

Module 7

Overcoming Communication Challenges

OVC Can Help You Put the Pieces Together



OVCTTAC

Learning Objectives

- ❖ **List several guidelines for interacting effectively with crime victims.**
- ❖ **List several guidelines for interacting effectively with people with disabilities.**
- ❖ **Identify ways to meet specific complex communications needs.**
- ❖ **Explain how to interact with service animals.**

Guidelines for Victim Service Providers

- ❖ A good victim service provider is *always* respectful and empathetic when assisting victims of crime.
- ❖ What are our guidelines?

Guidelines for Advocates for People With Disabilities

- ❖ A good advocate for people with disabilities is *always* respectful and empathetic when assisting individuals with disabilities.
- ❖ What are *our* guidelines?

Video

The 10 Commandments of Communicating with People with Disabilities

Refer to the Video Information Sheet to order this video.

Complex Communication Needs

A disability may impact someone's ability to communicate:

- ❖ **Inability or difficulty speaking.**
- ❖ **Inability or difficulty hearing.**
- ❖ **Difficulty understanding.**

Complex Communication Issues

- ❖ **Not always the result of physical disabilities.**
- ❖ **Crime victims with psychiatric disabilities can exhibit a wide range of symptoms that impact communication.**

Symptoms of Psychiatric Disorders

- ❖ **An individual with obsessive compulsive disorder may feel compelled to rearrange objects in a room.**
- ❖ **An individual with paranoid personality disorder may perceive hostility or malevolence in your attempt to help.**
- ❖ **A crime victim with schizophrenia may believe you can read her mind and transmit her thoughts to others.**

The Effects of Crime

- ❖ **Crime itself is a stressor that can trigger symptoms.**
- ❖ **Victim service providers must find ways to communicate with all victims, regardless of disability or type of disability.**

Abusers Take Advantage

- ❖ **Perpetrators of crime often take advantage of communication issues to silence people with disabilities.**
- ❖ **The crime victim who uses a Liberator in the *End the Silence* video was silenced when the abuser broke his device.**

Communication Guidelines

- ❖ **Communicating effectively with victims of crime is challenging.**
- ❖ **When the crime victim has a disability that impacts communication, the challenge is even greater.**
- ❖ **However, the need to communicate effectively in a crisis is critical.**

Activity

Interacting With Crime Victims With Complex Communication Needs

Worksheet 7.1

- ❖ **Work with your group to list as many communication/interaction guidelines as you can for your assigned communication need.**
- ❖ **Be prepared to share your responses with the other groups.**

Communicating is NOT Understanding

- ❖ **Talking with someone and receiving a response does not mean they understood your meaning.**
- ❖ **Crime victims may be uncomfortable discussing crime, they may not know the correct terms, or they may not know understand that a crime occurred.**
- ❖ **Victim service providers should learn to listen for euphemisms, metaphors, and a reluctance to discuss the crime.**

Activity

Rape in New Jersey

Worksheet 7.2

- ❖ **Work with your group to list as many communication/interaction guidelines as you can for your assigned communication need.**
- ❖ **Be prepared to share your responses with the other groups.**

Activity

Would it be your responsibility to try to obtain the truth from the crime victim? If so, what would you have done to find out what happened?

How could you help make the person understand and explain what had happened?

What resources might you find helpful to understand what happened to her? What your role is?

What do you do if someone changes his or her story about an incident? What do you do if the person has an intellectual or developmental disability?

Crime Victims With Acquired Disabilities

- ❖ **A crime victim who acquires a disability as a result of the crime has different issues.**
- ❖ **The victim is dealing not only with the crime itself but with a profound life change.**
- ❖ **They may focus more on the disability than the crime.**

Safety Plans and Individual Response Plans

- ❖ **May be vital in creating a sense of security for the crime victim.**
- ❖ **May protect the individual from further abuse.**
- ❖ **Can be tailored specifically for the individual at risk.**

Service Animals

Service animals are individually trained to provide assistance with:

- ❖ **Guiding people who are blind.**
- ❖ **Alerting people who are deaf.**
- ❖ **Pulling a wheelchair.**
- ❖ **Alerting or responding to seizures.**
- ❖ **Reminding a person to take medications.**
- ❖ **Calming a person.**

Service animals have the right to accompany their persons into most public facilities.

Do *not* pet service animals – they are working animals, not pets!

Review of Learning Objectives

- ❖ **List several guidelines for interacting effectively with crime victims.**
- ❖ **List several guidelines for interacting effectively with people with disabilities.**
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- ❖ **Explain how to interact with service animals.**

End of Module 7

- ❖ **Questions?**
- ❖ **Comments?**

