Hate Crime Victimization Eased by Proactive Professionals

By Karen L. Bune

For individuals whose lives are affected by hate crime victimization, the impact of bias and hate-motivated crimes can be a life-altering and traumatic experience. The FBI defines a hate or bias crime as a “criminal offense committed against a person, property, or society which is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender’s bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin”. Hate incidents can encompass the usage of derogatory language, racial slurs, and religious epithets as well as hate symbols such as swastikas, burning crosses, and hate-related graffiti. Incidents often occur near places commonly associated with a particular group.

Property offenses motivated by religious bias tend to result in vandalism and damage or destruction of property. Racial and ethnic, incidents tend to be violent and can include aggravated assaults and intimidation. In many communities throughout the country, hate/bias crimes directed at the gay/lesbian bisexual/transgender (GLBT) population is prevalent. These individuals often live in fear and isolation because of the possibility of becoming targets of hate crimes.

Twenty years ago, Jay, a gay male and age 29 at the time, was the victim of a hate/bias crime—an unprovoked aggravated assault. The incident occurred in a parking lot where he was struck in the face, knocked to the ground, and seriously injured. No one offered him assistance; when he was able to get up and attempted to run to a nearby house, he heard someone laughing hysterically and saying, “run fag boy”. Jay was hospitalized for ten days with a jaw fractured in several
Dear Reader,

A quick review of the declining violent crime rate statistics and the increase in statewide victim rights legislation might lead one to believe that victims today need little extra assistance. However, these figures do not reflect law enforcement’s effectiveness in rendering service to crime victims and their families.

In February 2003, the IACP held a focus group on the status of victim services and law enforcement attended by law enforcement leaders, line officers, detectives, victim advocates, and victims themselves. The twin goals of the focus group meeting were to: (1) identify critical and emerging issues, barriers and challenges facing law enforcement regarding victim services; and (2) recommend strategies to resolve issues, overcome these barriers and meet the identified challenges.

Group participants discussed not only the general obstacles agencies face in developing effective victim services, but also the specific needs of different levels of law enforcement leadership. The resulting report will clarify the needs and strategies identified by focus group members and provide a directional tool for law enforcement to use in improving its approach to serving victims.

To that end, the IACP has created a brochure and web page that law enforcement agencies can customize and distribute to victims. Both the brochure and the web page contain information for victims on victims’ rights and needs, responses to victimization, the court process, national victim resources, with spaces for police departments to provide information on local resources. The brochure is tri-fold on a single sheet, so it can be easily reproduced by agencies. The web page comes with directions on how to customize the page, and how to attach it to an existing website.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the report, brochure or web page, all available in September, please contact me at 703.836.6767 x255, vaughana@theiacp.org or visit IACP’s victim services project on the web at www.theiacp.org/research/.

Alison B. Vaughan, Project Manager, IPBVS

Campus Sexual Assault Programs – On the Cutting Edge
By Connie J. Kirkland, M.A., N.C.C.

Though sexual assault and related acts of violence have, historically, been common occurrences on college campuses across the nation, university and community recognition of this phenomenon has gradually come to the forefront over the past 15 years. Beginning with the high profile case of rape, burglary and strangulation of a freshman coed in her dormitory at Lehigh University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, campus security became newsworthy. After the murder trial of Jeanne Clery’s assailant and the civil suit in which Lehigh University was found responsible for negligence, failure to protect and failure to warn; the Clery family founded Security on Campus, Inc. in 1989, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving safety and security on America’s college campuses.

It was only then that the nation realized that just a small percentage of colleges reported crime statistics to the FBI. Few, if any, services for victims existed on campuses to respond to the high number of sexual assaults. Concern about the safety of college students has been on the rise and Security on Campus, Inc. has lobbied vigorously to secure federal and state laws to address these concerns. Campus violence is counterproductive to the healthy development of individuals who are attending college to gain an education and pursue a career.

The Federal Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act was passed by Congress in 1990. The Clery Act, as it came to be known, requires that all campuses report Part I crimes to the FBI, but perhaps more importantly, these same statistics must be provided to college students, campus employees, and prospective students and their parents. In addition, the Act requires that each college and university have policies and procedures for intervention and discipline for these major crimes as well as educational programming to help reduce the risks to students. The original focus on sexual assault continues today. In selecting a college, today’s parents and prospective students are looking at the college’s security as well as its sports teams and academic standing. Crime rates and prevention and intervention programs are factors in many decisions.

After the passage of the Campus Security Act, other important legislation quickly followed, to include the Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights in 1992, which became part of the US Department of Education’s Higher Education Reauthorization Act that same year. In 1994, the Violence Against Women Act was passed and included funding to increase sexual assault programming and victim services on college cam-
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If you are a victim of crime...

We can help you.

Call us.

1-800-FYI-CALL

Technology Spotlight

Web Based Resource on Family Violence
www.ncjrs.org/family_violence/summary.html
NCJRS announced a new “In the Spotlight” on family violence, addressing child physical and sexual abuse, child neglect and maltreatment, intimate partner violence, and elder abuse. Find the latest facts, publications, and legislation, and learn about programs, technical assistance, and grants and funding resources.

Wisconsin Website to Provide Victims with Offender Information
The Wisconsin Department of Corrections has launched Visual Offender Information Center (VOICE), a website that allows violent crime victims to keep track of their attackers via the Internet. The VOICE service, launched in April 2003, gives the 15,000 crime victims registered with the DOC’s Office of Victim Services and Programs around-the-clock access to offender status, residence, workplace, and mandatory and maximum release dates. Only victims registered with the DOC can access specific information on offenders, but the site also includes public information on crime and victimization. More information about VOICE is available at http://www.vivictimsvoice.org.

Violence Against Women Electronic Network
www.vawnet.org
This network provides support for the development, implementation and maintenance of effective violence against women intervention and prevention efforts at the national, state and local levels through electronic communication and information dissemination. VAWnet operates an extensive searchable electronic library available to the general public with links to external sources, an “In the News” section, and access to articles, and audio and video resources focused on intimate partner and sexual violence and related issues.

If you have technology that you would like highlighted in this newsletter,

Teenagers represent 14 percent of the American population, but represent 31 percent of victims of violent crime. NCVC’s card is aimed at helping teen crime victims understand what has happened to them and get the facts and help that they are looking for. The cards provide information about the National Center’s 1-800-FYI-CALL Helpline, where teens victimized by bullying, dating violence, assault, theft or any other crime can receive information and referrals.

The National Center for Victims of Crime outreach cards help victims get the necessary help they need with just one call. The 1-800-FYI-CALL helpline allows victims to talk to professionals who can provide information, resources and refer them to others who can help in every arena from counseling to legal actions.

To order copies, contact NCVC at 1-800-FYI-CALL on www.ncvc.org.
Though some colleges and universities were quick to see the need for services, many have abandoned these valuable programs, primarily due to a lack of available funds. At George Mason University (Mason), however, the program that was created in 1993 continues to thrive for a couple reasons – namely, an intense administrative commitment to continue such services, as well as the expansion of this innovative program through continuous federal VAWA funding to Mason’s Sexual Assault Services (SAS).

George Mason University’s program has been acknowledged by both the U.S. Department of Justice and the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services as a promising practice and as a resource for other institutions of higher education. The office, which works in collaboration with the university police, the student affairs office, the student health services, campus housing and community police and hospitals, is committed to providing a comprehensive response to reports of sexual assault and the related issues of stalking and dating violence. As a primary resource for students reporting an incident, Sexual Assault

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places, broken teeth, and bruising; his jaw was wired for three to four months. His teeth were beyond repair and, consequently, he had to get dentures.

Jay lacked medical insurance and was found ineligible for public assistance. There were days he did not have medication because he lacked sufficient funds to pay for it and, endured terrible pain. He was out of work for several weeks and was subsequently evicted from his home. He had to return to work earlier than he should have due to his financial status.

Jay’s victimization exemplifies the profound impact a hate crime can impose on a victim; he experienced feelings of anger, hatred, bitterness, and shame. His sense of trust in other people was shattered. His self-esteem was destroyed and he felt, in his words, “wasn’t worth a dime.” As a result of the crime, his home, health, and looks were taken from him. Jay acknowledges that people can be cruel and, following his victimization and injuries to his face, people ridiculed him. He said, “they didn’t realize that I did not choose to look like that…you end up hating yourself. You feel like you have no self-worth. You never forget people making fun of you.”

Following his victimization, Jay did not receive any victim services and did not make an appointment for counseling until fifteen years later after he could no longer cope with the unrelenting negative effects of the traumatic incident. It is vitally important that victims of hate/bias crimes receive victim services, and it is critical that victim service providers understand the complexities involved in working with victims of hate crimes.

Providers must realize hate crime victims feel extremely vulnerable, isolated, fearful, and distrustful following their victimization. Service providers must be sensitive to these feelings, and compassionate listening skills are essential. Victim service professionals can develop a sense of trust and bond with victims by building effective rapport and being forthright and sensitive at all times. The development of collaborative working relationships with other service providers including counseling agencies, hospitals, doctors, compensation programs, and others is imperative. When establishing contact with these agencies in their communities, victim service professionals should address the needs of hate crime victims, and develop inter-agency cooperative agreements.

Additionally, victim service providers should educate the community concerning the impact of hate crime victimization. They must enlist support for attention to the issue as well as promote public safety efforts and funding initiatives for individuals affected by hate crimes. Equally as important, they must continuously update their knowledge base and obtain as much training as possible regarding hate crime victimization.

A number of police departments have created specialized units to focus on these types of crimes. Professionals providing services to victims should enlist the support and cooperation of law enforcement and engage in joint efforts. Interaction in terms of reporting, sharing information, education and training, public relations efforts, and provision of services is essential.

**Tips on How to Assist with Victims of Hate Crimes**

- Remain objective
- Assign only one officer to interview the victim(s) to minimize trauma
- Let the victims defer answering question if they are too distraught
- Ask them if they have any idea why this happened to them
- Ask them if they have any idea why this happened to them
- Encourage victims to tell the story in their own words
- Ask them to recall, to the best of their ability, the exact words of the perpetrator(s)
- Inform them about what efforts can be made to enhance their safety
- Reassure them that every effort will be made to protect their anonymity during the investigation
- Tell the victim about the probable sequence of events in the investigation
- Provide information about community and department resources available to protect and support victim(s), their families and members of the community

Adapted from the IACP’s “Responding to Hate Crimes: A Police Officer’s Guide to Investigation and Prevention.”

To order free copies of IACP’s “Responding to Hate Crimes: A Police Officer’s Guide to Investigation and Prevention” contact the IACP’s Research Center at researchcenter@theiacp.org or 1.800.THE.IACP.
schools do not have a policy or have not revised their policy to meet today's federal statutes. Since 1997, the George Mason Sexual Assault Services Office has had in effect a "Sexual Assault Campus-Community Coordinating Council" that not only meets quarterly, but also has the responsibility of reviewing all policies, procedures, programming, and tasks of the Sexual Assault Services Office. This Council is an offshoot of the Violence Against Women Act federal funding that the SAS Office received. Without the input of this very active Council, the SAS Office staff would not be nearly as productive or successful.

So, how does one measure success? Since its creation in 1993, the number of incidents reported to SAS has continued to increase. SAS staff believes that is indicative of students understanding that George Mason has services for victims, rather than an increase in crime on campus. For the past three years, 33% of the students reporting an incident to SAS follow the initial disclosure by reporting the offense to the police and considering prosecution. SAS staff continually collaborates and trains both medical and legal professionals about the emerging issues related to sexual assault.

Mason's program has determined that campus-based sexual assault programs must have at least these three objectives to be effective: (1) to educate students, faculty, and staff about sexual violence and abuse; (2) to reduce sexual assaults committed by members of the campus community; and (3) to respond appropriately when these incidents occur. Institutions can achieve these purposes when they implement effective policies and protocols, provide adequate service delivery, add to the school's security measures, and offer continuous educational programming.

What George Mason University's Sexual Assault Services does is to coordinate with participants in the overall response (legal, medical, academic, housing, and psychological), whether on or off campus, in order to offer a consistent, timely, and effective victim-centered response. Creating, and reviewing annually, a university sexual assault policy that includes all the options that a student might want and/or need is the beginning. Many institutions can achieve these purposes when they implement effective policies and protocols, provide adequate service delivery, add to the school's security measures, and offer continuous educational programming.

IACP's Training Division

IACP offers up to date, cutting-edge training for law enforcement on a variety of issues, including:

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- Investigations
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- Crisis Management
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- Quality Leadership

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CRITICAL RESPONSE: An IACP NEWSLETTER Summer 2003
Both law enforcement and victim services personnel must acquaint themselves with media outlets in their localities. They need to establish guidelines regarding privacy issues, confidentiality requirements, and sensitivity to victims’ issues along with an understanding and agreement concerning the boundaries and extent of information dissemination.

The effects of hate crime leave no doubt that the impact on victims can be devastating and profound. Only with continued awareness, professional cooperation, and mutual efforts between law enforcement, victim services, and other allied agencies, can the potential for change evolve with the hope and anticipation that the number of these crimes will diminish.

Karen L. Bune is a victim services professional, a national consultant on victim issues for the U. S. Department of Justice, and an Adjunct Professor of Victimology at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA. She also serves on the IACP Advisory Board for Police-Based Victim Services. She can be reached at (703) 472-5611.

To order free copies of IACP’s “Responding to Hate Crimes: A Police Officer’s Guide to Investigation and Prevention” contact the IACP’s Research Center at researchcenter@theiacp.org or 1.800.THE.IACP.

A final aspect of Mason’s SAS Office that is both unique and valuable is its three-tiered Peer Support Program. A network of trained student volunteers has been established to provide information, support, and direct assistance to victims/survivors of sexual assault. Peer Educators provide educational programming to students in classrooms, residences, and student organizations. Peer Companions provide one-on-one advocacy, referrals, education, and offer options to victims to help them make more informed decisions about their medical-legal choices. And Peer Advocates, the most highly trained volunteers in the pyramid, provide crisis intervention and accompaniment through medical and police proceedings as necessary in the absence of the SAS Coordinator.

All services of Mason’s SAS Office are offered at no expense to the Mason community. All reports are kept confidential until the victim/survivor requests assistance from other agencies or offices. In addition to the expected legal, medical, and psychological support and information, SAS also is very involved in the judicial process on campus, as well as academic and housing intervention. With reported incidents to SAS averaging 90 per calendar year, the SAS staff is proud of the fact that since its creation, more incidents are being reported officially to either university or local police. The support offered by SAS staff and volunteers makes this possible; thereby creating a campus climate that is both responsible and responsive to its constituents.

Connie J. Kirkland, M.A., N.C.C., is the creator of and has directed the George Mason University Sexual Assault Services Office in Fairfax, Virginia since 1993. Previously she was the first director of a victim/witness assistance program on a college campus in the George Mason University Police Department. Prior to Mason, she directed victim advocacy centers in California, Arkansas, and Illinois and developed model law enforcement policies for Virginia. She is a Certified Law Enforcement Instructor, a National Certified Counselor, and a George Mason University Administration of Justice faculty member. Ms. Kirkland has been recognized for her innovative work in the fields of sexual assault and stalking by numerous state and federal agencies.

Mason’s Sexual Assault Services Office is on the cutting edge...the cutting edge of both program-
The 7 Critical Needs of Crime Victims: Strategies for Law Enforcement Response
Spotlight on: Continuity and Voice

**Continuity** - Coordinate with local victim service providers and the prosecutor’s offices to provide continuous service to the victim after the initial report is taken. Many cases do not result in arrest and therefore, victims will not receive assistance through the court system. All victims should have information on how to obtain counseling, financial compensation and other assistance.

**Voice** - Allow victims to express their needs and concerns; their feedback is crucial in determining how your agency should respond to them. Police departments can conduct surveys of the victims in their community to determine what needs are not currently being met.

For more information on the 7 Critical Needs of Crime Victims please request a copy of:

“What Do Victims Want”
A report from the 1999 IACP Summit on Victims of Crime