

Module 2: Values and Responses to Victims

Time Required

1 hour, 10 minutes

Purpose

This module helps participants become aware of their own attitudes, biases, and beliefs and how these affect their responses to victims of crime.

Lessons

1. Exploring Values (30 minutes)
2. Self-Awareness Inventory (20 minutes)
3. Values and Roles (20 minutes)

Learning Objectives

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:

- State their own values, morals, and ethics.
- State how these attitudes and beliefs influence their responses to victims of crime.

Equipment and Materials

- Assault Victim vignette (assault_victim.mpg on Ethics in Victim Services CD).

Participant Worksheets

- Worksheet 2.1, Assault Victim Vignette
- Worksheet 2.2, Self-Awareness Inventory
- Worksheet 2.3, Domestic Violence Scenario

Instructor Worksheet

- Worksheet 2.2, Self-Awareness Inventory (Instructor Only)

Preparation

- View the Assault Victim Vignette.
- Review the Self-Awareness Inventory.

Introduce the Module



Show **Visual 2-1** and present the objectives for the module.

1. Exploring Values (30 minutes)



Show **Visual 2-2** and present the following key points about delivering services:

- Providing quality services to victims of crime depends on many factors but begins with the personality, moral orientation, and the subjective beliefs and opinions of the victim service provider.
- Victim services are about relationships between providers and crime victims.
- Therefore, the personal values of the provider and the ethical codes that support these values will directly influence the provider's interactions in the relationship.



Show **Visuals 2-3 and 2-4** and tell participants that the three points on the visual will be used to explore values and responses to victims:

- The distinction between personal and professional values.
- The importance of self-awareness of one's personal values.
- Keeping personal attitudes from interfering with professional services.



Show **Visual 2-5** and introduce the activity.



Activity: What Are Values, Morals, and Ethics?

1. *Ask participants for a definition of values. Post the responses on the flip chart. Allow 2 minutes for this activity.*
2. *Ask participants for a definition of morals. Post the responses on the flip chart. Allow 2 minutes for this activity.*
3. *Ask participants for a definition of ethics. Post the responses on the flip chart. Allow 2 minutes for this activity.*



Show **Visual 2-6** and tell participants that for the purposes of this course these definitions for the terms *values*, *morals*, and *ethics* will be used.



Show Visual 2-7 and present the following key points about the victim service provider's character, commitment, and personal viewpoint:

- It is important that victim service providers understand their own definition of a morally good person.
- They must understand how their personal values may influence their response to challenging situations, how their religious beliefs may influence their judgments, and how their attitudes toward the rights of individuals may come into conflict with the broader principles of justice.
- Victim service providers must also understand how willing they are to act on their values and uphold their personal ethics if they are challenged.
- Being aware of the need for action, determining the right course of action, and having the emotional and intellectual commitment to follow through are all important factors when assessing personal values.
- Professional values grow from the same basic desire as personal values (to do no harm, help others, and make the world a better place), but they are different in focus and content.
- Any conflict between a victim service provider's personal and professional values could affect the ethical decisionmaking process and compromise the capacity to serve effectively in a particular circumstance.
- Personal values must be recognized and dealt with appropriately. A provider's character and commitment, motivation, and personal viewpoint are all authentic components of the ethical decisionmaking process.



Show Visual 2-8 and introduce the following activity.



Activity: Assault Victim Vignette

1. **Direct participants to Worksheet 2.1, Assault Victim Vignette, in their Participant's Manual. Ask them to read the background for the vignette they are about to see.**
2. **Show the Assault Victim Vignette (Assault_victim.mpg on Ethics in Victim Services CD).**
3. **Ask participants to answer the questions on the Worksheet on their own. Allow 5 minutes.**



Show Visuals 2-9 and 2-10 and lead a discussion of each question

with the group. Allow 10 minutes for this activity.

2. Self-Awareness Inventory (20 minutes)



Show Visual 2-11 and introduce the lesson.



Show Visual 2-12 and introduce the following activity.



Activity: Self-Awareness Inventory

Tell participants that it is now time to take a closer look at our values and beliefs. There are no right or wrong answers.

- 1. Direct participants to Worksheet 2.2, Self-Awareness Inventory, in the Participant Manual. Ask them to take the inventory. Allow 5 minutes for this activity.*
- 2. Facilitate a discussion based on participants' choices, using some of the points to consider from Worksheet 2.2, Self Awareness Inventory (Instructor Only). Allow 10 minutes.*

3. Values and Roles (20 minutes)



Show Visual 2-13 and introduce the lesson.



Show Visual 2-14 and introduce the following activity.



Activity: Domestic Violence Scenario

- 1. Direct participants to Worksheet 2.3, Domestic Violence Scenario, in their Participant's Manual.*
- 2. Show Visual 2-15. Form four groups of participants and assign one role to each group.*
- 3. Tell the participants that each group will respond to the scenario as the character in their assigned role.*
- 4. Ask participants (in their groups) to read the scenario and develop a*

response. Allow 10 minutes.

5. *Ask each group to present their response based on their assigned role. Allow 20 minutes (5 minutes per group).*
6. *Show Visual 2-16 and facilitate a discussion using the questions. Allow 10 minutes.*



Show Visual 2-17 and review the objectives for the module.

Worksheet 2.1

Assault Victim Vignette

Scenario

Julia Sullivan is a law enforcement victim advocate. Julia has taken Charlotte Thompson to the emergency room for treatment of injuries resulting from an assault.

Julia knows Charlotte Thompson because of Charlotte's prior history of physical and sexual assaults. In the last year, Charlotte had recanted her story of one violent assault as the case moved through the legal system.

Julia is trying to complete a compensation form to help Charlotte with her medical expenses.

Questions

- What are your reactions to the vignette?

- Do you have any concerns or hesitations about working with this client?

- What values cause you to feel this way?

- How might your feelings affect your professional relationship with Charlotte Thompson?

- What can you do to put Charlotte's interest first?

For your consideration:

What other challenging victims have you dealt with and how did you handle the situation?

Worksheet 2.2

Self-Awareness Inventory*

The following five questions will help you evaluate your own values, attitudes, and beliefs. For each question, circle 1 if you strongly disagree, 5 if you strongly agree, or 2, 3, or 4 for points along the continuum.

Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. This is an inventory designed to get you thinking about your values, attitudes, and beliefs so that you may better serve your clients.

1. Members of a helping profession such as victim assistance should refrain from getting personally involved with victims they work with.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. A higher spiritual power should guide our behavior and thinking.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. Women are rarely violent.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. The needs of victims must sometimes override a supervisor's directive.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. Culture and race are not factors in a professional helping relationship. As human beings, we are more similar than different.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

* This inventory was adapted from the inventory in Victim Assistance *Online* (VAT *Online*) at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/vatonline>.

Worksheet 2.2 (Instructor Only)

Self Awareness Inventory

Statement 1: Members of a helping profession such as victim assistance should refrain from getting too personally involved with victims they work with.

Points to consider:

- For some people “personally involved” may mean being friendly or courteous with a client, while for others it may mean phoning someone at home in the evening to ask about the client’s personal relationships and to inquire into ways the victim service provider can be helpful that go beyond the scope of the job.
- A romantic relationship with a client is indisputably unethical; however, how should one classify grocery shopping with a client, or babysitting for a client while she is interviewing for jobs?
- Some actions that seem compassionate and genuinely motivated can result in severe consequences for the victim service provider, client, and agency.
- The intimate nature of the provider-client relationship, the “caretaker” role of the victim service provider, and client vulnerability are factors that may lead to an inappropriate level of personal involvement with a client.
- Inappropriate emotional involvement with a client may blur objectivity and impact the process of ethical decisionmaking.
- To act in the “best interest of your clients” requires your maintaining professional boundaries under any circumstance.

What can you do to assure that you are providing victim services in the best manner possible?

To help you determine when your involvement with a client is too personal:

- Professional boundaries based on the ethical standards can help assure that you do not become too personally involved. Set and maintain these boundaries. Evaluate your conduct based on these ethical standards
- If the relationship with your client seems similar to relationships with family and friends, you may have crossed a professional boundary. Seek guidance from your supervisor on how to proceed.

Frequent exchange among coworkers about specific interactions with clients can be helpful when there are uncertainties.

Statement 2: A higher spiritual power should guide our behavior and thinking.

Points to consider:

- An individual's religious and spiritual beliefs can be central to one's personal identity. These beliefs may shape one's sense of morality and set of values, and therefore potentially impact the victim service provider-client interaction.
- The victim service provider must remain committed to the mission of his or her agency and be aware of situations in which his or her spiritual beliefs conflict with the agency's objectives. For example, one's spiritual beliefs may define compassion as "always putting others first, and helping those in need." This belief may dictate that "if anyone needs money, there is an obligation to give it to him or her under any circumstance." This belief conflicts with an ethical standard that must be maintained.
- It is perfectly acceptable for a victim service provider to engage in spiritual or religious practices or integrate beliefs into his/her professional identity. However, he or she must be aware of the potential influence of these beliefs.

What can you do to assure that you are providing victim services in the best manner possible?

- You are contracted to uphold the ethical standards of your place of employment. Be constantly aware of conflicts between your spiritual/religious beliefs and professional ethical standards.
- If a particular case creates considerable moral conflict and resolution is unattainable, the best option may be removal from the case.

It is not in the best interest of the client to act in a manner that contradicts one's personal standards. Guidance from a supervisor is recommended when challenged by a particular case.

Statement 3: Women are rarely violent.

Points to consider:

- Stereotypes and generalizations have the potential to negatively impact a client and/or individuals associated with the client. These biases must be acknowledged and eliminated.
- This practice can lead to inaccurate assessments of the client's presenting characteristics, which may introduce limitations in the treatment/counseling plan. For example, what if a woman's violent nature were in actuality a symptom requiring therapeutic intervention?

- In this specific example, one must also consider the victims of the “violent woman.” Imagine the impact of such an assumption on the battered male client. The victim service provider may show decreased levels of empathy for the male victim of female violence. The victim service provider may further assume that a child victim of domestic violence should automatically remain in the care of the mother rather than the father, when the mother may in fact be the primary abuser.

What can you do to assure that you are providing victim services in the best manner possible?

- Your assessment of clients should be “case specific” without assumptions, categorizations, or generalizations.
- Be in tune to initial reactions to clients. Do you immediately assume anything about the individual?
- If you do recognize any bias, do not hesitate to discuss the problem with a supervisor or coworker. Although such conversations may be quite uncomfortable, you should act in the best manner possible for the client.

Stereotypes may be difficult to overcome because of years of socialization. A change in perception may not happen immediately. Discussions with supervisors and coworkers will facilitate this process.

Statement 4: The needs of victims must sometimes override the supervisor's directive.

Points to consider:

- The ethically responsible victim service provider must simultaneously acknowledge ethical obligations to the client and the agency.
- A victim service provider may be experienced, aware of relevant ethical standards, and confident that he is acting in the best interest of the client, and yet be challenged by a supervisor on the best course of action. The supervisor's suggestion might even seem unethical.
- One might immediately assume that the most ethical thing to do is to meet the client's needs and ignore the supervisor. However, such action may create tension within the agency.
- Though sometimes challenging, the goals of alliance building and conflict resolution among agency staff are ethical objectives, which ultimately serve the client and should be a priority.

What can you do to assure that you are providing victim services in the best manner possible?

- Don't engage in discussions about coworkers with clients.
- The mission of agency must be supported by presenting a “unified front” to clients.
- When there are disputes among personnel, an appropriate third party should be invited to serve as a mediator before any plan is discussed with the client. This policy allows for a sharing of different perspectives in the presence of someone who can give an objective assessment of the case at hand.

Statement 5: Culture and race are not factors in a professional helping relationship. As human beings we are more similar than different.



Points to consider:

- Race and culture are central to one’s personal experience and worldview. The victim service provider is ethically obligated to take a racially and culturally sensitive approach to all client interactions.
- The race and culture of both the victim service provider and client may impact the victim service provider-client dynamic.
- It should not be assumed that the victim service provider/client relationship is beneficial only if both parties are of the same race and/or culture.
- “Color-blindness” is not an ideal approach to interacting with individuals from diverse races and cultures.
- It is often assumed that adopting a “color-blind” strategy will—
 - ♦ Nurture a “connection,” which is important when building rapport with a client.
 - ♦ Avoid the impossible challenge of understanding the unique qualities of all cultures.
 - ♦ Eliminate the use of stereotypes when attempting to understand an individual from a race or culture that is not your own.
- The above assumptions may express some truths. However, adopting a consistent standard of race and culture blindness has the potential to be of great disservice to the client.

What can you do to assure that you are providing victim services in the best manner possible?

- Seek to develop an understanding of the races and ethnic backgrounds of the client population you serve. This goal may be reached through communication with experienced coworkers and dialogue with members of a particular community.
- It is important to hear and affirm each client's reported experience as a member of a specific race or culture.
- Be aware that members of the same group may have different experiences.

Understand your racial and cultural identity and acknowledge components that may impact relationships with clients.

Module 2

Values and Responses to Victims

Learning Objectives

- ❖ State your own values, morals, and ethics.
- ❖ State how these attitudes and beliefs influence your responses to victims of crime.

2-2

Delivering Services

- ❖ Begins with personality, moral orientation, and beliefs of provider
- ❖ Involves relationships between providers and victims
- ❖ Requires awareness that personal values and ethical codes of provider influence interactions

2-3

Exploring Values

2-4

Exploring Values

- ❖ Distinction between personal and professional values
- ❖ Importance of self-awareness
- ❖ Keeping personal attitudes from interfering with professional services

2-5

Activity

What Are Values, Morals, and Ethics?

2-6

Definition of Terms

- ❖ **VALUES** are the ideals or beliefs to which an individual or group aspires.
- ❖ **MORALS** relate to making decisions between right and wrong.
- ❖ **ETHICS** is the articulation of standards of behavior that reflect those values or morals.

2-7

Behind Ethical Decisions Are . .

- ❖ Your character
- ❖ Your commitment
- ❖ Your personal viewpoint

2-8

Activity

Assault Victim Vignette

Worksheet 2.1

2-9

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Any hesitations about working with this client?
- ❖ What values may cause you to feel this way?
- ❖ How might your feelings affect your professional relationship with the victim?

2-10

Discussion Questions

- ❖ What can you do to put the client's interest first?
- ❖ Consider: what other challenging victims have you dealt with, and how did you handle the situation?

2-11

Self-Awareness Inventory

2-12

Activity

Self-Awareness Inventory

Worksheet 2.2

2-13

Values and Roles

2-14

Activity

Domestic Violence Scenario

Worksheet 2.3

2-15

Scenario Roles

- ❖ Group 1: Law enforcement victim assistance provider
- ❖ Group 2: Child protective services caseworker
- ❖ Group 3: Domestic violence program victim assistance provider
- ❖ Group 4: Prosecutor's office victim assistance provider

2-16

Discussion Questions

- ❖ How does assuming the perspective of another role affect your response to the victim?
- ❖ Would you have responded differently if you had been in your role as victim assistance provider?

2-17

Review of Module Learning Objectives

- ❖ State your own values, morals, and ethics.
- ❖ State how your attitudes and beliefs influence your responses to victims of crime.



2-18
