

Using Ethics to Enhance Services for Crime Victims



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1-800 FYI-CALL

Goals

- Define the importance of personal values and professional values and ethics.
- Recognize the relevance of a code of ethics to the victim service provider.
- Become familiar with the Ethical Standards defined by the *National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium (2003)*.
- Apply ethical considerations to case scenarios.

What brought you
to the work?

Values



Question 1

Advocates should never give their home or cell phone numbers to victims.

Strongly
agree

Somewhat
agree

Undecided

Somewhat
agree

Strongly
agree

5

4

3

2

1

Question 2

Immigrant victims deserve the same rights and services as legal citizens.

Strongly
agree

Somewhat
agree

Undecided

Somewhat
agree

Strongly
agree

5

4

3

2

1

Question 3

Advocates should always follow the rules and dictates of supervisors.

Strongly
agree

Somewhat
agree

Undecided

Somewhat
agree

Strongly
agree

5

4

3

2

1

Question 4

Advocates are free to make unspoken arrangements with colleagues about how services will be managed or delivered to clients.

Strongly
agree

Somewhat
agree

Undecided

Somewhat
agree

Strongly
agree

5

4

3

2

1

Question 5

Providers' personal values determine their ethical decision-making process.

Strongly
agree

Somewhat
agree

Undecided

Somewhat
agree

Strongly
agree

5

4

3

2

1

Question 6

Providers should act to expand choice and opportunity for gay/lesbian/transgender.

Strongly
agree

Somewhat
agree

Undecided

Somewhat
agree

Strongly
agree

5

4

3

2

1

Question 7

Providers should never give money or gifts to victims or survivors.

Strongly
agree

Somewhat
agree

Undecided

Somewhat
agree

Strongly
agree

5

4

3

2

1

Values

Professional Values in Victim Assistance:

- Competence
- Integrity
- Professional Responsibility
- Respect for rights and dignity
- Concern for welfare
- Social responsibility

Victim and Public Safety

Personal Values (individual)



Professional Values (shared)



Ethics (standards of conduct)



Responsible and Competent
Services



Victim and Public Safety

Providers' professional values determine the ethical decision-making process.

Professional Codes of Ethics

- Define the ideals and responsibilities of the profession.
- Protect both clients and professionals.
- Improve the profile of the profession.
- Motivate and inspire practitioners by defining their professional identity and purpose.

Professional Codes of Ethics

- Provide guidelines on acceptable conduct and decision making.
- Raise awareness and consciousness of issues.
- Improve and maintains quality and consistency.
- Safeguard the public.

Kevin is the supervisor for a large and very busy victim assistance agency for a law enforcement agency. He puts in long hours and even has worked weekends, but he is still behind on his documentation.

He decides to bring his “paper work,” home to catch up. After eating dinner with his wife and adolescent sons, Kevin spreads out his papers on the kitchen table where his sons are also busy doing their homework.

Ethical Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers

Dehart, D.D. (2003) *National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium: Standards for Victim Assistance Programs and Providers*. Columbia, SC: Center for Child and Family Studies, University of South Carolina.

NVASC Ethical Standards

1. Scope of Services
 - Professional activities
2. Coordinating within the Community
 - Collaboration
3. Direct Services
 - Relationships
4. Administration and Evaluation
 - Monitors activities and relationships

1.Scope of Services

Professional activities:

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

2. Coordinating within the Community

Collaboration:

- Respect colleagues
- Share knowledge
- Improve systems

3. Direct Services

Relationships:

- Respect civil rights
- Protect victim interests
- Nonjudgmental
- Self-determination
- Confidentiality
- Terminate appropriately
- Good boundaries
- Non-discriminatory
- Support colleagues
- Avoid conflict of interest

4. Administration and Evaluation

Monitors activities and relationships:

- Reports mistreatment
- Reports misconduct

Ethical Decision-Making Process

- Assess facts
- Identify ethical considerations or standards
- Identify 3 actions and consequences
- Consult
- Choose
- Evaluate

Lee has been working as a domestic violence advocate in a community based setting for close to 5 years. She is good at her job and is a domestic violence survivor herself. She has a strong desire to learn more about the law and options for victims and has attended numerous trainings on the law in her state, protection orders, stalking investigations, and child custody.

When victims ask about legal advice she has been instructed to refer them to legal advocates who provide referrals to pro bono legal services. Lee recently became aware that the legal pro bono services have a waiting list of about 2-3 months. Rather than ask victims to wait for a few months to speak to an attorney, Lee has begun to respond directly to victims' questions about the law and their options.

Practical Considerations

Ethical Considerations

What course of action do you recommend?

June lives in a rural community and is the victim liaison for her local police department. She has been working with Alison for a couple of months. Alison has moved away to get some distance from her abusive boyfriend and she asked that June not share her new address and phone number with anyone.

One day before leaving, June takes a call from Alison who is upset and very sad. In the course of their conversation, Alison admits to June that she has been thinking about suicide, but begs her not to tell anyone. June explains that she is obligated to report someone who is suicidal and that she will have to give Alison's name, address, and phone number to law enforcement.

Practical Considerations

Ethical Considerations

What course of action do you recommend?

Joanne works for a local domestic violence shelter. Joanne has been working with Marsha for close to two weeks. Marsha is in an abusive relationship, but has been reluctant to leave her abusive husband.

One morning Marsha shows up at the shelter and tells Joanne that she has finally left and needs a place to stay. The shelter is filled to capacity and there are not beds available, but. Joanne has a friend who has a vacant spare room. After checking with her friend, Joanne offers the space as a safe place that Marsha can stay until there is room at the shelter.

Practical Considerations

Ethical Considerations

What course of action do you recommend?

You are working alone at night. On this particular night, you receive a visit from a young lady, who states her name as Suzie. She says she is 14 years old and is there because she has been feeling “depressed”, because her father has been hitting her.

She reports that it isn't necessarily that he is hitting her that is making her feel bad, but rather that he is hitting her and her younger brother. She then begins to cry profusely, while stating that maybe if she did more around the house, he would be happier. She hasn't told anyone about this because she's afraid of what they might think about her. However, immediately after revealing this information, Suzie asks if this conversation is private.

Practical Considerations

Ethical Considerations

What course of action do you recommend?

June is a 70-year-old woman who lives in a private room in an assisted living facility. She first reported an incident to a nursing aide who immediately reported the accusation to her supervisor. June says she was raped by an employee of the facility.

Her examination and rape kit find evidence to confirm her accusation. She admits to you that she knows her assailant and is not sure she wants to go through with pressing charges. Her attacker is quite popular among the staff and other residents. June is afraid for her reputation and that she will be ostracized by both the staff and residents. She is also afraid that if she does report it, he will retaliate, and if she does not report it, he will continue to hurt her.

Her daughter is outside the room and has no idea what happened or why her mother was taken to the hospital. June has asked that her daughter not be informed of the "real" reason she is at the hospital.

Practical Considerations

Ethical Considerations

What course of action do you recommend?

Thank You



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