

Service training this month aims to help abuse survivors

“Break the Silence” focuses on vulnerable populations

Every minute, approximately 20 people are physically abused by a partner or family member. This equates to more than 10 million women and men each year, according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Domestic violence affects people in all walks of life. But it can be particularly hard to overcome for special population groups, such as students, victims of human trafficking, those in the LGBTQ community, and limited English speakers.

Community Legal Aid will be hosting a training for service providers who work with these populations.

“*Break the Silence* is our way of identifying best practices for helping people in underserved populations,” said Jeanne Charles, Legal Aid’s managing attorney for the domestic violence team. “Victims of violence face so many obstacles when trying to access the system, but when an individual is from an underserved population, those obstacles multiply greatly.

“We’re hoping to have professionals from all different services there – law enforcement, social workers, healthcare, attorneys, and of course, victims assistance programs,” Charles explained. It’s about serving the whole person. So having all of these people in the room together to talk about these issues is important.”

The one-day conference will include a morning keynote address and afternoon workshops. Topics will include:

- Islam in America: Shattering the myth
- Recognizing human trafficking
- Research findings of the online commercial sex industry
- Combating sexual assault on campus
- Implications of trauma on LGBTQ
- Overcoming language barriers: Solutions for law enforcement

“It’s really exciting that all of these topics are coming together into one event,” said Susan Laird, Executive Director of the Northeast Ohio Coalition Against Human Trafficking, who will be speaking at the event. “These are very difficult topics to hear about. People have a hard time believing that these things are occurring right here in our own community. But they are real, they are here, and it’s important that we talk about them.”

Other speakers for the event will include:

- Sarah Shendy, Law Enforcement Training Officer for the Ohio Attorney General’s Office
- Jan Apisa, Director of Community Engagement for the Victim Assistance Program
- Teresa Stafford, Senior Director of Victim Services and Outreach for the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center
- Eris Eady, Program Director for LGBT at the Community Center of Greater Cleveland

“We hope that people walk away from this conference empowered and armed with resources and tools to better assist the most vulnerable victims of violence,” Charles said. “But we also people walk away with a deeper understanding and a stronger sense of empathy for those who come to us for help.”

Those interested in learning ore or registering can visit www.communitylegalaid.org/events.

Event Details:

Break the Silence: Identifying and Protecting Vulnerable Populations

Thursday, March 22, 2018

8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center

215 S. Depeyster Street, Kent, OH 44242

Cost \$25

Lunch provided

Continuing education credits have been requested

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[Print](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

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