



August 2006

In side this issue:

Top Ten Ways to Keep
A Team Engaged

Page 3

∞

Protocol Site Updates

Page 5

∞

New Team
Announcement

Page 8

∞

MNCASA Update

Page 9

∞

SVJI Happenings

Page 10

**Join MNCASA for its
Annual Meeting and
Training Symposium
"Partners for Change"**

**Friday, September 22
8 AM—4 PM**

**Sheraton Bloomington
Hotel**

**7800 Normandale Blvd.
Free to MNCASA mem-
bers, nominal cost for
others. See form at
www.mncasa.org**

A Community Response

By Leah Lutz

In my work as the director of HOPE Center, I witness the devastating toll of sexual violence on the residents of Rice County. I also witness healing and resiliency, especially among children. In my office I have a drawing from a boy who described HOPE Center as, "a place for people who have worries, people who are afraid, a safe place, and a place for people who want to get strong." I look at his drawing often because it speaks to me of the powerful role of advocacy.

Advocates can become involved with a victim immediately after a crime, in the middle of a crisis, or sometimes not until years afterward, when a victim speaks out for the first time. Regardless of the timing, advocates work in accordance with a victim's self-identified needs, offering a variety of services, which may include helping victims navigate the criminal justice system. Advocates can be a calming presence during such system responses as medical procedures, interviews with law enforcement and court hearings. When an advocate is there to offer support and serve as a liaison among systems, the entire criminal justice system can focus on the important aspects of their work -- evidence collection, investigation and prosecution -- making the entire process more victim-centered.

As a member of the Rice County SMART, I have had the opportunity to be involved in the cyclical, eight-step process that is building our community's response to sexual violence. Along the way, there have been many challenges and successes, as

well as countless opportunities to learn from victims of sexual violence. I have to admit, the beginning of this process created some anxiety and hesitation. Now, however, when I think about what has resulted from the process, the word that most often comes to mind is transparency. I think of transparency as it relates to advocacy, law enforcement, corrections, prosecution, healthcare and educational settings. All team members, as well as the agencies they represent, have spent considerable time and energy listening to constructive criticism, learning about our challenges and strengths, and understanding each other's unique roles in responding to victims of sexual violence.

"...a place for people who want to get strong."

My favorite conversations have been when we passionately discuss how to shift from a case-centered to a victim-centered approach. As we have wrestled with how this shift would actually look, one consistent component has been the essential role of advocacy. All SMART members recognize that victims need advocates to help give them a voice in the system, to help system professionals understand victim needs and wishes, and to provide an opportunity for victims to access long-term supportive services. Perhaps that's just a grown-up way of saying that advocacy works best when it creates a safe place for "people who want to get strong."

Leah Lutz
Executive Director, Hope Center
Rice County SMART

Misleading Phrases in Sexual Assault: First, Do No Harm

Kaarin Long, Staff Attorney, Sexual Violence Justice Institute

In the criminal justice system, professionals use many phrases as short-hand for common concepts which need no further explanation. We all know what "crim sex," is, or "the perp," or maybe a "frequent flier." But some other short-hand might undermine the work that we do and convey to juries and judges misconceptions that make proving these cases tougher.

"He Said/She Said" – The phrase "he said/she said" refers to the fact that in the majority of sexual assault cases, there are only two people in the room: "She," who said it was sexual assault, and "he" who said it was consensual sex. The phrase implies that with her word against his, the truth of what happened when they were alone may be impossible to sort out.

Let's face it: rape *is* acquaintance rape. Some studies say 85% of sexual assault victims knew their attacker, some put it closer to 90%.

Yet, many other types of criminal cases are "he said/she said" or "he said/he said" – etc. A robbery, for example, where a weapon is wielded but not used to cause injury, is a "he said/he said" case. The victim reports that the suspect pointed a knife at him and demanded money, took the money from the victim, and then ran away. Robbery often happens between people who were acquainted previously and leaves no physical marks, and yet, if the robber says "no, he *gave* me the money willingly," most professionals would not throw up their hands and say "well, there's not much we can do – it's a 'he said/he said.'" The same might be true for a theft of a vehicle ("no, she *consented* to my taking the car"), or a burglary ("no, he *consented* to my coming in the house and *gave* me the X-Box").

In many similar cases, suspects *claim* consent, but professionals are not thrown by this – and neither are juries. They assume that the victim would not report these crimes unless they had in fact happened. There may be the occasional case where a false report is made so the police will recover the loaned car, but for the most part, people give the victim the benefit of the doubt that the report is genuine. With some corroboration of the report both before and after the event, professionals and juries seem comfortable finding a crime even when the suspect says the victim consented. It is often not so with sexual assault.

"Acquaintance Rape" – Let's face it: rape *is* acquaintance rape. Some studies say 85% of sexual assault victims knew their attacker, some put it closer to 90%. Putting a qualifier on the term rape to explain that the victim was acquainted with the rapist is like saying "domestic violence in a significant relationship" – it's redundant! It's like "rape lite" - it reflects the myth held by the public that *rape* is a stranger coming in the window with a knife, and *acquaintance rape* is just two people who had a misunderstanding, or is a rape that is less traumatizing than stranger rape.

Those who work in criminal justice know that the majority of crime – theft, robbery, assault, sexual assault, check

forgery – occurs between people who on some level are acquainted. They might be neighbors, family members, crashing on each other's couches, doing drugs together - rarely is "who dunnit" the question in criminal cases. Most often the case is about proving what was done by a known suspect, and what crime it amounted to. But other crimes don't get labeled with a qualifier like "acquaintance check forgery." When the guy who is staying at his buddy's house steals checks and forges them, it is treated and referred to the same as if they were strangers. Why is rape any different?

"Delayed Report" – The phrase "delayed report" is also misleading in that it implies that a report made by a victim after the passage of one day, one week, or months is somehow abnormal. A "report" is a call made immediately, but victims who wait longer are giving a "delayed report."

The reality is that only perhaps 16% of sexual assault victims report their assault to law enforcement *at all*. Those who do report *almost always* take some time to think carefully about coming forward about the assault. They may be initially in shock and confused about what happened. They may talk to a friend or a sexual assault advocate, unsure if their experience was truly sexual assault, or if they did something wrong. They may

Continued on page 9

Top Ten Ways to Keep a Team Engaged

By Melanie Matson, Site Coordinator, Rice County

1. Build relationships

An essential part of the SVJI team (SMART, SAPT, SAIC) process is building relationships. When professionals from advocacy, law enforcement, medical care, probation, prosecution and other disciplines come together to work on the response to sexual violence building relationships becomes a natural by-product of this process. Regular meetings provide opportunities for team members to have the opportunity to build and strengthen professional relationships. We have found that we enjoy interjecting some fun into our meetings. Our team begins each meeting with team members stating their name, agency, and a fun "fact" about themselves. The fun "fact" could be a favorite food, best vacation, or holiday memory. We got to know each other so well that we even played a trivia game about team "facts."

This team process has helped establish trust and rapport, which will help us achieve our overall goal of improving the victim experience. Professionals that work well together tend to create a coordinated, consistent response system. This improved response system can lead to increased reports and better system outcomes. In the end, this benefits the entire community.

Also, trust and rapport can improve the professional experience of the system. It's a lot easier to respond to a sexual assault when relationships are established and there is an understanding of respective roles.

Not only do we all respond to sexual violence, often we work together for other community efforts. Members can work together to offer direct service to other crime victims, present to a community group, or host a professional training. Some teams have even used the established relationships to apply this team concept to other issues, such as domestic violence. Continuing to build relationships keeps teams engaged.

2. Learn new things

When our team first started, SVJI suggested beginning each meeting with an agency introduction. Each agency representative shares with the team their agency logistics, roles, and current response to sexual violence. To learn more, other agencies not represented on the team were invited to share information with the team about their services. In this way, we learned about services in our com-

munity, prepared for protocol development, and raised awareness of our team.

In addition, we learned new things during the eight-step protocol process. Through the Victim Experience Survey, we learned about the system from victims' perspectives. The focus groups helped us learn from community members, such as college students, Somalis, and Latinas. The public forum helped the team, and the community, learn about the importance of a collaborative response. We gained feedback on the current response system and ideas for future response from local professionals during the Community Needs Assessment as well.

SVJI has also facilitated learning. The newsletter includes up-to-date information. The All-Team gatherings have offered us opportunities to learn from other teams, network within disciplines, and gain knowledge from expert speakers. SVJI listservs allow us to learn from professionals statewide. Trainings by SVJI offer insightful sexual violence information and team-building activities. The recent SVJI task force on Alcohol/Drug Use and Sexual Assault Cases helped us learn new things by pulling information and professionals together for a great effort that will benefit current and future teams. Take advantage of these regular opportunities to learn new things about each other, other teams, sexual violence, and collaboration.

3. Establish structure

When we first began, SVJI worked with us to establish regular meeting times and meeting activities. The eight-step cyclical process also gives these collaborative teams structure to base our activities on. Structure keeps us engaged and productive because we can focus on getting our work done instead of worrying about *how* to get it done.

4. Share leadership

Typically, members of teams are already leaders in the community; it's not that far of a stretch to see them as leaders for the team. For example, our team voted on co-chairs to facilitate the team meetings. Each subcommittee also has a chairperson, determined by the subcommittee. Chairs can lead in many ways, including facilitating meetings, proofread-

Continued on next page

ing documents, and representing the team at community functions. Every team member can be a leader by representing the team in the community as well.

5. Have a sense of humor

Laugh! As I mentioned before, our team begins each meeting by sharing fun facts about ourselves. This usually gives us a chance to laugh.

6. Appreciate your teammates

All of us are busy professionals, and the time and effort that team members commit to the team proves dedication. Unfortunately, we are also in professional roles that often go unrecognized. This is why it is so important to appreciate the unique contributions that each member gives to the team.

Some members may be early to every meeting, others may be skilled at taking the minutes, and some may volunteer for every subcommittee. It is important to recognize the assets that each member brings to the team. Our team has instituted the SMARTIE Award. The SMARTIE Award is based on our name (SMART) and the SMARTIE candy. At each meeting, a team member is honored for her/his contributions to the team.

Another way to show appreciation of teammates is to say thank you. Writing a thank you card, sending an email of appreciation, or simply stating "Thanks," builds relationships, shows respect and thankfulness, and probably makes your teammate feel good. Thank you cards can be sent to supervisors/administrators as well so that they know their agency is appreciated and represented well in the community. Another fun thing we did was a small gift bag filled with mint goodies that said, "Thanks for your commit'mint' to the Rice County SMART." Even small tokens of appreciation keep team members engaged by feeling appreciated.

7. Get involved

With the eight cyclical steps of the protocol process, no team could possibly get bored. This process also offers opportunities for team members to get involved in ways that fit their schedule, skills, and expertise. For example, professionals with a great awareness of community resources can help with the Inventory of Existing Services, members that provide direct service to victims are perfect for the Victim Experience Survey, and those with proof-reading and editing skills are helpful for developing reports. Our teams do great things, and we can do even better if we utilize team member strengths!

8. Communicate, communicate, communicate

Most teams have a number of regular communications. Team members receive regular emails, most likely including meeting agendas and minutes, from site coordinators. They may also receive quarterly or year-end reports. This is a great way to keep team members informed and to recognize individual, agency, and team efforts. Of course, SVJI does a phenomenal job of keeping site coordinators updated on relevant information, which also is passed on to team members. Finally, meeting attendance is crucial to communication. Yes, email and phone calls work okay, but nothing beats the whole team, face-to-face interactions. An open climate allows for honest and thorough discussion. These conversations can invigorate and engage the entire team.

9. Recognize the team's accomplishments

The accomplishments of the collaborative teams are amazing, so make sure to celebrate. Celebrating the completion of steps, such as the Inventory of Existing Services, focus groups, a public forum, or a monitoring checklist, is essential. It further bonds the group by building pride and a sense of accomplishment. Celebrations can take many forms as well. Perhaps it is a pizza party or an ice cream party, maybe playing a team-building game, giving out certificates during Crime Victims Week, or just sharing how many hours the team contributed towards an event. There's always a reason to celebrate.

It's also great to hear about the team accomplishments in the community. Local newspapers often cover team events, such as public forums and protocol/report releases. It's fun to hear from professionals and other community members about team accomplishments. Recently, an area professional reported being impressed by the team's collaboration and accomplishments. That is so wonderful to hear! Share these statements with the team. We are making great strides in our communities, *together*.

10. Have fun

Everybody loves to have a good time. The workday feels lighter when a meeting is productive and fun. Team meetings can be fun by sharing fun facts about ourselves, eating fun snacks, and maybe even throwing in a team-building game or activity. Having fun together is a great way to stay engaged with the team.

Protocol Site Updates

ISANTI COUNTY SAIC

Brenda Skogman, Site Coordinator

In Isanti County we are currently preparing for the fair which we will have our display booth out there as well as members of the team to answer questions and concerns. We are still working on our monitoring and evaluation portion which continues to be a struggle. The victim evaluations we have done so far have come back fine with no serious concerns on the part of the victims. We have decided as a team to work on two big projects for the fiscal year 07 which include a community forum/professional training with possibly Victor Vieth or another speaker speaking on sex offenders looking for their victims in rural areas; how to identify a child that may become a victim or would be an easy target for a sex offender to "pull in". We are currently talking about including the Anoka-Ramsey Cambridge Community College, Cambridge-Isanti Schools, Braham Schools and Clergy into our team.

Last of all we received a call from our Chief Deputy Sheriff, Russ Monson, that his son is going to school at Metro State and called to tell him that they are using the Isanti County Sexual Assault Protocol to train law enforcement officers on sexual assault. Apparently the teacher said that this protocol is the best that they have seen and they are going to start using it in all of the law enforcement schools for training new

law enforcement officers on sexual assault. Yeah!!! We are making a difference!



WINONA COUNTY SAIC

Valerie Williams, Site Coordinator

The Winona County SAIC team members have become excellent systems evaluators and have found they really enjoy the time spent discussing successes

and areas of improvement. Our newest member, Winona PD's new investigator, has a great passion for getting convictions on sexual assault cases. He feels his work has benefited greatly from the team's discussions and the different points of view offered.

In June, one of our sub-committees completed a juvenile protocol that will be a supplement to the adult version. The focus is on the rights of juvenile victims and includes recommendations for juvenile offenders.

As a part of the annual protocol training for law enforcement, our prosecution representative completed an evaluation of the kinds of sexual assault cases that went through the County Attorney's office in 2005. Throughout the coming year, the team will use this evaluation as a tool for identifying problems in the system and working to correct any issues.



OLMSTED COUNTY SAIC

Joann Holt Angerman, Site Coordinator

Both the Community Needs Assessment (CNA) and Executive Summary were officially released at a press conference in April. At the press conference, the heads of SAIC member agencies spoke about the findings of the CNA and strengths of the 8-Step Process in creating a better response to sexual assault. The mayor of Rochester signed a proclamation declaring April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. In addition to the Rochester mayor, the press conference was attended by the Rochester Police Chief, the Olmsted County Sheriff and the Olmsted County Attorney. Local television and newspapers covered the press conference, leading to a great deal of positive publicity for the SAIC.

A new co-chair, Lisa Swenson was elected and began her term in June.

Continued on next page

Site Updates, Cont.

Jeanne Martin and Jim Pittenger had served as co-chairs since the inception of the SAIC. The group decided to begin having co-chairs serve two-year terms, with one new co-chair elected each year. Lisa has been a valuable team member in both Winaona and Olmsted and we are excited to have her in this new leadership position. A huge Thank You also goes out to Jeanne Martin, who stepped down as co-chair. Jeanne has contributed much to the work of the SAIC over the last several years.

Two SAIC members attended the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs Conference on Crime Victims after being awarded a scholarship from OJP. A contingent also attended SVJI's All-Team Event in June.

Throughout all of this, Olmsted has continued its work on guideline writing. Most agencies have presented a first draft to the SAIC and the group hopes to complete our guidelines sometime this fall.



RAMSEY COUNTY SAPT

Nicole Albaugh, Site Coordinator

The Ramsey County team has been consulting with Midwest Children's Resource Center (MCRC) to gain a better understanding of the correct processes that should be followed when working with victims of sexual abuse who are under 12 years of age or crimes of interfamilial relations. Out of this effort, we are pleased to report MCRC will become a regular member agency of our team! This will be very helpful as the team begins to embark on expanding the protocol to include victims 13 -15 years of age.

The United/Children's medical-advocacy subcommittee group met again in July to review data that was collected by the SANE program, hospital staff and advocates about the new process of not having on site advocacy for victims of sexual assault. Social

Workers at both United and Children's hospitals have received training from Sexual Offense Services on how to respond to a victim of sexual assault and how to refer them on to additional services if they need. The group decided more time needs to pass in order to get a better idea on how effective this process is and to identify problem areas. The group plans to tentatively meet on November 7th to go over more data.

Finally, the team has been asked to participate in the Safe Harbor Youth Intervention Project (SHYIP) to help develop a protocol for runaway youth who have been sexually exploited. Since the Ramsey team has identified a need for a youth protocol to help guide services for victims of sexual assault between the ages of 13 – 15 years old, this is a great opportunity for the Ramsey Co. SAPT to collaborate with another multidisciplinary group!

The primary goal of the SHYIP grant is to develop a victim services model to address the needs of sexually exploited youth that is focused on prevention and intervention. The project will base it's foundation on the 8-step model protocol process which is the same process used by all SMART teams. Funding for the project is expected for 12 – 18 months. By January 2008, the group will report back to the senate and house committees on the results of the pilot project. If you know of Ramsey County agencies that should become members of the SHYIP project, please contact Nicole at (651) 241-5864.

The team continues to meet the second Thursday of every month from 9 – 10:30 am at the Eastern District Police Station in St. Paul. All team members are asked to bring their lists of current community resources for the August meeting. The team will be focused on updating the inventory of existing services, victim experience surveys, and monitoring the implementation of the protocol over the next couple months.



Continued on next page

Site Updates, Cont.

SOUTHERN ST. LOUIS COUNTY SMART

Brook A. Holmberg, Site Coordinator

The Southern St. Louis County Sexual Assault Multi-disciplinary Action Response Team (SMART) located in Duluth, MN is a program designed to bring together community organizations in an effort to create a community response to incidents of sexual assault. With great guidance from SVJI and MNCASA, over the last five years the Duluth SMART has established a very successful team comprised of local advocate groups, prosecution, law enforcement officials, medical representatives, persons representing the local clergy as well as many others.

The most recent accomplishment of the Southern St. Louis SMART is the establishment of a community-based Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program. Although the program development is only in its infancy, there are already great hopes and expectations that the SANE program will not only enhance the quality of medical care to victims of sexual assault, but will also create for more comprehensive forensic evidence collection which will potentially lead to more effective investigation and prosecution.

As the Duluth SMART enters its last year of full-funding, the team is beginning to create a methodology for evaluating as well as monitoring the core agencies on their effectiveness in maintaining a victim-centered approach to the issue of sexual assault. It is expected that the teams will find that they are incredibly effective as essential participants within a great collaborative system, which will hopefully create momentum to continue the hard work for years to come!!



Rice County SMART

Melanie Matson, Site Coordinator

The Rice County SMART has had a very busy quarter. Team members were busy raising awareness

about sexual violence during April. Neal Pederson from the Faribault Law Enforcement and Leah Lutz from HOPE Center, presented at the Women's Health Night. Over 150 community members were on hand to discuss the prevalence of intimate partner violence. Many team members wore a teal ribbon for sexual assault awareness and also wore blue on April 27 for child abuse prevention. During National Crime Victims Week, Rice County Attorney G. Paul Beaumaster recognized team members by presenting appreciation certificates and teal ribbon cookies. Also in April, the team learned about interpreting standards and diversity awareness.

The team proudly presented our Community Needs Assessment Report. Team members spent countless hours proofreading, providing feedback, and discussing the report. The report includes a printed Executive Summary and a CD-ROM version of the complete report. All tucked inside a SMART folder. Member agencies and the cyclical process of the SMART are highlighted on the folder. Carleton College generously printed the CD-ROMs and donated invitations for the public release event.

In May, the team held a Community Needs Assessment Report Release Ceremony. Team members attended the ceremony and local media covered this event. During the ceremony we released the Community Needs Assessment Report to the community and team members recommitted to the SMART by signing a Renewal of Agency Commitment within memorandum of understanding. Representatives included:

Carleton College – Hudlin Wagner, Wayne Eisenhuth, Dr. Linda Hellmich

District One Hospital – James Wolf, Joan Boysen, Cheryl Arnold

Faribault Law Enforcement – Chief Michael Lewis, Sergeant Neal Pederson

HOPE Center – Leah Lutz, Melia Garza

Lonsdale Law Enforcement – Chief Jason Schmitz

Morristown Law Enforcement – Chief David Osborne

Northfield Hospital and Clinics – Andy Yurek, Jessica Vogt

Continued on next page

Site Updates, Cont.



Northfield Human Rights Commission – Bonnie Praver

Northfield Law Enforcement – Chief Gary Smith, Detective Monte Nelson

Rice County Attorney's Office – G. Paul Beaumaster, Nathaniel Reitz, Vanessa Eng

Rice County Community Corrections – Jim Haas, Trace Martinez

Rice County Sheriff's Department – Sheriff Richard Cook, Chief Deputy Bob Sletten

St. Olaf College – Pamela McDowell, NiNi Hopkins-Sexual Violence Justice Institute – Michelle Knudson

Rice County Attorney G. Paul Beaumaster welcomed the attendees and shared highlights of the report. Each agency representatives publicly signed the Memorandum of Understanding, recommitting to the SMART. Team co-chairs Leah Lutz and Nathaniel Reitz thanked the participants and concluded the ceremony. Following the presentation, we shared a delicious cake with "Rice County SMART" written on it.

The event was truly a time to celebrate the participation of SMART members and agencies. The SMART is grateful for the staff time, effort and commitment that the team representatives, agencies and administrators have contributed. Thank you to the many team members and agencies whose commitment and effort has made SMART a great success!

In June, some Rice County team representatives attended the Sexual Violence Justice Institute All-Team Gathering. The event was a great way to learn about activities in other SMART communities, network within disciplines, and connect with the amazing work the SMART and SVJI are doing across the state of Minnesota.

At last, the team has begun to work on developing the SMART protocol. Protocol development will continue throughout this year. The dedication of team members and agencies is greatly appreciated!

CARVER COUNTY SAIC

Tara E. Keehr, Site Coordinator

The Carver County group has had several setbacks on Step 3 lately. But luckily adversity sometimes brings out creativity! In place of the professional focus group, at which no-one showed up, we sent out a written survey to the professionals and received a very good percentage of responses. No-one appeared at the Hispanic focus group, either, but plans are underway to attempt to reach the Hispanic community through written surveys at local churches with Spanish-speaking services. Our other focus group was a real success, and transcripts of that meeting are being prepared now. We are hopeful that we will be receiving epidemiological assistance from one our member agencies. We should, therefore, wind up with sufficient information for our Community Needs Assessment. In addition, we are retrieving demographic statistics from Carver County Administration which will be included in the CNA .

The group has decided not to meet in August, as we need a "breather"; our next meeting is scheduled for September 19th.

Itasca:

We welcome a new team to our protocol site organizing in Minnesota. Itasca County was awarded a subsistence grant from OJP. These grants are awarded to protocol sites that have completed their initial work and are committed to maintaining the protocol work. Itasca County received a VAWA special project grant in the past and used the funds to follow some of the protocol organizing work. We look forward to getting to know their work better and to welcoming their participation in our circle of site coordinators and teams. Look for more information about this team in the future. Amanda Ysen or Itasca Alliance Against Sexual Assault will coordinate the team.

Misleading Phrases in Sexual Assault:

First, Do No Harm

feel humiliated and embarrassed, unsure if they can meet with an investigator who is a complete stranger to discuss such a personal crime.

Thus, reports which are made other than instantaneously are not really "delayed" – they are normal – they happen all the time. In other words, a report made after six months of therapy is not "delayed," it is normal and is made in the course of the healing process for that particular victim. Does this time lapse present challenges in the investigation that would not have been present had she called 911 the moment she got away from the suspect? Sure. But is that time lapse an *abnormal* event that requires a special label of "delayed report?" No – taking time to think is normal for a victim of sexual assault.

What's the Difference? Professionals might say "what's the difference if we use these phrases, as long as we do our best with these cases?" The response is that the language we use certainly helps shape our understanding of the world – it turns abstract concepts into concrete thoughts. Each of these phrases camouflage the way sexual assault cases really happen and the common reactions and trauma that victims experience.

Professionals who work with these cases should lead the way to righting many of the wrong assumptions others – juries, less experienced professionals, and yes, judges – have about sexual assault. These cases can be an uphill climb to prove beyond a reasonable doubt – so why use terminology that presents more obstacles? With all the misconceptions about these cases, professionals should "first do no harm" by refusing to propagate misconceptions by using phrases which mislead about the reality of

MNCASA Update

I am pleased to announce that I recently accepted the position of Executive Director of the MN Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the home agency of the SVJI. The partnership that SVJI and MNCASA has had for the past five years has been an opportunity for both to grow. I am excited about the future for our joint work. I am proud of the wonderful changes that have happened in "protocol counties" and firmly believe that through this powerful process we have prompted lasting systems change that will continue to benefit survivors. The team members in each site have taken on the challenge to make their response more victim-centered. We all benefit from this work. I will remain involved in the growth and direction of the SVJI and the protocol process. I will always be committed to this ground breaking work.

Donna Dunn

SVJI Mission: Dedicated to promoting justice for victims of sexual violence through multidisciplinary collaboration, leadership, and resources.

New Sites!

With the welcomed news that the Violence Against Women Act was reauthorized we are hoping to see more teams funded to start the protocol process work in Minnesota. OJP has moved their funding cycle to match the VAWA and calendar year so any new projects will be funded beginning January 1, 2007. If you are interested in competing for this funding should the grants become available please stay in touch with us at the SVJI for information about what it means to become a protocol project.

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SVJI Happenings

- SVJI will be conducting a training the October with the Army and Air National Guards in Minnesota to begin coordination of their mandated sexual assault response. This group will be working to improve the response in Minnesota for Guard members who are sexually assaulted while on duty.
- SVJI is working with Pennington County law enforcement to conduct a training for area officers on investigating sexual assault cases.
- We have applied to be considered for a federal Office of Violence Against Women grant to expand the work of SVJI to a more national scale. We should hear whether we can make a full application by Fall.