

2019 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Theme Video Transcript

STEVE TWIST, FOUNDER, ARIZONA VOICE FOR CRIME VICTIMS: The crime victims' movement arose out of a million cases of injustice.

ELYNNE GREENE, MANAGER, HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND VICTIM SERVICES, LAS VEGAS METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT: Going into an emergency room to support a victim and being asked to leave.

STEVE TWIST: The parents of a murdered child were not allowed to be in the courtroom during the trial.

LAWANDA HAWKINS, FOUNDER, JUSTICE FOR MURDERED CHILDREN: Everybody's concerned about the rights of the perpetrator. No one's thinking that victims should have any rights. And we're here—treated with no dignity, no respect.

MAN: The family member that you lost is the only one that matters, and you want the persons that you're working with to treat you that way.

SHERIDAN MIYAMOTO, PH.D., DIRECTOR, SAFE-T CENTER, PENN STATE UNIVERSITY: How do we support someone in a moment? How do we help them feel believed and supported?

ELSIE R. BOUDREAU, YUP'IK, PRESIDENT, ARCTIC WINDS HEALING WINDS: Believing them is really important. Validating them, you know, "You're not alone." "It wasn't your fault."

LAWANDA HAWKINS: It affects us all. We all have to speak up and speak out—let victims know they do have rights.

STEVE TWIST: And these stories of injustice arose, and they created a movement that culminated in President Reagan calling for a task force on victims of crime.

ELYNNE GREENE: The 1984 Victims of Crime Act was really the first time that we solidified the rights and responsibilities at a national level. Suddenly crime became an issue, but not only was it about crime, but it was addressing the emotional, the physical, and the financial impact. And suddenly we were looking at how each and every piece—law enforcement, victim advocates, the medical community—everyone had a part in that.

HERMAN MILLHOLLAND, CONSULTANT, MASS VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM: If you want to have truly an effective response, it is those partnerships that are key and essential to the recovery of a community.

ELYNNE GREENE: Over the years, we started to make those connections across the country, and that's how we started to learn more and more about our field, because we were hearing from other communities, what they were doing, and then best practices were evolving. *I love the idea of having the services in the community and tailored to each unique community that we have across the valley.* There's often a history of victimization and there's multiple traumas. The Family Justice Center is designed to address the nexus of crimes because bringing together sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking resources under one roof helps to acknowledge that there is that crossover, and polyvictimization is not something that you can ignore.

HERMAN MILLHOLLAND: Victim services is moving in a wonderful direction. More and more resources are now being provided to create capacity. The victim-centered approach always has the victim in mind, making sure that their needs are met. It could be mental health support, if necessary. It could be financial support. It could be helping them in burying their loved one.

SHERIDAN MIYAMOTO: We're at a place in time where so much that has happened before has led to a place where we can make dramatic improvements for victims.

TECHNICIAN: *Sheridan, are you able to see what I see? How does that look?*

SHERIDAN MIYAMOTO: *That looks good. Go ahead and take a picture. We have to be thinking about hubs of expertise and how we can bring that expertise to every place that it's needed, and technology's the ideal way to do that. When a sexual assault victim of crime presents in a smaller, rural hospital, a physician in the emergency room is asked to go and conduct the exam. In worst-case scenarios, patients are turned away because there's no one available and no one willing to do that exam. The promise that the SAFE-T Center holds is that we can provide quality care no matter where someone lives. And they can support them in a way that doesn't re-traumatize them, that makes them feel safe, and that provides the compassion and the emotional and psychological support that they need to begin healing. Remember that, as we've talked about, when people are trying to tell us what's happened, it's really challenging to tell the whole story.*

STEVE TWIST: I think the struggle for victims' rights can give meaning to the work of professionals in the field today. They can understand that they're part of a long history now, of an arc toward justice.

ELYNNE GREENE: Our field is so strong because we're learning about resilience and we're also—instead of always just looking ahead at what we need to do next, we're never forgetting the victims behind us.

SHERIDAN MIYAMOTO: Multidisciplinary teams coming together, legislators really beginning to care about this issue.

STEVE TWIST: The past gives us every reason to have hope. We would be nowhere without that legacy.

ELYNNE GREENE: And we hold on to that just as we continue to support each other and mentor that new group of advocates that are going to carry us into the future.