

### 7:30 am – 8:15 am | Registration | Empire Ballroom

Coffee, tea, fruit & herb-infused water available all day in the Empire and Honore Ballrooms.

### 8:30 am – 8:45 am | Welcome and Opening Remarks | Empire Ballroom

#### 8:50 am – 10:15 am

##### **Creative Lawyering: Representing Sexual Assault Survivors Through the Criminal Justice Process | Empire Ballroom**

**Maura Crossin, Esq., & Nora Grais-Clements, Esq.**  
Victim Rights Law Center

From accompaniment with reporting to law enforcement, enforcement of privacy and other victim rights, help with drafting and delivering a victim impact statement, to preparation and support while testifying in a trial, there is a myriad of ways that lawyers can help survivors of sexual assault through criminal justice advocacy. This workshop will explore the ways that lawyers can assist survivors who are navigating the often-hostile criminal justice system pre- and post-arrest and conviction.

##### **Vicarious Trauma & Building Resilience | Honore Ballroom**

**Bridgette Stumpf, Esq., Volare**

This workshop is meant for both staff and supervisors in compassion-driven fields. Participants will gain insights into vicarious trauma, equipping them with practical tools for sensitive and compassionate engagement. There will also be limited discussion of ways to build institutional resiliency as well.

### 10:15 am – 10:30 am | Break

#### 10:30 am – 11:45 am

##### **Get Off of My Cloud: Technology and Survivor Confidentiality | Empire Ballroom**

**Carol Schrader, Esq., Victim Rights Law Center**  
**Laisa Schweigert, National Network to End Domestic Violence**

Technology is an essential element of gender-based violence advocacy. We use technology to communicate with each other, survivors, and community partners; to file pleadings and help survivors prepare for court; to find resources; and to document services. We need to think strategically about how different types of technology collect, store, and share data. Our strategies need to incorporate VAWA and jurisdiction-specific confidentiality laws and professional ethics rules. This workshop will help advocates and attorneys identify how technology intersects with their work, data safety considerations with different types of technology, and practical tips for protect survivors' confidential information.

##### **Accessing Legal Representation for Sexual Assault Survivors Pursuing Civil Protective Orders | Honore Ballroom**

**Sarah Beuning, Esq., Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault & Megan Greeson, PhD, DePaul University**

A team of researchers from the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault and DePaul University conducted focus groups with legal advocates from rape crisis centers, surveying survivors across the state of Illinois, and conducting in-depth interviews with survivors in diverse community contexts. In this session, they will present what they learned about why survivors do or do not seek and retain legal representation when petitioning for sexual assault protective orders. Participants will discuss how findings relate to their local context, and describe implications for policy, forging community relationships, service provision, and education about services.

## 11:45 am – 1:00 pm | Lunch on Your Own

Stop by the exhibits in Salons 4–6 (Third Floor), open until 6:15 pm Tuesday. For a list of exhibitors, page 3.

## 1:00 pm – 2:15 pm

### **Image-Based Abuse 101: What Advocates and Justice Professionals Need to Know About This Growing Form of Abuse | Empire Ballroom**

**Ilse Knecht, Joyful Heart Foundation, Andrea Powell, & Samantha McCoy, Esq.**

The surge in image-based abuse cases over the past five years highlights the urgent need for a deeper understanding of this growing form of abuse and the ways communities must begin to respond. The workshop will discuss what image-based abuse is and its prevalence; its impact on survivors; existing laws and policies; law enforcement and prosecution responses; barriers to justice; and what's next in the fight against this abuse. In addition, it will explore the strengths and opportunities to enhance resources for survivors. The workshop will also cover the current state of the law at the state and federal levels and what needs to be improved to wholly support survivors, ensure an appropriate justice response, and hold tech companies accountable. Participants will review efforts from both the U.S. and globally, and discuss next steps for their own communities.

### **For Us, By Us: Providing Culturally Specific Legal Services to Black Women Survivors of DVSA | Honore Ballroom**

**Nel-Sylvia Guzman, Esq., & Ikram Ali, Esq.  
The Safe Sisters Circle**

Join two experienced leaders from The Safe Sisters Circle in this informative workshop designed for lawyers and advocates. The session will delve into the critical role of culturally specific services in supporting survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault (DVSA). Participants will gain insight into what culturally specific services entail and how they can be integrated into the legal representation of DVSA survivors. Using real-world case examples from The Safe Sisters Circle, presenters will highlight best practices applied in civil protection order and family law cases. Attendees will leave equipped with practical strategies for more effective and empathetic advocacy, ensuring Black women survivors receive the nuanced, culturally relevant support they deserve.

## 2:15 pm – 2:30 pm | Break

## 2:30 pm – 3:45 pm

### **The Power of Partnership: Collaborative Approaches to Cold Case Sexual Assault Investigations | Empire Ballroom**

**Colleen Phelan, National Organization for Victim Advocacy & Colin King, ASU Family Violence Center**

Effective partnerships are essential for improving victim support, increasing offender accountability, and implementing systemic changes that lead to better outcomes. By examining the progression of professionals who have worked across disciplines to develop risk assessments, shape policy, and drive meaningful reform, this session highlights strategies for breaking down barriers and fostering a survivor-centered approach. Attendees will learn how collaborative efforts between law enforcement, victim advocates, and prosecutors enhance cold case sexual assault investigations, advocacy, and long-term systemic improvements while navigating the challenges that arise in multi-agency work.

### **Representing Immigrant Survivors of Sexual Assault in Challenging Times | Honore Ballroom**

**Kelly Byrne, Esq., & Lia Ocasio, Esq., ASISTA**

This workshop will discuss promising practices in the representation of immigrant survivors of sexual assault in a time of increased fear and enforcement. Presenters will discuss immigration relief available to survivors, the barriers immigrant survivors face in accessing services, the enforcement landscape immigrant survivors are facing, and how practitioners can harness available remedies to support, and seek justice for, immigrant survivors. The workshop will feature hypotheticals, various ways for participants to test their understanding, and tips on how participants can apply their learning to their roles.

3:45 pm – 4:00 pm | Break (snack provided) | Third Floor, Salons 4–6

4:00 pm – 5:15 pm

**Reproductive and Sexual Coercion: An Intimate Form of Abuse | Empire Ballroom**

Jane Straub, CornerHouse Interagency Child Abuse Evaluation Center

Research has shown that experiencing IPV may put women at higher risk for experiencing reproductive and sexual coercion. Studies show that post Roe v Wade, this type of violence is increasing while resources are decreasing. This training will define reproductive/sexual coercion, discuss the various tactics perpetrators use to control their partner’s reproductive/sexual health and autonomy and outline ways that staff can effectively screen for, and respond to, signs of reproductive coercion.

**Survivor Advocacy & Civil Litigation: Establishing Best Practices for Trauma-Informed Lawyering and Types of Civil Claims Available to Survivors | Honore Ballroom**

Molly Wells, Esq., Wallace Miller Law Firm

The session will cover best practices for trauma-informed lawyering, including client communication, informed consent, litigation pacing, and team building. We’ll also walk through the key civil claims available to survivors—individual actions, class actions, and mass torts—comparing their benefits, limitations, and practical considerations. Whether you’re new to civil SA work or looking to expand your impact, this session will offer tools, frameworks, and inspiration for survivor-centered legal advocacy.

5:15 pm – 6:15 pm | Networking Reception | Third Floor, Salons 4–6

**Generously sponsored by 2025 NSVLC “Speak Out Partner” Levin, Riback & Adelman.**

Come meet new colleagues, check out exhibitors, and enjoy a bite to eat and a mocktail or cocktail on us to toast the life-changing work you do all year!



Exhibitors include:



### 8:30 am – 10:00 am

#### **Trauma-Responsive Workplaces: Organizational-Level Strategies to Address Vicarious Trauma, Compassion Fatigue, and Burnout | Empire Ballroom**

**Dr. Jane Palmer & Ashley Schroeder, American University & Lucane LaFortune**

Are you tired of hearing that you need to engage in more “self-care”? Are you clear-eyed that a bubble bath or a massage won’t fix your burnout or compassion fatigue? This workshop will focus on what it will take to create trauma-responsive and equity-oriented workplaces where the responsibility for care is on the organization, not the individual. The presenters will share the results from a research study involving interviews with civil legal attorneys who work with survivors of sexual assault, and then focus on concrete strategies to create trauma-responsive, equity-oriented workplaces and advance communities of care within anti-sexual assault organizations.

#### **Title IX Case Mastery: Key Skills from Intake to Appeals | Honore Ballroom**

**Amanda Walsh, Esq., Victim Rights Law Center & Christina Zuba, Esq., Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation**

Join Title IX experts from Victim Rights Law Center (VRLC) and Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE) as they guide you through the ever-changing legal landscape of higher education. From making a formal complaint, through the investigation and hearing, attendees will learn practical strategies and gain concrete tools they can use to advocate for student survivor-clients navigating the campus adjudication process.

### 10:00 am – 10:15 am | Break

### 10:15 am – 11:45 am

#### **Increasing Access: Improving Legal Services for Survivors with Disabilities | Empire Ballroom**

**Nora Grais-Clements, Esq., Victim Rights Law Center**

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities experience sexual assault at rates significantly higher than the general population. These same victims also face substantial challenges in accessing legal and support services in the aftermath of assault. This session will examine the barriers survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities face with legal and other advocacy services. Together we will identify strategies and tools to improve access to services for them at every stage of representation, from the moment they first call or walk in the door to resolution of their legal needs.

#### **Sexual Violence: Cause and Consequence of Forced Marriage | Honore Ballroom**

**Hellitiz Villegas & Alexander Goyette, Tahirih Justice Center**

This workshop will provide an overview of the nature of forced marriage in the United States. This segment will cover key definitions, recent legislative updates, and the background of the issue through a lecture format, supplemented by video clips and case vignettes that highlight various perspectives of those impacted. Special attention will be given to how forced marriage occurs alongside other forms of violence, particularly focusing on how sexual violence may be used to justify forced marriages. Additionally, the workshop will address how non-consensual sexual conduct is likely to follow the experience of a non-consensual marriage.

### 11:45 am – 12:30 pm | Sound Bath Meditation with Mecca Elevated | Honore Ballroom

A sound bath is a meditative experience where participants are immersed in soothing sound waves from instruments such as gongs, singing bowls, chimes, and percussion. This ancient practice helps quiet the mind, reduce stress, and promote deep relaxation—no effort required, just listen and receive. Participants are invited to sit at a table, on the floor, or grab a towel and lie on the floor – whatever is most comfortable!

**12:30 pm – 1:15 pm | Lunch on Your Own****1:15 pm – 2:45 pm****Solving the Puzzle: Understanding What it Takes to Successfully Respond to Tech-Facilitated Stalking and Sexual Violence | Empire Ballroom****Natalie Ivey, Esq., SPARC & Matthew Herrick**

Stalkers are creative criminals who use – and misuse – a variety of technologies to locate, surveil and terrorize their victims. In this interactive case study presentation, Matthew Herrick will share his experience as a survivor of tech-facilitated stalking and sexual violence, highlighting the techniques his stalker used to negatively impact his professional, personal, and emotional health and to solicit sexual violence against Matthew from strangers. The presenters will discuss the factors that contributed to a systematic failure to support Matthew during his victimization, while also uplifting the professionals who offered an impactful and positive response.

**An Evolving Legal Landscape: Key Cases Every Gender-Based Violence Program Should Know | Honore Ballroom****Stephanie Holt, Esq., Victim Rights Law Center**

From executive orders to coalition challenges and class action lawsuits, litigation is rapidly shaping the future of survivor-serving programs. This session will review major cases including *Vera v. DOJ*, *Rhode Island Coalition et al. v. Bondi*, *San Francisco AIDS Foundation v. Trump*, *E. Jean Carroll v. Trump*, and *VRLC v. The Department of Education*. Participants will take away practical insights from the evolving legal landscape that directly impact gender-based violence programs.

**2:45 pm – 3:00 pm | Break (snack provided) | Mezzanine Lobby****3:00 pm – 4:15 pm****Leading Through Crisis | Empire Ballroom****Stacy Malone, Esq., Victim Rights Law Center**

Join VRLC Executive Director Stacy Malone who has navigated VRLC through the ever-shifting landscape of nonprofit legal services and the movement to end sexual violence. Whether economic recession, changing priorities and funding requirements passed down by different presidential administrations, disruptive government shutdowns or a global pandemic and resulting shifts in workplace norms, Stacy will share learnings and practical guidance to help attendees develop a framework of how to analyze and respond to crises that supports staff, serves survivors and strengthens organizations.

**Being a Lawyer for Child Survivors: What the Latest Research on Childhood Development Tells Us About Children and Trauma****| Honore Ballroom****Stephanie B. Scalise, Esq., Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence**

Drawing upon recent research in childhood development, neuroscience, parenting practices, therapy, and pediatrics, the presenter will teach a variety of best-practices for lawyers who work with child survivors to minimize the trauma that the justice system can often impose upon the youngest and most vulnerable in our society.

**4:15 pm – 4:20 pm | Break****4:20 pm – 5:00 pm | Closing Keynote by Kristen Gibbons Feden | Empire Ballroom**

Kristen Gibbons Feden is a celebrated sexual abuse litigation leader, long-time advocate for victim rights. A shareholder at Anapol Weiss, Feden gained international recognition as a relentless litigator in the #MeToo Movement. Among many other high-profile and high-yield verdicts, she is known for her world-renowned closing argument in the Bill Cosby trial, and \$10.5M verdict for survivors of entertainer R. Kelly.