

SECTION III

New Directions for Victim Assistance and Allied Professions

Members of many different professions work directly with crime victims or come into contact with them on a daily basis. In addition to the field of victim assistance, primary among these are the fields of health care, mental health, law, education, faith, business, and the news media. This section describes the important roles that these professional communities can play in assisting victims and chronicles the major accomplishments that each has made over the past few decades to meet victims' needs.

This section also identifies areas within each profession where services for victims of crime can be enhanced and highlights the innovative promising practices that have been developed to improve victim services. Each chapter contains recommendations developed by experts in that profession and others in the victims' field. The recommendations do not necessarily reflect the views of any one individual or group, but reflect a wealth of diverse voices from the field.

Many of the recommendations focus on developing educational programs on victims' issues, policies and protocols for working with victims, technological applications, programs that involve victims themselves

in providing services, multidisciplinary initiatives, and sensitive responses to staff victimization. A common theme running through all of the recommendations is an urgent concern to meet the needs of underserved victims, such as victims with disabilities, hate and bias crime victims, and gang violence victims, and to improve outreach to victims when language or cultural barriers prevent access to services.

CHAPTER 6

New Directions for the Victim Assistance Community

In the early 1960s, incidents of serious crime began to steadily rise in the United States, and their devastating effect on American life was evident by the early 1970s. In 1981, the year before the convening of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, the number of people victimized nationwide reached an historic high point. The victims' movement began in earnest during this period.¹

Early major strides were made in local communities by volunteers, many of whom were victims or survivors of crime motivated by the inadequate response of the criminal justice system in the aftermath of their victimization. The first three victim assistance programs in the United States were established in 1972. Two were rape crisis programs: Bay Area Women Against Rape in Alameda County, California, and Rape Crisis Services in Washington, D.C. The third program, Aid to Victims of Crime, in St. Louis, Missouri, concentrated on crisis intervention for all crime victims. In 1974, the first battered women's shelter was established in Denver, Colorado.

The first criminal justice-based victim assistance programs were also established in the 1970s. In 1974, the first eight prosecutor-based victim-witness assistance pilot programs were created with support from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). DOJ funds also supported the development at that time of the first law enforcement-based victim-witness programs in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Indianapolis, Indiana. Elements of these early victim assistance programs remained guideposts as the victim assistance field grew and formed the foundation of basic victim services today: crisis intervention, support during the criminal justice process, assistance in applying for compensation and in receiving restitution, and aid during the presentence process in preparing victim impact statements (first introduced in the Fresno County, California Probation Office in 1974).

In 1975, the first national organization to assist and advocate on behalf of crime victims, the National Organization for Victim Assistance, was formed, and it held its first national conference a year later.² In 1978, the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault and the National

When the victims' movement was launched in the early 1970s, many of us thought that establishing victim assistance programs, especially in prosecutors' offices, was our first and final challenge. We know now that such a 'final' challenge was but a first step. Victim assistance must become a pervasive, immediate presence in all our communities, responsive to the special attributes of those we serve, and suffused with enforceable rights. So the challenge of our beginnings has blossomed into a host of challenges today in America and indeed, across the world. I believe we are up to the task.

Marlene Young,
Executive Director
National Organization for
Victim Assistance

The enormous contributions of grass roots advocates across this country should not be ignored. Too often they remain the outsiders or at best on the fringes of credibility. They deserve acceptance as the experts many of them have become. Their patience, passion, and perseverance have enabled them to endure, to overcome, and to achieve extraordinary advances for all victims across this country.

Roberta Roper,
Founder, Stephanie
Roper Committee

Coalition Against Domestic Violence were organized by rape crisis and domestic violence programs, and the first national organization to assist homicide survivors, Parents of Murdered Children, was created. Mothers Against Drunk Driving was formed 2 years later in 1980. In addition, the Vera Institute of Justice began a demonstration project in the 1970s that assisted victims and witnesses in criminal courts in Brooklyn, New York. Today, this comprehensive nonprofit program known as Victim Services, Inc., employs a staff of 650 and operates with an annual budget of \$30 million.

By the late 1970s, the victim assistance field had developed to the point of needing federal support. The U.S. Department of Justice, through a grant to the Urban Institute, responded by publishing a guide to the elements of a model victim assistance program and by beginning a project to identify exemplary projects around the country that other jurisdictions could replicate. In 1979, the Department funded the creation of six state networks of victim assistance programs.

In the 1980s, numerous other national victim advocacy and assistance organizations were established, including the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, formed in 1984 to implement the newly passed National Missing and Exploited Children Act, and the National Victim Center, established in 1985 to advocate for the creation and expansion of victims' rights within the criminal and civil justice systems. Other national organizations started in the 1980s include Security on Campus, founded by surviving parents after their daughter was murdered on a college campus; Concerns of Police Survivors, formed by the families of slain police officers disillusioned with the general lack of support and rights they received in the aftermath of their loss; and the Victim Assistance Legal Organization, founded by Frank Carrington, a member of the 1982 President's Task Force.

The Impact of the 1982 President's Task Force

The 1982 President's Task Force on Victims of Crime provided leadership at a critical time for the victim assistance field. It highlighted the lack of services to victims and underscored the need for all participants in the justice system to respond sensitively to victims. The Task Force did not directly address the services provided by victim assistance programs based outside of the justice system. It did, however, append a set of model program elements for justice system-based victim-witness programs and provided references to programs that were implementing them. These elements included:

- Crisis counseling at crime scenes.
- Hotline services for victims and witnesses 24 hours a day.
- Emergency monetary aid for needy victims with problems caused by crime.

- Information on and referrals to victim assistance and compensation programs.
- Assistance with victim compensation.
- Public education.
- Intercession on behalf of victims and witnesses with employers and creditors.
- Transportation services.
- Translator services.
- Supportive counseling or companionship during court appearances.

Today, many community-based victim assistance programs provide these services or work in collaboration with other agencies to do so. Additional services that many programs provide include information about victims' rights, child care, support groups, security information, case monitoring, prevention activities, and assisting victims who want to become involved in activism. Many programs also provide education and training for victims about the justice process and community resources.

Additional Forces That Shaped the Field of Victim Assistance

Since the publication of the *Final Report*, three other significant developments have had a major impact on the field of victim assistance. First, the creation of state and federal funding programs for victim assistance such as the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA), which created the federal Crime Victims Fund, provided a more stable source of funding for local victim assistance programs. Since the passage of VOCA, more than \$2.5 billion has been distributed to local victim assistance programs and state compensation programs from fines and penalties assessed against federal offenders. More recently, the passage of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 made available \$1.6 billion to support domestic violence and sexual assault programs and research. In addition, all states now provide funding for victim assistance programs, although the levels of funding and types of programs funded vary greatly by state.

Second, the establishment of the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) provided financial and technical support for the development and dissemination of model protocols for victim assistance programs, diverse training curricula, and promising practices, as well as the training of thousands of victim service providers nationwide.

Third, the enactment of state crime victims bills of rights in the 1980s and the passage of state constitutional amendments in the 1990s have established a legal foundation for criminal and juvenile justice agencies to provide supportive services to crime victims, such as information and referrals, assistance with victim impact statements, help in collecting restitution, and a wide range of victim notification services.

When we began advocating for victims in 1972 a Common Pleas judge candidly said we were wasting our time. But, he added, if we happened to succeed the wave would ripple across the entire pond. The wave is growing to tidal proportions.

Dr. Robert Denton,
Executive Director,
Victim Assistance Program,
Akron, Ohio

The Office for Victims of Crime is committed to enhancing the Nation's capacity to assist crime victims and to providing leadership in changing attitudes, policies, and practices to promote justice and healing for all victims of crime.

Office for Victims of Crime
Mission Statement

Office for Victims of Crime U.S. Department of Justice

Established 1984

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) was established by the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) to administer federal funds that support victim assistance and victim compensation programs around the country, and to advocate for the fair treatment of crime victims. To this end, OVC administers the Crime Victims Fund, which is derived not from tax dollars but from fines and penalties paid by federal criminal offenders. Over 90% of the Fund is distributed to the states to help fund their victim assistance and victim compensation programs. OVC administers the remainder of the Fund to support services to federal crime victims, provide training designed to educate criminal justice and allied professionals regarding the rights and needs of crime victims, provide technical assistance to criminal justice and allied professionals, support training and victim assistance programs in Indian country, and initiate and support innovative projects with national impact. This office is one of five bureaus within the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. For further information contact OVC at 202/307-5983 or visit OVC's webpage at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/>.

Violence Against Women Grants Office U.S. Department of Justice

Established 1994

The Violence Against Women Grants Office (VAWGO) administers the U.S. Department of Justice's formula and discretionary grant programs authorized by the Violence Against Women Act of 1994. The program assists the nation's criminal justice system in responding to the needs and concerns of women who have been, or potentially could be, victimized by violence. Grant programs emphasize enhanced delivery of services to women victimized by violence; strengthen outreach efforts to minorities and disabled women; and provide Indian tribal governments with funds to develop and strengthen the tribal justice system's response to violent crimes committed against Native American women, through a discretionary grant program. In addition, the Office provides technical assistance to state and tribal government officials in planning innovative and effective criminal justice responses to violent crimes committed against women. OVC works closely with the Violence Against Women Office, which is responsible for Department-wide coordination of this issue. For further information contact VAWGO at 202/307-6026 or visit VAWGO's webpage at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/VAWGO/>.

Victim Assistance Services Today

This nation's capacity to respond to victims has changed significantly in the 15 years since the release of the *Final Report* of the President's Task Force. The victim assistance movement has grown rapidly into a full-fledged advocacy and service field dedicated to meeting the physical, financial, and psychological needs of victims and their families. More than 10,000 programs now provide support and assistance to victims in the aftermath of crime.

Victim assistance programs have become part of the nation's criminal and juvenile justice infrastructure and now exist in law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and correctional agencies. Over 2,000 community-based programs assist battered women, and over half provide shelter.³ Nationwide there are 2,000 rape crisis centers, more than 200 chapters of the advocacy and support group Parents of Murdered Children, and over 500 chapters of Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Multidisciplinary children's advocacy centers, many of which are community or hospital-based, help abused children in more than 350 jurisdictions, and Triad programs assist elderly crime victims in more than 525 communities. Numerous national organiza-

As the crime victims movement enters its third decade, it is useful not only to reflect on where we have been, but where we are headed. In order to make sure we have neither reached our zenith nor exhausted our welcome as an important component of the criminal justice system, we should take a long look at what we do—and most important of all—whether we can do it better.

David Austern, President,
National Victim Center

National Organization for Victim Assistance

Founded 1975

The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) is the world's oldest broad-based victim rights group. A nonprofit, membership organization, NOVA is guided by four purposes: to be of service to its members; to be an advocate for victim rights and services in federal, state, and local legislatures and executive agencies; to be a training and educational resource to victim assistance and allied professionals; and to be of direct service to victims who call the NOVA offices or who are involved in a large-scale disaster to which a NOVA crisis team responds.

National Victim Center

Founded 1985

The National Victim Center (NVC) is a resource and advocacy center for victims of crime. The Center serves as a national advocate to establish and protect legal rights for victims and to secure the resources they need to recover from the trauma of crime. NVC programs emphasize public education, public policy through legislative advocacy, and resource development for victims. NVC provides technical assistance to victim service providers, criminal justice, and allied professionals and supports the creation of model programs and materials including the nation's most comprehensive library collection on victim-related issues.

tions assist and advocate on behalf of crime victims, providing essential support for the expanding network of Victim Assistance programs across the country. These are extraordinary accomplishments for a movement that started modestly only three decades ago.

Public Awareness

Today, many victim assistance programs at the local, state, and national levels are involved in raising public awareness about crime victims issues and available services. Many programs provide education about victim needs and appropriate and sensitive treatment to police, prosecutors, judges and corrections officials on an ongoing basis. Advocates for victim services also educate students in schools and at other community locations, make television appearances, post advertisements, and distribute program literature.

At the national level, Congress designates one week each year, usually in late April, as National Crime Victims Rights Week. During that week, national awards are presented to outstanding victim service providers from across the country. The week also provides an opportunity for thousands of local communities to pay tribute to the millions of Americans who have been victimized by crime. Each year the Office for Victims of Crime sponsors the development of a public awareness *Resource Guide* for victim assistance programs to use in planning National Crime Victims' Rights Week activities. Over the years, hundreds of ideas to increase public awareness of victim's issues have been presented in the guide. They include sponsoring candlelight vigils, runs, rallies, memorial walls, and tree plantings; conducting forums; publishing editorials and broadcasting public service announcements; creating posters, buttons and brochures; and displaying public awareness information in courthouses, school libraries, hospitals, local retail establishments, and other civic locations. For example, in California, the Youth Authority and Department of Corrections each year print copies of the *Resource Guide* materials and distribute them to their many facilities throughout the state to increase offender awareness of the impact of victimization. Inmates also print public awareness materials for victim assistance programs to distribute throughout the week. Since 1995, the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization has produced OVC's *Resource Guide* and each year distributes it to approximately 6,000 programs nationwide.

Expanding Victim Assistance Services

As the victim assistance field has grown, so has its awareness of the complex needs of crime victims and the demand for coordinated, multidisciplinary responses. There is increasing understanding that services are needed for communities as a whole when they are affected by certain crimes, such as acts of mass violence and hate and bias

motivated violence. At the same time, victim assistance providers are recognizing that services must be tailored to meet the needs of traditionally underserved crime victims including diverse cultural populations, crime victims with disabilities, elderly crime victims, victims of gang violence, and victims of white collar crime/fraud. Expanded knowledge about trauma, grief intervention, and the genesis of criminal activity is leading victim assistance providers to develop programs that address these issues. In short, the field of victim assistance is dynamic and evolving. A few of the issues currently facing the field are discussed below.

Community Response to Crime Victims

Communities around the country are working toward the goal of integrated victim service delivery systems where quality services to crime victims are available and readily accessible to all victims. In some communities this approach takes the form of making services available to victims in one location.

- In Jacksonville, Florida, a unique comprehensive victim service center has been created that provides a range of services in one location for all crime victims. Center staff operate an emergency fund for victims and can pay for expenses such as emergency medical items and new locks for burglarized homes. Counselors at the center provide therapy onsite and respond with law enforcement to major catastrophes and homicides as part of a crisis response team. A representative of the state victim compensation program and self-help groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Parents of Murdered Children are also located at the facility. Bringing these critical services to one location greatly facilitates the system's response to victims: victims have immediate access to a range of needed services. The program has its own cable television show and school crime prevention program and offers many other services for victims.

In other communities, this integrated approach takes the form of strong partnerships among victim service providers, criminal justice and emergency response personnel, allied professionals, and community leaders.

- In Denver, Colorado, and Travis County, Texas, the Office for Victims of Crime has provided funding for two demonstration sites called Victim Services 2000 to develop and implement seamless, comprehensive, coordinated, interdisciplinary systems of services for victims of crime. It is hoped that the projects will result in model environments for crime victims in which culturally and linguistically appropriate services are available to every victim. Both projects will conduct thorough needs assessments, develop innovative intervention strategies and services, institutionalize cross-training on victims issues throughout the criminal justice, community nonprofit, and

The philosophy of Victim Services 2000 is that there is 'no wrong door' in a community when crime victims seek help and support in the aftermath of crime. Whether victims turn to their school, church, hospital, social service or criminal justice agency, each entity will be prepared to provide information, services or referrals and will treat each victim with dignity and compassion.

Steve Siegel,
Director of Program Development,
Denver District
Attorney's Office

One [incident] that really stays home for me was the incident where a five-year-old child was thrown out of a building on the 14th floor. This event was witnessed by 100-plus children in the housing development. There were several thousand children who lived in the community who had either heard about it or were there later on and saw the ambulances or saw the police car there. And then there were thousands of families who lived in that particular housing development. As a member of the response team that went out, it was important not only to work with the children, but also with the families, with the community.

Dr. Pat Jones,
Clinical Psychologist,
at 1995 Public Forum
on *New Directions*

allied professional communities, and utilize technology to integrate services and communication among providers. Victim Services 2000 projects will serve as models for other communities to follow in the 21st century.

Community Crisis Response

Communities are also developing community crisis response capabilities to improve services to victims of violent crime following multiple victimizations. Individual or teams of trained responders assist victims through debriefings and training in the aftermath of criminal incidents that cause significant trauma to a community.

- The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) has provided training and technical assistance to support the establishment of crisis response teams in more than 15 states. Since 1986, NOVA has sent crisis response teams to 125 communities and has provided technical assistance to more than 300 others in the aftermath of communitywide disasters and acts of violence.
- Building on the work of NOVA and others, the Office for Victims of Crime has established a Community Crisis Response program to help communities following multiple serious victimizations. The program has been used to send a crisis response team to the Chicago Housing Authority following a weekend in which 13 people were murdered; to assist the Ramah branch of the Navajo Nation after an eight-fatality drunk driving crash; to bring a noted psychologist to work with survivors and community members following a quadruple homicide on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming; to provide help to the community of Dryden, New York, after the brutal murder of two local high school girls; and to fund crisis response teams that provided training and debriefings for thousands of school children, teachers and medical personnel after the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

Prior to the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia, OVC funded NOVA to provide community crisis response training to approximately 70 victim advocates and volunteers across the State of Georgia on national and international crisis response. Through this initiative, the Atlanta Victim-Witness Assistance Program developed a comprehensive crisis response plan for victim advocates in conjunction with the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. OVC also funded the development of a videotape for law enforcement and a brochure for victims. After the bombing during the Olympics in Atlanta's Centennial Park, the trained advocates and volunteers were instrumental in ensuring that victims received needed services.

Respecting Cultural Diversity in Providing Victims Services

The racial and ethnic diversity of the United States has changed considerably in the past few decades. With this transition, victim assistance professionals face new challenges. Providing effective and sensitive services to victims now requires recognizing and respecting individuals' cultural differences and ensuring that services and information are available in languages other than English.

Unfortunately, the practice of delivering victim services does not yet fully reflect the extraordinary diversity of our nation's population. Some programs have made important strides by working to remove language barriers for victims in need of services. An organization called AYUDA in Washington, D.C., for example, offers bicultural and bilingual services to abused Latina women. In Orange County, California, the Gang Victim Services project of the county's Community Services Program provides multicultural, multilingual support to survivors and victims of gang violence. Many other programs across the country reach out to non-English speaking victims through translated materials. The most effective of these materials provide practical information, explaining the nation's justice system and victim services in an appropriate, culturally relevant manner.

More difficult than removing language barriers, however, is providing services that accommodate and are responsive to different cultures. Differing concepts of suffering and healing influence how victims experience the effects of victimization and the process of recovery. The majority of crisis intervention methods and counseling modalities are based upon specific philosophies of suffering and healing derived from conventional Western theories. Methods for reaching culturally diverse victims must include resources that are specific to their needs. For example, the historical role of African American churches, the reliance upon Mexican curanderas and Native American shamans, and the social constructs of Asian life must be understood and utilized. Establishing a presence in ethnic neighborhoods, whether through storefront offices, mobile crisis units, outreach to homes, or coordination with community-based organizations, is essential.

Those responding to crime victims must make a concerted effort to incorporate the perceptions, beliefs, values, and experience of diverse cultures. The importance of cultural awareness was illustrated in the aftermath of Patrick Purdy's deadly assault weapon attack in 1989 on the school children of Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton, California. In the aftermath of the attack there was an outpouring of concern and support from across the nation. Five children had been killed and 29 children and one teacher wounded. Two of the central events in the healing process for Cambodian and Vietnamese surviving

Crime victims experience their bond of humanness, and therefore also their particular victimization, through a prism replete with racial histories, ethnic colorations, and cultural variations. Every criminal justice and crime victim-related issue is fundamentally multicultural.

Brian Ogawa,
Director,
Crime Victims Institute,
Texas Office of the
Attorney General

When it comes to hurt and pain, color is not an issue—all our blood is red. However, how we respond to trauma is very different. In the black community, our support has always been the church and the family. But these support networks are breaking down. Without that, victims have fewer resources in helping themselves heal. We must work to bring all the available resources to us and work to create others based on this great need.

Clementine Barfield,
Survivor of homicide,
founder and president,
Save Our Sons
and Daughters,
Detroit, Michigan

family members were a Buddhist funeral service and a ceremonial purification of the school grounds to release the children's spirits. These rituals were strange to the local district attorney's victim assistance staff, but their willingness to educate themselves about these important mourning customs and facilitate them for victims was critical to providing a sensitive, meaningful response.

All of those who interact with crime victims must be educated about cultural differences to understand the responses and needs of victims. There is a compelling need for more victim service providers who share and/or can understand the ethnic histories, people, culture, and language of the victims they serve. In addition, there are many other avenues that can be pursued to meet the needs of diverse victims. They include intensive outreach programs to seek minority volunteers, referrals to social/legal service organizations that serve diverse populations, instituting culturally sensitive protocols, and providing clients with on-call translators.

In summary, developing a diverse cultural response to victims' needs involves a multifaceted effort. First, services and information must be provided in appropriate languages. Second, there must be an acknowledgment of the different and valid cultural definitions of personal well-being and recovery from traumatic events. Third, there must be support of the sophisticated and varied cultural pathways to mental health and incorporation of these practices into appropriate victim services and referrals. Fourth, extensive cultural awareness training must be undertaken to enable victim assistance staff to understand persons whose thinking, behavior, and expressive modes are culturally different.

Meeting the Needs of Victims with Disabilities

There are approximately 43 million individuals with disabilities in the United States, many of whom are at high risk of becoming victims of crime because of difficulties in communicating or their limited mobility.⁴ This is especially true for those suffering from developmental or severe disabilities, who are often victimized by their own caretakers, making them extremely fearful of retaliation if they report the crime. With several notable exceptions, few victim assistance programs are designed to meet the needs of the disabled.

- In 1986, Marilyn Smith founded Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services (ADWAS) in Seattle, Washington. The program offers a 24-hour crisis hotline, counseling, and legal advocacy for deaf and deaf-blind victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse. Many staff members and volunteers are deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals who offer a special sensitivity to the needs of deaf victims. The program has developed training for both deaf and hearing crime victim advocates and has published educational materials specifically for deaf adult and youth

victims. Ms. Smith, who is deaf, started ADWAS in response to her own experiences after having been raped. At the time, no services existed for deaf crime victims, making her journey through existing services difficult, and her recovery needlessly long and lonely. ADWAS recently received funding from the Office for Victims of Crime to help replicate this program in 5 cities across the country.

- Several years ago, staff at the Children’s Hospital and Health Center in San Diego, California were concerned that the hospital received few referrals concerning sexually abused youth with disabilities. Their inquiry into this issue culminated in the creation of the Hospital’s Center for Child Protection, which offers specialized forensic assessment and treatment of developmentally disabled victims of sexual assault. The center offers counseling and treatment to approximately 1,200 children a year, with routine referrals of victims with disabilities. In addition, the center offers a 4-week course, developed with the state office of Criminal Justice Planning and the Family Protection Unit of the District Attorney’s Office, to children who are scheduled to testify in court. The center produced training materials to help other medical providers assist victims with disabilities, and all center staff are trained to work with developmentally disabled victims.
- The Midwest Leadership Through Education and Advocacy for the Deaf (LEAD) in Missouri provides people who are deaf and hard of hearing with comprehensive support and leadership through education and research. With support from VOCA, the Midwest LEAD Institute (MLI) provides culturally and linguistically appropriate services to deaf victims of domestic violence. The goals of the project are to reduce the severity of psychological and emotional trauma that result from abuse, provide support for deaf victims in coping with the impact of abuse, provide crisis intervention for deaf victims of domestic violence, develop a pool of volunteer sign language interpreters for shelters and agencies, and establish a 24-hour crisis hotline for deaf victims of violent crime. In collaboration with the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence, MLI provides training and materials to shelters and agencies throughout the state.

Services for victims with disabilities were largely overlooked on the national level until the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990,⁵ which required states and organizations receiving public funding to make their services accessible to all. Several efforts have since been undertaken to provide information to state and local criminal justice agencies and victim assistance programs on achieving compliance with the ADA’s requirements. There is a paucity of research on the rate of victimization of people with disabilities, however. In addition, more information is needed regarding model intervention services and appropriate criminal justice responses to victims with disabilities such as improving reporting rates, making interview

A ‘true pioneer’—a deaf woman in a hearing world, fighting for and winning equality and accessible services for deaf victims.

Attorney General Janet Reno
honoring Marilyn Smith,
National Crime
Victims’ Rights Week, 1996

People with developmental and other severe disabilities suffer violent crime at an alarming rate. Yet there is little written or, more importantly, done about it. This is not an abstract problem of trends and statistics, but a brutal reality in the lives of the human beings who are victims of these crimes.

Daniel D. Sorensen,
Chair of the Victims
of Crime Committee,
Criminal Justice Task
Force for People with
Developmental Disabilities,
Sacramento, California

techniques more sensitive, and exploring alternative avenues for victim participation. Such efforts should be expanded, and all victim assistance programs should examine how they can make their services accessible and responsive to the needs of the disabled.

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) has undertaken a number of projects in recent years to begin to address this issue. For example, though a grant to NOVA, OVC sponsored a transfer of knowledge symposium in 1998 on the topic of assisting crime victims with physical and developmental disabilities. The 35 experts from the fields of disability rights, victim assistance, and criminal justice who attended the symposium developed recommendations and an action plan to improve the capacity and preparedness of victim service providers and allied professionals to respond effectively to the unique needs of crime victims with disabilities. Curriculum development and other national training efforts have also been initiated by OVC.

Responding to Specific Victim Populations

At the same time the victim assistance field is confronting global issues such as securing a community wide continuum of services and ensuring the accessibility and responsiveness of all services to diverse cultures and the disabled, it also faces the challenge of meeting very particularized needs of discrete victim populations.

Cited throughout *New Directions* are many reports that have been written regarding the special needs of certain victim populations. While OVC has supported many of these products, other Justice Department divisions have supported research and promising practices as well. For example, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) recently published: *A Policymakers Guide to Hate Crime; The Criminal Justice Response to Rape; The Project to Develop a Model Anti-Stalking Code for the States: A Final Summary Report;* and the *Regional Seminar Series on Developing Antistalking Codes*. These monographs provide indepth information about how to establish policies and laws that address hate crimes, sexual assault, and stalking. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) has published many reports about “promising practices” in responding to domestic violence. One recent report entitled *Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Antistalking Legislation* discusses important interventions for domestic violence and stalking, including community policing, arrest and protection orders, collaborative court approaches, and other multidisciplinary techniques, as well as threat assessment procedures.

The sections that follow do not attempt to address all of the issues and concerns related to diverse victim populations, but rather briefly highlight background information and a few major topics. These crime victim population groups include victims of domestic violence, sexual

assault, survivors of homicide, elderly victims of crime, victims of drunk driving crashes, stalking, and gang violence, hate and bias crimes, and victims of white collar crime/fraud and bank robbery.

It is important to note that every section of this report provides information and recommendations regarding these and other victim populations.

Victims of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence has been called a “hidden crime” because until the recent past it was often not reported by the victim or treated as criminal behavior by the justice system. The 1982 President's Task Force on Victims of Crime recognized the lack of serious attention given to victims of domestic violence, stating in its report that “the cries of family violence victims can no longer go unheeded.”⁶ Since that time, significant changes have occurred in the nation’s response to domestic violence.

The Model Domestic Violence Code was drafted through the National Council of Juvenile and Family and Court Judges and introduced to the National Conference of State Legislatures in 1994.⁷ It has been enacted in whole, or in part, in some jurisdictions. Its key provisions seek to upgrade interventions and limit discretion of individuals within the criminal justice system to make the system more responsive to the safety needs of victims. The code requires mandatory arrest, mandatory no-contact orders, restrictions on home detention and deferred prosecutions for batterers, restrictions on plea bargaining domestic violence cases, and standards for certification of domestic violence treatment programs.

Passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994 secured additional federal funding for domestic violence programs and a new base of funding for criminal justice interventions and important research to address violence against women. Programs under VAWA are managed by the Violence Against Women Grants Office of the U.S. Department of Justice.⁸ The Act also established federal criminal and civil remedies for battered women and created protections for immigrant women who are battered. Additionally, VAWA supported the creation of the National Domestic Violence Hotline in 1996 to provide crisis intervention information and assistance to victims of domestic violence. In its first year of operation, the hotline responded to more than 73,000 calls for assistance from around the country.

Model domestic violence programs for all sectors of the justice system and for allied professionals are described throughout this report.

Let us focus on family violence and understand that the child who sees his father hit his mother is going to accept violence as a way of life. And let us understand that family violence in all forms is an epidemic in this nation and should not be tolerated.

Attorney General Janet Reno

We have made much progress, but we still have far to go if women and children are to be kept safe in America. Only by committing further resources and making the protection of women and children a priority can we hope to correct the injustices women still face at the hands of the criminal justice system.

Joan Zorza,
Editor, Domestic
Violence Report

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Founded 1978

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) represents more than 2,000 grassroots programs and shelters serving battered women and their children in rural and urban areas throughout the United States. NCADV opposes the use of violence as a means of control over others, and supports equality in relationships and strategies for helping women assume power over their own lives. NCADV also works to educate the public about domestic violence and supports state legislation that appropriately sanctions offenders.

National Network to End Domestic Violence

Founded 1990

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) is a membership and advocacy organization of state domestic violence coalitions. NNEDV began as the Domestic Violence Coalition on Public Policy in 1990, and was instrumental in developing policy that became part of the landmark Violence Against Women Act of 1994. Its mission is to ensure that national public policy is responsive to the concerns and interests of battered women and their children; to strengthen the development of and relationships among domestic violence coalitions, which provide services, community education, and technical assistance to programs establishing shelter and related services to battered women and their children; and to educate the general public about issues concerning domestic violence.

A network of more than 2,000 programs has been established to support domestic violence victims. In addition, many domestic violence programs have recently expanded their services to meet the special needs of elderly battered victims, and children who witness violence in their homes.

- The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women uses coalition building as an effective tool for dealing with older battered women. Since older women seldom use shelters, many service providers in Minnesota began providing hotel rooms and private “safe homes” for older battered women. As a result of making these alternatives available, service providers are now seeing larger numbers of these victims coming forward to seek assistance and support. The Coalition reports that as the number of older women on staff increased, the number of older battered women clients also increased.

- Advocacy for Women and Kids in Emergencies (AWAKE) is an innovative program that offers advocacy and support to abused mothers at the same time that the hospital provides services for their children. Begun with a VOCA grant at Children's Hospital, Boston, in 1986, AWAKE was the first program in the nation in a pediatric setting providing dual advocacy for both battered women and their abused children. AWAKE believes that by providing help to battered women in conjunction with clinical services to children, both populations are more effectively served.

Victims of Sexual Assault

The true magnitude of sexual violence in the United States is difficult to ascertain. Official law enforcement statistics in the annual Uniform Crime Report are based on forcible rapes reported to the police.⁹ In 1992, the National Crime Victimization Survey—designed to elicit crime information not reported to law enforcement—was redesigned to include more specific questions concerning sexual assault. According to data from the National Crime Victimization Survey, over 300,000 rapes and sexual assaults were reported in 1996.¹⁰ Moreover, another 100,000 attempted rapes were reported during the same period.¹¹

When compared, the two national sources of statistical data show a difference between reported and unreported sexual crimes. Victimization research underscores the fact that a large majority of rape victims do not come forward and report to law enforcement.¹² The reasons are many: the stigma surrounding sexual crimes, victim fear of those that they are close to finding out and blaming them, and victim intimidation and a distrust of the criminal justice system.¹³

Initiatives to assist victims of sexual assault are described throughout this report. Over 2,000 rape crisis centers have been established nationwide. These local programs and the state coalitions and national organizations that they are affiliated with have worked to coordinate the responses of medical providers and criminal justice agencies and to protect sexual assault victims' privacy through statute and policies adopted by criminal justice agencies, as well as some media organizations.

Much of the change in the criminal justice system's response to sexual assault victims has been prompted by the passage of laws. Rape shield laws now prevent the sexual history of the victim from being put on trial, and legislation has changed the very definition of sexual assault, making the crime gender neutral, acknowledging that it can occur within marriages, and expanding the definition to include all forms of sexual violence.¹⁷ Specialized sex crime units now operate in many large law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies. The *Final Report* of the President's Task Force recommended training for criminal justice officials on sexual assault and such training has been conducted widely.¹⁸

Research has shown that 69 percent of rape victims fear being blamed for the rape,¹⁴ and that if they knew their attacker, they were six times less likely to report.¹⁵ According to the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, females are ten times more likely than males to be victimized, and females face the highest risk of sexual assault.¹⁶

*The [victim advocate]
helped me to heal, to feel
that I had value again.
He saved my life.*

A sexual assault victim

National Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Founded 1978

National Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCASA) is a membership organization committed to the prevention of sexual violence through intervention, education, advocacy, and public policy. NCASA promotes and advocates a national course of action based on the sexual assault victim/survivor's perspective and works toward the empowerment of all victims and survivors: children and adults, women and men. Major NCASA initiatives include hosting an annual National Conference and Women of Color Institute as well as producing resources for National Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April.

Rape, Abuse & Incest

National Network

Founded 1994

The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) is a non-profit organization that operates the only national toll-free hotline for survivors of sexual assault. Founded in 1994 by singing artist Tori Amos, a survivor of sexual assault herself, RAINN provides hotline access to trained counselors 24 hours a day from anywhere in the country. Calls are automatically routed to local rape crisis centers, expanding the outreach and service of these centers. In just three years of operation, RAINN has helped more than 170,000 victims of sexual assault.

Protocols for coordination between medical providers and criminal justice agencies in sexual assault cases have been developed and implemented in many communities. The development of a standardized rape examination kit to improve medical practices in identifying and gathering evidence was one of the *Final Report's* key recommendations for sexual assault victims. The Office for Victims of Crime sponsored the development of such a kit in the 1980s, but not all states have adopted the national model. And while medical protocols may exist, they are not always followed. In a study of rape victims who sought medical treatment, a significant percentage of victims did not receive pregnancy testing or information on HIV or STD exposure.¹⁹ However, a major step forward was made in 1995, when the American Medical Association published comprehensive guidelines for physicians to communicate with and treat sexual assault victims.²⁰

A new approach to medical intervention for sexual assault victims utilizes sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE) as the primary medical examiner.²¹ Operating under the direct supervision of a

physician, a specially trained nurse takes the victim's medical history, conducts the examination, and implements comprehensive aftercare plans including referrals for counseling and financial assistance.

Privacy remains a critical concern of victims of sexual assault, and a primary factor in non-reporting. Several states have enacted privacy protection laws to prevent the name, address, or other identifying information about rape victims to be made public. In addition, many law enforcement agencies have adopted policies to exclude such information before the release of police reports to the media.²² Regardless, several high-profile rape cases in the 1990s proved that *ultimately* protection of victim privacy rests with internal policies of the media.

Because the overwhelming majority of sexual crimes are committed by intimates and against youth, programs are increasingly targeting funding and efforts to assist younger victims of sexual assault. In New York City, the Youth Empowerment Association trains teenagers recovering from sexual assault to work as peer counselors with youth who are at earlier stages of recovery. Victims have also played a large role in establishing and staffing rape crisis centers.²³

Survivors of Homicide

The senseless loss of life through murder—the ultimate violation—touched the family, friends, schoolmates, and coworkers of nearly 20,000 victims in 1996.²⁴ Murder may occur as a final, violent act after many years of escalating spousal, elder, or child abuse. It may be used as a solution to gang-related hostilities, or to silence a robbery or sexual assault victim. Homicide can kill dozens of victims through one terrorist act or a series of victims by one serial killer. As a direct consequence of drinking and driving, an additional nearly 18,000 lives are lost each year. This is addressed later in this section.

Early victims' rights laws did not recognize surviving family members of homicide victims, extending rights to the "primary" or "direct" victim and not to co-victims or survivors of homicide. Throughout the 1980s, victims' rights laws were enacted and amended to recognize survivors as true victims who should be extended all victims' rights. Betty Jane Spencer testified in front of the 1982 President's Task Force. In 1978 her four sons were shot and killed in an execution-style massacre in their rural Indiana home. Betty Jane was wounded but survived. Looking back on that tragedy she said, "I was killed too. I just didn't die."

Many outstanding programs have been developed to provide support and advocacy for survivors of homicide, including support groups created by survivors.

What is homicide? The accepted definition is the intentional, non-negligent killing of one human being by another. The family of a murder victim has a different definition: the blackest hell accompanied by a pain so intense that even breathing becomes an unendurable labor.

Deborah Spungen,
 Founder and Special
 Projects Director,
 Anti-Violence Partnership
 of Philadelphia,
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

America still has far too great a tolerance for murder. Cocktail parties don't feature games like 'guess who the rapist is' or 'host a robbery,' yet 'host a murder' parties have become common social fixtures. If Americans had an understanding of the consequences of homicide, perhaps we simply would not tolerate our culture's playing with murder.

Nancy Ruhe Munch,
Executive Director,
Parents of Murdered
Children, Inc.

- The Stephanie Roper Committee was created by Roberta and Vince Roper in 1982 following the brutal murder of their daughter Stephanie. The Ropers were astounded at the way they were treated by the criminal justice system. They not only were not allowed to attend the trial but discovered that the two convicted killers would be eligible for parole in 12 years. The Ropers turned their frustration and outrage into activism and created one of the most successful victim activism programs nationwide. With the help of many volunteers, the organization has lobbied for legislative reforms to protect victims' rights and increase services in Maryland. In addition, they operate a Court-watch program that places volunteers, many of whom are victims, in courtrooms to monitor whether victims' rights are respected.
- Save Our Sons and Daughters (SOSAD) is a nonprofit grassroots organization founded in 1987 by Clementine Barfield, who lost two sons to violence in her community. She joined other parents of slain children to create positive alternatives to violence throughout the community. SOSAD provides counseling and training in violence prevention, crisis intervention, multicultural conflict resolution, gang redirection, and peer and bereavement support.
- Other support groups such as Loved Ones of Homicide Victims in Los Angeles and the Tender Loving Care organization in Dallas work to decrease crime victims' sense of isolation, offer support and understanding, and provide practical information and advice. Victim Services in New York City has formed a choir of children who have had a family member killed.
- The Anti-Violence Partnership of Philadelphia has developed, with OVC funding, a multidisciplinary training curriculum to foster more consistency in services for survivors of homicide victims. The curriculum, called "Traumatic Grief: The Synergism of Trauma and Grief," addresses the unique psychological and emotional impact of homicide on survivors and presents a new approach to assisting them.

Parents of Murdered Children *Founded 1978*

Parents of Murdered Children (POMC) was founded by Charlotte and Bob Hullinger in 1978 after the murder of their daughter Lisa. POMC has grown from a single self-help group in Cincinnati, Ohio, to a network of more than 200 local chapters serving 38,000 survivors each year. POMC's goal is to allow the grief of family members to be shared with others who have been through similar experiences, thereby breaking down the isolation that many families face.

Elderly Victims of Crime

While the elderly are less likely to become victims of crime than any other age group, their fear of crime is the highest among all populations and they are more likely to suffer serious consequences when they are victimized. Elderly victims of fraud and other financial schemes often lose financial independence. The impact of physical violence is greater because serious injuries can become life altering disabilities. Older Americans experience a wide range of crimes perpetrated by strangers, family members, paid and unpaid caregivers, and acquaintances. Crimes against the elderly occur not only in public places and their homes, but in nursing homes and residential care facilities as well.

One of the most grievous forms of elderly victimization is by someone the elderly victim knows or depends on for care. Between 1986 and 1994, reports of domestic elder abuse nationwide more than doubled, from 117,000 to 241,000 per year.²⁵ While the elderly are the most likely age group to report crimes, they are less likely to report crime committed by family members and spouses. Many experts believe that only 1 in 14 incidents of domestic elder abuse comes to the attention of the authorities.²⁶ According to the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Aging, when these hidden crimes are considered, the actual abuse rates of the elderly rises to 1 to 2 million incidents each year.²⁷ Adult children are the most frequent abusers of the elderly in domestic settings. For example, adult children were the abusers in 35 percent of substantiated cases of elder abuse in 1994.²⁸ Other relatives were the second most frequent abusers of the elderly with 13.5 percent of cases, and spouse abuse contributed 13.4 percent.²⁹ Each year in the United States, more than 700,000 women over the age of 50 are hit by their husbands.³⁰ The Administration on Aging in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is funding several model projects to help domestic violence shelters develop services for women 50 years and older.

Elders are especially at risk of becoming victims of economic scams and fraud. Con artists target the elderly with get-rich schemes, home improvement scams, and investment fraud. The House Select Committee on Aging found that the victim in 99 percent of home improvement scams was elderly.³¹ Telemarketing fraud has also become a growing threat against the elderly. Of the \$40 billion lost each year from telemarketing crimes, 37 percent is swindled from the elderly.³²

Significant responses to elder abuse and victimization have occurred over the past two decades. Over 42 states have elder abuse reporting laws which, at minimum, require health care professionals to report suspected elderly abuse to a designated state agency, usually Adult Protective Services.³³ However, the effectiveness of these laws are

John, an 85 year-old retired construction worker was fishing when he was approached by two teenagers demanding money. When he did not hand over any money one of the teenagers produced a shotgun and discharged a single blast into the fisherman's neck, killing him. A neighbor said: "He went fishing everyday. He went fishing on the coldest days of winter." The neighbor said she saw John's wife that day, she was standing at the door, waiting for her husband to walk up the street in his fishing gear.

Janet Loflin Lee,
Responding to Elderly
Crime Victims,
1995

being reassessed. Research is showing that in the absence of essential community services, mandatory reporting can create trauma for the abused elder without resolving the underlying abuse problem. Moreover, a common outcome of intervention is to institutionalize elders against their will.³⁴ The extent of abuse against the elderly occurring within institutional settings such as medical, long-term care, and board-and-care facilities is difficult to determine. In one study, more than 36 percent of care providers in institutional facilities had witnessed at least one incident of physical abuse by other staff and four in five (81%) had witnessed an incident of psychological abuse.³⁵

Communities have taken a variety of approaches in responding to elderly victimization. Triad, the unique partnership between the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Sheriffs Association, and the American Association of Retired Persons, assists elder victims of crime and fosters a variety of crime prevention activities. The Triad program is discussed in greater detail in Section II, Chapter 2, Law Enforcement. In addition:

- Isolated elders are being identified by a remarkable program called TIES (Teamwork Insuring Elder Support) that is active in more than 200 communities nationwide.³⁶ TIES trains individuals who come into contact with the elderly, such as bank tellers, postal carriers, and sanitation workers, to call an emergency hotline when they suspect something is wrong. TIES workers have assisted elders who have fallen unconscious, intervened in elder abuse cases, and linked elders in need of medical, emotional, or financial assistance with free services.³⁷
- Gatekeeper programs train employees who interact with the elderly in their homes to identify elder abuse and refer elderly victims to agencies that can intervene. The employees include utility service and repair employees and mail carriers. In Billings, Montana, a senior outreach program entitled GEARS: Gatekeepers Elder Assistance Referral System trains public and private employees to make referrals to adult protective services. After GEARS was started, elder abuse referrals in Billings increased by 16 percent.³⁸

Victims of Drunk Driving Crashes

There are more arrests every day for drunk driving than for any other crime. Although drunk driving fatalities have decreased 40 percent in the past two decades, from 28,000 in 1980 to 17,126 in 1996, this crime is still a leading criminal cause of death and is responsible for approximately 3.5 million injuries each year, which cost an estimated \$45 billion a year to treat.³⁹ The cost of loss in quality of life is estimated to be an additional \$67 billion.⁴⁰ Although the deaths and injuries resulting from drunk driving are well documented, drunk driving is still not considered a violent crime. Victims of drunk driving crashes were until

relatively recently not even considered to be victims of crimes, and their needs and rights to participate in the criminal justice process were often ignored. Changes in public understanding of and response to the crime of drunk driving can largely be credited to the extraordinary work of grassroots groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Remove Intoxicated Drivers (RID), and Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD). Their efforts helped create momentum for the passage of more than 1,700 pieces of driving under the influence (DUI) legislation between 1982 and 1993,⁴¹ as well as the establishment of programs that respond to the needs of this underserved victim population.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving *Founded 1980*

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) was started by two mothers whose daughters were victimized by drunk driving. One was killed and the other became the country's youngest paraplegic. MADD's mission is to stop drunk driving and support victims of this violent crime. Each of the more than 500 MADD chapters across the country have at least one trained advocate who provides emotional support through one-on-one advocacy and support groups, guidance through the criminal justice system, and assistance with victim impact statements and compensation applications. MADD operates numerous education and prevention programs for children and adults of all ages and advocates for better public policy. The organization publishes a wide array of victim brochures and offers information and assistance through a 24-hour hotline.

It is appalling to tell someone with catastrophic injury or the parent of a child killed by a drunk driver that what happened to them is not considered a violent crime.

Janice Harris Lord,
Consultant for Crime
Victims' Issues,
Mothers Against
Drunk Driving

Survivors of drunk driving have, through MADD, also developed death notification trainings and protocols for those who must carry the wrenching news of the death of a loved one to family members or friends. MADD has developed a series of 4 death notification training manuals targeting the professions of law enforcement, mental health counselors and victim advocates, medical personnel, and clergy and funeral directors. Each manual outlines procedures to follow when notifying someone of the death of a loved one, and includes information on debriefing those who must perform this task, as well as sample resource materials to use.

Advocates against drunk driving, many of whom are victims or survivors of drunk driving crashes, continue to focus their energies on prevention efforts and legislative reforms, and have made tremendous impact in this area.⁴² Legislative changes, including establishing the 21-year minimum drinking age, have been singularly effective in reducing the incidence or severity of drunk driving.

Victims of Stalking

Stalking is a distinctive form of criminal activity composed of a series of actions that, taken individually, might constitute legal behavior. For example, actions such as writing a letter, placing a telephone call, or waiting for someone outside their place of work are not criminal actions. When these actions are intended to instill fear or injury, however, they may constitute a pattern of behavior that is illegal.⁴³ Although every stalking case is unique, over time a stalker's behavior becomes more threatening, serious, and violent. Stalking activity often escalates from what was initially bothersome to a level that is obsessive, dangerous, violent, and potentially fatal.

Stalking is a complex social problem that has only recently been addressed in our nation's criminal codes. Until 1990, no states had laws making stalking illegal. That year, California enacted the first anti-stalking law, leading to the passage, in just over 4 years, of laws in the 49 other states and the District of Columbia.⁴⁴ Prior to the passage of these laws, police and prosecutors felt limited in their efforts to assist victims threatened by a stalker because there were no applicable laws to protect a person until the perpetrator actually committed an act of harm. Today, law enforcement officials can use anti-stalking statutes to help determine whether an arrest should be made and to assess the level of threats involved in such cases.

In 1993, Congress directed the U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice to develop a model anti-stalking code to provide a constitutional and enforceable legal framework for states to use in formulating their anti-stalking laws.⁴⁵ NIJ asked a group of nationally recognized criminal justice and victims' rights experts to develop a model anti-stalking code. The code, as reported in the final report of the *Project To Develop a Model Anti-Stalking Code for States*, encourages legislators to make stalking a felony offense, to establish penalties for stalking that reflect and are commensurate with the seriousness of the crime, and to provide criminal justice officials with the authority and legal tools to arrest, prosecute, and sentence stalkers.⁴⁶ In the 3 years since the code's release, 17 states have amended their stalking laws.

Making stalking illegal is only the first step in addressing this crime. The objective in any response to a report of stalking is to intervene before the victim is injured or killed. For communities to respond effectively, a coordinated, multi-agency strategy is essential. Any multi-agency response to stalking must include law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, community and institutional corrections, victim assistance, and social service agencies.

Although stalking has entered the public consciousness through some highly publicized cases, stalking affects many people every day, crossing all racial, social, religious, ethnic, and economic lines. We know that stalking is a crime of terror, power, and control. But we do not always know how to prevent or respond to this complex crime. To meet the challenge of formulating an effective criminal justice strategy for combating stalking, we must increase our knowledge about stalkers, intervention techniques, prevention efforts, and law enforcement policies and practice.

Bonnie J. Campbell,
Director, Violence
Against Women Office
U.S. Department
of Justice

Victims of Gang Violence

Over the past decade the proliferation of gang violence in the United States has received considerable attention from criminal justice professionals concerned about the rising tide of gang violence. Gang violence affects medical professionals who respond to the flood of critical injuries associated with gang-related violence and entire communities whose residents are deeply concerned. While much discussion and effort have focused on the prevention, intervention, and suppression of gang violence, too little attention has been paid to those who are most affected by its tragic impact—the victims of gang violence.

Often lost within the system and sometimes blamed for gang-related crimes for which they hold no responsibility, victims of gang violence frequently receive limited support and experience significant barriers to justice and healing. Their social, cultural, and systemic alienation produces fear, anger, frustration, and confusion when they are brutally injured by, caught in the crossfire of, or lose a loved one to gang violence.

Working on the frontlines of victim and witness assistance in areas confronting gang-related violence, the following programs provide compelling examples of programs that appear to be working and could be replicated in other communities:

- The California-based Teens on Target (TNT) trains at-risk youth and young victims to be anti-violence advocates. Using their firsthand experiences, these advocates talk to their peers about the causes of violence and suggest alternatives for resolving conflict. In a new TNT project, *Caught in the Crossfire*, advocates visit young gunshot victims who are still hospitalized to dissuade them from seeking revenge.
- The Tariq Khamisa Foundation, in San Diego, California, was founded by Azim Khamisa after the murder of his 20-year-old son, Tariq, by four teenage gang members. Tariq's father joined with the grandfather of the 14-year-old gang member who shot Tariq to form the Foundation, which is dedicated to preventing similar crimes through educational programs in schools. With funding from OVC, the Foundation is developing a video to assist students in learning about gang violence and its impact, and encourage them to seek alternatives to gangs.

Hate and Bias Crimes

The President's Task Force on Victims of Crime *Final Report* did not address hate and bias crimes. In the intervening years, great progress has been made in identifying, documenting, and prosecuting these crimes. During the 1980s, state legislatures stiffened penalties for acts of hate violence and added other protected classes of victims. Hate crime statutes today not only encompass race, religion,

Through these years I have gotten 13 restraining orders, I have changed my name and I have moved out of state several times. We have had to leave friends, family, stability behind so many times. I live looking behind me in fear . . .

A domestic violence and
stalking victim

and ethnicity, but include gender, sexual orientation, disability, and persons from foreign nations as well. They vary, however, across the nation. As of 1996, 12 states still have not enacted criminal laws addressing racially motivated crime.⁴⁷

Identifying and meeting the needs of victims of hate crimes has been a particular challenge to the victim assistance field. Until 1990, most jurisdictions did not collect data on the level and incidence of hate crime, making it difficult for advocacy and assistance groups to press for programs to meet the needs of hate crime victims. Since the passage of the Hate Crime Statistics Act in 1990, data on hate crimes have been collected on the national level by the FBI as part of the Uniform Crime Reporting System.⁴⁸

Victims of hate crime continue to be one of the most underserved victim populations. Serious underreporting, the fear of retribution, and the trauma of dealing with prejudice and violence present victim service providers and allied professionals with great challenges of equity and access to all victims of these heinous crimes.

Karen McLaughlin,
Senior Policy Analyst,
Education Development Center,
Newton, Massachusetts

In spite of this progress, the scope of hate and bias crimes in the United States is still relatively unknown because of the lack of comprehensive data from every jurisdiction in every state. Definitions of what constitutes a hate and bias crime and who constitute protected categories of victims vary across the states. States are not mandated to comply with the Hate Crime Statistics Act, and 8 states failed to collect hate crime statistics in 1996.⁴⁹ Improved data collection is imperative because hate and bias crimes are underreported and their victims continue to be seriously underserved.

Hate and bias crimes can affect the entire community in which they occur. To be effective, victim assistance programs must meet the needs of individual victims and at the same time explore ways to help the community to heal. The recent church burnings are an example of the devastation that a single bias-motivated crime can have upon a community.

In June 1996, President Clinton formed the National Church Arson Task Force to address a sharp rise in the number of fires at churches and other houses of worship across the nation. Of particular concern was the large number of reported fires at African-American churches in the South in the mid-1990s. Federal and state criminal charges involving allegations of racial motivation have been brought in connection with 24 church burnings.⁵⁰ In October 1997, the South Carolina Burned Church Coalition sponsored a retreat for 200 children whose churches had burned to discuss how to cope with hate and bias crimes.

A number of states and local communities have developed hate and bias crime task forces and commissions to enhance coordination among agencies, recommend legislation, foster education programs, and develop programs for public awareness and prevention. New York, New Jersey, California, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Minnesota have established such commissions.

Further, special victim assistance programs have been created in law enforcement agencies, prosecutor offices, courts, and community-based agencies to deal with the broad range of bias crime victims. Many state attorneys general have civil rights units or bias crime units exclusively dedicated to dealing with bias crime and civil rights violations. Special bias crime units also exist in many large city police departments. At the state level, the New Jersey Attorney General's Office has developed a Bias Crime Unit that staffs a statewide hotline for bias crime victims to report their victimization and seek assistance.

In 1996, OVC and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, a component of the Office of Justice Programs in the Department of Justice, supported the creation of a training curriculum on responding to hate and bias crimes for law enforcement and victim assistance professionals by the Educational Development Center in Boston, Massachusetts. The curriculum, entitled *National Bias Crimes Training for Law Enforcement and Victim Assistance Professionals*, emphasizes that while bias crimes are similar to other crimes, they present unique challenges to victim-serving professionals because of their often devastating psychological impact on the victim and the victim's community. The curriculum is available through the OVC Resource Center.

White Collar and Fraud Victims

Victims of white collar crime and fraud suffer severe psychological and financial harm, and they require assistance and intervention that takes into account their particular needs and the unusually complex nature of their cases.

Victims of white collar and fraud crimes include individuals as well as small and large institutions. Examples of these types of crimes include mail fraud, bankruptcy fraud, wire fraud, computer fraud, health care and insurance fraud, pension and trust fund fraud, mail theft resulting in check washing, credit card fraud, embezzlement, security fraud, commodities fraud, cellular phone fraud, antitrust fraud, telemarketing fraud, and advance fee schemes.

White collar and crimes of fraud cases are often very complex, with many victims (sometimes numbering in the hundreds) residing over a wide geographical area. Automated systems can help relieve some of the burden on victim assistance personnel to notify these multiple-victim groups of their rights, restitution awards, and other services. However, in light of the resource shortages many victim assistance programs face, it is especially important for agencies to develop interagency, cross-district collaborations to reach these victims. Victims often need immediate information. Brochures should be provided to victims by investigators responding to a crime, and they should include information on local, regional, and national resources.

African Americans, who constitute the single largest minority group in the Nation, are more likely to be targets of hate crimes than members of any other group. Of the nearly 8,000 hate crimes reported in 1995, almost 3,000 of them were motivated by bias against African Americans.⁵¹

According to the Uniform Crime Report, approximately 60 percent of the hate crime incidents reported in 1994 were motivated by racial bias, 18 percent by religious bias, 12 percent by a bias against sexual orientation, and 10 percent by a bias against ethnicity or national origin.⁵²

The white collar crime victim population tends not to seek support for mental health or psychological problems they are suffering from as a result of their victimization. When they do, it is usually through a counselor covered by private insurance or a religious advisor. Victim service providers must reach out to white collar crime victims to assist them in developing their own support groups or accessing appropriate emotional support from trained professionals.

- In 1996, OVC funded a federal demonstration project on white collar crime victimization at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California. The goal of this San Francisco-based project is to enhance the capability of the Northern District to respond to the needs of federal victims of white collar crime and financial fraud, including telemarketing, health care fraud, investment, and mail and wire fraud. The project includes hiring two Asset Investigative Advocates to assist prosecutors and investigators in the identification and recovery of assets that can be returned to victims via restitution or other mechanisms. The project also includes developing internal guidelines and a training manual for providing comprehensive services to victims of white collar crime.

Bank Robbery Victims

Victims of bank robbery can include bank customers, bank employees (tellers, managers, and security guards), law enforcement officers, and other members of the banking community. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, just over 7,000 bank robberies were committed in 1994, with losses totaling more than \$58 million.⁵³ In almost half of the robberies, a weapon was threatened against the bank employees.⁵⁴

A common reaction by the largest group affected by bank robberies—the tellers—is a tremendous amount of self-blame. Many bank tellers in the aftermath of a bank robbery feel that they should have been able to do something to stop the crime. While bank robbery is not generally considered a personal crime but a crime against the bank, most tellers take it very personally. When robberies become violent, tellers are injured, taken hostage, and killed. Moreover, tellers must return to the scene of the crime, their place of employment, to keep their job. In light of the trauma they have suffered, this is understandably difficult for many tellers.

U.S. Attorneys' offices have developed a variety of useful approaches to deal with victims of bank robbery.

- The Victim-Witness Coordinator in the U.S. Attorney's office for the Eastern District of Wisconsin has developed an innovative outreach program for victims of bank robberies, specifically addressing bank

employees. The office, with input from bank tellers who have been victims of bank robberies, developed a brochure that provides information about the specific trauma reactions of bank employees and offers advice about how to cope and where to go for assistance. In addition, after a robbery occurs, a trained crisis response professional goes immediately to the scene to debrief customers, tellers, and staff, and then follows up with visits to the victims to ensure that they have access to counseling and victim services. The Victim-Witness staff of the U.S. Attorney's office host workshops and support groups for victim tellers as part of the program, which law enforcement officers attend to give case updates, and an Assistant U.S. Attorney is present to answer any questions the tellers have about the court process. With support from OVC, the U.S. Attorney's office has also developed a video for victims called "After the Robbery: From Crisis to Resolution."

Enhancing Victim Assistance Services

The victim assistance field has expanded considerably since the *Final Report* of the President's Task Force in 1982. Many victim assistance programs are well established, and a number are institutionalized within the justice system. But in some communities, especially in many rural areas, few victim services are available. Victim assistance providers must explore new ways to ensure that the greatest number of victims receive the highest quality services possible.

Technology increasingly offers new avenues to serve crime victims through the Internet and toll-free telecommunication. In addition, many tools are available, such as needs assessments and surveys, that can help programs target the types of victims that need additional services. Program evaluations also offer an opportunity for victim assistance programs to determine how effective they are in meeting the needs of crime victims. Improving victim services also means establishing program standards, training standards, and a code of ethics for the field. These topics are addressed below.

Needs Assessments

Conducting needs assessments is an important first step in expanding services to underserved crime victims. Needs assessments help identify the problems that victims encounter as a result of their victimization and can determine to what extent these problems are being addressed. For example, the Alameda County, California Prosecuting Attorney's Victim-Witness Assistance Division learned through a needs assessment survey that the recovered stolen property of nearly 30 percent of victims it serves is never returned to them by the courts.

Needs assessments also help victim assistance programs to determine the many barriers that prevent victims from accessing their services. Victim/Witness Services in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, discovered that nearly 45 percent of the victims it surveyed had difficulty finding transportation to the courthouse.

Some states have conducted needs assessments to determine which programs should receive VOCA funding. Pennsylvania required each county to conduct an assessment of the type of victim services needed within its jurisdiction. Counties within the state then used the results of the needs assessment to solicit and evaluate proposals from eligible programs within their own communities. All programs should develop means of assessing needs for additional services and evaluating the efficacy of existing services.

Technology

Technology increasingly offers new avenues for enhancing victim assistance. The Internet offers a powerful vehicle for victim assistance programs to expand their services by providing immediate access to information as well as a means to communicate with large numbers of victims.

- The Brazos County Rape Crisis Center in Bryan, Texas, offers online counseling through its website. To ensure anonymity, the Center uses a secure server—the same type of system banks and companies use for electronic financial transactions. The Center currently serves approximately 100 clients online, including clients who live as far away as Bangkok, South Korea, and Australia.⁵⁵
- Victim Services in New York City is exploring the use of the Internet to provide services for crime victims. Victim Services operates two websites, both designed for Internet surfers seeking help. The organization has received inquiries on services from around the country, which it answers via e-mail. When possible, Victim Services provides referrals to local resources and offers encouragement for those taking first steps to continue seeking help.

E-mail is the tip of the iceberg in the capabilities of the Internet and the World Wide Web to provide convenient and interactive help to victims. The Web is an ideal resource, for example, for people for whom receiving help is difficult, such as victims in rural communities who do not have access to a local service provider. Or, a battered woman who works and has access to the Internet and could join a support group online during her lunch break without leaving her office. Victim Services is discussing the kinds of activities that could be provided to victims through a website, including chat rooms, bulletin boards, and secure e-mail to protect the privacy of exchanges with online clients.

Victim Services is examining the potential of online counseling by exploring the issues of confidentiality, interstate jurisdictional issues, and creating a counseling protocol.

In addition, cellular telephone technology can be used to achieve a measure of security to domestic violence victims. Many domestic violence victims fear that they will be attacked and not have a way to call for help. To help these victims, cooperative partnerships have been forged with local criminal justice agencies, sheriffs, police chiefs, state attorneys and local cellular telephone companies to help domestic violence victims by providing them the use of cellular phones.

- In Tallahassee, Florida, the Attorney General's Office launched a statewide initiative to combat domestic violence with cellular telephones in January 1996. Four major cellular telephone companies, AT&T Wireless, Bell South Cellular Corp., Sprint Cellular, and GTE Mobile Net, have endorsed the program and agreed to encourage local cellular affiliates to make free cellular phones available for victims' use. Under the initiative, the State Attorney General's office provides guidance on establishing a cellular phone program to local police chiefs, sheriffs, and state attorneys and helps coordinate efforts to get local programs running.

Program Standards

Victim assistance programs need to achieve consistency in the kind of services they offer and in the use of trained staff and volunteers to deliver these services. The importance of instituting standards of services was emphasized in the recently released National Institute of Justice report *Serving Crime Victims and Witnesses*.⁵⁶ The publication highlighted the eight basic elements of service standards recommended by the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA). These elements include crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy, support during criminal investigation, support during prosecution and case disposition, support after case disposition, training for allied professionals, violence and substance abuse prevention activities, and public education activities.

NOVA's standards also provide performance guidelines for activities in the areas of planning, management, service, training, and evaluation. The standards serve a twofold purpose of helping new programs to develop realistic standards and helping established programs to better assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Some states have also developed standards of service for crime victims. However, they vary across the nation. New Hampshire, for example, requires that all domestic violence and sexual assault programs meet basic standards in order to qualify for funding. In New

Experience has proven that perpetrators of domestic violence or stalking will take advantage of a victim's inaccessibility to a phone. It is our hope that a 24-hour, immediate accessibility by telephone to local law enforcement, although not a guarantee against violence, will act as a deterrent to repeated acts of domestic violence.

Norman R. Wolfenger,
State Attorney,
18th Judicial Circuit, Florida

OVC has a vast constituency of victim advocates, service providers, and allied professionals who look to us to provide cutting-edge training on all aspects of the victim experience and response. To the extent that we can work collaboratively with the national victim organizations and coalitions, private consultants with a wide range of expertise, and State VOCA Administrators to support the delivery of basic, intermediate, and advance training at the local, regional, state, and national levels will determine the quality of service victims of crime will receive today and in the future.

We must also explore ways to further support state and local efforts to establish training institutes which will meet the specific needs of those who are responsible for making victims' rights a reality and providing a standard of care for the millions of people who are victimized each year.

Carolyn A. Hightower
Deputy Director
Office for Victims of Crime

Jersey, the state Attorney General has issued standards for services within county prosecutor's offices. The project was facilitated by the state's centralized prosecution system, in which all prosecutors are part of the Attorney General's office. In Pennsylvania, the state Commission on Crime and Delinquency's Victim Services Program has developed a resource manual that outlines minimum standards for the various victim assistance programs in the state. The Commission encourages these programs to use the manual for self-evaluation and to ensure that they are meeting the minimum standards before they strive for model standards. The standards are also used by the Commission to monitor state-funded programs.⁵⁷

Continuing Education

On the national level, OVC has supported the training of thousands of victim service providers over the past decade. Through its funding of national, regional, and state conferences, approximately 40,000 individuals have been trained in the area of victims' rights and services. Many of OVC's training initiatives for criminal justice and allied professionals, as well as topic specific trainings, are cited throughout this report.

In order to make comprehensive, academic-based training available to a diverse group of victim service providers, including federal, tribal, state and local justice and allied professionals, OVC funded the development of the first National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) in 1995. Now in its fourth year, the Academy is coordinated by the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization and a consortium of universities, including California State University-Fresno, the Medical University of South Carolina, the University of New Haven, and Washburn University. NVAA's 45-hour course of study is taught by leaders from the victims' assistance field and the accompanying 600 page Academy Text has been utilized by the field in state and local training programs.

Several states have established minimum training requirements that have raised the professionalism and knowledge of victim advocates, including Florida, Arkansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and New Mexico.

The Attorney General's office in Florida has developed a Victim Services Practitioner Designation Training Program that has been conducted throughout the state for the past 5 years. All programs that receive funding from the office are encouraged to send staff to the training program. Service providers with over 5 years of experience were initially offered a 1-day "grandfather" training on legislative, research, and state guideline developments to qualify for this designation. Arkansas mandates training as a VOCA grant condition. VOCA recipients must receive 24 hours of basic training, 8 hours of administrative training, and 8 hours of continuing education each year.

Finally, some states have begun to move in the direction of certifying victim advocates as a means of ensuring a base level of training and knowledge. The California Victim and Witness Coordinating Council established a system of victim advocate certification in 1993 to recognize the professional standing of victim advocates in the state. To be certified as a victim advocate, employees must complete one full year of work in a comprehensive victim services program (as defined by the California Penal Code) and demonstrate through education, experience, and specialized training, the ability to assist victims and witnesses. In addition, the employee must complete a state-approved 40-hour training program within the first year. To be certified as a senior advocate, employees must meet the criteria outlined above and have 5 years of experience as a victim advocate in California.⁵⁸

Recommendations from the Field for the Victim Assistance Community

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #1

Victim assistance providers should encourage victim involvement in the development and implementation of all programs and services they provide, including public awareness, education, and violence prevention programs.

Crime victims have been the true pioneers in the creation of the victim assistance field and have served as a dedicated force for social change for more than 20 years. Their critical involvement should continue. Many avenues are available to increase victim participation in the development and provision of victims services. Victim assistance programs should actively engage victims in paid and volunteer positions at all levels, from facilitating self-help groups to managing programs.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #2

Victim assistance programs and services should be designed to reach diverse constituencies. All policymakers, program administrators, and staff should be knowledgeable and skilled in serving diverse cultural and ethnic groups.

The true measure of the victims' rights movement's success is not in the number of laws passed, constitutions amended, programs started, or funds spent. The test is whether the victims who told the 1982 President's Task Force that they could no longer participate in the criminal justice process because of the insensitive treatment they received would feel that way today.

Steve Derene, VOCA Program
Manager Office of
Crime Victims Services
Department of Justice,
Madison, Wisconsin

A young black male was brutalized, called derogatory names, and left to die in the bushes by three Caucasian gang members. The prosecutor has refused to file charges. There are witnesses who are afraid to come forward because they fear for their own personal safety. This, I feel, is a hate crime conducted in a racist setting where nobody will come forward on behalf of the victim either because of personal racism or fear of personal safety.

A Victim Advocate

The victim assistance field must emphasize cultural sensitivity and awareness in all aspects of services, including in the development, administration, staffing, and funding of victim assistance programs. One of the most overlooked areas of the field has been the development and support of multicultural victim services and cultural diversity among professionals. Advocates should work toward the goal that all victims, regardless of their language or culture, receive a high level of services.

Victim service professionals must be educated in diversity to better understand the victims they serve as well as themselves. Training on cultural competency, hate and bias crimes, and outreach to underserved victims should be conducted for VOCA administrators and victim advocates in community- and criminal justice-based agencies.

Brochures, posters, and other public awareness efforts for non-English speaking victims should be published and distributed by victim assistance programs. Victim assistance programs should have bilingual and bicultural staff to help non-English-speaking victims complete compensation claim forms and victim impact statements. Crisis intervention and counseling techniques should incorporate methods of healing that draw upon diverse multicultural grieving and counseling techniques.

Cultural awareness goes beyond printing brochures in other languages, hiring bilingual and bicultural staff, and supporting nontraditional therapies and services. It must also include a commitment to examine underlying cultural differences and work not to assimilate but to respect those differences. Incorporating diversity into all aspects of program development and management increases awareness of the differences that make people who live in America unique, as well as the similarities that bind us together as a community and as a nation.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #3

Victim service providers should join with criminal and juvenile justice and allied professionals to conduct needs assessments in their communities to identify underserved victim population groups and to determine the types of services that should be available for these groups.

Although great strides have been made in the past decade to provide services to crime victims, many remain overlooked and underserved. These include victims with disabilities, rural or geographically dispersed victims, white collar and property crime victims; victims of hate and bias crimes, and elderly victims of domestic violence and other forms of abuse.

Conducting needs assessments is an important first step in expanding services to underserved crime victims. Needs assessments help victim service programs identify the problems that victims encounter as a result of their victimization and determine to what extent these problems are being addressed. Needs assessments also help victim service programs identify the barriers that prevent underserved victims from accessing their services.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #4

Victim service providers should work with allied professionals, other victim service providers, and leaders in their community to ensure that a comprehensive network of services and support is available for crime victims.

The goal of providing comprehensive services to crime victims—from the point of victimization through the criminal justice system and beyond—involves responding to victimization on many fronts and with many agencies, individuals, and organizations. One victim assistance program cannot possibly provide all the services necessary for all crime victims. Comprehensive victim assistance means establishing strong partnerships among victim-serving agencies and allied professionals.

In providing a comprehensive network of services and support, victim service providers should be aware of the needs of victims who are victimized in their communities but live in other jurisdictions. There is a need to provide information and referrals for these victims and to develop cross-jurisdictional partnerships to ensure that the interests of these victims are not overlooked.

The Office for Victims of Crime is providing funding for a number of communities to develop a vision for a comprehensive communitywide response to crime victims entitled Victim Services 2000. Over the next decade, these partnerships will serve as models for communities across America in developing comprehensive networks of victim services.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #5

Standards for victim assistance should be developed and instituted to guide those who serve victims in community-based programs as well as across all justice systems.

I assisted a domestic violence victim in leaving an abusive situation and received a letter thanking me. In the letter she stated 'I hope that I will be able to get a job as fulfilling as yours. Thank you.' Knowing that she appreciated the work I do and realizing how important that job is to me really made my day. I have her letter on my bulletin board to remind me why I do what I do when days are bad.

A Victim Advocate
Office of State's Attorney
Florida

While the number of victim assistance programs has dramatically increased since the time of the President’s Task Force on Victims of Crime, insufficient attention has been given to establishing standards for victim assistance. On the national level, the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) has developed model program standards with support from OVC, but they have not been formally adopted by the victim assistance field.

In addition, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) requires all chapters to provide a threshold of services and to have at least one advocate who has completed a 40-hour education program. Chapters that do not comply lose their chapter charter from MADD.

In a 1997 survey of VOCA administrators conducted by OVC, several VOCA administrators cited the need for statewide standards for victim assistance, emphasizing that such standards would greatly enhance decisionmaking efforts on program funding and oversight. According to the survey, some states, including Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Wisconsin, and Vermont, have initiated the development of program standards. However, the standards vary. Some address only certain types of victim assistance such as prosecutor-based programs, while others address management issues as well.

Standards that have already been developed in the field should be used as a foundation for developing national or state program standards. States that have already developed standards for victim services should be included in any national discussions on standards.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #6

Victim assistance providers must receive basic training and annual continuing education on crime victims’ rights and services.

To be able to respond effectively to crime victims, service providers need up-to-date, comprehensive training, both before and during their service. According to the National Institute of Justice, training for victim assistance is often “ignored or downplayed, usually because of indifference, lack—or unawareness of—training opportunities, or limited funds, staff, or time.” NIJ reports that a 1994 survey of more than 300 victim assistance programs found that nearly half provided neither preservice nor inservice training for either paid staff or volunteers.⁵⁹

Training does not have to be expensive. Literally dozens of training curricula have been developed with support from OVC over the past decade, and many of the training materials, including videos, are available free of charge to local victim assistance programs through the OVC Resource Center. OVC also operates a Trainers Bureau, through which victim assistance programs can apply for training and technical assistance from national experts, and supports many local, state, regional, and national training programs.

A number of states, including Florida, Arkansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and New Mexico, have already established minimum training requirements that have raised the professionalism and knowledge of VOCA-funded staff. However, it is clear that the national training and education capacity needs to be expanded so that both experienced and inexperienced victim assistance providers can easily obtain cost-effective education.

While the goals of all of these training strategies should be in service to the entire victim assistance field, not just to programs supported by VOCA, the federal government has a special obligation to ensure the skills and competence of programs it helps to fund and of all victim assistance activities operated by federal agencies.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #7

A national commission should be established to develop certification and accreditation standards for victim advocacy and assistance.

For the victim assistance field to become a recognized profession, accreditation and certification standards will eventually be necessary. Some states have already begun to move in this direction. After program standards are established, it is imperative that a system of accreditation for both individuals and programs be established at the national or state level, or both. To recognize the range of skills that contribute to successful victim assistance, accreditation efforts need to embrace a wide range of factors that consider experience, education, and competence.⁶⁰

The following methods for certification and accreditation have been used by other professions and should be considered by the victim assistance field as well: preservice and inservice training requirements; continuing education requirements; an “experience” clause that gives credit to years of service; ongoing credit for experience as a substitute or partial substitute for education; education and testing requirements, including observational methods of practitioners at work; licensing examinations; and continued certification contingent upon a designated number of hours of continuing education.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #8

Victim service providers should increase public awareness of their programs and services.

Increasing public awareness of victimization is critical to ensuring that victims receive the services they need and that victim assistance programs continue to be supported at every level of government. National public awareness campaigns have been undertaken for domestic violence, child abuse, abduction and exploitation, and drunk driving. These campaigns have helped raise the public's awareness about these devastating crimes. National public awareness and education campaigns should be expanded to include other critical victims' issues such as elderly victimization, sexual assault, hate and bias crimes, victims with disabilities, and white collar/fraud. Such campaigns would heighten the public's ability to recognize and report victimization and would provide victims with information they need to seek assistance. Victim assistance programs in every community should help raise awareness of crime and victimization by conducting public awareness activities during National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

It is very positive when a victim walks up to you in public and thanks you for all your help and tells you how it has changed their life.

A Victim Advocate

More globally, public education efforts can help reduce the stigma of certain types of victimization, such as sexual assault or domestic violence, and encourage victims to seek help, including criminal justice interventions. In addition, male leaders and influential organizations should play an active role in sending a message to other men that violence against women is not acceptable. To address the growing problem of economic crimes committed against the elderly, State Attorneys General should institute or expand consumer education programs for older persons.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #9

Evaluation studies should be conducted to determine if current methods of victim assistance are effective and to identify critical areas in which additional victim intervention and assistance services are needed.

Many experts in the field of victim assistance have expressed concern about the lack of information on what types of services and assistance are most effective in serving crime victims. For example, an

evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of different individual or group crisis intervention models should be conducted, including examining components of other trauma interventions such as immediate assistance and peer support programs.

To address this need, OVC is working closely with researchers at NIJ and with leading researchers and practitioners in the field of victimization and victim services to evaluate the effectiveness of state VOCA-funded compensation and assistance programs in meeting the needs of crime victims. The multiyear project will include a needs assessment of the target population from the victim's point of view; an assessment of the services available to victims, including both federally funded and reimbursable programs; identification of unmet needs such as gaps in service or access to compensation; and suggestions for improving the delivery and funding of services to all crime victims.

On the national level, the effectiveness of each new program implemented should be evaluated. There is no value in reinventing the wheel, but there is a benefit to replicating successful programs in a new context or with a different target population. In addition, standard evaluation procedures and protocols should be developed for each component of victim services. With such efforts, programs can measure their own success and compare their progress with others in the field.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #10

There should be a clearly defined code of ethics to bind all victim service providers in the field to designated standards of behavior.

Most professions have adopted an accepted code of ethics that guide the values and minimum standards of professional behavior by the professionals within it. The field of victim assistance, however, has yet to adopt such a code.

On the national level, NOVA has developed a suggested Victim Assistance Provider's Code of Ethics. It begins with this statement of purpose:

The victims' movement expects its members to act with integrity, treating all victims of crime with dignity and compassion, and to uphold fair standards of justice for accused and accuser alike. To this end, the following principles will govern the behavior of victim assistance providers.⁶¹

The principles address three critical areas: the service provider's relationship with victims; the service provider's relationship with colleagues, other professionals, and the public; and rules for professional conduct.

Victim service providers in South Carolina have drafted a code of ethics that cover similar principles, and MADD has also implemented a code of ethics for their victim advocates. Failure to meet the code's standards results in the advocate's removal from service.

The development of a code of ethics should be part of the mission of the proposed national commission on standards and accreditation described in recommendation 7. To be effective, the code must include a way to hold victim service providers accountable when they fail to comply.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #11

Victim assistance providers should expand current statewide networks to build a capacity for addressing communities in crisis. Each state should develop a crisis response team and interact with other disaster planning efforts.

Each state should develop and train a statewide crisis response team to assist communities within their state that suffer mass acts of violence, terrorism, or community disasters. Local and regional teams should also be developed.

The creation of a national office for such crisis response should be seriously considered and charged with the following responsibilities: developing and disseminating a model for state and local community crisis response; developing a national training and education component; coordinating national support in the aftermath of a community crisis; and maintaining a stress intervention program for victim assistance providers and others who become involved in community crisis response. Because many community disasters involve criminal acts, such an office must involve the Department of Justice; but it should also involve the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal departments concerned with the relief and recovery of communities affected by technological and natural disasters.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #12

Victim service providers should develop interagency response protocols for assisting all crime victims, including child victims, elder abuse victims, and victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Developing multidisciplinary responses to victimization is important for all victims, but it is especially critical for children, the elderly, and victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. To help professionals be alert to the signs of elder abuse and neglect, protocols such as the Diagnostic and Treatment Guidelines on Elder Abuse and Neglect developed by the American Medical Association should be adapted and used. For stalking intervention, a multidisciplinary approach should be developed that involves law enforcement, the judicial system, correctional and social service agencies, and victim service and advocacy organizations. Appropriate, accessible, and safe shelters should be available that address the special needs of older women, with special attention to rural communities. Cross-training, coordination, and coalition building between the elder abuse and domestic violence communities is imperative. Similar relations should be established between domestic violence and sexual assault programs because sexual violence is often part of the batterer's abusive behavior. Several excellent interagency response protocols for sexual assault have been developed by local, state and national rape crisis agencies working in coordination with law enforcement, prosecution, hospitals, and the courts.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #13

A national hotline that provides 24-hour immediate crisis counseling, information, and referral to services for all victims of crime should be established. In addition, every state should establish statewide, toll-free 800 numbers to provide information and referrals for victims of crime.

As a result of the enactment of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994, a national toll-free hotline was created for victims of domestic violence to call for 24-hour crisis intervention, assistance, and referrals in English and Spanish. Interpreters are available to translate an additional 139 languages. The hotline uses state-of-the-art technology to transfer calls from the national hotline to local domestic violence programs and shelters

in the victim's community. Extensive public awareness efforts of the hotline have been undertaken with public and private support, and nearly 10,000 individuals across the United States use the hotline each month.

The establishment of national and statewide hotlines for *all* crime victims should be a priority for the victims' movement. In many rural areas across the country, victims have little access to information about their rights, services, and compensation. Expanding the nation's capacity to provide information and referrals to crime victims would provide a basis of service for underserved victims. Approximately half of the states operate 800 numbers for certain crime victims, but few are available for all crime victims. Some states operate general victim assistance 800 numbers out of a state office, while others report that 800 number assistance is limited to specific victim population groups, primarily domestic violence or sexual assault victims. A nationwide survey of 800 number programs in operation across the states should be conducted to provide VOCA administrators with ideas on developing and funding these types of services.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #14

Victim assistance programs should integrate technological advancements into their programs to help better meet the needs of crime victims.

Victim assistance programs must integrate computer and telecommunication technology into their management and service delivery systems. Technical assistance and training in the development and integration of technological innovations should be provided with support from federal and state funding.

A comprehensive victim assistance program database should be established and provided to the field via the Internet and an 800 number. The database should include the names, locations, and types of victim services available worldwide and give users the ability to exchange referrals and other information on services through a telecommunications network. Victim assistance providers should also explore using the Internet to expand their services.

A national center should be created to locate or develop, as needed, software that local programs could use for case management, internal evaluations, and reporting, all tailored to the needs of victim assistance programs. Such a center would assist the field in achieving its goal of seeing that all VOCA-funded programs have full access to the Internet and help other victim assistance programs obtain Internet access at no cost.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #15

Victim assistance programs should comply fully with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act to ensure that victims with disabilities can access available services. More programs that focus on serving victims with disabilities must be established. Additional research should be conducted to determine the extent of victimization against people with disabilities and to guide strategies to increase reporting and prevent this type of victimization. Criminal justice professionals and the victim service community must receive additional training in providing outreach and assistance to victims with disabilities.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a disabled person cannot be denied access to services, programs, or activities associated with a public entity. The ADA covers at least 900 different disabilities including mental impairments. It is critical that agencies meet the spirit and the letter of this law by making public buildings accessible to all and ensuring that communications about victim rights and services are understandable by all.

While limited research studies have been conducted that document that people with disabilities are at much greater risk for victimization than people without disabilities, large-scale studies are needed to fully understand the extent of victimization and how to prevent it. These studies would help provide needed information to develop relevant training programs and public policy reforms.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #16

Victim service providers should be trained to assist crime victims who interact with members of the media.

The increase in the news media's coverage of crime and victimization has resulted in very specialized discipline within the field of victim services: advocating for crime victims whose cases are covered by the news media. Training programs to help service providers work more effectively with members of the news media, as well as guidelines in

media relations that help providers enhance their professional relationships with the news media, are regularly offered at training conferences and as a component of victim service professional education.

The constituency *most* affected by the news media coverage of violence and victimization is crime victims. While sensitive coverage of victim's cases can be helpful and in some cases even healing, media coverage that is insensitive, voyeuristic, and uncaring compounds victims' emotional and psychological suffering.

The National Victim Center has developed guidelines for victim assistance providers who work with victims who choose to deal with the media. First published in a brochure in 1987 entitled *Victims' Rights and the Media*, the guidelines offer valuable counsel to crime victims whose cases are covered by print and broadcast news media. While the "rights" enumerated in this brochure are not mandated by statute or policy, they should be considered guiding principles that all service providers should provide to crime victims before they interact with the news media.

The recommendations in this chapter were based upon input from participants at public hearings and reaction and working groups, as well as papers submitted by experts in the field, identified in Appendix A. The recommendations do not necessarily reflect all of the views of the contributors, nor do they necessarily represent the official views of the Department of Justice.

Guidelines for Victims Who Choose to Deal With the Media⁶²

You have the right:

1. To say “no” to an interview.
2. To select the spokesperson or advocate of your choice.
3. To select the time and location for media interviews.
4. To request a specific reporter.
5. To refuse an interview with a specific reporter even though you have granted interviews to other reporters.
6. To say “no” to an interview even though you have previously granted interviews.
7. To release a written statement through a spokesperson in lieu of an interview.
8. To exclude children from interviews.
9. To refrain from answering any questions with which you are uncomfortable or that you feel are inappropriate.
10. To know in advance the direction the story about your victimization is going to take.
11. To avoid a press conference atmosphere and speak to only one reporter at a time.
12. To demand a correction when inaccurate information is reported.
13. To ask that offensive photographs or visuals be omitted from broadcast or publication.
14. To conduct a television interview using a silhouette or a newspaper interview without having your photograph taken.
15. To completely give your side of the story related to your victimization.
16. To refrain from answering reporters’ questions during trial.
17. To file a formal complaint against a journalist.
18. To grieve in privacy.
19. To suggest training about media and victims for print and electronic media in your community.

Establishing Comprehensive Victim Services

In order to provide crime victims with dignified and compassionate treatment, sustained financial and emotional support, and enforceable rights, every community should strive to ensure that the following services are available for crime victims:

Emergency Aid

- On-scene crisis intervention
- 24-hour crisis hotline
- Sensitive death notification
- Information on victims' rights and services
- Referrals for emergency financial aid
- Emergency transportation
- Accompaniment to hospital for rape examination
- Referrals for emergency shelter
- Referrals for short- and long-term counseling
- Local Emergency Fund to aid victims
- Assistance with emergency compensation claim
- Information and assistance on security options
- Emergency restraining or protection orders
- Information and assistance on recovery of stolen property
- Information and assistance on document replacement
- Child care services
- Crime scene cleanup
- Interpreter services

Counseling and Advocacy

- Crisis intervention services
- Short-term counseling
- Long-term counseling
- Access and referrals to self-help support groups
- Group counseling
- Community crisis response
- Access to counseling during criminal and juvenile justice adjudications
- Intervention with employers, creditors, and landlords
- Intervention with public agencies

Investigation

- Regular updates on status of investigation
- Notification of suspect arrest
- Basic information on the criminal justice system
- Compensation claim filing and processing assistance
- Referrals for short- and long-term counseling
- Interpreter services
- Protection from intimidation and harassment
- Notification of pretrial release of accused
- Input into bail/bond release decisions

Prosecution

- Orientation to the criminal justice system
- Regular updates on status of case
- Accompaniment to court
- Witness alert/on-call technology 24 hours per day
- Safe and secure waiting areas
- Employer intervention services
- Notification of plea negotiations
- Victim consultation in plea decisions
- Assistance in recovery of property held as evidence
- Information on restitution
- Restitution routinely requested or an explanation in writing
- Landlord/creditor intervention
- Transportation/parking assistance
- Child care services

Sentencing

- Notification of right to submit a victim impact statement
- Victim impact information in presentence investigation report
- Victim impact statement—written
- Victim impact statement—allocution
- Victim statement of opinion
- Audio taped or videotaped victim impact statement
- Notice of sentence

Post Disposition

- Information/notification of appeal
- Collection of restitution
- Restitution payment as condition of probation or parole
- Notification of parole hearing
- Victim impact statement at parole—written
- Victim impact statement at parole—allocution
- Audio or videotaped victim impact statement at parole
- Notification of violation of parole/probation
- Notification of revocation of parole/probation
- Notification of application for clemency, pardon, or commutation
- Notification of escape and capture
- Notification of custody location
- Name of probation officer or other supervised community release officer
- Notice of execution date in death penalty cases
- Advance notification of release

Endnotes

- 1 National Victim Assistance Academy, *Academy Text*, Alexandria, VA: 1997: 2-5.
- 2 *Id.*
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