

Seminar focuses on technology used to bully



The 10th Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council offered a special seminar on the use of technology to Bully and Stalk particularly as it relates to young people.

Michelle Garcia is the Executive Director of the National Center for Victims of Crime. She says often the behavior associated with stalking and bullying are not recognized.

"Things like texting someone, calling someone repeatedly, spreading rumors, emailing, posting on someone's social media; individually those are not criminal behaviors and individually we all probably engage in those behaviors, sometimes daily. But it's when they become part of a course of conduct or pattern of behavior, that's when we can begin to look at them as stalking."

"We often want to say, 'where is the line?' But we really can't because the behaviors themselves are not necessarily what we have to focus on, but the context in which those behaviors are occurring. I might text you multiple times a day and that would be fine however if those messages contain threats or if they are part of a larger pattern of abuse then that's a different story."

Garcia says often cases of bullying include stalking behaviors but not always. About 70 people participated in the training, including educators, social workers, probation and police officers.