

Crime Victims' Institute



In this issue

- Examining the Issues **P.1**
- Focus On **P.2**
- In the Works **P.3**
- Let's Discuss It **P.3**
- CVI Advisory Board **P.3**
- TSUS Board of Regents **P.3**
- Upcoming Events **P.4**

Our Mission

The mission of the Crime Victims' Institute is to :

- Conduct research to examine the impact of crime on victims of all ages in order to promote a better understanding of victimization
- Improve services to victims
- Assist victims of crime by giving them a voice
- Inform victim-related policymaking at the state and local levels.

Sam Houston
STATE UNIVERSITY

MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM™

Published by
The Crime Victims' Institute
College of Criminal Justice
Sam Houston State University

Examining the Issues

Elder Abuse: The Impact of a New Social Phenomenon

By Mary Breaux, PhD

While the month of May marks Elder Abuse Prevention Month, a symbolic time to increase understanding and cooperation in addressing the issues associated with elder abuse, June 15th, 2015 marked World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). WEAAD was initially launched on June 15, 2006 by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.

Elder abuse, neglect and exploitation is an upcoming social problem facing society. It has gained more attention in recent decades due to an increase in education and public awareness, however there is still a great need for ongoing awareness and research. In general, elder abuse refers to the intentional or neglectful acts by a caregiver or trusted individual that lead to, or may lead to, harm of a vulnerable elder.¹ This multidimensional phenomenon can occur anywhere, in the home, in nursing homes, or other institutions

and affects seniors across all socio-economic groups, cultures and races. Although cases of abuse and neglect have been associated with serious harm and sometimes death, many cases go unrecognized or unreported. Each year an estimated 5 million older Americans are victims of elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation, however experts believe that for every case of elder abuse or neglect reported, as many as 23 cases go unreported. Research studies related to incidences and prevalence of elder abuse show that many older individuals are abused in their own home, by family members or caretakers and often times are reluctant to report for fear of losing their independence or becoming institutionalized. This means that very few seniors who have been abused get the help they need.

The impact of significant societal aging associated with elder abuse is profound. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the greatest number and proportion of people age 65 and older in all of decennial census history was 40.3 million, or 13% of the

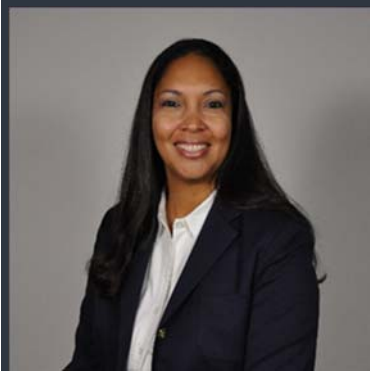
Focus on:

Mary M. Breaux, PhD

Dr. Breaux brings nearly 20 years of practical state experience from working with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in areas such as community relations (Adult Protective Services), case management (Child Protective Services), training (Children's Protective Services Training Institute), and human resources (Family and Protective Services Human Resources Department). Dr. Breaux taught as an adjunct Lecturer for Sam Houston State University in the College of Criminal Justice prior to accepting a full-time Lecturer position within the same Department.

Dr. Breaux holds a PhD in Educational Leadership with emphasis on Higher Education from Prairie View A&M. Her teaching interests center on victimology, an area of which much of her practical experience encompasses. Dr. Breaux's research focuses on an understudied area of victimology, child emotional abuse and elder abuse.

Dr. Breaux actively serves on the MS Program for Victim Services, Faculty Advisory Committee-(The SHSU Woodlands Campus), and the University of Texas Consortium on Aging Committee.



total population. Additionally, by 2050, people age 65 and older are expected to comprise 20% of the total U.S. population and it is projected that there will be 19 million people aged 85 years or older.² Experts predict this growth in the older population will produce even more cases of elder mistreatment due to longer life expectancy, chronic diseases, and disabilities.

Adult Protective Services (APS) investigates allegations of elder abuse and neglect and provides or arranges for services to alleviate or prevent future maltreatment. More than half of all cases reported to APS involve neglect.³ One of the most common situations Adult Protective Services encounters is adults who are neglecting themselves due to some contributing factor. Some factors contributing to elder abuse are isolation, reduced cognitive capacity, physical disability, caregiver dependence, and poverty. According to experts, elders who experience abuse have a 300% higher risk of death when compared to those who had not been abused. Additionally, victims of elder abuse have had significantly higher levels of psychological distress and lower perceived self-efficacy than older adults who have not been victimized. Elder victims of violence have additional health care problems than other older adults, including increased bone or joint problems, digestive problems, depression or anxiety, chronic pain, high blood pressure, and heart problems.⁴ The effects of elder abuse have proven to be costly with regard to poorer health outcomes and social wellbeing and significant increases in the risk for premature mortality.

As the nation's population ages, elder abuse prevention becomes even more important. Elder mistreatment is a great concern for professionals and communities who witness the harmful effects it leaves on victims and families. Raising public awareness can assist millions of older people, caregivers, and professionals in understanding ways to prevent elder abuse and how to address it if it does occur. As elder abuse awareness becomes more apparent in society, it becomes a valuable tool to positively impact the outcome of this type of abuse. With a collective knowledge base to prevent and combat elder abuse, everyone can play a role in knowing how to recognize and respond to the signs of elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

To report suspected elder abuse, neglect or financial exploitation, contact your local Adult Protective Services agency.

-
1. *National Center on Elder Abuse.* (2015, June 28). Retrieved from National Center on Elder Abuse: <http://www.ncea.aoa.gov>
 2. *U.S. Census.* (2015, June 28). Retrieved from U.S. Census: <http://www.census.org>
 3. *Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.* (2015, June 28). Retrieved from Texas Department of Family and Protective Services: <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>
 4. *Administration on Aging.* (2015, June 28). Retrieved from Administration on Aging: <http://www.aoa.gov>





In the Works....

Look for upcoming publications from the Crime Victims' Institute on:

- Characteristics and Processing cases Involving Strangulation
- Campus Sexual Assault-Title IX Coordinator Survey
- Evaluation of an Expedited Domestic Violence Court
- Safety Planning Among College Students
- Bullying and Fear of Victimization

Crime Victims' Institute Advisory Board

Victoria Camp, Austin
Consultant, Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence

Dottie Carmichael, College Station
Texas A&M University

Bianca Burciaga
Director, Victim Assistance Unit

Stefani Carter, Austin

Robert Duncan, Austin
TTU System Chancellor

Ana Estevez, Amarillo
District Judge

Rodman Goode, Dallas
Law Enforcement Teacher

Ann Matthews, Jourdanton
Domestic Violence

Henry Porretto, Galveston
Chief, Galveston Police Department

Geoffrey Puryear, Georgetown
District Attorney

Richard L. Reynolds, Austin
Psychotherapist

Stephanie Anne Schulte, El Paso
ICU Nurse

Jane Shafer, San Antonio
San Antonio P.D. Victim Liaison

Debbie Unruh, Amarillo
Captain, Randall County Sheriff's Office

Ms. Mary Anne Wiley, Austin
Office of the Governor

Mark Wilson, Fort Worth
Police Officer, Fort Worth Police Department

Texas State University System Board of Regents

Dr. Jaime Garza, Chairman
San Antonio

Rossanna Salazar, Vice Chair
Austin

Charlie Amato
San Antonio

Veronica Muzquiz-Edwards
San Antonio

David Montagne
Beaumont

Vernon Reeser III
Bellaire

William F. Scott
Nederland

Alan Tinsley
Madisonville

Donna Williams
Arlington

Spencer Copeland
Student Regent
Huntsville

Brian M. McCall
Chancellor

Let's discuss it:

During the 2015 Crime Victims' Rights Week, Karen Kalergis was honored by the Office for Victims of Crime for her work in victim services. Karen was a recipient of this year's National Crime Victim Service Award, a prestigious award that honors noteworthy individuals and programs that provide services to victims of crime and exemplify a long-term commitment.

Karen began working in victim services in 1991 and since that time she has had a variety of roles and been involved with numerous victim service initiatives in Texas. Earlier in her career Karen was involved with initiating notice of rights for victims and creating a state crisis consortium which partnered victim assistance and emergency management. She has also been instrumental in coordinating victims' rights summits, one of the first State Victim Assistance Academies in the nation, and a research to practice symposium.

Congratulations Karen!



Please contact us at:

crimevictims@shsu.edu to share your thoughts and ideas regarding issues of crime and victimization that you would like to see the Institute research.



Upcoming Events



Annual Crimes Against Children Conference Dallas, TX	8/10-13/2015
National Organization for Victim Assistance Conference Dallas, TX	8/16-19/2015
Institute on Violence Abuse & Trauma 20th International Conference San Diego, CA	8/23-26/2015
2015 VOCA National Training Conference Washington, DC	8/25-27/2015
National Sexual Assault Conference Los Angeles, CA	9/2-4/2015
2015 National Center for Victims of Crime National Conference Anaheim, CA	9/9-11/2015

Share your ideas:

We welcome your input. Please send issues or topics you would like to see CVI conduct research on to: crimevictims@shsu.edu

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
Annually on June 15th
Click here for details

Issue 3 July 2015

Crime Victims' Institute

P.O. Box 2180
Huntsville, TX 77341