

OVS Outreach

Fall 2018

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From the Director's Desk



October marks **Domestic Violence Awareness Month**. First marked as a Day of Unity in 1981 by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence to connect advocates across the country, it evolved to

National Domestic Violence Awareness Month in 1987 and Congress formally designated October as NDVAM in 1989. In New York, our sister agency, the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, created this [toolkit](#) to help individuals, victim service agencies, nonprofit organizations, law enforcement and employers to share information and promote awareness.

What is domestic violence and why do we observe DVAM each year?

Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, sexual assault, or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by an intimate partner against another. The crimes can range from harassment and stalking to rape and homicide. When there is domestic violence in a home, everyone suffers, particularly children.

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SUNY's Got Your Back!

OVS and SUNY are partnering to supply and distribute 225,000 comfort bags to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence seeking help at hospitals, shelters and rape crisis centers across the state.



Joya Ahmad, victim advocate with the Crime Victims Treatment Center; Elizabeth Cronin; SUNY Downstate Medical Center President Dr. Charles Riley; Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, SUNY Chancellor Kristina M. Johnson, SUNY Associate Attorney Joseph Storch and Elizabeth Brady, Project Director for SUNY's Sexual and Interpersonal Violence Prevention program

Read more about the announcement [online](#).



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From the Director's Desk *(continued)*

Intimate partner violence accounts for more than 15 percent of all violent crime in the country. In addition, one in four women and one in seven men experience severe intimate partner physical violence, sexual violence, and/or stalking that can result in physical injury, fearfulness, post-traumatic stress, contraction of sexually transmitted diseases and suicide attempts. Many victims suffer from isolation, emotional abuse and threats. Only a third of survivors seek medical help and many are afraid to report to law enforcement.

Domestic violence also has a devastating economic impact. Workers lose a total of approximately 8 million days of paid work due to DV. The costs of this lost productivity is estimated to range between \$5.8 billion and \$12.6 billion annually.

I'm proud to say that New York State leads the way in addressing domestic violence with legislation, programming and funding. OVS is proud to partner with so many victim advocates and service providers who work with sexual assault and domestic violence victims to help them move from victim to survivor to thriver.

We all need to take a stand against DV.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Cronin, Esq.



Victim Service Academy Training Update

This summer, 230 victim advocates and service providers attended a total of four Victim Service Academy Trainings, which were offered by OVS across the state for the first time. Each 2½-day training covered the essentials of trauma-informed care, vicarious trauma and self-care practices. OVS once again partnered with the Institute for Disaster Mental Health at SUNY New Paltz (IDMH) to bring this free training to advocates from OVS-funded victim assistance programs. Instead of traveling to New Paltz, professionals attended one of four regional trainings offered from July through September in Albany, Manhattan, Rochester and Olivebridge. ■

OVS at the State Fair

For the second consecutive year, OVS participated in the [New York State Fair](#) in Syracuse. For 12 days, OVS staff shared information about the agency's services with fair attendees from all across New York. ■



Domestic Violence at a Glance:

According to the [2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](#):

- On average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men.
- One in three women and one in four men have been victims of some form of physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime.
- One in four women and one in seven men have been victims of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- One in seven women and one in 18 men have been stalked by an intimate partner during their lifetime to the point in which they felt very fearful or believed that they or someone close to them would be harmed or killed.
- Intimate partner violence accounts for 15 percent of all violent crime.
- Women who are 18 through 24 are most commonly abused by an intimate partner.
- Only 34 percent of people who are injured by intimate partners receive medical care for their injuries.
- One in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year, and 90 percent of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence. ■

OVS Victim Service Portal: Compensation Tip

If you have a client who was not physically injured during the crime but you feel he or she may still be eligible under the OVS exceptions to physical injury guidelines, please make sure that you file the claim for a personal injury (PI) claim. To do this correctly, select “was injured” from the drop-down menu under the first entry for “Tell us about the crime.”



Tell us about the crime.

* The victim due to this crime

Even if the victim is only seeking reimbursement for loss of essential personal property, the claim must be filed as a personal injury claim. If filed only as an Essential Personal Property (EPP) claim, the claim will automatically be assigned to one of our EPP staff members. Once they review the claim and determine that it must be filed as a Personal Injury claim for the victim to be eligible for additional assistance, the claim type must be changed and reassigned to a crime victim specialist 1. This results in an unnecessary delay in the processing of the claim.

For specific information on the charges needed for a victim to qualify as an exception to physical injury claim, see the “Advocate Guidelines for Compensation section on the [VAP Training Center](#) section of the OVS website. ■

Legal Corner: Helping Victims of Domestic Violence

Generally speaking, an individual must be physically injured as the result of a crime to be eligible for assistance from OVS. There are exceptions that benefit certain vulnerable populations, including children under 18, adults older than 60, disabled individuals and certain victims of domestic violence.

Victims of domestic violence who are not injured may apply for assistance from OVS if the following Penal Law crimes have been committed against them (the specific section and subsection of the crime is included):

- Fourth-degree criminal mischief [145.00(4)],
- First-, second- and third-degree menacing [120.13], [120.14], [120.15],
- First-, second-, third- and fourth-degree stalking [120.45], [120.50], [120.55], [120.60],
- Criminal obstruction of breathing or blood circulation [121.11],
- First-degree criminal contempt [215.51(b),(c)],
- First- and second-degree harassment [240.25], [240.26],
- First- and second-degree aggravated harassment [240.30(3),(5)], [240.31(2)],
- Unlawful imprisonment [135.10], and
- First- and second-degree kidnapping [135.20], [135.25].

When an OVS investigator determines that a claim is ineligible because it is a domestic violence incident that did not result in a physical injury, the claim is forwarded to an associate attorney. The attorney then reviews the entire claim, including the victim's narrative, criminal justice reports, family offense petitions and orders of protection, among other information and documentation.

Based upon that review, the associate attorney determines whether one of the charges listed above also could have been charged in the incident, making the claim eligible. If it is determined that one of these charges could apply under the totality of the circumstances, the claim is returned to the original investigator to continue the review process.

OVS takes pride in being able to assist in the healing process of individuals who, although they were not physically injured, have experienced such a personal form of victimization. ■

Seek Then Speak

“[Seek Then Speak](#)” is a website devoted to sexual assault survivors, providing information, support, and ways to contact police, if desired. Although established by [End Violence Against Women International](#), the site is gender-neutral and recognizes that sexual violence can affect anyone, including men and non-binary individuals. Multiple language options are available, making it a rich source of information for everyone.

The site seeks to break the stigma and shame that may silence survivors and recognizes that some individuals may be more comfortable obtaining information, options, and assistance online before reaching out in person.



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Seek Then Speak (*continued*)

A wealth of information is available for survivors and loved ones about medical assistance, the forensic rape exam and how to prepare for an exam, and the investigation process if the incident is reported. The site also provides additional resources and information for students and those in the military.

Seek Then Speak also provides survivors with multiple ways to seek assistance: online or through a mobile app, text messaging or via telephone. The site is confidential and gives survivors the control over what information is shared and when. ■

Request for Applications: Federal Victim of Crime Act Victim Assistance Program

OVS is developing a new Request for Applications (RFA) that will be released this fall for new contracts starting on October 1, 2019. This RFA will allow any victim assistance program – those currently funded by OVS as well as those that are not – to apply for federal Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) funding.

It is important to remember that some eligibility requirements have changed and items previously not eligible for VOCA funding may now be eligible. Please [view this link](#) for more information on the Victim of Crime Act Victim Assistance Program.

We encourage all applicants to evaluate their programs to determine their needs, how this funding can be used to meet gaps in service and ways in which they can better serve victims of crime, and detail that information in their applications.

Please share this information with programs that currently don't receive funding and urge them to contact OVS to be added to the RFA notification list. Once the RFA is released, it will be posted to the OVS website (www.ovs.ny.gov) and the link will be shared through the agency's social media platforms (www.facebook.com/nyspublicsafety and [@NYSPublicSafety](https://twitter.com/NYSPublicSafety) on Twitter) and other ways to reach as many potential applicants as possible. ■

OVS Compensation Training

OVS Compensation staff are now available to accompany contract management specialists when they make site visits to OVS-funded victim assistance programs. Staff members can conduct a basic training on site or answer questions about specific topics.

Staff also have provided compensation training in several regions across the state in response to requests from victim assistance programs. If you would like a member of the compensation team to visit your site, contact your contract management specialist in the Grants Unit to make those arrangements. ■

National Wear Purple Day

This year's national "Wear Purple Day" to raise awareness of domestic violence and show support for victims and survivors is Thursday, Oct. 18. If you share your purple photos on social media, don't forget to use [#NYGoesPurple4DV](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/NYGoesPurple4DV) and tag [@NYSPublicSafety](https://twitter.com/NYSPublicSafety). ■

**Wear Purple
on
October 18th**

[#NYGoesPurple4DV](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/NYGoesPurple4DV)