



# **Introductory Workshop on Crime Victims' Rights and Services Trainer's Manual**

A component of the project

## **Victims of Crime: A Social Work Response Building Skills To Strengthen Survivors**

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## Preparing for the Workshop

*New Directions from the Field: Victims' Rights and Services for the 21st Century* (Office for Victims of Crime, 1998) encourages allied professionals to become more knowledgeable and involved in providing appropriate services to victims of crime. Recommendations for the mental health community are particularly relevant to professional social workers. Because more clinically trained social workers are in the labor force than the other three core mental health professionals—psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychiatric nurses—combined, it is incumbent on social workers to build their capacity to respond to victims and survivors of crime and develop links with the rapidly growing field of victim assistance.

To address the need for targeted training for professional social workers, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW)/Texas Chapter, in collaboration with the University of Texas at Austin's and the University of Missouri–Columbia's Schools of Social Work, developed this training curriculum. Although they may not choose to work in the victim assistance field, all social workers will come into contact with victims of violent crimes at some point in their careers. The curriculum, which teaches about the impact of violent crime on and the services and legal rights available to adult crime victims, can be used as a continuing education workshop for social work practitioners or as a stand-alone lesson for an undergraduate or graduate social work class.

The training curriculum has four parts:

- Trainer's manual.
- PowerPoint exhibits—to be used as overhead transparencies, slides, or handouts (after attachment 2).
- Participant manual.
- Evaluation form (attachment 2).

Additional training resources are included in the trainer's and participant manuals.

The curriculum, designed for interactive presentations, includes discussion questions and exercises. The estimated time for the training is 2 ½–3 hours.

Below are steps for preparing materials and planning the training session.

**1. Obtain information about your state.** Tailor the curriculum to the workshop participants by adding information about crime victims' rights and services in your state. Revisions will be needed to the following:

- The curriculum: Sections requiring state-specific information are marked.
- Exhibits 9, 10, and 11.
- Last page of the participant manual: Include contact information about state agency organizations.

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Information pertaining to Texas is included in the above materials as examples.

**2. Arrange logistics.** Discuss training logistics, such as place, time, date, and potential number of participants with the local NASW chair or program coordinator. The NASW chapter office has contact information for the local NASW leaders. Request an enclosed room that has ample space to seat participants and a screen on which to project PowerPoint overhead transparencies or slides. Handouts printed from the slides are another option. These transparencies, slides, and handouts are referred to as exhibits in this manual.

**3. Arrange for materials and equipment.** Arrange to have the following materials and equipment available at each training session. If you do not have access to the equipment needed, request that the NASW unit chair provide the equipment. Chances are someone in that unit can provide the equipment.

These suggested resources will help make the session more effective:

- Overhead projector and screen or computer and LCD projector.
- VCR and monitor.
- Flipchart and markers.
- Extension cord.
- Training curriculum.
- Participant manuals.
- PowerPoint exhibits—to be used as overhead transparencies, slides, or handouts (after attachment 2).
- Index cards.
- Handouts on crime victims' rights and crime victim compensation.
- Handouts on specific crimes, such as domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Workshop evaluation forms (attachment 2).

**4. Include local victim assistance providers.** Arrange a panel presentation by inviting local victim assistance providers to attend the workshop and present information about their programs. Both victim assistance providers and NASW members can benefit from this opportunity to network. Be sure to locate a place in the curriculum into which a panel presentation can be integrated.

**5. Do before each training session.** Become familiar with the material in both the trainer's and participant manuals. Visit the presentation site prior to training and review the room setup to determine where you will stand, where participants will sit, and where the projector and screen will be placed.

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**6. Do during each training session.** Distribute participant manuals, handouts, and index cards to participants when they arrive. Ask the NASW unit chair or a designee to sign participants in for continuing education units.

**7. Do after each training session.** Ask participants to complete the evaluation forms. Leave extra participant manuals and handouts with the unit chair to distribute to members who were unable to attend. Send completed evaluation forms and index cards to the NASW chapter office.

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## Section I. Welcome and Introduction

[Refer to exhibit 1.]

Welcome participants to the workshop. Introduce yourself and be sure to mention your experience in the victim assistance field. In addition to thanking participants for attending, thank the unit chair and individuals who helped with logistics and arrangements.

### Exercise 1: Who Is the Audience?

Ask participants the following questions. Request that they stand or raise their hand if they can answer “yes” to any of them:

- How many of you work in the victim assistance field?
- How many of you encounter victims or survivors of crime in your practice setting?
- How many of you are in private practice?
- How many of you work in mental health programs?
- How many of you work in the area of child abuse and neglect?
- How many of you work with battered women or in the field of domestic violence?
- How many of you work with clients who have substance abuse problems?
- How many of you are still in school and have not decided where you will work?

Remark on the diversity of the group, and then encourage participants with experience in the victim assistance field to share their expertise.

### Exercise 2: What Experiences Have They Had as Victims of Crime?

This exercise is used to illustrate the prevalence of crime. At the earliest point in the program, ask participants to answer these questions on index cards and turn them in:

- Have you been a victim of crime?
- If so, what type of crime?
- Did you notify the police?

If you have an assistant or workshop monitor, ask this person to tally and prepare a short report on the number of cards received, the number of people who have been victims of crime, the types of crimes committed, and how many participants notified police of the crime. You will share this information with the audience later.

If you do not have an assistant, you will have an opportunity to review the cards and prepare a short summary later in the program.

### Workshop Goal and Objectives

[Refer to exhibit 2.]

This training was developed as part of the Victims of Crime: A Social Work Response, Building Skills To Strengthen Survivors project conducted by the Texas Chapter of NASW in



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collaboration with the Schools of Social Work of the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Missouri–Columbia.

**Goal:** To enhance professional social workers’ capacity to respond to adult victims and survivors of violent crime.

**Objectives:** At the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to—

- Describe biopsychosocial effects of violent crime.
- Describe services available to victims and survivors of violent crime.
- Identify at least two rights of crime victims.
- Understand the role of victim impact statements.

**What this training is not**

This training is not a how-to workshop on providing long-term or trauma counseling to victims of crime. It is an introductory workshop intended to provide all social workers—regardless of their practice settings—with basic information about the biopsychosocial effects of violent crime on individuals and the rights and services available to crime victims.

As a result of this workshop, participants may want to seek additional training on clinical interventions with victims. Information from this workshop also will help put clinical interventions into perspective with regard to the ongoing needs of crime victims and their role in the criminal justice system.

The trainer should point out the participant manual and ask participants to follow along.

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## Section II: Biopsychosocial Effects of Violent Crime

### Exercise 3: How Would Participants React to an Assault?

In this exercise, participants will brainstorm possible victim reactions to a sexual assault and what *their* response might be if they were a victim assistance social worker for the police department. After listing ideas on a flip chart or marker board, show exhibit 3.

Let's say you are a victim assistance social worker with a local police department. You receive a phone call and are requested to accompany two officers to a crime scene. A 43-year-old woman jogging on a park trail was attacked by two men and sexually assaulted. On the way to the crime scene, you prepare to meet the victim by considering the effect this crime is having—and may later have—on her.

**Ask participants: What are some possible reactions the woman might have had during the crime event?**

[Refer to exhibit 3.]

- Feelings of being violated.
- Terror.
- Shock.
- Anxiety.
- Physiological arousal (heart beats faster, pulse races, perspiration, hyperventilation).
- Helplessness (loss of control).
- Anger.
- Fight, flight, or freeze.

**Ask participants: What happens to the brain during a traumatic event?**

Memory is usually processed through sensory input to the thalamus, on to the hippocampus, and then to the prefrontal cortex. When the brain experiences trauma, information goes to the amygdala, which is the seat of strong emotion, and triggers the fight, flight, or freeze reaction. This results in memories being stored as emotional states and visual images rather than as verbal memory. During trauma, the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain that controls reasoning and problem solving, does not function.

**Ask participants: How might this affect the crime victim?**

- Information is not stored.
- Sensory input can stimulate emotional responses (triggers).
- Numbers are not remembered.
- Problems do not get solved.

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**Ask participants: What does that mean for you as the victim assistance social worker?**

- The information you give may not be retained.
- You may have to repeat the information several times.
- When the victim is no longer in an extreme state of trauma, repeat the information again.

**Ask participants: You are now 2 blocks from the crime scene. What is your role as social worker in this situation? What might the crime victim need from you at this time? Remember, she is in crisis and you are a first responder.**

Generate ideas from participants. According to the National Sheriffs' Association's basic guidelines on approaching victims of crime, most responses fall into four categories:

[Refer to exhibit 4.]

- Victims need to feel safe.
- Victims need to express their emotions.
- Victims need to know what comes next.
- Victims need to be aware of secondary victimization issues.

**Ask participants: How might you help this crime victim feel safe?**

- Reassure victims of their safety and express your concern.
- Ask simple questions that allow victims to make decisions and take control over their lives: Would you like something to drink? Would you like to go to the hospital now?
- Address physical injuries first.
- Mobilize the victim's support system: Make calls to her family and friends.
- Provide safety planning.

**Ask participants: How can you help her express her emotions?**

- Allow the victim to tell her story.
- Be aware of the victim's body language.
- Assure the victim that her emotional reactions are normal.
- Counter any self-blame the victim may express. Say to her, for example, "You did not do anything wrong. This is not your fault."

**Ask participants: What comes next? Victims may have concerns about—**

- The law enforcement investigation.
- The medical forensic exam.
- Potential aftereffects. Help the victim/survivor understand the aftereffects such a trauma may have on her: lapses of concentration, memory loss, depression, and physical ailments. Let her know these symptoms are normal.

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- Getting back to normal. Encourage her to reestablish normal routines as soon as possible.

**Ask participants: What secondary victimization issues will you want to discuss with crime victims?**

- The cost of replacing stolen items.
- Medical bills.
- The cost of safety devices.
- Lost wages from work.
- Increase in health insurance costs.
- Initial contact with the criminal justice system.
- The possibility of no longer feeling safe at home.

**Ask participants: What are some of the other possible emotional reactions that she or other victims might have after this event?**

[Refer to exhibit 5.]

- Self-blame (If only I had not been there. If only I had given him the money right away.).
- Feelings of being violated and unclean.
- Destruction of a fair world view. (The world is no longer a fair and just place where bad things happen only to bad people.)
- Inability to concentrate.
- Increased risk of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- Other health risks.

**Ask participants: What are some symptoms of PTSD?**

In the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, IV-TRIV* (2000), the symptoms of PTSD are as follows:

- Recurrent and intrusive memories, dreams, or feeling as if the event were recurring.
- Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness, as evidenced by three or more of the following:
  - Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma.
  - Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections (trigger events and stimuli might be internal or external to the individual, such as the anniversary of an event, similar sounds, and arrest and trial of the perpetrator).
  - Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma.
  - Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities.
  - Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others.
  - Restricted range of moods.
  - Sense of foreshortened future.

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- Persistent symptoms of increased arousal, as indicated by two or more of the following:
    - Difficulty falling or staying asleep.
    - Irritability or outbursts of anger.
    - Difficulty concentrating.
    - Hypervigilance.
    - Exaggerated startle response.
  - Duration of these symptoms is more than 1 month (less than 1 month would be considered “normal”).
  - Disturbance causes significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

A diagnosis of PTSD is more likely in people who have experienced, witnessed, or confronted an event that included actual or threatened death or serious injury to self or others *and* when the person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.

**Ask participants: According to this information, who were the persons most at risk for developing PTSD as a result of the events of September 11, 2001, in the United States?**

Potential answers include rescue workers, survivors, family members and friends of victims, eyewitnesses, people who debrief rescue workers and other first responders, and persons watching the events on television who feel emotionally close to the people who have suffered.

It is normal for crime victims to experience the symptoms of PTSD as a result of the trauma of the crime event. Only when these symptoms persist for more than 1 month after the event should a diagnosis of PTSD be considered. (Information about PTSD is included in the participant manual.)

**Ask participants: Besides PTSD, a sexual assault victim may also develop other health problems as a result of this crime. What health problems would you screen for?**

- Physical injury: broken bones, cuts, and disabilities resulting from the crime.
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV.
- Unwanted pregnancy.
- Impaired immune system, which places victims at risk for other infectious diseases.
- Unhealthy behaviors: drug use, drinking, smoking, poor diet, and lack of exercise, all of which may contribute to longer-term health problems.
- Increased risk for cardiac distress, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic pain, and sexual dysfunction.

**Ask participants: What services do you as victim assistance providers give to victims after the initial crisis response?**

- Accompany victims to the hospital.

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- Accompany victims to the police department.
  - Provide emotional support.
  - Explain the processes of the criminal justice system.
  - Mobilize support from victims' families and friends.
  - Talk to victims' landlords about changing the locks or breaking leases so they can relocate if necessary.
  - Talk to victims' employers regarding their absence from work.
  - Notify victims when suspects have been arrested.
  - Assist victims with prosecution decisions.
  - Provide victims with information regarding court procedures.
  - Accompany victims to trial.
  - Help protect victims from media intrusion.
  - Help victims fill out crime victim compensation forms (which is covered later in this training).
  - Help victims write victim impact statements (VISs) (which also will be covered).
  - If there is a conviction, support victims in providing testimony at parole hearings.
  - Notify victims of probation hearings.
  - Help victims collect restitution.

**Note to Trainer:** Add panel presentations here.

If you invited local victim assistance advocates to attend this training, this is an appropriate time to have them talk about the services they provide.

Point out that the participant manual describes the services that victim assistance programs provide—from the crisis or emergency response phase, to arrest and prosecution, and after conviction.

## **Resiliency Issues**

How quickly or effectively can a social worker help a crime victim evolve into a crime survivor? This depends on many factors, including the response of the criminal justice system itself (for example, how is the victim treated by law enforcement, the prosecutor's office?) and the victim's capacity for tapping into her natural resiliency.

[Refer to exhibit 6.]

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Resiliency is affected by—

- Previous victimization. Has the victim been victimized before, as a child or adult? Was the event the same type of victimization or different?
- Preexisting vulnerabilities, such as mental illness and dependency on substances.
- Timing and duration of the crime event (for example, chronicity, repetitiveness, and suddenness).
- Location of the crime event. Was it in the victim’s own home or a neutral site?
- Physical threats or moral dilemmas, such as fear of retaliation by the offender or, as in the case of many domestic abuse situations, “If he goes to jail, how will I feed my children?”
- Availability of resources after the crime event (for example, social support and crisis intervention).

### Issues for Special Populations

[Refer to exhibit 7.]

#### **Race and ethnicity, religious views, disability, age, and sexual orientation may affect how people react to crime.**

People of different cultures may respond differently to grief and loss.

- **Victims of hate crimes may fear involvement in the criminal justice system.** For example, people of color may not trust police to take their report of a hate crime seriously. Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered persons may fear public “outing” as a result of criminal justice intervention.
- **People with disabilities may feel trapped by abusive caretakers.** Individuals with physical and developmental disabilities are among the most vulnerable to crime. The victim assistance field has begun to develop specialized assistance for them, such as projects that help battered women with hearing impairments, sexual assault survivors with developmental disabilities, or victims of persons with serious mental illness.
- **Immigrants may fear deportation.** Recent immigrants from countries with oppressive police also may be wary of criminal justice involvement, as might persons without immigration documentation.
- **People who live in rural and remote areas may not have consistent access to the criminal justice system.** In many Alaska villages, for example, the only way in and out is by airplane and the only law enforcement is the village safety officer. Crimes that require a law enforcement response must wait until state troopers can arrive, which may be several days, depending on the weather.
- **Elderly individuals may fear retaliation by perpetrators.** Social workers who have been trained to work with people from diverse cultures may be particularly helpful in victim assistance work. Point out that the participant manual has additional information on the reactions of special populations to crime.

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Only the crime of sexual assault has been discussed; other crimes may bring other reactions. The needs of a domestic violence victim may be different from the surviving family members of a homicide victim. The victim assistance provider has to consider the type of crime, the victim and his or her background, and the criminal justice system itself when considering which services to provide. Each crime victim's situation presents unique challenges to those in the helping fields.

Note that most sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim, so the case study in exercise 3 is not a typical scenario.

Despite the differences in possible reactions to crime, all crime victims are entitled to certain rights, which came out of a historic movement. The next section of the workshop examines the movement that fully recognized crime victims' rights as well as their needs and brought their stories to the forefront.



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## **Section III. Crime Victims' Rights**

### **History of the Victim Assistance Field**

Although the concept that victims of crime are entitled to certain rights has its origins in the Code of Hammurabi, circa 1780 BC, the modern victims' rights movement did not begin until the 1970s. During that time, many individuals became aware of the harmful effects of crime and the often insensitive treatment of crime victims and witnesses by police, prosecutors, and judges. The feminist movement drew attention to the "blame the victim" mentality that often met victims of the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence. Groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the National Organization of Victim Assistance advocated for local, state, and national changes regarding the role of crime victims in the criminal justice system. Crime victimization studies identified a large gap between the number of crimes reported to police and the number of self-identified crime victims (Kilpatrick, Saunders et al., 1987). Both law enforcement and prosecutors began to recognize that addressing victims' problems that result from the crime may increase victims' cooperation, thereby increasing the quality of the evidence needed for successful prosecution.

Victim assistance programs were developed to help crime victims cope with the trauma and aftermath of crimes, report crimes, and participate in the criminal justice process and to advocate for sensitive treatment of victims by criminal justice personnel.

Such programs led to the development of federal and state legislation that focused on crime victims' rights and victim assistance services:

- In 1984, Congress passed the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which established strong federal leadership for victim assistance. This act provided funding to qualified victim assistance programs and state crime victim compensation programs.
- In 1988, Congress established the Office for Victims of Crime.
- In 1994, (and reauthorized in 2000) the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was passed, which provides federal funding for shelters for battered women, sexual assault programs, and a variety of other measures to combat violence against women.
- By 2001, 32 states had enacted a constitutional amendment that required states to provide certain services to crime victims.

Currently, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands have federally funded compensation programs. And all 50 states have passed legislation establishing victims' rights.

Under current debate is a national movement to pass a victims' rights amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

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## **Ask participants: Why are many victim advocates supporting an amendment to the U.S. Constitution?**

Persons charged with a crime have federally protected constitutional rights. The rights of victims are only protected by individual states. When there is a conflict between the rights of the accused and the rights of the victim, the rights of the accused take precedent because federal law takes precedent over state law. To establish parity between the rights of the victim and the rights of the accused, federal constitutional rights are needed.

Today, crime victim assistance is a part of the larger restorative justice movement that includes the crime victim as an active partner in the criminal justice process. In the restorative justice model, offenders, crime victims, and the community are all considered clients of justice processes. Restorative justice places emphasis on how crime damages its victims, their communities, and their relationships. Restorative justice processes emphasize repairing the harm done, rather than simply punishing the offender.

### **What Are the Rights of Crime Victims?**

Although the rights of crime victims may differ from state to state, there are four basic types of rights:

[Refer to exhibit 8.]

- The right to notification. This includes the right to notification and information about the stages of the criminal justice proceedings, such as arrest, prosecution, parole, and release.
- The right to be present during criminal justice proceedings, including the trial.
- The right to be heard. Victims exercise this right through victim impact statements and when bail is set.
- The right to restitution. This includes restitution from the offender and compensation for expenses incurred as a result of the crime.

**Note to Trainer:** Add state-specific information here.

The Web site of the National Center for Victims of Crime allows individuals to look up their state's crime victims' rights and resources. Visit [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org) and click Helpful Links under Resource Library, then State Links.

The State of Texas, for example, has the following laws, policies, and programs to help crime victims:

[Refer to exhibit 9.]

- Bill of Rights for Texas Crime Victims.
- Crime Victims' Compensation Fund.
- Crime Victims' Institute.

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- Each prosecutor’s office must designate a victim assistance coordinator and each law enforcement agency must designate a crime victim liaison.

Although many states require each county prosecutor to have a victim assistance coordinator, not all counties have such a person.

**Ask participants: What does that mean for crime victims in Texas?**

- Not all victims are being served.
- Services are more likely to be short term and crisis oriented.
- Referrals must be made for long-term services.
- Jobs are available in the victim services field.

**Crime Victim Compensation**

Two of the four basic crime victims’ rights will be reviewed in more detail: the right to restitution in the form of compensation for expenses accrued as a result of a crime and the right to be heard through victim impact statements.

**Note to Trainer:** Add state-specific information here.

This section requires state-specific information and uses the State of Texas as an example. Please contact your state’s crime victim compensation office to learn about the costs they will compensate and for what amounts. It is very easy to get sidetracked into an indepth discussion of how a victim compensation program actually works. While affirming participants’ interest in this area, refer more specific questions to the crime victim compensation office in your state and mention that specialized training is available to learn more about the program.

Crime victim compensation is a federally and state-funded program that reimburses crime victims for the expenses they incur as a result of a crime. Reimbursements are paid directly to crime victims. Victim assistance providers often help victims fill out the forms needed for reimbursement.

**Ask participants: Who is eligible for crime victim compensation?**

Eligibility may vary from state to state. In Texas, for example, the following individuals are eligible:

[Refer to exhibit 10.]

- Victims who suffer bodily injury, death, or emotional harm.
- U.S. residents who become victims of crime in Texas and Texas residents who become victims of crime in a state or country without comparable compensation.
- Family members of victims.
- People who legally or voluntarily assume expenses related to the crime.

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- Peace officers and firefighters who are injured or their families if they are killed during a crime.

**Ask participants: What costs may be compensated?**

In Texas, for example, costs that may be compensated include—

[Refer to exhibit 11.]

- Medical, prescription, and rehabilitation expenses.
- Lost wages and travel costs incurred during the justice process and when receiving medical treatment.
- Mental health counseling for victims and family members.
- Funeral expenses.
- Loss of earnings or support.
- Childcare or dependent care.
- Attorney fees for legal assistance in filing the application and obtaining benefits.
- Crime scene cleanup.
- Replacement costs for items taken as evidence or made unusable as a result of the criminal investigation.
- Relocation costs for victims of domestic violence.

Note to participants: Mental health services performed by a licensed social worker are reimbursable.

**Ask participants: What is the amount of compensation available?**

Again, each state is different. In Texas, for example—

- Total recovery may not exceed \$50,000 (except for victims who suffer total and permanent disability).
- Victims who suffer permanent and total disability as a result of their victimization may qualify for an additional \$50,000.
- Total recovery may not exceed \$100,000 for catastrophically injured victims.

**Ask participants: How do victims apply?**

The toll free number for the Texas Crime Victim Compensation Program is 1–800–983–9933.

**Victim Impact Statements**

Help with the development of victim impact statements (VISs) is one of the rights of crime victims and one of the roles of victim assistance providers.

[Refer to exhibit 12.]

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Victim impact statements were initiated in 1976 by Chief Probation Officer James Rowland of Fresno County, California, who felt that victims had valuable information they could provide to courts before sentencing.

Facts about victim impact statements include the following:

- Through a VIS, “the voice of the victim” is heard in court.
- Medical, financial, and emotional injuries are presented to the court.
- The probation officer includes a summary of the VIS in the presentencing packet.
- The judge has discretion on how much weight to give a VIS.
- State courts permit VISs; Federal Courts require them.

If you do not have 10 minutes to show a videotape that includes victims’ stories, read the attached victim impact statement, as published in the Mothers Against Drunk Driving biannual publication, MADDvocate (attachment 1).

### **Video: *New Directions from the Field*, Section 1**

If you have the time and equipment, show the first segment of the *New Directions from the Field: Victims Rights and Services* videotape. This 10-minute segment addresses “Implementing the Rights of Crime Victims,” recapping the important points of the training and showing real victims telling their stories.

While participants watch the videotape, review the index cards collected at the beginning of the workshop.

Do a quick calculation about the number of people attending the training and the number of people reporting that they were victims of crime. What percentage of the total audience does that represent? What percentage (rough estimate) of people who were victims of crime actually reported the crime to the police? Be prepared to give a short report at the end of the exercise and discussion.

**Ask participants for their reactions** (after participants have listened to the victim impact statement and/or viewed the video):

- Any reactions to the video and/or victim impact statement?
- According to the video, what is the impact on people who do not get to tell their story through a victim impact statement?

Report on the review of the index cards on which participants described their experiences with crime. Ask participants the following questions:

- How many people in this room are victims of crime? What percentage does that represent?
- How many people reported the crime to police?
- What types of crime did people report?

[Do not ask people to claim their own index cards or victimizations.]

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## Section IV. Next Steps for Social Work

This workshop has covered the biopsychosocial impact of crime, explored two of the critical rights of crime victims, and provided an overview of the services that victim assistance advocates provide.

**Ask participants: What do you think the next steps are for the social work profession and individual social workers regarding the victim assistance field?**

**Ask participants: What do you think the response of the social work profession should be to the victim assistance field?**

**Ask participants: What can individual social workers do now?**

At the 2002 Delegate Assembly, NASW passed its first Crime Victim Assistance Policy Statement, which includes the following recommendations:

[Refer to exhibit 13.]

- NASW encourages all professional social workers to practice universal screening for clients of all ages to determine whether the client has been victimized, or is currently being victimized, to provide better services and support.
- NASW supports policy advocacy on local, state, and national levels to promote assistance for victims of crime and to ensure their safety and recovery from the crime.
- NASW supports social work advocacy for individual victims of crime in overcoming the government obstacles, barriers, and loopholes that may complicate or prevent victims' efforts to obtain needed services.
- NASW supports increased funding to assist crime victims, particularly underserved populations and historically oppressed groups who may be targets of hate crimes.
- NASW encourages all social workers to become familiar with the rights of crime victims and the services available to victims and their families.
- NASW supports continuing education about the field of crime victim assistance through activities such as workshops at conferences and information disseminated through the *NASW News* and chapter newsletters.
- NASW encourages schools of social work to develop curricula to prepare students to identify victims of crime in their chosen field of practice, understand the biopsychosocial effects of victimization, and acquire knowledge of services available to crime victims in their particular state. Furthermore, NASW supports the development of field placements for students to gain experience in this field.
- NASW supports research on the effects of crime on victims, including the psychological and financial consequences and the effects on secondary victims such as family, friends, and social services providers. Research on the effectiveness of interventions to help victims heal from their trauma is also supported.

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- NASW encourages social workers who offer victim services and referrals to be sensitive to differences in age; family supports; race and ethnicity; cultural, religious, or spiritual issues; immigrant status; sexual orientation and gender roles; persons with disabling conditions; attitudes toward trauma resolution, death, and grieving; and perceptions of the criminal justice system.
  - NASW supports efforts to gain recognition for same sex and domestic partners of crime victims by compensation and other assistance programs. Same sex and domestic partners should be entitled to the same benefits as married heterosexual partners.

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## Attachment 1. Jennifer Fry Donaldson's Victim Impact Statement

"Your honor: I would like to thank the court for allowing me to confront the convicted. It is important to me that I let him know the impact the crash has had on my life and the changes I've had to make because of it. I would also like to submit a written copy for the court record.

"When I first learned about victim impact statements, I realized it was my only chance to tell you face to face how you changed my life. On the one hand, I was scared. I was afraid because I knew that in preparing for this, I would have to be honest with you and with myself about damage to my body I find difficult to acknowledge. There are so many things I can't do any more. Before the crash, I played every sport: basketball, volleyball, softball, and track. I was very competitive and excelled at everything I did. In my free time I lifted weights and played racquetball. I was attractive enough that I competed in many county, state and national beauty pageants, two of which I won. In college, I played softball and racquetball, and earned my income as an assistant manager in a restaurant. I worked 50-60 hours a week and made a pretty good living for a 20 year old. It was a fast paced but secure life.

"Then on August 5, my world crumbled.

"That night haunts me in more ways than you can imagine. I have not lived one day without pain in my legs and head. I wonder why this happened to me. I wonder why you didn't know better than to drink and drive. I wonder why you were out of jail before anyone knew if I was going to live. I wonder if you even remember that night. I wonder if you know how many people you hurt and how many lives you changed.

"I wonder if you have nightmares like I do. Nightmares of the crash keep me from sleeping. I see the crash. I hear you hit me. I feel myself going through your windshield, dragging along the side of your car, leaving the flesh from my head on the road. In the nightmare, I see you when you finally stop and throw me off the car into the ditch. I think I'm going to die there.

"You claim you didn't know what you hit! As I relive it time after time, it is only a nightmare. But the nightmare really happened, and I have to live with it for the rest of my life.

"You may say to yourself, 'She should just feel lucky to be alive and go on with her life.' But luck isn't what I'd call it. I can cover up the outside scars, and my limp isn't bad when I wear my brace. But the scars on the inside may never heal.

"When I try to think of what you lost that night, my mind goes blank. You were in your parents' car, and they bailed you out of jail. Unless justice is served today, you will walk away a free man.

"I have \$60,000 in medical bills. I have constant aches and pains. I suffer the consequences of your irresponsible and inexcusable behavior every day of my life. My prayer is that someday you will acknowledge that on August 5, it wasn't a deer you hit. It was a young woman. That woman was me."

Jennifer Fry Donaldson  
Columbus, Kansas

Source: Mothers Against Drunk Driving biannual publication for victims, *MADDvocate*, Winter 1998.



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## Attachment 2. Workshop Evaluation Form

for Victims of Crime: A Social Work Response: Building Skills To Strengthen Survivors

Date \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate your gender:**             Male             Female

**Please check the race/ethnicity of your primary identification:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> African American | <input type="checkbox"/> European American (Caucasian) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian  | <input type="checkbox"/> Latino                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian American   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                   |

**Please check the *one* practice setting or population group that most closely describes where or with whom you currently work:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult mental health (private)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Substance abuse treatment program (alcohol and/or drug) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult mental health (public)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Adult corrections                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult protective services  | <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile corrections                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child and adolescent services (private nonprofit)                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child welfare (private)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Victim assistance                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child welfare (public)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Law enforcement agency (police, sheriff)                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services to persons with developmental disabilities                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Prosecutor's office                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee assistance program  | <input type="checkbox"/> Probation office  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical social work  | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence agency                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services to persons with physical disabilities                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual assault agency                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private clinical practice  | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint domestic violence and sexual assault agency       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School social work   | <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile court  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services to older adults including nursing homes, respite services, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Elder abuse program                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social work education (university or college)                            |  |

**Please indicate your highest social work practice degree:**

- No degree in social work
- Social work student
- BSW
- MSW

*Please turn over for more questions.*

**For questions 1–13, circle the number that best describes your experience with this workshop:  
1 = strongly disagree (lowest), 3 = neutral, 5 = strongly agree (highest).**

**As a result of this workshop, I feel that—**

1. I can identify at least two rights of victims of crime.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can describe the biopsychosocial impact of violent crime on individuals.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can describe services available to victims/survivors of violent crime.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I understand the role of the victim impact statement.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I can identify the resources available for victims/survivors of crime.	1	2	3	4	5

**Circle the number that best describes your reaction to this workshop:**

6. The workshop was relevant to my work as a social worker.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The trainer was knowledgeable about the subject.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The trainer encouraged participation and questions.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The workshop was presented in an interesting manner.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The handouts will be useful resources.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The exercises added to the training experience.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The workshop included information that I can use in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I would recommend this workshop to other social workers.	1	2	3	4	5

14. Please identify three things you learned during the training.

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- 
- 

15. What did you like best about the workshop?

16. What would you change about the workshop?

17. What additional training in the area of working with victims of violent crime would be helpful to you?

# **PowerPoint Slides**

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## **Exhibit 1. Victims of Crime: A Social Work Response, Building Skills To Strengthen Survivors**

**Developed by**

**National Association of Social Workers/Texas  
Chapter**

**University of Missouri–Columbia**

**Funded by**

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

# **Exhibit 2.Goal and Objectives**

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## ***Goal***

- **Enhance professional social workers' capacity to respond to victims/survivors of violent crime.**

## ***Objectives***

- **Describe the biopsychosocial effects of violent crime.**
- **Describe services available to victims/survivors of violent crime.**
- **Identify crime victims' rights.**
- **Understand the role of victim impact statements.**

# **Exhibit 3. Victims' Common Reactions to Crime *During* the Event**

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- **Feelings of being violated.**
- **Terror.**
- **Shock.**
- **Anxiety.**
- **Physiological arousal.**
- **Helplessness.**
- **Anger.**
- **Fight, flight, or freeze.**

# **Exhibit 4. Crisis Intervention Issues: Victims' Immediate Needs**

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- Victims need to feel safe.**
- Victims need to express their emotions.**
- Victims need to know what comes next.**
- Victims need to be aware of secondary victimization issues.**

# **Exhibit 5. Victims' Common Reactions *After* the Event**

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- **Self-blame.**
- **Feelings of being violated, unclean.**
- **Destruction of a fair world view.**
- **Inability to concentrate.**
- **Increased risk of posttraumatic stress disorder.**
- **Other health risks.**

# **Exhibit 6. Victims' Resiliency Is Affected By—**

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- **Previous victimization.**
- **Preexisting vulnerabilities.**
- **Timing and duration of crime event.**
- **Location of event.**
- **Physical threats or moral dilemmas.**
- **Availability of resources after crime event.**



# **Exhibit 7. Special Populations**

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- **Race and ethnicity, religious views, disability, age, and sexual orientation may affect how people react to crime.**
- **Victims of hate crimes may fear involvement in criminal justice system.**
- **People with disabilities may feel trapped by abusive caretakers.**

# **Exhibit 8. Victims' Rights**

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- **Right to notification.**
- **Right to be present during criminal justice proceedings.**
- **Right to be heard during criminal justice proceedings.**
- **Right to restitution.**

## **Exhibit 9. In Texas\***

- **Bill of Rights for Texas Crime Victims.**
- **Crime Victims' Compensation Fund.**
- **Crime Victims' Institute.**
- **Each prosecutor's office must designate a victim assistance coordinator and each law enforcement agency must designate a crime victim liaison.**

\* *Revise with your state's victims' rights policies and initiatives.*

# Exhibit 10. Who Is Eligible for Victim Compensation in Texas?\*

- **Victims who suffer bodily injury, death, or emotional harm.**
- **U.S. residents who become victims of crime in Texas and Texas residents who become victims of crime in a state or country without comparable compensation.**
- **Family members of victims.**
- **People who legally or voluntarily assume expenses related to the crime.**
- **Peace officers and firefighters who are injured or their families if they are killed during a crime.**

\* *Revise with your state's victim compensation eligibility rules.*

# Exhibit 11. Costs That May Be Compensated in Texas\*

- **Medical, prescription, and rehabilitation expenses.**
- **Lost wages and travel costs incurred during the criminal justice process and when receiving medical treatment.**
- **Mental health counseling for victims and family members.**
- **Funeral expenses.**
- **Loss of earnings or support.**
- **Child or dependent care.**
- **Attorney fees for legal assistance in filing the application and obtaining benefits.**
- **Crime scene cleanup.**
- **Replacement costs for items taken as evidence or made unusable as a result of the criminal investigation.**
- **Relocation costs for victims of domestic violence.**

\* *Revise with your state's eligible victim compensation costs.*

# **Exhibit 12. Victim Impact Statements (VISs)**

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- **“The voice of the victim” is heard in court.**
- **Medical, financial, and emotional injuries are presented to the court.**
- **Probation officer includes the VIS summary in the presentencing packet.**
- **Judge has discretion on how much weight to give a VIS.**
- **State courts permit VISs; Federal Courts require them.**

# **Exhibit 13. NASW Crime Victim Assistance Policy Statement**

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- **Practice universal screening.**
- **Advocate for and use policies and services to help victims.**
- **Support increased funding for programs.**
- **Learn about victims' rights and services.**
- **Support education, training, and research through workshops, conferences, *NASW News*, and chapter newsletters.**
- **Be sensitive to special populations and underserved groups.**

# **Exhibit 14. Summary**

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- **All social workers come in contact with crime victims.**
- **Help is available for victims.**
- **Victim assistance is an emerging field of practice.**