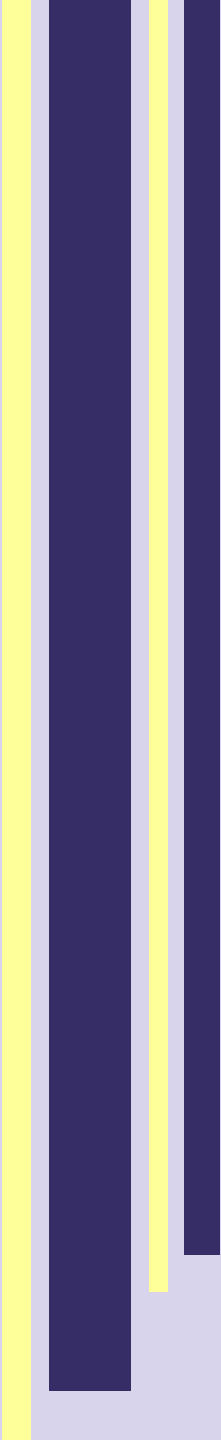




Ethics in Victim Services

Welcome!



Module 1

Introduction and Training Overview

Acknowledgements

Shara Moscinska, MA, LPCC and the Placitas Healing Center, LLC gratefully acknowledges the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, for allowing us to reproduce, in part or in whole, the training entitled Ethics in Victim Services released in March 2009, the training entitled National Victim Assistance Academy Foundation Level Training held in Albuquerque, NM in March, 2011, and OVC's publication, *Achieving Excellence: Model Standards for Serving Victims & Survivors of Crime (Model Standards)*.

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Acknowledgements

This training has been modified. The full text is available online by visiting the OVC TTAC website at:

www.ovcttac.gov/ethics/presenterstoolbox.cfm and

www.ovcttac.gov/views/TrainingMaterials/NVAA/dspNVAACurriculum.cfm and

<https://www.ovc.gov/model-standards>

www.ovcttac.gov

Learning Objectives

- ❖ **Identify at least one other participant and his/her role in providing services to victims of crime.**
- ❖ **Introduce Micro Self-Care**

Activity

Introductions and Micro Self-Care

Activity

- ❖ **Introduce Yourself (Name, Position, and Agency) to at least three people**
- ❖ **State what you like best about your role as a victim service professional**
- ❖ **State three things you are grateful for**

Course Objectives

- ❖ **Create self-awareness and understanding of how attitudes and beliefs influence responses to victims of crime.**

Course Objectives

- ❖ ***Learn about OVC's Achieving Excellence: Model Standards for Serving Victims & Survivors of Crime (Model Standards).***
- ❖ ***Special Focus on OVC's Model Ethical Standards***

Course Objectives

- ❖ **Recognize when a person (including ourselves!) is acting in an ethically questionable way.**
- ❖ **Use a standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.**

Course Agenda

Module 1: Introduction and Training Overview

Module 2: Values and Responses to Victims

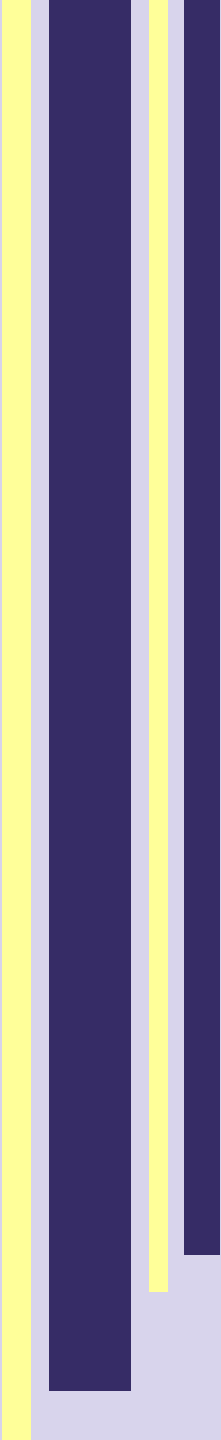
Module 3: Ethics in Victim Services

**Module 4: Standard Decisionmaking Process for
Ethical Decisions**

Module 5: Closing

Review of Module Learning Objectives

- ❖ **Identify at least one other participant and his/her role in providing services to victims of crime.**
- ❖ **State the course objectives.**



Module 2

Values and Responses to Victims

Learning Objectives

- ❖ Increase awareness about your own values, morals, and ethics.
- ❖ Increase awareness of how these attitudes and beliefs influence your responses to victims of crime.

Personal Values

- ❖ **Ideals and beliefs we hold dear.**
- ❖ **Form the foundation for how we view and interact with the world.**
- ❖ **Guide our decisionmaking.**
- ❖ **Authentic components.**
- ❖ **Affect working with clients.**

Professional Values

- ❖ **Ideals and beliefs the professional holds dear.**
- ❖ **Create expectations in the field.**
- ❖ **Guide our decisionmaking.**
- ❖ **Might conflict with personal values.**
- ❖ **Key determinants in ethical decisionmaking process.**

Ethics

- ❖ **A system of moral principles, rules, and standards of conduct.**
- ❖ **Safeguard the reputation of the profession.**
- ❖ **Protect the public from exploitation.**
- ❖ **Promote competent and responsible practices.**

Why Is Self-Awareness Important to Ethical Practice?

Values drive behavior and are always in operation.

Personal values influence response to challenging situations, how judgments are made, and how you balance the rights of individuals.

Awareness of values or biases allows you to recognize when they are being challenged, so you can focus on your clients.

Definition of Terms

- ❖ *VALUES* are the ideals or beliefs to which an individual or group aspires.
- ❖ *ETHICS* is the articulation of standards of behavior that reflect those values or morals.

Activity

Assault Victim Vignette

Assault Victim Vignette Scenario

Julia Sullivan is a law enforcement victim advocate. Julia has taken Charlotte Thompson to the emergency room for treatment of injuries resulting from an assault.

Julia knows Charlotte Thompson because of Charlotte's prior history of physical and sexual assaults. In the last year, Charlotte had recanted her story of one violent assault as the case moved through the legal system.

Julia is trying to complete a compensation form to help Charlotte with her medical expenses.

Assault Victim Vignette

Reflection Questions

- ❖ Any hesitations about working with this client?
- ❖ What values may cause you to feel this way?
- ❖ How might your feelings affect your professional relationship with the victim?
- ❖ What can you do to put the client's interest first?
- ❖ Consider: What other challenging victims have you dealt with, and how did you handle the situation?

Activity

Self-Awareness Inventory

Self-Awareness Activity

Members of a helping profession such as victim assistance should refrain from getting personally involved with victims they work with.

- ❖ **1 = Disagree**
- ❖ **2 = Undecided**
- ❖ **3 = Agree**

Self-Awareness Activity

A higher spiritual power should guide our behavior and thinking.

- ❖ **1 = Disagree**
- ❖ **2 = Undecided**
- ❖ **3 = Agree**

Self-Awareness Activity

Women are rarely violent.

- ❖ **1 = Disagree**
- ❖ **2 = Undecided**
- ❖ **3 = Agree**

Self-Awareness Activity

The needs of victims must sometimes override a supervisor's directive.

- ❖ **1 = Disagree**
- ❖ **2 = Undecided**
- ❖ **3 = Agree**

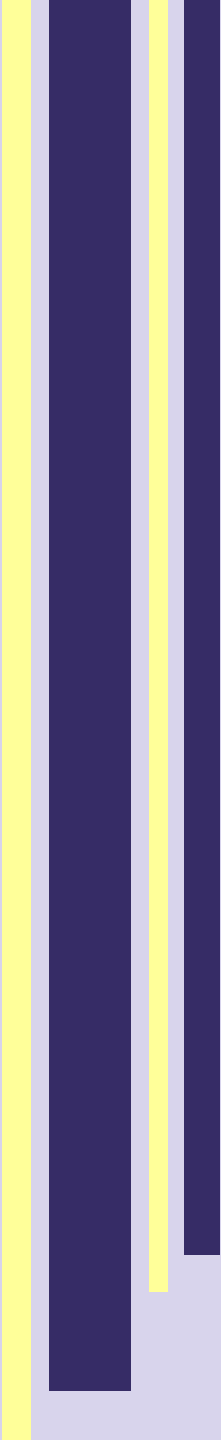
Self-Awareness Activity

Culture and race are not factors in a professional helping relationship. As human beings, we are more similar than different.

- ❖ **1 = Disagree**
- ❖ **2 = Undecided**
- ❖ **3 = Agree**

Review of Module Learning Objectives

- ❖ Increase awareness about your own values, morals, and ethics.
- ❖ Increase awareness of how these attitudes and beliefs influence your responses to victims of crime.



Module 3

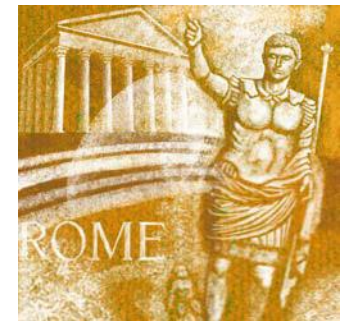
Ethics in Victim Services

Learning Objectives

- ❖ Understand the need for codes of ethics.
- ❖ Become familiar with OVCs Model Standards for Serving Victims and Survivors of Crime
- ❖ State at least one Model Ethical Standard for victim assistance providers.

Ethics Background

- ❖ Ancient civilized societies developed systems of ethical 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

*OVC Model
Standards for Serving
Victims & Survivors
of Crime (Model
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; Reconvened in 2010.**
- ❖ **Purpose: To create model program, competency, and ethical standards of conduct**
- ❖ **NVASC researched existing standards, polled the field of victim assistance, and utilized experience of a representative and diverse core of VAPs.**
- ❖ **Result: *Model Standards for Serving Victims & Survivors of Crime.***

OVC Model Standards

OVC Model Standards focus on three areas:

- ❖ **Program Standards for Serving Victims & Survivors of Crime**
- ❖ **Competency Standards for Serving Victims & Survivors of Crime**
- ❖ **Ethical Standards for Serving Victims & Survivors of Crime**

OVC Model Standards

❖ **Scope of Services**

- ◆ Professional activities

❖ **Coordinating within the Community**

- ◆ Collaboration

❖ **Direct Services**

- ◆ Relationships

❖ **Privacy, confidentiality, data security, and assistive technology.**

❖ **Administration and Evaluation**

- ◆ Monitors activities and relationships

Activity

*Identify the Relevant
Model Ethical
Standards
3 Minute Review*

Is it Ethical?

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

Applying Model Standards

Scenario 1

Jo, a woman who is trying to leave her violent husband, asks Betty, the victim assistance provider at a local domestic violence shelter, to help her find a place to stay for a while. The shelter has been filled to capacity the past 2 weeks. Betty's friend has a vacant garage apartment. After checking with her friend, Betty offers the apartment as a safe place for Jo and her two young children to stay until everything is settled.

Scenario 1 Betty

**Betty should do her best to avoid dual relationships that could impair her objectivity and professional judgment.
Standard 3.7**

Scenario 1 Betty

ETHICAL STANDARD 3.7: The victim assistance provider does not engage in personal relationships with persons served which exploit professional trust or could impair the victim assistance provider's objectivity and professional judgment.

Scenario 2

Marsha, who is a victim assistance provider is working with Jean, a stalking victim who wants to sue the employer of the man who stalked her. The stalker accessed Jean's financial records through the database at his place of employment. Marsha advises Jean, "Getting involved in a stressful lawsuit isn't a good idea right now. You really need to focus on your recovery."

Marsha Scenario 2

Marsha needs to realize that Jean has a right to self-determination and that Marsha should not be giving advice regarding legal issues.

Standards 1.1 and 3.4

Marsha Scenario 2

ETHICAL STANDARD 1.1: The victim assistance provider understands his or her legal responsibilities, limitations, and the implications of his/her actions within the service delivery setting, and performs duties in accord with laws, regulations, policies, and legislated rights of persons served.

ETHICAL STANDARD 3.4: The victim assistance provider respects the victim's right to self-determination.

Scenario 3

Kevin, a victim assistance provider, has been working with Heidi. She recently moved to a different town to get away from her abusive boyfriend, and she has asked Kevin not to share her new address and phone number with anyone. One day she calls Kevin; she is distraught and reluctantly discloses that she is thinking about suicide, but she begs him not to tell anyone. He explains that he is obligated to report someone who is suicidal and will give her contact information to law enforcement.

Scenario 3 Kevin

If a client is suicidal or if there is a duty to warn, for example, exceptions to confidentiality can be made. Kevin should have warned Heidi up front of exceptions to confidentiality.

Standard 3.5

Scenario 3 Kevin

ETHICAL STANDARD 3.5: The victim assistance provider preserves the confidentiality of information provided by the person served or acquired from other sources before, during, and after the course of the professional relationship.

Scenario 4

Rebecca, a white victim assistance provider who majored in psychology in college, realizes that an African-American victim she is working with, Shauna, has a substance abuse problem. Shauna is just starting to open up to Rebecca after several weeks of silence. When Rebecca suggests that Shauna see a substance abuse counselor or check out a 12-step program, Shauna accuses Rebecca of trying to get rid of her because she is black. Rebecca denies the accusation and assures Shauna that she will continue working with her. Rebecca figures that she has had enough experience to help Shauna with her substance abuse problem.

Scenario 4 Rebecca

Rebecca needs to recognize her limitations and make appropriate outside referrals. Part of professional competence is staying within defined responsibilities. Rebecca should consider whether fear of being perceived as racially biased influenced her decision. That would be a form of discrimination. Standards 1.4 and 3.8

Scenario 4 Rebecca

ETHICAL STANDARD 1.4: The victim assistance provider achieves and maintains a high level of professional competence.

ETHICAL STANDARD 3.8: The victim assistance provider does not discriminate against a victim/survivor and does not turn victims/survivors away from services due to personal biases or lack of cultural competency.

Scenario 5

Jeff, who works long hours as a victim assistance provider at a law enforcement agency, regularly takes records home and finishes up his documentation at night. After he eats dinner with his wife and two adolescent daughters, Jeff spreads his work on the kitchen table and puts in a couple more hours.

Scenario 5 Jeff

Confidentiality requires paperwork and any other information about a victim should be kept secure.

Standard 3.5

Standard 4.1

Standard 4.2

Scenario 5 Jeff

ETHICAL STANDARD 3.5: The victim assistance provider preserves the confidentiality of information provided by the person served or acquired from other sources before, during, and after the course of the professional relationship.

Scenario 5 Jeff

ETHICAL STANDARD 4.1

The VAP protects the privacy of the person served, adhering to the highest applicable standard of privacy.

ETHICAL STANDARD 4.2

The VAP preserves the confidentiality of information provided by the person served or acquired from other sources before, during, and after the course of the professional relationship.

Review of Module Learning Objectives

- ❖ **Recognize when a person is acting in an ethically questionable way.**
- ❖ **State at least one OVC Model Ethical Standard for victim service providers.**



Module 4

Standard Decisionmaking Process for Ethical Decisions

Learning Objectives

- ❖ **State the steps in the standard decisionmaking process.**
- ❖ **Use the standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.**

The Decisionmaking Process

Decisionmaking Process

- 1. Assess the facts.**
- 2. Identify relevant standards and practical considerations.**
- 3. Brainstorm options and consequences.**
- 4. Consult with peers/supervisor.**
- 5. Choose best option and act.**
- 6. Evaluate. How can this situation be avoided in the future?**

Activity

Disclosing Victim Vignette

Disclosing Victim Vignette



Decisionmaking Process

- 1. Assess the facts.**
- 2. Identify relevant standards and practical considerations.**
- 3. Brainstorm options and consequences.**
- 4. Consult with peers/supervisor.**
- 5. Choose best option and act.**
- 6. Evaluate: how can this situation be avoided in the future?**

Ethical Standards	Practical Considerations
1.1 Obligations within the service delivery system.	Deborah should explain the limits of confidentiality to Paulina.
3.2 Best interests of person served	Deborah must keep in mind what is best for Paulina and treat her with respect and courtesy.
3.5 Confidentiality issues	Deborah is obligated to report pertinent information to the prosecutor.

Brainstorm Options and Consequences

Deborah convinces Paulina to keep quiet about having had sexual intercourse prior to the rape.

Pro: Paulina's attacker gets the maximum punishment for his crime.

Con: Deborah puts her job in jeopardy if the truth comes out that she withheld information from the prosecutor. Paulina may be left with feelings of guilt for lying.

Brainstorm Options and Consequences

Deborah promises not to tell anyone what Paulina has revealed to her, but she encourages Paulina to tell the prosecutor.

Pro: Deborah keeps Paulina's trust by promising not to tell. By putting the decisionmaking responsibility on Paulina, Deborah feels exonerated from taking action.

Con: Deborah puts her job in jeopardy if the truth comes out that she withheld information from the prosecutor.

Brainstorm Options and Consequences

Deborah explains to Paulina that she, as an employee of the prosecutor, cannot keep this information confidential. She offers to accompany Paulina through the process of setting the record straight.

Pro: Deborah fulfills her obligations as a victim assistance provider at the prosecutor's office.

Paulina takes responsibility for her actions.

Con: Paulina may feel betrayed. The plea bargain may be affected. Jake might receive a lighter sentence because Paulina is perceived to be less credible.

Consult, Choose, and Act

Consult with peers or supervisors.

Choose the best option and act: What option seems to be the most ethical and why?

Evaluate

Deborah should always stress to crime victims the importance of telling the truth from the beginning. She is also obligated to be certain that crime victims understand the limits of confidentiality within the prosecutor's office.

Common Ethical Issues

Common Ethical Issues

- ❖ **Boundary issues and multiple relationships**
- ❖ **Confidentiality**
- ❖ **Legal advocacy versus legal advice**
- ❖ **Professional competence**

Activity

Common Ethical Issues
30 Minutes

Case Study

- 1. Explain the facts of the case.**
- 2. What are the relevant standards and practical considerations?**
- 3. Present your three options and pros and cons of each.**
- 4. Which option did you chose and why?**
- 5. Evaluate: how can this situation be avoided in the future?**

Teresa works at a local domestic violence shelter. She has taken a couple of counseling classes but has no formal training as a therapist or mental health professional. She has recently gained the trust of Mandy, a client who was abused as a child and has recently left an emotionally and physically abusive relationship. Teresa soon realizes that Mandy has serious mental health issues and needs additional therapy. Mandy expresses a deep-seated mistrust of “shrinks” because she became sexually involved with one therapist 10 years ago. The relationship did not last and she felt betrayed. Mandy wants to work with Teresa

Teresa and Mandy

What additional ethical considerations arise if you find out that Teresa begins to meet Mandy regularly for “supportive counseling?”

What relevant standards apply?

Teresa and Mandy

Standards 1.1 and 1.4

Part of being professionally competent is knowing one's own limitations and staying within the clearly defined range of responsibility. Teresa must make an outside referral.

Standard 3.2 Teresa must also keep the client's fragile emotional and mental state in mind.

Teresa and Mandy

If Teresa engaged in therapy with Mandy:

Standard 2.1: VAPs have an ethical obligation to treat colleagues and professionals with whom we work in a way that promotes mutual respect and improvement of services.

Standard 5.1: VAPs must report to appropriate authorities the conduct of any professional that constitutes mistreatment of a person served or brings the profession into dishonor.

Carolyn, who is white, has a large grant to provide assistance to the three culturally and ethnically diverse populations that have started grassroots homicide survivor groups in the city. Her role as a strategic planner/victim assistance provider is to help them assess their needs, to assist them in applying for not-for-profit status, and to help them become self-sufficient as support groups for survivors. Carolyn believes that she is color blind – that race and culture are not factors in her job. However, many of the members of the grassroots groups feel that she does not understand them. Over a period of months they have been increasingly frustrated by her stereotypical views about their cultures. When they ask her to bring in interpreters and members of their own communities to assist her, she replies that the money will be better spent hiring lawyers to secure the not-for-profit status.

Carolyn and Grassroots Groups

Standard 3.9: Carolyn's insistence that race and culture are not factors is a form of discrimination.

Standards 3.4: The grassroots groups clearly disagree with Carolyn's approach.

Standard 3.2: Carolyn's primary responsibility is to do what is in the best interest of those she serves.

Carolyn and Grassroots Groups

Standard 1.4: Carolyn should be sensitive to crime victims.

Standard 1.1: Carolyn must keep in mind the implications of her actions within the service delivery system.

Ethical Victim Assistance Professional Means Knowing...

The OVC's model ethical standards and their importance.

Yourself, your values and biases and how they might affect behavior.

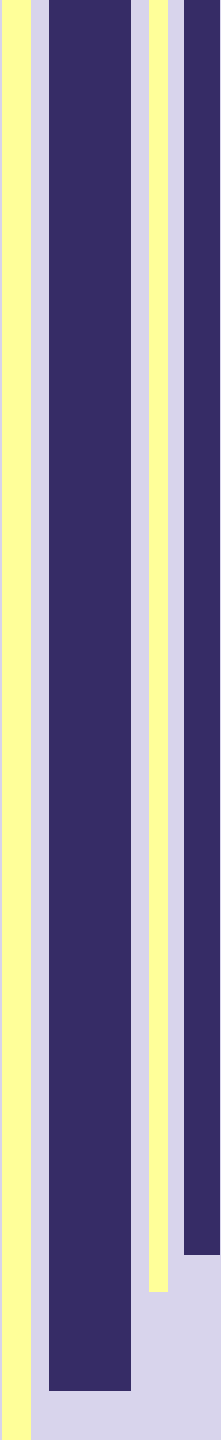
When you are facing an ethical dilemma.

How to provide services considering interests of the victim despite personal values and biases.

A decisionmaking process to determine actions.

Review of Module Learning Objectives

- ❖ **State the standard decisionmaking process.**
- ❖ **Use the standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.**



Module 5

Closing and Evaluations

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Closing

Activity

*Brainstorming: What Can You Do
When You Get Back?*

*Ethical Organizations
Creating Ethical Organizations*

Course Objectives

- ❖ **Create self-awareness and understanding of how attitudes and beliefs influence responses to victims of crime.**

Course Objectives

- ❖ **Learn about and how to use *Model Standards for Serving Victims and Survivors of Crime, especially Model Ethical Standards***

<https://www.ovc.gov/model-standards>

Course Objectives

- ❖ **Recognize when a person (including yourself!) is acting in an ethically questionable way.**
- ❖ **Use a standard decisionmaking process when faced with an ethical dilemma.**

The slide features a dark blue header and footer. On the left side, there are three vertical bars of varying heights and shades of blue and purple. The central text 'Thank You' is displayed in a bold, dark blue font on a white background.

Thank You