

SURVIVORS COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

January 2018



KENTUCKY OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
OFFICE OF VICTIMS ADVOCACY

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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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January 17, 2018

Dear Reader:

Last January, I announced the creation of the Office of the Attorney General's Survivors Council. The Council, made up of survivors of violent crimes and family members of victims of violent crimes, advises and assists my Office so that we can help victims get the justice they deserve.

Over the past year, the 25 members of the Survivors Council have used their harrowing experiences to help us develop awareness initiatives, training efforts, publications and ensure that policy and legislative initiatives are truly victim-centered, effective and responsive to the needs of diverse victims.

In this report, you will find their thoughtful recommendations to improve services and systems for victims and their families throughout the Commonwealth. The 2017 Survivors Council Report is the culmination of a year of hard work by members. I hope you will join me in praising our Survivors Council members for the brave use of their struggles and challenges to help other Kentuckians in need of justice and comfort.

Sincerely,

Andy Beshear
Attorney General

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the work of the first year of the inaugural Attorney General’s Survivors Council, convened to help inform policy, training, education and other efforts are victim-centered. The twenty-five members, survivors of crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, homicide, DUI, felony assault stalking, revenge porn, child abuse, mass shooting and other serious offenses, have met quarterly and in legislative, victim guide and education and awareness subcommittees. Together, the Council members have participated in over 16 events across Kentucky, including conferences, press appearances, awareness events, to raise awareness of crime and stress the importance and impact of having survivor leaders at the table. They have developed resources to guide both professionals and survivor leaders in their work together on behalf of victims of crime. To improve justice and healing for victims of crime in the Commonwealth, the Council issued 57 recommendations, including budget and legislative recommendations. Recommendations were directed towards the Office of the Attorney General, the Governor, the Kentucky General Assembly, the Kentucky Auditor of Public Accounts, County and Commonwealth’s Attorneys, Kentucky Claims Commission, Office of Grants Management, the Department of Criminal Justice Training, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, the Department of Health, K-12 Schools, Colleges and Universities, Youth Serving Organizations, the Media, Public Officials and Workplaces. In the upcoming year, the Council will finalize a Victim/Survivor Guide for victims of crime in the Commonwealth, expand training and awareness events and strengthen the capacity of the council members through leadership development.

Overview

This report summarizes the first year of the Survivors Council, documents the activities and development of materials and includes recommendations for the Commonwealth of Kentucky from the Council.

Formation of Survivors Council

The Office of Victims of Crime defines a victim-centered approach as one which seeks to minimize re-traumatization associated with the criminal justice process by:

- providing the support of victim advocates and service providers;
- empowering survivors as engaged participants in the process;
- providing survivors an opportunity to play a role in seeing their offenders brought to justice.

To achieve this goal of empowering survivors as “engaged participants in the process, the Office of the Attorney General formed the Survivors Council in January 2017. The Council is the first of its kind in any Office of Attorney General nationwide, and one of the only government hosted groups of Survivor leaders apart from the [White House Advisory Council on Human Trafficking](#).

The purpose of the Survivors Council is:

- To advise and assist the Office of the Attorney General on matters related to victims of crime, including but not limited to:
 - awareness initiatives;
 - training efforts; and
 - publications, policy and legislative initiatives
- *To ensure that these efforts are victim-centered, effective and responsive to the needs of diverse victims*

<https://ag.ky.gov/survivors-council>

Structure of the Council

The Council was formed through an application and nomination process shared with victim service agencies and posted in media in the Fall of 2016. The Council sought individuals who would be interested in public speaking, training, public policy, development of materials, leadership development and other activities. Council members were chosen based on their background and commitment and to ensure a diverse representation of voices from urban and rural parts of the state, spanning a wide range of crimes and life experiences.

The following individuals comprise the 2017-2019 Council:

Jaydee Graham	Bradford McClain	Dontoe Tomei, Jr.
Ekaterina Estes	Angela Renfro	Beverly Weinholt
Michelle Kuiper	Tammy Quetot	Jennifer Lynn Williams
Angelina Alcott	Meghan Wright	Theresa Martinez
Melissa Buchanan	Tammy Adams	Lisa Murray
Jennifer Diaz	Michelle Kelty	Clorissa Novak
Amy Leenerts	Kayla Ray	Donna Pollard
Margeaux Gray	Paige Sutkamp	
Tonya Lindsey	Brittney Thomas	

These individuals are survivors of victims of homicide, mass shooting, DUI, gun violence, felony assault, stalking, revenge porn, human trafficking, campus rape, sexual assault, child abuse, domestic violence and other serious offenses. They have transformed their experiences of trauma and committed to ensuring that victims of similar types of crime receive a voice in the criminal justice process, meaningful assistance, and compassionate treatment.

Members serve a two-year term and commit to attending four meetings a year in the capitol, Frankfort. The Council is co-chaired by the Director of the Office of Victims Advocacy, Gretchen Hunt, and Michelle Kuiper, Survivors Council member.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SURVIVORS COUNCIL

The Survivors Council held four Council meetings in Frankfort at the Office of the Attorney General in their first year. At the first meeting, the Council elected co-chair Michelle Kuiper and received a training on advocacy and the legislative process. In the second meeting, the Survivors Council formed three committees: a Victim/Survivor Guide Subcommittee, a Legislative Subcommittee and a Training/Education Subcommittee and began work on tip sheets for professionals and survivor leaders. During the third meeting, the Council finalized tip sheets for professionals working with survivor leaders and survivor leaders and began work on the recommendations in the annual report. (See Appendix) During the fourth meeting, the Council heard a presentation by Marsy's Law for Kentucky and worked on recommendations for the annual report.

Victim/Survivor Guide Subcommittee: The Victim/Survivor Guide subcommittee was formed to assist the Office of Victims Advocacy in developing a comprehensive, trauma informed guide to help crime victims navigate the criminal and civil legal systems, with linkages to other governmental and community agencies. Currently, there is no single guide or website for crime victims to know their rights and understand how the multiple government agencies (Office of Victims Advocacy, Corrections Victim Services, Kentucky Claims Commission and others) interact and provide services to victims of crime. Most police departments lack victim advocates, so many crime victims do not receive information about their rights or options or services until the case proceeds to prosecution. In addition, not all prosecutors offices have victim advocates on staff. This guide will help fill a gap of information and support to crime victims across Kentucky. The Council has been working to ensure that the Victim Guide is trauma informed, in language that victims will respond to, and is focused on resiliency and healing. The Victim Guide is scheduled to be completed in Spring of 2018.

Legislative Subcommittee: The Initiatives Branch of the Office of the Attorney General provided a briefing on the legislative process to the Legislative subcommittee.

Training and Education Subcommittee: The Training and Education Subcommittee met to develop priority areas for training and education. Council members identified the need to have a broader awareness campaign putting on the face of victims of crime, as well as a hub of training resources where agencies could go to get the input of survivors. In addition to Council members serving as trainers for a number of KYOAG trainings, the Council will be developing a resource listing all Council members and the trainings they can provide to the public. In addition, the Council will be creating a Survivors Quilt for Victims Rights Day 2018.

In addition to the scheduled meetings, several Council members were provided a briefing by the Office of Human Trafficking and Child Abuse Prosecution and Prevention in winter 2017 and attended the Victim Assistance Conference held by the Office of Victims Advocacy in June of 2017.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

During the first year of the Survivors Council, members assisted the Office of the Attorney General and the public in multiple training and awareness events. Outreach and education efforts are summarized below:

Victims Rights Awareness:

- Victims Rights Day 2017: Three council members were the main speakers at the Attorney General's Victims Rights Day event, and a council member led the opening prayer. Council members contributed quotes on resiliency, strength and justice, the theme for national crime victims rights week for an art exhibit that was displayed in the Capitol rotunda for Victims Rights Day. The quoted are included below:

"To me it's all about JUSTICE, the JUSTICE I will never receive in this life, but that I can give to others. Until all are Free to Hope."

—Amy Leenerts

"Through experiencing struggles you gain Strength, with continued Strength you gain Resilience."

—Theresa Martinez

"When you first become a victim, you haven't a clue of the fight ahead of you. You quickly learn that you have two choices, stand up or stand down. It's when you've stood up long enough that you learn to become a survivor."

—Melissa Buchanan

"Having looked the past in the eye, I've rewritten my narrative with redemptive strands. I'll never forget what was done to my family and me. But it doesn't define me. With God's help, I'm not shamed by my trauma; instead I'm honored to be a survivor."

—Rev. Dr. Beverly Weinhold

"Strength doesn't mean getting past the trauma Strength is waking up every day after and living on..."

—Tammy Adams

"Resilience is the passion within you that affirms that despite horrific events in one's life, it is possible to elevate beyond the experience itself and transform the trauma into solidarity and protection for oneself, peers, and future generations. It is within this transformation where strength and justice are found."

—Donna Pollard

"The bravest thing I ever did was to own my story. The question was not will I survive. The question was did I want to. Everything changed when someone looked me in the eye and said 'me too.' "

—Brittney Thomas

*“I always said it happened to my body and not my soul
 I wouldn't allow what he did to go there and destroy me
 That was the way I protected myself, I guess
 Sometimes things might happen
 To awaken my body or mind on my path of life
 That is what trauma does,
 It comes and goes when we least expect it
 For me healed is not a platform or destination I must reach
 Because if I don't reach it every day that does not mean I am broken
 It means it is a journey, a survivor journey for me
 Until I reach Heaven and Christ can wipe away the hurt, feeling, smell, or memory
 I am not truly healed, I am forever growing
 In the mean time I am on a survivor journey of growth
 Living with the peace I am finding and graceful heart
 Some words my offender gave me that day were: shame, powerless, fearful, silenced
 Today I am: powerful, heard, believed, resilient, courageous, validated and grateful
 I survived it and now reframe that crime to help other survivors
 I choose to say...
 "He doesn't win over one more moment of my life, not anymore"
 I feel a sense of hope and accomplishment that comes from knowing I am working to
 make things better, because of Courage, Grace, Forgiveness, Strength, Peace Justice and
 Validation.
 I am truly FREE”*

—Michelle Kuiper

- **Human Trafficking Awareness:** Council members (representing crime of human trafficking) spoke and participated in the Attorney General’s Human Trafficking Awareness Day on January 11, 2017 and assisted in the Hotel Initiative to train hotel workers on human trafficking.
- **Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over:** Council member (representing DUI Homicide) collaborated with the Office of the Attorney General on a Drive Sober, Drive Safe press release in 2017.
- **Children’s Advocacy Day:** Council members attended Children’s Advocacy Day in 2017 at the Capitol and met with legislators to advocate for child abuse legislation.
- **Great Day Live:** Council Co-chair Michelle Kuiper and member Tonya Lindsay appeared with Attorney General Andy Beshear on the show Great Day Live in Louisville to discuss the Survivors Council. <http://www.whas11.com/entertainment/television/great-day-live/a-first-of-its-kind-in-the-united-states-the-survivors-council-offers-comfort-to-victims-of-violence/413567450>

- **Spectrum News:** Survivors Council member Michelle Kelty and co-chair Gretchen Hunt were interviewed on Spectrum News on the impact of sexual harassment on survivors. <http://mycn2.com/politics/dealing-with-the-effects-of-sexual-harassment-a-survivor-speaks-out-and-urges-others-to-come-forward>

TRAINING AND EDUCATION:

- **From Investigation to Conviction: Prosecuting Sexual Assault Cold Cases:** Survivors council members (representing crime of sexual violence) presented on a panel during a 3 day training in April 2017 , *From Investigation to Conviction: Prosecuting Sexual Assault Cold Cases* for 90 prosecutors, law enforcement and victim advocates in collaboration with AEQUITAS: A Prosecutors Resource on Violence Against Women.
- **Two Days in May: Conference on Victim Assistance:** In May 2017, the Executive Director presented on the Survivors Council at the Ohio Attorney General’s “Two Days In May Conference on Victim Assistance” to over 2,500 victim advocates and allied professionals.
- **#VoiceOfJustice Video Campus Sexual Assault Video Contest:** Survivors Council members (representing survivors of campus sexual assault) formed a committee to judge submissions of videos by college students to increase reporting of campus sexual assault, awareness of the rape crisis hotline and to encourage prevention of campus sexual assault.
- **Morehead University:** Survivors Council member spoke with Attorney General to students, faculty and law enforcement on campus sexual assault.
- **Investigating and Prosecuting Campus Sexual Assault:** Survivors Council members (4 survivors of campus sexual assault) served on planning committee for a three day training on Investigating and Prosecuting Campus Sexual Assault for November 2017 and presented two panels at the including providing tips for law enforcement on investigating sexual assault and engaging victims.
- **Victim Assistance Conference:** Three council members presented on a panel on survivor perspectives (on campus sexual assault and mass shooting) at the annual Victim Assistance Conference in June 2017 to 250 prosecutor and law enforcement based advocates.
- **Community Shield Conference:** Council members and co-chair Gretchen Hunt presented on the Survivors Council at the Community Shield Conference on Child Abuse in October 2017.

- **Ending Sexual and Domestic Violence Conference:** Council Co-Chair and Office of Victims Advocacy Director presented on the Survivors Council and the Annual Report/Recommendations at the Ending Sexual And Domestic Violence Conference in Lexington, Kentucky in November 2017.
- **Kentucky Victim Assistance Academy Steering Committee:** Survivors Council Member (representing crime of gun violence/homicide) is serving on Steering committee with the Office of Victims Advocacy for Kentucky Victim Assistance Academy to be held in September 2017.
- **Victim, Survivor and Victim Advocacy Roundtable:** Survivors Council Members participated in the Victim, Survivor, and Victim Advocate Roundtable discussion hosted by the CJPAC Kentucky Justice Reinvestment Work Group on November 1, 2017 to make recommendations about victims rights, services, criminal justice reform and priorities for funding. Council members met with Roundtable organizer and Office of Victims of Crime consultant Anne Seymour to discuss the work of the Council.



RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of their work in 2017, the Council individually and collectively developed the following recommendations to improve justice and healing for victims of crime in Kentucky:

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Office of the Attorney General**:

- Ensure that training, including the Victim Assistance Conference is victim-centered and provides advocates with practical training to best serve victims. Ensure that there is not a “one size fits all” approach to victim advocacy, with special attention to the needs of all victims of crime.
- Host a one-day conference 2-3 times a year in different counties and communities to provide the education and tools developed from the Survivors Council to victims of crimes and their families.
- Conduct more training and education for marginalized communities about what their rights are and who can better serve them and their rights as a citizen of Kentucky.
- Expand the availability of information concerning investigation and criminal justice proceedings for victims of crime.
- Engage with the Survivors Council in a discussion of trauma informed principles and help develop plan for state agencies to become trauma informed.
- Together with Survivors Council members, meet with a handful of diverse ecumenical clergy to build relationships toward collaborating on a conference to train faith leaders regarding domestic violence and sexual abuse in 2018.
- Identify local community leaders and work with them to improve victim services in the outlying regions.
- Develop literature for minors seeking emancipation and/or marriage that explains their legal rights as well as provides resource information should they find themselves in need of services.
- Provide training for prosecutors on stalking.
- Expand efforts on sexual assault and Title IX to include K-12 schools.

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Office of the Governor**:

- Support a Budget that adequately funds law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, and victim services with a particular focus on underserved communities and evidence based solutions to address crime and protect victims. Ensure that there is a funded victim

advocate in every prosecutor's office in Kentucky. Fund crisis response teams to respond to victims immediately following the crime. Victims often lack an advocate until their case goes to court and many, including survivors of homicide, lack any advocacy following the crime. Support funding for trauma informed training for first responders. Support funding for prevention programs. Fund training and programs of survivor/peer advocates to assist victims of crime. Fund primary prevention of violence through more in home support for parents and establishing "pit stops," centers where families can go for support.

- Fund the Survivors Council of the Office of the Attorney General to expand its efforts, including training, outreach and resource development.
- Create a Crime Victims Experience Commission/Alliance/ Advisory to investigate and report the experiences of Kentucky crime victims (much like the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, established in 1982).

The Survivors Council recommends that that **Kentucky General Assembly**:

- Pass a Budget that adequately funds law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, and victim services with a particular focus on underserved communities and evidence-based solutions to address crime and protect victims. Ensure that there is a funded victim advocate in every prosecutor's office in Kentucky. Fund crisis response teams to respond to victims immediately following the crime. Victims often lack an advocate until their case goes to court and many, including survivors of homicide, lack any advocacy following the crime. Support funding for trauma informed training for first responders. Support funding for prevention programs. Fund training and programs of survivor/peer advocates to assist victims of crime. Fund primary prevention of violence through more in home support for parents and establishing "pit stops," centers where families can go for support.
- Pass Senate Bill 3 and Senate Bill 30, known as "Marsy's Law" to create a constitutional amendment for crime victims' rights.
- Pass Senate Bill 48, addressing the current statutes on child marriage. *"If we want to stop the cycles of poverty, domestic violence and sexual abuses, this is a first step towards victory over those human rights violations."* Donna Pollard, Survivors Council Member
- Pass legislation ("Safe Time Act") to require employers to provide paid time off for hours taken in connection with family violence, sexual offenses, stalking, human trafficking and other crimes (including but not limited to court appearances and counseling).
- Pass DNA at Felony Arrest legislation to require swabbing for a DNA profile at time of felony arrest instead of conviction. This will allow for suspects' DNA profile to be entered into CODIS as an investigatory tool to match the right perpetrators, exonerate the innocent, remove offenders off the streets before they escalate in their crimes and hopefully save lives from possibly ever being offended in the first place.

- Pass an updated Legal Definition of Rape – Ensure that Kentucky’s definition of rape matches federal definition of rape.
- Fund Long-term STD Treatment For Victims of Rape – Amend Kentucky law to require funding for treatment of long term STDs contracted as a result of rape or sexual assault.
- Pass legislation making revenge porn/image exploitation, or the non-consensual sharing of photos/videos a crime under Kentucky law.
- Pass legislation creating protective order for victims of other serious crime, including but not limited to revenge porn, felony assault and murder.
- Adopt universal requirements for sex education for middle and high school students to include consent and interpersonal violence.
- Pass legislation remove clergy penitent privilege in suspicion/allegations of child abuse. Clarify that church officials are mandatory reporters of child abuse and should not substitute internal investigations for reports and cooperation with state authorities charged with investigating child abuse.
- Pass legislation that prohibits domestic violence misdemeanants from buying or owning firearms, prohibit subjects of domestic violence restraining orders from buying or owning firearms, require domestic violence misdemeanants to dispose of firearms in their possession and require subjects of domestic violence restraining orders to dispose of firearms in their possession.
- Pass legislation to mandate child abuse prevention education (such as Darkness to Light) for all teachers, firefighters, police officers, EMTs, Paramedics, hospital staff, daycare workers, and anyone else who comes into contact with children regularly.
- Address the drug epidemic by effectively funding efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect. *“Our leaders must begin to look at Child Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency, along with the susceptibility of our population to heroin and other drugs, not as separate issues, but in a cause/effect relationship.”* Survivors Council Member Brad McClain
- Increase pay and set limits on caseloads for child welfare workers.
- Pass legislation to clarify that the testimony of young children (under 12) shall be admissible in court in order to enhance the prosecution of child abuse in Kentucky.
- Expand CASA program and funding.
- Adopt zero tolerance policies for sexual harassment, including those individuals who have settled sexual harassment claims.

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Kentucky Auditor of Public Accounts:**

- Provide an updated report on the Rape Kit Backlog, including more detailed information about handling of rape kits by campus police departments.

The Survivors Council recommends that **County and Commonwealths Attorneys:**

- Create victim assistance programs in each office.
- Create a network of policy, training and technical assistance in coordination with members of the Survivors Council

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Kentucky Claims Commission:**

- Fund crime scene cleanup as an allowable expense. Victims of many crimes, most notably homicide victims, cannot currently seek crime victim compensation for cleaning up the scene of the crime, adding to the trauma of the crime.
- Fund relocation as an allowable expense to allow crime victims to seek safety and healing.
- Require trauma informed training for Kentucky Claims Commission staff and board members.

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Office of Grants Management:**

- Fund trauma informed training, services to underserved victims including rural survivors and homicide victims, Survivors Council leadership training, fund training and programs of survivor/peer advocates to assist victims and increase funding for a focus on internet based crimes.
- Fund more training and education for marginalized communities about what their rights are and who can better serve them and their rights as a citizen of Kentucky.
- Fund community based groups to prevent violence since they are on the ground and best understand the community.

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Department of Criminal Justice Training:**

- Expand training for school resource officers to include trauma informed care.

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Cabinet for Health and Family Services**:

- Provide resources for non-offending parents to help navigate the court and child welfare system.
- Clarify or eliminate the term “unsubstantiated.” This is a term used by social workers when abuse is not found, but also when the child is too young to make a statement, or did not have physical injuries, or any number of factors that indicate abuse, but are dismissed. In many of these cases, abuse did indeed occur but could not be prosecuted. Courts, law enforcement, and could impact future investigations.
- Child abuse cases should be handled in a multidisciplinary team model, and social workers should have cross training with medical and law enforcement professionals. Social workers and multidisciplinary partner agencies should be required to meet face to face to discuss cases.

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Department of Public Health**:

- Mandate screening for victimization and trauma in HANDS and WIC program intake.

The Survivors Council recommends that **K-12 schools in Kentucky**:

- Train and create more trauma-informed schools, including consulting with Survivors Council members to create trauma informed environments.
- Conduct more training in schools for children and staff on the definition of rape and sexual violence, safe touch, boundaries, consent and bystander intervention.
- Provide information to students about what their rights are if they are victims of a crime and information to parents, so they may effectively help their child or loved one.
- Provide awareness and education for school personnel on how to recognize the signs of someone that has been victimized by crime

The Survivors Council recommends that **Kentucky Colleges and Universities**:

- Educate the public and students in schools/universities about sexual assault, including Title IX, potential sanctions, and victim rights.
- Explore restorative justice programs on campus for those victims who chose not to go through the criminal process.
- Restrict admission of those convicted or found responsible on another campus for violent crime, including but not limited to sexual assault, intimate partner violence and stalking.

The Survivors Council recommends that **Youth Serving Organizations:**

- Adopt Boundary precautions, including but not limited to the following:
 - **Transporting clients:**
 - Use camera in vehicles and develop process for reviewing recorded material
 - Material should not just be reviewed after a complaint is made- it is common for reports of inappropriate behaviors to go unreported for many years after the occurrence. An established process for reviewing the material needs to be implemented for the protection of staff and clients
 - Consider utilizing audio recording or an audio recording camera that can be clipped to the staff member's clothing for use when not in the automobile
 - **Training:**
 - Train staff on how to recognize signs of grooming amongst colleagues and how to report suspicious behaviors
 - Train staff on how to handle clients who may attempt to initiate the crossing of boundaries themselves
 - Train staff on how to respond to a client who alleges inappropriate interactions-
 - Consider how the client will be kept a safe distance from the accused during and after the investigation, if the severity of the complaint has not warranted leave
 - Develop talking points for assisting the staff (other than the accused) in helping a client talk through their alleged experience
 - Develop re-integration training for the accused when the allegations are deemed unsubstantiated and they come back to work (especially when they must continue interacting with the client that alleged the misconduct)
 - **Policy Enhancements:**
 - Develop a database to be shared amongst direct service providers where these accusations could be securely stored (regardless of the outcome of the investigation)
 - Require organizations providing direct services to reference this database during hiring process as a complement to criminal background checks
 - Revisit timeliness of reporting substantiated claims to the direct service provider

The Survivors Council recommends that the **Media:**

- Receive training and awareness on trauma, how to report crimes and interview people victimized by crime.
- When responding to Mass Shootings:
 - No notoriety for the shooter. Avoid using images/pictures and the name of the shooter, especially in follow-up stories and especially not beside the photo of a victim and/or survivor. The only exception for showing the picture and name would be if police are still looking for the shooter and the public's safety is at risk. Instead, report on the victims and survivors. Focus on them instead of the shooter.

- Do not sensationalize the incident or the shooter. Doing so only and gives the next shooter a number of deaths to exceed (ex: do not say "deadliest shooting since Sandy Hook")
- Avoid stigmatizing the community where the event takes place (ex. Columbine is actually a flower...but most everyone associates it as the location of the school shooting. Instead of saying "The Columbine shooting" say instead, the shooting that happened at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO.)
- Exercise the principal of "do no harm." Victims and Survivors have the right to decline to be photographed, interviewed and/or filmed. Instead give them a card with your contact information to call you should they decide to speak about their experience. If you have taken their photograph, ask for permission to use it. Remember, you will be there long after the national media is gone and you want to keep the trust of your local community!
- After a mass shooting tragedy, the story does not need added sensation or to be dramatized more. It's already dramatic enough. Rely on good solid facts and check your sources thoroughly, including those claiming to be eye witnesses or friends of the victims and/or shooter.
- Do not show graphic images. Instead report on where people can go to get help and/or how the community can help the survivors and their families
- Avoid speculating about why the shooter committed the crime. Stick to the facts. Mass shootings often happen for a variety of reasons and are very complex. There is no one answer or motive that will explain why this happened.
- Do not "swarm" people at the scene where the shooting happened. They are in shock and do not need to be giving interviews. They need time to process what has just happened before speaking to the media. Provide them a contact card to call you when/if they are ready to share their story
- Plan ahead. Have a plan and get trauma-informed training for your news media crew on how to report on mass shootings BEFORE they happen.
- When interviewing victims/survivors, allow them as much control as possible. Let them choose when and where they are interviewed and what questions they will answer.

The Survivors Council recommends that **Public Officials:**

- Public officials who serve this Commonwealth in state and local government should be required to receive gender equity training. This training should then be replicated in other agencies with an emphasis on agencies that serve the most vulnerable populations. KY ranks 27th out of our nation's 50 states in gender equality (<https://wallethub.com/edu/best-and-worst-states-for-women-equality/5835/>), 1 in 9 adult women here have been "forcibly raped" and almost 1 in 2 women (47%) have been sexually victimized at some point in their lives and most offenders are male (CDC, 2010 as reported by <http://bluegrassrapecrisis.org/sexual-violence-statistics/>).
"Because these types of violence are gender related and power based we must move prevention beyond awareness raising to conversations and training that targets hierarchical attitudes and social norms."

— Rev. Beverly Weinhold, Survivors Council Member

The Survivors Council recommends that **Workplaces:**

- Provide awareness and education for those in the workplace on how to recognize the signs of someone that has been victimized by crime

CONCLUSION

Council members have expressed that being on the Council has enhanced their experience of healing and giving back to the community, and that being able to work together across different crimes has strengthened their own advocacy in their particular fields. In the words of some of the members:

“The Attorney General Survivor's Council allows for men and women who have survived all types of victimization to come together and feel like we are able to use our voices and experience to create awareness, spread education, have our voices heard and be a part of a group that can create change in community and legislation currently and for future generations to come.”

—Michelle Kuiper, Survivors Council Co-Chair

“The impact of the Survivor’s Council in the State of Kentucky is a huge step forward not only for the state of Kentucky, but for the United States in general. The Survivor’s Council values its survivors beyond their stories. Having a seat at this table has empowered me to affect change in the process while making things better for other victims who have to walk the same road. Through the experience on the Survivor’s Council I have learned that people do care, will support and fight, will lift you up when depleted of energy and will celebrate as you learn that you are worthy of all things good in this world. When that realization happened to me, I became a survivor, no one’s victim. As a survivor of domestic violence, trying to wade the waters of the judicial system was quite a difficult and trying process that leaves the victim feeling more helpless and isolated. The Survivor’s Council now gives a voice to the people who need to be heard. By listening directly to survivors, policymakers can now advocate for necessary legislative changes that encourage collaborative efforts to help victims recover.”

—Lisa Murray, Survivors Council Member

The Survivors Council has made great strides in the first year of its creation, and stands ready to assist the public, non-profits and government agencies to create policies, training, legislation and initiatives that are trauma-informed and victim centered. For more information about the Survivors Council, or to request training or consultation with the members of the Council, visit <https://ag.ky.gov/survivors-council> or contact Gretchen Hunt at Gretchen.Hunt@ky.gov.

APPENDICES

- A. Application/Nomination form for Survivors Council**
- B. Survivors Council Agreements**
- C. Guidelines for Professionals Working With Survivor Leaders**
- D. Tip Sheet for Public Speaking for Survivors**
- E. Best Practices in Responding to Disclosures from Other Survivors**



**Office of the Attorney General
Office of Victims Advocacy
Survivors Council Application/Nomination Form**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: ____ () _____ Email: _____

I am a: ___Survivor ___Family member of Victim/Survivor

If you are a family/friend, what is your relationship to the victim/survivor?

We strive to ensure that the Survivor's Council is reflective of the diversity of the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the multiple experiences of victimization. Please complete the following information, checking all that apply.

I identify as a victim/survivor of

I am age 18 or older: ___Yes ___No

I identify as : ___Male ___Female

I identify as Caucasian/ African American/ Asian / Latino/a /Pacific Islander/ Native American (circle all that apply)

I identify as a person with disabilities _____

I identify as LGBTQ _____

I speak another language _____

If yes, please list languages: _____

Please include a brief description of your experience as a victim of crime, including, if relevant , any criminal or civil case or investigation and outcome.

If selected to be part of the Survivor’s Council, I would be interested in the following opportunities
(Check all that apply)

- Training on public speaking
- Training on working with the media
- Training on the legislative process
- Attending Victim Assistance Conference
- Advocating for legislation
- Testifying before a legislative committee
- Speaking at public awareness events (e.g. Victims Rights Day)
- Training professionals
- Developing outreach and training materials
- Public awareness campaigns
- Being filmed for awareness videos

Other: _____

By signing below, I acknowledge that I am age 18 or older. I acknowledge that the above information is true and accurate. I agree to be contacted by a representative of the Office of the Attorney General and regarding my application and the Survivor’s Council.

Signature Date



Office of the Attorney General Survivors Council Agreements

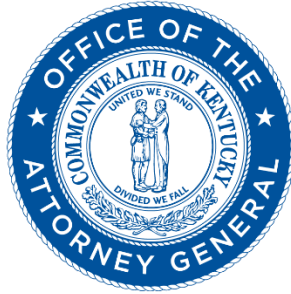
In order to ensure that the Survivors Council is a trauma informed space, we agree to the following:

- Be respectful. Be mindful of body language, word choice, tone and volume, recognizing the expertise of one another while acknowledging that we all come with trauma and will have our personal difficulties as members both around the table and in our personal lives. Be aware of trauma and triggers. If you need assistance or to take a break, feel free to step out of the room and/or speak to an OVA victim advocate.
- Practice active listening.
- Remember that we can offer support to one another and encourage each other, but this is NOT a support group, and not everyone may be inclined to personal contact outside of the group.
- Speak from one's own experience. Be honest.
- Value and validate others' differences and experiences. Give everyone an opportunity to speak and contribute. Wait a few moments before jumping in. Recognize that everyone at the table has a unique perspective to offer.
- Safety is important. These are "open meetings" but personal details that are disclosed should be kept confidential.
- Keep realistic expectations and perspectives – we are humans, with individual worldviews, unique life experience, on top of being survivors of traumatic crime. We need to be respectful and gentle with each other while still holding each other accountable to the mission of the council



Guidelines for Professionals Working with Survivor Leaders

- Create trauma informed spaces for survivors to be engaged in the work.
- Allow survivor leaders to decide how and when to tell aspects of their own experience.
- Survivor leaders are professionals. “None of us are just survivors. We come with our own expertise.” “We can offer something beyond the story. Not make assumptions.” Beyond telling the story of survival, be sure to ask survivors, “what else are you interested in doing?”
- The goal of survivor leaders is not just to raise awareness of victimization (“My son was killed”) but to create change (“Make sure your son is not killed.”).
- Treat survivor leaders as peers, be respectful and do not coddle or condescend. Trust that survivor leaders know our boundaries and are getting the support we need.
- Acknowledge that there are a high number of survivors already working in victim-serving agencies. Create the space so that these survivors can speak from their perspective as survivors to improve practice.
- Create a culture of empowerment. Encourage survivor leaders to grow. Offer mentoring and support to enhance capacity and increase professionalism



Office of the Attorney General Survivors Council

TIP SHEET: Considerations for Public Speaking for Survivors

- You are in control of your story. You decide when where and to whom you disclose aspects of your experience.
- Vet speaking engagements to ensure that they are victim centered. Ask how the event will be run. Consider arriving early to see the layout of the room and run through what will occur during the event.
- Explain up front that you will decide whether or not you answer any questions about the details of your experience.
- Let the audience know up front if you are comfortable or do not wish to have photos taken or postings made on social media.
- Speaking out about your experience takes courage and can be mentally, physically and emotionally taxing.
- Listen to your body. Take cues when you need to rest. Take time to prepare before the event.
- Consider having a support person attend with you to help be a buffer with the audience and to debrief following the speaking engagement. Make a plan for him/her to intervene if you are triggered or do not feel comfortable in a situation.
- Have a plan for how to respond to disclosures by other survivors. If possible, have a victim advocate or crisis counselor from a victim services agency be present.
- Take time after the speaking engagement to debrief with a support person and recharge your batteries.

- Check in with mentors and peers to continue to develop presentations and speeches. Seek input for what is most effective and impactful in your presentation.
- Know that you can take breaks from public speaking and return when you are ready. You are giving a gift to the community by sharing your experience.



Best Practices for Responding to Disclosures by Other Survivors

- **Know your own boundaries and role as a survivor leader.** If you are not a direct service advocate, be sure to define your role to the survivor. As one survivor leader suggests: “I modulate myself in ways to protect myself.”
- **Believe, support and refer.** Respond to the survivor with compassion and respect, and then refer to appropriate resources. Prepare yourself with a list of state and national resources, or refer to Office of Victims Advocacy for more support for the survivor.
- **Acknowledge the power of creating a safe space for disclosure.** Remember that “just telling your story is effective” to reach out and create a safe space for individuals to talk about the crime they have experienced. Your role is “merely to be a witness to the survivor , without fixing, judging, controlling or resolving the situation.”

Resources:

Office of Victims Advocacy, 1-800-372-2551 www.ag.ky.gov/Family/Victims
 Office for Victims of Crime, <https://www.ovc.gov/help/index.html>

DIRECT SERVICES FOR CRIME VICTIMS – Toll Free Numbers	
Americans Overseas Domestic Violence Crisis Center	866-USWOMEN (866-879-6636)
Childhelp USA National Hotline	800-4-A-CHILD (800-422-4453)
Disaster Distress Helpline	800-985-5990
Mothers Against Drunk Driving	877-MADD-HELP (877-623-3435)
National Domestic Violence Hotline TTY Hotline	800-799-7233 800-787-3224
National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline TTY Hotline	866-331-9474 866-331-8453
National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children	888-818-POMC (888-818-7662)
National Runaway Safeline	800-RUNAWAY (800-786-2929)
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-8255
Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)	800-656-HOPE (800-656-4613)

Safe Phone Helpline (sexual assault support for the DoD community)	877-995-5247
Sexual Assault Support and Help For Americans Abroad	886-USWOMEN (866-879-6636)
StrongHearts Native Helpline (domestic violence and dating violence support for Native Americans)	844-7NATIVE (844-762-8483)
DIRECT SERVICES FOR CRIME VICTIMS – Online Help	
Lifeline Crisis Chat	https://chat.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetHelp/LifelineChat.aspx
National Sexual Assault Online Hotline	English https://ohl.rainn.org/online/ Spanish https://ohl.rainn.org/es/
Safe Online Helpline (sexual assault support for the DoD community)	https://www.safehelpline.org
National Runaway Safeline Chat	https://www.1800runaway.org/
INFORMATION/REFERRALS FOR CRIME VICTIMS	
Battered Women’s Justice Project	800-903-0111 x 1
Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Country Child Abuse Hotline	800-633-5155
Federal Trade Commission IdentityTheft.gov	English: https://identitytheft.gov/ Spanish: https://robodeidentidad.gov/
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children TDD Hotline	800-843-5678 800-826-7653
National Crime Victim Bar Association	844-LAW-HELP (844-529-4357)
National Crime Victim Law Institute Referral Line	888-768-6556
National Human Trafficking Hotline	888-3737-888
National Criminal Justice Reference Service (OVC Resource Center) TTY Hotline	800-851-3420 301-240-6310
National Organization for Victim Assistance	800-TRY-NOVA (800-879-6682)
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence TTY Hotline	800-537-2238 x 5 800-553-2508
StopFraud.gov	https://www.stopfraud.gov/report.html
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration TDD Hotline Español	877-SAMHSA-7 (877-726-4727) 800-487-4889 800-662-HELP (800-662-4357)

U.S. Department of Justice Elder Abuse Initiative	https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/find-support-elder-abuse/
VictimConnect (live anonymous referrals and support for victims of crime)	855-4-VICTIM (855-484-2846) Chat: https://chat.victimconnect.org/online/