

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Benchbook on Sexual Assault

The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals received a STOP Violence Against Women grant to develop a benchbook on sexual violence. FRIS staff is co-chairing a committee to provide input and resource information to this project. This benchbook will be one of only three such resources in the country. It will serve as a tool to assist the judiciary by providing the most updated information on issues relating to sexual violence victimization and perpetration.

Office for Victims of Crime Bulletin

The federal Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) is creating a Bulletin on the regional SANE Mobile Project that FRIS was instrumental in developing. OVC occasionally creates a special in-depth report or 'Bulletin' that is released nationally on projects believed to be promising practices in the field of crime victimization. FRIS has been integrally involved in the development of this lengthy Bulletin detailing the development and implementation of the SANE Mobile Project in north central West Virginia. The Bulletin should be completed and distributed nationally in late 2007.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program Evaluation

The West Virginia Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) has received a STOP Violence Against Women grant to evaluate West Virginia's SANE program. The evaluation, possibly the first of its kind in the country, will compare the completeness of the sex crimes kits collected by sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs) with those collected by other medical personnel. Additionally, the state's rape crisis centers are assisting SAC with a victim satisfaction survey to evaluate victims' experiences at medical facilities that utilize SANEs for the forensic exams versus those that do not. The evaluation should be completed in the spring of 2008. FRIS staff members are assisting in a coordinational role with this project.

Sexually Violent Predator Management Task Force

This Task Force, charged by the state legislature in the spring of 2006 to examine the management of sexually violent predators both in West Virginia and in other states, completed its task and submitted an extensive report to the Governor at the end of June. The data collection process included three public hearings. At each hearing the local rape crisis center provided an informational table for the public. At all of the public hearings, the public emphasized the need for prevention. FRIS staff served on the fifteen member panel, providing the voice of the advocate to the Task Force as well as authoring the section on sexual violence prevention for the final report. The panel elected to broaden the scope of its work to recommend an investment by the state in prevention and included an acknowledgement of a serious lack of resources for sexual assault victims in West Virginia.

Stalking Awareness Month

For January's Stalking Awareness Month FRIS produced several informational items. A special bookmark was developed which cited numerous resources for victims of electronic stalking. An educational module was developed to accompany a DVD on stalking, both of which were distributed with a packet of educational information to the state's rape crisis centers and domestic violence shelters.

LEGISLATION

FRIS was asked to provide input into several pieces of legislation impacting victims. Two new state laws went into effect in June: sexual assault victims can no longer be required to participate in a criminal investigation in order to receive a forensic exam, nor can they be asked to submit to a polygraph exam prior to a criminal investigation.

The proposed revised stalking statute again passed the state Senate but did not clear the House Judiciary Committee.

On the federal level, the newly created Sexual Assault Services Program was passed last year but the continuing resolution for the budget resulted in no funds appropriated. For 2007-08 \$10 million has been designated by both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for the program.

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PREVENTION/AWARENESS

Key Players in Rape Prevention

This statewide multidisciplinary group began working in November 2006 to create a comprehensive, five year plan for sexual violence prevention in West Virginia. Components of the plan will include a state demographic profile as well as numerous assessments of prevention needs and resources. Assessments completed include the rape crisis centers' prevention programs and college campus prevention activities. The plan, due to be completed in October 2008, will help direct future sexual violence prevention activities in the state with a targeted focus on primary prevention.

Prevention Education Specialists

Nine part-time Prevention Education Specialists, funded through the nine rape crisis centers, participated in three meetings coordinated by FRIS during the year for the purpose of resource sharing and capacity building.

Prevention Education Programs

West Virginia's nine rape crisis centers presented 1182 school programs, reaching 41,653 students. A special focus was on Internet safety. The centers also coordinated 67 programs to 2469 students on college campuses. In addition to the programs provided by the rape crisis centers, FRIS staff made presentations on two university campuses, reaching 100 students.

Informational Materials

Fifty billboards warning of the danger of online stalking predators and providing local rape crisis center contact numbers were displayed throughout the state during April. A bookmark citing safety tips and resources for technology stalking victims was developed and a new brochure created regarding FRIS and the services FRIS provides. Additionally, four brochures, two posters, and two sets of bookmarks were reprinted for statewide distribution. Two newsletters were developed, one focusing on statewide initiatives and the other on Internet and technology safety.

Informational materials advertising the national sexual assault hotline and encouraging respectful behavior were purchased for schools, colleges, and the general public. Materials purchased for distribution were 20,000 pencils, 20,000 whistle/flashlight keychains, and 10,000 highlighter/pens. These items will provide survivors and at-risk populations with important resource contact information.

Resource Materials

Multiple copies of seven different resource materials were purchased for use with different disciplines working with victims of sexual violence. Four extensive reference books were purchased to assist in training sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs). One reference book was purchased to assist SANEs in identifying child sexual assault. Two DVD's were purchased to provide technical assistance to Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs): one on the DNA initiative and one on SART development.



PARTNERSHIPS

include the program accessibility of the 9 rape crisis centers and identifying the training nurse examiners serving victims of sexual assault with disabilities and Deaf women. The WVSAFE Partnership currently consists of FRIS, the Northern West Virginia Center for Independent Living, the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities, and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. A strategic plan for the implementation phases of the three year project will be finalized in the fall of 2007.

West Virginia Women's Health Care Initiative

FRIS is involved in this project to survey the state's pharmacies regarding the availability of emergency contraception for sexual assault victims. A sample survey of pharmacies was completed last year. However, with the FDA ruling making Plan B available over the counter, a survey of all of the pharmacies to provide current information to the rape crisis centers is planned for the summer of 2007.

TRAININGS

Advocate Training

A training for sexual assault advocates was held in March in Clarksburg with 13 attending: 12 advocates, representing six different organizations, and one law enforcement officer.

Sexual Assault Annual Symposium

The format of the annual symposium was changed this year on many levels: two different days, two different sites, multiple sessions, and a variety of training styles. A total of 225 professionals from around the state attended this 7th annual event, which focused on technology and sexual violence/stalking.

WV Intercollegiate Council Against Sexual Violence Training

In August FRIS coordinated a training for 20 members of the West Virginia Intercollegiate Council Against Sexual Violence on the Clery Act and campus reporting procedures.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Trainings

FRIS staff assisted in coordinating five SANE trainings:

- One adult SANE training in Huntington in September with 31 in attendance
- One pediatric SANE training in Huntington in October with 18 attending
- An advanced SANE training in Clarksburg in February with 12 attending
- An adult SANE training in Clarksburg in March with 27 attending
- A pediatric SANE training in Clarksburg in April with 25 in attendance

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Trainings

Two SART trainings were held in 2006-2007. At Monongalia General Hospital, 27 individuals attended a four hour training that served as a catalyst for organizing a SART. FRIS assisted in coordinating a SART training in Romney that attracted 62 professionals from surrounding areas.

West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute (WVPAI)

WVPAI requested FRIS' assistance in coordinating a statewide multidisciplinary training on testifying in court. Utilizing distance learning technology, the training occurred simultaneously at 11 sites around the state, allowing over 400 professionals to participate. It was a wonderful opportunity for new prosecutors to develop their skills while giving the 'witnesses' the opportunity to experience testifying outside of an actual courtroom setting.

RECOGNITION