about abuse. Reassure them that you

take what they said seriously, and that it is not their fault.

Safety comes first. If you feel that your safety or the safety of the child would be threatened if you tried to intervene, leave it to the professionals. You may be able to provide more support later.

Call 911 or local law enforcement if you suspect child abuse or neglect or have immediate concerns.



“Awareness is the greatest agent for change.” - Eckhart Tolle

UPCOMING Events

Statewide Weekly Education Hour

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

April

April 6: Missoula Prosecutor & Special Victims Counsel

April 13: Sexual Assault Survivor: Jane Do No More

April 20: Group Facilitation and Management

April 27: Importance of Early Disclosure- Sexual Assault Survivor

The Friendship Center is also hosting events the month of April:
<https://www.thefriendshipcenter.org/>

May

May 4: Understanding Sex Offender Treatment

May 11: Factors that Increase/Decrease Trauma

May 18: Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI)

May 25: Dan Murphy

June

June 1: The Stages of Group Dynamics: Dave Garcia

June 8: Prison Paws: Montana Women’s Prison: Jen Severud

June 15: Passages Culinary Arts Program (CAP)

June 29: VA Domestic Violence Services

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](tel:+14063185487) United States, Billings (Toll)
Conference ID: 108 988 550#

Subject to change

APRIL

Child Abuse Prevention Month
Sexual Assault Awareness Month
National Crime Victims’ Rights Week (April 18-24)
Montana National Guard Fair (April 21)

May

Mental Health Awareness Month

June

National Safety Month
LGBTQ Pride Month

Empty 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 “Empty Place at the Table” also known as “Saving a Place at the Table” and will feature place settings in honor of those affected by crime in Montana.

Anyone is welcome to visit the exhibit!

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 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>