

# The Impact of Victimization



# Integrate Crime Victims' Issues Into University and College Curricula

The project is designed to:

- Broaden college and university students' awareness of crime victims' issues and knowledge of appropriate responses.
- Increase the number and diversity of students exposed to and educated in crime victims' issues.
- Give victim issues a new level of prominence in university and college curricula.

# Resources for Students

Campus resources to list typically include:

- Counseling.
- Health services.
- College chaplain/Faith community.
- Dean of students.
- Women's centers.
- Campus police.

# Resources for Students

Local community resources to list typically include:

- Rape crisis center.
- Domestic violence shelter agency.
- State or county victim-witness office (often a part of the prosecutor's office).

# National Resource Information

National Resource Information

Student Handout

# Overview

1. Introduction
2. The Personal Impact on Victims
  - a. Financial and Physical
  - b. Psychological and Emotional
  - c. Secondary Victimization of a Victim
3. The Impact of Crime on Society
  - a. Financial Costs
  - b. Secondary Victims

# Introduction

Over 26 million people ages 12 and older were victims of crime:

- 6.8 million in violent crimes
- Over 19.6 million in property crimes

Consequences can be immediate and long term.

NCVS, 2008

# The Impact of Crime

Does crime have the same impact on all victims? No.

Crime affects victims differently.

# Who is Impacted by Victimization?

## The Victim

- Physical
- Financial
- Psychological and emotional

## Society

- Financial
- Secondary victims

# Physical Consequences

## Death

- 2008: More than 14,000 people were victims of homicide

## Injury

- 36% of robbery and 23% of assault victims were injured

## Illness

- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Psychosomatic illness

Injury: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007

# Financial Consequences

## Healthcare

- Medical and psychological treatment

## Lost Wages

- Attendance and productivity can suffer

## Other Related Costs

- Attorney fees, child care costs, moving expenses, changing phone numbers, the loss or need to change employment

Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007

# Emotional Consequences

Common reactions among victims:

- Shock/Disbelief
- Numbness
- Changes in appetite or sleeping patterns
- Difficulty concentrating
- Confusion
- Anger
- Fear
- Anxiety

# Factors That Influence the Emotional Impact on Victims

- Prior victimization.
- Personal characteristics and coping strategies.
- Type of crime experiences.
- Reaction of others.
- Support networks available to victims.

It is important to be aware of cultural variations in reactions to crime and in response to and interventions designed to support crime victims

# Psychological Consequences

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Is a medical diagnosis (DSM V)
- Re-experiencing of the traumatic event
- Avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma
- Increased arousal or anxiety
- Stress and fear

# Psychological Consequences

- PTSD symptoms seem to be worse if they were triggered deliberately by another person, as in a mugging or rape.
- PTSD rates are higher with victims of violent crimes than other crimes.

# Depression and Anxiety

Possible clinical diagnoses of victims post-crime.

Fear can cause victims to make major lifestyle changes. Examples: relocating, not working, or seeking new employment.

Agoraphobia: intense fear of crowds and being alone in public places.

- Self-isolation
- Refusal to leave their home or travel far from home
- Avoid crowded places

# Cognitive and Behavioral Impact

## Self-Blame and Attributions = Negative Self-Esteem

- Low work productivity
- Nature of relationships with others
- Carry weapons and “target harden”
- Substance use and abuse
- Antisocial behavior

# Secondary Victimization

- Negative response from family, friends or law enforcement.
  - ◆ Were they made to feel blamed, at fault, responsible or that they used poor judgment or unnecessary risks?
- Criminal justice process experience.
- Can influence a victim's future willingness to report a crime.

# Secondary Victims

Witnesses and those close to the victim may experience:

- Shock
- Anger
- Thoughts about the event
- Fear for the victim's safety
- Be reminded of their own past traumas
- Having to help the victim with expenses related to the crime

# Children Witnessing Violence

- In 2008, 60% of children surveyed were exposed to violence within the past year, either directly or indirectly.
- Many children suffer long term physical, mental, and emotional harm:
  - ◆ Negative impact on adult interpersonal relationships and parenting ability
  - ◆ Possible cycle of violence

Children's Exposure to Violence: A Comprehensive National Survey (October, 2009) by David Finkelhor, Heather Turner, Richard Ormrod, Sherry Hamby, and Kristen Kracke.

# What is the Impact of Crime on Society?

- There are many different ways to calculate the costs of crime to society. In 2007, the economic cost of crime was estimated at over 17 billion dollars.
- Victims bear 77% of the costs associated with violent crimes.
  - ◆ Taxpayers cover an additional 14% and employers cover the remainder
- Average cost of each homicide = more than \$8 million dollars

Heaton, P. (2009). Hidden in Plain Sight: What Cost of Crime Research Can Tell Us about Investing in Police. Washington, D.C.: Rand Corporation.

# Societal Costs of Crime

- Violent crime accounts for 3% of U.S. medical spending and 14% of U.S. injury related medical spending
- Lost work time adds up to financial loss for a victim's place of employment and for the victim
- Cost to maintain the Criminal Justice System
- Violent crime by juveniles alone costs the United States \$158 billion each year

Data source: Milller, T., Cohen, M., & Wiersema, B. (1996).

# Impact on Communities

Community fear due to awareness of crime in their neighborhood or region.

- People who live in the same neighborhood as the victim are just as likely to relocate as the victim.
- Victimization also can force victims to relocate or become homeless, increasing the need for society to provide services.

# Conclusions

- Victimization has immediate and long-term consequences.
- Victims of crime can experience physical, financial, emotional, psychological, and spiritual consequences.
- Victims can be re-victimized by the response of others and the criminal justice system.
- Witnesses and those close to the victim can experience similar symptoms as “secondary victims”.
- Crime is both financially and psychologically costly to society.