**Supportive Handoff Guidelines**

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| **Definition** |
| A supportive handoff is the transfer of information and responsibility during transitions in service provision. |
| **Accountable Service Provision** |
| Supportive handoffs support victims’ needs that extend beyond individual professional roles.  Consistent completion of supportive handoffs can—   * Reduce breakdowns in communication * Decrease victims’ burden to independently seek information and services from multiple professionals * Increase victims’ understanding of next steps and professionals responsible for actions and assistance * Support victim-centered, trauma-informed work by providing personal connections that can address access barriers (e.g., physical, language, cultural) * Support ethical and equitable services to victims |
| **Process** |
| *Referrals* |
| Supportive handoffs can occur when—   * Victims are referred to your agency or services by another professional. * You are referring victims to agencies or services of other professionals. |
| *Communication Methods* |
| Supportive handoffs occur in the presence of the victim and can occur through in-person meetings, conference calls, or virtual platforms.  Including the victim and all providers ensures that everyone participating can hear what is being said and engage in communication to understand the next steps in service provision. |
| *Release of Information* |
| Supportive handoffs require an exchange of information to support ongoing service provision. This may include specific information related to criminal cases, past services received by victims, and victims’ current circumstances (e.g., financial status, health history).  Ensure use of signed release of information documents when required by statute and policy. |
| *Information Exchange Format* |
| Use of a consistent communication structure can bridge gaps in communication styles between agencies and victims. When conducting a supportive handoff, use the following format to transfer information:   * Situation – describe current circumstances prompting the transition in services * Background – provide relevant information for a full understanding of victims’ needs * Plan – describe actions and who is responsible   Provide multiple opportunities for all parties to ask questions, clarify information, and confirm understanding of future services and options. |
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**Helpful Tips**