

Recent Events Raise Crime Awareness

The Louisiana State University community was recently touched by incidents involving two of our students. Christine Moore, a first year student in the School of Social Work, was reported missing at the end of May. Her car was found shortly after her disappearance and her remains were discovered in mid June at a location 10 miles from campus.

Charlotte Murray Pace, who had just graduated with a Masters in Business Administration, was found murdered in her apartment in the Sharlo subdivision in May.

These incidents have caused University employees, students, and the community at large to become even more concerned about their safety. Other communities around the state have been touched by similar heinous acts. When incidents such as these hit so close to work and home, many begin to worry about the safety of themselves and their loved ones. We are still coming to terms with the events of last September. Events such as these, whether murder in a local community or one of mass destruction through a terrorist attack, can have serious long lasting effects on all of us.

When the victims are missing, hope continues for a positive outcome. The community pulls together and holds vigils and remembrances. If the outcomes aren't positive, friends and neighbors worry that the perpetrators are still at large. In some cases, resolution takes a long time or never happens. This increases stress and can contribute to depression, anxiety, and lack of productivity at work and disruption in personal relationships.

Normally this newsletter shares information linking research to policy and practice. In light of recent events affecting the LSU and surrounding communities, and with the nearing of the first anniversary of the events of September 11, 2001, this issue will focus on how incidents ranging from a homicide in a community to ones of mass destruction have the potential to leave not only those personally affected by them, but citizens in general at risk of *vicarious victimization*. It will offer some basic guidelines we can use to help those in pain.



Quotable Quote

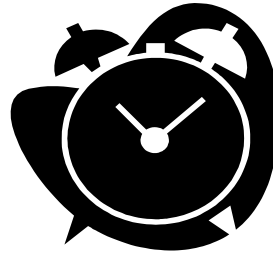
Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it—Helen Keller

We are all at risk

- ▶ You don't have to have been a witness to a trauma to have been traumatized.
- ▶ Though the grief and pain of those that directly lost loved ones is unique and enormous, pain is pain. There is no purpose served by comparing one person's with another's, or in minimizing your own.
- ▶ There is no wrong way to feel. That includes feeling numb, or actually feeling like you're handling things fairly well; feeling irritable for no reason; feeling confused; feeling guilt or grief or fear or, most common of all, feeling many mixed feelings that shift from time to time.
- ▶ Lack of feelings, social withdrawal, sleep disturbances or severe anxiety symptoms that last longer than 2-4 weeks are causes for concern, though they may be inevitable among those who have been personally bereaved.
- ▶ Past history of trauma or recent bereavement makes coping with a community crisis much more difficult. So does *vicarious traumatization*: the second hand trauma experienced by rescue personnel, therapists, pastoral counselors, and other caregivers.

Extent of Victimization

- Every 2 seconds a property crime is committed
- Every 15 seconds a woman is battered
- Every 46 seconds someone is robbed
- Every minute 1.5 an adult women is raped
- Every minute approximately 6 American children are reported as abused and neglected
- Every 21 minutes someone is murdered
- Every day 55 Americans are killed in alcohol-related traffic crashes (from National Victim Center 1994 Crime Clock)



In Memoriam

Christine Moore
1979-2002

Charlotte Murray Pace
1979-2002

What we can do to help

- **Listen**—the most important thing we can do when people are suffering, whether they are the victims or family and friends, is to listen and let them talk. They may need to talk to you long after the event has occurred. They may want to go over events many times—this is okay.
- **Find** a private setting where you won't be overheard or interrupted.
- **Keep** comments brief and simple so the person doesn't get off track.
- **Ask** questions which show your interest and encourage the person to keep talking.
- **Don't** offer unsolicited advice right away—the person may ask for this later.
- **Don't** make the conversation about you and your experiences. Do not say *"I know exactly how you feel."*
- **Don't** say anything critical of the person, such as *"You shouldn't take it so hard."*
- **Remember** that by being there and caring, you are helping.



Sources of Support

Mothers Against Drunk Driving—1-800-438-6233
 National Domestic Violence Hotline—1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)
 National Mental Health Association Help Line—1-800-969-6642
 National Suicide Hotline—1-800-SUICIDE
 Parents of Murdered Children—1-888-818-7662
 Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN)—1-800-656-HOPE
 United Way Crisis Help Line—1-800-233-4357
 Victims of Crime Help Line—1-800-FYI-CALL

