

Faculty Involvement

This section includes helpful guidelines for faculty to teach about criminal victimization; additional materials about crime trends, the cost of crime, the mental health impact of crime and other useful information related to crime victimization; and a copy of a PowerPoint presentation on the challenges of victimization issues in an online environment that was presented at the Sloan Consortium, October 10, 2012.

Why Incorporate Victim Issues in University and College Curricula?

There are many important reasons for faculty in every department in every discipline to be concerned about crime victimization and to incorporate victim issues into their courses.

1. Crime Victimization may Negatively Impact Students' Academic Performance

No matter what we teach or what type of program we are in, there are students in our courses who have been touched, either directly or indirectly, by crime. See the curriculum kit *Who is a Victim of Crime?* They may have been directly victimized themselves, such as being assaulted or having their home broken into, or may have had a family member murdered or assaulted. Such an occurrence may well be a reason why they are not performing adequately in their academic coursework. We need to recognize this possibility and know what action to take.

2. Knowing the Nature and Impact of Criminal Victimization and the Way the Criminal Justice and Allied Social Services Systems Work Helps Us Navigate Those Systems

Crime affects us all. Both in our professional and personal lives we are likely to encounter victims of crime. We may be or become victims of crime ourselves. See the curriculum kit *Nature and Extent of Criminal Victimization*.

How we relate to victims of crime impacts their ability to recover. This in turn impacts our relationships with them. Knowing how the criminal justice and allied social services systems work enables all of us to negotiate these systems more effectively, thus minimizing potential secondary trauma from dealing with those systems.

3. Career Opportunities Exist in Victim Services Agencies

There are many career opportunities for working with crime victims. These include: a victim advocate in a District Attorney's Office; a victim assistant in a police department; a counselor or advocate in a rape crisis center or domestic violence shelter; a staff member of a state victim assistance program or domestic violence coalition; and, a victim advocate coordinator for a local victim assistance program. We need to make students aware of these career opportunities.

4. Students in Many Careers Will Work with Victims

Contact with victims is not limited to those who choose to work in victim services agencies. In their futures, students in a broad range of careers will need to work with victims as a part of their professional responsibilities. This includes, but is certainly not limited to, first responders, counselors, youth services workers, attorneys, mental health providers, criminal justice system workers, educators, social workers, health care providers, armed services personnel, public officials, faith community leaders, human resources staff, journalists, and managers in all fields. This underscores that material on crime victims needs to be incorporated in a broad range of academic courses and disciplines.

How can we persuade administrators and faculty that crime victimization is an important issue to consider in all university and college courses?

Provide administrators and faculty with evidence indicating:

- The extent to which college students are the direct or indirect victims of crime.
- The impact that this experience can have on these students including how victimization can impact student performance in any course.
- The importance of dealing sensitively and responsibly with students who disclose victimization.
- The importance of giving students information required to access the services they may need.
- The existence of careers open to students in Victim Services Agencies.
- The likelihood that students in a broad range of careers will work with victims of crime.

Understanding How Crime Victimization May Negatively Impact Students' Academic Performance

As we consider why students are not performing to their potential in our courses, we need to be aware that crime victimization may be a factor that is negatively impacting their academic performance. We owe it to these students to:

- Recognize the issues they are confronting by being aware of the warning signs
- Provide them with information about available resources to help them deal more effectively with these issues

Make sure we do nothing that makes the situation worse. This involves teaching in a sensitive and appropriate way that does not cause additional harm or support victim blaming and managing disclosures of victimization in an appropriate manner. See *Teaching About Criminal Victimization: Guidelines for Faculty*.

- **Why do faculty and administrators have this responsibility?**
- Whether faculty see themselves this way or not, students often consider them to be sources of knowledge and help not just for their academic needs, but for their lives in general
- Faculty are invested not only in the educational, but also in the career and life success of students. This involves understanding what can impede those goals.

It is Helpful to Know about the Nature and Impact of Criminal Victimization and the Way the Criminal Justice and Allied Social Systems Work

There are a number of reasons to know the nature and impact of criminal victimization and the way the criminal justice and allied social services systems work.

- Anyone can be a victim of crime.
- It is helpful to learn about how and where crime is committed so that you can take precautions to lessen the likelihood of becoming a crime victim.
- If you or someone you know is or becomes a victim of crime, it is helpful to know how best to facilitate recovery from victimization. See the curriculum kit *The Impact of Victimization*.
- It is helpful to know how the criminal justice system really works, so that you can negotiate it more easily. See the curriculum kit *Victims and the Police* and the curriculum kit *Victims and the Public Prosecutor*.
- It is helpful to know what rights victims have so that these rights are obtained.

Career opportunities exist in victim service agencies.

There are a number of ways to help students prepare for such a career. The pathway depends upon the student's objective. If the student already has a specific career in mind, it is desirable to find out what qualifications are required to obtain that job. A specific undergraduate or graduate degree may be required.

In order to obtain the knowledge and/or qualifications desired, students can:

- Take a course that focuses on victim issues, such as victimology or victims and the criminal justice system
- Take a victim studies certificate
- Take an internship or practicum in an agency or organization that deals with victims or promotes victim interests
- Earn a degree in a program that focuses on victim issues

Many careers involve working with victims of crime.

Undergraduate and graduate education helps prepare students for a future career(s) of their choice. However, this education often does not prepared students for the fact that in many jobs, they will encounter situations that involve working with victims of crime. Instead, faculty can include information about criminal victimization and its consequences, as well as likely scenarios where victims of crime would be encountered while working.

Some disciplines that could integrate information on crime victims into the curriculum include:

- Business
- Criminal Justice
- Education
- Human Services
- Journalism
- Law
- Management
- Military Science
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Physical Therapy
- Public Health
- Public Policy
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Sociology