

2017 Crime Victims Rights Week Conference

Speaker Biographies | Presentation Descriptions | Course Objectives

Speaker: Heather Pfeifer, Ph.D.

Bios: Dr. Heather L. Pfeifer is an Associate Professor in the School of Criminal Justice at the University of Baltimore and is the Associate Director of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland. Her research interests focus on child victimization, its relationship to offending, and implementing trauma-informed policy and practices. She has been involved in numerous federal and state funded research projects involving substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, victim services, and trauma-informed care. She has served as a consultant to the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, the Baltimore City Circuit Court-Juvenile Division, the Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, and the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. She currently serves as a facilitator of the Illuminations Program, a nationally recognized training on child sexual abuse and trauma that focuses on how criminal justice agencies can more effectively respond to and assist victims and their families.

Topic: The Illuminations Project: A Dialogue With a Victim

Description: This presentation will master the objectives by narrating a victims' story of abuse and using subsequent artwork produced by the victim during their healing journey. Challenges and barriers to communicating with crime victims will be examined by reviewing the artwork and exploring the experience of victimization. Strategies to build trauma-informed practices and collaborative partnerships to assist victims and their families will be discussed.

- Objectives:**
1. Discuss why individuals who work with victims of crime should learn about trauma.
 2. Define trauma and identify examples of traumatic events, both acute and chronic.
 3. Describe how the effects of trauma can be experienced throughout life, and its potential impact on attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.
 4. Identify trauma-informed approaches when communicating and interacting with victims of crime and their families.

Speaker: Center For Survivors—Revolutions Group Presentation

Bio: Abbie Tessendorf is the Program Manager at the Center for Survivors, Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault program in Columbus, NE. She has worked in the DV/SA field for 23 years. In addition to being the Program Manager, Abbie oversees the “Revolution” student volunteer program.

Topic: “You Deserve Better” a dramatic presentation on youth dating violence

Description: The Revolution drama troupe has inspired thousands of young people to take a stand against dating violence and sexual violence. This group of dedicated students write and perform this presentation highlighting dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The presentation consists of three components: the drama; a question/answer segment in which actors answer questions in character; and an educational piece.

- Objectives:**
1. Participants will identify new strategies to assist youth victims of dating violence.
 2. Dramatization will engage others in the efforts to stop youth dating violence.
 3. Participants will learn how their role as advocates to young victims of dating violence impacts the victims they serve.

Speaker: Julie Masters, PhD

Bio: Julie L. Masters, PhD is professor and chair of the department of gerontology at the University of Nebraska Omaha. She also is the Terry Haney Chair of Gerontology. She received her BA in Psychology in 1984 from the University of Nebraska Omaha, her MA in Gerontology in 1985 from the University of Northern Colorado and her PhD in Community and Human Resources with an emphasis in Gerontology and Counseling in 1997 from the University of Nebraska Lincoln. Dr. Masters teaches courses on death and dying on the Omaha and Lincoln campuses. In addition, she oversees the activities of the department on the Omaha, Lincoln and online campuses. In addition to her research on end of life planning, Dr. Masters conducts research on healthy aging, caregiving and aging inmates.

Topic: Recognizing the Aging Victim

Description: By 2020, 56 million people will be over the age of 65 in the United States and by 2060 this number will almost double to 92 million people 65 and older. Even more interesting are those 85 and older who represent one of the fastest growing segments of society and who are also at greater risk of decline. For the first time in history we will have more people over the age of 65 than under the age of 18. For those who are in good health – both physical and cognitive, the aging process is something to enjoy and embrace. However, for those who are facing ill health because of disease, disability or dementia, the challenge of aging can be daunting. For those unfamiliar with normal and not so normal changes associated with aging, knowing how to respond issues of crime and abuse of older adults can be difficult. The purpose of this session is to familiarize attendees with the growing number of older persons and how changes in their physical and cognitive health can make them susceptible to criminal victimization.

Objectives:

1. Learners will gain insight into the growing number of older adults in the United States and how this is reflected in US Census Data.
2. Learners will become familiar with the different cohorts of older adults and how those who are in the oldest-old category are most vulnerable to victimization.
3. Persons attending will become acquainted with the various physical and cognitive changes that make an older person more susceptible to victimization.

Speaker: Ed Oslica

Bio: Ed Oslica is the Intelligence Specialist for the United States Attorney for the District of Nebraska, he has served in this position for 6 years. He is assigned to the Criminal Division where he functions as a liaison to the Joint Terrorism Task Force with the FBI Omaha Field Office. He also conducts criminal analysis for White Collar and terrorism investigations. Additionally, he is the District Office Security Manager and Crisis Management Coordinator. Prior to joining the U.S. Attorney's Office Mr. Oslica served 23 years in the U.S. Air Force, Security Forces and retired as a Master Sergeant. He graduated from American Military University, with a B.A. in Homeland Security in 2009.

Topic: Safety in the Workplace

Description: This presentation will discuss the questions: "What is workplace violence?"; "What can these employers do to help protect these employees?" and "How can the employees protect themselves?" Workplace violence is violence or the threat of violence against workers. It can occur at or outside the workplace and can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and homicide, one of the leading causes of job-related deaths. Crime victim advocates, 1st responders and those disciplines working within crisis settings can be vulnerable to violence in their workplace. The best protection employers can offer is to establish a zero-tolerance policy toward workplace violence against or by their employees. The employer should establish a workplace violence prevention program or incorporate the information into an existing accident prevention program, employee handbook, or manual of standard operating procedures. It is critical to ensure that all employees know the policy and understand that all claims of workplace violence will be investigated and remedied promptly. Nothing can guarantee that an employee will not become a victim of workplace violence. These steps, however, can help reduce the odds: Learn how to recognize, avoid, or diffuse potentially violent situations by attending personal safety training programs. Alert supervisors to any concerns about safety or security and report all incidents immediately in writing. Avoid traveling alone into unfamiliar locations or situations whenever possible. Carry only minimal money and required identification into community settings.

Objectives:

1. To increase safety and threat awareness in the workplace.
2. The participant will be able to identify and mitigate threats in the workplace.
3. Learn about reacting to safety and threat based incidents in the workplace.

Bios:

Jacey Gengenbach is a Certified Functional Aging Specialist and Certified instructor for the Delay Disease Parkinson's Fitness program. Jacey is the owner of Fitness & Beyond, an exclusive personal training studio. She authored Active Aging: Functional Fitness to Renew Your Strength, Balance, and Energy for Your Best Years Yet. Her passion comes from her daily interactions with clients and making a difference in the quality of their lives. A survivor of domestic violence, Jacey is the founder of Survivor Rising, a 501(c)3 working group dedicated to advocacy, education and support for survivors of domestic violence. In her free time, Jacey enjoys spending time with family, including her son Tristan.

Paulissa Kipp is a Certified Peer Support and Wellness Specialist, Certified Wellness Recovery Action Planning and Whole Health Action Management Facilitator, Mental Health 1st Responder, Certified Self-Advocacy Educator and Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper. Ms. Kipp uses her lived experience with mental health and abuse-related trauma to advocate for, educate and support individuals to achieve resiliency after abuse through art, creative expression, lived experience and specialized training in trauma-informed approaches. Her work has been published in the Art Saves Lives International and Creative Mental Health Guide magazines. She is the owner of Paulissa Kipp's Art of Becoming. Paulissa joined the board of Survivors Rising and is dedicated to bringing awareness to effects of domestic violence on the quality of life of survivors and the cost to the community.

Angie Rodriguez is an Omaha native who graduated from Omaha South High School. While working full-time and raising a family, she attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha and graduated with a degree in Accounting. She has worked for Graham Enterprises, Inc. for 31 years where she is currently a Controller. In her free time, she loves spending time with family and friends, baking and volunteering. Angie lost her daughter to domestic violence and is dedicated to working to bring awareness to domestic violence through advocacy, education and training. She joined Survivors Rising as a board member as it was being formed.

Elizabeth Jones is a single mother of 3 and a survivor of childhood physical and sexual abuse as well as a survivor of years of domestic violence. Being in the cycle of abuse most of her life, it is her mission to help break the cycle of abuse, bring awareness to the issues of domestic violence, educate the community and its partners and help create changes necessary to save more people from the claws of domestic violence. She was instrumental in starting the annual domestic violence vigil on the Douglas County Courthouse Steps. Her experience and passion drive her to create ripples today so that one day there will be recognizable change in the way domestic violence is treated in the eyes of the law and in the community.

Topic: How Trauma-Informed Supports Help Survivors Thrive

Description: The panel will address generational trauma, the role of adverse childhood experiences in morbidity and the autoimmune response to trauma. The panel will use “Pillars of Resilience” as the basis of their presentation. Panelists will share lived experience to offer participants the opportunity to challenge their misconceptions about domestic violence and better understand the victim perspective.

- Objectives:**
1. Participants will examine the ways in which current Nebraska legislation affect the ability of survivors to move toward safety and resiliency, including good time laws, plea deals and protection orders.
 2. Participants will examine the ways in which trauma-informed training for law enforcement affects the ability of survivors to report abuse and obtain ongoing

support while holding offenders accountable.

3. Participants will learn the role of trauma-informed training for medical personnel, dental technicians, first responders and mental health professionals in supporting the ability of survivors to move forward in whole health.

Speaker: Erin Aliano

Bio: Erin Aliano is the Special Projects Coordinator with the Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers. Her current special project is to enhance the response across Nebraska for Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth. Prior to this position, she was a Victim Witness Specialist for the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Nebraska. She worked with service providers, investigators, Tribal leaders and community members to improve the protection and empowerment of crime victims. Prior to her appointment, she was the Training Specialist for the Omaha Police Department and a Family Violence Specialist/Advocate for the YWCA Omaha.

Topic: Motivational Interviewing

Description: This presentation will explore the definition of Motivational Interviewing (MI) and how it is used to encourage change that is congruent with a person's own values and concerns. Knowing about MI can be an effective way to communicate with victims of crime as they are working through their victimization during the investigation and prosecution of the case as well as learning to live following the crime. MI is grounded in a respectful stance between victim and advocate in order to allow the victim the power to choose what is best for themselves and not have ideas or opinions imposed upon them. MI is victim centered, honors autonomy, and seeks to evoke the victims own strength and motivation to move forward.

Objectives:

1. The professionals attending will understand the basics of motivational interviewing with victims of crime.
2. The professionals attending will understand the "Stages of Change" in working with victims of crime in healing and recovery.
3. The professionals attending will practice scenarios using the skills of motivational interviewing.

Speaker: Duane T. Bowers, LMHP

Bio: Duane Bowers is a Trauma Therapist/Educator in private practice working with survivors of homicide, suicide, and accidents. As a contractor he works with parents of abducted, murdered, and exploited children, and provides mental health support to those working with child exploitation and trafficking, including the MD State Police ICAC Unit and the Child Exploitation Division of National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. He is a mental health first responder and educator nationally and internationally on Trauma, PTSD and Trauma Informed Care, and is the author of “*Guiding Your Family Through Loss and Grief*,” as well as, “*A Child is Missing; Providing Supports for Families of Missing Children*.”

Topic: The Impact of Victims’ Trauma on Responders and Victim Advocates

Description: This presentation briefly describes the victims’ experience in a traumatic event, then focuses on how the victims’ trauma impacts responders and victim support staff. The body/brain response to trauma is explored, as well as providing an understanding of the difference between Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and traumatic response. The concept of secondary trauma is discussed providing new research information about how the personalities of first responders express the impact of trauma. Warning signs and symptoms of trauma are presented as well as interventions to mitigate them so that responders and victim support personnel can effectively protect themselves from secondary trauma. Finally, through a discussion of the personality types of first responders, participants can create their individual plan for building their resilience.

- Objectives:**
1. Understand the difference between traumatic response and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
 2. Recognize the impact and characteristics of long term exposure to victim trauma.
 3. Discuss 3 behavioral interventions to stop the accumulative effect of victim Trauma.
 4. Evaluate personal personality types to create effective coping strategies for dealing with victim trauma.

Speaker: Betsy Funk

Bio: Betsy is a clinical social worker and Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner in private practice and co-founder of Omaha Therapy and Arts Collaborative. She has been practicing as a social worker in the community for over 20 years and has worked with various agencies including Goodwill Industries, Phoenix House Domestic Violence Shelter, Nebraska Health and Human Services, and Lutheran Family Services. Currently, she works with people coping with challenges of all kinds with a specialty in trauma and abuse related issues. She has specialized training in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Child Parent Psychotherapy as well as Expressive Arts Therapy. Her passion involves bringing the arts into treatment in a way that promotes healing and resiliency. She is the developer of the “GREAT” Teen and Kids Groups, which are Expressive Arts therapy groups she facilitates in the OTAC studio and in area elementary and middle schools. Additionally, she provides consultation and presentations on the use of the arts as a method of self-care.

Topic: Healing and Self Care Through Expressive Arts

Description: This presentation will use art form as a tool for healing following the victimization of a crime. Crime victims do not plan to be victimized. Crime catches victims by surprise and dramatically changes lives. Victims need to find a new way of living. Healing Through Expressive Arts can show victims that life can become livable again—the process of mending can make victims stronger. Art helps regain a sense of meaning in life. Art can transform pain, rather than being destroyed by it. The training is beneficial for both the crime victim and the responder advocate. Processing, sharing, and witnessing art will be explained and encouraged throughout the workshop. The workshop will incorporate a hands-on experience utilizing the arts as a form of healing and self-care.

- Objectives:**
1. Workshop participants will receive education and background on the use of expressive arts in various settings when addressing the pain experienced by a victim of crime.
 2. Participants will gain knowledge about how to incorporate the arts into a communication practice as a means for the crime victim to express and release their pain.
 3. Participants will be invited to engage in several unique art processes through demonstration and participation in order to initiate engagement in the arts.