

**VOLUME**  
**4**



Office for Victims of Crime  
**OVC**  
Training Institute

**International Association  
of Chiefs of Police (IACP)**



**Enhancing Law Enforcement  
Response to Victims:**

**TRAINING  
SUPPLEMENTAL** ◀

## VOLUME 4: TRAINING SUPPLEMENTAL

- » **Preface**
- » **Snapshot: A 21st Century Strategy for Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims (Volume 1)**
- » **Snapshot: Implementation Guide (Volume 2)**
- » **Core Curriculum**
- » **Agency-Wide Personnel Training on Victim Issues**
- » **Field Training Program Victim-Focused Enhancements**
- » **Recruit Training Enhancements:**
  - » **Crime Prevention**
  - » **Crisis Intervention**
  - » **Ethics**
  - » **Police-Citizen Relations**
  - » **Problem-Oriented Policing**
  - » **Service Calls**
- » **Other Ways of Applying Content Provided in the Supplemental**
- » **References**
- » **Handout**
- » **Acknowledgements**

This publication was produced by the International Association of Chiefs of Police under grant number 2003-VF-GX-K004, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

# PREFACE



**Increased Case Clearance Rates**

**Decrease in Crime**

**Improved Efficiency**

**Heightened Job Satisfaction**

Law enforcement personnel have vital roles to play in responding to and supporting victims of crime. Crime victims are key stakeholders in problem-oriented policing since they hold unique perspectives, valuable insights, active interest in the problem, and strong feelings about criminal behavior. Responding effectively and appropriately to all victims is not only the right thing to do for victims, their families and communities, but it is also in law enforcement's best interest. It contributes to:

- **Increased Case Clearance Rates.** Victims who are treated with sensitivity and respect are more likely to participate in the investigation of crimes and are more willing to report future crimes. This support can increase the likelihood that offenders are arrested and successfully prosecuted.
- **Decrease in Crime.** When victims are treated with empathy and respect, they are more receptive to receiving crime prevention tips that may minimize their potential risk of re-victimization.
- **Improved Efficiency.** One component of providing an enhanced response to victims is establishing more effective collaboration between law enforcement and victim service providers and advocates. These partnerships can increase victims' access to support and compensation, thereby freeing officers to focus on investigating crimes.
- **Heightened Job Satisfaction.** By building relationships with the community, a law enforcement agency can improve its reputation with stakeholders, thus heightening job satisfaction.

Enhancing victim response requires modifying some of the values, behaviors, and protocols at the core of law enforcement agencies. Training is required to institute and sustain this change. Although the critical needs of victims remain constant, the ways in which law enforcement can effectively respond will vary as technology, crime analysis, investigation techniques, and resources evolve. Hence, ongoing training must be provided at all career stages and levels, from recruit to executive.

The purpose of this *Training Supplemental* is to present law enforcement agencies with content that can be customized to provide every agency employee with specific knowledge, skills, abilities, and tools to better respond to victims of crime. The publication contains a Core Curriculum and presents training outlines for the following levels of personnel: agency-wide, Field Training Officer (FTO), and recruit.

Recognizing that fiscal concerns often impact an agency's capacity to provide adequate training, the *Supplemental* was not developed as a stand-alone course requiring additional resources and time. Instead, it outlines victim response enhancements that can be integrated into all existing basic and advanced law enforcement curricula and utilized with a minimum investment.

The *Training Supplemental* is the fourth Volume of the [Strategy Package](#) and incorporates concepts from volumes 1 and 2, the *Strategy* and the *Implementation Guide*. Snapshots of these foundational documents are in the two following sections.



# SNAPSHOT: A 21ST CENTURY STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TO VICTIMS



Criminal victimization affects over 20 million people in the United States every year.<sup>1</sup> Despite significant progress in establishing federal and state legislation that defines the rights and redress for crime victims, only a small percentage of victims obtain the services and information they are entitled to receive. As a result, the critical needs of crime victims are often unmet by the criminal justice system which historically is focused on the goals of apprehension, prosecution, adjudication, punishment, and reformation of offenders. Law enforcement agencies over the last decade have come to understand and recognize that successful achievement of their mission now requires an increased attention to the needs of victims of crimes.

The overall goal of the *Strategy for Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims* is to create a philosophical shift that allows for the identification of and response to victim needs as a priority throughout all areas and functions of any law enforcement agency. In a concise format, the *Strategy* introduces federal, state, local, campus, and tribal law enforcement leaders to the concepts and benefits of enhancing their response to victims of all crimes. It discusses the evolution of enhanced victim response; highlights multiple benefits of implementing the *Strategy*; identifies possible internal, external, and resource challenges; and provides ways to overcome these challenges. The document outlines seven critical needs of victims that law enforcement agencies must address and identifies four principles essential to enhancing law enforcement's response to crime victims:

- **Leadership.** Law enforcement leaders must convey the benefits of enhanced victim response to all staff; develop and sustain an agency infrastructure that reinforces enhanced victim response as a priority; and foster ongoing communication and partnerships with community stakeholders.
- **Partnering.** By partnering with victim service providers, victim advocates, human service agencies, and community-based organizations, law enforcement agencies can maximize their capacity to better meet victims' needs.
- **Training.** All law enforcement personnel play a role in enhancing victim response. Therefore, ongoing training that provides victim response skills, knowledge, and tools must be required at all career stages and levels.
- **Performance monitoring.** Law enforcement agencies aiming to enhance their victim response should document baseline information about the quality of their current victim response. Then the agency will be able to analyze the baseline data, develop relevant strategies, and develop performance measures to assess their progress toward their enhanced victim response goals.

Utilizing these key principles, the *Strategy* systematically illustrates how every level of a law enforcement agency, from recruits to executives, can maximize its agency's ability to effectively respond to victims. The *Strategy* acknowledges that meeting the full spectrum of victims' needs requires the collaboration of many stakeholders and emphasizes the importance of establishing and maintaining strong community partnerships.

More information regarding the implementation of the *Strategy* is provided in the following section: Snapshot: *Implementation Guide*.

<sup>1</sup> Ann L. Pastore and Kathleen Maguire, eds., *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics*, Available Online:

<http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/pdf/t322007.pdf> (accessed July 13, 2009): (Table 3.2.2007).

# SNAPSHOT: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



The *Implementation Guide* is the second volume of the *Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims: Strategy Package*. It operationally serves as the bridge between the concepts outlined in Volume 1 (*Strategy*) and the templates provided in Volume 3 (*Resource Toolkit*). The *Implementation Guide* is broad enough for a wide variety of law enforcement agencies, yet specific enough to guide agencies step-by-step toward enhancing victim response. It details lessons learned and methods developed through the efforts of the personnel at the field-testing sites and their partners. The *Implementation Guide* consists of four sections: Starting, Charting, Implementing, and Sustaining and Expanding. Recognizing that every law enforcement agency can fine-tune its victim response, policies, and practices, each section outlines customizable steps to implement an enhanced response to victims of crime.

**Starting** - This section of the *Implementation Guide* outlines the first steps necessary to implement an enhanced response to victims. This includes creating an infrastructure to manage the initiative and laying the groundwork to achieve success. To create this infrastructure, the assignment of an executive sponsor is critical. This person, designated by the law enforcement agency's chief executive, should be a member of senior leadership and will serve as the agency point-of-contact to maintain executive presence and facilitate agency buy-in. The next step is to establish a leadership team: a core group of individuals to direct victim response efforts. This section provides guidance on the optimal composition of the leadership team and how it can be divided into subcommittees reflecting the core elements of the *Strategy*: leadership, partnership, training, and performance monitoring. In addition, this section describes how to establish goals, identify budgetary needs, and measure progress.

**Charting** - This section provides guidance on documenting a law enforcement agency's current status, or baseline level, of victim response. It outlines steps for engaging internal and external stakeholder groups in data gathering efforts to determine the agency's current victim response level. This data will enable the law enforcement agency to establish goals, conduct "before and after" comparisons, and help assess whether the agency is progressing toward its enhanced victim response goals.

**Implementing** - After charting gaps in victim response, the next step is to develop an action plan that incorporates strategies and actions best suited to the law enforcement agency. This section will help foster internal and external buy-in. It is a step-by-step plan to help law enforcement agencies develop, prioritize, and implement an action plan that will accomplish enhanced victim response goals. The Implementing section instructs law enforcement agencies on how to add external partners (identified in the Charting section) to the leadership team. This expanded team will become the steering committee to drive the implementation plan.

**Sustaining and Expanding** - Enhancing victim response is not a one-time project, but a continuous cycle of evaluating baseline data, goals, and the implementation plan. The baseline that was documented in the Charting stage can be used to monitor victim response progress. This section focuses on celebrating successes and implementing course corrections, all with the goal of creating sustainable enhancements to victim response.

Now that the foundation for the *Training Supplemental* has been established, the sections that follow present victim-focused training enhancements for all levels of a law enforcement agency.

# CORE CURRICULUM



As first responders to a vast array of human events, law enforcement officers are the gateway to safety, support, information, and justice for victims of crime. This section of the *Training Supplemental* presents general victim-focused information, concepts, principles, and approaches that can be applied to training all levels of personnel in a law enforcement agency. In order to adequately meet the needs of victims, it is important to *understand these needs and key elements of a successful victim response*.

The Core Curriculum can be utilized in its entirety and/or segmented into mini-training sessions for specific personnel and discussed in a variety of formats and environments.

## Understanding Victim Needs

The interdependence of crime victims and law enforcement is one of the most important relationships in the functioning of the criminal justice system. To facilitate this relationship, it is necessary for law enforcement to have an accurate understanding of victims. In 1999, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) held a National Policy Summit on victims of crime to determine the needs of victims. Based on input from victims, victim advocates and service providers, law enforcement, prosecutors, health and mental health professionals, researchers, and school officials, a list of the following seven critical needs of victims was developed:

1. Safety
2. Support
3. Information
4. Access
5. Continuity
6. Voice
7. Justice

## Key Elements of a Successful Victim Response

### Effective Communication

Effective communication skills are essential for establishing a positive and professional relationship with victims. Law enforcement officers must remain cognizant that voice quality and tone, as well as non-verbal communication (facial expressions, gestures, body motions, and posture), convey intended or unintended messages during a conversation.

### Empathy

Officers must balance professional investigatory conduct with an honest effort to empathize with the victim. Taking the time to listen to the victim, ensuring that support services are notified promptly, and recognizing the



victim's need for safety, information, and voice are appropriate means of projecting an empathetic and caring position. As a general rule, officers should put themselves or a family member in the victim's situation. Understanding the victim's feelings and reacting in a supportive way can build rapport and trust with the victim, gain information that can assist the investigation, and demonstrate true professionalism.

### **Professionalism and Integrity**

Crime victims have experienced a traumatic incident that shatters their perception of personal safety, challenges their positive views of society, elicits feelings of mistrust and fear, and causes them to question many previously held beliefs. Crime victims are seeking to reestablish their sense of stability and personal safety. Law enforcement officers can contribute to this process by building a reputation of professionalism and integrity. A professional reputation is the foundation of a productive relationship between the officer and the victim.

Crime victims need to be able to feel confident that law enforcement officers advocate for their interests, provide a measure of safety, actively investigate crime, and assist in their access to needed services. Victims need to believe that the criminal justice system is competent and will strive to hold the offender accountable.

### **Honesty and Confidentiality**

Victims must trust that the behavior of the officer and organization are beyond reproach. Honesty and confidentiality are critical traits that crime victims seek in law enforcement officers. Crime victims fear that their personal reputations and professional relationships can be damaged if their victim status becomes public knowledge. Therefore, officers should attempt to protect the privacy of the victim when possible and always provide clear expectations to the victim as to the agency's ability to control information.

### **Knowledge of Available Resources and Services**

Law enforcement officers should provide timely and accurate referrals to appropriate victim services, advocacy, and counseling. They should demonstrate familiarity with local, state, and national resources to match victim needs. In addition, law enforcement officers should ensure that victims receive consistent information and continuity of services from initial response through the investigation and judicial processes. Additionally, officers must be familiar with state law and local ordinances regarding victim rights and be well-versed on their agency's policies regarding victim response. Developing positive professional relationships with the broad variety of victim and social service providers will give officers resources that, once accessed, can assist them in fully addressing victim needs.

### **Responsiveness**

Law enforcement response to victims should provide immediate attention and effective resolution. Officers should supply information relative to the status of the victim's case, explain how the criminal justice system operates, and notify the victims of their rights and availability of restitution or compensation.

Providing professional and effective support to victims of crime requires a systemic effort from all components within a law enforcement agency. The following sections of the *Training Supplemental* are the Agency-Wide, FTO, and Recruit segments that each present specific training enhancements for your law enforcement agency.

# AGENCY-WIDE PERSONNEL TRAINING ON VICTIM ISSUES



Victims struggle with varying degrees of physical and psychological trauma. The emotional devastation and disruption to their lives as a result of criminal victimization is compounded when the criminal justice system fails to respond adequately to their needs. This section of the *Training Supplemental* is specifically designed to ensure that employees throughout every level of a law enforcement agency are educated about victims of crime, their issues, needs, and concerns. It will enable law enforcement agency employees to:

- Develop a broad view of issues and concerns associated with victimization
- Establish sound, respectful, and supportive responses to the needs of victims
- Utilize tools for communicating effectively with victims of crime
- Foster positive relationships with community stakeholders

The following four modules presented here as a series of PowerPoint slides with Notes<sup>1</sup>, will help law enforcement personnel develop the knowledge, skills, and awareness necessary to ensure that victim issues are treated as a priority of the agency.

1. Module 1: Understanding the Trauma of Victimization introduces the topic of “psychological trauma” and presents the rationale for service delivery and assistance for crime victims. It offers a fundamental understanding of how victims are affected by a traumatic experience.
2. Module 2: Developing and Sustaining a Positive Law Enforcement/Victim Relationship conveys the importance, purpose, and value of successful relations between law enforcement and victims of crime. It presents information about working with victims and practical applications for dealing with victims of violent and non-violent crime. It highlights the fact that victims tend to view reality through their own lenses; culture awareness therefore is useful in responding to the needs of victims.
3. Module 3: Creating a Communication Foundation explores the skills and knowledge for communicating with victims and provides helpful hints and recommendations for successful relations with victims.
4. Module 4: Law Enforcement Personnel Roles, Challenging Situations, and Law Enforcement Trauma discusses specific roles of law enforcement personnel and their responsibilities relative to providing support to victims. It emphasizes the importance of coping with the effects of assisting people in crisis.

<sup>1</sup> To get access to the training content provided in the Notes section accompanying each slide in the four modules, click on the module link and then **SAVE** the file to your hard drive without first opening it. To view slides only, use **OPEN** button.



# FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM (FTP) VICTIM-FOCUSED ENHANCEMENTS



## Introduction

As informal leaders chosen based on their knowledge, skill level, experience, ability to instruct, and support the agency's goals and mission, Field Training Officers (FTOs) are key to incorporating victim-related training enhancements into the FTP. When FTOs introduce the concept of an enhanced victim response to trainees from the onset of their law enforcement careers, it illustrates that adequately addressing victim needs is a necessary component of performing sworn duties. This section of the *Training Supplemental* presents customizable content that can be used for inclusion into a FTP and other agency documents, such as policy and mission statement, to ensure that trainees receive the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to provide an enhanced response to victims of crime.

## Importance of the Victim Response Policy

Ideally, the first step to incorporating victim-focused content into the FTP is adopting an agency-wide victim response policy, the purpose of which is to establish clear procedures, protocols, and actions for how agency personnel will relate and provide assistance to victims of crime. The policy will outline broad expectations for all agency employees and state the agency's position regarding the treatment of victims. It will also serve as a platform for incorporating a victim-focused approach into the FTP.

## Victim-Focused Training Enhancements for FTPs

Once the agency has adopted a victim response policy, it should be integrated within the "knowledge", "task performed," and "evaluation" sections of the FTP. It is the FTO's responsibility to ensure that the trainee understands the policy and is able to demonstrate his or her ability to apply it to performance of daily activities and duties. This can be achieved through checking the trainee's base level of knowledge and motivation; providing information relating to victim issues; reviewing the material; and evaluating the trainee. Additionally, assessing how a trainee responds to victims can be included in such anchors as decision-making, public interaction, and report writing.

Victim-focused training can be presented as a 30 - 45 minute session, prior to which, the trainee should review the agency's victim response policy and familiarize him or herself with appropriate agency procedures. Upon completion of the victim-focused training, the trainee should be able to:

- Exhibit familiarity with the victim response policy
- Demonstrate the integration of first responder and follow-up victim support techniques
- Explain proper victim rights notification
- Identify the resources available for victim referrals



## Checking Base Level of Knowledge and Motivation

This section requires the FTO to review the trainee's personal experiences and explain why this training is important. By examining the trainee's level of knowledge on this subject, FTOs may find that students bring valuable information to the agency. The FTO should also impress upon the trainee why this is a valuable skill to learn and why it is a priority of the agency.

### EXAMPLE<sup>2</sup>

A. FTOs can obtain a base level of knowledge by asking trainees the following questions:

1. Have you ever been the victim of a crime?
2. Has a relative or friend been a victim of a crime? How would he or she describe his or her contact with law enforcement (positive or negative)?
3. Have you read the agency's policy in regards to assistance and services to victims? If yes, then tell the trainee this will be a good review. If the trainee has not reviewed the policy, then he or she must be told to do so.

B. FTOs can motivate trainees and convey the importance of providing an enhanced victim response by stating the following:

1. Being a victim may be very traumatic
2. How you respond to the victim can determine how well he or she recovers from the trauma of the crime
3. Being able to interact with a victim in a positive, professional, and compassionate way may assist the investigation when it comes to gathering details about the crime and future prosecution

## Interacting with Victims

This section provides the trainee with instruction on interacting with victims. It offers suggestions for professionally meeting victim needs and conveying information regarding access to available community resources.

### EXAMPLE

A. Review victim response policy and procedures with the trainee.

B. There are several areas of consideration during initial contact with a victim:

1. Treat the victim with compassion
  - a. Express concern with what the victim is going through
  - b. Treat the victim with dignity and respect
  - c. Remember, a routine call for law enforcement is rarely a routine call for the victim

<sup>2</sup> This and other examples provided in this section are included in the Beaverton (OR) Police Department's Field Training Program.



2. *Treat the victim with empathy*
  - a. *Be sensitive to what the victim is going through*
  - b. *Treat the victim the way you would want your family member treated*
3. *Give all victims a professional response*
  - a. *Give consistent information to the victim*
  - b. *Offer the same level of service, information, and respect to every victim*
  - c. *Keep victims informed, updated, and return phone calls promptly*
4. *While interviewing the victim*
  - a. *When possible, use a safe and private setting (victim may be stunned or embarrassed by what occurred)*
  - b. *Let the victim direct where to sit or ask: "May we sit here?"*
  - c. *Be out of view of the offender (as much as officer safety allows)*
  - d. *Ask: "May I talk with you about what happened" rather than "I need to take a report"*
  - e. *Convey empathy with the victim: "I'm sorry this happened to you"*
  - f. *Provide victim resources and referrals*
  - g. *Be careful when offering crime prevention tips, so it does not come across as victim blaming*
  - b. *Explain the next steps of the process to the victim and what he or she can expect in the future*

#### *C. Crime Victims' Rights Notification*

1. *In some states providing victims a Crime Victims' Rights Card is **MANDATORY**. (Wherever it is not mandatory, the use of the card is highly recommended.)*
  - a. *Provide a person who has been a victim of a crime with appropriate victims' rights notification card*
  - b. *Explain the victim's rights when presenting the card*

#### *D. Victim Resources and Referrals*

1. *Most common victim-related referral numbers can be found:*
  - a. *In Records and Dispatch*
  - b. *At Patrol Vehicles' Mobile Data Terminal*



- c. *By calling 211 (where available)*
  - d. *On the agency's Web site*
  - e. *In pamphlets for distribution to the victims*
2. *Community Services and Resources Card (if available)*



### **Review**

This section addresses all critical points of what has been taught and discussed, reinforces the training, and provides the trainee an opportunity to review the materials and ask questions.

### **Example**

- A. *Review with the trainee how he or she has done during this training session. Reiterate that it is imperative to meet the needs of victims of crime by providing them with the necessary assistance.*
- B. *Review the steps of appropriate victim response:*
  1. *Follow the agency's victim response policy*
  2. *There are several factors to consider when interacting with a victim of crime:*
    - a. *Treat the victim with compassion and empathy*
    - b. *Respond to all victims professionally*
    - c. *Be cognizant of the environment*
    - d. *Take notice of the victim's feelings*
  3. *Crime Victims' Rights:*
    - a. *Notify victims of their rights*
    - b. *Present the victim with an agency issued Crime Victims' Rights Card*
  4. *Victim Resource Referrals can be found on:*
    - a. *Community Services and Resources Card*
    - b. *Crime Victims' Rights Card*

It is also recommended that during the FTP the trainee visit each of the agency's community resource partners to obtain a working knowledge of available services and become familiar with the location of each relevant resource.



## Evaluation

FTPs across the country vary in approach and method for evaluating trainees. Some departments utilize a daily evaluation, while others periodically cover specific topics in a classroom-type environment. Regardless of the method, it is important to remember that the overall goal is to assess the trainees' knowledge, skills, abilities, and understanding of victim issues, rights, needs, and available resources.

The following list of trainee performance criteria and sample performance evaluation guidelines can be incorporated into any agency's current FTP evaluation process. Each agency must determine its optimal combination of suggested criteria.

### *General Criteria for Evaluating Trainees*

1. *Knowledge and understanding of federal and state statute requirements as they relate to victims' rights*
2. *Strong familiarity with the agency's victim response policy and ability to apply its provisions into his or her daily duties and activities*
3. *Concern and empathy for the victim and ability to properly identify victim's needs*
4. *Strong communication skills and ability to apply them appropriately while responding to victims of crime*
5. *Working knowledge of the available victim services*
6. *Ability to identify needs and services based on the information provided by the victim*
7. *Ability to refer the victim to the proper services*

### SAMPLE EVALUATION GUIDELINES:

#### 1. Knowledge of Victim Response Principles, Policy, and Resources

- a. **Superior:** The trainee demonstrates an exceptional knowledge and understanding of the basic needs of crime victims, principles of effective victim assistance by first responders, practical communication techniques, federal and state statutes relative to victim rights, compensation and restitution, agency policy that relates to law enforcement interaction with crime victims, and the governmental and local services and resources that support and assist victims. The trainee can readily explain this knowledge base and provide functional examples on how this knowledge relates to his or her interaction with victims and during criminal investigations.
- b. **Acceptable:** The trainee possesses a basic foundation of knowledge of the needs of crime victims, principles of effective victim assistance by first responders, practical communication techniques, federal and state statutes relative to victim rights, compensation and restitution, agency policy that relates to law enforcement interaction with crime victims, and the governmental and local services and resources

that support and assist victims. The trainee can readily explain the primary aspects of this knowledge base and provide practical examples on how this knowledge relates to his or her interaction with victims and during criminal investigations.

- c. **Needs Improvement:** The trainee possesses a rudimentary level of knowledge of the basic needs of crime victims, principles of effective victim assistance by first responders, practical communication techniques, federal and state statutes relative to victim rights, compensation and restitution, agency policy that relates to law enforcement interaction with crime victims, and the governmental and local services and resources that support and assist victims. The trainee can explain certain aspects of this information, although the explanation is incomplete and lacks sufficient depth of understanding. Practical examples provided by the trainee reinforce this incomplete comprehension of the knowledge base.
- d. **Unacceptable:** The trainee fails to demonstrate the minimally acceptable level of knowledge of crime victim needs, victim assistance techniques, communications skills, laws and agency policies relative to victim assistance, and the resource agencies that support crime victims. The trainee cannot provide satisfactory examples of how this knowledge is integrated into his or her interaction with victims.

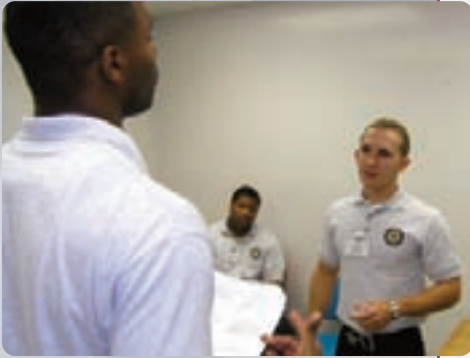
## 2. **Demonstrated Skills: Incorporating Victim Assistance Principles, Statutes, and Policy into Conducting and Assisting in Criminal Investigations**

- a. **Superior:** The trainee fully utilizes the principles, policies, and statutes relative to providing assistance to victims of crime. The trainee takes every reasonable step to address the victim's needs, uses appropriate communication techniques to develop a professional relationship with the victim, establishes empathy with the victim, maintains professional boundaries and protects the integrity of the investigation, provides the victim access to relevant and necessary information and resources, and demonstrates a genuine desire to support and assist the victim during all phases of the investigation and prosecution.
- b. **Acceptable:** The trainee recognizes and utilizes the primary principles, policies and statutes that are relative to the specific investigation and crime victim, makes an effort to identify and address the victim's needs, accesses available resources, attempts to understand the victim's trauma and develops a positive working relationship with the victim, appropriately prioritizes the needs and concerns of the victim into the investigative process, and demonstrates a strong desire to assist the crime victim during the investigative process.
- c. **Needs Improvement:** The trainee's efforts to provide support and assistance to crime victims fail to make full use of the laws, policies, and resources in place to assist victims. The trainee demonstrates an incomplete understanding of the principles of victim service and related communication skills. The trainee's efforts to develop empathy and form a positive professional relationship demonstrate a lack of understanding and a deficient level of the skills necessary to accomplish this task.



- d. **Unacceptable:** The trainee fails to recognize the necessity to prioritize the victim's needs into the context of a criminal investigation and demonstrates a lack of understanding of the laws and policies relative to victim support. The trainee makes little effort to develop professional rapport with the victim and does not demonstrate an understanding of the necessity of this relationship.

# RECRUIT TRAINING ENHANCEMENTS



## Introduction

Recruit training provides new law enforcement personnel with intensive instruction to enable them to effectively perform their roles, duties, and responsibilities. As a rule, the curriculum for recruit training is established by the state where the officer will be certified as a peace officer. Typically, law enforcement executives have minimal direct influence over this component of personnel training. In order to ensure that recruit training meets the specific needs of their agencies, law enforcement executives must collaborate with their training academy and/or state law enforcement training authority to promote inclusion of the victim-focused enhancements into existing academy curricula.

## Project Background

The IACP and a group of subject matter experts analyzed all courses from the 2007 State of Illinois Police Officer Basic Training Curriculum and identified six courses that naturally lent themselves to the inclusion of enhanced victim response training content<sup>3</sup>: Crime Prevention, Crisis Intervention, Ethics, Police-Citizen Relations, Problem-Oriented Policing, and Service Calls. The objective was to seamlessly integrate victim-focused training material in each of the identified courses. Next, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Police Training Institute (PTI) piloted the enhancements.

## Academy Pilot Site

PTI is Illinois' premier provider of law enforcement training and education. After more than 50 years of continuous training, PTI has become one of the country's longest-serving multi-jurisdictional police academies. Its delivery model is nationally recognized for innovative approaches to applying adult learning principles in academy-based training. PTI's Basic Law Enforcement Course consists of the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board's (ILETSB) mandated basic law enforcement curriculum, as well as over 70 hours of enhanced training. PTI provides this training to over 350 municipal, county, and state law enforcement agencies. Approximately eighty percent (80%) of the recruits in Illinois are trained at PTI.

## Pilot Site Findings

The PTI trainers who taught the six courses containing victim-related enhancements indicated that they observed a new mindset among recruits, who appeared more open to accepting the concept of enhanced victim response. The trainers attributed this attitude to the fact that many recruits have either been victims of crime themselves or have friends or family members who have been victims. In addition, they reported that their recruits have come to the academy with a wider range of previous experience: teachers, combat veterans, and factory workers among others.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that victim issues can and should also be incorporated in the courses focused on specific crimes (e.g. homicide, domestic violence, property crimes, and stalking.)

The PTI trainers reported that they did not have difficulty incorporating the victim-focused training content into their existing courses. The trainers stated that a constant challenge that they face is the limited hours available for training. Despite this constraint, they indicated that the enhanced courses did not place a strain on the training scope or time limits. They reported that the enhanced courses were well received by the recruits and were easy to present. Specifically, the trainers appreciated the references to national resources and found it helpful in providing depth to the information. PTI's recruits are 21-50+ years old from a wide variety of educational levels. The trainers believed the enhanced courses were able to reach recruits at all educational levels and were designed in a format fit for easy adult learning by the audience. Overall, the trainers were extremely pleased with the victim-focused training content and found the instructor notes to be useful.

This section of the *Training Supplemental* presents enhancements that were added to the six courses piloted by PTI and designed to complement any state's existing academy curriculum.

Enhancements for each course include Potential Student Performance Objectives (PSPOs), Instructor Notes, Sample Quiz Questions, and PowerPoint slides. The PSPOs are for the new material only and are presented separately from the state approved Student Performance Objectives (SPOs). The Instructor Notes highlight key concepts that should be conveyed when incorporating the training enhancements into existing academy curriculum. Instructors should determine an optimal method for integrating the victim-focused training content into their material.





## I. CRIME PREVENTION

The primary purpose of this unit of instruction is to acquaint recruits with the multi-faceted aspects of crime prevention. An overview of crime prevention as it relates to public information, citizens' personal safety issues, and security precautions against property crimes is provided. Recruits will learn how day-to-day citizen contact with law enforcement can have significant impact on the prevention of crime and enhance the reputation of the law enforcement agency and its members.

As victims have already experienced crime firsthand and suffer from varying degrees of trauma, law enforcement must be sensitive to the victim's experience during this assistance process. Increasing a victim's sense of security and safety is a critical factor for recruits to learn in this unit.

### POTENTIAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

1. Identify the need for applying crime prevention techniques while interacting with victims of crime

### TRAINING CONTENT

The following victim-focused topics were included and discussed with recruits during PTI's *Crime Prevention* training:

- When and How to Talk About Crime Prevention
- Special Considerations When Working with Victims
- Crime Prevention Techniques When Working with Victims

### INSTRUCTOR NOTES<sup>4</sup>

#### **When and How to Talk About Crime Prevention**

The service of providing crime prevention suggestions, tips, security audits, and similar assistance to citizens, which is designed to reduce their vulnerability to future criminal acts, is a critical function for patrol officers. Every interaction with the public, including victims, is a potential opportunity to discuss crime prevention. Whether conducting initial and follow-up investigations or delivering auxiliary services such as providing security or transportation, officers have opportunities to educate victims on how to reduce their exposure and to limit the offender's opportunity to subject them to further victimization.

This information exchange must occur without giving the impression that the victim bears responsibility for the occurrence of the incident (victim blaming). In addressing the safety needs of crime victims, the investigating officer enhances his or her professional relationship with the victim, builds trust, and develops the potential to gain information valuable to the investigation.

<sup>4</sup> *The following sources will facilitate an instructor's ability to incorporate victim-related materials into Crime Prevention training: 1) National Crime Prevention Council ([www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org)); 2) Tom Dempsey, *Contemporary Patrol Tactics*. (Prentice Hall, Inc. 1992); 3) *Community Policing Consortium* ([www.communitypolicing.org](http://www.communitypolicing.org)); and 4) *Federal Trade Commission* ([www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft)).*

## Special Considerations When Working with Victims

The following special considerations should be made when assisting victims of crime:

- **Emotional Component.** When interacting with crime victims, law enforcement officers must develop an understanding of the complex variety of emotions that victims may experience. These emotions range from fear to anger, helplessness, isolation, shock, and guilt.
- **Communication Skills.** The professional relationship that is established through effective communication can assist the victim in his or her healing process and aid in the interview and investigation. Examples include active listening and non-verbal cues. For more information go to [Module 3](#) in the Agency-Wide segment of the *Supplemental*.
- **Empathy.** Officers themselves should make an effort to put him or herself in the victim's situation. This effort is reflected in the officer's communication with the victim and helps in developing a stronger professional relationship.
- **Working with Diverse Populations.** Information provided to the victim should be culturally appropriate and available in languages that represent the community's composition. Considerations should be made for victims with disabilities, special needs, diminished competency, mental illness or cultural dissimilarities. Depending on the agency's resources, translation can assist while interviewing the victim or referring him or her to appropriate services.
- **Community Partnerships.** In order to provide victims with current and accurate referral information, it is important to develop positive professional relationships with the various victim service providers in the community (e.g. domestic violence counselors, victim and witness assistance organizations, peer support groups, etc.). For more information on partnerships go to [Partnering](#) sub-section of the *Implementation Guide* (p. 27).



## Crime Prevention Techniques When Working with Victims

The following techniques are useful for discussing crime prevention with victims of crime:

- Educate the victim on reducing the likelihood of re-victimization
- Avoid victim blaming, the implication that the victim bears responsibility for the initial crime
- Provide information about victim rights and available resources
- Offer current and accurate victim service referral information

## SAMPLE POWERPOINT SLIDES

## SAMPLE QUIZ QUESTIONS



1. During a burglary investigation, an officer should inform victims to:
  - a. Purchase firearms to protect themselves when they are home
  - b. Take practical steps to protect themselves from recurrences**
  - c. Tell them to relocate to a safer area
  - d. Buy a guard dog
  
2. When investigating a domestic violence crime, an officer should understand that the victim may be experiencing a variety of emotions. These emotions may include:
  - a. Anger
  - b. Fear
  - c. Guilt
  - d. All of the above**
  
3. Officers should attempt to establish empathy with crime victims by “putting themselves in their shoes” for all of these reasons EXCEPT:
  - a. It will assist in developing a professional relationship with the victim
  - b. It will insulate officers from the victim’s trauma**
  - c. It may lead to a more thorough and successful investigation
  - d. It may assist in the victim’s healing process

## II. CRISIS INTERVENTION

The primary purpose of this unit of instruction is to introduce the recruits to the broad range of activities termed “crisis intervention,” explain the underlying causes of crisis situations, inform the recruit of some of the dangers in crisis intervention, and emphasize effective crisis intervention techniques. Individuals who experience catastrophes caused by brutality, human error, or natural disasters will experience trauma differently. Recruits need to have a basic understanding of victim trauma to enable them to provide an appropriate and effective response. Knowing that the effects of trauma can be lifelong, recruits will be better prepared to deal with victims encountered at crisis scenes and to refer them to agencies and services that can help after the crisis intervention.



### POTENTIAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize the impact of a crisis on a variety of victims
2. Describe key steps in providing effective crisis intervention services (Young’s Three Phase Model)<sup>5</sup>
3. Identify resources and services specific to victims of crisis or trauma

### TRAINING CONTENT

The following victim-focused topics were included and discussed with recruits during PTI’s *Crisis Intervention* training:

- Crisis
- Trauma
- Reactions to Crisis Situations
- Assisting Victims in Crisis
- Providing Referrals to Victim Services
- Delivering Death Notifications

### INSTRUCTOR NOTES

#### **Crisis**

A crisis can be defined as a *period of psychological disequilibrium experienced by a person or a community caused by a single (or enduring), perilous, and traumatic event that produces a substantial and overwhelming problem which cannot be addressed by applying ordinary coping strategies.*

Crisis situations result in individuals or groups feeling helpless and without control. These feelings can be associated with victimization in all of its forms, including criminal victimization.

<sup>5</sup> Young, Marlene (1993) *Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals*, Washington D.C., National Organization for Victim Assistance.





Reactions to a crisis are unique, and what constitutes a crisis for one individual may not be considered a crisis for another. The goal of crisis intervention is to resolve the most pressing and immediate problems associated with the crisis within a given time by caring for the victim's medical, physical, emotional, mental, and personal needs. Crisis intervention assistance helps victims deal with immediate needs and enables them to begin focusing on the future.

There are two distinct crisis situations: acute and chronic. An acute crisis is sudden and unexpected. It may erupt in association with death or when incidents of violence are experienced or perceived. An acute crisis may include a serious injury, a life-threatening act, witnessing serious injury to another, sudden loss of a job or material items, and arrest or apprehension.

A chronic crisis occurs in association with ongoing conditions which impact the individual or group of individuals over a period of time. Domestic violence and child abuse are examples of chronic crises. Other examples are mental illness, gang violence, divorce, and financial problems.

### **Trauma**

Trauma is a psychological wound or a blow that shatters an individual's assumptions about the world. It inflicts damage to the body, mind, spirit, self-esteem, sense of safety, belief system, ability to trust, and sense of well being.

Traumatic events can be categorized as 1) acts by human intention; 2) natural disasters; and 3) unintentional acts. People and communities are impacted by acts of human intention. Unlike natural disasters, when acts of human intention are perpetrated, criminal victimization occurs. Acts by human intention that constitute violation of laws include homicide, rape, physical assault, terrorist events, abductions, hostage situations, shootings, bank robberies, family violence, or bullying. Examples of natural disasters are floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, landslides, avalanches, brush fires, and hurricanes. Lastly, unintentional acts may result from fires, car crashes, plane crashes, explosions, or chemical spills. Though unintentional acts do not involve planned violence, the person impacted may still experience trauma. Each type of traumatic event can be devastating, and there must be an understanding of how victims are impacted.

### **Reactions to Crisis Situations**

Dr. Marlene Young, in *Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals*, writes: "The psychological trauma of victimization can be separated into two phases – the initial crisis reactions to the violation and the long-term trauma reactions it sometimes causes, with the second of these often exacerbated by additional 'assaults' by society and its institutions."<sup>6</sup>

For example, immediate short-term reactions include shock, disbelief, denial, safety issues, general distress, feelings of loss of control, confusion and disorientation, feelings of helplessness, vulnerability and hopelessness, and preoccupation with the event.

Long-term reactions manifest themselves through major depression, anxiety disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, suicidal ideation, and post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD).

<sup>5</sup> Young, Marlene (1993) *Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals*, Washington D.C., National Organization for Victim Assistance.

Typical overt reactions of victims in crisis situations are terror, shock, sense of loss of control, and physiological arousal. However, victims may not necessarily react in any of the expected behavioral patterns (e.g. sometimes victims may laugh or seem detached in response to their victimization).

### **Assisting Victims in Crisis**

Understanding that criminal victimization leaves its mark on victims in ways that can remain for a lifetime is the first step in providing tailored services for the needs of victims. Traumatized victims may experience anxiety, be vulnerable to additional danger and trauma, and require an immediate response to their needs. Their reactions may result in physical shock, disorientation, numbness, insecurity, and an inability to think clearly. In addition, victim emotional extremes may include fear, anger, rage, shame, humiliation, guilt, terror, and resistance to support. These responses are often manifested through crying, shouting, screaming, and physical aggression. It is important to show a calm, sensitive, and inquiring attitude; establish safety for the victim; engage in effective communication; and connect victims to appropriate resources for information and support.

To help victims in crisis, it is important to know Young's Three Phase Model for Crisis Intervention:

#### **1. Safety and Security**

- Remove victims from immediate danger (recognize that they may not feel safe even though they have been placed in a safe location)
- Recognize that victims may have physical injuries that need care
- Address the victim's comfort needs
- Connect victims to victim service providers and advocates (understand that victims have experienced trust violations which may have rendered them fearful and suspicious of interacting with others)

#### **2. Ventilation and Validation**

- Allow victims to share their account (recognize the importance of bearing witness to the horrible events that have occurred)
- Convey to the victims that their reactions to the event, whether intense or mild, are not uncommon and are valid
- Communicate with the victim by using words that focus on concrete issues to help the victim describe their feelings and the event





### 3. Prediction, Preparation, and Information

- Provide information about “what happens next” (the role of law enforcement, medical and mental health support, the criminal justice system, etc.)
- Address future safety needs (shelter, protective orders, safety plans, etc.)

For additional information go to the handout: [Some Do’s and Don’ts for Communicating with Victims](#).

#### **Providing Referrals to Victim Services**

Crime victims should be advised about services available for immediate intervention and follow-up support. For example, victims of domestic violence may need a safe place, and a domestic violence shelter may be an appropriate referral. Child protective services may be necessary for children in need of immediate care and support.

The following list describes various types of support services for victims of crime. Communities typically have one or two of these.

- ***Law enforcement-based victim advocates*** respond to the scene along with patrol officers and perform crisis intervention in the aftermath of an event. About one-third of victim assistance programs are located in police departments. The FBI also has victim advocates throughout the nation who respond to federal crimes. Police-based victim advocates support the patrol officers and detectives in responding to the scene and accompanying victims through the criminal justice system proceedings. These advocates can respond immediately to victims and events along with law enforcement, have a strong understanding of investigations, and are critical in helping to keep victims informed about the progress of a case. Additionally, police-based victim advocates can support officers in notifying victims of their rights and the availability of community victim services.
- ***Prosecutor-based victim advocates*** are extremely knowledgeable about court services and legal issues. They serve as court escorts, conduct court tours, and provide other services for victims. They work in collaboration with community-based victim assistance programs (e.g. Sexual Assault Response Teams) and are generally the case advocate (as opposed to the client advocate in some systems). In addition, prosecutor-based victim advocates work closely with law enforcement in developing successful protocols (receipt of cases, investigation updates, etc.).
- ***Community-based victim advocates*** can be called to the scene and provide follow-up response for the needs of victims. Community-based advocates and their related victim assistance agencies (usually domestic violence



or sexual programs such as shelters and counseling centers) are designed to meet the unique needs of victims of interpersonal violence. Rape Crisis Centers work with victims of sexual assault, and Child Advocacy Programs provide support for children who are victims of abuse, neglect, and sexual violence. These programs operate in many communities and rely on grants, private funding, and volunteers to offer an array of services to address immediate intervention (i.e. on-scene advocates) as well as follow-up assistance (i.e. support groups). These experts and therapists are often available 24/7 to respond to victims. Community-based victim advocates play a major role in supporting law enforcement officers in their work with victims.

- ***System-based emergency response professionals*** can be accessed for crisis intervention in the wake of catastrophic events including natural disasters. Victim advocates from law enforcement, prosecution, corrections, and the judiciary are trained in crisis intervention and are connected to emergency response plans in their locales. They can be called upon locally, regionally, and nationally to participate in mass casualty situations.
- ***Mental health professionals*** provide short and long-term therapy for victims of crime. Many communities have created multi-cultural counseling programs and/or are knowledgeable about how to ensure (through appropriate channels) that victims from diverse cultures have access to professional services. Social services provide support to victims through their collaborations with system and community-based victim assistance programs such as child protective and social services, domestic violence programs, and family services.
- Several ***Federal and national organizations*** provide specific education, information, and support for victims. Examples include [Office for Victims of Crime \(OVC\)](#) at the U.S. Department of Justice, the [National Center for Victims of Crime \(NCVC\)](#), the [National Organization for Victim Assistance \(NOVA\)](#), and the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children \(NCMEC\)](#).

### **Delivering Death Notifications**

Typically, patrol officers are the agency's representatives tasked with providing efficient and sensitive death notifications to ensure recipients receive accurate information and links to resources for support relative to their individual issues and concerns. When delivering death notifications, it is important to understand that recipients of a death notification will never forget where, how, and by whom the news was delivered. There is only one opportunity to perform this function, and it must be done appropriately.

Before undertaking the process, the officer should:

- Establish whether there are special communication needs (language, disabilities, etc.)



- Learn as many details as possible about the death (what, where, when, how)
- Check and recheck the information for accuracy

When delivering the death notification, the officer should:

- Identify him or herself and ask to enter the victim survivor's space
- Attempt to have the victim survivor seated (for their safety and the safety of the officer making notification)
- Ask the recipient where they would like him or her to sit (in order to be at eye level when speaking)
- Provide them with as many details as known at the time
- Be aware of the possible immediate needs of the victim survivor
- Be prepared to repeat him or herself

Since the death notification is a mutually traumatizing process for the purveyor of the news and the recipient of the information, death notifications should be followed by a period of debriefing and support for the officer who performed this duty.

## **SAMPLE POWERPOINT SLIDES**

## **SAMPLE QUIZ QUESTIONS**

1. Which of the following is NOT an act of human intention that may result in a crisis situation for a victim?
  - a. Stalking
  - b. Bullying
  - c. Accidents**
  - d. Identity theft
  
2. An officer must be aware of the impact of psychological trauma because:
  - a. Trauma permeates beneath the protective layers or usual coping skills that help individuals to deal with a crisis
  - b. Trauma can impact one's sense of safety and trust
  - c. Trauma can be lasting and require ongoing support
  - d. All of the above**

3. Short-term reactions of victims to traumatic events may result in:
  - a. Shock, disbelief, and denial
  - b. Preoccupation with the event
  - c. Concerns about safety
  - d. **All of the above**

### III. ETHICS

The primary purpose of this unit of instruction is to formulate an understanding and adherence to ethical and moral behavior expected of law enforcement in both their personal and professional lives. Fundamental to law enforcement, ethical behavior is the manner in which crimes are investigated, reports are prepared, testimony is presented in court, and the way victims of crime are treated.



#### POTENTIAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

1. Explain how to apply ethical behavior when investigating crimes, writing reports, testifying in court, and dealing with victims of crime
2. Articulate the need for law enforcement to develop a reputation for ethical behavior within their communities

#### TRAINING CONTENT

The following victim-focused topics were discussed with recruits during PTI's *Ethics* training:

- Law Enforcement Values and Mission
- Ethics and Victims of Crime

#### INSTRUCTOR NOTES

##### **Law Enforcement Values and Mission**

At its core, law enforcement should be values-based. These values should focus on respecting citizens' rights, upholding state and constitutional statutes, and engaging positively with the community. They should be reflected in organizational policies, practices, and behavior. When organizational values are properly communicated and reinforced, they can positively influence individual officer behavior. In a values-based organization, the values are the filter through which everything employees do and say should pass. Employee hiring methods, evaluations, discipline systems, operational strategies, and communications must be consistent with the stated values. Systems must be created to identify and correct incidents which are inconsistent with the organizational values.

These values permeate law enforcement agencies' mission statements, which are diverse but all contain a component of service to the community. Since victims of crime are part of the community and one of the primary constituencies of law enforcement, a victim service component should be added into the agency's mission statement.

## Ethics and Victims of Crime

Law enforcement agencies develop a public reputation based on the daily interaction between the agency and the public; organizational efforts to engage the community and provide quality service; high profile incidents that shape the public's perception of the department; and media portrayal of the department's effectiveness and integrity. An agency's reputation is not formed overnight, nor can damage be quickly repaired. Victims' personal experience with law enforcement is the main factor influencing their opinion of the agency. Law enforcement officers must be understanding and attentive to the needs of crime victims and make every effort to address these needs within the context of their mission and the limitation of their resources.



Crime victims have experienced a traumatic incident that shatters their perception of personal safety, challenges their positive views of society, elicits feelings of mistrust and fear, and causes them to question many previously held beliefs. Law enforcement interactions with crime victims should be a stabilizing influence in the victims' lives and provide victims with the ability to begin reestablishing a sense of safety and trust. If the officers and the institution that they represent are untrustworthy, the stabilizing effects of this interaction are eliminated, and the ability of victims to begin the healing process is impeded.

*Honesty* and *confidentiality* are critical traits that crime victims expect from law enforcement. Crime victims fear that their personal as well as professional reputations and relationships can be damaged if the fact that they were crime victims becomes public knowledge. Frequently, public "right to know" laws can limit the information that law enforcement can withhold from the media, but officers should attempt to protect the privacy of the victim, where possible, and always provide clear expectations to the victim regarding the agency's ability to control information. In some communities, a negative view is taken toward those who cooperate with law enforcement. Witnesses are often intimidated, and victims may face retaliation for reporting the crime. Officers must be mindful of these risks and take every precaution to maintain confidentiality and protect the victim.

## SAMPLE POWERPOINT SLIDES

## SAMPLE QUIZ QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following elements has the MOST SIGNIFICANT effect on crime victim's opinion of law enforcement?
  - a. The power of law and the government
  - b. Negative statements about the law enforcement agency in the press
  - c. **The victim's personal experience with law enforcement**
  - d. Dress and image of the officers



2. Victims of crime often experience significant trauma increasing their mistrust of others and making them feel unsafe in their homes and neighborhoods. When working with victims, the MOST IMPORTANT aspect of this relationship should be:
  - a. **Serving as a stabilizing influence in the victims' lives**
  - b. Being consistent
  - c. Being completely focused on solving the crime
  - d. Having minimal communication with victims
  
3. What are some of the critical traits that crime victims expect from law enforcement?
  - a. Positive view of society
  - b. Mistrust and fear
  - c. **Honesty and confidentiality**
  - d. Intimidation and retaliation

## IV. POLICE-CITIZEN RELATIONS

Police-citizen relations directly impact the quality of community life, the community's capacity to maintain stability, and the ability of law enforcement to solve problems. With proper training, support from agency leadership, and sound policy, law enforcement personnel can develop a professional, supportive, and trusting relationship with citizens. During this instructional unit, recruits are introduced to the history of law enforcement; obstacles to establishing a positive relationship with citizens; some dynamics of cultural diversity; crime victims' rights and needs; and the value of collaborations.



### POTENTIAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

1. Develop knowledge and understanding of the history, mission, values, and vision for law enforcement service to the community, which will set the stage for a high standard of performance by the agency and its officers
2. Understand the importance of establishing a service delivery process that is appropriate for diverse populations within the community
3. Recognize that victims of different types of crime have specific needs associated with their victimization

### TRAINING CONTENT

The following victim-focused topics were included and discussed with recruits during PTI's *Police-Citizen Relations* training:

- History and Role of Law Enforcement
- Barriers to Improving Police-Citizen Relations
- Cultural Competency
- Addressing Crime Victims' Rights
- Needs of Victims of Specific Types of Crime
- Importance of Collaborations

### INSTRUCTOR NOTES<sup>7</sup>

#### **History and Role of Law Enforcement**

“Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that **the police are the public and the public are the police**; the police being the only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.” — Sir Robert Peel, the father of modern policing (1829).

<sup>7</sup> The following sources will facilitate an instructor's ability to incorporate victim-focused materials into Police-Citizen training: a) the National Victim Assistance Academy March 2009 foundation level curriculum can be found online at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/mar09nvaa/>; and b) <http://factfinder.census.gov>



Improving the quality of life for citizens has always been a high priority for local governments, elected officials, and civic groups. Law enforcement plays a pivotal role in supporting this widespread community goal. The relationship between law enforcement and community members is essential to successfully addressing social problems, as well as promoting and sustaining safe towns and neighborhoods. Productive law enforcement-community relationships are built on trust and established through repeated, positive contact between individual citizens and the law enforcement personnel who serve them.

Police-citizen relations are impacted by the agency's level of openness, honesty, integrity, and its quality of service to citizens. The way in which agencies respond to the critical needs of victims of crime also has bearing on police-citizen relations. Victims of various types of crime have specific needs that the wider community is not only extremely concerned about, but looks to law enforcement to address. Thus, the manner in which crime victims are treated also impacts the relationship between law enforcement and the community.

### **Barriers to Improving Police-Citizen Relations**

Effective police-citizen relations are built upon the community's collective history with its law enforcement agency. Trends, strategies, and enforcement philosophies carried out in the past, as well as individual incidents, both positive and negative, influence citizens' opinion of law enforcement. Unfavorable perceptions of law enforcement must be corrected through a consistent series of successful collaborations. Building trust is a continual process, easily damaged by careless words or acts. Fortunately, law enforcement organizations provide a vital service and are considered necessary by the majority of community members. This allows agencies the opportunity to rebuild even the most damaged relationship.

Recruits should be aware of and help mitigate the following barriers to successful police-citizen relations:

- An organizational culture unable to connect with the community
- Lack of information regarding problem areas and gaps in service
- Poor service record
- Customer dissatisfaction with response to service calls
- Language barriers
- Stereotyping
- Racial profiling
- Ineffective communication skills and techniques
- Lack of a victim-centered approach to service
- Unfamiliarity with the victim experience



## Cultural Competency

Culture is the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and attitudes that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another. It is learned and shared from generation to generation. Introducing the process of cultural competency is an effective way of indicating to recruits that they are not expected to become experts in cultural matters. Instead, cultural competency helps officers to engage in learning and developing the capacity to value diversity, conduct self-assessments, and adapt to the diverse communities they serve.

Understanding cultural differences means acknowledging that culture is not simply a function of race and ethnicity. Culture includes a broader national or community culture in which evolving layers of subcultures (composed of groups or neighborhoods) are bound together by racial, religious or ethnic association. Law enforcement must be sensitive to how cultural considerations affect the manner in which they respond to victims of crime. Specific behaviors, gestures, and methods of communication, while suitable in certain situations, can be deemed offensive and become a barrier to building effective professional relationships with citizens. Familiarity with cultural norms will assist law enforcement personnel engage citizens in a courteous and constructive way.

## Addressing Crime Victims' Rights

Under state laws, law enforcement, as first responders to victims at the scene, often are responsible for informing victims of their rights. A victim or witness of crime may be entitled to information about:

- Protection and protective orders
- Financial assistance and social services including victim compensation
- Address and phone number confidentiality
- Closed preliminary hearings or use of closed-circuit television
- Separate waiting area during court proceedings
- The right to remain in the courtroom during a criminal trial or proceeding

It may be beneficial to review state victims' rights laws at [www.victimlaw.info](http://www.victimlaw.info).

## Needs of Victims of Specific Types of Crime

There are seven critical needs of victims, and they should be explained to recruits in this module. Instructors must ensure that recruits are also aware of specific needs of victims of various crimes such as property crime, domestic violence, elder abuse, sexual assault, stalking, hate crimes, and homicide.<sup>8</sup> Even though the list is not all inclusive, these are some of the victimization issues officers will encounter.

---

<sup>8</sup> Sandra L. Brown, *Counseling Victims of Violence: A Handbook for Helping Professionals* (Alameda, CA: M.A. Hunter House Publishers, 2007).





### *Victims of Property Crime*

- Want stolen possessions to be returned
- May not have an inventory of what was stolen
- Question the possibility that the criminal will return
- Fear for their personal safety
- Are concerned whether the stolen articles can be replaced
- Wonder if anything could have been done to prevent the crime
- Consider installing security devices

### *Victims of Domestic Violence*

- Fear for the physical safety of themselves and their children
- May be afraid the abuser will locate them
- Worry about how they will survive
- Are concerned about having a place to stay that is away from the abuser
- Lack knowledge about legal procedures

### *Victims of Elder Abuse*

- May have an inability to report the crime effectively
- Fear retaliation, relocation, having to go to court, and institutionalization
- May have an inability to recognize abuse or other forms of crime
- Lack knowledge of community services
- May feel embarrassment and shame

### *Victims of Sexual Assault*

- Wonder if the sexual assault should be reported
- Contemplate whether to have a medical exam
- Are concerned about pregnancy, HIV, and STDs
- Fear the rapist will return
- Are concerned friends or family will learn of the incident and judge them
- Fear being alone
- May be concerned about impending procedures, if the sexual assault is reported
- Worry about not being believed

### *Victims of Stalking*

- Typically do not seek help until they feel threatened
- May not be aware of interventions that can be used in stalking episodes
- Fear the stalking will continue and evolve into more dangerous or threatening behavior
- May be afraid to disclose stalking episodes to family or friends
- Wonder how the stalker acquired personal information
- May not want to report or make a “big deal” of the stalking

### *Victims of Hate Crimes*

- Fear a lack of concern from law enforcement
- Worry they will not be believed
- Are concerned about additional attacks
- Wonder if incidents should be reported
- May be afraid to disclose the crimes to family or friends

### *Homicide Survivors*

- Wonder whether the murder was preventable
- Question whether the murderer was apprehended and will go to trial
- Are concerned about dealing with the media and the investigation
- Want family possessions returned that were taken as evidence during the investigation
- May be concerned about making funeral arrangements
- Fear explaining the death to their children
- Question their ability to work

### **Importance of Collaborations**

Effective collaborations and partnerships are essential elements for successful police-citizen relations and can:

- Build trust within the community toward governmental and social service organizations
- Improve the quality of life for citizens by reducing community problems
- Increase the bank of services available to victims and the community
- Enhance knowledge and respect for organizations and institutions that work together toward a common goal
- Improve communication among groups
- Create societal change through legislation and other means

## SAMPLE POWERPOINT SLIDES

### SAMPLE QUIZ QUESTIONS

1. Successful collaboration is essential for law enforcement relations with the community because:
  - a. It increases knowledge and respect about and for organizations and institutions who work together toward a common goal
  - b. It improves the quality of life for citizens by reducing community problems
  - c. It increases the bank of services available to the victims and the community
  - d. **All of the above**
  
2. Which of the following is NOT among the seven critical needs of victims of crime?
  - a. Safety
  - b. **Purpose**
  - c. Information
  - d. Support
  
3. A positive relationship between law enforcement and the public requires:
  - a. Professionalism
  - b. Connecting crime victims to needed services
  - c. Trust
  - d. **All of the above**



## V. PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING<sup>9</sup>

Problem-oriented policing was designed to identify and remove the causes of recurring crime and disorder problems that harm communities. Problem-solving and problem-oriented policing are integral parts of law enforcement daily duties. This segment of instruction includes a discussion of Community-Oriented Policing (COP) and Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) as they relate to academy training and law enforcement in general. PTI identified this course as a key component of its academy training. PTI believes it sets the tone for recruits and provides pivotal concepts of law enforcement training.

### POTENTIAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of crime victims in the problem-solving process
2. Describe the need for establishing an appropriate relationship between law enforcement and victims during the problem-solving process

### TRAINING CONTENT

The following victim-focused topics were discussed with recruits during PTI's *Problem-Oriented Policing* training:

- Crime Victim as a Stakeholder in the Problem-Oriented Policing Process
- Special Considerations for Crime Victims in the Problem-Oriented Policing Process

### INSTRUCTOR NOTES<sup>10</sup>

#### **Crime Victim as a Stakeholder in the Problem-Oriented Policing Process**

The philosophy of problem-oriented policing has its focus on the routine and systematic analysis of situations that cause public concern or harm. Effective analysis demands the involvement of stakeholders—groups, organizations or individuals that have an interest in the problem. When criminal acts are a part of a community problem, an obvious stakeholder is the victim of the crime. Crime victims are affected in a personal way and have a perspective on the issue that can assist the officer in understanding the nature and scope of the problem and arrive at potential solutions.

#### **Special Considerations for Crime Victims in the Problem-Oriented Policing Process**

Law enforcement officers must:

- **Avoid victim blaming.** During the analytical phase of the problem-solving process when attempts are made to answer the questions of “why” the incidents happened, “how” they are connected, and “what” were the precipitating factors, law enforcement officers must use caution not to allow victim blaming to enter into the dialogue. It is harmful to the victim and counterproductive to the discussion.

<sup>9</sup> This course is not specifically included in the ILETSB 2007 Police Officer Basic Training Curriculum, however, this block includes curriculum found in the “Tactical Communications Exercise,” as listed in the Police Proficiency Learning Module.

<sup>10</sup> The following sources will facilitate an instructor's ability to incorporate victim-focused materials into Problem-Oriented Policing training: a) Center for Problem-Oriented Policing ([www.popcenter.org](http://www.popcenter.org)); and b) Herman Goldstein, *Problem-Oriented Policing*, (Columbus, Ohio: McGraw-Hill, 1990).



- ***Demonstrate sensitivity.*** The victims' experience of crime must be considered by law enforcement officers when engaging them in the problem-solving process. Law enforcement should be sensitive to the fact that trauma caused by victimization may be relived when discussing even unconnected criminal incidents.
  
- ***Utilize active listening.*** The practice of active listening is especially important when involving victims in the problem-solving process. A great deal can be learned when law enforcement refrains from directing the dialog, resists the temptation to arrive at a hasty conclusion, and listens to what the victim has to say. Law enforcement officers must recognize that these discussions, while designed to accomplish a specific goal (that of a reduction or elimination of future incidents), affords the crime victim an opportunity to share his or her experience and begin to come to terms with the personal consequences of being victimized.
  
- ***Understand the dynamics of repeat victimization.*** When working with crime victims who have been involved in multiple incidents, officers need to understand the dynamics and consequences of repeat victimization.
  
- ***Engage victim service professionals.*** Law enforcement should consider including victim service professionals in the problem-solving dialog when appropriate. These individuals often have relevant insights that can be helpful for gaining an understanding of the nature and scope of the problem and developing effective response strategies.

## **SAMPLE POWERPOINT SLIDES**

## **SAMPLE QUIZ QUESTIONS**

1. Officers should involve victims when conducting crime-related problem-solving because:
  - a. Victims should have a direct, hands-on involvement in police operations
  - b. Victims will often complain to the chief and elected officials if they feel left out
  - c. **Victims often have unique viewpoints and ideas on how to address the problem**
  - d. Victims can become upset if not involved

2. When problem-solving a string of neighborhood burglaries and involving the victims in the process, the officers **MUST AVOID**:
  - a. Giving victims details of the crime
  - b. Allowing victims to provide ideas on possible solutions
  - c. Blaming victims for allowing the crime to happen**
  - d. Providing victims with a description of suspects
  
3. Which of the following communication techniques is **MOST** effective when working with crime victims in the problem-solving process?
  - a. Direct question and answer
  - b. Active listening**
  - c. Pointing out victims' responsibility in the crime
  - d. Manipulation

## VI. SERVICE CALLS

A large number of calls responded to by law enforcement are service requests to situations which do not initially include criminal acts or violations. Service calls from the public can range in severity from a citizen locked out of his or her residence to a missing child. Service calls originate from every facet of the community to include those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those with disabilities, and those who may be geographically isolated from the community. This unit of instruction provides recruits with common methods and techniques for handling service calls in an appropriate manner. Instructors will emphasize that responses to service calls differ by agency and should comply with the agency's guidelines.



### POTENTIAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the value of a law enforcement response to service calls that incorporates efficiency, practical solutions, sensitivity, and familiarity with available resources
2. Understand the importance of responding to calls for service in a way that promotes integrity and accountability, high citizen satisfaction, positive agency reputation, and officer safety

### TRAINING CONTENT

The following victim-focused topics were discussed with recruits during PTI's *Service Calls* Training:

- About Service Calls
- Model Service Call Response
- Service Calls within the Context of the Law Enforcement Mission

### INSTRUCTOR NOTES

#### **About Service Calls**

One of the key functions of law enforcement is to respond to criminal and non-criminal calls for service. When agencies place a strategic priority on requests for assistance, the operation, policies, and culture of the agency require an efficient, practical, and sensitive response.

A model response with integrated service delivery ensures that service calls receive prompt attention, effective resolution, referrals to support services, where appropriate, and personalization.

Service calls address a wide range of circumstances. Cultural understanding is important in addressing human situations and can have far-reaching consequences in the delivery of quality services to the public. The same amount of care and consideration must be given to each opportunity to serve the public.

Responding to citizens' request for service entails many of the same skills utilized in assisting victims of crime. Officers should employ active listening skills, effective communication and problem-solving techniques, a sense of empathy, patience, and a genuine desire to assist citizens in obtaining a remedy to their problems. Officers must work diligently to acquire critical skills for working effectively with victims of crime and citizens who are seeking assistance in non-criminal matters.



### **Model Service Call Response**

Effective law enforcement responses to calls for service require:

- **Efficiency:** responding in a timely manner and with skill
- **Problem solving:** applying workable solutions to achieve successful outcomes
- **Sensitivity:** recognizing and addressing the impact of the situation on the individual in need of service
- **Familiarity with available resources:** being knowledgeable about community resources and other possible help measures
- **Personalization:** approaching each request for service with flexibility, creativity, and cultural competency
- **Shared responsibility:** educating and encouraging citizens to take an active role in addressing and preventing the circumstances that initiated the service call

Providing a high-quality service call response leads to:

- Increased confidence and trust in the law enforcement agency
- Active citizen participation in the health and welfare of their community
- Shared responsibility for improving the quality of life and reducing crime in the community
- Heightened public awareness regarding crime prevention strategies, victimization, available resources, and other issues of concern

### **Service Calls within the Context of the Law Enforcement Mission**

Statistically, municipal law enforcement agencies respond to non-criminal calls for service with greater frequency than calls for service involving criminal behavior. Service calls are opportunities to demonstrate the agency's mission to protect and serve; engender public support for the agency; and educate the public on the appropriate methods for preventing and solving personal and community issues.

Some individuals who initiate a service call have unique issues and require specific support and referrals. In these situations, proper training and policy will assist officers in assessing the incident and developing the appropriate response.



## SAMPLE POWERPOINT SLIDES

### SAMPLE QUIZ QUESTIONS

1. Officers must respond promptly to calls for service from the public because:
  - a. Service calls may in fact involve an actual criminal situation
  - b. The agency may receive an inordinate amount of citizen complaints
  - c. Effective responses to service calls promote good public relations and a trusting law enforcement-citizen relationship
  - d. **Both a and c**
  
2. In responding to a service call for an older person needing assistance, an officer can use what knowledge and ability?
  - a. Familiarity with community resources designed specifically for older individuals
  - b. Ability to apply creative solutions as the situation may require
  - c. Appropriate agency policies and procedures for responding to the elderly
  - d. **All of the above**
  
3. Officers must be prepared at all times when responding to service calls because:
  - a. Citizens expect prompt response and practical solutions to their problems
  - b. Each response needs to be personalized/tailored to meet the needs of the situation
  - c. Officer safety is paramount in every situation and event regardless of the nature of the call
  - d. **All of the above**

# OTHER WAYS OF APPLYING CONTENT PROVIDED IN THE *SUPPLEMENTAL*



Every individual employed by a law enforcement agency, from the executive to the newest recruit, plays a vital role in making his or her agency optimally responsive to the needs of victims. Responding appropriately to crime victims is an ongoing process, and law enforcement personnel must continue to revisit their assigned tasks to ensure that they are sustaining, updating, and assessing their ability to fully meet victim needs. To achieve agency-wide application of the general principles for providing an enhanced response to victims, all personnel must be exposed to this concept on a continual basis. The following list presents additional ways to use the content outlined in this publication:

1. *In-Service Training:* When there is ample time to present the material in a classroom setting, consider using modules from the [Agency-Wide Training PowerPoint Presentations](#). In addition, in-service training is an opportunity to invite community partners to discuss the services they provide to victims.
2. *Scenario-Based Training:* Scenario-based training is an excellent opportunity to incorporate victim-focused enhancements.
3. *Cross-Training with Community Partners:* In briefing, roll call, or in-service training, the use of non-agency personnel with an expertise in victim services and resources will help build and strengthen relationships with victim service providers, victim advocates, human service agencies, and community-based organizations. Sit-alongs, ride-alongs, and [partner symposia](#) are examples of such cross-training opportunities.
4. *Supervisor Meetings:* It is important for the first-line supervisors to have a complete understanding of the material presented in the *Supplemental*.
5. *Briefing or Roll Call Training:* For agencies that do not have the capability to gather all of their personnel at specific times for scheduled in-house or similar training, segments of the content in the *Supplemental* can be presented during briefings or roll call.

6. *Leveraging Electronic Communication:* Law enforcement agencies can utilize their in-house e-mail or intranet to disseminate victim-focused training information in the form of training bulletins or similar documents.
7. *Community Policing Training:* Ultimately, providing an enhanced victim response will reinforce a law enforcement agency's commitment to community policing. Therefore, it is important to build victim-focused training enhancements into community policing training programs.
8. *Citizens Academy or Similar Public Groups:* Law enforcement agencies hosting Citizen Academies or similar public programs can utilize elements of the *Supplemental* to train citizens and volunteers.
9. *Reviewing Agency Protocol:* Elements of the *Supplemental* can be utilized to revise the agency's mission, policies, and procedures.

# REFERENCES



## REFERENCE 1:

For over a decade, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) at the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, have collaborated to promote crime victim rights and facilitate law enforcement's ability to effectively address victim needs. Key milestones of this collaboration include the 1999 National Policy Summit on Victims of Crime and the *21st Century Strategy for Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims (Strategy Package)*. The Summit was the first multi-disciplinary dialogue between criminal justice professionals and community stakeholders to identify and address the unmet needs of victims. The *Strategy Package* consists of four interconnected volumes: the *Strategy (Volume 1)*, the *Implementation Guide (Volume 2)*, the *Resource Toolkit (Volume 3)*, and the *Training Supplemental (Volume 4)*. It utilizes findings from the Victims Summit, national multi-disciplinary information-gathering forums, and extensive field testing. The *Strategy Package* is a comprehensive and systemic model for institutionalizing a shift in law enforcement policy and culture to enhance victim response through all aspects of a law enforcement agency. It conveys the following overarching themes:

- Enhancing victim response is an integral component of community policing
- Any agency has the capacity to enhance their response to victims of all crimes
- All law enforcement personnel have roles to play in fully addressing victim needs
- Change, though it will take time, will be mutually beneficial to the agency and community

The *Strategy* identified training as one of the four essential components for creating sustainable enhancements to law enforcement's response to victims.



## REFERENCE 2:

### Seven Critical Needs of Victims



1. *Safety.* Victims should be protected from re-victimization and educated on how to decrease the likelihood of re-victimization without making them feel responsible for the incident.
2. *Support.* Law enforcement should provide current and accurate referral information about available victim services.
3. *Information.* Law enforcement needs to provide victims with information about their rights, the resources available to them, and keep victims apprised of the status of their investigation.
4. *Access.* Information should be readily available in languages and formats that represent the community's composition.
5. *Continuity.* Collaboration with victim service providers and other criminal justice professionals is necessary to ensure that victims receive consistent information and support throughout their involvement with the justice system.
6. *Voice.* Law enforcement should empower victims by encouraging them to ask questions and listening to their concerns.
7. *Justice.* Victims need to feel that law enforcement officers are doing the best they can for them, working in victims' best interests, and holding offenders accountable.

## REFERENCE 3:

Several elements suggested for inclusion into the victim response policy are:

- State Crime Victims' Bill of Rights
- Expectations of Employees
- Procedures for Initial Victim Contact
- Procedures for Follow-up with the Victim
- Working with Victim Service Partners



### State Crime Victims' Bill of Rights

Legislation has been enacted in all 50 states with the goal of improving treatment of victims and increasing their opportunities to participate in the criminal justice process. Some states have adopted victims' bill of rights to set standards for fair treatment. Undoubtedly, state laws should be consulted during the construction of the victim response policy. It is essential to research state legislation and identify any laws applicable to victims of crime in order to include them in the policy and training. Many law enforcement agencies print a summary of victim rights on cards and distribute them to victims (see [www.victimlaw.info](http://www.victimlaw.info) for state laws).

#### Example<sup>1</sup>

*CRIME VICTIMS' BILL OF RIGHTS. Officers will become familiar with and adhere to the applicable requirements known as the "Crime Victims' Bill of Rights." {Insert Agency Name and Applicable Chapter of State Code} defines various services and notifications that are to be provided to victims. {Insert Agency Name and Applicable Chapter and Section of State Code} requires officers to provide victims of crime with notice of their {Insert Your State} constitutional rights. Officers who reasonably believe that a person has been a victim of a crime will provide appropriate victims' rights notice by giving and explaining the agency issued Victims' Rights Card. Officers should also provide victims with an Available Community Services and Resources Card (if applicable).*

All 50 states have established victim compensation programs. Law enforcement agencies may be required to inform victims about available compensation and distribute the forms. Officers should be aware that most compensation programs have eligibility restrictions to receive benefits and/or services. Often compensation is limited to reimbursement for medical and funeral expenses. Few states offer reimbursement for property losses, and a number of states require the victim to demonstrate financial hardship (<http://www.navaa.org>; <http://www.nacvcb.org>).

---

<sup>1</sup> Beaverton (OR) Police Department  
Policy Manual

## Expectations of Employees

It is beneficial for the agency to state in the victim response policy that any employee who has contact with a person reasonably believed to be a victim of a crime will treat him or her with compassion and empathy.

### Example<sup>2</sup>

*All victims will be treated by agency members with compassion, fairness, dignity, and respect. It is recognized that many victims will be under extreme emotional stress and may not relate well to law enforcement personnel. Officers will, at the earliest possible point, provide assistance to victims, including referrals to any available resources that may help them. Lack of information concerning a case is one of the greatest sources of dissatisfaction among victims of crime and their families. Assistance includes timely follow-up and returned phone calls when required. Officers will receive ongoing training concerning response to victims, including, but not limited to active listening, information delivery, and other communication skills. Officers will also receive resource materials necessary to connect victims to available community services.*

*Any employee who has contact, whether in person or by telephone, with a person reasonably believed to be a victim of a crime will treat that person with compassion and empathy. Employees must always be aware that this may be the most traumatic event to occur in the victim's life. What is said and done by an employee at this critical point may either positively or negatively affect a victim.*

Addressing the role of supervisors in the victim response policy is important because they play a key role in achieving and sustaining an agency-wide enhanced victim response by ensuring a high level of accountability.

### Example<sup>3</sup>

*Supervisors will monitor staff performance concerning response to victims and ensure employees are delivering an appropriate level of victim service. Supervisors who review reports must look for documentation of appropriate victim response. Necessary follow-up will be assigned by the reviewing supervisor. Briefing reminders and discussions involving special or challenging cases should occur on a regular basis.*

## Procedures for Initial Victim Contact<sup>4</sup>

Officers should be sensitive to what the victim is experiencing and recognize that what may be considered a routine call for law enforcement is not a routine call for the victim. In order to calm and assist the victim, officers shall:

1. Allow the victim a reasonable period of time to express feelings and emotions while describing what happened during the incident
2. Express empathy for the victim
3. Provide reassurance that the victim's reactions are normal and understandable



---

<sup>2</sup> Beaverton (OR) Police Department Policy Manual

---

<sup>3</sup> Beaverton (OR) Police Department Policy Manual

---

<sup>4</sup> This and the next three subsections were written using the 1991 IACP Police Victim Assistance Model Policy, Concepts & Issues Paper, and Field Training Task #45 by Mundelein (IL) Police Department.

4. Avoid judging the victim's feelings, actions, and emotions or the apparent lack thereof
5. Help redirect the victim's self-blame and responsibility for the criminal act from the victim to the offender
6. Emphasize personal commitment to assist and work with the victim



It is important that officers take appropriate steps to meet victim needs for support and information. These include:

1. Advising the victim about what to do if the suspect and/or the suspect's companions threaten or intimidate him or her
2. Informing the victim of the subsequent steps in the processing of the case
3. Providing an agency telephone number that the victim can call to report additional information about the case or to receive an update about the status of the case
4. Informing the victim of any additional services that are available to address special needs they may have
5. Responding to the victim's questions and concerns to the best of the officer's ability

Some agencies provide officers with brochures for distribution listing victim service agencies, police contact numbers, hotline numbers, and other resources. Many officers leave a card with contact information or provide the victim with a phone number for reporting new information.

It is important to encourage the victim to use the given number. It is believed that many victims do not report crimes because they feel that law enforcement agencies do not have time to be concerned with "minor" incidents, or they believe the information they have is insignificant. Victims who do report crimes initially may withhold details they recalled after the responding officer has left.

### **Procedures for Follow-up with the Victim**

Lack of information about case status can be one of the greatest sources of dissatisfaction among victims who report crimes. In some agencies, officers are assigned to make routine victim callbacks. Usually, the objective is to gain information useful to the investigation.

However, even when no further information is forthcoming, these calls can achieve a second objective – assuring victims that the agency is concerned. Officers who make these calls can listen for signs of depression or distress, ask the victims about their needs, and make referrals to sources of assistance. If home or business security is a problem, referrals can be made to the crime prevention unit.





Victims' need for information increases when a case goes to trial. Court schedules and postponements are frequent sources of aggravation for law enforcement. They can be even more frustrating and confusing for victims who may not be familiar with court processes. Victims who testify may lose time and money by taking leave from work and may have to pay for child care and transportation only to find out that the case is continued. Other problems emerge both before and after the trial. Victims and other witnesses may fear recrimination, yet be required to wait in the same room at court with the offender. Victims are not only denied an opportunity to influence probation and parole decisions, but may never even be informed about them.

Officers cannot alleviate all of these frustrations for victims, but when they understand what victims need, they can go the extra step to deal with some of these concerns. The investigating officer in particular may be the most familiar and the most reassuring person the victim will see during the whole court process.

Victim assistance that is provided during the follow-up investigation should at a minimum include the following:

- Re-contacting victims, especially victims of any unusually severe or traumatic criminal act, on a periodic basis to determine if their needs are being met
- Explaining to victims the procedures involved in the prosecution of the case and their role in those procedures provided such disclosure does not jeopardize the successful prosecution of the case
- Scheduling line-ups, interviews, and other required appearances at the convenience of the victim whenever possible, including a provision for transportation if necessary
- Relaying information regarding:
  - the arrest and detention of suspects and their pretrial release status
  - court restraining orders
  - court proceedings and schedules, operations of the agency, and the criminal justice system
  - the victim's possible eligibility for victim compensation
- Returning evidence or the personal property of the victim whenever possible and as permitted by law or the prosecuting authority
- Assigning, whenever possible, a designated victim advocate to assist the victim

### **Working with Victim Service Partners**

More than a third of law enforcement agencies in large jurisdictions operate their own victim assistance programs. About two-thirds of these police-based programs serve victims of violent crimes including rape, domestic violence, and child abuse. Approximately one-third provide special services to victims of burglary and robbery. The services most frequently offered by these victim assistance programs are printed materials, referrals, information on case status, short-term counseling, and in-service training for line officers.

Prosecutors, mental health agencies, units of local government, and independent nonprofit organizations may also be sponsors of victim services. In many larger jurisdictions, prosecutors operate victim/witness programs. Prosecutor-based programs are available to all crime victims and may offer counseling, referrals, and witness notification to victims whether or not their cases go to trial.



Victim assistance programs, whether sponsored by the law enforcement agency or other organizations, can provide many benefits to victims as well as officers. They can help victims recover emotionally; aid the investigative process; allow officers to return to service quickly without compromising victims' needs; and encourage victims to file charges, cooperate, and learn to be better witnesses.

To facilitate the process of training officers to provide information to victims, law enforcement agencies should strongly consider doing the following:

- Develop partnerships with victim advocates, victim service providers, and other community resources
- Develop a list of locally available resources and services for victims of all crimes noting those that are specifically designed for victims of certain crimes (i.e. domestic violence, sexual crime, stalking, restraining order violation, etc.)
- Develop and distribute a Victims' Rights Card that contains the specific state's Crime Victim Bill of Rights as well as contact information for the partners in the community

Victims need to feel that law enforcement officers are doing the best they can for them, working in victims' best interests, and holding offenders accountable.

## REFERENCE 4:

### Mission Statement Revisions

All victims of crime are entitled to be treated with compassion, fairness, dignity, and respect. To ensure this, it is beneficial for the agency to clearly state its position on the treatment of victims. One of the ways this can be done is by adding appropriate language to the agency's mission statement.



#### Example 1<sup>5</sup>

*The {NAME OF THE AGENCY} shall provide the highest quality service, preserving human rights, lives, and property, while striving to achieve the goals of the agency, the city, and community. We are committed to the highest professional standards, **responding to and supporting victims**, while working in partnership with our citizens to meet the challenges of reducing crime, creating a safer environment, and improving our quality of life.*

#### Example 2<sup>6</sup>

*The {NAME OF THE AGENCY} is in existence to provide the highest quality of police service, which requires citizen involvement in the identification and solution of problems within the community. The {NAME OF THE AGENCY} will provide professional, knowledgeable, and focused law enforcement services to ensure the safety and well being of all people, while promoting individual responsibility and community commitment. **Our officers will work with compassion and respect as we assist victims of crime** and form partnerships to organize strategies, which reduce crime, the fear of crime, and improve the quality of life. As we work toward these goals we do so remembering: Our greatest asset is our personnel; our greatest strength is our partnership with the community.*

---

<sup>5</sup> Beaverton (OR) Police Department revised mission statement

<sup>6</sup> Mundelein (IL) Police Department revised mission statement

# HANDOUT



## SOME DO'S AND DON'TS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH VICTIMS<sup>1</sup>

### DO

- Attempt foremost to communicate respect, trust, support, and confidence to the victim.
- Give victims time to tell what happened and describe how they are feeling in their own words.
- Where possible, give victims back the control the offender took away by letting them decide when and where to talk.
- Reassure victims that their reactions are normal and natural. Let the victim know that any feelings of anger, distress, frustration, fear, etc. are not uncommon.
- Listen to the victim share his or her experience if he or she wants to talk about the crime and its impact. Validate his or her experience with empathy and support.
- Be encouraging, but not unrealistic, about the duration of the recovery process or the complexity of the criminal justice system.
- Be alert for opportunities to stress the victim's qualities and strengths (without being patronizing).
- Ask for assistance from a supervisor if a situation appears to be too difficult to handle yourself.
- Recognize that mistakes will be made, but that you will improve your communication skills by learning from your mistakes.
- Understand that many victims will have extreme difficulty reconstructing their lives after a violent crime and that some may never recover from the tragedy.
- Accept the fact that you may never know whether a victim follows through with your recommendations.
- Have information and a referral system with names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mails, and Web sites for appropriate referrals.
- Offer to make referral calls/contacts for further information on behalf of the victim to ensure that a connection is actually made for the victim.

### DON'T

- Be judgmental or blame the victim for the crime that was committed against him or her.
- Try to frame the victim's experience to any possibly similar experiences, including your own. It is essential to individualize each victim, each crime, and each victim's reaction to that crime.
- Be "overly-helpful" by making decisions and choices for victims. Since no victim chooses to be victimized or has control over a violent act committed against him or her, the ability for victims to regain control over their lives and make decisions affecting their lives becomes very important.
- "Second guess" how the victim reacted to the crime, either at the time it was occurring or in the aftermath of the violent act.
- Shy away from the victim or avoid listening about his or her reaction to the crime. Listening and validating those experiences and emotions are critical to a victim's reconstruction after a crime.
- Become defensive, arrogant, or get into an argument with a victim.
- Become flustered by the victim's anxiety or urgency. One of the most important things is that you must remain calm, even in a crisis. Remember that your anxiety may be apparent to the victim.
- Be discouraged if you feel your conversation has been unsuccessful. You are not expected to solve most problems with a single conversation.
- Be afraid of silence. Use it constructively. Don't talk more than the victim.
- Expect to be a psychotherapist, nor to know all the right answers. Your job is to listen and assist the victim to the degree possible in handling his or her immediate issues.
- Take sides against a victim who has had difficult experiences with the criminal or juvenile justice system. You must work to solve problems and assure the victim that you will do your best to address their identified needs. Avoid talking critically about allied professionals at all costs!

<sup>1</sup> Louise Kaufman-Yavitz (N.D.), *Some Common Do's and Don'ts*. St. Louis, MO.

Anne Seymour, *Do's and Don'ts in Supporting Victims of Crime*. Unpublished (1998).

Ed Stout (N.D.), *Victim First Aid*. St. Louis, MO.

*The original documents were insignificantly modified for inclusion into this publication.*



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME (OVC) AT THE OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

**Joye Frost**  
Acting Director

**Meg Morrow**  
Attorney Advisor

## IACP EXECUTIVE STAFF

**Daniel N. Rosenblatt**  
Executive Director

**John R. Firman**  
Director, Research Center Directorate

**James W. McMahon**  
Deputy Executive Director/Chief of Staff

## IACP PROJECT STAFF

**Jeff Ebersole**  
Captain  
Loudoun County (VA) Sheriff's Office  
Project Manager/IACP Special Fellow

**Keely McCarthy**  
Project Coordinator

**Suzanne Jordan**  
Former Project Manager

**Michael Spochart**  
Lieutenant  
U.S. Capitol Police  
Research Fellow

**Jeff Harrington**  
Former Project Coordinator/Acting Project Manager

**Irene Romashkan**  
Senior Project Specialist

**Gregory Camp**  
Acting Project Assistant

## IACP EDITORS

**Aviva Kurash**  
Project Manager

**Nancy Turner**  
Senior Program Manager

**Michael Rizzo**  
Project Manager



## SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS, ADVISORS AND CONSULTANTS

### **Chris Lamberger**

Senior Training Officer/Firearms Range Master  
Beaverton (OR) Police Department

### **Tim Roberts**

Captain  
Beaverton (OR) Police Department

### **Michelle Harrold**

Management Analyst  
Beaverton (OR) Police Department

### **Steven Brochu**

Captain  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC) Police Department

### **Timothy Danchess**

Major  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC) Police Department

### **Mike Campagna**

Captain  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC) Police Department

### **Jimmy Fields**

Captain  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC) Police Department

### **Kobee Moore**

Officer  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC) Police Department

### **Raymond J. Rose**

Chief of Police  
Mundelein (IL) Police Department

### **Michael O'Brien**

Deputy Chief  
Mundelein (IL) Police Department

### **Larry G. Thoren**

Chief of Police  
Hastings (NE) Police Department  
Chair  
IACP Victims Services Committee

### **David Porter**

Captain  
City of Flint (MI) Police Department

### **Michael Shiraishi**

Sergeant  
San Diego (CA) Police Department

### **Thomas Oetinger**

Chief of Police (Ret.)  
Laconia (NH) Police Department

### **Carroll Ann Ellis**

Director of Victim Services  
Fairfax County (VA) Police Department

### **Krystal Fitzpatrick**

Director  
Police Training Institute (PTI)  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

### **Coralyn (Cora) Beem**

Associate Director  
Police Training Institute (PTI)  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

### **Tom Gibbons**

Police Training Institute (PTI)  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

### **Kim Bright**

Writer/Editor

### **Brian McClure**

Chief Operating Officer  
Breckenridge Design Group, Inc.

### **Monica Rokus**

Art Director  
Breckenridge Design Group, Inc.