

Victim Service Call Role Plays

Review one of the case studies below—which describe fictional, but typical service calls—and consider how you would have reacted in the same situation.

Good Samaritans train so that they will be prepared for the service call and able to empathize with the feelings of a crime victim in crisis. Read the following exercises and discuss what you would do as a Good Samaritans volunteer responding to this call. Because volunteers, as well as victims of crime, may come from non-Christian faith traditions, you may replace the term “church” in any of the exercises with synagogue, mosque, temple, or another faith-based congregation.

EXERCISE 1

Sally is an 18-year-old single mother, with a 14-month-old daughter, who has been on her own since she graduated from high school last year. She works full time at a local discount store and attends night classes at a local community college. She lives alone in an isolated rented trailer. Sally picked up her daughter and came home tonight to find her door broken and her trailer in shambles. She found her clothes thrown on the floor, food emptied out of the refrigerator, garbage strewn all over, and graffiti painted on her walls. Some jewelry, CDs, and a boom box were stolen.

She calls the police from a nearby convenience store, and the officers arrive to find her staring fixedly at one particular line on her wall that says, “We’ll be back!” The police officers take the information for the crime report and suggest that she might want to stay with her parents for a few days. Sally becomes very agitated at the suggestion and adamantly refuses. She tells the officers that she doesn’t have any close friends she can stay with and does not attend a church anymore. She reluctantly agrees to let the officers call Good Samaritans.

EXERCISE 2

Bobby is a 24-year-old construction worker whose wife, Janice, is a private first class in an Army unit stationed overseas. He is caring for their two children, a 3-year-old girl and a 5-year-old boy, and trying to work as steadily as possible in the uncertain construction market. They live in a small rented house in a somewhat rundown area of the city. Today, he was told that his construction job was ending in 3 days.

Bobby picked up his children from daycare and came home to find that his house had been broken into. The window in the back door had been smashed and the entire house turned upside down. Among the items stolen were a TV, VCR, radio, checkbook, his wife’s jewelry, and an old hunting rifle he inherited from his father. Also stolen was a small strongbox with important papers such as their marriage license, birth certificates, Social Security cards, Janice’s driver’s license, military dependent ID cards for Bobby and the children, copies of Janice’s military insurance and dependent forms, a spare set of keys, and savings bonds. A Good Samaritans staff

member copies the crime report the following day, and a Good Samaritans team leader contacts him that evening.

EXERCISE 3

Charlie and Barbara are both retired and living on modest pensions. They live in a 50-year-old house in a middle-class suburban neighborhood. Their house was burglarized last week while they were out, but only replaceable appliances and electronics were taken. The responding police officers gave Charlie a Good Samaritans brochure, and he called them the following day.

When the Good Samaritans team arrives, they find neighbors and members of Barbara's and Charlie's church gathering to provide support for the couple. Barbara is vacillating between a fierce desire for vengeance and fear that the burglars might return. Charlie shows the Good Samaritans team leader the lockless window where the burglars entered and asks what Good Samaritans can do to help.

EXERCISE 4

Morgan is 37 years old and lives alone in a modest suburban neighborhood. He lost a leg in a car accident 3 years ago and is living on a small insurance settlement while he tries to establish himself in computer graphic design. He is divorced and has no close friends in the city. While he was out, burglars entered his home through a sliding glass door and stole some computer equipment. They also vandalized the house and left it a mess.

A Good Samaritans staffer copies Morgan's crime report, and a volunteer team contacts him to arrange an appointment at his home. The team finds Morgan trying to sweep up broken glass from his wheelchair. He tells them he can—just barely—afford to replace the stolen equipment *or* his sliding glass door, but not both. He also says that he is reluctant to leave his house, even to shop for groceries or go to a fitting for a prosthetic leg.

EXERCISE 5

Jane is a 32-year-old divorced mother with two children, ages 6 and 8. She is a laboratory technician at a local hospital and barely survives financially. Yesterday, she picked up her children and came home to find that her rented house had been broken into. The thieves stole a TV, a camera, an antique gold locket that had belonged to her grandmother, her checkbook, a credit card, and a box of papers that contained birth certificates and her divorce decree.

A call from the Good Samaritans team leader the following morning finds her at home. The volunteer team arrives to find her frantically cleaning her house. She has crudely nailed a 2 by 4 over the broken back door. She tells the children to go play in their room while she talks with the volunteer team. As she talks to the team, she becomes increasingly agitated and jumps every time she hears the children's voices. She admits that she is very frightened and kept the children out of school today because she could not bear to let them out of her sight. She appears tired and says that she did not sleep last night. She asks the Good Samaritans team questions such as "Who

were they?” “Why did they break into my house?” “Will they come back?” and “Will the police recover my grandmother’s locket?”

EXERCISE 6

Vera has lived in the same house for the past 50 years. She is a widow living on a modest pension. She had a pleasant life until she returned home yesterday from a gardening class to find that thieves had broken into her home by removing the security grating from a side window. They stole the usual items such as a checkbook, TV, DVD player, and computer, as well as food from her refrigerator and clothes from her closet. Her whole bedroom had been turned upside down. The police said they were probably searching for hidden jewelry.

Vera’s children live in other states so she is reluctant to “bother” them. She is afraid they’ll insist that she move. This is the second break-in she has experienced this year, and she admits that she is terrified that “they” will come back and hurt her. She has a number of friends, all close to her own age, but does not attend church with any regularity.