



Together, we are  
**The Network.**

South Dakota Network Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault

## 2022 SUMMER NEWSLETTER



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*Working together to promote victims' rights for a safer South Dakota.*

# OVERCOMING THE AFTERMATH OF ABUSE

We wanted to start the newsletter off with a personal story from one of our very own Network staff members, Sara Kindvall. As a survivor of violence and abuse herself, she is living proof that the work we do in South Dakota matters and can be impactful in people's lives. Sara's story of struggle and resilience mirrors many of the stories we hear across the state of victims who experience violence. These personal stories continue to drive the passion for what we do at The Network, promoting a safer South Dakota for all.

## SARA'S STORY

In the more than 5 years since the day that changed everything for me, I have come from a place of fear, shame, guilt, regret, and despair to a space where the light truly does shine. That day I thought I may face death, yet somehow, I made it out alive. Pregnant and bloody, with wounds that left lifelong scars, I survived. While still on the healing journey, I not only have more knowledge around domestic violence and the potential warning signs, I'm also more aware of myself, the way I speak to myself and my self-worth.

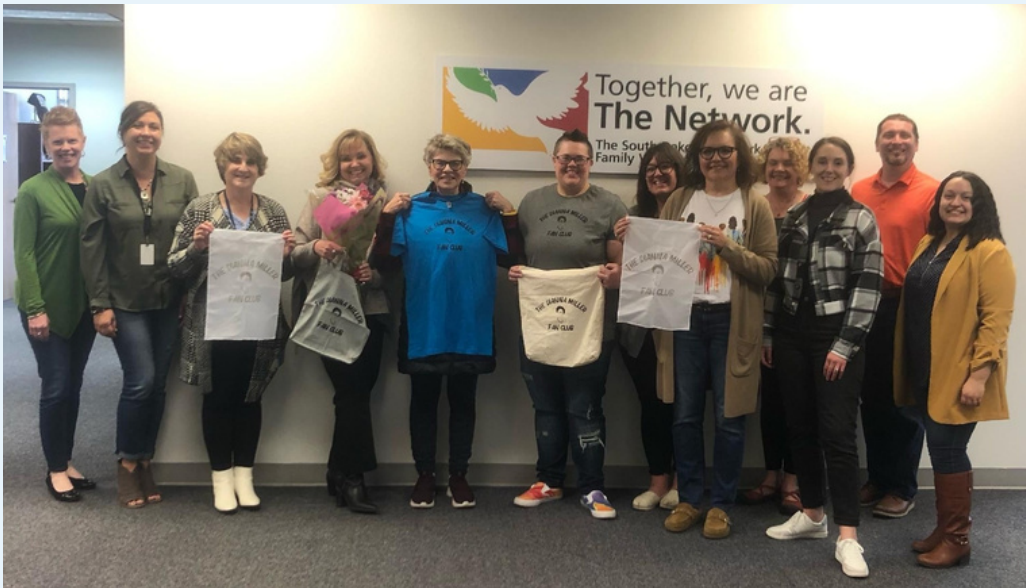
# OVERCOMING THE AFTERMATH OF ABUSE

Over these past several years, I've dealt with many struggles in the aftermath of abuse. Financial, parenting, focus, anxiety, depression, employment, and purpose are the big ones. To combat these, I've been consistent with counseling and coaching while putting in work to heal and grow within myself. This has not been a quick or easy process and although I did not cause the abuse I endured, the healing is MY responsibility. In discovering hidden negative beliefs of myself, with help, I was able to switch the narrative and build upon positive, uplifting thoughts and embrace the new beliefs of me. Self-beliefs, though many in the subconscious, are crucial to uncover because what we believe of ourselves, is often how we allow people to treat us. These beliefs may develop from childhood, from toxic relationships or a lack of understanding of our emotions or healthy relationships as well as being shaped by outside circumstances. These beliefs are not our fault.

Today, and most days, when I'm taking time for myself, my ongoing growth (because honestly, I don't plan on stopping) and listening to my intuition, I have a much greater sense of self-worth and confidence and am ready to take on life while loving who I'm becoming. Without this I'm unable to pour into others without leaving myself depleted. I have realized my great passion and purpose in guiding others to discover their truest and most confident selves, regardless of the cards life has dealt them. While the physical scars remain, the emotional scars are deep but with healing they are lessened and allow the light to shine in.

# A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On behalf of the Network staff, I want to send a huge thank you to Dianna Miller and Jennifer Stalley for their diligent work within the legislative process to secure one-time funding for victim services in SD. We also appreciate the work of the SD Department of Public Safety Victim Services and their ongoing efforts to ensure that victims of violence and their families have services throughout SD.



One of our staff members, Jordan Catlett, made a custom Dianna Miller fan club graphic t-shirt and bag to show our appreciation. If you would like to order any fan club items, please contact [jordan@sdnafvsa.com](mailto:jordan@sdnafvsa.com).

The Network is strong due to our incredible membership, including our executive committee members who volunteer their time to support the staff and the agency. We have many challenges ahead of us. Unfortunately, violent crimes continue to increase in SD. Let's continue to work together, to welcome others to join us, and strive to find solutions to very difficult problems.



# A STATEMENT ON ROE V. WADE

On behalf of the SD Network Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault, we are surprised and shocked about the recent Roe v. Wade decision by our United States Supreme Court.

As we consider the possible ramifications for our South Dakota women and specifically rape victims, we will be researching our state statistics and other data, holding focus groups with our members and other providers, and ensuring the best possible response for all victims in South Dakota. We welcome the feedback and opportunity to share the words of South Dakota sexual assault providers and others as they anticipate the impact on our work and the women in our state.

This is not a political statement, but a realization of our current situation in our country and how this decision will impact rape victims, poor women, and many other disenfranchised groups, and all of us. You will be receiving information in the upcoming weeks to invite you to participate with our focus groups and other discussions to determine how this decision will impact all victims of violence and their families in South Dakota.

# MEET THE NEW NETWORK STAFF

## **ERIC LINGEN**

### **GRANTS COMPLIANCE SUPERVISOR**

Eric has been with The Network since December. Currently, Eric is the first set of eyes on the processing of vouchers for reimbursement and audit preparation.

Before joining The Network, he spent the last 15+ years working in retail. Eric and his wife enjoy daily adventures at home with their 4 kids, labradoodle, cat, and hedgehog...he says their house is basically a zoo.

## **CHRISTY VANDEWETERING**

### **DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION**

Christy joined the Network in January of 2022. Prior to the Network, she was the Executive Director of the Domestic Violence Network in Madison, SD for 9 years and the Administrative Director at the Wholeness Center in Flandreau, SD for 7 years.

Christy spent her childhood on a farm outside Roswell, SD and attended school in Howard. After high school, she attended SDSU before transferring to the University of Nebraska, where Christy earned a B.S. in Psychology, a M.A. and Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology while working at Boys and Girls Town.

# MEET THE NEW NETWORK STAFF

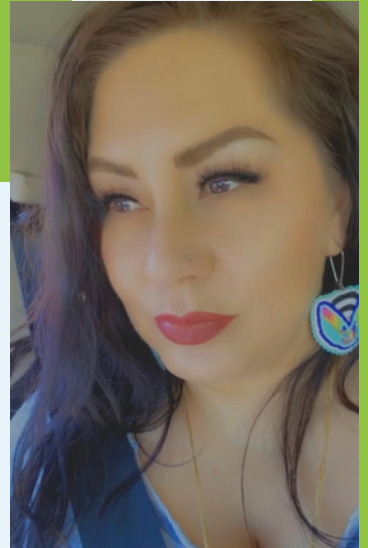
## CHRISTY VANDEWETERING CONTINUED

At the Network, Christy provides technical assistance and training for victim service agencies regarding Mavis, DPS grants, and other related topics such as policy, procedures, and fundraising. In addition, she is exploring how to update and maintain the Network job descriptions, training manuals, policies, and procedures and then writing and assisting with technical writing assignments. Lastly, Christy is completing a needs assessment with victim services providers and collaborative agencies to identify statewide strengths and gaps of services in the state and develop a strategic plan to build on the strengths and fill the gaps.

In her free time, Christy loves to spend time with her husband, Steve, and 3 children, Lyndsey, Nick, and Tim (a teacher, and 2 college kids), gardening, bike riding, watching movies and traveling.

# MEET THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## LINDSEY COMPTON WHITE BUFFALO CALF WOMEN'S SOCIETY



Lindsey is entering her 4th year in her role as Executive Director at White Buffalo Calf Woman's Society, Inc. (WBCWS). Lindsey believes in shared leadership, balancing compassion with accountability, seeking balance in traditional forms of governance while working towards expertise in modern systems.

In her role at WBCWS, she looks towards kinship systems, and how this is developed and revitalized in our contemporary work, while also acknowledging formal roles and responsibilities.

Lindsey attended Sinte Gleska University, Oglala Lakota College, Santa Fe Community College, and Institute of American Indian Arts for her undergrad studies, then attending University of Minnesota for her Graduate Studies.

Lindsey is a mother to two sons, her interests are creative arts of all mediums, writing on contemporary indigenous issues, and working on her homestead in South Dakota.



# MEET THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## **AYESHA MEER** **ARTEMIS HOUSE**

Ayesha is the Executive Director of Victims of Violence Intervention Program, and Artemis House Shelter, which serves Butte, Harding and Lawrence Counties.



Originally from South Africa, Ayesha moved to Spearfish in 2019. She holds a Master's in Public Administration from New York University, which she completed on a Fulbright grant. Ayesha has a wide range of experience in the non-profit sector, particularly in gender justice, racial equity and education policy.

In her free time Ayesha is an avid knitter and bread baker. She loves being a part of an organization which is truly member-led.

Through the Network Ayesha has not only been able to grow and develop her own leadership skills, but she's had the opportunity to share some of her interest in furthering racial justice and equity within organizations.

# MEET THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## LINDA SHROLL WORKING AGAINST VIOLENCE, INC.



Linda is the Executive Director at Working Against Violence, Inc. (WAVI), located in Rapid City, South Dakota. She identified her strengths as being creative, collaborative, and kind, with her weaknesses being sitting still and the ability to have a poker face. Linda has a deep passion for people and animals and loves hiking and sunshine.

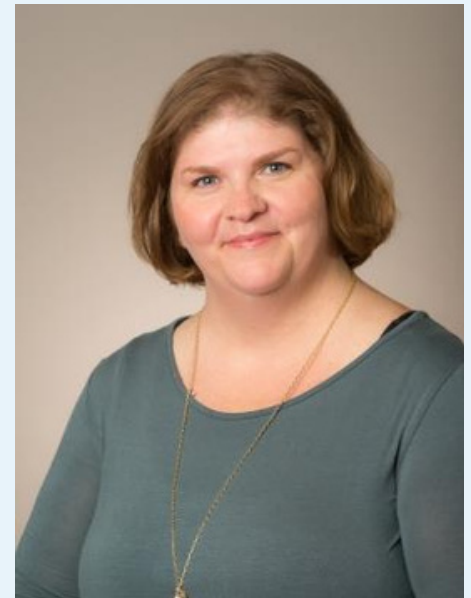
Her favorite part about being part of The Network is she has a built-in support system with tons of friendly mentors, access to tons of training, opportunities to grow, laugh, learn and change, state and national representation, and the contacts that are truly valuable in all areas of her work.

The Network provides a level of support and expertise that Linda hasn't found anywhere else. She's so honored to be a part of such an amazing group of people.

# MEET THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## **TIFANIE PETRO** **CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY**

Tifanie Petro, MS, serves as the Director of Advocacy and Prevention, overseeing the Children's Home Child Advocacy Center and multiple statewide awareness and education campaigns.



In addition to overseeing collaborative investigations of child abuse cases; Tifanie provides forensic interviews for local, state, federal, and tribal jurisdictions, court room testimony, and comprehensive trainings rooted in understanding trauma and recognizing and responding to child abuse. Tifanie believes that by empowering children we can create resilient families and communities.

Tifanie received her BS degree in Psychology from Black Hills State University, her MS in Public Health from Capella University, Minnesota and her MS in Human Services from Capella University, Minnesota.

# MEET THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## **NORMA RENDON**

### **WICANYUONIHAN OYANKE**

#### **(WHERE ALL WOMEN ARE HONORED)**

Norma Rendon has been an advocate for ending violence against Indigenous Women for over thirty years. She has vast experience with grass roots organizing in Indigenous Communities. She is currently operating a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and Founder of Where All Women Are Honored – Winyan Wicayuonihan Oyanke. Where All Women Are Honored, provides shelter and advocacy for the LGBTQ+ community, victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, teen dating violence and sex trafficking by providing; culturally relevant programs and community outreach which will contribute to social change through intervention, prevention, education and community awareness.

Philosophy – Winyan Wicayuonihan Oyanke is a healing center that provides more than just shelter! We provide culturally based advocacy and resources for our women and their children, utilizing trauma informed care for all victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Teen Dating Violence and Human Trafficking.

Norma is currently running for House Representative District 27!



# MEET THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## **DAWN SIKKINK** **THE BEACON CENTER**

Dawn has been the Executive Director of the Beacon Center since 2011. She has an undergraduate degree in Sociology from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and a graduate degree in Counseling and Psychology from University of West Alabama.



Dawn started off her career and spent 9 years in the United States Air Force as a Paralegal and Supply Technician. After spending most of her childhood in Illinois, Dawn moved to Sioux Falls in 2004 and then Castlewood in 2006, where she still resides with her husband, Todd Sikkink.

Todd is a Federal Agent for the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, Office of Inspector General, and the United States Department of Defense.

Dawn and Todd have three beautiful children, Paige (30), Logan (21), and Dorian (19), along with four grandchildren, Araylia (7), Gabe (5), Tytus (3), and Pyria (2).



# MEET THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## **MICHELLE TRENT** **THE COMPASS CENTER**



Michelle Trent joined the Compass Center in January 2014 as a Counselor/Advocate. She added the title of Clinical Director in 2018, and was named Executive Director in 2020.

She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and a Master of Science degree in Counseling from South Dakota State University. Michelle serves as an individual counselor as well as an advocate on the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). Michelle heads the educational efforts of the agency and recently developed "It's Our Business," a free training available to local businesses.

Her past experience includes working with families and children in home-based counseling, providing case management to children with developmental disabilities and their families and providing case management to adults with severe and persistent mental illness.

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# LEGISLATIVE SESSION RECAP

South Dakota Legislature has made the exciting decision to pass House Bill 1272 during this year's legislative session which will require offenders convicted of domestic abuse to complete domestic violence counseling as part of the defendant's probation or parole terms. The therapy aims to address issues of power and control, accountability, emotional regulation, and uses cognitive work to address unhealthy thought patterns. This type of prevention and intervention is crucial in our efforts to eliminate intimate partner and family violence within our communities.

The Unified Judicial System has asked The Network to assist in the preparation and implementation of the HB 1272 program for South Dakota. As such, we are in the process of creating a database of current domestic abuse counseling providers as well as those interested in providing these services. The Network will also offer training opportunities specific to providing domestic violence counseling.

We would like to express our appreciation to Representative Reimer for her willingness to sponsor and support HB 1272. Thank you, Representative Reimer, and all the other advocates who helped this bill become a reality!



*Pictured above from left to right: Tanya Grassel-Krietlow, April LeBeau, and Representative Rebecca Reimer*

# 2022 SEXUAL VIOLENCE INSTITUTE RECAP

We wanted to take a moment to reflect on the success of the Sexual Violence Institute in April 2022. With over 155 in attendance from multiple disciplines, attendees took part in a two-day conference and learned from experts in the field of domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, exploitation, and child abuse.

Keynote and breakout sessions covered topics including online and offline human trafficking, exploring crimes against children, victim advocacy and trauma-informed care in the forensic exam process, stranger sexual assault and genealogy, jurisdictional issues when working with victims of violent crimes, witness intimidation, and expert testimony.

The conference also had a large focus on self-care, with multiple breakout sessions, a variety of self-care activities at tables, and a hospitality room available for any attendees to use throughout the day.



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# 2022 VISIONARY VOICE AWARD

At the Sexual Violence Institute in April, we had the pleasure of awarding the 2022 Visionary Voice Award. In partnership with The Network, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) offers the Visionary Voice Awards, in conjunction with Sexual Assault Awareness Month each April, to recognize the creativity and hard work of individuals around the country who have demonstrated outstanding work to end sexual violence.

Each year, state, territory, and tribal coalitions select an outstanding individual to nominate for the awards. Nominees may be partners from a local community or other outstanding individuals that have worked to end sexual violence.



This year's award went to [Ramona \(Mona\) Herrington](#).

Ramona is a cultural outreach manager at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln based in Rapid City, South Dakota. Mona has led multiple projects focused on reducing sexual and related forms of violence among Native Americans in Rapid City and on nearby Indian Reservations.

# 2022 VISIONARY VOICE AWARD

Mona has a deep commitment to and passion for improving the lives of Native Americans. Mona is one of the most respected community leaders in Rapid City. She has led numerous projects in the community that focus on critical public health issues that disproportionately impact Native Americans such as preventing sexual violence and adverse childhood experiences, reducing homelessness and food insecurity, providing COVID-19 relief, and supporting women's reintegration into the community following incarceration.

Mona exemplifies a commitment to her Lakota values, especially compassion, generosity, and fortitude. Mona is patient and tireless in her advocacy for her community. Her caring attitude and her ability to meet youth, families, and community partners where they are fosters respect and builds strong lasting relationships. Beyond her local impact, Mona's work has received national attention. For example, Mona has co-authored eight peer-reviewed journal articles that focus on reducing sexual violence and other health disparities among Native Americans.

Mona is an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, a veteran of the U.S. Army and Navy, and co-founder of the nonprofit One Rapid City. Mona is mother to four children, grandmother to 12 grandchildren, and relative to many others in the community for whom she serves through tireless volunteer work and advocacy.



# 2022 SD SEXUAL ASSAULT WHITE PAPER

For the past few decades, The Network has responded to the needs of the state in relation to sexual assault. Through this work, The Network is either spearheading, or is closely connected to, most efforts to respond and prevent sexual violence across the state. In this time, most of the efforts created have been in response to issues that have arisen, rather than as a planned and systematic response. The Network is taking this opportunity to reflect on the work currently being done, identify gaps, and utilize this information to systematically plan a statewide response to sexual violence. The recently published sexual assault white paper is the first step in this direction.

This document was released in 2022 and focuses specifically on The Network's efforts to address sexual violence across South Dakota. The Network contracted with the Center for Rural Health Improvement (CRHI) in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine (USD) for this report.

This report was completed by Bridget Diamond-Welch, Ph.D. Diamond-Welch is an Associate Professor of Family Medicine and Associate Director of CRHI overseeing the team's research & evaluation portfolio. Diamond-Welch has over a decade of experience with research, data management, and analysis. Her research specialization is in interpersonal violence with a focus on sexualized victimization. Diamond-Welch's efforts were assisted by Network staff and interns.



# 2022 SART TOOLKIT

Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) have been present in communities in South Dakota for over two decades. These teams continue to evolve and improve to enhance victim safety and the response to sexual assault. Currently, more than a dozen communities across the state have formalized SARTs with a variety of structures, formats and partners involved, including local partners, tribal entities, state, and federal agencies, and more. Teams across South Dakota continue work to make SARTs a part of their efforts to improve offender accountability and victim safety.

This toolkit is meant to assist teams as they navigate the work of creating best practices and protocols for responding to sexual assault locally. Every community in South Dakota is unique, with different strengths and challenges. We hope this guide will help you to build and grow your team to meet the needs of your specific community.

Support for this document was provided by the South Dakota Statewide Sexual Assault Task Force (SDSATF) (Jen Canton, Angela Lisburg, Cam Corey, Krista Heeren-Graber, Becki Jordan, and Cindy Schmit). Special thanks to following, including current and former South Dakota Network Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault staff and interns; Olivia Boese, Megan Gayer, Raina Boyum, and Becki Jordan.



# BASIC SD VICTIM ASSISTANCE ACADEMY

Thank you to the 24 professionals that attended the weeklong Basic South Dakota Victim Assistance Academy the beginning of June in Watertown! This training equipped professionals in the field with best practices of working with victims of crime.



Training topics included communication with victims and survivors, sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking and technology safety, working in multiple jurisdiction areas, developing resilience, working with Native American victims, safety planning, working with victims with disabilities, crimes against the elderly and child victims, human trafficking, resources available to victims in South Dakota, and 211.

# UPCOMING TRAININGS AND EVENTS

## 2022 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INSTITUTE

The Annual Network Membership meeting and Domestic Violence Institute will be taking place this September in downtown Sioux Falls. Details are included below.



Hilton Garden Inn  
201 E 8th St  
Sioux Falls, SD

### MEMBERSHIP MEETING

September 7th, 2022

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INSTITUTE

September 8th, 2022  
8:15 am - 5 pm CST

## REGISTRATION

Domestic Violence Institute registration is available now through August 18th. Please register by scanning the QR code or visiting Coalition Manager.



## LODGING

Rooms will be available to reserve at the Hilton Garden Inn through August 8th. Reservations can be made by calling 605-444-4704 and asking for the "SD Networking" block.