Mission
The mission of the NIU Center for the Study of Family Violence and Sexual Assault is to promote research that informs prevention, intervention, and treatment related to violence, aggression, and trauma.

Toward this end, the center’s faculty and staff are devoted to conducting research designed to advance our understanding of the causes and consequences associated with various forms of interpersonal violence, including child maltreatment, intimate partner violence, and sexual assault.

In addition to conducting research, the center’s faculty and staff are committed to providing high quality professional education and consultation. Their numerous contributions to the field have been recognized locally, nationally, and internationally.

Research
Each year, the center’s faculty and associates receive over $1 million in external support for its various research programs. Fund sources have included agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Defense, and the Illinois Department of Human Services.

The center hosts a vibrant research community. To facilitate interdisciplinary approaches to research topics, the center holds semimonthly brownbag lunch meetings. Presenters include colleagues from various departments within NIU and the northern Illinois region, as well as scholars from the national and international research community.

Training Opportunities
Depending on interest and availability, graduate students have the opportunity to become members of the center’s multidisciplinary research teams.

In addition, there are often funded assistantship positions available on various grant-funded projects at the center. Currently, the center supports two graduate fellowship positions. The fellowship is targeted toward graduate students interested in developing research skills germane to the study of family violence, sexual assault, trauma, and related topics.

Information about admission to graduate study in clinical psychology is located at www.niu.edu/psych/graduate/clinical.

Facilities
The center is housed in a 21,000-sq.-ft. building that boasts training and conference facilities, two sound attenuated psychophysiology chambers, and ample office, research suites, and equipment to support a variety of research programs. Faculty associates and students are allotted space and equipment as needed to support their research interests.
Faculty and Associates*

Kathryn M. Bell
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology (Clinical)
Ph.D., Western Michigan University, 2006
E-mail: kbell9@niu.edu
Homepage: www.niu.edu/psyc/faculty/bell.shtml
• Examination of risk factors associated with interpersonal trauma
• Exploration of substance use, emotion regulation/recognition skills, and PTSD as they relate to risk for interpersonal violence victimization and perpetration

Julie Crouch, Director
Ph.D., Northern Illinois University, 1995
E-mail: jrcrouch@niu.edu
• Exploration of the causes and consequences of child physical abuse and intimate partner violence
• Application of social cognitive paradigms as a means of understanding why some parents physically abuse their children

Michelle M. Lilly
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology (Clinical)
Ph.D., University of Michigan, 2008
E-mail: mlllyl1@niu.edu
Homepage: www.niu.edu/TMHRlab
• Exploration of mental health outcomes following interpersonal trauma
• Examination of research on how world views, attachment and coping styles affect outcome following trauma

M. Christine Lovejoy
Associate Professor, Department of Psychology
Ph.D., University of Iowa, 1986
E-mail: mlovejoy@niu.edu
• Effects of parental psychopathology and stress on parent–child interactions and adult perceptions of child behavior
• Social information processing as it affects outcome following trauma

Thomas McCanne
Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology (Clinical)
Ph.D., Ohio State University, 1974
E-mail: tmccanne@niu.edu
• Exploration of psychophysiological reactivity, physiological response of child abusers, psychological problems in victims of abuse
• Applying event-related potential methodologies to the study of parental aggression

Joel S. Milner
Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology (Clinical)
Ph.D., Oklahoma State University, 1970
E-mail: jmilner@niu.edu
• Description and assessment of child physical and child sexual abusers, and the testing of various components of a social information processing model of child physical abuse
• Execution of a multiple-year randomized clinical trial of a new intervention for preventing child physical abuse

Holly K. Orcutt, Associate Director
Ph.D., SUNY at Buffalo, 1998
E-mail: horcutt@niu.edu
Homepage: www.niu.edu/~horcutt/
• Identification of risk factors that operate to increase individual vulnerability to PTSD following exposure to traumatic events
• Factors that mediate the link between trauma exposure and increased risk for subsequent trauma exposure

Mandy M. Rabenhorst
Research Associate/Coordinator of the Psychophysiology and EEG Laboratories
Ph.D., Northern Illinois University, 2005
E-mail: mrabenho@niu.edu
• Psychophysiology and interpersonal trauma, particularly sexual assault
• Exploration of the relationships between arousal and various risk factors for and consequences of trauma

Alan Rosenbaum
Professor, Department of Psychology (Clinical)
Ph.D., SUNY at Stony Brook, 1979
E-mail: arosenbaum@niu.edu
• Expansion of the understanding of and treatment related to intimate partner violence
• Examination of the etiology of relationship aggression with an emphasis on biological and developmental factors

John J. Skowronski
Presidential Research Professor, Department of Psychology (Social)
Ph.D., University of Iowa, 1984
E-mail: jskowron@niu.edu
• Application of various social cognitive paradigms to the study of parents at risk for child physical abuse

Gregory A. Waas
Associate Professor, Chair of Department of Psychology (School)
Ph.D., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1986
E-mail: gwaas@niu.edu
Homepage: www.niu.edu/~gwaas
• Exploration of children’s peer relationships and applied social cognition
• Children’s perceptions of how peers attempt to cope with bullying behaviors

* Please see www.niu.edu/fvsa/people for a full list of current faculty and associates.

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Front row L to R, Joel Milner, Julie Crouch, Holly Orcutt. Back row L to R, Kathryn Bell, Michelle Lilly, Cindy Thomas, Alan Rosenbaum, Mandy Rabenhorst.