

Service training to focus on elder abuse

Break the Silence, an annual conference hosted by Community Legal Aid, will take place on Thursday, March 16th from 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at the Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center, 215 S. Depeyster St. in Kent, Ohio.

This year's conference will focus on serving individuals who experience abuse later in life and explore the connection between domestic, sexual assault, and elder abuse.

According to the National Council on Aging, approximately one in 10 people age 60 or older experience elder abuse. Survivors of abuse later in life experience abuse, neglect, abandonment, or financial exploitation by someone in an ongoing, trust-based relationship.

"When working with victims who are older adults, it's important to understand nuances between domestic violence and elder abuse," explained Jeanne Charles, managing attorney for Community Legal Aid's Legal Assistance to Victims Project. Charles added that making the distinction between the type of abuse will determine what types of services are best suited to meet a survivor's needs.

Sylvia Pla-Raith, Lead Staff of the Ohio Attorney General Elder Abuse Commission and Director of the Elder Justice Unit, Consumer Protection Section, is a featured speaker for the training. Pla-Raith will present on the intersection of intimate partner violence in later life and elder abuse and civil protection orders versus protective services orders.

Additional speakers and panelist for the day's event include:

- Catherine Rufener, Deputy Director of Elder and Disabled Services for the County of Summit Department of Job and Family Services
- Alexandria Ruden, Supervising Attorney for the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
- Susan Mays, Supervisor for the Trumbull County Adult Protective Services
- Susan Stroup, Chief Officer of Social Services for Coleman Professional Services, and
- Susan Fitch, Staff Attorney at Community Legal Aid

Victims advocates, law enforcement, attorneys, and other social service providers who work with survivors of violence are invited to attend the training. Cost is \$30 and includes lunch. Continuing education credits for attorneys and social workers have been requested. For more information and to register, visit

www.communitylegalaid.org/breakthesilence.

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