

Survivor Voices: Elevate, Engage, Effect Change

By Angie McCown, Director



This year National Crime Victims' Rights Week will be commemorated April 23-29, 2023. National Crime Victims' Rights Week was established by President Ronald Reagan in 1981 as part of an initiative to address the needs of crime victims. In 1982, it evolved into the creation of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime to conduct

a review of national, state, and local policies and programs affecting crime victims. This review involved interviewing criminal justice and victim service professionals, but more importantly it involved speaking to crime victim survivors whose lives had been altered by violent crime. The Task Force devised a list of recommendations to help crime

victims receive financial, medical, and legal assistance. Since 1981, every year, this week is an opportunity for crime victim survivors, and criminal justice and victim service professionals to share the effect violent crime has on individuals, families, and communities, and to promote laws, policies, and programs to assist crime victims.

This year's theme calls upon communities to amplify the voices of crime victim survivors once again and to commit to creating an environment where survivors have the confidence that they will be heard, believed, and supported.

To read the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime Final Report: <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/ovc/87299.pdf>



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Message of Thanks

By Derrelynn Perryman, Vice-Chairman
Texas Board of Criminal Justice



2022 was a challenging year for so many of us. It seems like daily we see stories of people being hurt in so many ways. Victims of crime see others join their ranks and do what they can. Victim Advocates are on the front lines helping people pick up the pieces after the worst moments of their lives. It's

easy to get discouraged, tired, overwhelmed. First responders keep responding no matter how daunting the tasks have become.

I want to remind you all that although you don't get to hear it often enough, what you do matters. People don't always remember in a crisis to say thank you or let you know how much your kindness and support means to

them, but it does. I see the work that people all over Texas do, and I'm thankful for everyone out there day in and day out doing what it takes. I see you and so do others. Know that!

I also want to remind you to take some time to be present in the now. Slow down and rest a moment in a place of peace. Right now, at this very moment, all is well. It's okay to stay still for a little while no matter how much there is to do. You need time for you no matter how much there is to do. You need to recharge especially because there is so much to do.

My wish for you is that you continue, and that you find peace and hope amidst all this chaos and tragedy. Thank you for being you.

"My wish for you is that you continue. Continue to be who you are, to astonish a mean world with your acts of kindness." -Maya Angelou

Project Beloved: The Molly Jane Mission

By Libby Hamilton, Director
Victim Liaison Program, Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles



I occasionally submit articles to provide updates pertaining to the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, however, I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight an amazing non-profit organization that is making a huge impact. In particular, their founder is doing truly incredible work for sexual

assault survivors - not only in Texas, but across the US.

In 2018 I met Tracy Matheson at a meeting for the Tarrant County Coalition of Crime Victim Services. She was speaking to a large group of advocates about her daughter Molly Jane, and the unbearable tragedy that became her family's reality when Molly was raped and murdered in April of 2017 at the age of 22. I am

certain there was not a dry eye in the room as "Molly Jane's Momma" explained the need for change, and the need for Molly's story to matter. Tracy founded Project Beloved in 2018, which strives to educate, advocate, and collaborate to change the conversation about sexual assault, and empower survivors to find their voices.

Later that year Tracy contacted Texas House Representative Craig Goldman and simply stated, "We need to write a law." One of the many tragic facts of this case is that the offender who strangled, raped, and murdered Molly could and should have been apprehended before this happened. He was known to multiple law enforcement agencies for raping and strangling women, and had been interviewed more than once. His DNA was collected and yielded a case-to-case hit in the Combined DNA Index System, yet no one stopped him from committing further crimes.

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On the second anniversary of Molly Jane's murder, House Bill (HB) 3106 was heard and unanimously passed out of the Homeland Security Committee. Next came approval from the House and Senate, and then Governor Abbott's signature on May 29, 2019. Molly Jane's Law, which states that Texas law enforcement agencies must enter sexual assault cases into the FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP), became effective September 1, 2019. Tracy learned that 90% of all rapes are committed by repeat offenders, and ViCAP can aid in identifying serial rapists and murderers based on their patterns before they repeat or escalate their crimes.

In addition to the passage of HB 3106, Tracy knew she would need to raise money to aid in Project Beloved's other initiatives: Beloved Bundles and Soft Interview Rooms (SIR). When a sexual assault survivor goes to a hospital for a forensic exam by a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), their clothing is often taken as evidence. Beloved Bundles provide the survivor with clothing, undergarments, hygiene products, a stress ball, a journal, and many other items that aim to allow healing to begin. Bundles can be requested by SANEs and other organizations through the Project Beloved website.



Beloved Bundles

highly recommend hosting a "packing party" to assemble bundles for a rape crisis center in your area. <https://www.projectbeloved.org/beloved-bundles>

Project Beloved also partners with law enforcement agencies to create SIRs within their departments, which allows survivors to have a safe and comfortable space to tell their stories and provide vital information to investigators. To date there are 57 SIRs from Alaska to Florida, and the trauma-informed care provided in these rooms is having a huge impact on a survivor's experience. Each room contains carefully selected paint,

rugs, blankets, chairs, and lighting to increase comfort and warmth. Additionally, Project Beloved honors the legacy of Megan Getrum by hanging her photography on the walls of each SIR. Megan was murdered five days after Molly Jane, by the



Project Beloved members with Comal County Sheriff's Office staff members

same offender. A plaque hangs in every room in remembrance of both, and after each installation is complete, Tracy shares Molly Jane's story with law enforcement. The goals remain the same in everything Project Beloved does: "do better" for victims of sexual assault, and "change the conversation" so that all survivors are believed.

The individual who raped and killed Molly and Megan pled guilty to their capital murders in March of 2022, and received a sentence of life without parole for each. Additionally, he pled guilty to the sexual assaults of three additional women and received 20 years for those crimes. In all, there were 12 women prepared to testify had the case gone to trial.

Please visit the Project Beloved website at <https://www.projectbeloved.org/mission> or their social media accounts to donate or see more pictures of the amazing work that's being done.



The Purple Door

*Reprinted with Permission from Fanny Chirinos-Tober
Office Administrator, The Purple Door*

The Purple Door is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization headquartered in Corpus Christi, Texas with additional offices in the surrounding rural communities. The mission of The Purple Door is to empower the community and those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault to transition to a safe and healthy environment. The vision is to end domestic violence and sexual assault in the Coastal Bend, and strive to accomplish this by providing services to victims and their families as well as through prevention education efforts. All services are confidential, free of charge, and available to clients staying in emergency shelter and those residing elsewhere in the community. Services are available in the following counties: Aransas, Bee, Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Live Oak, McMullen, Nueces, Refugio, and San Patricio. The Purple Door provides the following services:

- 24-hour crisis hotline;
- 24-hour safe, confidential shelter;
- Safety planning;
- Referrals to other community resources;
- Crime Victims' Compensation assistance;
- Protective order assistance;
- Counseling for adults and children;
- Support groups;
- Accompaniment to medical facilities, law enforcement, or judicial proceedings;
- Transport to safe shelter;
- Community education and awareness programs or trainings; and
- Primary prevention.

Sexual Assault Services

Services, including crisis intervention and advocacy, are available to adult survivors of stranger and non-stranger sexual assault at no charge 24-hours per day, seven days per week, 365 days per year.

Contact Us

No appointment is ever needed for face-to-face crisis intervention services for victims of domestic violence or sexual assault.

24-hour Crisis Hotline: 361-881-8888 or 800-580-HURT (4878)

www.purpledoortx.org

www.facebook.com/purpledoortx

Administration Office:

813 Buford Street,
Corpus Christi, TX 78404
361-884-2900 telephone
361-884-2006 fax

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 3368
Corpus Christi, TX 78463

Services are free and confidential to all victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Services are available to clients whether or not they stay

Accessible Services for Crime Victims with Disabilities

By Emily Yisa, Disability Services Project Coordinator and Educator, SAFE Alliance with Contributions from SAFE Disability Services' Project Advisory Council

People with disabilities are at least seven times more likely to experience sexual violence at some point in their lives than peers without disabilities¹. This means that many people with disabilities experience traumatic events related to sexual assault, abuse, and exploitation. People with disabilities need access to victim services, but according to the Vera Institute of Justice “only 13% of crime victims with disabilities received assistance from non-police victim services agencies from 2010-2014².” It is necessary to continually examine services being offered by our agencies and work to make those services accessible to everyone.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

In 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law. Most of us are likely aware that the ADA guarantees people with disabilities the right to equal opportunity and access in all public areas of life, including employment, public transportation, and telecommunications. The ADA entitles people to reasonable accommodations, which are modifications or adjustments to the environment or how things are typically done³. Victims with disabilities should ultimately decide what accommodations they need. This article outlines common ways to increase accessibility, but it is important to respect victims with disabilities by listening to their needs and letting them choose their own accommodations.

Physical Devices

Physical devices are one type of accommodation that can be provided at victim service agencies. It is important to ensure that buildings are accessible to everyone by installing ramps, elevators if there are multiple floors, and modified restrooms⁴. In addition, it is critical to make all spaces (particularly spaces where services are held) accessible to people who may use physical devices like wheelchairs or hearing devices. When a conference room is crowded with chairs and tables this may create barriers for a person using a wheelchair or electric mobility device to navigate. The physical layout of this room can be altered to accommodate victims who use wheelchairs. Maybe soft music is played during a support group or educational session for victims of traumatic events

related to violence, but this could make it challenging for participants with hearing loss, who use hearing devices, or who have difficulty concentrating (i.e., cognitive/mental health disabilities) to hear what is being said. The group can stop playing music to ensure that everyone can hear and be part of the conversations. All agency staff can also benefit from education on etiquette regarding various mobility aids and devices. These types of physical accommodations can be standard at all agencies.

Adaptations

Assistive technology is another type of accommodation that can increase access for crime victims with communication related support needs. One example, for victims who are blind or have low vision, is screen reader software. Screen reader software can be downloaded onto a device to read aloud what is on the screen. [Webanywhere](#) is a screen reader software that can be used on any computer. There is a variety of screen reader software available, some for only Apple devices (e.g., Apple [VoiceOver](#)) and some for only Windows (e.g., [NVDA](#) and [Serotek System Access](#)). These are just a few examples and there are many more.

Another way to increase accessibility is by adapting printed/electronic resources. Be mindful to leave enough space between lines and increase the font size. By making small changes like this, printed and electronic materials/resources can instantly become more accessible to individuals with visual impairments.

Services

Service accommodations include providing and/or accommodating sign language interpreters, personal care attendants/providers, service animals, and Metro Access to name a few. It is critical to ensure interpreters are available so that all victim services are inclusive to survivors who are deaf or hard of hearing.

We can also examine and revise agency policies that prohibit personal care attendants from accompanying victims to receive services (e.g., individual therapy or counseling, support groups, emergency shelter, etc.).

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Some individuals with disabilities rely on personal care attendant services to do things they would do for themselves if they did not have a disability. For example, assist with communication, medical needs, personal care/hygiene, or other daily living tasks. Having a policy that prohibits attendant care automatically excludes an entire population of victims with higher support needs from accessing some or all services. Agencies must accommodate people with higher support needs. This could mean changing current policies to allow more flexibility in personal care attendant services. Equally important, agencies must ensure that people with service animals (e.g., dogs for people who have seizures, emotional support animals, guide dogs, etc.) can access services. Do current policies allow service animals? Are there designated rest areas for service animals in the agency's building?

Communication

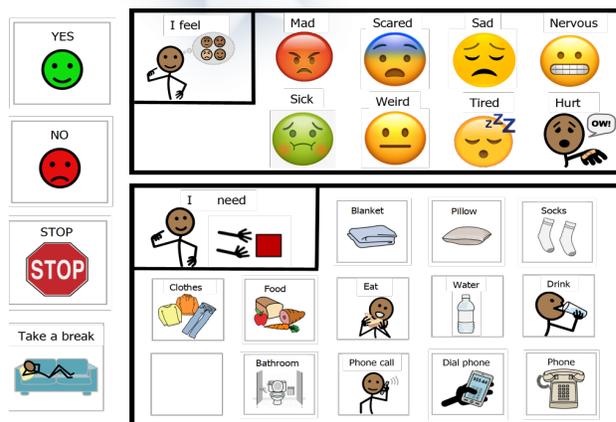
There are numerous ways for people to communicate. Verbal communication is only one type of communication. Some individuals with disabilities have speech related disabilities and more limited verbal communication, and some do not communicate verbally. We can still communicate with a person regardless of their level of verbal communication if we are aware of and have some tools to help us.

Some examples of communication accommodations are handwritten notes, gestures, pictures, and using plain jargon-free language in all written communication.

Some people prefer to communicate using picture communication boards. They may have their own picture communication board on hand, but it may be helpful to have a selection of images available. There are free resources such as [Picto4Me](#) and [Visuals Engine](#) to create picture communication boards. An additional resource is [Boardmaker](#), but be aware that Boardmaker is not free.

For people who prefer communicating with pictures there is an easily accessible option: Google Images. Googling images can be a useful aid in understanding one another during a conversation and can be done on a cellphone. Using this tool can be helpful in communicating with victims with disabilities as well as victims whose native language is not English.

The average person in the United States reads at a 7th grade level and this level goes down further after experiencing trauma or stress⁶. Victims with



Example of a picture communication board⁵

disabilities may read at lower reading levels prior to experiencing trauma or stress. It is important to use easy to understand language, short sentences, and eliminate jargon. When possible, include images with the text (e.g., include an image that portrays the main point of the text); visuals can help the reader make sense of the text.

Approach

How someone is approached can set the tone and relationship with service providers. Examples of approach accommodations are speaking calmly, avoiding sudden movements, and getting on the same level physically (if possible). Getting on the same level physically with a client can increase feelings of comfort or safety. Maintaining neutral body language (i.e., arms uncrossed, relaxed stance) makes a person less intimidating. Be mindful of your physical presence and the real power you exercise.

Another approach accommodation is giving adequate wait-time. Wait-time in this case refers to the amount of time provided for an individual to process and respond to communications. If a victim is asked a question, give them enough processing time to understand the question, formulate a response to the question, and respond to the question before repeating the question again. People with disabilities, in general, benefit from longer wait-times than people without disabilities. This may be even more true for individuals who have experienced violence and abuse related trauma.

Key Takeaways

There are a variety of tools and strategies that agency staff can use to make prevention and healing services more accessible to all victims, with and without disabilities. Examine the types of accommodations agencies are providing and keep in mind that some of the primary needs for accommodations are related to physical needs, adaptations to service delivery, communication, and approach. People with disabilities know themselves better than anyone and should be given the opportunity to explain their needs and choose accommodations. For further reading on accommodations there is a quick [reference guide](#)⁷ and also a [tip sheet](#) that offer helpful information.

¹The Sexual Assault Epidemic No One Talks About [Broadcast]. (2018, January 18). National Public Radio.

²Smith, N., Harrell, S., & Judy, A. (2017). *How Safe are Americans with Disabilities? The facts about violent crime and their implications.*

<https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/How-safe-are-americans-with-disabilities-web.pdf>

³*Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, AS AMENDED with ADA Amendments Act of 2008.* (n.d.). www.ada.gov. Retrieved October 4, 2022, from <https://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm#SubchapIII>

⁴*Accommodations | U.S. Department of Labor.* (n.d.). www.dol.gov. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/accommodations>

⁵Yisa, Emily. (2022). *Engaging with & Responding to Students with Disabilities* [78]. The SAFE Alliance.

⁶Taylor, Z. W. (2018). Unreadable and Underreported: Can College Students Comprehend How to Report Sexual Violence? *Cultivating Safe College Campuses Conference.* docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/7c1e05_885eec3ce6c1425bb4c0cd6947c7638d.pdf

⁷Reference guide, <https://www.endabusepwd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Quick-reference-guide-Advocates.pdf>

Windham School District: Changing Lives Through Education

By Kristina J. Hartman, Ed.S., Superintendent
Windham School District

**For the purposes of this article, inmates who attend educational programs within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) are referred to as students.*

The Windham School System (Windham) was established by the Texas Board of Corrections in October 1969. Now known as the Windham School District, Windham provides educational opportunities to students who are incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). Over the past five decades, Windham has become one of the largest correctional education entities in the nation, providing a variety of services and programs to men, women and a small population of youth learners. Windham programs provide approximately 50,000 students at 85 TDCJ facilities with academic education, career and technical education, and life skills courses to equip them with the tools necessary for a successful reentry

into our Texas communities. Windham employs over 1,000 individuals to include certified teachers, student advisors, principals, and support staff.

Recidivism studies show that access to educational programs during incarceration significantly decreases the likelihood of reoffending, thereby supporting safer communities. A [2013 RAND study](#)¹ reported that for every dollar spent on correctional education, there is a three to five dollar return on investment. Windham is required to submit a biennial report to the legislature on program effectiveness, and use the data to adjust course content, structure and offerings as needed. Feedback is solicited from staff, community members and students when developing and implementing programs and practices that lead to safer communities.

The majority of Windham's diverse programs target

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the students who will rejoin our communities following incarceration. Last school year, Windham served 48,955 students, and 43,289 students were reintroduced to Texas communities from TDCJ.

Windham aims to reduce recidivism and victimization by establishing career pathways for students that lead to gainful employment. Windham offers over 45 courses in 11 career clusters in high demand industries based on labor market data obtained from the Texas Workforce Commission. Each course provides the opportunity to earn an industry recognized credential. Examples include commercial truck driving leading to a commercial driver's license (CDL), electrical, RV repair, culinary arts, business computer information systems, landscape design, and customer service support. In partnership with TDCJ, Windham students develop resumes, participate in mock and actual interviews, skills demonstrations, and career expos. Partnerships with agencies, employers, community organizations, and volunteers are critical in the success of Windham.

Obtaining and maintaining gainful employment requires the ability to establish and continue professional relationships with members of the community. Windham's life skills courses are specifically designed to transform students' thought patterns that led to incarceration to a more productive and positive perspective. The Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) is designed for students to identify how to meet their needs without trespassing on the rights of others. Students explore their values, how they were established and how their choices have impacted others. The CIP instruction challenges students in interpersonal problem-solving, aiding them to:

- Develop personal accountability and responsibility;
- Develop anger management;
- Develop impulse control;
- Overcome criminal thinking;
- Create positive attitudes and beliefs; and
- Set goals.

Similarly, Windham's Changing Habits and Achieving Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) course is a life skills program designed to prepare students for successful reentry to their communities by addressing multiple components essential to success. The course serves students who are within two years of their

projected release, with curriculum that guides them in:

- Personal development;
- Healthy relationships;
- Living responsibly;
- Drug education;
- Health maintenance;
- Emotional development;
- Employment; and
- Other related life skills.

While the average student entering Windham's academic programs joins with a 5th grade literacy level, Windham has seen great success in achievement when students participate in literacy and high school equivalency or high school diploma courses. Windham students have earned 896 high school equivalency certificates this school year, which is over 50% of those earned for the entire previous year. Students are working hard to better themselves and their futures in Windham classrooms.

Approximately three years ago, as part of a satisfaction survey, students were asked, "What can Windham do to better prepare you to reenter and remain in Texas communities?" Overwhelmingly, students messaged the need for support in securing employment and practicing communication skills. Terminology was central to this discussion. Windham recognizes that words are powerful and the impact that they hold. The way Windham communicates recognizes the positive changes that these students are striving to accomplish that will ultimately benefit themselves, their families, and our communities as they become contributing members of the workforce. Windham is a national leader in terminology transformation which includes the use of person-first language to support successful reentry. To this point, Windham refers to those in our classrooms as "students," individuals visiting the prison libraries as "patrons," and those in the general population as "residents." This forward-focused terminology does not limit the ability to establish boundaries and take progressive discipline steps as needed. Windham prioritizes elevating self-awareness, positive characteristics, and development so students understand and acknowledge the harm they have caused in the past and learn to identify triggers and

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appropriate reactions to avoid repeating their negative choices and harm to others in the future. It is through education that Windham supports more productive members of society and safer Texas communities.

For more information regarding Windham School

District and its services, please visit www.wsdtx.org.

¹Davis, Lois. "Education and Vocational Training in Prisons Reduces Recidivism, Improves Job Outlook." 2013, [Education and Vocational Training in Prisons Reduces Recidivism, Improves Job Outlook | RAND](#)

Safety Planning

*By Rakesh Ganeriwala, Program Specialist II
TDCJ Victim Services Division*

Victimization can alter a victim's view of the world and how they perceive safety. Even though safety cannot be guaranteed, victim services professionals can help educate victims about important steps they can take to protect themselves and their families from violent crime and/or further victimization.

Additionally, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Victim Services Division (VSD) has developed a Safety Plan to help prepare for an inmate's release from incarceration. For more information, please visit https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/vs/safety_planning.html to access a copy of our post-conviction Personal Safety Planning booklet.

IVSS Links Library and Resource Directory

*By Rakesh Ganeriwala, Program Specialist II
TDCJ Victim Services Division*

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Victim Services Division (VSD) has a Links Library on the Integrated Victim Services System (IVSS) website located at <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/links-library/>. The Links Library features links to websites and publications about various topics related to victim services and victimization. There are links to resources about abuse and neglect, Crime Victims' Compensation, safety planning, sexual assault, victimization within the LGBTQ+ community, domestic violence, and other areas that have important information for victims and those

who assist victims.

The Texas Victim Resource Directory is also located on the IVSS at <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/resource-search/>. This directory features a searchable database with over 750 service providers from government agencies or non-profit organizations that provide services to victims free of charge.

If you need to update your directory listing, please email the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse at tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov

Volunteer Opportunity

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Victim Services Division (VSD) facilitates victim impact panels for criminal justice and victim services agencies and organizations. The attendees of the panels are usually criminal justice or victim services professionals, or offenders. Panelists are typically victims of crime who are also TDCJ volunteers. Volunteer panelists can indicate if they prefer to speak at panels with only

criminal justice or victim services professionals, or offenders, or both. For anyone interested in serving as a panelist, contact the VSD office at (512) 406-5991 and ask to speak with Kadey Desai. Crime victims who wish to volunteer as panelists will need to apply to be a TDCJ approved volunteer. For more information, please visit https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/faq/victim_impact_panel.html.

Training Opportunities

The Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse (TxCVC) provides training statewide for our partners in the criminal justice and victim assistance fields.

Texas Victim Assistance Training Online

The Texas Victim Assistance Training (TVAT) Online is designed to provide a foundation level training for new victim services professionals who routinely work with victims of crime. Topics include: crime victims' rights, ethics in victim services, stress management, compassion fatigue, crime victims' assistance standards, effective communication skills for working with victims of crime, guiding principles and practices of the victim services field. For more information, please visit the TVAT Online webpage https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/vs/tvat_online.html.

Resiliency Module

Serving as a victim service professional can be incredibly fulfilling and rewarding. However, adverse effects can result from continuous interactions with people who have endured horrible criminal acts. Information, preparation, and positive self-care practices can help victim service professionals moderate any adverse effects they may experience. The TVAT Online Resiliency Module explores strategies that can help you recognize, reduce, and transform the adverse effects that may come from working with people who have suffered extreme trauma, grief, and loss. This module teaches coping practices, skills, and techniques that can help you build a resiliency program

and prevent or mitigate vicarious trauma. To register for the Resiliency module please go to [TVAT Online Resiliency Module](#) event registration page.

Webinars and Other Trainings Available

The TxCVC hosts a webinar series designed to provide training on a wide range of topics for criminal justice and victim services professionals. Information regarding webinars and other victim services related trainings and events scheduled in Texas are provided through the search tool found here <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/search-training-event/>. The database includes trainings, conferences, memorial/remembrance events, webinars, and other relevant events hosted in the state of Texas.

The TxCVC can provide training to your agency or coalition. Training content and topics can be developed and integrated to meet your specific training needs and can vary in length. The TxCVC is committed to providing training to meet the individualized needs of communities working to enhance services provided to victims. Trainings provided by TxCVC staff are free of charge. If you would like the TxCVC to present a training event for your organization, please go to the Event/ Training Request page found here <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov/training-request/>.

National Victim Awareness Dates

March 2023

Brain Injury Awareness Month

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month, which brings attention to the prevention and treatment of traumatic brain injuries (TBI). TBIs are caused by an impact or force to the head or body or a penetrating injury

to the head. They are a leading cause of injury and death among crime victims and TBIs affect millions of Americans each year. For more information, please visit <https://www.biausa.org/events/brain-injury-awareness-month>.

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April 2023

National Crime Victims' Rights Week

National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRRW) will be observed during April 23-29, 2023. NCVRRW will celebrate the accomplishments of the victim's rights movement. This year's theme is *Survivor Voices: Elevate. Engage. Effect Change*. Please visit <https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/national-crime-victims-rights-week/overview> for more information.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week Ceremony

In honor of NCVRRW, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Victim Services Division will be hosting a commemorative ceremony to honor and support victims of crime as well as express appreciation for those who serve victims. The ceremony will be held on Friday, April 28, 2023, at the Texas Prison Museum located at 491 TX-75 N, Huntsville, TX 77320. For more information, please contact the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse at tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov.

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Child abuse and neglect are serious issues that can have adverse effects for children throughout their lives. Education and awareness about child abuse is crucial in preventing it. For more information, please visit <https://www.cactx.org/news-events/child-abuse-prevention-awareness-month>.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This is a campaign to increase awareness about the causes and risk factors for sexual assault and empower individuals to take steps to prevent it. For more information, please visit <https://www.rainn.org/saapm>.

May 2023

National Peace Officers' Memorial Day

Every year, May 15 is recognized as National Peace Officers' Memorial Day. This observance takes place during Police Week to honor law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. Please visit <https://www.concernsofpolicesurvivors.org/aboutnpw> for more information. The Texas Peace Officers' Memorial will occur on April 30, 2023, in Austin,

TX. For more information, please visit <https://texaspeaceofficersmemorial.org/event-details/event-memorial-ceremony>.

National Missing Children's Day

In 1983, May 25 was established as National Missing Children's Day in memory of Adam Walsh, a 6-year-old boy who went missing. This day honors the efforts of agencies, organizations, and individuals who work to protect children. For more information, please visit <https://ojdp.ojp.gov/events/missing-childrens-day/about-missing-childrens-day>.

Information About *The Victim's Informer*

The Victim's Informer e-newsletter is published quarterly. Articles and other submissions should be emailed to tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov. If you would like to submit materials, the deadline dates for articles, meeting notices, and other submissions are below. For questions or comments, please call us at 800-848-4284 or 512-406-5931.

Deadlines for articles and other information:

March 16, 2023 for June/July 2023 edition

Please Note: You may access the publication at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Victim Services Division (VSD) website by going to tdcj.texas.gov/publications/victim_informer_newsletter.html. If you wish, we will notify you via email each time *The Victim's Informer* becomes available on the TDCJ VSD website and provide an electronic link to *The Victim's Informer*.

Subscribe/Unsubscribe/Update your email address here: <https://ivss.tdcj.texas.gov>.

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