

IDVSA Voice

Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
Fall 2005
Volume II, Issue 2

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The mission of the Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (IDVSA) is to

advance the knowledge base related to domestic violence and sexual assault in an effort to end interpersonal violence.

IDVSA accomplishes this through supporting research on domestic violence and sexual assault and by providing training, technical assistance, and information dissemination to the practitioner community and the community at large.

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Childhood Sexual Abuse: What you need to know

by Regina Jones Johnson, Dr.PH, M.S.N., R.N., IDVSA Co-Investigator

Sexual abuse of children is not a new problem or a rare occurrence. It is not easily identified or diagnosed; it rarely results in physical injury and often goes unreported to authorities. Both boys and girls may be victims of sexual abuse, and children as young as 6 months old have been attacked. During 2003, approximately 906,000 children were determined to be victims of child abuse or neglect by the state and local child protective service agencies, with 10% of the cases reported being sexual abuse (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2005). It is difficult to determine the actual number of sexually abused children in the United States. However, the good news is that the rate of victimization per 1,000 children in the national population has dropped from 13.4 children in 1990 to 12.4 children in 2003 (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2005). In 2003, in the state of Texas, there were 7,370 (14.6 %) reported cases of sexual abuse.

While some children are grabbed by strangers in dark alleys, many, many more are abused by people they know and trust. According to the 2003 National Child Abuse and Neglect Data, 58.2% of the perpetrators were women and 41.8% were men. When the relationship of perpetrator to the child victim was considered, less than 3% of parents committed sexual abuse; however, 29.9% of other relatives, 26.8% of other professionals, 23.0% of daycare providers, and 11.5% of residential facility staff committed sexual abuse. More than three-quarters (75.9%) of perpetrators who were friends or neighbors committed sexual abuse (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2005).

The sexual abuse of a child is a crime. Those who work with child victims and their families cannot ignore the impact of the legal system. Laws concerning

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A Note from Sarah Buel, Co-Investigator

I have been asked to briefly describe my current work. I teach *Domestic Violence and the Law and Torts*, both informed by relevant issues of race, gender, and poverty. For example, I start each *Domestic Violence* class by asking the students, "What does a family of 3 receive in welfare payments per month in Texas?" And they all respond, "\$208." I am determined that they understand at least the rudimentary underpinnings of the feminization of poverty and its stranglehold on so many abuse victims. Additionally, Professor Jeana Lungwitz and I co-teach the class component of the *Domestic Violence Clinic* (in which we are delighted to have an MSSW intern). In lieu of a final exam, the *Domestic Violence* students must write a

minimum 20-page paper that will be of use to the community. In addition to teaching law students doctrinal and normative law, my goal is to inspire them to be champions for social justice.

Assisting battered women in prison with legal and other matters is work to which I am deeply committed. Each year, ten to twelve students help in preparing parole applications and other appellate issues for these largely forgotten women. Dr. Noël Busch, UT School of Social Work, and Pam Wilhoite, Texas Council on Family Violence, are collaborators in this effort. We are currently co-writing proposals to secure a full-time lawyer to better coordinate the legal cases,

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Childhood Sexual Abuse (continued from page 1)

sexual acts against children vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction throughout the country. In the state of Texas, reporting of child sexual abuse is mandatory for some health care professionals, especially nurses. The task of protecting the child victim of sexual abuse cannot be relegated to a single professional discipline, agency, or service delivery system. Health, legal, and social service professionals working together can do much to alleviate the potential problems that may arise for children who have been sexually abused. They can provide anticipatory

guidance and emotional support to child victims and their families. While each profession obviously offers special and necessary skills in assisting the children and their families, there is a critical need for better communication and increased coordination among all service providers. We want to safeguard the children and the community.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (2005). Child maltreatment 2003. Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

A Note from Sarah Buel (continued from page 1)

support groups, and education programs in which we have been involved thus far. We would welcome involvement from other IDVSA participants, students, and community members.

I am delighted to be co-chairing the Travis County Family Violence Task Force's Youth Issues Committee, through which we started the successful juvenile batterer's program, STOP, now operating in its third year. Working with Dorothy Garza at the IDVSA, we have an active Curriculum Infusion workgroup geared to the integration of intimate partner violence issues into the curriculum of all U.T. courses. Also on campus, I'm delighted to be part of the UT *Voices Against Violence* program, providing community education and counseling, as well as conducting comprehensive data collection, faculty

trainings, and writing a UT policy on domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Another effort Dorothy Garza is helping with is the *Decriminalization of Survival Welfare Fraud project*, designed to prevent low-income women from gaining a criminal record because they receive neither sufficient income nor assistance with jobs, child support, child care, and abusive partners. I started this with the cooperation of our district attorney's office, because I, too, had to accept welfare assistance in the process of leaving my violent ex-husband. I was fortunate to find a job with Legal Aid through the CETA federal job training program and that ended my time on welfare.

It has been a joy to work with many of you here at UT and I look forward to many more collaborations!

Torie Camp Awarded Community Sabbatical

*Modified from the UT Humanities Institute website
(<http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/huminst/sabbatical/biosCS.html>)*

The University of Texas at Austin Humanities Institute has awarded Torie Camp, Director of Operations for Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, one of six Community Sabbaticals for 2005-2006. Torie will use her Community Sabbatical to more fully research and determine the economic impact sexual assault has on Texas. Successfully calculating and publicizing the financial consequences of sexual assault each Texan bears will increase the attention given to this issue in the public policy arena. Torie will research data on the prevalence of sexual assault in Texas, identify and calculate the myriad and diverse costs associated with sexual assault, and translate these figures into written documents for dissemination by TAASA

and other allied organizations. Quantifying the cost of sexual victimization in Texas will facilitate TAASA's goals of raising awareness in the public sphere of the value of prevention programming and push policymakers closer to recognizing sexual assault as a public health issue.

Torie will be working with Dr. Noël Busch, Assistant Professor in the UT School of Social Work, and Dr. Bruce Kellison, Associate Director of the Bureau of Business Research. Dr. Busch's research interests include the study of violence against women and children, social and public policy, and social justice issues. Dr. Kellison specializes in economic development, economics, and politics.

Field Instructor Workshop

by Dorothy Garza, IDVSA Curricula Developer

The Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault had the honor of presenting to approximately 115 Field Instructors at their Fall 2005 workshop. Primary focus areas, identified by a survey sent prior to the workshop, included assessment information for children and adults, strategy tips for interns, and resources. The morning portion of the workshop began with an introduction from **Dr. Noël Busch**, Principal Investigator for IDVSA, following which I led a brief opening activity designed to get participants to discuss their own values regarding the complex issues of domestic violence and sexual assault. Next, **Sarah Buel**, JD, of the UT Law School, and IDVSA Co-Investigator gave an extraordinary presentation focusing on the importance of preparing social work interns to address domestic violence and sexual assault. She provided the audience with a very powerful story, her own, as well as compelling statistics about domestic violence in Texas and the U.S.

In the afternoon, sessions were conducted in four smaller groups. **Torie Camp**, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA),

and **Sue Snyder**, SafePlace, presented information about sexual assault including basic dynamics, statistics, and assessment strategies. **Connie Geerhart**, Austin Police Department Victim Services, and I facilitated similar presentations about domestic violence. An IDVSA fact sheet was also distributed. This included information about our website that will be updated to include a link to a sexual assault and domestic violence bibliography in addition to the community resources already available

Thank you to our IDVSA members who took time to prepare presentations for this workshop. Many more practitioners in the field are now aware of the IDVSA and ways in which we can collaborate. Special thanks go to **Morgan Curtis**, IDVSA GRA, who provided assistance in preparing the workshop. As a follow-up to this presentation, IDVSA will provide information in the undergraduate and graduate field seminar classes this fall about addressing domestic violence. Presentations addressing sexual assault will be offered in these same classes in the spring.



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October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Domestic Violence Awareness Month, which grew out of the Day of Unity organized and observed by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, was first observed in October 1987.

For more information, visit www.ncadv.org



Michele Rountree Awarded Seed Grant

The Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault extends congratulations to Dr. Michele Rountree, Assistant Professor at the UT School of Social Work, who will receive the second 2005 Seed Grant from the IDVSA. Dr. Rountree's study, "Comparative Analysis (Arizona and Texas): Integration of HIV/AIDS Risk Assessment and HIV/AIDS Education and Prevention Programming & Policy within Domestic Violence Shelters" will examine the HIV/AIDS risk

assessment and HIV/AIDS specific prevention/education programming in domestic violence shelters in Texas and Arizona.

Dr. Rountree joined the UT School of Social Work Faculty this fall as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Rountree most recently served as the Coordinator of Field Education at Arizona State University School of Social Work. Welcome and congratulations to Dr. Rountree!

IDVSA Convenes Student Committee

by Morgan Curtis

In order to engage more student involvement in IDVSA activities, we convened a student committee beginning this fall. The student committee's first project will be to disseminate pamphlets on sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking in the School of Social Work. We will also distribute materials with the National Domestic Violence Hotline Number in places where students have easy access. The student

committee is looking to partner with other campus anti-violence groups, including the Survivor Support Network, in order to coordinate our efforts on campus. The committee will also co-sponsor events for Sigma Phi Omega's Stop Abuse in the Family Environment (SAFE) week in the Spring.

For more information, contact Morgan Curtis.

IDVSA Committees

Curriculum Infusion
Contact Dorothy Garza
Next meeting: Oct 28

Student
Contact Morgan Curtis
Next meeting: TBD

Fundraising
Contact Noël Busch
Next Meeting: TBD

Affiliate Showcase: SAHELI

Support Advocate Heal Empower Listen Inform

This issue's Affiliate Showcase features SAHELI, a local organization that focuses on Asian families who are dealing with domestic violence. The answers below are from various members of the organization, including board members and volunteers. Thanks to Emily Kwan Bailey, SAHELI's Family Advocate, for compiling these answers!

SAHELI seems to have grown quite a bit in the last year or so. Can you talk a little about that growth and the precipitating factors?

The visible growth in the past year has been the result of five years of planning and capacity building through an Americorps*VISTA project aimed at (1) increased outreach, (2) strengthening of volunteer base, and (3) development and fundraising. As a result of the VISTA program's achievements, the agency was recognized by the state as a special non-residential project under its Domestic Violence Program which later precipitated into being awarded a grant from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission in 2004 to further develop our client advocacy and community education programs. Small grants from a variety of other sources such as the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime and the Shield-Ayres Foundation has increased our capacity to assist clients. Also, our own fundraising efforts and the support from the community have played a critical role in our growth.

What are some of the unique needs of the population you serve that helped the founders of SAHELI identify the need for a separate organization to serve them?

In the beginning, we noticed that South Asian organizations in New York and Chicago were getting calls from victims in Texas, who were forgoing services from more mainstream and established DV organizations. Clients sought help from organizations that provided cultural specific assistance.

SAHELI initially focused on the domestic violence issues of Indian women and now we have widened our scope by serving all Asians who are victims of DV. Some of the cultural and community dynamics that differentiate the needs of our clients from the needs of other victims are:

- language and cultural barriers that may block one's search for outside help
- reluctance to seek help and defend one's culture/way of life when dealing with mainstream DV organizations
- immigration status issues
- isolation/lack of extended family in the U.S. for most first-generation immigrants
- total dependence on the abuser in almost every aspect of survival



Left: Lisa Phan, SAHELI's new Executive Director

Below: SAHELI's staff members Ellen Parsons, Community Educator (left), and Emily Kwan Bailey, Family Advocate (right)

What have been some of SAHELI's most notable successes in recent years?

Until recently, our biggest success was the sheer fact that we were still in existence after 12 years of making a difference in the lives of our clients, who chose to come to us instead of going to larger and more established domestic violence programs. This major accomplishment was made possible by volunteer power alone. Now, due to new funding, we have been able to expand our services by providing more face-to-face contact with the clients, offering support groups, increasing the number of community presentations, and increasing volunteer diversity.

Recently, we offered an interpreter training where attendees learned how to properly utilize their language skills in providing support to clients. The interpreter training included a pool of volunteers who spoke over 10 different languages. Another big success is our ability to inspire other communities to follow our example. SAHELI was the first organization of its kind in Texas. Since then we have inspired and provided assistance to three other organizations with similar missions, two in Houston and one in Dallas.

What have been some of the biggest challenges?

Transitioning from an all-volunteer organization to an agency with employees, after being the recipient of new grant funding, has presented a new set of challenges. In a short amount of time, we had to learn to be an employer when we hired our first employees. We had to acquaint ourselves quickly to new written policies that weren't a part of our agency's all-volunteer culture. Our Board is still learning to grow from an operating Board to a

SAHELI Showcase *(continued from page 4)*

governing Board. In our advocacy work, being able to serve all of our clients in their native language is always a challenge. Due to the myriad of languages and dialects in the Asian community and the diversity of our clients, it is sometimes difficult to match interpreters with clients who have very specialized language needs.

Where do you hope to see the organization within five years?

We would like to see SAHELI:

- be able to achieve funding level necessary to increase client services
- serve the Asian population of Austin proportionately
- mobilize more men to participate in the movement
- mobilize individual Asian communities to take a stance against domestic violence
- improve economic empowerment of our clients
- do more prevention work in domestic violence by addressing issues such as proper parenting and the promotion of healthy relationships
- expand services to support more victims and survivors of sexual violence
- expand services to offer support for abusers if such support is requested
- offer programs for Asian teens and college students using the peer theater model
- increase the Asian community's awareness of SAHELI services and general domestic violence and sexual assault issues
- become more knowledgeable and raise awareness about human trafficking issues

Is there anything else you would like the affiliates of the Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to know about SAHELI, its staff, its clients, or its services?

To holistically combat the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault, we have built coalitions on three different fronts:

- working with local mainstream service providers making their services more accessible to our clients instead of duplicating services
- working with local Asian community organizations that do not work on domestic violence issues but have better connection with their constituency
- working with Asian organizations with similar missions in other cities and other countries.

Not only do we focus on the needs of women here in the U.S., we also take on international cases. Some instances of international help include cases where a victim has fled to India and the batterer is still in the U.S. or the victim may be in the U.S. with a divorce filed in India. Sometimes, our clients move and they request that we find resources for them in their new location. There have also been instances where clients have moved to Austin because of our presence here.

For more information see www.saheli-austin.org.
The SAHELI voicemail helpline is 512-703-8745.

Curriculum Infusion Update *by Dorothy Garza*

The efforts toward Curriculum Infusion continue within the School of Social Work as well as with other departments across campus. The Curriculum Infusion Workgroup has continued to meet and now has 10 members. Our three newest members are service providers: Sue Snyder with SafePlace and Adriana Duarte-Wilson and Lupita Lujan of the Austin Police Department Victim Services. Other members include: Regina Johnson, Sarah Buel, Melissa Hamilton, Andria Salucka, Morgan Curtis, and Lauren Bloom. The workgroup has reviewed and helped revise various documents that I am compiling to distribute to faculty across campus this fall. Two social work modules are being revised and should also be ready in the fall. One module is a basic overview of domestic violence and the other module is a safety planning activity. The workgroup members are now concentrating on generating sample statistics problems and ideas for activities, readings, and assignments addressing sexual assault in preparation for our spring infusion efforts. Thanks to all of the Curriculum Infusion Workgroup members for your ideas and suggestions as we develop various resources for faculty, students, and practitioners.

Providing follow-up to the first-round departments has also resumed with the beginning of the Fall 2005 semester. I have met with Dr. George Holden of the Psychology Department and received some additional contacts within the Psychology and Sociology Departments. He also shared some autobiographical accounts of domestic violence survivors that may be used within course assignments. Many thanks for his help and insight. In working with the School of Social Work, I have scheduled four classroom presentations to graduate and undergraduate students. These presentations will include practical strategies for working with clients who have experienced domestic violence such as safety planning and community resource referrals. Presentations to address sexual assault are planned for the spring semester. In addition to these activities, I will send the information packets to my contacts in the History Department, Law School, English Department, and the LBJ School as soon as final revisions have been made. I will also continue to follow up with the remaining departments to secure faculty contacts.

If you have suggestions for curriculum development and/or are interested in participating in the workgroup, please contact me.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

October 3-8: **Operation Orange**: 8:15 AM-4:15 PM, UT Law School Atrium. Students from the Survivor Support Network will be selling burnt Orange Bracelets for \$2. All proceeds go to SafePlace.

October 4:

Silent Witness March at the Capitol hosted by Texas Council on Family Violence, 11:30-12:15

IDVSA Chocolate Extravaganza, 12:30-2:30PM, School of Social Work, Utopia Theatre. This event, held partially in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, will feature a performance by UT Voices Against Violence Peer Theatre Group, followed by updates about the Institute, a variety of chocolate desserts, and time for networking. (Parking for the event is available in the garage on the corner of Trinity and MLK. Bring us your garage ticket, and we will validate your parking.)

October 6: **SafePlace 8th Annual Anniversary Party**, 6:30-9:30PM, La Zona Rosa. Event will feature live music by Asleep at the Wheel and will honor Patti Hallady with the SafePlace Guardian Award. Tickets \$40.

October 6 & 7: **Trial Run: Expert Witnesses in Domestic Violence Cases**. Jeffers Courtroom, UT Austin School of Law. Training sponsored by the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence.

October 26: Brown Bag Presentation: ***The Nature of Children's Exposure to Domestic Violence: A Multi-informant Study* by George Holden, PhD**. 12:00-1:00PM, School of Social Work, room 2.132.

NOVEMBER

November 1: **IDVSA Monthly Meeting**, 12:30-2:00PM, Dean's Conference Room, School of Social Work. **Guest Presenter: Dr. Elizabeth Pomeroy**.

November 3 & 4: **NUESTRAS VOCES/OUR VOICES: Empowerment and Healing in la Comunidad** St. Edward's University, Austin, TX. A national two-day capacity-building institute for improving outreach and promoting partnerships with marginalized Latina/o victims of sexual and intimate partner violence. See http://www.arte-sana.com/nuestras_voces.htm for more information.

The activities of the Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault are made possible through funding by:

The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

The RGK Foundation

The Shield-Ayers Foundation

**Dean Barbara White,
The University of Texas at Austin
School of Social Work**

The IDVSA website continues to be updated with information and resources, including sexual assault and interpersonal violence bibliographies, and an electronic copy of the newsletter.

Check it out at
www.utexas.edu/research/cswr/idvsa