

SAFVIC ON THE SCENE

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New Rights for Sexual Assault Victims

Texas Property Code 92.0161 allows a victim of sexual assault to break a lease at an apartment or another rental property without having to pay financial penalties such as future rent or any fees for ending the lease early.

HB 2626 now states that a sexual assault examination shall be conducted if a victim of sexual assault arrives at certain types of health care facilities within 96 hours after the assault and consents to the exam, even if they have not reported the assault to law enforcement.

For more information visit www.HopeLaws.org or www.TAASA.org.

SOURCE Texas Association Against Sexual Assault

Involving the Community Helps Law Enforcement Make Us All Safer From Sexual Violence

By Joan Tabachnick and Meg Bossong

Picture this scenario: a patrol officer and detective are dispatched to a popular local bar near closing time on a busy weekend night to respond to a report of a sexual assault that took place there. From a law enforcement perspective, this case has the potential to be a challenging one. There are multiple scenes to secure, a number of witnesses to interview (many are not cooperating or intoxicated), timelines to establish, and the business concerns of the bar's owners, to name just a handful of considerations.

Bystander Intervention

Typically, law enforcement will get involved in cases of domestic and sexual violence AFTER an incident has been perpetrated. But what if law enforcement could offer their skills and resources to help engage the larger community in prevention? This is the opportunity offered by a bystander intervention approach in Boston. The idea of bystander behavior has been widely used to explore an individual's reaction to witnessing crimes and emergencies.

Only recently has it been applied to sexual violence prevention. All of the bystander approaches are based upon the concept that everyone has a responsibility to respond to sexual abuse before, during or after the abuse has been perpetrated. To do so, people need to be educated about what to look for and given the skills about how to respond. (For more information about bystander interventions, see the resources listed at the end of the article.)

Role of Law Enforcement

What role could law enforcement have in this original scenario? Let's move backward in time, before the call to the police is placed, before the assault occurs, before the bar even opens that night.

To answer that question, we'd like to offer the case example of work done by the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC) and the Boston Police Department (BPD) with bars and clubs in two areas of the city: one with a number of establishments frequented by tourists and club-goers, the other in a part of the city with a very

large college student population.

Typical bystander intervention programs in bars are directed toward encouraging individual patrons to protect potential victims. Common advice includes: look out for your friends, come together and leave together, and don't let your friend leave with someone if they seem to be too intoxicated. Those are all excellent and sensible tips, and ones that can be effective. But communities will never be safe if the only approach is to reach people individually by individual. The unique approach developed by BARCC in conjunction with the BPD was to extend this approach to include a change in the entire atmosphere at the bars in Boston.

The bar trainings that BARCC now conducts grew from a relationship with the BPD and from the BPD's relationship to the investigation and enforcement division of the state's Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC). In the neighborhood popular with college students, the

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Denim Day

The SAFVIC Team along with the Texas Municipal Police Association showed support by participating in Denim Day Austin. Part of Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month, Denim Day is celebrated in protest of an Italian High Court ruling that overturned a rape conviction because the victim was wearing jeans.

Businesses, organizations and individuals wore Denim in support of sexual assault survivors and to raise awareness about sexual assault rape misconceptions.



Available SAFVIC Courses

SAFVIC 24 Hour

- TCLEOSE Course #3264
- 24 hour credit
- Recommended for law enforcement officers – victim advocates and prosecutors invited to attend as well

SAFVIC for Cyber-crimes

- TCLEOSE Course #3266
- 8 hour credit
- For law enforcement officers only

SAFVIC for TCPs

- TCLEOSE Course #3267
- 8 hour credit
- Recommended for telecommunicators and 911 dispatchers/call takers

All SAFVIC courses are FREE!

To register online for any of the SAFVIC courses, please visit www.safvic.org and click on Calendar.

Or

Contact the SAFVIC Staff at
1-800--848-2088

Featured Agency:

SafeHaven of Tarrant County

SafeHaven of Tarrant County (SHTC) employs a variety of methods in its mission to end domestic violence through safety, support, prevention and social change. The agency operates two emergency shelters, one in Fort Worth and one in Arlington, with a total of 174 beds. These facilities protect approximately 2,500 different women and children each year. While there, residents receive meals, personal care items, clothing, transportation, legal assistance, counseling, case management, parent training, job readiness support and childcare. With the assistance of Fort Worth ISD, the Fort Worth shelter operates an on-site school. At both facilities, children receive specialized therapeutic, educational and recreational services.

Upon shelter exit, clients are eligible to enter *SafeLiving*, a two year transitional housing program for victims and their children seeking permanent self-sufficiency and independence. Rental assistance couples with services such as budgeting, career counseling, legal resources, parenting classes and life skills training to help women create safer lives for themselves and their children.

SHTC also staffs two resource centers where a variety of supportive professional services are available for adult and child survivors. Support groups, counseling, play therapy, parenting classes and case management are consistently available to victims. Additionally, SHTC employs family law and immigration attorneys to assist clients with protective orders, child support, child custody, divorce, Crime Victims Compensation and legal residency. More than 3,300 victims found help at the centers in 2010.

Victims often find the agency through *SafeResponse* which is part of our 24/7 crisis intervention program. In addition to answering our toll-free phone 24/7/365, staff



and volunteers offer on-site crisis services to domestic violence victims through hospitals and police departments. Healthcare and law enforcement professionals, as well as victims, access services by contacting SHTC's 24-Hour Hotline, 1-877-701-SAFE (7233). The hotline received more than 55,000 calls in 2010 – more than 20% of all domestic violence hotline calls answered in Texas.

A staff of educators teaches approximately 31,000 community members, mostly elementary, middle and high school students throughout Tarrant County, about domestic violence annually. Their prevention activities focus on bullying, red flags for dating abuse and characteristics of healthy relationships. Training is regularly scheduled for school personnel, the faith community and professionals in the fields of human resources, mental health and child protection. Community presentations are available for any organization, church or company.

To address social change, SHTC instituted *SafeCommunities* in specific zip codes. This community-based approach promotes safe and healthy environments, reducing the likelihood of family violence. Staff and volunteers help community members identify the causes of domestic violence in their neighborhoods and create unique action plans to proactively address it.

The agency also runs a successful resale store, Berry Good Buys, at 1701 W. Berry Street in Fort Worth. For more information on how you can help, call 817-535-6462 or visit our website at www.safehavenc.org.

For immediate assistance regarding domestic violence, please contact the 24 hour toll free crisis hotline at 1-877-701- SAFE (7233).

Save the Date



**23rd Annual
Crimes Against Children Conference**
Providing Professionals the Instruction, Information
and Strategies They Need to Protect Child Victims
and Prosecute their Offenders.

August 8th - 11th, 2011

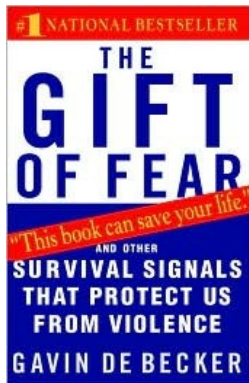
Sheraton Dallas Hotel
400 N. Olive Street
Dallas, Texas 75201
(214) 515-9045 x22

Since 1988, professionals involved in the investigation, prosecution and treatment of crimes against children have been coming in growing numbers to receive training at this premiere conference. We continue to see record attendance each year with 2010 setting an all-time high of nearly 3,500 participants.

For more information about the 23rd Annual Crimes Against Children Conference and to register please visit www.cacconference.org.

Featured Book

From the SAFVIC Library The Gift of Fear by Gavin De Becker



AMAZON'S list of the 25 Bestselling Self-defense books for the past decade.

In this empowering book, Gavin de Becker, the man Oprah Winfrey calls the nation's leading expert on violent behavior, shows you how to spot even subtle signs of danger—before it's too late. Shattering the myth that most violent acts are unpredictable, de Becker, whose clients include top Hollywood stars and government agencies, offers specific ways to protect yourself and those you love, including...how to act when approached by a stranger...when you should fear someone close to you...what to do if you are being stalked...how to uncover the source of anonymous threats or phone calls...the biggest mistake you can make with a threatening person...and more. Learn to spot the danger signals others miss. It might save your life.

Marcia Clark:

"In my 14 years as a prosecutor, crime victims or their loved ones have always asked me, 'What could I have done to prevent this?'" The Gift of Fear is the first book that answers that question. It teaches you how to tap into and act on the subtle warning signs that herald danger. Gavin de Becker's brilliant insights and encyclopedic familiarity with the minds of criminals have made powerful contributions to the successful prosecutions of many cases, including mine, and now he shares that knowledge with his readers."

Available in the SAFVIC library to SAFVIC instructors.

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collaboration also included the Allston-Brighton Substance Abuse Task Force, a coalition of community agencies and residents working to prevent and reduce substance abuse and related problems, as well as the local colleges (college police and wellness offices).

A Successful Community Based Model

The BPD, BARCC, the ABCC, and the substance abuse task force held a community meeting and invited owners and managers of all the bars and clubs in the neighborhood. Because it benefits the owners and managers to have an amicable working relationship with the police and licensing board, the meetings were much better attended than if they were held by the rape crisis center or substance abuse task force alone.

At the community meeting, training programs were scheduled with

each of the participating bars. The training programs are designed to cover all staff within each bar or club – from owners and managers, to bartenders, servers, and door staff. The content of the training (available for free on the BARCC website at www.barcc.org) focuses on the social environment in bars and clubs, and what bar staff can do to create an environment where the safety of patrons is paramount. This skill building covers a range of situation from how to identify and approach specific situations where sexually inappropriate behaviors may be escalating to passive messaging about safety announced through posters in restrooms and public areas.

Captain James Hussey, of the Boston Police Department, explained the importance of the law enforcement role at the community meeting, noting that sexual violence *"wouldn't normally be on the training agenda"* for bar and tavern

owners training their staff. *"It takes these meetings to get [owners and managers] to put sexual assault on their radar screens and see themselves as being part of our team,"* says Hussey. *"The biggest thing is trying to get them to understand that they play a big role as part of the community in terms of giving back and taking care of people who patronize their business."*

Much of the training involves framing sexual violence as part of good customer service and good business practice. In a tight economic environment, establishments work hard to craft a niche for themselves in the local market, and no establishment wants to be seen as the place where individuals are sexually assaulting others on their premises. At the same time, police and regulators can also help frame that good business practice in terms of their own larger law enforcement goals.

Ted Mahony, chief of the Massachusetts Alcoholic Beverages

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Resources provided by Joan Tobachnick and Meg Bossong:

BARCC Program free curriculum used in the collaborative program for bystander intervention with bars and clubs. www.barcc.org/active/bars

Engaging Bystanders in Sexual Violence Prevention by Joan Tabachnick: Basic information and workshop ideas about engaging bystanders in a book and online course format. Multiple copies of the book can be ordered at no cost. Free Book: <http://www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications/engaging-bystanders-sexual-violence-prevention>

Free Online Course: <http://training-center.neari.com/training-center/form/course-item.jsp?target-CourseId=8&categoryId=0&list=false>

National Judicial Education Program, a free course about adjudicating intimate partner sexual abuse. <http://www.njep-ipsacourse.org/>

End Violence Against Women International has developed an On-Line Training Institute to bring state-of-the art training to anyone who is interested, on the topic of criminal justice response to sexual assault. <http://www.evawintl.org/onlinetraining.aspx>

Response Ability: A Complete Guide to Bystander Intervention by Alan Berkowitz: <http://www.lulu.com/product/paperback/response-ability-a-complete-guide-to-bystander-intervention/4843519>

The Macho Paradox, Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help by Jackson Katz: <http://www.jacksonkatz.com/pub2.html>



"Piecing together the tools needed to effectively investigate and prevent sexual assault, family violence, & stalking."

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Call for Instructors!

The Advanced Child Abuse Investigation training program is currently seeking new instructors from across Texas. An Advanced

Child Abuse Investigation Instructor must have a comprehensive understanding about investigating child abuse (sexual & physical), neglect, and exploitation; including benefits to using multidisciplinary teams and the resources available for victims.

The dates for the 2012 Advanced Child Abuse Investigation Instructor Training have not yet been set, but applications are being accepted! Officers who wish to be considered must submit an online application. The online application and instructor criteria can be found under the **'About - Instructor Training'** tab on our website at www.acatraining.org.

For more information, email nicole.martinez@tmpa.org or call 1.800.848.2088.

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Control Commission Investigation and Enforcement Division explains that involvement with community groups and local police is beneficial to the Commission's enforcement work. *"We get good, solid, valid information [from the community], which lets us put our resources right toward a problem location."* Mahony also noted that in Massachusetts, businesses licensed to serve alcohol are prohibited by law to allow illegal or disorderly behaviors on their premises, and if his unit got reports of establishments turning a blind eye to sexual assaults, it could jeopardize their licensing.

Mahony and Hussey both emphasized that it was important to build relationships with proprietors before a report of sexual assault. Said Hussey, *"When you're in the business of serving alcohol, there are going to be problems sometimes, there's no getting around that, but be proactive. Realize that we all have responsibilities to keep people safe."*

Unique Role for Law Enforcement

The collaboration between the Boston Police Department, BARCC, ABCC and the community goes far beyond simply teaching individuals the skills they need to intervene. This innovation shows that when we expand our thinking beyond the individual

college student or young professionals drinking in the bar there is the potential for long term change. When each of these organizations and especially the police who represent a position of authority takes the initiative to lead a prevention effort, the community pays attention. And according to Jackson Katz, an international expert working with the military on bystander programs, "A person in a position of institutional authority, whether they're a governor or mayor, university or college president, school superintendent or the principal of a high school, who does not use their position to initiate, fund and lead sexual violence prevention efforts, he or she is being a passive bystander. Individual skill building is important, but we need to look at systemic solutions."

Law enforcement working in collaboration with the community has both the authority and the potential to implement ground breaking programs to prevent sexual violence in many other areas where adults, youth, and children might be vulnerable. For example, many municipalities run summer recreation and day camp programs for children and youth. Law enforcement can team up with a local sexual abuse prevention organization and youth-serving organizations to provide training and suggest policies for administrators and staff about

creating safe environments. Programs initiated by and/or support by the law enforcement community offers the credibility and the assurance that community participation can help to keep the entire community safe.

The involvement of law enforcement grabs the attention of everyone and it can represent an institutional shift within a community. As more and more organizations put their focus and resources to prevent as well as respond to sexual violence the community will be able to address a full range of sexual behaviors from inappropriate to harassment to sexual assault. When law enforcement agencies are working on the prevention side of the equation, though, it touches on why many individuals entered the field in the first place: to help create safer communities.

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