

CRIME VICTIMS RESOURCE CENTER

WINTER 2025 Newsletter

Serving victims in Mower County since 1977 - To subscribe or unsubscribe, email miller.tori@mayo.edu

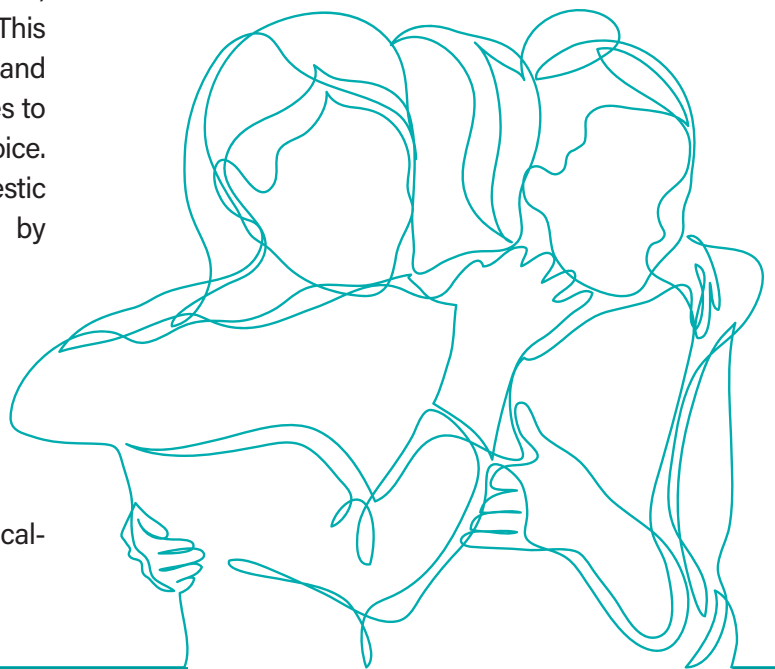
Victimization in the Sex Trade World

Did you know that December 17th was National Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers? This day started as a day to remember the victims of the Green River Killer, who terrorized the women of Seattle in the 1980s and 1990s. Many of his victims were thought to be sex workers. In 2004, an organization called SWOP (Sex Workers Outreach Project) collaborated with Dr. Annie Sprinkle. Together, they designated the day as the National Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers (swopusa.org).

Sex work can be defined as exchanging sexual services, both performative and/or physical, for compensation. This definition is pretty broad, yes, but that helps us understand how varied the labor can be. This definition also ensures to include those who are not in the sex work trade by choice. Many sex workers are victims of human trafficking, domestic violence, or have had their vulnerabilities exploited by others.

It should be no surprise that sex work comes with numerous risks that disproportionately affect those in the trade more than someone who has a mainstream line of work. According to Jayne Swifts of the University of Minnesota, 45-80% of sex workers have experienced some form of violence- sexual or physical-while working.

However, very few of these incidents are reported. Why is that? As it stands now, there are no federal laws that explicitly ban the sale of sex. However, many laws criminalize activities associated with it. These include laws against loitering, transportation, advertising, etc. So, when a sex worker has been a victim of crime, they may not reach out in fear of being persecuted for the sex work itself. Keep in mind that many people in sex work are not doing it out of choice but out of necessity, fear, or coercion. This leaves them with little opportunity to seek help.



Sex Trade Victimization continued ...

The fear created by the system has not gone unnoticed and some communities are working to remove these barriers that harm individuals in sex work. Communities and advocates are working to pass "Safe Reporting" laws. These laws would provide immunity to victims from being prosecuted for prostitution when reporting violent crimes such as assault, rape, or domestic violence. Minnesota's Safe Harbor uses a "No Wrong Door" model that allows the juvenile system to use the court proceedings to support youth victims of sex trafficking in healing and recovery rather than penalizing

them for acts of prostitution (dps.mn.gov). Advocates also encourage local communities to repeal laws that can lead to discrimination against vulnerable populations within sex work such as anti-loitering laws. (genderpolicyreport.umn.edu).

Regardless of someone's background, there is never an excuse to harm another person. At CVRC, victims of all crimes are supported without judgment. If you or anyone you know would like more information, please call 507-437-6680.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY:

Why They Stay — An Interactive Role Play

Over the years, we have heard many comments made by individuals, such as, "Why don't they just leave? They must like to get hit!" Advocates who have worked with people experiencing abusive relationships know there are many reasons why people choose to remain in their relationship, and there are many barriers to "leaving." One of our job responsibilities is to educate others about the many dynamics and obstacles that can prevent a domestic violence victim from leaving.

It is often very hard to explain so that others can truly understand. We now have the remedy for this, the interactive role play, Why They Stay. This role play allows others to be put in the victim's shoes to fully experience all the obstacles they face.

This month we are providing this interactive training to Gerard staff, and we would like to extend the opportunity to you and your team, club, church, or other organization.

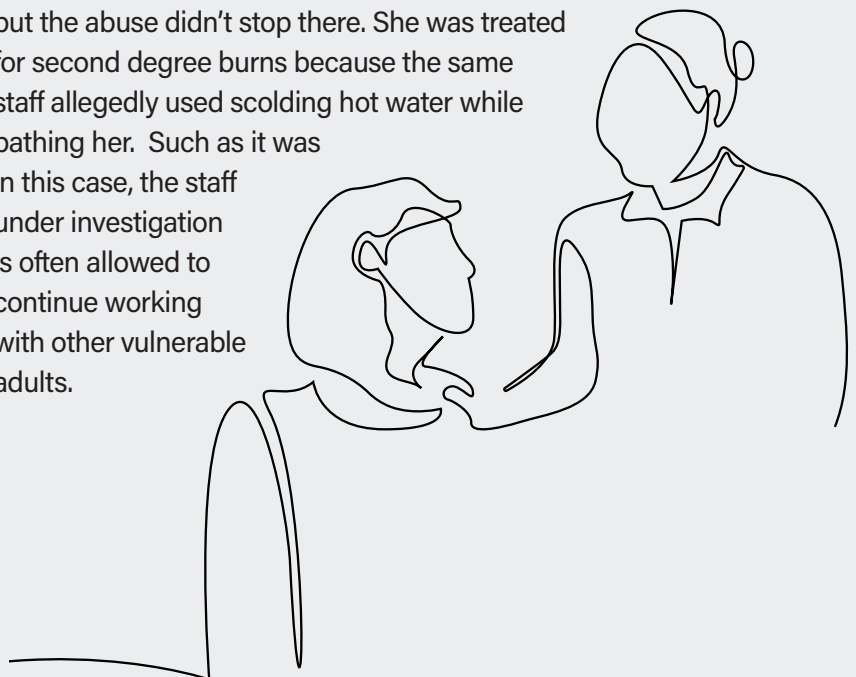
**Call Crime Victims Resource Center at 507-437-6680
for more information on education opportunities.**

Prevalence of Abuse Committed Against Individuals with Disabilities

There is a great deal of research that reflects certain populations experience abuse at a much higher rate than the average population. The statistics that I have found most astounding are the rates at which individuals with disabilities experience abuse. One article estimates that [70% of individuals with disabilities will experience some form of abuse in their life.](#)

Compared to the general population, individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) are [3 times more likely to experience violent crime](#) and the estimated rate of sexual assault is [7 times higher than those without disabilities.](#) Women with disabilities had a [40% greater risk of being the victims of domestic violence.](#) Some articles refer to the prevalence of abuse experienced by individuals with disabilities as the “silent epidemic” because many incidents go unreported.

You don't have to search very far to find cases of horrendous abuse that individuals suffered even in licensed settings such as an assisted living or group home. In September of 2024, the [Owatonna People's Press](#) released an article describing significant abuse and neglect of a 32 year old woman who resided in a group home. The perpetrator was a direct support staff that was responsible for providing daily cares to the individuals in the home. The current complaint states that the staff would lock this individual in her room for several hours at a time, but the abuse didn't stop there. She was treated for second degree burns because the same staff allegedly used scolding hot water while bathing her. Such as it was in this case, the staff under investigation is often allowed to continue working with other vulnerable adults.



Over 6 million individuals in the United States have developmental disabilities.*

Barriers to Reporting Abuse

There are many barriers to consider in order to understand why many cases of abuse go unreported. Here are just a few factors:

- Similar to individuals without disabilities, the perpetrator is often times someone they know and care about. In many cases, it may be a caregiver who is responsible for providing vital, everyday cares.
- They may not be educated on how to recognize and report abuse.
- Many individuals with disabilities have experienced verbal abuse resulting in low self esteem and in some cases, a belief that the abuse is somehow deserved.
- They may lack the skills or abilities necessary to seek help.
- Belief in a myth that they are unable to make decisions and choices independently.

Abuse Prevention and Reporting

So what can you do to help end this silent epidemic? As the old adage goes; if you see something say something. Report suspected abuse to local law enforcement. You can also report abuse of a vulnerable adult by calling the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC) or by [submitting a report on their website](#). If the individual is residing in a licensed setting such as a group home or assisted living and you feel like your concerns are not being addressed, you can contact the office of the [Ombudsman for Long-Term Care](#).

It's important for individuals to have a strong network of support such as family members, friends, co-workers, fellow church members, caregivers etc. Offer regular education to the individual and caregivers on how to recognize and report abuse. Support them with identifying someone they feel comfortable with in the event they need to report maltreatment. If you suspect abuse but are unsure ... report it.

Please feel free to call our office for additional support and resources if you know an adult with disabilities who has been the victim of abuse.

Support Victims as a Volunteer Advocate

We would like to expand our volunteer team to assist us in providing our 24/7 access to services on evenings and weekends. No experience is necessary; volunteers must be

over the age of 18. Training will be provided at no cost. To learn more about this opportunity, please call 507-437-6680.

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”
— ghandi

Crime Victims Resource Center

1000 First Drive 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



Coleena Snyder
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.