

EDITORIAL

Proposal for a National Institute on Sexual Violence

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As editor of the *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation (JTD)*, I read many fascinating submissions. These articles are often inspiring and full of intellectual insights, compassion, creativity, and the promise of a better world. The submissions are just as often sobering in that they reveal a tragic reality of human suffering due to abuse, violence, and other forms of mistreatment underlying suffering. Our field makes a valiant effort to address these issues, but it is clear that the promise of a better world will not be realized without the commitment of additional attention and financial resources. I thus begin this editorial with a proposal for a new federal agency that would address sexual and other gender-based violence as one large component of what underlies much suffering. It is then my privilege to conclude this editorial with some words about the status of *JTD*.

A PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE

In the United States, sexual and other gender-based violence (e.g., rape, child sexual abuse, intimate partner and dating violence) is alarmingly prevalent and enormously costly to victims and to society. Although all individuals may be sexually violated and/or targeted for mistreatment based on their gender or sexual orientation, girls, women, non-heterosexuals, and nonnormatively gendered individuals are at especially high risk for victimization. The consequences of victimization have staggering ethical, health, legal, educational, and economic implications (Post, Mezey, Maxwell, & Wibert, 2002).

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Sexual and other gender-based violence is simultaneously a major public health, criminal, civil rights, and human rights issue. Furthermore, in recent years efforts to address such violence in families, on college campuses, and in the military have revealed the substantial problem of institutional betrayal—institutions can exacerbate the harm of violence by responding poorly to victimization (Smith & Freyd, 2013, 2014). Thus, sexual and gender-based violence is also a systems issue.

Research has revealed that the majority of victims are victimized by someone they know, and frequently the victim depends on the perpetrator to some degree, which greatly increases the harm and the difficulty in ending ongoing abuse (Freyd & Birrell, 2013). Victimization and perpetration often start in childhood. Individuals who are victimized as children are at increased risk for revictimization as young adults and are at increased risk for perpetrating violence.

Federal funding for research on sexual and other gender-based violence has been sparse, and what little exists has been spread across many different agencies (Freyd et al., 2005). Although researchers have uncovered some of the features of sexual and gender-based violence perpetration and victimization, we currently lack fundamental knowledge about the basic problems and mechanisms as well as clarity about effective intervention.

We urgently need substantial federal funding of research on sexual and other gender-based violence. The best way to achieve this is to create a new National Institute on Sexual Violence (NISV) that will be charged with funding innovative and excellent basic and translational research drawing on the best psychological, medical, educational, sociological, ethical, and criminal justice approaches. Because sexual and other gender-based violence cuts across health, criminal, educational, and social issues, NISV needs to be an independent institute modeled on the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Justice. NISV will benefit the United States by generating a body of excellent research that will have a profound positive impact in the short and long run. The formation of NISV will immediately signal the government's commitment to ending sexual violence. The basic and translational research that will be funded will produce prevention and intervention, leading to a very substantial reduction in sexual violence and its costly consequences.

JOURNAL STATUS

JTD has had another banner year. We continue to receive many compelling submissions, and we strive to select and publish the very best of those.

For the fourth year in a row, and with the generous support of our publisher, Taylor & Francis, we were able to give a cash award for a particularly outstanding publication in *JTD*. Bethany Brand again kindly agreed to be the chair of the awards committee that reviewed the nominations for 2014.

The Richard P. Kluft Award for *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation* 2014 Best Article went to Jepsen, Langeland, and Heir (2014) for their innovative article “Early Traumatized Inpatients High in Psychoform and Somatoform Dissociation: Characteristics and Treatment Response.” In addition, the awards committee acknowledged three 2014 papers for Honorable Mention: Carello and Butler (2014), Chapleau and Oswald (2014), and Brand and Loewenstein (2014).

JTD's success would not be possible without the excellent work of the editorial board, associate editors, and ad hoc reviewers; I am enormously appreciative. I welcome Robyn Gobin as an editorial board member for Volume 17 (to be published in 2016) and thank retiring members Jon Allen, Pamela Birrell, Christine Courtois, Matthew Gray, and Daphne Simeon, who have provided years of helpful reviewing. A big thank you to Carly Smith, who served as *JTD* editorial assistant for a number of years and is now on clinical internship. We are in good hands with Marina Rosenthal, who has taken the editorial assistantship helm.

I invite you to send *JTD* your best work; our quality depends on it.

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