

# THE UFPD ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Office of Victim Services  
University of Florida Police Department  
(352) 392-5648  
Spring 2009



## What is the Office of Victim Services?



The Office of Victim Services (OVS) assists all victims of crime including, but not limited to, sexual assault, battery, intimate partner violence, stalking, and/or harassment. Services provided by OVS include:

- ✧ Crisis intervention
- ✧ Accompanying victims to criminal justice/ Student Conduct proceedings
- ✧ Obtaining financial reimbursement for losses or expenses incurred as a result of victimization
- ✧ Filing for Injunction for Protection Orders (Restraining Orders)
- ✧ Advocating for students with professors if special accommodations are necessary

The role of the victim advocate is to educate a victim of crime on what options are available, and to support and assist him/her in whatever option s/he chooses. A victim can feel comfortable knowing that anything discussed with the victim advocate will be kept completely confidential, allowing them to explore all of their options in a safe, non-judgmental environment. These services are all free, and available on a 24 hour-a-day, 7 day-a-week basis.

Additionally, the Office of Victim Services is available to make presentations on campus on a variety of different topics including victim advocacy, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking/harassment, child abuse, and workplace violence.

For more information on the services provided by OVS, please call (352) 392-5648 from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. or (352) 392-1111 after hours and on weekends.



## Recognizing Relationship Violence

Intimate partner violence is a pattern of behaviors aimed at gaining power and control over one's partner. Sometimes these actions may escalate, resulting in assault, battery, stalking, rape, and even murder. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, women ages 20-24 were victimized by an intimate partner at the highest rate of any other age group (a rate of 21 per 1,000 women). This rate is about 8 times the peak for men (3 victimizations per 1,000 men ages 25-34).

A person may be in an abusive relationship if his/her partner:

- Is jealous or possessive toward him/her.
- Tries to control him/her by being very bossy or demanding.
- Tries to isolate him/her by demanding him/her to cut off social contacts and friendships.
- Is violent and/or loses his/her temper quickly.
- Pressures him/her sexually or demands sexual activity with which s/he is not comfortable.
- Claims you are responsible for his/her emotional state.
- Makes "jokes" that shame, humiliate, demean, or embarrass him/her, whether privately or around family or friends.

Help is readily available for a person who may be thinking about leaving an abusive relationship. A victim advocate can help the person create a plan for staying safe while leaving the relationship. An advocate can also assist the person with reporting the assault to the police if the person wants to do so, inform that person about legal protection, provide assistance with obtaining medical and counseling services, and/or accompany him/her to criminal justice or Student Conduct proceedings.



**Did you know . . .** there is an internship opportunity for junior or senior UF students available at UFPD's Office of Victim Services? In the fall and in the spring, one intern will be selected to assist in community awareness activities, educational presentations, and training programs. The intern will also shadow the victim advocates during professional duties, such as criminal justice proceedings, crisis response, and meetings with other campus organizations.

Preferred qualities for this position include a background in criminology, psychology, or a related field; basic knowledge of the criminal justice system, Florida criminal laws, and victimization issues; excellent oral, written, and computer skills; public speaking experience; and ability to work independently. Interns often use their hours to earn college credits (check with your department to see if this option is available to you). If you are interested in an internship with the Office of Victim Services, please submit a resume and cover letter explaining your interest in the position to [judithaw@ufl.edu](mailto:judithaw@ufl.edu) or [tvanderv@ufl.edu](mailto:tvanderv@ufl.edu). An advocate will contact you to schedule an interview.

## When Love Becomes an Obsession

If you think you can't be stalked, think again! According to the National Center for Victims of Crime, 1 out of every 12 women will be stalked during her lifetime and 1 out of 45 men will be stalked during his lifetime.

Some reasons why one person may stalk another are that the stalker:

- Believes the victim is an ideal partner.
- May believe the victim is in love with him/her.
- Believes that the victim is the only person who can satisfy his/her desires.

Some common stalking behaviors include:

- Writing inappropriate letters, e-mails, or text messages to the person begging for attention.
- Calling/texting the person repeatedly.
- Sending unwanted gifts to the person.
- Secretly following a person.
- Breaking into the person's e-mail, MySpace or Facebook account to monitor discussions with others.
- Becoming threatening or violent if rejected by the person.

If you feel that you are being stalked, do NOT take the situation lightly! Don't ignore the stalker's behavior and assume that it will go away over time - chances are it won't! Here are a few things that you can do to protect yourself:

- Keep a daily diary/log of harassing behaviors, and print out any e-mails, Facebook posts, or IM chats. This may prove useful should you have to go to court or if you decide to obtain an Injunction for Protection.
- Discuss the situation with friends or roommates so you have an extra set of eyes looking out for you.
- File police reports for harassment and save them.
- Consider obtaining an Injunction for Protection.

If you need any assistance with obtaining and Injunction or you would like to file a police report, a victim advocate from the Office of Victim Services can help you.

## Staying Safe on Campus

According to the U.S. Department of Justice's report, the Sexual Victimization of College Women, the vast majority of sexual victimizations occur after 6 p.m.

- 51.8 percent of completed rapes take place after midnight.
- 36.5 percent occurred between 6 p.m. and midnight.

So, although the University of Florida ranks 2nd among the nation's safest colleges and universities, we feel it is important to provide you with some well-known, yet useful tips to help keep you safe while on campus:

- **STAY ALERT!!!** Be aware of your surroundings.
- When going for a jog on campus, run with a partner.
- Avoid taking short-cuts in unfamiliar places.
- Do not park in deserted or poorly lit areas.
- Keep your car doors locked. If someone tries to approach your car, drive away immediately if possible, or honk to draw attention to yourself.
- At parties, drink with dependable friends, and always bring a friend who is not drinking.
- Always pour your own drinks and never accept opened containers from others. Never let your drinks out of your sight.
- Always leave parties and bars as a group. Never leave a friend behind, even if s/he insists. If s/he simply will not leave with you, then stay with him/her.
- Use your resources!!! For a night escort on campus, call the Student Nighttime Auxiliary Patrol (SNAP) at (352) 392-7627.

## Real Talk: What NOT to Do if a Friend Confides in You

Sometimes, we find ourselves in situations where we just don't know what to say. If a friend has been raped, do you blow it off? Do you say things like, "You shouldn't have been drinking that much anyway," or "Why were you walking alone, if you called me I would have come." What if s/he just broke up with her/his boy/girlfriend? Do you say "s/he wasn't meant for you anyway"? Sometimes, our responses for the people who come to us for understanding aren't the best ones. The following is a guide to help you to be sensitive in such situations:

- Listen openly and let your friend take his/her time telling you his/her story.
- Believe what your friend tells you.
- Validate your friend's feelings.
- Avoid false reassurances ("It's going to be okay") and overused sayings ("Everything happens for a reason...").
- Avoid asking too many questions, especially blaming questions ("Why did/were you...?").
- Respect your friend's privacy. Don't talk to others about the incident.
- Inform your friends about campus and community resources that can provide assistance and offer to go with them to seek help.

