



# Crime Victims Resource Center

Serving victims in Mower County since 1977

## SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS

Every April, we recognize Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) and work to educate and engage our community in awareness and prevention of sexual assault, harassment, and abuse. This year marked the 22nd anniversary of SAAM, and the campaign focus this year called on all individuals, communities, organizations, and institutions to change ourselves and the systems surrounding us to build racial equity and respect.

Sexual violence is an umbrella term that includes any type of unwanted sexual contact. Sexual violence can take on many forms and represents a range of behaviors including, but not limited to rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, unwanted sexual contact/touching, sexual exploitation and trafficking, non-consensual image sharing (often referred to as revenge porn), and words and actions of a sexual nature against a person's will and without their consent.

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"Systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, and others contribute to higher rates of sexual harassment, assault, and abuse. So often, we are unaware of how historical conditions have shaped our lives and how we move throughout the world, specifically, forms of privilege with the many identities we each hold. As such, we recognize that it will take ending all forms of oppression to end sexual violence worldwide."

*-National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)*

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**#SAAM2023**



**DRAWING CONNECTIONS**  
**PREVENTION DEMANDS EQUITY**

Research shows that historically oppressed groups such as Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), LGBTQI, disabled, and other marginalized communities face increased sexual violence. It's pervasive - 32.9% of adults with intellectual disabilities report having experienced sexual violence, 1 in 3 Hispanic women reported unwanted sexual contact in their lifetime, more than 1 in 4 non-Hispanic Black women in the United States report being raped in their lifetime, and 47% of all transgender people report having been sexually assaulted at some point in their lives. Certain groups of people are at a higher risk for sexual violence, and those same groups are also the most impacted by inequitable systems and oppression in our society.

In order to end sexual violence, we must work to build equity and respect within our communities. We need to address the bigger picture and the driving forces behind sexual violence. These are often based on attitudes, norms, and social systems that support the unequal treatment of certain groups over others. Let's condemn these forms of oppression and start it right here in our own community by addressing behaviors and policies that contribute to an environment where sexual violence is normalized or isn't taken seriously. It may not be an easy task, but having difficult discussions regarding social exclusion, unequal access to resources, increased exposure to sexual violence and prejudice that people of color face can create real, long-lasting change.

"We can help create change if we take the time to hear, understand, and recognize one another. Drawing connections between ourselves, history, and the world around us is necessary for changing the future."

*As adapted from National Sexual Violence Resource Center; [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)*





# Child Abuse Awareness

According to the National Children's Alliance, in 2020 there were 168,000 cases of child abuse in the United States alone. Of those, over 1500 resulted in the death of a child.

Child abuse is an ongoing epidemic. It's important for a community to be aware of the prevalence, signs, and types of abuse that can happen so that we can speak up. Many people may think of child abuse as being primarily physical abuse, however, child abuse has many different forms.

- **PHYSICAL:** A child is purposely physically injured or put at risk of harm by another person.
- **SEXUAL:** Any sexual activity with a child. This can also involve non-contact sexual abuse, such as exposing a child to sexual activity or pornography.
- **NEGLECT:** The failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, clean living conditions, affection, supervision, education, or dental or medical care to a child.
- **EMOTIONAL:** Injuring a child's self-esteem or emotional well-being. It includes verbal and emotional assault — such as continually belittling or berating a child — as well as isolating, ignoring, or rejecting a child.

The most common form of child abuse is neglect, which made up over 75% of the reported deaths related to abuse. While there are many challenges that can come with proving child abuse, neglect is often one of the toughest to prove which could be why it's the deadliest. It's also important to recognize that the younger a child is, the more vulnerable they can be. Of the reported deaths due to child abuse, more than half were 8 years old or younger. However, it's not all

bad news: Minnesota saw a 16.8% decrease in child abuse cases from the year 2019 to 2020.

Child abuse does not exist in a vacuum. There are often indications that something may be wrong that can be spotted by caregivers, friends, neighbors, teachers, and others.

Here are a few signs that you can look out for, but keep in mind that this list is not exhaustive:

- Bruising
- Injuries that are unexplained or insufficiently explained
- Withdrawn, skittish, or fearful behavior
- Frequent absences from school or events
- Sudden behavior changes
- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Bloody underwear or clothing
- Unkempt hygiene
- Hiding or stealing food

If you ever suspect that a child is experiencing maltreatment or abuse, there are things you can do to help. If a child discloses things they may be experiencing at home, listen with full attention, thank them for letting you know, and remind them that they did the right thing by speaking up. If you have suspicions that a child is being abused, we encourage you to contact your local child protection agency or law enforcement. It's often misconstrued that child protection agencies job is to just remove a child and move on. However, they often try to connect a parent with resources and assistance to help prevent abuse from happening. Removal is often the last option considered.

The most important thing to remember is that prevention is always better than intervention. If you or someone you know is struggling, seek out resources available in the community. In Austin, Parenting Resource Center can help you access classes, assistance, or emergency respite care for parents needing help.

# CVRC Updates

We recently submitted our funding application to our largest funder, The Minnesota Department of Public Safety – Office of Justice Programs. This year it was a competitive process, which is always a much more stressful application. Even with such stress, we were able to submit our application a week earlier than the actual due date ... what a great feeling!! The last competitive process was six years ago, and in comparing 2016 statistics to 2022 statistics, our services have increased by 296% and the number of victims assisted has increased by 78%.

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## INTRODUCING VICTIM ADVOCATE: Sasha Border

Hello! My name is Sasha. I graduated from Utah State University with a bachelor's degree in social work with minors in criminal justice and sociology. I have worked in the social service field for several years and I love being able to help people in any way I can.

I love art and in my free time I can be found painting or drawing while listening to music. Most weekends I love watching a horror movie with my dog Cannon. I'm new to the area but have enjoyed exploring and getting to know Austin. I am so excited to be able to join this team and look forward to being able to help!





# 2022

CVRC  
provided

# 6,982

services to

# 698 VICTIMS

## Crime Victims Resource Center

101 14th Street NW, Austin • 507-437-6680

Empowering victims of crime through education, intervention, support and advocacy.

The Crime Victims Resource Center will help individuals who have been victims of many different types of crime. Some of the specific crimes we work with are:

- Accidents involving intoxicated driver
- Assault
- Burglary
- Child Abuse
- Domestic Abuse/Assault
- Elder Abuse
- Harassment
- Sexual Abuse/Assault
- Stalking
- Terroristic Threats
- Theft



Tori Miller  
Director



Sasha Border  
Victim Advocate



Linnea Garness  
Victim Advocate

### Victim Support Services

- 24 hour crisis hotline
- Crisis counseling
- Safety planning
- Arranging emergency shelter
- Support groups
- Referrals to other agencies
- Emergency transportation
- Support during hospital examinations
- Support during police reporting
- Assistance with Orders for Protection and Harassment Restraining Orders
- Assistance with understanding the criminal justice system
- Accompaniment to court proceedings for support
- Updates on the progress of court proceedings
- Notification of victims' rights

Free and confidential service funded by The Hormel Foundation, Minnesota Department of Public Safety-Office of Justice Programs, and United Way of Mower County.