

# Empower!

GIVING VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES A VOICE



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## Message from Tyria Fields



Tyria Fields

**N**ational Crime Victims' Rights Week is celebrated April 8-14, 2018 and during this time, victim services professionals around the nation cultivate with clarity the intent of victim advocacy. At the Metropolitan Police Department

members of the Victim Services Branch work together with community based organizations to provide a coordinated response to victims of crime in the District of Columbia. We work to affirm your rights and provide education about the criminal justice

system. Additionally, we offer emotional support and identify victim-centered resources. With clarity, our goal is to ensure victims are helped and receive the assistance needed in the aftermath of a crime.

## Upcoming Events and Activities

### April

#### Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)

According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), one in five women and one in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives ([www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)). NSVRC is a national, non-profit organization, which through collaboration, sharing, and creating resources fight to end sexual violence. Sexual Assault Awareness Month is an annual campaign, geared towards raising public awareness, education, and prevention strategies. Metropolitan Police Department Victim Services Branch will be hosting the Embrace Your Voice Expo on Denim Day, Wednesday, April 25th, 2018, from 11am-Noon. Join Us! Denim Day has become a symbolic protest against erroneous and destructive attitudes about sexual assault. Denim Day urges everyone to make a social statement, by wearing jeans on this day as a visible means of protest against the misconceptions that surround sexual assault. For more information on Denim Day, visit [www.denimdayinfo.org](http://www.denimdayinfo.org).

#### Next of Kin Meeting

April 9-13, 2018

The Next-of-Kin Meetings are designed to empower and encourage the survivors of homicide victims to take an active role in the investiga-

tion process. The Metropolitan Police Department provides families the opportunity to meet with a Homicide Detective to address their concerns and questions regarding the investigation of their loved one's case. Additionally, members of the Victim Services Branch are present to provide families with resources, information and other supportive services. For more information, contact the Family Liaison Specialists Unit at (202) 645-6363.

#### 2018 National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW)

April 8-14, 2018

Every April, the Office for Victims of Crime dedicates a week to serving victims and those who serve them. This year's theme is Expand the Circle: Reach All Victims. This year's theme emphasizes the importance of inclusion of ALL victims. During this time, many victim-related organizations engage the community in events that strive to raise awareness and provide support for victims. For a list of events for this year's campaign, visit <https://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ovccalendar>.

### May

#### Capital Trans Pride

May 19, 2018

The Capital Pride Alliance is a non-profit organization dedicated to

...serving the needs of the LGBTQ community and its partners through educational events, entertainment, community outreach, and celebrations of diversity throughout the year. The 2018 Capital Trans Pride Day, on Saturday, May 19, will draw together members of the Transgender community, allies, colleagues, family, and friends for a day of celebration, workshops, and panel discussions on a variety of issues important to the Trans community. For more info on this event, please visit [www.capitalpride.org](http://www.capitalpride.org).

### June

#### Camp Forget-Me-Not/Camp Erin DC

June 29-July 1, 2018

Camp Forget-Me-Not/Camp Erin DC is a free weekend, sleep-away grief camp that gives children an opportunity to enter a safe space-away from their daily lives, to gently explore the process of grief. The camp is not designed as a replacement for therapy but as an enjoyable opportunity to explore grief where a child's self-expression is heard, valued and honored. For more info on enrollment, visit [www.wendtccenter.org](http://www.wendtccenter.org).

—Tramaine Newsome

# Embrace Your Voice: Sexual Assault Awareness Month

## Resources

The District of Columbia has a vast array of community resources available that provide direct services to victims such as advocacy, free sexual assault medical exams (SANE), temporary safe housing & relocation, free legal aid, and counseling resources. Should you or someone you know, need assistance locating services and resources, please contact MPD's Victim Services Branch at **(202) 727-6007** or the National Sexual Assault Hotline at **(800) 656-4673** (24/7).

For a list of resources available, visit the National Sexual Violence Resource Center at [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)

— Ashley Rinaldi, Victim Specialist

**A**pril is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) and the theme this year is engaging new voices. This year's campaign calls on individuals, as well as communities, to take action towards ending sexual violence. It starts with recognizing how powerful each of our individual voices is.

Our voices are extremely influential tools that can be used to foster empowerment, as well as accountability. Using our voices to hold people and policies accountable for their actions is quintessential in the fight towards combating the rape culture and ending sexual violence everywhere. Recent movements, such as #Time'sUp and #MeToo, originated from a few peoples decision to embrace their voice. Although these movements have generated heavy media acclaim due to the overwhelming support of celebrities and other pop culture figures, we too can join in the overall movement by making simple, yet effective stances in our daily lives.

## What Does 'Embracing Your Voice' Look Like?

- » Choose to communicate your values on a daily basis
  - "No I didn't see that new movie...I don't support films that glorify violence against women!"
- » Hold colleagues, classmates, and friends accountable for their words and/or actions
  - "I think it's wrong for you all to say she is lying about what happened last night, especially since we weren't there."
- » Use consent in everyday encounters by respecting others' boundaries
  - "We looked amazing last night...is it okay with you if I post the picture we took on Facebook?"
- » Promote healthy communication with your children concerning their bodies and boundaries
  - "I understand that you don't like to hug... I bet we can think of other cool ways that you are

comfortable greeting others."

As you can see, these examples although simple in nature, are effective by allowing you to embrace your voice and encouraging those around you to do so as well. Metropolitan Police Department's Victim Services Branch cordially encourages you to join us as we embrace one united voice in demonstrating our continued mission of support and dedication to survivors of sexual assault, as well as empower others to use their voice.

The MPD's Victim Services Branch will host the Embrace Your Voice Expo on Denim Day. This event will occur on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, in front of MPD Headquarters from 11am-12pm. The goal is to unite with a large group of survivors, citizens, community partners, Victim Services Branch, and other MPD personnel in an effort to demonstrate MPD's ongoing support and service to victims of Sexual Assault. We ask that you join us on this impactful day of solidarity and Embrace Your Voice!

—Ashley Rinaldi

## Victim Services Expands the Circle to Include Teens!

**IT IS EASIER TO BUILD STRONG CHILDREN THAN TO REPAIR BROKEN MEN.**

— Frederick Douglass

**O**ne in three teens experience some form of dating violence, whether it is verbally, physically, sexually or emotionally. The Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center released a study examining the role technology plays in teen dating abuse. According to the study, 26 percent of teens in a romantic relationship digitally experienced abuse via social media, email, and text messages.

As a community, we have been very intentional about our efforts to address domestic violence. When we have

discussions on the issue, it typically does not include the violence that exists within the relationships between the teens in our community. Recently, Victim Services Branch decided to expand the circle by and allowing our teens to be a part of the discussion.

During February's Teen Dating Awareness Month, Victim Services Branch members were in the community conducting outreach and awareness to combat the issue of relational violence that plagues our community. We spent time visiting local Boys & Girls

Clubs and Recreation Centers passing out information about healthy dating relationships. We also provided resources for teens to recognize "red flags" in their relationships as well.

Just because Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month has ended, it does not mean that our efforts to expand the circle to reach all teens are coming to an end. We all play a part in ensuring that our teens are safe and knowledgeable when it comes to dating.

Submitted by Tiarra Laury-White

# Taking Care of Yourself Is Key to a Happy Life

**S**elf-care. It's a term we've all heard of, but what exactly is it? I'm glad you asked. Self-care is just that — taking care of yourself. I can't stress to you how important it is to do this.

Maybe you're thinking you don't have time for a break. Or taking a break is just a waste of time. If you keep working, you'll be done sooner. Breaks are for wimps. Breaks are just a way to procrastinate and I'm sure you can come up with a hundred different reasons.

While there may be truth in some of those statements, there IS time for a break. We perform better and live more well if we allow ourselves breaks and take the time to care for ourselves — physically, and emotionally. But, be careful to not take breaks for the sake of laziness or boredom. They can be as productive as you make them.

Here are my top 10 self-care tips:

1. Set boundaries with friends, family, co-workers; whoever you need to limit in your life for your health and well-being. There's no time for toxic relationships.

2. Carve out time everyday to do something you enjoy. This is your time to invest in you. Have fun with it!

3. Get enough sleep! Being a college student, I understand sleep deprivation all too well. Getting little sleep may be seen as hardworking and dedicated to school, but it's a bad idea. Your brain needs the rest to replace what it used

up that day. Eight hours is prime.

4. Exercise and eat healthy. I know this is something you hear a lot, but that's because it's true! When you exercise regularly and eat a balanced diet, we perform better in our daily activities, moods are better, and are overall physically healthier. 20 minutes two to three times a week is a great start!

5. Be social! Grab coffee with a friend, try a new restaurant, attend a community event, do something that gets you out of the house. Connect with others on a daily basis. Your brain will thank you for it.

6. Be your own advocate. Know what you need and go for it. If you need to stay in for the night, do that. Being assertive is not self-centered. It's knowing what you need to be well and following through with it.

7. "Spoil" yourself. It's not actually spoiling; it's investing and caring for yourself — something we should all be doing more of. Do your nails, build something, paint the walls, go to the movies, shopping, and get the extra scoop of ice cream!

8. Take it one day at a time. Prepare for what you can, and then let the rest come when they come. The world will continue to spin. Life will go on. You will be fine.

9. Remember to breathe. If you're stressing out, pause, take a few deep breaths, and place yourself back in the present moment. No sense in stressing over something that

hasn't happened yet.

10. Take care of yourself because you want to, not because you 'have' to. This isn't a chore. It's giving yourself the attention and care you deserve. There's nothing wrong with putting your needs first.

There are three things you should tell yourself throughout the day. First, find something that you appreciate about yourself from that day. Not "I came in to work" —be specific! "I made a really good cup of coffee this morning."

Second, identify something you appreciate about someone else. "Somebody held the door for me when my hands were full"

And third, something you appreciate about life in general. "Traffic wasn't that bad this morning, making it a better drive into work." At first, this will be hard to remember and that can be discouraging. But keep with it! Set your alarm throughout the day so you remember to think of these three things. They are simple and you will feel better about yourself.

Well, here it is. This list isn't exhaustive — there are lots of books, magazine, and websites that talk about self-care. I encourage you to make a commitment to yourself this season to look out for you. When we can take care of our well-being, we are more able to care for those around us. An empty cup can't fill others up.

*Submitted by Emily Diepstra*

## Expanding the Circle: Engaging Men in the Grief Process

**T**he theme for National Crime Victims' Rights Week is "Expand the Circle: Reach All Victims." Though there is no single "right" way to grieve, men and women deal with grief differently. It is all too common to see support groups and counseling centers frequented by women while men most often deal with their grief privately and/or actively. In order to adapt support services to reach grieving men we must be mindful of the effects that various stigmas have on this underserved population. As service providers, we must find creative ways to help men through the grief process and promote healing.

One reason men tend to avoid seeking support in more traditional therapeutic settings is related to the stigma that men must not show weakness. This can often leave men feeling the need to be strong and to be the "protectors" of those they love. As a result, many men in today's culture avoid seeking traditional counseling services. Consequently, men often suppress or channel grief in silence, secrecy, anger, taking action, or suffering from various addictions.

In his article, "Helping a Man Who is Grieving," Dr. Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D. provides the following suggestions to better support grieving men in our communities:

- » Offer a safe place for a man to mourn. Allow them to express whatever feelings



they may have including anger, guilt, sadness, and fear.

- » Remember there is no single right way to grieve a death. Stand by men by supporting them in finding their own way through the grief process without judgement.
- » Try to coordinate times of reflection with moving and activity. In the context of activities such as shooting hoops or going for a hike, men may be more comfortable sharing than in a therapy setting.
- » Encourage them to engage in active problem solving such as getting involved in the legal process surrounding the death or participating in an activity or event related to the cause of death such as a Gun Prevention Rally or a sporting event to raise money for a related cause.
- » Remain available to support men for years after the funeral. Reach out on holidays and other significant days that may be especially difficult in light of their loss.
- » Watch for warning signs suggesting men are avoid-

ing or repressing feelings of grief. These may include substance abuse, chronic depression, withdrawal, workaholicism, deterioration in relationships, anxiety or agitation, or physical symptoms such as headaches. If you see any of these signs talk to him about your

concerns and help him find resources in his community to support him.

The loss of a loved one can be a life altering experience that leaves men with the task of navigating a sea of emotions privately as they try to cope and be strong for those around them.

As a community it is important to offer services and educate others to better support and engage men in the healing process. Some ways to involve men may include:

- » planning a motorcycle ride against gun violence,
- » shooting hoops to raise money for a scholarship in memory of the deceased, or
- » checking on a friend on a special anniversary day.

We must work together to expand the circle to reach men and give them the support needed to become whole again.

For more information, see the terrific resource, "Helping a Man Who is Grieving," by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. (2007), available at [www.Griefwords.com](http://www.Griefwords.com)

—Megan Riley

## Did You Know?

### Resources

For more on the centers info or resources, visit the D.C. Superior Court at [www.dccourts.gov](http://www.dccourts.gov) or call the court line at (202) 879-1010.

### Family Court Self-Help Center

Moultrie Building  
500 Indiana Avenue, NW  
John Marshall Level  
Room #JM 570  
[www.dccourts.gov/services/family-matters/self-help-center](http://www.dccourts.gov/services/family-matters/self-help-center)

### The Child Care Center

Moultrie Building  
500 Indiana Avenue NW  
Room C-185 on the lower  
(C) street level of the court  
[www.dccourts.gov/jurors/arranging-child-care](http://www.dccourts.gov/jurors/arranging-child-care)

### DC Superior Court Supervised Visitation Center

Moultrie Building  
500 Indiana Avenue NW,  
Washington, DC 20001  
[www.dccourts.gov/services/domestic-violence-matters/supervised-visitation](http://www.dccourts.gov/services/domestic-violence-matters/supervised-visitation)

The D.C. Superior Court has many free resources for victims and survivors of crime. The D.C. Superior Court is located within the H. Carl Moultrie Building at 500 Indiana Avenue Northwest. For instance, there are three specific centers within the court where patrons can access valuable resources. The center staff is there to guide patrons in getting assistance with answers to general legal questions, obtaining information on supervised visitation services, and on how to access free child care services when attending court hearings. Below are a few descriptions of center resources:

The Family Court Self-Help Center is a free walk-in service and self-help center. Services provided by the center assist unrepresented people with general legal information on family law matters such as divorce, custody, visitation, child support. In addition, the center provides information about DC family law matters; informs patrons of their legal rights and obligations, describes legal op-

tions, assists in determining which forms are most appropriate and how to complete them, explains how to navigate the court process, and what to expect in court. The Center also provides referrals to other helpful legal clinic programs.

The Child Care Center is open, free of charge, to all members of the public visiting the DC Courts. The Center provides an opportunity for all children who attend to participate in creative and stimulating activities. To be eligible, the child(ren) must be between the ages of 2 and 12 years old. Children must be completely toilet-trained and wearing underwear - no pull-ups or pampers. The Center is licensed by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), Child & Residential Care Facilities Division and center license is posted in the Reception Area of the Child Care Center. The Center is staffed full time by a Director and an Assistant Director and part-time aides whom are CPR and First-Aid certified. Children must be reg-

istered and Child Care Center registration forms can be completed online and brought to the Center on the day of or prior to Center use to speed up the registration process. A current D.C. Child Health Certificate with immunization records and D.C. Oral Health Assessment form must be provided for each child on the second visit.

The DC Superior Court Supervised Visitation Center. The DC Superior Court Supervised Visitation Center provides supervised visitation and exchange services primarily to court-referred domestic violence cases. The Center has four primary objectives that are outline to: provide a neutral location for visits between children and non-custodial parents; serve as a site for exchanges of children; protect the safety of children and the custodial parents; and to preserve the visitation rights of non-custodial parents. Parties may request supervised visitation through their CPO, Family Court order, or a referral from another organization.

—Helen Hall

## Expanding the Circle: Reaching All Victims through Next-of-Kin Meetings



Each year during National Crime Victims' Rights Week the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) hosts its annual Next-of-Kin (NOK) Meeting. The Next-of-Kin meetings provide MPD an opportunity to reach survivors as well as encourage them to participate in the investigative process. The meetings are held during the week of April 9th – 13th at the Homicide Branch for open homicide cases from 2013-2017. Immediate family members met with the assigned homi-

cide detective to discuss their loved one's case. A Family Liaison Specialist was available to provide supportive services, advocacy, information, and resources to address survivors' individual needs in the aftermath of a homicide.

Additionally, in an effort to reach all survivors and victims, the Victim Service Branch (VSB) continues to update our email group to enhance support and improve communication between MPD and the community. Through this group, VSB has

expanded its circle to renew and strengthen partnerships with healthcare professionals, the faith community, universities, and other allied professionals to survivors and victims to services.

VSB invites you to join its email group at: <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/MPDVictimServices/info>

For more information or to update your contact information please call the Family Liaison Specialist Unit at (202) 645-6363.

Submitted by Carla Okonkwo

# 'Reaching All Victims': Closing the Gap Between Police, Marginalized Communities

This year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week theme "Expand the Circle: Reach All Victims" highlights the importance of forming stronger partnerships with grassroots program, non-profits organizations, and community and system based agencies. The relationship between law enforcement and many marginalized communities continues to be challenging due in part

to language barrier, immigration policies, and lack of trust toward the police. Police Departments throughout the country recognize the importance of

forging positive relationships with this population. To address this issue Departments have implemented several initiatives to educate their officers and engage the community. Some internal initiatives include cultural competency training for all officers and establishing community liaison officers. Other initiatives consist of hosting meetings at churches or other places of worship and participating in activities where officers can engage the community on topics that are beneficial to the public.

The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) is committed to reaching all victims, specifically those in marginalized communities. This commitment includes the communities who are served by MPD's Special Li-

aison Branch (SLB). SLB is composed of the Asian Liaison Unit (ALU), the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Liaison Unit (DHHLU), the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Liaison Unit (LGBTLU), and the Latino Liaison Unit (LLU). SLB members conduct outreach, public education campaigns, and facilitate translations to patrol officers. The vision of the Branch is to build relationships based on mutual respect and trust by providing exceptional support to all citizens of the District of Columbia.

Additionally, MPD continues its commitment to reach all victims by providing information and resources in English, Amharic, Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese languages.

*Submitted by Marlene Castro*



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