



U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
*Office for Victims of Crime*

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# Ethics in Victim Services

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Instructor's Manual

March 2009

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## Acknowledgments

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The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



## **Instructor's Overview**

### **Training Goal**

This training, *Ethics in Victim Services*, explores common ethical conflicts and how to apply ethical standards and decisionmaking to resolve them. There are several goals associated with this training:

- To create self-awareness and understanding of how attitudes and beliefs influence responses to victims of crime.
- To become familiar with and be able to apply the Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers developed by the National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium.
- To recognize when a person is acting in an ethically questionable way.
- To use a standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.

The participants will learn information and skills related to:

- Values and responses to victims.
- Ethics in victim services.
- Standard decisionmaking process.

### **Target Audience**

The training is designed for those who work in the field of victim services with at least 2 years of experience. The training material is useful for both supervisors and direct services staff.

To be most effective and best use the participatory techniques in the training, enrollment should be limited to 40 participants.

## Instructor Requirements

Instructors for this course should have:

- Practical experience as a victim advocate/counselor.
- Experience conducting training, particularly experiential and interactive (rather than lecture-based) programs.

## Length of the Training

This training is designed to be conducted in 1 day.

## Using This Instructor's Manual

This instructor's manual is a template to help trainers prepare for instruction and guide the delivery of training. It details the information to be discussed and how to introduce, conduct, and process group activities. It also contains a copy of all visuals (see *Using the Visuals*, below).

Each trainer should draw on her or his knowledge and expertise to enrich the training and provide relevant examples and illustrations, while maintaining the integrity of the training design. To successfully conduct this training, you should become very familiar with all of the concepts and processing notes in this manual as well as the Participant's Manual.

The Instructor's Manual is organized into this overview and the following six modules.

Module 1: Introduction and Training Overview

Module 2: Values and Responses to Victims

Module 3: Ethics in Victim Services

Module 4: Standard Decisionmaking Process

Module 5: Case Studies

Module 6: Closing and Evaluations

An outline is provided at the beginning of each module. The outlines include specific learning objectives, a list of required equipment and materials, preparation instructions, and notification of time required to complete the module. All information and activities within the modules are presented in a timed sequence and have been chosen to help participants achieve the learning objectives for each module.



The following cues appear throughout this manual and are intended to help you determine what to say, when to show slides or overheads, and when and how to conduct activities.



The group activity icon in the margin and the ***bold italic type*** indicate directions for you to follow when leading activities.



This icon and the directive “**show visual**” followed by a number, means that you should show a specific slide or overhead; the text immediately following that directive is intended as an explanation of the information contained on the slide or overhead.

The directives “tell participants.....” or “explain.....” are used to indicate that information following the directives should be verbalized to participants. Paraphrase this information as you present comments or brief lectures. You can use the visuals to guide the brief lectures.

## Using the Visuals

The visuals for this training are designed to provide the trainer with an outline that can be used to guide the activities in each module. The visuals include “talking points” for use during lectures as well as cues for the trainer to conduct an activity, ask for questions from the participants, or transition to the next module. As mentioned above, the directive “show visual” followed by a number, appears throughout the Instructor’s Manual. Within each module, the visuals are numbered sequentially starting with 1-1 (indicating the first slide for the first module). For clarity, the visual number appears at the bottom right corner of the slide. This allows the trainer to determine, at a glance, both the module number and the number of the particular visual within that module.

## Training Approach

The training design is based on the principles of adult learning and active training. Adults learn best when:

- Training focuses on building skills rather than just transferring information.
- They are involved in meaningful activities to practice new skills.
- They can draw on and apply their own knowledge and experience to the training.
- They see the relevance to their jobs and their lives of what they are learning.

The training also incorporates a variety of methods and activities to appeal to visual learners (those who learn best by seeing), auditory learners (those who learn best by hearing), and kinesthetic learners (those who learn best by moving and doing).

## **Equipment and Materials**

Each module includes a list of required equipment and materials. In addition to each module-specific list, the following equipment and materials are used consistently throughout the training.

- Instructor's Manual.
- Participant's Manual.
- Visuals, which are provided in a PowerPoint presentation on CD-ROM.
- Laptop PC (with PowerPoint), LCD projector and screen (or blank space on wall for projection), or overhead projector and screen.
- Tear sheets and easel.
- Multi-colored thick markers for use with a flip chart; dark colors should be used so participants can see the writing on the tear sheets easily.
- Name tags (for participants and instructor).
- Pens (one per participant).

Additionally, for each module there may be specific equipment and materials that are required to conduct the module. These are listed in the outline that precedes each module and are also included in the summary table at the end of this overview.

## **Worksheets**

Each module includes worksheets that are used by participants during one of the activities in a module. The Worksheets are labeled sequentially by module (e.g., Worksheet 2.3 is the third worksheet in Module 2; Worksheet 5.2 is the second worksheet in Module 5). A complete list of worksheets is provided at the end of this overview.

## **Room Layout**

If at all possible, try to avoid a traditional classroom style layout (a series of rows) in the training room. This type of layout makes it more difficult for participants to see and hear the trainer and the audiovisual equipment, and to interact with each other. Instead, try to organize the room so participants are seated in a series of small groups. This type of layout encourages discussion and participation among participants. Remember that you

will need a small table at the front of the room for your training supplies, as well as a larger table at the side or back of the room for supplementary materials for the participants.

## **Preparation for Training Delivery**

In addition to studying this manual and making preparations described for each module, be sure you visit the training room prior to the training. Confirm the layout of the training room, including location of furniture and audiovisual equipment, and determine if you need additional tables or chairs. Make sure all electrical outlets are functioning, and appropriate extension cords and power cords are available. Check to see if there are shades on the windows and whether lighting can be adjusted, to control any glare on the audiovisual equipment. Test all equipment to be sure it is functioning properly.



**Instructor Preparation - Worksheets, Equipment/Materials**

Module	Worksheets	Equipment / Materials	Preparation
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 1.1, Introductions and Expectations</li></ul>		
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 2.1, Assault Victim Vignette</li><li>▪ 2.2, Self-Awareness Inventory</li><li>▪ 2.2, Self-Awareness Inventory (Instructor)</li><li>▪ 2.3, Domestic Violence Scenario</li></ul>	Assault Victim vignette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ View the Assault Victim vignette</li><li>▪ Review the Self-Awareness Inventory.</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 3.1, Is it Ethical?</li><li>▪ 3.2, Identify the Relevant NVASC Standards</li><li>▪ 3.2, Identify the Relevant NVASC Standards (Instructor)</li><li>▪ 3.3, NVASC Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers</li></ul>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Review the five scenarios for the Is it Ethical? activity.</li><li>▪ Review the six scenarios and the discussions for the Identify the Relevant NVASC Standard activity.</li><li>▪ For the Identify the Relevant NVASC Standard activity, create one tear sheet for each scenario with the name of the scenario (e.g., "Sue and Connie").</li></ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 4.1, The Decisionmaking Process</li><li>▪ Handout 4.1, Decisionmaking Process: Steps 1-6</li><li>▪ 4.2, Disclosing Victim Vignette</li><li>▪ 4.3, Common Ethical Issues</li></ul>	Disclosing Victim vignette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ View the Disclosing Victim vignette.</li><li>▪ Prepare a tear sheet with the heading "Potential Benefits."</li></ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 5.1, Decisionmaking Process</li><li>▪ 5.2, Case Study</li><li>▪ 5.2, Case Study (Instructor)</li></ul>	None	Read the case studies.
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 6.1, Brainstorming Ideas: What Can You Do When You Get Back?</li></ul>	None	Create a tear sheet with the heading "Ideas."

**Special Instructions:**

- Copy Handout 4.1, The Decisionmaking Process: Steps 1-6 – 1 per participant.
- Copy and laminate NVASC Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers – 1 per participant.

## ***NVASC Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers***

Developed by the National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium (NVASC)

For additional information about the NVASC, go to  
[www.sc.edu/ccfs/training/victimstandards.pdf](http://www.sc.edu/ccfs/training/victimstandards.pdf).

### **SECTION I: Scope of Services**

**ETHICAL STANDARD 1.1:** The victim assistance provider understands his or her legal responsibilities, limitations, and the implications of his/her actions within the service delivery setting, and performs duties in accord with laws, regulations, policies, and legislated rights of persons served.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 1.2:** The victim assistance provider accurately represents his or her professional title, qualifications, and/or credentials in relationships with persons served and in public advertising.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 1.3:** The victim assistance provider maintains a high standard of professional conduct.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 1.4:** The victim assistance provider achieves and maintains a high level of professional competence.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 1.5:** The victim assistance provider who provides a service for a fee informs a person served about the fee at the initial session or meeting.

### **SECTION II: Coordinating within the Community**

**ETHICAL STANDARD 2.1:** The victim assistance provider conducts relationships with colleagues and other professionals in such a way as to promote mutual respect, confidence, and improvement of services.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 2.2:** The victim assistance provider shares knowledge and encourages proficiency in victim assistance among colleagues and other professionals.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 2.3:** The victim assistance provider serves the public interest by contributing to the improvement of systems that impact victims of crime.

### **SECTION III: Direct Services**

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.1:** The victim assistance provider respects and attempts to protect the victim's civil rights.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.2:** The victim assistance provider recognizes the interests of the person served as a primary responsibility.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.3:** The victim assistance provider refrains from behaviors that communicate victim blame, suspicion regarding victim accounts of the crime, condemnation for past behavior, or other judgmental, anti-victim sentiments.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.4:** The victim assistance provider respects the victim's right to self-determination.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.5:** The victim assistance provider preserves the confidentiality of information provided by the person served or acquired from other sources before, during, and after the course of the professional relationship.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.6:** The victim assistance provider avoids conflicts of interest and discloses any possible conflict to the program or person served as well as to prospective programs or persons served.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.7:** The victim assistance provider terminates a professional relationship with a victim when the victim is not likely to benefit from continued services.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.8:** The victim assistance provider does not engage in personal relationships with persons served which exploit professional trust or could impair the victim assistance provider's objectivity and professional judgment.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.9:** The victim assistance provider does not discriminate against a victim or another staff member on the basis of race/ethnicity, language, sex/gender, age, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, social class, economic status, education, marital status, religious affiliation, residency, or HIV status.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.10:** The victim assistance provider furnishes opportunities for colleague victim assistance providers to seek appropriate services when traumatized by a criminal event or client interaction.

### **SECTION IV: Administration and Evaluation**

**ETHICAL STANDARD 4.1:** The victim assistance provider reports to appropriate authorities the conduct of any colleague or other professional (including self) that constitutes mistreatment of a person served or brings the profession into dishonor.



# Module 1: Introduction and Training Overview

## Time Required

1 hour

## Purpose

This module introduces the instructor and participants, sets expectations for the course, and presents the course objectives and agenda.

## Lessons

1. Introduction and Module Objectives (10 minutes)
2. Participant Introductions (35 minutes)
3. Course Objectives and Agenda (15 minutes)

## Learning Objectives

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

- Identify at least one other participant and his/her role in providing services to victims of crime.
- State the course objectives.

## Equipment and Materials

No special equipment or materials are required.

## Participant Worksheets

- Worksheet 1.1, Introductions
- Worksheet 1.2, Expectations

## Preparation

- Place a Participant's Manual, a highlighter, Post-It flags, and a pen at each participant position in the room.

## 1. Introduction and Module Objectives (10 minutes)



**Show Visual 1-1.** and introduce the module and review the objectives for it.

**Review** the purpose and objectives for this module.

This module introduces the instructor and participants, sets expectations for the course, and presents the course objectives and agenda.

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

- Identify at least one other participant and his/her role in providing services to victims of crime.
- State the course objectives.

## 2. Participant Introductions (35 minutes)



**Show Visual 1-2** and introduce the activity.



**Activity: Introductions and Setting Expectations**

1. *Ask each participant to find a partner. Each is to spend a few minutes interviewing the other. They are to:*
  - ♦ *Find out their partner's name, the organization they work for, their role in providing services to victims of crime, and what they like best about their job in providing services to victims.*
  - ♦ *Find out two unique characteristics about their partner.*
  - ♦ *Find out one expectation their partner has for the training.*

*They can record their answers about their partners on Worksheet 1.1, Introductions and Expectations.*

2. *Ask each participant to introduce their partner. As they are doing this, record the expectations on a tear sheet.*
3. *At the end of the introductions, review the expectations and point out those that are covered in the training and those that are not.*

### **3. Course Objectives and Agenda (10 minutes)**



**Show Visuals 1-3, 1-4, and 1-5** and present the objectives for the course.



**Show Visual 1-6** and present the agenda for the course. Explain where each objective is covered in the agenda.

As you review the agenda, point out the modules in which the various expectations will be covered. Review the contents of the Participant's Manual with the participants.

### **Conclude Module**



**Show Visual 1-7** and review the objectives for the module.



## Worksheet 1.1

### Introductions and Expectations

1. Your partner's name:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. The organization your partner works for:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Your partner's role in providing services to victims of crime:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What your partner likes best about his or her job in providing services to victims:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Two unique characteristics of your partner:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. One expectation for this training:



# Ethics in Victim Services

## Welcome!




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# Module 1

## Introduction and Training Overview

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# Learning Objectives

- ❖ Identify at least one other participant and his/her role in providing services to victims of crime.
- ❖ State the course objectives.

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A presentation slide with a dark blue header and footer. The header contains the word "Activity" in white italicized font. The main content area is white and contains the text "Introductions and Setting Expectations" in bold dark blue font, followed by "Worksheet 1.1" in bold dark blue font. The footer contains the text "1-3" in white font. On the left side, there are three vertical bars of increasing height from left to right, colored light blue, medium blue, and dark blue.

1-3

[illegible]

# Course Objectives

- ❖ Create self-awareness and understanding of how attitudes and beliefs influence responses to victims of crime.

1-4

1-4

[illegible]

# Course Objectives

- ❖ Learn the *Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers* developed by the National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium (NVASC).

1-5

1-5

[illegible]



## Course Objectives

- ❖ Recognize when a person is acting in an ethically questionable way.
- ❖ Use a standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.

1-6

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## Course Agenda

- Module 1: Introduction and Training Overview
- Module 2: Values and Responses to Victims
- Module 3: Ethics in Victim Services
- Module 4: Standard Decisionmaking Process for Ethical Decisions
- Module 5: Case Studies
- Module 6: Closing and Evaluations

1-7

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## Review of Module Learning Objectives

- ❖ Identify at least one other participant and his/her role in providing services to victims of crime.
- ❖ State the course objectives.



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## 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

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

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

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**3. Women are rarely violent.**

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

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

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

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**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

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\* 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

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## Learning Objectives

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

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## 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

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Exploring Values

2-4

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Exploring Values

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

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Activity

*What Are Values, Morals, and Ethics?*

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## 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.

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## Behind Ethical Decisions Are . .

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

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## Activity

*Assault Victim Vignette*

*Worksheet 2.1*

2-9

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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?

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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?

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Self-Awareness Inventory

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Activity

Self-Awareness Inventory

Worksheet 2.2

2-13

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Values and Roles

2-14

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Activity

Domestic Violence Scenario

Worksheet 2.3

2-15

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## 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

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## 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?

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## 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.



U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
Office for Victims of Crime



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## Module 3: Ethics in Victim Services

### Time Required

1 hour, 45 minutes (including 30-minute optional lesson)

### Purpose

This module introduces participants to the concept of ethics and the Ethical Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers developed by the National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium (NVASC).

### Lessons

1. Ethics and You (30 minutes)
2. National Victim Assistance Standards (75 minutes)
3. Ethical Organizations (30 minutes) **Do this lesson only as time allows.**

### Learning Objectives

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

- Recognize when a person is acting in an ethically questionable way.
- State at least one of the NVASC's ethical standards for victim assistance programs and providers and how it is used in an organization other than one's own.
- State at least one way to make ethics and standards part of an organizational culture.

### Equipment and Materials

No special equipment or materials are required.

### Participant Worksheets

- Worksheet 3.1, Is It Ethical?
- Worksheet 3.2, Identify the Relevant NVASC Standards
- Worksheet 3.3, NVASC Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers

## Instructor Worksheet

- Worksheet 3.2, Identify the Relevant NVASC Standards (Instructor Only)

## Preparation

- Review the five scenarios for the *Is It Ethical?* activity.
- Review the six scenarios and the discussions for the *Identify the Relevant NVASC Standard* activity.
- For the *Identify the Relevant NVASC Standard* activity, create one sheet of flip chart paper for each scenario with the name of the scenario (for example, Sue and Connie).

## Introduce the Module



Show **Visual 3-1** and present the objectives for the module.

### 1. Ethics and You (30 minutes)



Show **Visual 3-2** and introduce the lesson.



Show **Visual 3-3** and introduce the following activity.



*Activity: Is it Ethical?*

1. *Ask participants to turn to Worksheet 3.1, Is it Ethical?, in their Participant's Manual.*
2. *Form five groups of participants and assign one of the scenarios to each group.*
3. *Direct each group to read the assigned scenario and determine whether the victim assistance provider in the scenario is acting ethically. Why or why not?*

*Allow 5 minutes for group discussion.*

4. *Ask each group to report back to the entire group.*
  - *Was the victim assistance provider acting in an ethically questionable manner?*
  - *Why or why not?*

*Allow each group 5 minutes to report.*

5. *Write the scenario number, victim service provider name, answer, and rationale on the flip chart.*
6. *At the end of the activity tell participants that you will re-visit the scenarios after learning the NVASC standards.*



Show **Visual 3-4** and present the following key points:

- Throughout history, philosophers and teachers have contemplated what behaviors are most valued and the distinction between right and wrong.
- Societies have developed systems of moral principles based on values.
- Values reflect how people should act towards each other.
- Moral principles are the foundation of ethics.
- Ethics are standards of right and wrong that guide human behavior.
- Ethics started with the ancient professions of medicine and law.
- Victim assistance started as a grassroots movement but is now evolving as an established profession.



**Show Visual 3-5** and present the following key points:

A code of ethics for a profession serves the following purposes:

- Safeguards the reputation of the profession.
- Protects the public from exploitation.
- Furthers the competent and responsible practice of the profession.



**Show Visual 3-6** and present the following key points:

The foundation for the victim assistance code of ethics includes:

- Values of client autonomy, privacy, and self-determination.
- Objectivity and abstention from abuse.
- Honesty and equity of service.
- Compassion and respect for individuals.
- Social responsibility and confidentiality.
- Working within one's range of competence.

## 2. National Victim Assistance Standards (75 minutes)



**Show Visual 3-7** and introduce the lesson.

Tell participants that this lesson addresses the NVASC standards and how they can be useful to victim assistance providers and managers.



**Show Visual 3-8** and present the following key points:

- The field of victim assistance has moved into a professional discipline from its grassroots beginnings.
- The field encompasses a wide diversity of individuals and organizations.
- Victim assistance services cover the entire range of the justice experience.



**Show Visual 3-9** and present the following key points:

- With the growth of the field came a call for greater accountability by victim assistance providers.
- The field is seen to be credible, worthwhile, and providing much-needed services.
- To meet this demand, the National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium (NVASC) was formed to help develop professional standards for the field.



**Show Visual 3-10** and present the following key points:

- NVASC was created in 2000 by the Office for Victims of Crime at the U. S. Department of Justice with the express purpose of developing model program, competency, and ethical standards of conduct for the field of victim assistance.
- NVASC researched existing standards in similar professions, polled the field of victim assistance, and utilized the expertise and experience of a representative and diverse core of victim assistance professionals.
- The result of this work is the *NVASC Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers* published by The Center for Child and Family Studies, College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina.
- The book *Ethics in Victim Services* is based on the NVASC model of ethical standards. It is designed to help victim assistance professionals identify, analyze, and resolve the many ethical dilemmas they face in their daily work. This book was used to develop this training.



Show Visuals 3-11 through 3-16 and discuss the NVASC standards.



Show Visual 3-17 and introduce the following activity.



*Activity: NVASC Standards in Your Organization*

1. Ask participants to pair up with someone who does not work in their organization. Using *Worksheet 3.3, NVASC Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers*, ask participants to read the *Ethical Standards 3.1 – 3.10*.
2. Ask each participant to choose one standard. Have the pair of participants:
  - Explain the standard chosen.
  - Explain how the standard applies to what they each do in their organizations.

*Allow 5 – 10 minutes for this activity.*

3. Ask for a few participants to share the standard they chose and explain how it applies to the work they do in their organization.



Show Visual 3-18 and introduce the following activity.



*Activity: Identify the Relevant NVASC Standards*

1. Tell participants they will now read the *NVASC Ethical Standards* and have an opportunity to apply them to a specific scenario.
2. Direct participants to *Worksheet 3.2, Identify the Relevant NVASC Standards*, in the *Participant's Manual* where they will find the six scenarios. Tell them that the *NVASC Ethical Standards* are included on *Worksheet 3.3, NVASC Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers*.
3. Form six groups of participants. Assign one scenario to each group.
4. Direct participants to read the *NVASC Ethical Standards* and then work in their groups to identify which standards are involved in their assigned scenario.

*Allow 15 minutes for this activity.*

**5. Ask groups to report on their assigned scenarios.**

- *For each scenario, have a group member read the scenario and list the relevant NVASC standards.*
- *Post relevant NVASC standards on the prepared flip chart page for the scenario.*
- *Ask participants if they would like to add any other standards.*
- *Ensure that the relevant standards on Trainer Worksheet 3.2, Identify the Relevant NVASC Standards Activity, are included if not identified by the group or other participants.*

*Allow 30 minutes for this activity, 5 minutes per group.*



**Show Visual 3-19** and remind participants about the *Is it Ethical?* activity. Turn the flip chart to those pages where you recorded the scenario number, victim service provider name, answer, and rationale for those scenarios. Discuss each scenario using the points on **Visual 3-19**.

***Tell participants that there often are “gray” areas in a situation and that the NVASC standards were created as guidelines.***

In the discussions, ensure that the following points are made for each scenario.

**Scenario 1 Betty**

Betty should do her best to avoid dual relationships that could impair her objectivity and professional judgment.

Standard 3.8

**Scenario 2 Marsha**

Marsha needs to realize that Jean has a right to self-determination and that Marsha should not be giving advice regarding legal issues.

Standards 1.1 and 3.4

**Scenario 3 Kevin**

If a client is suicidal or if there is a duty to warn, for example, exceptions to confidentiality can be made. Kevin should have warned Heidi up front of exceptions to confidentiality.

Standard 3.5

#### Scenario 4 Rebecca

Rebecca needs to recognize her limitations and make appropriate outside referrals. Part of professional competence is staying within defined responsibilities. Rebecca should consider whether fear of being perceived as racially biased influenced her decision. That would be a form of discrimination.

Standards 1.4 and 3.9

#### Scenario 5 Jeff

Confidentiality requires paperwork and any other information about a victim should be kept secure.

Standard 3.5

### 3. Ethical Organizations (30 minutes – optional if time allows)



Show Visual 3-20 and introduce the lesson.



Show Visual 3-21 and introduce the following activity.



*Activity: Creating Ethical Organizations*

1. *Form four groups of participants.*
2. *Ask participants (in their groups) to brainstorm ways to make ethics and the NVASC standards part of an organizational culture.*  
*Allow 10 minutes.*
3. *Ask each group to present their brainstorming ideas. Post the ideas on the flip chart.*  
*Allow 20 minutes (5 minutes per group).*
4. *Review ideas and add from the following list, if they have not been mentioned.*
  - Create a set of ethical standards specifically designed for your organization.
  - Conduct in-service training sessions.
  - Post the standards in the office.
  - Encourage peer consultation.



- Encourage supervisor consultation.
- Discuss articles or books in staff meetings to increase knowledge base of staff.
- Take the initiative to develop good, respectful, and knowledgeable relationships with partner agencies.
- Establish a library for tapes, books, and resources for staff.
- In staff meetings, present a case with an ethical dilemma and discuss it for a few minutes using the ethical standards.
- Create opportunities for staff professional development.

## **Conclude Module**



**Show Visual 3-22** and review the objectives for the module.



## Worksheet 3.1

### Is It Ethical?

#### Scenario 1

Jo, a woman who is trying to leave her violent husband, asks Betty, the victim assistance provider at a local domestic violence shelter, to help her find a place to stay for a while. The shelter has been filled to capacity the past 2 weeks. Betty's friend has a vacant garage apartment. After checking with her friend, Betty offers the apartment as a safe place for Jo and her two young children to stay until everything is settled.

#### Scenario 2

Marsha, who is a victim assistance provider, is working with Jean, a stalking victim who wants to sue the employer of the man who stalked her. The stalker accessed Jean's financial records through the database at his place of employment. Marsha advises Jean, "Getting involved in a stressful lawsuit isn't a good idea right now. You really need to focus on your recovery."

#### Scenario 3

Kevin, a victim assistance provider, has been working with Heidi for a couple months. She recently moved to a different town to get away from her abusive boyfriend, and she has asked Kevin not to share her new address and phone number with anyone. One day she calls Kevin; she is distraught and reluctantly discloses that she is thinking about suicide, but she begs him not to tell anyone. He explains that he is obligated to report someone who is suicidal and will give her contact information to law enforcement.

#### Scenario 4

Rebecca, a white victim assistance provider who majored in psychology in college, realizes that an African-American victim she is working with, Shauna, has a substance abuse problem. Shauna is just starting to open up to Rebecca after several weeks of silence. When Rebecca suggests that Shauna see a substance abuse counselor or check out a 12-step program, Shauna accuses Rebecca of trying to get rid of her because she is black. Rebecca denies the accusation and assures Shauna that she will continue working with her. Rebecca figures that she has had enough experience to help Shauna with her substance abuse problem.

#### Scenario 5

Jeff, who works long hours as a victim assistance provider at a law enforcement agency, regularly takes records home and finishes up his documentation at night. After he eats dinner with his wife and two adolescent daughters, Jeff spreads his work on the kitchen table and puts in a couple more hours.



## Worksheet 3.2

### Identify the Relevant NVASC Standards

#### Scenario: Sue and Connie

Sue, a rape crisis advocate, has been called to the emergency room to assist Connie, a rape victim. Connie is too embarrassed to describe, in the presence of a police officer, the intimate details of the rape. Eventually, the officer agrees to leave the room but asks Sue to report the details of Connie's story to him. According to her agency's policy, Sue should decline because doing what the officer requested would allow her to be subpoenaed if the case comes to trial.

#### Scenario: June and Abeir

June, the victim services coordinator for a large metropolitan police department, is particularly fond of Abeir, a young Sudanese immigrant who has filed a report on her boyfriend after he threatened to kill Abeir's young daughter. June soon realizes that Abeir has severe mental health problems exacerbated by dynamics within her family. June decides Abeir needs therapy to deal with her anger and understand the threat these issues pose for her daughter. Because June has 10 years' experience as a psychotherapist, she is considering counseling Abeir herself, despite having little knowledge of Abeir's culture.

#### Scenario: David and Emma

David, the chief district attorney popular for his get-tough policy on crime, is being honored at a political dinner for his public service work. After David's thank-you speech, Emma, a victim assistance provider at a domestic violence shelter, realizes she has an opportunity to ask that he publicly defend his "no-drop" policy, which prevents women from dropping charges against their batterers once they have made a report. A batterer has recently carried out his threat to murder his wife if she ever brought charges against him, even though the woman had desperately tried to drop the charges.

#### Scenario: Lee and Lisa

Lee Chan works at a nonprofit advocacy center where she provides support to victims of abuse and neglect. She is working with Lisa, a 19-year-old immigrant who lives with her father, sisters, and two aunts and uncles (none of whom have green cards) in a Southeast Asian neighborhood. They suffered greatly in their country of origin, and Lisa feels it is her duty to keep her family together in America. One of Lisa's uncles molests her, but she refuses to report him. She is terrified that an official report will trigger his deportation, and the whole family will turn against her.

### **Scenario: Carlotta and Inez**

Carlotta, a victim assistance provider at the police department, often encounters young women in the Hispanic community who are at risk of violence when they break up with their gang-member boyfriends. Today, Inez was fired upon by someone she believes (but cannot prove) was her ex-boyfriend. Inez reluctantly agrees to stay out of sight while Carlotta looks for a safe place for her to stay. Later that afternoon, Carlotta receives a call saying that Inez has been hospitalized for a gunshot wound she received while standing in front of a popular gang hangout. Carlotta is so angry with Inez for not staying home that she does not want to see her.

### **Scenario: Sam and Little Saigon**

Sam, a community-based crisis responder who speaks Vietnamese, is called out on a homicide in Little Saigon, a city neighborhood where Asian immigrants reside. Neighbors have witnessed the shooting of a teenaged boy, and the alleged killer has been arrested. The boy's parents arrive as the emergency medical team is preparing to remove his body. The parents insist that his body cannot be moved until the Buddhist monk, who is on the way, conducts a short ceremony to support their son's departing soul. A hostile crowd, shouting in Vietnamese, grows as the police officer in charge proceeds with the removal.

## Instructor Worksheet 3.2

### Identify the Relevant NVASC Standards

Below each scenario are examples of which NVASC standards might be relevant and the corresponding practical considerations that help explain how the standard could be applied to the scenario. If the group assigned the scenario does not include these items, add them to the list on the flip chart.

#### Scenario: Sue and Connie

Sue, a rape crisis advocate, has been called to the emergency room to assist Connie, a rape victim. Connie is too embarrassed to describe, in the presence of a police officer, the intimate details of the rape. Eventually, the officer agrees to leave the room but asks Sue to report the details of Connie's story to him. According to her agency's policy, Sue should decline because doing what the officer requested would allow her to be subpoenaed if the case comes to trial.

##### *Ethical Standards*

- 1.1 Understand service delivery setting
- 2.1 Colleagues and other professionals
- 3.2 Best interests of person served
- 3.5 Confidentiality

##### *Practical Considerations*

Agency policy/state laws/risk of subpoena  
Clarification of roles  
Connie's fragile emotional state  
To help Connie, Sue needs to know what happened.

#### Scenario: June and Abeir

June, the victim services coordinator for a large metropolitan police department, is particularly fond of Abeir, a young Sudanese immigrant who has filed a report on her boyfriend after he threatened to kill Abeir's young daughter. June soon realizes that Abeir has severe mental health problems exacerbated by dynamics within her family. June decides Abeir needs therapy to deal with her anger and understand the threat these issues pose for her daughter. Because June has 10 years' experience as a psychotherapist, she is considering counseling Abeir herself, despite having little knowledge of Abeir's culture.

##### *Ethical Standards*

- 1.1 Understand legal responsibilities
- 1.4 Professional competence
- 3.2 Best interests of person served
- 3.8 Dual relationship

##### *Practical Considerations*

Safety concerns for Abeir's daughter  
June's inexperience working with multicultural clients in a therapeutic context  
June's affection for Abeir  
Abeir's need to deal with her anger

### **Scenario: David and Emma**

David, the Chief District Attorney popular for his get-tough policy on crime, is being honored at a political dinner for his public service work. After David's thank-you speech, Emma, a victim assistance provider at a domestic violence shelter, realizes she has an opportunity to ask that he publicly defend his "no-drop" policy, which prevents women from dropping charges against their batterers once they have made a report. A batterer has recently carried out his threat to murder his wife if she ever brought charges against him, even though the woman had desperately tried to drop the charges.

#### ***Ethical Standards***

- 2.1 Respect for relationships with colleagues and other professionals
- 2.3 Improve systems that impact
- 3.2 Best interests of person served

#### ***Practical Considerations***

- Potential embarrassment caused to David, the District Attorney's office, and the victim services agency
- Finding opportunities to be heard in a public venue
- The local no-drop policy can be bad for domestic violence victims.

### **Scenario: Lee and Lisa**

Lee Chan works at a nonprofit advocacy center where she provides support to victims of abuse and neglect. She is working with Lisa, a 19-year-old immigrant who lives with her father, sisters, and two aunts and uncles (none of whom have green cards) in a Southeast Asian neighborhood. They suffered greatly in their country of origin, and Lisa feels it is her duty to keep her family together in America. One of Lisa's uncles molests her, but she refuses to report him. She is terrified that an official report will trigger his deportation, and the whole family will turn against her.

#### ***Ethical Standards***

- 1.4 Professional competence
- 2.3 Serving public interest
- 3.2 Best interests of person served
- 3.4 Right to self-determination

#### ***Practical Considerations***

- Southeast Asian family values in conflict with American attitudes about family violence
- Possibility that the uncle is molesting others or would in the future
- Lee's desire for justice and safety for Lisa
- Offering services despite nondisclosure of uncle's criminal behavior



### **Scenario: Carlotta and Inez**

Carlotta, a victim assistance provider at the police department, often encounters young women in the Hispanic community who are at risk of violence when they break up with their gang-member boyfriends. Today, Inez was fired upon by someone she believes (but cannot prove) was her ex-boyfriend. Inez reluctantly agrees to stay out of sight while Carlotta looks for a safe place for her to stay. Later that afternoon, Carlotta receives a call saying that Inez has been hospitalized for a gunshot wound she received while standing in front of a popular gang hangout. Carlotta is so angry with Inez for not staying home that she does not want to see her.

#### ***Ethical Standards***

- 1.3 Professional conduct
- 1.4 Professional competence
- 3.2 Best interests of person served
- 3.3 Refrain from victim blaming

#### ***Practical Considerations***

- Professional capacity at all times
- Carlotta's anger and frustration
- Safety issues and fear
- Carlotta's reaction to Inez's poor judgment

### **Scenario: Sam and Little Saigon**

Sam, a community-based crisis responder who speaks Vietnamese, is called out on a homicide in Little Saigon, a city neighborhood where Asian immigrants reside. Neighbors have witnessed the shooting of a teenaged boy, and the alleged killer has been arrested. The boy's parents arrive as the emergency medical team is preparing to remove his body. The parents insist that his body cannot be moved until the Buddhist monk, who is on the way, conducts a short ceremony to support their son's departing soul. A hostile crowd, shouting in Vietnamese, grows as the police officer in charge proceeds with the removal.

#### ***Ethical Standards***

- 1.4 Professional competence
- 2.1 Respect for relationships with colleagues and other professionals
- 3.2 Best interests of person served

#### ***Practical Considerations***

- Beliefs/rituals conflict with protocol
- Body is treated as evidence in the investigation
- Hostile crowd and police indifference further traumatize family



### Worksheet 3.3

## NVASC Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers

Developed by the National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium (NVASC)

### SECTION I: Scope of Services

**ETHICAL STANDARD 1.1:** The victim assistance provider understands his or her legal responsibilities, limitations, and the implications of his/her actions within the service delivery setting, and performs duties in accord with laws, regulations, policies, and legislated rights of persons served.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 1.2:** The victim assistance provider accurately represents his or her professional title, qualifications, and/or credentials in relationships with persons served and in public advertising.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 1.3:** The victim assistance provider maintains a high standard of professional conduct.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 1.4:** The victim assistance provider achieves and maintains a high level of professional competence.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 1.5:** The victim assistance provider who provides a service for a fee informs a person served about the fee at the initial session or meeting.

### SECTION II: Coordinating within the Community

**ETHICAL STANDARD 2.1:** The victim assistance provider conducts relationships with colleagues and other professionals in such a way as to promote mutual respect, confidence, and improvement of services.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 2.2:** The victim assistance provider shares knowledge and encourages proficiency in victim assistance among colleagues and other professionals.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 2.3:** The victim assistance provider serves the public interest by contributing to the improvement of systems that impact victims of crime.

### SECTION III: Direct Services

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.1:** The victim assistance provider respects and attempts to protect the victim's civil rights.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.2:** The victim assistance provider recognizes the interests of the person served as a primary responsibility.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.3:** The victim assistance provider refrains from behaviors that communicate victim blame, suspicion regarding victim accounts of the crime, condemnation for past behavior, or other judgmental, anti-victim sentiments.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.4:** The victim assistance provider respects the victim's right to self-determination.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.5:** The victim assistance provider preserves the confidentiality of information provided by the person served or acquired from other sources before, during, and after the course of the professional relationship.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.6:** The victim assistance provider avoids conflicts of interest and discloses any possible conflict to the program or person served as well as to prospective programs or persons served.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.7:** The victim assistance provider terminates a professional relationship with a victim when the victim is not likely to benefit from continued services.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.8:** The victim assistance provider does not engage in personal relationships with persons served which exploit professional trust or could impair the victim assistance provider's objectivity and professional judgment.

**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.9:** The victim assistance provider does not discriminate against a victim or another staff member on the basis of race/ethnicity, language, sex/gender, age, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, social class, economic status, education, marital status, religious affiliation, residency, or HIV status.



**ETHICAL STANDARD 3.10:** The victim assistance provider furnishes opportunities for colleague victim assistance providers to seek appropriate services when traumatized by a criminal event or client interaction.

### SECTION IV: Administration and Evaluation

**ETHICAL STANDARD 4.1:** The victim assistance provider reports to appropriate authorities the conduct of any colleague or other professional (including self) that constitutes mistreatment of a person served or brings the profession into dishonor.

## Module 3

# Ethics in Victim Services



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## Learning Objectives

- ❖ Recognize when a person is acting in an ethically questionable way.
- ❖ State at least one NVASC ethical standard for victim service providers.
- ❖ State at least one way to make ethical standards a part of an organizational culture.

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## Ethics and You

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Activity

Is It Ethical?

Worksheet 3.1

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Ethics Background

❖ Ancient civilized societies developed systems of moral principles based on values.

❖ Early ethical codes of law and medicine were set in place.

❖ Victim assistance evolved into an established profession.



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Code of Ethics Purposes

❖ Safeguards reputation of the profession

❖ Protects public from exploitation

❖ Furthers competent and responsible practice

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## Foundation for Code of Ethics

- ❖ Client autonomy, privacy and self-determination
- ❖ Objectivity and abstention from abuse
- ❖ Honesty and equity of service
- ❖ Compassion and respect for individuals
- ❖ Social responsibility and confidentiality
- ❖ Working within one's range of competence

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## National Victim Assistance Standards



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## Victim Assistance Field Background

- ❖ Moved from grassroots beginnings to a professional discipline
- ❖ Encompasses a wide diversity of individuals and organizations
- ❖ Provides services over the entire range of the justice experience

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## Victim Assistance Field Background

- ❖ Greater accountability by victim assistance providers was needed.
- ❖ Field is viewed as credible, worthwhile, and providing much-needed services.
- ❖ National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium (NVASC) was formed to develop professional standards for the field.

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## NVASC

National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium

- ❖ Created in 2000 by OVC
- ❖ Purpose: To create model program, competency, and ethical standards
- ❖ Result: *Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers*
- ❖ *Ethics in Victim Services* – book based on the NVASC model

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## NVASC Ethical Standards

- ❖ **Scope of Services**
  - ♦ Professional activities
- ❖ **Coordinating within the Community**
  - ♦ Collaboration
- ❖ **Direct Services**
  - ♦ Relationships
- ❖ **Administration and Evaluation**
  - ♦ Monitors activities and relationships

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## Scope of Services

- ❖ Professional activities
  - Follow the law
  - Accurate representation
  - Professional conduct
  - Professional competence
  - Inform about costs

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## Coordinating within the Community

- ❖ Collaboration
  - ◆ Respect colleagues
  - ◆ Share knowledge
  - ◆ Improve systems

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## Direct Services

- ❖ Relationships
  - ◆ Respect civil rights
  - ◆ Protect victim interests
  - ◆ Nonjudgmental
  - ◆ Self-determination
  - ◆ Confidentiality

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## Direct Services

- ❖ Relationships
  - Terminate appropriately
  - Good boundaries
  - Non-discriminatory
  - Support colleagues
  - Avoid conflict of interest

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## Administration and Evaluation

- ❖ Monitors activities and relationships
  - ♦ Reports mistreatment
  - ♦ Reports misconduct

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## Activity

*Identify the Relevant NVASC Standards*

*Worksheet 3.2*

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Activity

NVASC Standards  
in Your Organization

Worksheet 3.3

3-19

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Is it Ethical?  
Revisited

- ❖ Was the victim assistance provider acting in an ethically questionable manner?
- ❖ Any additional rationale?
- ❖ What NVASC standards might apply?

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Ethical Organizations

3-21

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Activity

Creating Ethical Organizations

3-22

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Review of Module Learning Objectives

- ❖ Recognize when a person is acting in an ethically questionable way.
- ❖ State at least one NVASC ethical standard for victim service providers.
- ❖ State at least one way to make ethical standards a part of an organizational culture.



U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
Office for Victims of Crime



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## **Module 4: Standard Decisionmaking Process for Ethical Decisions**

### **Time Required**

1 hour

### **Purpose**

This module teaches participants a standard process for making ethical decisions and how to use the process.

### **Lessons**

1. The Decisionmaking Process (25 minutes)
2. Common Ethical Issues (35 minutes)

### **Learning Objectives**

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

- State the steps in the standard decisionmaking process.
- Use the standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.

### **Equipment and Materials**

- Disclosing Victim vignette (disclose\_victim.mpg on CD).

### **Participant Worksheets**

- Worksheet 4.1, The Decisionmaking Process
- Worksheet 4.2, Disclosing Victim Vignette
- Worksheet 4.3, Common Ethical Issues

## **Participant Handouts**

Handout 4.1, Decisionmaking Process: Steps 1-6 – one per participant

## **Preparation**

- View the Disclosing Victim Vignette.
- Prepare a sheet on the tear sheet titled “Potential Benefits.” This sheet is used in the Decisionmaking Process lesson.

## Introduce the Module



Show **Visual 4-1** and present the objectives for the module.

### 1. The Decisionmaking Process (25 minutes)



Show **Visual 4-2** and introduce the lesson.

*Tell participants that you will:*

- *Present the decisionmaking process.*
- *Show a vignette.*
- *Demonstrate how the decisionmaking process can be used in the situation presented in the vignette.*

*Ask participants:*

*What are the potential benefits of using a standard process to make decisions when faced with an ethical dilemma?*

*Post the responses on the tear sheet.*

*Allow 5 minutes for this discussion.*

*Direct participants to Worksheet 4.1, The Decisionmaking Process.*



Show **Visual 4-3** and present the six-step decisionmaking process.

1. Assess the facts. Review all relevant documents and legislation. Verify all sources of information.
2. Identify relevant standards and practical considerations. What ethical standards and corresponding practical considerations are in conflict?
3. Brainstorm at least three (preferably more than five) courses of action and consequences of each.
4. Consult peers or supervisor.
5. Choose the best option and act.
6. Evaluate: How can this situation be avoided in the future?



Show Visual 4-4 and introduce the activity.



*Activity: Disclosing Victim Vignette*

1. *Direct participants to Worksheet 4.2, Disclosing Victim vignette, in the Participant's Manual.*
2. *Ask them to read the background for the vignette they are about to see.*
3. *Run the Disclosing Victim vignette* (Disclose\_victim.mpg on Ethics in Victim Services CD).
4. *Ask participants: what is the ethical dilemma that Deborah Giles is facing?*



Show Visual 4-5.

Tell participants that you will now demonstrate how to use the six-step decision-making process to determine the best course of action for Deborah Giles.

Tell participants that the process related to the Disclosing Victim vignette is on **Handout 4.1, The Decisionmaking Process: Steps 1-6**, which you will hand out at the end of this section.

Tell participants that the first step is to **assess the facts**.

Paraphrase the following information:

- Paulina Mantegna is a teenager who has been traumatized by her experience as a victim of criminal sexual assault.
- When law enforcement questioned Paulina about whether she had sexual intercourse prior to the rape, she denied it though, in fact, she had sexual intercourse with her brother's roommate on one occasion prior to the rape. This information, if known, could affect the outcome of the plea bargain.
- Deborah Giles, as an employee of the prosecutor's office, has the obligation to tell the prosecutor any information pertinent to a case.
- A community-based victim assistance provider might approach the confidentiality issues from a different angle.



*Ask participants: are there any other facts to be added?*

Tell participants that the second step is to **identify relevant standards and practical considerations.**

*Ask participants: what are the ethical standards and practical considerations for each standard?*



Post them on the tear sheet. Ensure that the following are included:

***Ethical Standards***

1.1 Obligations within the service delivery system.

3.2 Best interests of person served

3.5 Confidentiality issues

***Practical Considerations***

Deborah should explain the limits of confidentiality to Paulina.

Deborah must keep in mind what is best for Paulina and treat her with respect and courtesy.

Deborah is obligated to report pertinent information to the prosecutor.

Tell participants that the third step is to **brainstorm options and consequences**.  
Paraphrase the following three options and consequences.

1. Deborah convinces Paulina to keep quiet about having had sexual intercourse prior to the rape.

**Pro:** Paulina's attacker gets the maximum punishment for his crime.

**Con:** Deborah puts her job in jeopardy if the truth comes out that she withheld information from the prosecutor. Paulina may be left with feelings of guilt for lying.

2. Deborah promises not to tell anyone what Paulina has revealed to her, but she encourages Paulina to tell the prosecutor.

**Pro:** Deborah keeps Paulina's trust by promising not to tell. By putting the decisionmaking responsibility on Paulina, Deborah feels exonerated from taking action.

**Con:** Deborah puts her job in jeopardy if the truth comes out that she withheld information from the prosecutor.

3. Deborah explains to Paulina that she, as an employee of the prosecutor, cannot keep this information confidential. She offers to accompany Paulina through the process of setting the record straight.

**Pro:** Deborah fulfills her obligations as a victim assistance provider at the prosecutor's office. Paulina takes responsibility for her actions.

**Con:** Paulina may feel betrayed. The plea bargain may be affected. Jake will probably receive a lighter sentence because Paulina is perceived to be less credible.

*Ask participants: do you want to include any additional options?*  
*Post them on the tear sheet.*



Tell participants that the fourth step is to **consult with peers or supervisor**.  
*Ask participants: what choice would they make?*

Tell participants that the fifth step is to **choose the best option and act**.  
*Ask participants: what option seems to be the most ethical decision? Why?*

Tell participants that the sixth step is to **evaluate how the situation can be avoided in the future.**



*Ask participants for suggestions. Post them on the tear sheet.*

Ensure that the following information is included:

Deborah should always stress to crime victims the importance of telling the truth from the beginning. She is also obligated to be certain that crime victims understand the limits to confidentiality within the prosecutor's office.

*Ask for any reactions they have to applying the decision-making process to this case scenario.*

## 2. Common Ethical Issues (35 minutes)



Show Visual 4-6 and introduce the lesson.



Show Visual 4-7.

Tell participants that these are common ethical issues faced by victim assistance providers. *Ask them if they have other examples of ethical issues.*



Show Visual 4-8 and introduce the activity.



*Activity: Common Ethical Issues*

1. *Direct participants to Worksheet 4.3, Common Ethical Issues.*
2. *Form five groups of participants. Ask each group to identify one ethical dilemma they personally have faced as a victim assistance provider. Using Worksheet 4.3, ask each group to record the situation, the ethical standards that apply, and some of the actions the victim assistance provider could take to resolve the dilemma. Allow 15 minutes for group work.*
3. *Allow each group 10 minutes to present their ethical dilemma and some solutions. Draw out common themes and grey areas.*



Show Visual 4-9 and review the objectives for the module.



## **Worksheet 4.1**

### **The Decisionmaking Process**

1. Assess the facts. Review all relevant documents and legislation. Verify all sources of information.
2. Identify relevant standards and practical considerations. What ethical standards and corresponding practical considerations are in conflict?
3. Brainstorm at least three (preferably more than five) courses of action and consequences of each.
4. Consult your peers or your supervisor.
5. Choose the best option and act.
6. Evaluate: How can this situation be avoided in the future?



## **Worksheet 4.2**

### **Disclosing Victim Vignette**

Deborah Giles is a victim assistance provider in a prosecutor's office. For the past 5 months, Deborah has been working with Paulina Mantegna, a young woman who is a victim of criminal sexual assault. The case against Paulina's rapist is about to plead out.

A call has been patched through to Deborah's home phone. As this scenario opens, we hear the phone ring in Deborah's apartment.





### **Worksheet 4.3**

## **Common Ethical Issues**

State the ethical issue.

What standards are relevant to this issue?

What practical considerations should the victim service provider be aware of?



## Handout 4.1

### Decisionmaking Process: Steps 1- 6

#### Step 1: Assess the facts.

- Paulina Mantegna is a teenager who has been traumatized by her experience as a victim of criminal sexual assault.
- When law enforcement questioned Paulina about whether she had sexual intercourse prior to the rape, she denied it though, in fact, she had sexual intercourse with her brother's roommate on one occasion prior to the rape. This information, if known, could affect the outcome of the plea bargain.
- Deborah Giles, as an employee of the prosecutor's office, has the obligation to tell the prosecutor any information pertinent to a case.
- A community-based victim assistance provider might approach the confidentiality issues from a different angle.

#### Step 2: Identify relevant standards and practical considerations.

##### *Ethical Standards*

1.1 Obligations within the service delivery system.

3.2 Best interests of person served

3.5 Confidentiality issues

##### *Practical Considerations*

Deborah should explain the limits of confidentiality to Paulina.

Deborah must keep in mind what is best for Paulina and treat her with respect and courtesy.

Deborah is obligated to report pertinent information to the prosecutor.

#### Step 3: Brainstorm options and consequences.

1. Deborah convinces Paulina to keep quiet about having had sexual intercourse prior to the rape.

**Pro:** Paulina's attacker gets the maximum punishment for his crime.

**Con:** Deborah puts her job in jeopardy if the truth comes out that she withheld information from the prosecutor. Paulina may be left with feelings of guilt for lying.

2. Deborah promises not to tell anyone what Paulina has revealed to her, but she encourages Paulina to tell the prosecutor.

**Pro:** Deborah keeps Paulina's trust by promising not to tell. By putting the decisionmaking responsibility on Paulina, Deborah feels exonerated from taking action.

**Con:** Deborah puts her job in jeopardy if the truth comes out that she withheld information from the prosecutor.

3. Deborah explains to Paulina that she, as an employee of the prosecutor, cannot keep this information confidential. She offers to accompany Paulina through the process of setting the record straight.

**Pro:** Deborah fulfills her obligations as a victim assistance provider at the prosecutor's office. Paulina takes responsibility for her actions.

**Con:** Paulina may feel betrayed. The plea bargain may be affected. Jake will probably receive a lighter sentence because Paulina is perceived to be less credible.

**Step 4: Consult with peers or supervisor.**



Which is the most appropriate and why?

**Step 5: Choose the best action and act.**

In this scenario, option 3 above seems to be the most ethical decision.

**Step 6: Evaluate: How can this situation be avoided in the future?**

Deborah should always stress to crime victims the importance of telling the truth from the beginning. She is also obligated to be certain that crime victims understand the limits to confidentiality within the prosecutor's office.

## Module 4

# Standard Decisionmaking Process for Ethical Decisions

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## Learning Objectives

- ❖ State the steps in the standard decisionmaking process.
- ❖ Use the standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.

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## The Decisionmaking Process

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Decisionmaking Process

1. Assess the facts.
2. Identify relevant standards and practical considerations.
3. Brainstorm options and consequences.
4. Consult with peers/supervisor.
5. Choose best option and act.
6. Evaluate.

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Activity

*Disclosing Victim Vignette*

*Worksheet 4.2*

4-5

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Decisionmaking Process

1. Assess the facts.
2. Identify relevant standards and practical considerations.
3. Brainstorm options and consequences.
4. Consult with peers/supervisor.
5. Choose best option and act.
6. Evaluate.

4-6

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Common Ethical Issues

4-7

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Common Ethical Issues

- ❖ Boundary issues and multiple relationships
- ❖ Confidentiality
- ❖ Legal advocacy versus legal advice
- ❖ Professional competence

4-8

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Activity

Common Ethical Issues  
Worksheet 4.3

4-9

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## Review of Module Learning Objectives

- ❖ State the standard decisionmaking process.
- ❖ Use the standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.



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## **Module 5: Case Studies**

### **Time Required**

1 hour

### **Purpose**

This module provides practice in using the standard process for making ethical decisions given an ethical dilemma.

### **Lesson**

Case Study (60 minutes)

### **Learning Objective**

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

- Use the standard decisionmaking process given a particular ethical dilemma.

### **Equipment and Materials**

No special equipment or materials are required.

### **Participant Worksheets**

- Worksheet 5.1, The Decisionmaking Process
- Worksheet 5.2, Case Study

### **Instructor Worksheet**

- Worksheet 5.2, Case Study (Instructor Only)

### **Preparation**

- Read the case studies.

## Introduce the Module



Show **Visual 5-1** and present the objective for the module.

Tell participants that they now have the opportunity to apply the decisionmaking process to two case studies.

## Case Study (60 minutes)



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



*Activity: Case Study*

1. *Tell the participants that they are going to be using Worksheet 5.1, The Decisionmaking Process, to complete the case studies.*
2. *Form five groups of participants and assign one of the cases from Worksheet 5.2, Case Study, to each group.*
3. *Tell participants that each group is to use the decisionmaking process with the assigned case study and then report back to the full group.*
4. *Show Visual 5-3 and explain what each group will report on their case study.*

*Allow 15 minutes for the group work.*

5. *Ask each group to present their case. Allow 10 minutes for each group.*



Show **Visual 5-4** and review the objectives for the module.

## **Worksheet 5.1**

### **The Decisionmaking Process**

1. Assess the facts. Review all relevant documents and legislation. Verify all sources of information.
2. Identify relevant standards and practical considerations. What ethical standards and corresponding practical considerations are in conflict?
3. Brainstorm at least three (preferably more than five) courses of action and consequences of each.
4. Consult your peers or your supervisor.
5. Choose the best option and act.
6. Evaluate: how can this situation be avoided in the future?



## Worksheet 5.2

### Case Study

#### 1. Blake and Philip

Blake is the victim advocate in the Surry County Sheriff's Department. He recently had a case that posed a dilemma for him. His sister has been through a traumatic divorce and her minister Philip helped her through it. A woman in the choir has accused the minister of molesting her during a counseling session. Blake is certain that Philip could not be guilty. In fact, he knows from his sister that there are factions within the church that are trying to get rid of the minister. Some members think he takes the Bible too literally. This accusation could be a ploy to ruin the minister's name.

#### *Ethical Standards*

#### *Practical Considerations*

**Three** options and consequences for each:

1.

2.

3.

Chosen course of action:

How can this situation be avoided in the future?

## **2. Carrie and Maria**

Carrie is a victim assistance provider with a private nonprofit agency that serves victims of sexual assault. She has recently started working with Maria, who refuses to leave her abusive husband though he frequently assaults her sexually. Carrie has suggested that Maria talk to a counselor, and Maria has agreed, provided she can see an Hispanic female counselor. Carrie's agency has a practice of referring victims to a counseling group that is regarded as having special expertise in working with crime victims. The director of the group, Brooke, works hard to accommodate sexual assault victims and be supportive of Carrie's agency. Brooke and Carrie have become friends. In fact, their families have vacationed together several times at Brooke's mountain home. Carrie knows that Brooke has recently hired an Hispanic male counselor in an effort to meet the cultural needs of clients, but Maria keeps saying that she cannot relate to a man.

### *Ethical Standards*

### *Practical Considerations*

**Three** options and consequences for each:

1.

2.

3.

Chosen course of action:

How can this situation be avoided in the future?



### 3. Kayla, Liz, and Kate

Kayla, a sworn officer at a law enforcement agency, has recently taken on the role of victim assistance provider at the agency. She is riding with Frieda, another officer, to respond to a domestic violence report, which turns out to be at the home of a lesbian couple. Kayla sees that one of the women, Kate, has bruises around her wrists and neck (evidence of previous abuse), and her nose is bleeding. The woman seems terrified but submissive to the other, more outspoken woman, Liz. Kate readily agrees with Liz's story that Kate ran into a door and broke her nose. Although the state's domestic violence laws do not apply to homosexual couples, Kayla thinks that she and Frieda should make an arrest on assault and battery, but Frieda treats the women with condescending indifference and leaves without making an arrest. In the car, she tells Kayla that a couple of dykes can beat each other up all they want as far as she is concerned.

#### *Ethical Standards*

#### *Practical Considerations*

**Three** options and consequences for each:

1.

2.

3.

Chosen course of action:

How can this situation be avoided in the future?

#### 4. Teresa and Mandy

Teresa works at a local domestic violence shelter. She has taken a couple of counseling classes but has no formal training as a therapist or mental health professional. She has recently gained the trust of Mandy, a client who was abused as a child and has recently left an emotionally and physically abusive relationship. Teresa soon realizes that Mandy has serious mental health issues and needs additional therapy. Mandy expresses a deep-seated mistrust of “shrinks” because she became sexually involved with one therapist 10 years ago. The relationship did not last and she felt betrayed.

##### *Ethical Standards*

##### *Practical Considerations*

**Three** options and consequences for each:

1.

2.

3.

Chosen course of action:

How can this situation be avoided in the future?

## **5. Sally and Jeffrey**

Sally is a victim assistant who facilitates a homicide survivor support group. She has been working closely with Jeffrey, whose life partner was murdered. Sally knows that Jeffrey is battling a cocaine addiction, and she has helped him secure drug treatment out of state. Sally recently learned that Jeffrey was arrested as an uninsured driver after wrecking another person's sports car, which has raised her concerns about whether he is still actively using cocaine. The passenger in the car was seriously injured. Jeffrey passed the breathalyzer test, but the district attorney's office thinks he might have been high on something else. Today, Sally received a voicemail message from a prosecutor she has known for years asking her to come in to discuss Jeffrey. Sally knows that there is no statutory protection of confidential privilege for providers in the state where she lives and works.

### ***Ethical Standards***

### ***Practical Considerations***

**Three** options and consequences for each:

1.

2.

3.

Chosen course of action:

How can this situation be avoided in the future?

## **6. Frances and Skip**

Frances's son was killed in a car accident last year, and she is now going through a painful divorce. She is taking over-the-counter and prescription medications to help her cope. Her friend and fellow victim assistance provider, Skip, who has worked with Frances for several years, has noticed she has been neglectful of her clients, failing to return phone calls or keep up with case documentation. Several times she has asked Skip to cover for her. Recently he found out that she has had dinner a couple of times with a married man, a client with whom she has been working for a couple of months. When Skip asks Frances about it, she replies that the man just wants to express his gratitude. Skip knows that Frances is going through a rough time and is looking for solace wherever she can find it, but he also knows that her actions are inappropriate.

### *Ethical Standards*

### *Practical Considerations*

**Three** options and consequences for each:

1.

2.

3.

Chosen course of action:

How can this situation be avoided in the future?



## **7. Chana, Tanya, and Rosanne**

Chana is a trauma counselor who works with high school teenagers who have been victims of child molestation. Two of her most problematic cases are Tanya and Rosanne, who are best friends and always at risk of suspension from school as chronic troublemakers. Tanya is generally the instigator of the trouble, but Rosanne is her loyal follower. Chana feels that her professional relationship with Tanya is ineffective and wants to refer her elsewhere, but she is also aware that she responds negatively to Tanya because of her bad behavior. Rosanne, on the other hand, is quite receptive to treatment, particularly when she is free of Tanya's negative influences. Chana fears that she may lose Rosanne's interest and possibly her trust if she terminates the relationship with Tanya. Clearly, the two girls talk about their meetings with Chana and share experiences which may be the only way Tanya is benefiting, albeit indirectly, from treatment.

### ***Ethical Standards***

### ***Practical Considerations***

**Three** options and consequences for each:

1.

2.

3.

Chosen course of action:

How can this situation be avoided in the future?

## 8. Carolyn and Grassroots Groups

Carolyn, who is white, has a large grant to provide assistance to the five culturally and ethnically diverse populations that have started grassroots homicide survivor groups in the city. Her role as a strategic planner/victim assistance provider is to help them assess their needs as an organization, to assist them in applying for not-for-profit status, and to help them become self-sufficient as support groups for survivors. Carolyn believes that she is color blind – that race and culture are not factors in her job. However, many of the members of the grassroots groups feel that she does not understand them. Over a period of months they have been increasingly frustrated by her stereotypical views about their cultures. When they ask her to bring in interpreters and members of their own communities to assist her, she replies that the money will be better spent hiring lawyers to secure the not-for-profit status.

### *Ethical Standards*

### *Practical Considerations*

**Three** options and consequences for each:

1.

2.

3.

Chosen course of action:

How can this situation be avoided in the future?

## **9. Jane and Linda**

Jane works as a victim assistance provider in a nonprofit counseling center. Linda, her newest client, is a Native American activist working to reclaim land for the Lakota tribe. Linda was beaten up 3 weeks ago in a heated argument during a land claims meeting. Linda does not want to report the incident because she believes it will reflect poorly on the activist group. In conversation, Linda reveals that her religion has been central to the process of healing from this violence. She belongs to a Native American church that uses peyote as part of its religious ceremonies, particularly those involving healing. Although some argue that peyote is legal because of freedom of religious practice, Native Americans who have gone up against the courts in the past have often lost their cases. Now Jane has found out that Linda's 10-year-old son also participates in the healing ceremonies to help him get over the paranoia and fear he has been experiencing since his mother was attacked.

### ***Ethical Standards***

### ***Practical Considerations***

**Three** options and consequences for each:

1.

2.

3.

Chosen course of action:

How can this situation be avoided in the future?

## **10. Charlotte and Teisha**

Teisha has been battling her husband Andre for custody of their two sons. They have filed for divorce after 3 years of marriage during which they had five domestic violent incidents involving law enforcement. Charlotte, a victim advocate with the sheriff's department, has been assisting Teisha throughout her troubled marriage. A couple of weeks prior to the custody hearing, Teisha convinced Andre to meet for dinner without their lawyers and try to work some things out on their own. The evening ended in another domestic violence incident that left Teisha with a black eye and sprained wrist. She called Charlotte the next morning and vehemently expressed her desire to report the incident. Charlotte understands Teisha's anger but is afraid that reporting Andre may jeopardize custody of Teisha's sons, considering that Teisha talked Andre into meeting without the lawyers and that Teisha also left a nasty scratch on Andre's face.

### ***Ethical Standards***

### ***Practical Considerations***

**Three** options and consequences for each:

1.

2.

3.

Chosen course of action:

How can this situation be avoided in the future?



## Worksheet 5.2 (Instructor Only)

### 1. Blake and Philip

Blake is the victim advocate in the Surry County Sheriff's Department. He recently had a case that posed a dilemma for him. His sister has been through a traumatic divorce and her minister Philip helped her through it. A woman in the choir has accused the minister of molesting her during a counseling session. Blake is certain that Philip could not be guilty. In fact, he knows from his sister that there are factions within the church that are trying to get rid of the minister. Some members think he takes the Bible too literally. This accusation could be a ploy to ruin the minister's name.

Examples of how the standards might apply to this scenario:

- Standard 3.6. Previous relationships, whether familial, professional, personal, or business, create potential conflicts of interest which should be avoided.
- Standard 3.3. Blake should refrain from suspicion of the victim's account of the crime or any judgmental, anti-victim sentiment.

### 2. Carrie and Maria

Carrie is a victim assistance provider with a private nonprofit agency that serves victims of sexual assault. She has recently started working with Maria, who refuses to leave her abusive husband though he frequently assaults her sexually. Carrie has suggested that Maria talk to a counselor, and Maria has agreed, provided she can see an Hispanic female counselor. Carrie's agency has a practice of referring victims to a counseling group that is regarded as having special expertise in working with crime victims. The director of the group, Brooke, works hard to accommodate sexual assault victims and be supportive of Carrie's agency. Brooke and Carrie have become friends. In fact, their families have vacationed together several times at Brooke's mountain home. Carrie knows that Brooke has recently hired an Hispanic male counselor in an effort to meet the cultural needs of clients, but Maria keeps saying that she cannot relate to a man.

Examples of how the standards might apply to this scenario:

- Standards 1.4 and 3.8. Multicultural competency is part of professional competence, and insensitivity to culture can be considered a form of discrimination.
- Standard 3.6. Dual relationships with other providers can create a conflict of interest.
- Standard 3.4. Maria has the right to self-determination.
- Standard 2.1. Carrie needs to conduct relationships in a manner that promotes public confidence.

### 3. Kayla, Liz, and Kate

Kayla, a sworn officer at a law enforcement agency, has recently taken on the role of victim assistance provider at the agency. She is riding with Frieda, another officer, to respond to a domestic violence report, which turns out to be at the home of a lesbian couple. Kayla sees that one of the women, Kate, has bruises around her wrists and neck (evidence of previous abuse), and her nose is bleeding. The woman seems terrified but submissive to the other, more outspoken woman, Liz. Kate readily agrees with Liz's story that Kate ran into a door and broke her nose. Although the state's domestic violence laws do not apply to homosexual couples, Kayla thinks that she and Frieda should make an arrest on assault and battery, but Frieda treats the women with condescending indifference and leaves without making an arrest. In the car, she tells Kayla that a couple of dykes can beat each other up all they want as far as she is concerned.

Examples of how the standards might apply to this scenario:

- Standard 2.1. Kayla has an ethical obligation to treat her colleagues and professionals with whom she works in a way that promotes mutual respect and improvement of services.
- Standard 1.4. Multicultural competence is part of professional competence and includes gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender populations as well as ethnic and racial minority populations. In some states protective orders are unavailable to victims of same-sex domestic violence.
- Standard 4.1. Kay must report to appropriate authorities the conduct of any professional that constitutes mistreatment of a person served.
- Standards 3.2 and 3.9. Kate, as a victim, deserves to have services offered to her, and not offering those services can be considered discrimination.

### 4. Teresa and Mandy

Teresa works at a local domestic violence shelter. She has taken a couple of counseling classes but has no formal training as a therapist or mental health professional. She has recently gained the trust of Mandy, a client who was abused as a child and has recently left an emotionally and physically abusive relationship. Teresa soon realizes that Mandy has serious mental health issues and needs additional therapy. Mandy expresses a deep-seated mistrust of "shrinks" because she became sexually involved with one therapist 10 years ago. The relationship did not last and she felt betrayed.

Examples of how the standards might apply to this scenario:

- Standards 1.1 and 1.4. Part of being professionally competent is knowing one's own limitations and staying within the clearly defined range of responsibility. Teresa must make an outside referral.
- Standard 3.2. Teresa must also keep the client's fragile emotional and mental state in mind.

## 5. Sally and Jeffrey

Sally is a victim assistant who facilitates a homicide survivor support group. She has been working closely with Jeffrey, whose life partner was murdered. Sally knows that Jeffrey is battling a cocaine addiction, and she has helped him secure drug treatment out of state. Sally recently learned that Jeffrey was arrested as an uninsured driver after wrecking another person's sports car, which has raised her concerns about whether he is still actively using cocaine. The passenger in the car was seriously injured. Jeffrey passed the breathalyzer test, but the district attorney's office thinks he might have been high on something else. Today, Sally received a voicemail message from a prosecutor she has known for years asking her to come in to discuss Jeffrey. Sally knows that there is no statutory protection of confidential privilege for providers in the state where she lives and works.

Examples of how the standards might apply to this scenario:

- Standard 1.1. Driving under the influence of illicit drugs is criminal behavior.
- Standard 1.1 Providers should be fully informed and continually current regarding legal, statutory, policy, and agency authority.
- Standard 3.2. Sally must recognize the interests of the person serviced as her primary responsibility.
- Standard 3.5. Sally knows about Jeffrey's cocaine addition but is not covered under confidential privilege. She should keep her clients informed about the limitations to confidentiality.
- Standard 1.3. Sally must keep a mutually respectful relationship with the district attorney's office.
- Standard 3.3. Jeffrey should not be condemned for past behavior.

## 6. Frances and Skip

Frances's son was killed in a car accident last year, and she is now going through a painful divorce. She is taking over-the-counter and prescription medications to help her cope. Her friend and fellow victim assistance provider, Skip, who has worked with Frances for several years, has noticed she has been neglectful of her clients, failing to return phone calls or keep up with case documentation. Several times she has asked Skip to cover for her. Recently he found out that she has had dinner a couple of times with a married man, a client with whom she has been working for a couple of months. When Skip asks Frances about it, she replies that the man just wants to express his gratitude. Skip knows that Frances is going through a rough time and is looking for solace wherever she can find it, but he also knows that her actions are inappropriate.

Examples of how the standards might apply to this scenario:

- Standard 1.3. Frances is not maintaining a high level of professional conduct.

- Standard 1.4. Frances's professional competence is being compromised by her high stress level and possibly by her medications.
- Standard 3.8. Frances is developing a dual relationship with a client.
- Standard 4.1. Skip has an obligation to report to the appropriate authorities conduct that constitutes mistreatment of a person served or that brings the profession into dishonor.
- Standard 2.1 Skip must also treat his colleagues in a way that promotes mutual respect.
- Standard 1.1. Skip must keep in mind the implications of his and Frances's actions within the service delivery system.

## **7. Chana, Tanya, and Rosanne**

Chana is a trauma counselor who works with high school teenagers who have been victims of child molestation. Two of her most problematic cases are Tanya and Rosanne, who are best friends and always at risk of suspension from school as chronic troublemakers. Tanya is generally the instigator of the trouble, but Rosanne is her loyal follower. Chana feels that her professional relationship with Tanya is ineffective and wants to refer her elsewhere, but she is also aware that she responds negatively to Tanya because of her bad behavior. Rosanne, on the other hand, is quite receptive to treatment, particularly when she is free of Tanya's negative influences. Chana fears that she may lose Rosanne's interest and possibly her trust if she terminates the relationship with Tanya. Clearly, the two girls talk about their meetings with Chana and share experiences which may be the only way Tanya is benefiting, albeit indirectly, from treatment.

Examples of how the standards might apply to this scenario:

- Standard 3.7. Providers must terminate the professional relationship when a victim no longer benefits from the services offered, and the provider should prepare victims for this eventuality.
- Standard 3.3. Chana reacts negatively to Tanya's poor decisions and bad behavior.
- Standard 3.2. Chana must keep in mind what is in the best interests of both her clients.

## **8. Carolyn and Grassroots Groups**

Carolyn, who is white, has a large grant to provide assistance to the five culturally and ethnically diverse populations that have started grassroots homicide survivor groups in the city. Her role as a strategic planner/victim assistance provider is to help them assess their needs as an organization, to assist them in applying for not-for-profit status, and to help them become self-sufficient as support groups for survivors. Carolyn believes that she is color blind – that race and culture are not factors in her job. However, many of the members of the grassroots groups feel that she does not understand them. Over a period

of months they have been increasingly frustrated by her stereotypical views about their cultures. When they ask her to bring in interpreters and members of their own communities to assist her, she replies that the money will be better spent hiring lawyers to secure the not-for-profit status.

Examples of how the standards might apply to this scenario:

- Standard 3.9. Carolyn's insistence that race and culture are not factors is a form of discrimination.
- Standard 3.4. The grassroots groups clearly disagree with Carolyn's approach.
- Standard 3.2. Carolyn's primary responsibility is to do what is in the best interest of those she serves.
- Standard 1.4. Carolyn should be sensitive to crime victims.
- Standard 1.1. Carolyn must keep in mind the implications of her actions within the service delivery system.

## **9. Jane and Linda**

Jane works as a victim assistance provider in a nonprofit counseling center. Linda, her newest client, is a Native American activist working to reclaim land for the Lakota tribe. Linda was beaten up 3 weeks ago in a heated argument during a land claims meeting. Linda does not want to report the incident because she believes it will reflect poorly on the activist group. In conversation, Linda reveals that her religion has been central to the process of healing from this violence. She belongs to a Native American church that uses peyote as part of its religious ceremonies, particularly those involving healing. Although some argue that peyote is legal because of freedom of religious practice, Native Americans who have gone up against the courts in the past have often lost their cases. Now Jane has found out that Linda's 10-year-old son also participates in the healing ceremonies to help him get over the paranoia and fear he has been experiencing since his mother was attacked.

Examples of how the standards might apply to this scenario:


- Standard 1.1. Jane must find out what federal and state laws require regarding children and substance abuse of any kind.
- Standard 1.1. Jane must find out what federal laws apply to peyote and religious freedom in her state.
- Standards 1.4 and 3.8. Jane must respect Linda's values and religious practices.
- Standard 3.4. Jane needs to recognize Linda's right not to report the crime.
- Standard 3.5. Linda has the right to keep her story confidential.

## **10. Charlotte and Teisha**


Teisha has been battling her husband Andre for custody of their two sons. They have filed for divorce after 3 years of marriage during which they had five domestic violent incidents involving law enforcement. Charlotte, a victim advocate with the sheriff's department, has been assisting Teisha throughout her troubled marriage. A couple of weeks prior to the custody hearing, Teisha convinced Andre to meet for dinner without their lawyers and try to work some things out on their own. The evening ended in another domestic violence incident that left Teisha with a black eye and sprained wrist. She called Charlotte the next morning and vehemently expressed her desire to report the incident. Charlotte understands Teisha's anger but is afraid that reporting Andre may jeopardize custody of Teisha's sons, considering that Teisha talked Andre into meeting without the lawyers and that Teisha also left a nasty scratch on Andre's face.

Examples of how the standards might apply to this scenario:

- Standard 1.1. Charlotte must keep in mind her role as legal advocate and not legal counsel. She cannot give legal advice to Teisha.
- Standard 3.4. Teisha has the right to self-determination.
- Standard 3.2. The victim assistance provider needs to keep the client's best interests in mind.



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## Module 5 Case Studies

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Learning Objective

❖ Use the standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.

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Activity

**Case Study**  
**Worksheets 5.1, 5.2**

5-3

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Case Study

1. Explain the facts of the case.
2. What are the relevant standards and practical considerations?
3. Present your three options and pros and cons of each.
4. Which option did you chose and why?
5. Evaluate: how can this situation be avoided in the future?

5-4

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Review of Module Learning Objective

❖ Use the standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.

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Review of Module Learning Objective

❖ Use the standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.



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## **Module 6: Closing and Evaluations**

### **Time Required**

50 minutes

### **Purpose**

This module provides a wrap-up of the course. Participants fill out an evaluation of the course.

### **Lessons**

1. Personal and Professional Ethics Conflict
2. Closing
3. Evaluations

### **Learning Objectives**

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

- State the skills presented in the course.
- Generate ideas on how to implement ethics in their organizations.

### **Equipment and Materials**

No special equipment or materials are required.

### **Participant Worksheets**

- Worksheet 6.1, Brainstorming Ideas: What Can You Do When You Get Back?

### **Preparation**

- Create a tear sheet with the heading “Ideas.”



## Introduce the Module



Show **Visual 6-1** and present the objectives for the module.

## 1. Personal and Professional Ethics Conflict



Show **Visual 6-2** and introduce the following activity.



*Activity: Personal and Professional Ethics Conflict*

1. *Ask participants to take out their pre-Training assignment in which they summarized situations where there was a conflict between their personal interests and professional responsibilities.*
2. *Ask participants to review what they wrote. Ask them to consider what they have learned in this training and if what they have learned may have influenced how they viewed the conflict or how it was resolved. What would they do differently?*
3. *Ask participants to find a partner and briefly share the situation and any changes in how the conflict was viewed or how it was resolved, based on learnings from the training.*
4. *Facilitate a brief discussion of a few of the conflicts and their resolutions.*

## 2. Closing (20 minutes)



Show **Visuals 6-3 and 6-4** and introduce the following activity.



*Activity: What Can You Do When You Get Back?*

1. *Direct participants to Worksheet 6.1, Brainstorming Ideas: What Can You Do When You Get Back?, in the Participant's Manual.*
2. *Ask participants to brainstorm strategies that they can use when they return to their organizations to implement what they have learned. Allow 5–10 minutes for this activity.*

3. *Write the ideas on the tear sheet page that you prepared.*
4. *Ask them to make a commitment to implement at least one new strategy when they return to their organization.*



**Show Visual 6-5.**

Review the expectations that were identified in Module 1 and point out those that were covered in the course.



**Show Visuals 6-6 through 6-8** and review the course objectives as presented in Module 1.

### **3. Evaluations (10 minutes)**



**Show Visual 6-9.**

Pass out the evaluations and tell participants how to fill them out and return them.





**Show Visual 6-10** and thank participants for attending the course.

**Worksheet 6.1**

**Brainstorming Ideas: What Can You Do When You Get Back?**



## Module 6

### Closing and Evaluations

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## Learning Objectives

- ❖ State the skills presented in the course.
- ❖ Generate ideas on how to implement ethics in your organization.

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## Activity

### *Personal and Professional Ethics Conflict*

6-3

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Closing

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Activity

*Brainstorming: What Can You Do  
When You Get Back?*

*Worksheet 6.1*

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Expectations

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Course Objectives

❖ Create self-awareness and understanding of how attitudes and beliefs influence responses to victims of crime.

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Course Objectives

❖ Learn the *Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers* developed by the National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium (NVASC).

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Course Objectives

❖ Recognize when a person is acting in an ethically questionable way.

❖ Use a standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.

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Evaluations

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Thank You



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## Handout 4.1

### Decisionmaking Process: Steps 1- 6

#### Step 1: Assess the facts.

- Paulina Mantegna is a teenager who has been traumatized by her experience as a victim of criminal sexual assault.
- When law enforcement questioned Paulina about whether she had sexual intercourse prior to the rape, she denied it though, in fact, she had sexual intercourse with her brother's roommate on one occasion prior to the rape. This information, if known, could affect the outcome of the plea bargain.
- Deborah Giles, as an employee of the prosecutor's office, has the obligation to tell the prosecutor any information pertinent to a case.
- A community-based victim assistance provider might approach the confidentiality issues from a different angle.

#### Step 2: Identify relevant standards and practical considerations.

##### *Ethical Standards*

1.1 Obligations within the service delivery system.

3.2 Best interests of person served

3.5 Confidentiality issues

##### *Practical Considerations*

Deborah should explain the limits of confidentiality to Paulina.

Deborah must keep in mind what is best for Paulina and treat her with respect and courtesy.

Deborah is obligated to report pertinent information to the prosecutor.

#### Step 3: Brainstorm options and consequences.

1. Deborah convinces Paulina to keep quiet about having had sexual intercourse prior to the rape.

**Pro:** Paulina's attacker gets the maximum punishment for his crime.

**Con:** Deborah puts her job in jeopardy if the truth comes out that she withheld information from the prosecutor. Paulina may be left with feelings of guilt for lying.

2. Deborah promises not to tell anyone what Paulina has revealed to her, but she encourages Paulina to tell the prosecutor.

**Pro:** Deborah keeps Paulina's trust by promising not to tell. By putting the decisionmaking responsibility on Paulina, Deborah feels exonerated from taking action.

**Con:** Deborah puts her job in jeopardy if the truth comes out that she withheld information from the prosecutor.

3. Deborah explains to Paulina that she, as an employee of the prosecutor, cannot keep this information confidential. She offers to accompany Paulina through the process of setting the record straight.

**Pro:** Deborah fulfills her obligations as a victim assistance provider at the prosecutor's office. Paulina takes responsibility for her actions.

**Con:** Paulina may feel betrayed. The plea bargain may be affected. Jake will probably receive a lighter sentence because Paulina is perceived to be less credible.

**Step 4: Consult with peers or supervisor.**

Which is the most appropriate and why?

**Step 5: Choose the best action and act.**

In this scenario, option 3 above seems to be the most ethical decision.

**Step 6: Evaluate: How can this situation be avoided in the future?**

Deborah should always stress to crime victims the importance of telling the truth from the beginning. She is also obligated to be certain that crime victims understand the limits to confidentiality within the prosecutor's office.