

Responding to Victims of Crime: Basics for Interns



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

Lecture Overview

- *Who and What:* Role as an Intern
- *When and Where:* Encountering Victims of Crime
- *Why:* Impact of victimization
- *How:* Basics of crisis intervention and effective communication

Ground Rules

- Self-Care
- Participation
- Respectful Communication
- Confidentiality
- Sharing
- Individual Questions

Student Role: Who and What You Are

Who You ARE

- A representative of a victim service provider or allied profession
- A representative of the college/ university
- A person with potential to impact a victim of crime

Who You Are NOT

- An expert on victimization and its impact
- A counselor or therapist
- The investigating officer, prosecutor, or judge

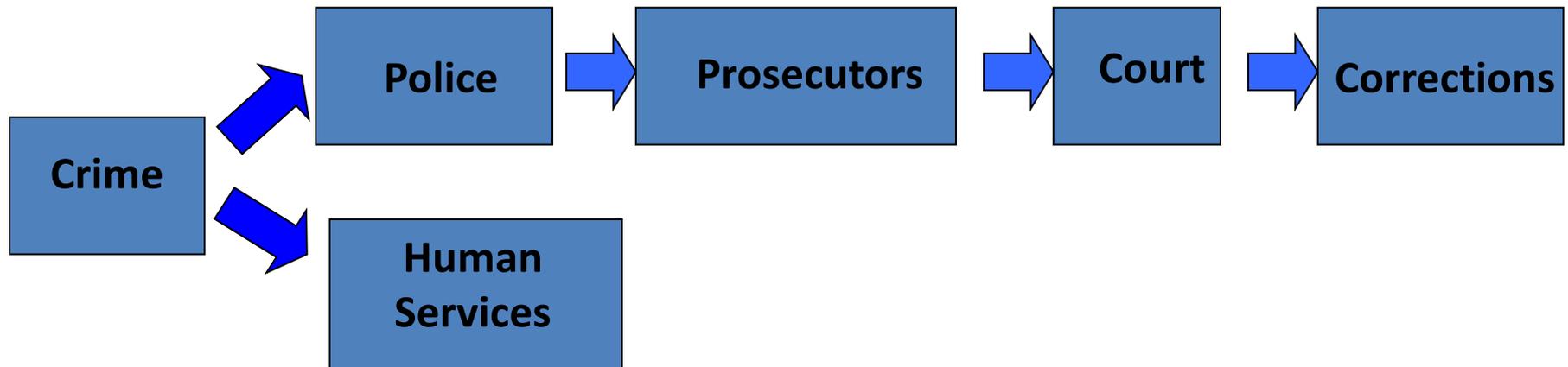
You can make a positive difference.

Encountering Victims of Crime: When and Where

You may encounter victims of crime at three stages:

- Emergency
 - Crisis
 - Every Day

Encountering Victims of Crime: When and Where



Impact of Victimization: Why

- In 2011, there were almost 23 million victimizations in the U.S.¹
 - ◆ 5.8 million violent victimizations of people age 12 and over.
 - ◆ 17.1 million property victimizations of households.
- Being a target or victim of a crime can have immediate and long term consequences for the victims, their friends, families, and co-workers.

¹Truman & Planty, 2012

Impact of Victimization: Why

Criminal victimization may lead to:

- Death.
- Physical injury.
- Illness.
- Health care costs.
- Lost wages.
- Property damage and other financial costs.

Impact of Victimization: Why

- Becoming a victim of crime undermines:
 - ◆ An individual's sense of personal control.
 - ◆ The idea that bad things do not happen to good people.
 - ◆ The world as a fair and comprehensible place.
- Individuals who have been victimized experience a loss of control.

Impact of Victimization: Why

Victims commonly experience:

- Shock and numbness.
- Disbelief.
- Loss of trust.
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Confusion.
- Memory problems.
- Anger.
- Fear of crime.
- Anxiety.
- Depression.
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- Suicidal tendencies.

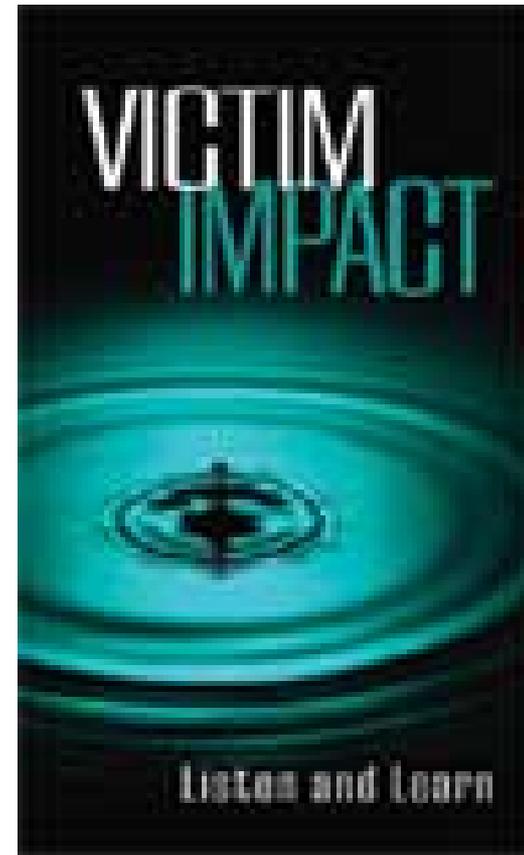
Impact of Victimization: Why

Criminal victimization and its consequences may impact:

- Work.
- Education.
- Family.
- Parenting.
- Interpersonal relationships.
- Faith/Spiritual life.

Impact of Victimization: Why

- Being a victim of a crime can be traumatic and confusing, with short and long term negative impacts.
- How others respond to victims of crime can make matters better or worse.



Impact of Victimization: Why Your Response Matters

For Victims

- Victims who receive positive support have better psychological outcomes and heal faster than those who do not or who encounter negative reactions.

For a Criminal Case

- Victims who perceive that they are not being believed or are being treated negatively are less likely to participate in the criminal justice process and are less able to provide high quality participation.

Basics of Crisis Intervention: How

Goal is to identify:

- The immediate needs of the person.
- Ways to cope during the next 24 to 72 hours.

Basics of Crisis Intervention: How

Step 1: Introduction

- Name and title
- “I’m Dusty and I am an intern here. How can I help you?”

Basics of Crisis Intervention: How

Step 2: Safety Check

- Step 2a: Insure safety:
 - ◆ Are you safe right now?
 - ◆ Is it safe for you to talk to me now?
- Step 2b: Calm person down:
 - ◆ Body language
 - ◆ Spoken language

Basics of Crisis Intervention: How

Step 3: Listen and Assess

- Practice effective listening.
- Be aware of 3 major needs of crime victims:
 - ◆ To feel safe.
 - ◆ To express their emotions.
 - ◆ To know “what comes next.”

Basics of Crisis Intervention: How

Step 3: Listen and Assess, continued

- Assess needs:
 - ◆ What are the things that can be addressed right now?
- Assess available resources:
 - ◆ “What has worked to help you cope with stressful events in the past?”
 - ◆ “Who might be able to help you with this issue?”
 - ◆ “What resources might help?”

Basics of Crisis Intervention: How

Step 4: Take Action

- Assist in creating a step-by-step plan.
 - ◆ Remember that you need additional training, help from a supervisor and knowledge of the protocols and procedures of your organization before in order to create an effective action plan for a victim.

Basics of Crisis Intervention: How

Step 5: Review

- Plan
- Information
- Referrals
- Contact person

Basics of Effective Communication: How

When working with a victim of crime, DO

- Practice *effective communication*.
- Be aware of nonverbal cues.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries.
- Be comfortable with expressions of emotion.
- Treat them as individuals.

When working with a victim of crime, DO NOT:

- Judge or blame a victim.
- Make decisions for them.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Give inaccurate information.

Basics of Effective Communication: How

Active listening is:

- Listening carefully, without judgment.
- Listening to the content and emotions of the message.
- Attempting to understand and relate to another's situation and feelings.

Basics of Effective Communication: How

Paraphrasing is:

- Repeating back in your own words what you understood the person to have said.
 - ◆ “So what I think you are saying is...”
 - ◆ “It sounded to me like... Is that accurate?”

Foundations of Effective Communication: How

Reflective listening is:

- Mirroring a person's feelings back to them verbally.
 - ◆ “It sounds like you are feeling...”
 - ◆ “When you told me your story, you sounded sad. Is that accurate?”

Foundations of Effective Communication: How

Affirming is validating a victim's experiences and reinforcing their strengths:

- Verbally.
- Nonverbally.

Foundations of Effective Communication: How

If you must ask questions as part of your placement, ask yourself:

- What is the minimum I need to know right now to help this person?
- What type of question will get me the information I need?
- How can I ask without having a negative impact?

Foundations of Effective Communication: How

If you must ask questions as part of your placement:

- Use open-ended and closed-ended questioning.
- Open ended questions allow for victims to feel listened to.
- Avoid closed ended (for example, yes/no type) questions except when needed.

Note-Taking

If you take notes on your communication with a victim, keep in mind that anything you document is discoverable.

That means it can be used by the defense in case of a trial.

Student Role: Who and What You Are and How

- Confidentiality
- Mandated Reporting
- Cultural Differences
- Diversity

Student Role: How

Working with those who have experienced trauma can lead to secondary trauma or compassion fatigue.

- Know the signs.
- Monitor yourself for changes.
- Engage in self-care.

What is your self-care plan?

Remember...

What you do matters.

You can help.

But leave it to the professional staff whenever possible – they are the experts.