



# Legal Access Newsletter

April 2016

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### Practice Tips:

Dos and Don'ts for Working with Survivors of Trauma

*Each month we will feature practical tips and strategies to support your work with victims of trauma and domestic abuse. If you have any questions, need any additional support, or have a tip to share, please feel free to contact [spencer@jcada.org](mailto:spencer@jcada.org).*

### ***To be a Good Litigator, You Must Be a Good Counselor (And Therapist)***

This [recent piece](#) from *Above the Law* discusses the importance of attorneys "being there" for their clients by listening and empathizing. JCADA recognizes the importance of being there, too. That's why we've created the *Legal Access* program, to support attorneys assisting survivors of domestic abuse. JCADA provides continual support and counseling to clients through their legal cases, while also assisting attorneys with resources and tools to help them better represent survivors.

### ***Guide for Engaging and Supporting Parents Affected by Domestic Violence***

The National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Health just released this "[Framework for Supporting Parents Affected by Domestic Violence](#)." This guide outlines concrete ways for professionals to be relationship-based, family-centered, and trauma-oriented in working with their clients. This resource could be valuable to family law attorneys and their staffs who are representing survivors in child custody litigation.

### JCADA by the Numbers- March - April 2016

Currently Active JCADA Counseling Clients: 116

*Legal Access* Meetings with Clients: 16

*Legal Access* Consultations with Clinicians: 22

### Emerging Issues & Training Opportunities

*As a part of our attorney network, we will provide you with local training opportunities. We encourage all attorneys to participate in trainings designed to provide best practices for working with victims of domestic abuse, and we will notify you as training programs become available.*

## CourtWatch Montgomery Report: DV Deaths in Montgomery County, Maryland

Earlier this year, CourtWatch Montgomery released a [tragic report](#) about domestic abuse homicides in Montgomery County. This report, based on media accounts, outlines the number of deaths in Montgomery County caused by domestic abuse.

From 2000-2015:

- 60 county residents died due to domestic abuse;
- 25% of those killed were children murdered to retaliate against a partner attempting to leave an abusive relationship; and
- 73% of victims were killed after trying to end an abusive relationship, highlighting the real risk survivors face when leaving abusive relationships.

This report highlights the need for safe visitation and custody arrangements and exchanges, as well as thorough counseling and safety planning with advocates.



### Sexual Assault Awareness Month- April 2016

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. During this month, organizations around the country have been highlighting resources available to attorneys, advocates, and other professionals. The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) has [outlined Maryland sexual assault laws and regulations](#) to assist attorneys in identifying sexual abuse. Additionally, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) created this [fact sheet](#) focused on 2016's theme of prevention.

### Developments in the Law

#### Maryland Legislative Updates

The 2016 Maryland Legislative ended with some significant legal successes for survivors. The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence issued its [2016 final report](#), which outlines the bills of interest to survivors. Some of the highlights include:



- Passed- HB 155/ SB 278- Updates the definition of stalking to prohibit a person from behavior which "intends to cause or knows or reasonably should have known that the conduct would cause serious emotional distress to another." This amendment will hopefully allow for the successful prosecution of stalking behaviors.
- Passed- HB 314/ SB 346- Adds to the list of offenses for which someone can qualify for a peace order, including misuse of telephone facilities and equipment, misuse of electronic communication or interactive computer service, revenge porn, and visual surveillance.

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