

Victim Service Providers

Victim service providers support people impacted by crime throughout their involvement with the justice system...and sometimes beyond. Their participation in the justice process enhances how the system responds to the needs of victims and how it works toward harm reduction in an evidence-based way—one that benefits both individuals and the community.

Supporting Individuals



Victim service providers ensure that victims' unique voices and perspectives are heard...that victims have input into the justice system. They gather and share information from victims and help them make victim impact statements that can inform key decisions, for example, around supervision conditions or effective interventions. Conversely, they keep victims informed about the actions of the justice system—notifying them of case processing, clarifying how decisions might impact them, and helping them understand how evidence-based tools and interventions are correlated with reduced recidivism and future victimization.

Victim service providers also offer emergency services, assist with safety planning, offer treatment, and help victims seek restitution and restoration.

IDENTIFYING VICTIMIZATION AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE VIOLATED THE LAW

Many people who have violated the law have also been victims of crime. Unaddressed trauma associated with past victimization may interfere with their ability to fully engage in treatment or successfully complete supervision. Practitioners need to screen for trauma and refer people to appropriate services.

CRIME VICTIMS ACT (PA Act 111 of 1998)

Victims/survivors of crime have the right to be:

- treated with fairness, dignity, and respect
- accompanied at all proceedings by a family member, a victim advocate, or another support person
- restored as they were before the crime, as much as possible, through restitution
- notified of the person's release from incarceration (including work release, medical release, furlough, and escape) and of their rearrest and incarceration
- notified of the arrest of a person under supervision who has violated a Protection from Abuse order

Contributing to the System

Victim service providers collaborate with other justice system stakeholders to develop policies and practices that reflect victims' needs and concerns. They share information about victims' experiences with the justice system—providing qualitative data that can be used to evaluate the system's success. They help to identify gaps in services and to create models for sharing information and working with victims. And, they add their voices when stakeholders request additional funding or lobby for legislative changes that can contribute to fewer victims and increased community well-being and safety.

Positive Impacts

When victim service providers are effective partners in the justice process:

- **VICTIMS'** satisfaction increases as they see the justice system becoming more responsive to their needs and as they feel more empowered
- **JUSTICE SYSTEM** policies and practices reflect a victim-centered perspective
- the **PUBLIC** has greater confidence in the system's ability to address crime

QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDER

- Deep understanding of the justice system process and of the research that helps inform key decisions
- Ability to work collaboratively with other justice system stakeholders
- Trained in trauma-informed care, including expressing empathy, supporting autonomy, and empowering the person who was harmed
- Trained in motivational interviewing (e.g., active listening, reflection)
- Strong knowledge of victim services and other programs available in the community

Understanding
Empathetic Collaborative
Well trained
Knowledgeable