

COLLABORATIVE RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



CONFERENCE ON
CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

The following workshop list will continue to be updated and is subject to change.

KEYNOTE: How One Case Changed a Town

Staley Heatly has served as District Attorney for the 46th District of Texas – population 18,000, spanning three counties – since 2006. On July 4, 2009, when five-year-old Kati Ernest was beaten to death in her home on the edge of town, Staley’s approach to domestic violence cases was forever changed. Kati’s mother, Kristina, initially confessed to the crime; but something didn’t add up. Two years later, after following a hunch and digging deeper into the violent past of Kristina’s boyfriend, Tommy Castro, Staley instead brought Castro to trial, where he was sentenced to life in prison for Kati’s death.

Learn how one rural Texas community drastically changed its systemic approach to domestic violence following Kati’s horrific and preventable murder, from starting a body worn camera program, to putting together a Battering Intervention & Prevention Program, to establishing a family violence coalition that later became the region’s first nonprofit domestic violence agency.

Bridging the Gap: How to Build & Sustain Collaborative Relationships

Julie Germann, Erica Olson

When professionals, teams, and communities collaborate well, they effectively bridge the “justice gap,” resulting in better outcomes for victims, efficient use of resources, and healthier communities with less violence. In fact, the majority of Coordinated Community Response (CCR) success is based on skillfully building and maintaining collaborative relationship. However, the process of multiple fields and organizations joining together to bridge the justice gap is, understandably, complex and rarely without conflict. This presentation will explore the supports necessary to successfully bridge disciplines when forming a collaborative response to family violence and discuss ways to increase professional skills to build and maintain healthy, victim-centered, effective professional relationships.

Creating & Operating a Family Violence Program in a Rural Community

Staley Heatly, Rachel Lira

This presentation will discuss the creation of Texoma Alliance to Stop Abuse (TASA), a non-residential family violence program operating in three rural Texas counties. TASA was founded in 2013 as a reaction to a family violence homicide that occurred in Wilbarger County. Over the last several years, TASA has grown from a battering intervention program operated by volunteers to a fully staffed agency offering a wide range of services to survivors of domestic violence. Attendees will learn from TASA’s experience of forming and sustaining a non-profit in a rural community, including performing successful outreach activities in a

sparsely populated area; overcoming challenges in working with community partners, including law enforcement; creating client demand through community awareness; and the operation of a Domestic Violence High Risk Team.

Domestic Violence High Risk Teams in Rural Settings

Kelly Dunne, Heather Davies

The Domestic Violence High Risk Team (DVHRT) Model, created by the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center in 2005, is an innovative strategy to prevent domestic violence homicides. The Model incorporates evidence-based risk assessment into a community's domestic violence response system to identify and intervene in the most dangerous cases. These cases are monitored by a multidisciplinary team that shares case information and implements coordinated intervention plans to mitigate the danger, increasing both survivor safety and offender accountability. Studies have shown that survivors in rural areas report higher levels of intimate partner violence and higher severity of physical abuse when compared with their urban counterparts. Rural survivors face distinct barriers to accessing help and services, amongst other factors, which increases their risk of intimate partner violence. This training will provide an overview of the DVHRT Model, explore the applicability of the Model in rural settings and offer approaches to adapting the Model to best fit rural communities.

Why Shelters Won't Solve Our Problems

Jordyn Lawson

What began as the "Battered Women's Movement" in the 1970s was initially rooted in a "get her out and hide her" approach. Considering the laws of the time, lack of resources, and other limitations, those grassroots efforts and the establishment of confidential shelters were vital in saving many victims of domestic violence. But, 50 years later, does this approach really lead to healing, safety, and self-sufficiency? This presentation will discuss the modern-day barriers that victims seeking safety face, and question whether emergency shelter services should still be our go-to recommendation for victims. Attendees will explore alternative options – such as community-based and systems advocacy, individualized safety planning, long-term exit planning, and transitional living programs – that are also often more practical for rural communities.

Coming Soon...

- Addressing Bias in the Legal System
- Benefits of Systemic Assessment
- Lessons Learned from Rural Texas
- Responding to the Most Challenging Domestic Violence Cases
- ... and more!