

# Module 3

# Ethics in Victim Services



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

**OVCTTAC**  
OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME Training and Technical Assistance Center

# Learning Objectives

- ❖ Recognize when a person is acting in an ethically questionable way.
- ❖ State at least one NVASC ethical standard for victim service providers.
- ❖ State at least one way to make ethical standards a part of an organizational culture.

# Ethics and You

# *Activity*

*Is It Ethical?*

*Worksheet 3.1*

# Ethics Background

- ❖ Ancient civilized societies developed systems of moral principles based on values.
- ❖ Early ethical codes of law and medicine were set in place.
- ❖ Victim assistance evolved into an established profession.



# Code of Ethics Purposes

- ❖ Safeguards reputation of the profession
- ❖ Protects public from exploitation
- ❖ Furthers competent and responsible practice

# Foundation for Code of Ethics

- ❖ Client autonomy, privacy and self-determination
- ❖ Objectivity and abstention from abuse
- ❖ Honesty and equity of service
- ❖ Compassion and respect for individuals
- ❖ Social responsibility and confidentiality
- ❖ Working within one's range of competence

# National Victim Assistance Standards





# Victim Assistance Field Background

- ❖ Moved from grassroots beginnings to a professional discipline
- ❖ Encompasses a wide diversity of individuals and organizations
- ❖ Provides services over the entire range of the justice experience

# Victim Assistance Field Background

- ❖ Greater accountability by victim assistance providers was needed.
- ❖ Field is viewed as credible, worthwhile, and providing much-needed services.
- ❖ National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium (NVASC) was formed to develop professional standards for the field.

# NVASC

## National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium

- ❖ Created in 2000 by OVC
- ❖ Purpose: To create model program, competency, and ethical standards
- ❖ Result: *Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers*
- ❖ *Ethics in Victim Services* – book based on the NVASC model

# NVASC Ethical Standards

- ❖ **Scope of Services**
  - ◆ Professional activities
- ❖ **Coordinating within the Community**
  - ◆ Collaboration
- ❖ **Direct Services**
  - ◆ Relationships
- ❖ **Administration and Evaluation**
  - ◆ Monitors activities and relationships

# Scope of Services

## ❖ Professional activities

- Follow the law
- Accurate representation
- Professional conduct
- Professional competence
- Inform about costs

# Coordinating within the Community

- ❖ Collaboration
  - ◆ Respect colleagues
  - ◆ Share knowledge
  - ◆ Improve systems

# Direct Services

- ❖ Relationships
  - ◆ Respect civil rights
  - ◆ Protect victim interests
  - ◆ Nonjudgmental
  - ◆ Self-determination
  - ◆ Confidentiality

# Direct Services

## ❖ Relationships

- Terminate appropriately
- Good boundaries
- Non-discriminatory
- Support colleagues
- Avoid conflict of interest



# Administration and Evaluation

- ❖ Monitors activities and relationships
  - ◆ Reports mistreatment
  - ◆ Reports misconduct

# *Activity*

## *Identify the Relevant NVASC Standards*

### *Worksheet 3.2*

# *Activity*

## *NVASC Standards in Your Organization*

### *Worksheet 3.3*

# Is it Ethical? Revisited

- ❖ Was the victim assistance provider acting in an ethically questionable manner?
- ❖ Any additional rationale?
- ❖ What NVASC standards might apply?

# Ethical Organizations

# *Activity*

## *Creating Ethical Organizations*

# Review of Module Learning Objectives

- ❖ Recognize when a person is acting in an ethically questionable way.
- ❖ State at least one NVASC ethical standard for victim service providers.
- ❖ State at least one way to make ethical standards a part of an organizational culture.



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