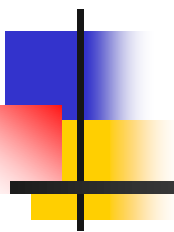


Training Your Staff to be Trauma-informed in Interactions with Victims & Survivors



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National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center



Session Goals

- Define core principles of trauma-informed care and trauma
- Understand the impact of trauma on victims and how it can influence interactions and communications
- Recognize basic communication skills necessary to successfully advocate for and support crime victims
- Identify specific listening and active listening skills, and communication techniques for participants to practice

SAMHSA Core Principles of Trauma-informed Care





1. Safety

- Throughout the organization, staff and the people they serve feel physically and psychologically safe.

2. Trustworthiness and transparency

- Organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency and the goal of building and maintaining trust among staff, clients, and family members of those receiving services.

3. Peer support and mutual self-help

- These are integral to the organizational and service delivery approach and are understood as a key vehicle for building trust, establishing safety, and empowerment.



4. Collaboration and mutuality

- There is recognition that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making. The organization recognizes that everyone has a role to play in a trauma-informed approach. One does not have to be a therapist to be therapeutic.

5. Empowerment, voice, and choice

- Organization aims to strengthen the staff, client, and family members' experience of choice and recognizes that every person's experience is unique and requires an individualized approach. This builds on what clients, staff, and communities have to offer, rather than responding to perceived deficits.

6. Cultural, historical, and gender issues

- The organization actively moves past cultural stereotypes and biases, offers culturally responsive services, leverages the healing value of traditional cultural connections, and recognizes and addresses historical trauma.



- Acute
- Chronic
- Vicarious ("trauma cues")
- Historical

*Survivors may have one or more.....
(as may victim assistance professionals....)*

Trauma is Directly Related to Victim/Survivor Impact of Crime

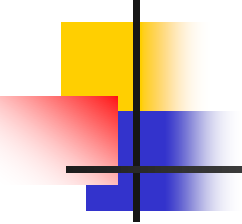


What are the **5 IMPACTS** of crime?
(please take a moment to jot down your response)



Scope of Impacts of Crime

1. Physical
2. Psychological
3. Financial
4. Social
5. Spiritual



“Victims remember TWO things: those who *help*, and those who *hurt*.”

- Cheryl Ward Kaiser



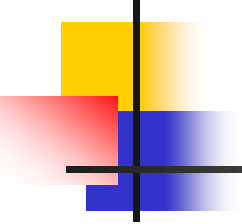
Individual Responses to Crime and Victimization

- Often at the hands of family members, friends, faith community members, and even helping professionals:
 - “It’s time to get on with your life.”
 - “When is she ever going to ‘get over it,’ ‘get a grip,’ or ‘get back to normal.’”
- Social support is important factor in recovery



The Words We Use.....

- Often imply judgments or expectations of victims and survivors
- The language of trauma and victimization has *different connotations* for *different people*
- When they cannot achieve what the words imply, they may feel “worthless” or “damaged”



“Kind words can be short
and easy to speak, but
their echoes are
truly endless.”

- Mother Theresa



Establishing Goals of Communications With Victims

- Identify victims' needs.
- Explaining justice processes and their role.
- Implement the rights of victims.
- Protect the safety of victims.
- Provide information requested.
- Obtain information needed.
- Sensitivity to special needs or concerns.



Effect of Victim Reactions on Communications

- Difficult interviews with victims:
 - Victims who are angry, confused or highly traumatized.
- Limited information:
 - Cannot always answer victims' important questions; or they cannot answer yours.
- Stressful to the helping professional:
 - Vicarious trauma.



You Can Discourage Communication by:

- Talking too much
- Talking too little
- Using jargon
- Lack of attention to affect of the victim
- Behaving in a defensive or judgmental manner
- Speaking in an aggressive manner



You Can Encourage Communication By:

- Body language
- Explaining the process/reason for your communications to the victim
- Setting guidelines for the interview
- Sensitivity to cultural issues
- Addressing privacy & confidentiality.



Some Do's of Communicating with Victims

- **Attempt foremost to communicate trust, support & confidence.**
- **Calm & comfort victims. Ask "How are you doing?"**
- **Allow victims time to tell what happened & describe how they are feeling in their own words.**
- **Give victims back the control the offender took away by letting them decide when & where to talk.**



Some Do's of Communicating with Victims

- Reassure them that their feelings are quite normal & natural, even though they may seem unusual at the moment.
- Let the victim know that any feelings of anger, distress, frustration, fear, etc. are *not* uncommon & are perfectly justifiable.
- Provide *options* and *opportunities*.
- Be willing to *listen* to the victim share his/her experience if he/she wants to talk about the crime and its effects, and *validate* that experience with empathy & support.



Some **Do's** of Communicating with Victims

- **Be encouraging, but not unrealistic.**
- **Be alert for opportunities to stress the victim's qualities & strengths (without being patronizing).**
- **Accept the fact that you may never know whether a victim follows through with your recommendations.**



Some **Do's** of Communicating with Victims

- **Have an information & referral system—with names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mails, & websites/pages—to be able to provide appropriate referrals.**
- **Offer to make referral calls/contacts for further information & victim support (to ensure that a connection is actually made for the victim).**
- **Ask for assistance from a supervisor if a call appears to be too difficult to handle yourself.**



Some Do's of Communicating with Victims

- **Recognize that mistakes will be made, & that increased communication skills come with learning from your mistakes.**
- **Understand that many victims will have extreme difficulty reconstructing their lives after a violent crime, and that some may *never* recover from the tragedy.**



Some Don'ts of Communicating with Victims

- **Be judgmental or blame the victim for the crime that was committed against him/her.**
- **“Second guess” how the victim reacted to the crime, either at the time it was occurring or in the aftermath of a violent act.**
- **Avoid the victim, or avoid listening about his/her reaction to the crime. Listening about & validating those experiences & emotions are critical to a victim’s reconstruction after a crime.**



Some Don'ts of Communicating with Victims

- Try to frame the victim's experience to any possibly similar experiences, even your own. It is *essential* to individualize each victim, each crime & each victim's reaction to that crime.
- Be "over-helpful" by making decisions & choices for victims. Since no victim *chooses* to be victimized or has control over a violent act committed against him/her, the ability for victims to *regain control* over their lives & *make decisions* affecting their lives, becomes vital.



Some Don'ts of Communicating with Victims

- **Be discouraged if you feel a call or contact has been unsuccessful. You are not expected to “solve” most problems with a single contact.**
- **Be afraid of silence. Use it constructively. Don't talk more than the victim caller.**
- **Become flustered by the victim's anxiety or urgency. One of the most important things is that you must remain calm, even in a crisis. Remember too that your anxiety can easily be transmitted over the telephone.**



Some Don'ts of Communicating with Victims

- **Expect to be a psychotherapist, nor to know all the “right” answers. Your job is to listen and assist the victim— to the degree possible—in handling his or her immediate issues and victim compensation needs.**



Good and Bad Things to Say/Not Say to Victims

Please see participant handout.



Effective Listening

- No matter how effective your questions are, if you aren't listening, you won't get the information.
- Listening is a mental process.
- There is a difference between **hearing** and **listening**.



Active Listening Techniques

- **Selective Listening**
 - **Focusing on the words that reveal the victim's needs & problems.**
 - **Goes beyond the spoken word and "hears" the underlying motivation.**
 - **Give victim your complete attention.**
 - **Don't take other calls.**
 - **Don't do peripheral work.**
 - **Don't be distracted by activity around you.**



Active Listening Techniques

- **Responsive/Reactive Listening**
 - *Verbal feedback.* Demonstrates to victim that you're paying attention. Merely saying "I see" or "Uh-huh" as the victim talks can build rapport, demonstrate your interest, & encourage victim to keep on.
 - *Take notes.* Demonstrates your professionalism and concern, as well as preserves essential information.



Active Listening Techniques

- **Responsive/Reactive Listening (cont.)**
 - *Verify thoughts & feelings.* “Put yourself in the victim’s shoes.” Summarize aloud what the victim has said to you. Demonstrate you’re trying to understand what the victim is feeling.
 - *Confirm what you hear.* Paraphrase back to the victim, in your own words, your understanding of his/her position. Avoids misunderstanding down the line.



Active Listening Techniques

- **Responsive/Reactive Listening (cont.)**
 - ***Transition.*** Before deciding on a course of action, confirm the victim's statements and go on to build a relationship.
 - "Has anyone given you written information about your rights as a victim and available services?"
 - "Do you have receipts for any of your possessions that were stolen?"



Time Limits:

Start at the Beginning.....

- “It’ll help both of us if we can identify and focus on your major needs/concerns.”
- “Thanks for calling. Let’s see if we can identify ways I can assist you.”
- “I’d like to help you, or figure out who is the best person to help you.”



Time Limits:

Start at the Beginning.....

- “I only have # minutes. I wish I had more time, but let’s see what we can do to meet your needs in this timeframe.”
- “I am not a counselor, but can offer you referrals if you need more help.”



Time Limits: Ending A Conversation

- Search for a “break” in the victim’s conversation with you.
- Express appreciation for their call:
 - “I’m glad you called....”
 - “The information you’ve given me is helpful.”
 - “Thanks for taking time to share your concerns/issues....”

Time Limits:

Ending A Conversation

- “As I said earlier, I wish I had more time to speak with you. Since I don’t, is there any final information I should have about.....?”
- Offer “action steps” that you and/or the victim should take.
- If possible, provide a time line for the action steps.
- Thank the victim for calling.



Important Resource *(updated last week)*

See Participant Handout:

23 National Toll-free Information/Referral
and Crisis Lines, and Websites

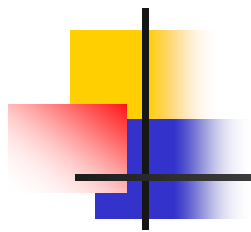


A Final Thought....

You may be the *first* person
the victim has spoken to, or
you may be *the most*
important person the victim
needs to talk to!

A Second Final Thought...







Monday Mentoring Missives

TO JOIN ANNE'S FREE WEEKLY LISTSERV:

Send a **BLANK** email with “**subscribe**” in subject line to:

MMM+subscribe@groups.io

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

JusticeSister@outlook.com

@JusticeSister