



the NATIONAL REENTRY
RESOURCE CENTER

— *A project of the CSG Justice Center* —

Involving Crime Victim Services to Ensure Successful Offender Reentry

Brought to you by the National Reentry Resource Center and the Bureau of
Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice

Speakers

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“We have a justice system because someone has been hurt by a crime. We need to take into account the harm that has been done to a victim and help that hurt. To be truly effective in our criminal justice effort, we have to include the fact that a crime has harmed someone.”

Traditional Offender Reentry

- In general, offender reentry has focused on *offenders*.
- Lack of attention to victims' needs, concerns, and rights when their offenders prepare to reenter the community.
- Yet, reentry can be a “trauma trigger” for many victims.

Reginald Wilkinson, Retired Director
OH Dept. of Rehabilitation & Correction

“Corrections needs a culture change.
The word is not out there yet that
victims need to be considered at the
time of offender release.”

Reentry Case Study

A man convicted of sexual assault of a 10-year old is convicted and sentenced to 15 years in prison. After 7 years, he's up for parole. During incarceration, he attended 9 months of both sex offender & substance abuse treatment programs; he has not yet fulfilled his restitution order to pay for his victim's counseling costs.

Reentry Case Study

- What might be the major concerns of the victim and the victim's family?
- What might be the major concerns of the community to which the offender will be paroled (where the crime occurred)?
- Conditions of supervision?
- Services/support for the victim?
- Who should be involved in reentry?

Challenges with Ex-Offenders: *What Experience Tells Us*

- Stigma
- Negative connotation
- Addressing sustenance needs
- Mental health issues
- Alcohol and other substance use/abuse issues
- Cycle of violence
- Financial issue\$\$\$\$\$
- Employment
- Lack of social support
- Need for peer support and networks
- Family reunification issues

Challenges with **Victims**: *What Research Tells Us*

- Stigma
- Negative connotation
- Addressing sustenance needs
- Mental health issues
- Alcohol and other substance use/abuse issues
- Cycle of violence
- Financial issue\$\$\$\$\$
- Employment
- Lack of social support
- Need for peer support and networks
- Family reunification issues

Major Needs of Victims

- Acknowledgement
- Respect
- Information

Basic Victims' Rights Related to Reentry

- Notification
- Protection
- Participation and input
- Restitution
- Information and referrals

Involving Victims in Reentry

- Goal of assessing and addressing crime victims' needs
- Inviting victims and service providers to the planning and implementation table
- Developing creative approaches that implement victims' basic rights
- Developing approaches for victim-offender programming that focus on *offender accountability*

Involving Victims in Reentry

- They should have a *role*, but *no responsibility*.
- Opportunities for involvement should be *voluntary*.
- Victim safety should be a *priority*.
- *Assumptions* about “crime victims” should not be made.
- Victim involvement should be meaningful – an *opportunity* and not an *obligation*.

Federal SVORI Program

- Required addressing victims' needs and rights in two areas:
 - Victim notification
 - Principles of restorative justice

Federal Second Chance Act

- Requires addressing victims' needs by:
 - Providing victim-appropriate services
 - Encouraging timely and complete payment of restitution to victims
 - Providing services such as security and counseling to victims upon release of offenders
 - Protecting communities against dangerous offenders by using validated risk assessment tools
 - Coordination with victim services in development of the reentry strategic plan

Federal Second Chance Act

- Grantees must provide extensive evidence of collaboration with State and local government agencies overseeing victim services.
- Grantees must submit annual reports indicating increased victim participation.

Challenges

Challenge # 1

Do reentry initiatives
have a
responsibility
to crime victims?

Challenge # 2

View victims not as an
obligation,
but as an
opportunity.

What's Enough?

- *Ex-Offenders*: A job and a place to live?
- *Victims*: Information and notification?
- *Community*: Basic education and an invitation to get involved?
- *The system*: “Do a lot with a little”?

What We Know About *Communities* & Reentry

- “NIMBY”:
 - Propelled by very real fears (see statistics!)
- Lack of education = lack of involvement = lack of feelings of control
- Active participation of communities has a major impact on victims *and* offenders.

How Do Reentry Programs Create a Victim Focus?

- The most successful strategies have been those that involve *collaboration* among system- and community-based programs.
- Victims and community members themselves should be viewed as *key partners* for collaboration.
- Victim/community safety has to be a *priority*.

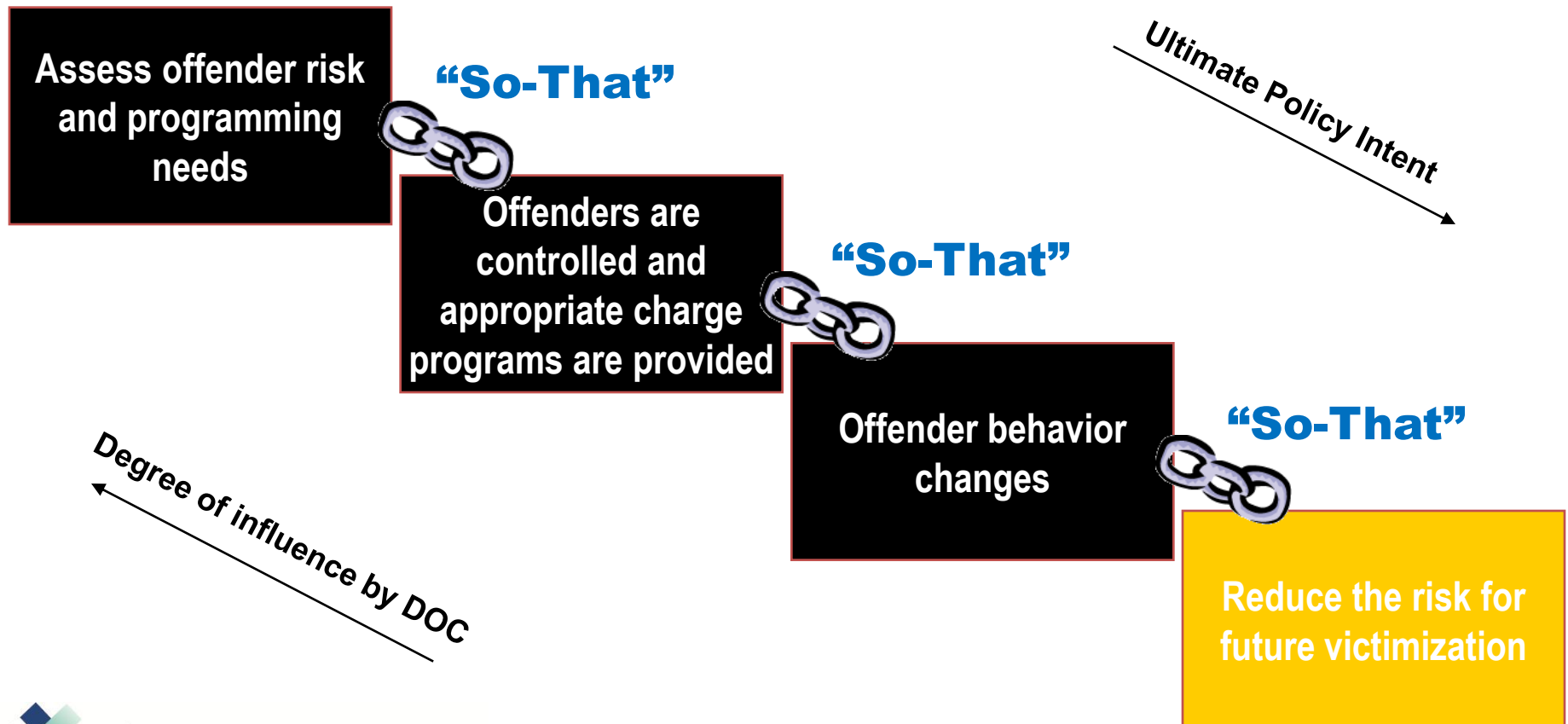
Offender Assessments

- Serve both **classification** and **reentry** purposes
- Should take into consideration victims' rights, interests, and needs
- Victim information can come from:
 - ✓ Pre-sentence investigations
 - ✓ Victim impact statements
 - ✓ Contacts with the victim to obtain their input during offender incarceration
 - ✓ Contacts with the victim during the reentry process

The Offender Management Practices

“So-That” Chain

NOTE: The “So-That” chain is a concept developed by Public Knowledge, Inc., in “Instituting Performance and Outcome Measures.”



Victims' Basic Rights & Needs Throughout Reentry

- Notification & information about:
 - Status of the case
 - Status/location of the offender
 - Their role throughout the reentry process
 - Their rights
 - Supervising officer and agency
 - Whom to contact in cases of emergency

Victims' Basic Rights & Needs Throughout Reentry

- Protection
 - Opportunity to identify safety needs (*real* and *perceived*)
 - Assistance in safety planning
 - Assistance in obtaining protective orders (*if needed and upon request*)
 - Information about whom to contact regarding violations of protective orders or supervision conditions

Victims' Basic Rights & Needs Throughout Reentry

- Participation and input:
 - Effective PSIs and victim impact statements
 - Input into conditions of supervision
 - Input into community service
 - Opportunities to contact PO's
 - Victim Advisory Councils
 - Victim awareness programming for offenders
 - Victim-offender dialogue programs

Victims' Basic Rights & Needs Throughout Reentry

- Legal/financial obligations:
 - Restitution (as a priority)
 - Assistance in documenting losses
 - Guidance in cases of non-payment
 - Opportunities for community service as an alternative to restitution
 - Child support (in applicable cases)

Victims' Basic Rights & Needs Throughout Reentry

- Information/referrals:
 - To state crime victim compensation
 - To supportive victim services in the community
(*OVC Online Directory of Crime Victim Services*)
 - To assistance with their basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, transportation, work, etc.)

Agency Staff Needs

- Training on basic victim trauma and mental health needs, and how to speak to victims
- Training on how victim input can help with offender case planning and management
- Information about victims' most "frequently asked questions" (FAQ)
- Knowledge about victims' rights and services

APPA/OVC Reentry Project

- Recognized that, in general, offender reentry projects focused on *offenders*.
- Lack of attention to victims' needs, concerns, and rights when their offenders prepared to reenter the community.
- Received funding from Office for Victims of Crime (USDOJ, OJP)

APPA/OVC Reentry Project

- Goal was to “fill the gaps” on reentry:
 - National survey
 - National focus group
 - Individual interviews
 - National call for “promising practices” relevant to victims and reentry

APPA/OVC Reentry Project

- Created a manual that focused both on victims' rights & needs and the role of the community:
- “The Victim Role in Offender Reentry: A Community Response Manual” and other resources

www.appa-net.org/victims_role.html

- “Creating a Victim Focus: A Guide to Working with Victims During Offender Reentry” (OVC TTAC)

www.navspic.org

"The Three R's"

- “White paper” written by criminal justice, corrections, and victim services professionals addressing *three core tenets* relating to reentry:
 - Reparative justice
 - Relationships
 - Responsibility
- “Three R’s”, victim impact statement resource package, and other resources for victims and reentry: www.justicesolutions.org

"The Three R's" Perspective

- Creates an opportunity about offender reentry from a perspective that is **victim-, family-, and harm-centered**
- Encourages leadership and commitment
- Focuses on addressing *reentry* at *preentry* (at the time of sentencing and commitment)

Reparative Justice

- Provides opportunities to hold offenders accountable to make *reparations*, and to involve *all* stakeholders in building a capacity to prevent the harm from occurring again
- Addresses the *perceived fear* and the *actual potential* for victimization, and the *negative consequences of crime*

Relationships

- Most offenders *know their victims*.
- Crime is highly *personal*.
- The offender's victim, his/her family, and potential support systems for both must be *identified* and *not isolated*.

Responsibility

- Offenders to victims
- Offenders to the community
- Community to the offender
- Criminal and juvenile justice systems to the community and victims
- Criminal and juvenile justice systems to offenders

Restorative Community Service

- Visible
- Viable
- Relevant and meaningful to the community:
 - *Including crime victims and survivors, and those who serve them*

Promising Practices

- Batterer's Intervention Programming, PROVE (*Ohio*)
- Victim Awareness Programming Research
(*Connecticut*)
- Victim Safety Planning
(*Ohio, Washington State, Vermont, and West Virginia*)
- Victim Advisory Councils
(*Ohio and Washington State*)

Most Vital Victim Components of Reentry

- Safety
- Information
- Involvement

Core Elements (Back to the Basics...)

- See victims as *opportunity*, not *obligation*.
- Be familiar with victim services.
- Seek input from victims and survivors.
- Identify and address victims' key concerns.
- Educate victim service providers about reentry initiatives.

Core Elements (Back to the Basics...)

- Provide victims with basic information and notification.
- Think “safety first”!!!!
- Make restitution a reality.
- Recognize that most offenders *know* their victims.
- Engage interfaith communities – for *offenders* and for *victims*.

For More Information:

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