



CRIME VICTIMS' INSTITUTE

Executive Director: Mary M. Breaux, Ph.D.

January 2026

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Second Annual CVI Conference

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.

The Second Annual Crime Victims' Institute Conference, *Breaking Barriers: Advancing Research, Policy, and Advocacy for Crime Victims and Survivors*, was held at Sam Houston State University on October 15-17, 2025. Over 50 victim advocates and victim service professionals, law enforcement professionals, legal professionals, government officials, and academics/researchers from various district attorney's offices, police departments, sheriff's offices, juvenile justice departments, TDCJ, nonprofits, and universities all across the country were in attendance. Four CVI Advisory Board members were in attendance as well: Elizabeth Hamilton (Crime Victim Liaison, Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles), Heather Ayala (National Director of Victim Services, Mothers Against Drunk Driving), Forrest Mitchell (Retired Director of Operations, Nueces County Medical Examiner's Office), and Jeffery "JD" Robertson (Independent Consultant & Retired Major, Texas Rangers), in addition to Donald Stout from the Office of the Governor.

Attendees had the opportunity to learn from experts in the fields of Human Trafficking, Cybercrime Victimization, and Elder Abuse and Neglect, as well as network with one another. Upon the completion of all conference workshops and the keynote address, participants received a certificate of attendance. Attendees who completed an overall conference evaluation agreed that the conference was a valuable use of their time, well organized, and they would highly recommend it to others in their field. In fact, one attendee said, "I'm impressed. I learned a lot and made great connections." Another shared that, "All presenters were amazing. The information was relevant and clear, I love(d) the varying perspectives."

Based on the overwhelming positive feedback, and with the support of the CVI Advisory Board, the conference planning committee has decided to proceed with hosting the third annual CVI Conference. The 2026 CVI Conference will be held **October 14-16** at Sam Houston State University. Please be on the lookout for the official save-the-date flyer and pre-registration form via our website and/or distribution list in the coming weeks.

Second Annual CVI Conference Photos



Second Annual CVI Conference Photos



SHSU Alumnae Camille Figueroa (left) and Makayla Burden (right) proudly show their CVI Conference Certificate of Attendance.



Fun Fact: CVI Conference attendees can utilize the Quiet Reflection Room (pictured above) to decompress, take a quick break, and learn more about relevant resources as well as the many programs that the SHSU College of Criminal Justice has to offer.

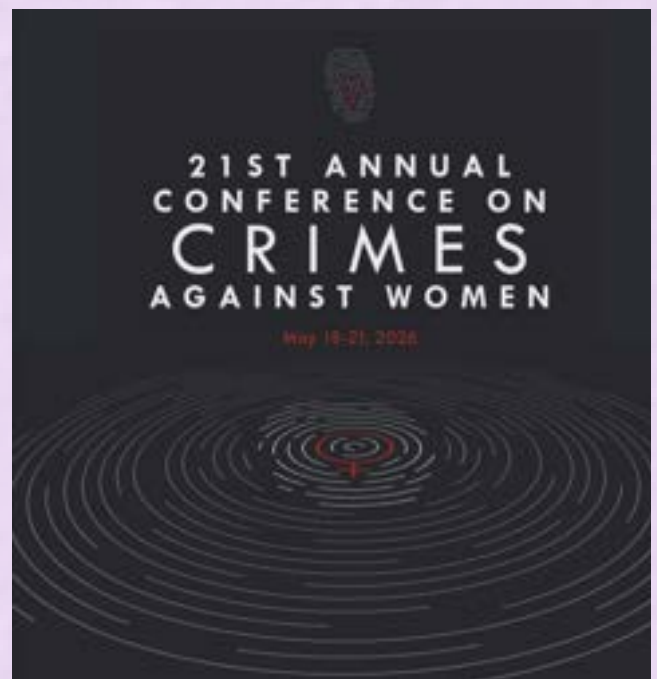
Working with Survivors of Trauma and Trafficking: Legal and Mental Health Perspectives Webinar

We are thrilled to announce that the recording for our most recent webinar is now available! The CVI held a webinar last November to educate attendees on and expose them to legal and mental health perspectives of working with survivors of trauma and trafficking. Panelists included Davina Ugochukwu, ESQ. (MiCreate), Brian Simmons, MA, LPC (New Solutions Counseling & Trauma Center), and Christina Richardson, NCC, LPC (Trauma Support Services). There were over 50 attendees during the live event, most of whom were students and victim services professionals. If you are interested in viewing this webinar recording, you may find it on our website under the Publications tab or click the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQDNhRewiUc>

If you have any recommendations or suggestions for future webinar topics, please feel free to email crimevictims@shsu.edu.

CCAW 2026 – Call for Posters

The CVI is excited to announce the second annual Academic Poster Presentation Session at this year's Conference on Crimes Against Women (CCAW), which is being held May 18-21, 2026, in Dallas, Texas. We invite research posters that explore victimization prevention, investigative intervention, and trauma-informed practices across healthcare, legal, and law enforcement sectors. Abstracts are due by **February 27, 2026**. Please visit the following webpage for more details, including poster guidelines: <https://conferencecaw.org/more-to-explore/>



Feel free to reach out to PostersCCAW-CVI@shsu.edu if you have any questions or need additional information. We look forward to seeing your research!

Look for upcoming publications, CVI Talks episodes, webinars, and fact sheets from the Crime Victims' Institute:

- February (Technical Report)
- Child Marriage Laws Fact Sheet
- CVI Talks: Forensic Analysis and Justice for Victims and Survivors
- March (Technical Report)
- Child Labor Fact Sheet



Other commemorative events/upcoming activities:

January

National Stalking Awareness Month
National Human Trafficking Prevention & Awareness Month

February

National Teen Dating Violence Prevention & Awareness Month
Black History Month

March

Women's History Month
National Social Work Month

April

Sexual Assault Awareness Month
National Child Abuse Prevention Month
Crime Victims' Awareness Month

Crime Victims' Institute Advisory Board

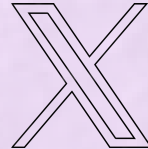
Heather F. Ayala Grand Prairie National Director of Victim Services, Mothers Against Drunk Driving	Hon. Lee Ann Breeding Denton District Judge, 462nd Judicial District Court	Melissa Carter Bryan Victim Assistance Coordinator, Brazos County District Attorney's Office	Hillary A. England, MSW Pflugerville Deputy Director of Victim Services and Prevention Programs, Office of the Governor
Matthew L. Ferrara, Ph.D. Austin Forensic Psychologist	Elizabeth "Libby" Hamilton Austin Crime Victim Liaison, Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles	Hon. Joan Huffman Houston State Senator for District 17 & Chair of the Committee on Finance	Chief Emmitt R. Jackson, Jr. Argyle Chief of Police Argyle Police Department
Lindsay M. Kinzie, Esq. Keller General Counsel, The Gatehouse at Grapevine	Forrest A. Mitchell Corpus Christi Retired Director of Operations, Nueces County Medical Examiner's Office	Alexis J. Nungaray Houston Student, Lone Star College	Brandi L. Reed Amarillo Director of Education, Family Support Services of Amarillo, Inc.
Jeffery "JD" Robertson Wimberley Independent Consultant & Retired Major, Texas Rangers	David E. Schwartz Bellaire Retired Pharmacist	Hon. John Smithee Amarillo Texas State Representative District 86 & Chair of the Texas House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee	Hon. Erleigh N. Wiley Forney Criminal District Attorney, Kaufman County

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Resources

- Aging and Disability Resource Center 855-937-2372
- Cyber Civil Rights Initiative 844-878-2274
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving 877-623-3435
- National Child Abuse Hotline 800-422-4453
- National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-7233
- National Human Trafficking Hotline 888-373-7888
- National Sexual Assault Hotline 800-656-4673
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 988
- Texas Abuse Hotline 800-252-5400
- Texas Council on Family Violence <https://tcfv.org/survivor-resources/>
- Texas Association Against Sexual Assault <https://taasa.org/get-help/>
- Victim Connect Resource Center 855-484-2846



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