



**Program Administration and Direct Service Standards
for
Victim/Survivor-Serving Programs**

The purpose of the Standards for Program Administration and Direct Service delivery is to:

- Assure that all agencies providing services to victims of all crime adhere to the Code of Ethics.
- Ensure a standard quality of service provided to all crime victims in Iowa regardless of type of victimization or location (around the state of Iowa).
- Recognize the value of specialized, skilled providers serving all crime victims.
- Instill confidence in clients and the community that paid and unpaid staff of agencies have successfully completed the specialized training, experience and on-going professional development necessary to provide victim/survivor-centered, trauma-informed intervention with those impacted by crime across Iowa.

These Standards for services for crime victims in Iowa...

- Respect people's rights and dignity, especially during the challenging and life-altering situations under which service providers engage them;
- Set the level of competence expected to assure that all crime victims in Iowa will receive the same or similar level of care while they are engaged with any and all agencies;
- Create a level of integrity that all Victim Service Professionals can offer to the communities in which they live as well as among each other;
- Proclaim that Victim Counselors are professionals supporting, advocating and caring for individuals, families and groups who are crime victims;
- Require that Victim Counselors show concern and care for their neighbors and communities under the guidelines of professional ethics, standards of care, and on-going professional development; and
- Affirm that Victim Counselors have a social responsibility to care for their communities prior to the occurrence of crime victimization and in the aftermath of crime victimization. Our professional responsibility is to work with peers to prevent crime and promote healthy communities, as well as ensure quality services when needed after crime victimization occurs.
- Will evolve based on available evidence and best practices, survivors' advocacy needs, and programs' needs for guidance.

This document includes: the ICCA Advocate Code of Ethics, Program Administration & Direct Service Standards, and Best Practices.

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ICCC Code of Ethics: Victim Counselors & Certified Victim Advocates

- I. Victim Counselors have an ethical responsibility to adults and children who seek their assistance.
 - A. Victim Counselors will be competent.
 1. Victim Counselors will have knowledge of the field of violent crime experiences and the skills to apply the knowledge.
 2. Victim Counselors will constantly update their knowledge and skills.
 3. Victim Counselors will not operate outside the limits of their competence, but make referrals or consultations in those areas. Advocates will seek advice and counsel from colleagues and supervisors whenever such consultation is in the best interest of clients.
 4. Victim Counselors will understand how many cultural, historical, and social norms lead to and condone violence and how those norms impact the individual.
 - B. Victim Counselors will tell clients about the following:
 1. All of the services offered by the program;
 2. The qualifications of Victim Counselors;
 3. The expectations the agency may have for the client;
 4. The grievance procedure;
 5. Any obligation the agency may have to report child abuse to the Department of Human Services;
 6. The limits of confidentiality.
 - C. Victim Counselors will protect the client's confidentiality within clearly defined limits. These limits will be explained to all clients as follows:
 1. Informed, specific consent may be given to the Victim Counselors by the client to obtain services for the client from other service providers.

2. If agency policy states that advocates are mandatory reporters, the client will be informed that confidentiality cannot be maintained in the following situations:
 - a. When a dependent adult or child has been abused, exploited or neglected.
 - b. When the client's life may be endangered and they cannot give consent.
 - c. When the client makes a probable threat or is violent against another person.
 3. The client will be informed that confidentiality may not be maintained when a court issues a court order for specific information (as stated in Iowa Code 915.20A subsection 7).
 4. The Victim Counselor will consider the potential for harm to a client when releasing information even with informed consent, and consult with a Certified Advocate.
 5. A client will be given the option to remain anonymous within certain limitations, such as a crisis call or support group member.
 6. The client has the right to refuse all or part of services to protect their anonymity.
- D. Victim Counselors will have clear boundaries between work and social relationships and will be aware of the inherent privilege and power differences. The Advocate will never exploit relationships with clients for personal advantage.
1. Prior and/or present social, personal, or business relationships with clients require special consideration. When appropriate, the Advocate will refer these clients to another service provider within the agency or within another agency.
 2. Advocates making decisions about forming social, personal, or business relationships with former clients after provision of services should take into serious consideration any potential for harm or exploitation to the former client, and proceed accordingly. Advocates should strive at all times to do no harm to current and former clients.
 3. Advocates should not provide services to people to whom they are related, or people they consider family.

4. Sexual and/or romantic relationships with current or former clients are prohibited. This is also a crime under Iowa Code Chapter 709.15.
 5. Victim Counselors:
 - a. will work to increase victim safety;
 - b. will respect the authority and autonomy of the adult victim to direct their own life; and
 - c. will hold the perpetrator, not the victim, responsible for the violent behavior and for stopping the violence.
 6. Victim Counselors will treat the client with respect and honesty in both verbal and nonverbal communication.
 7. Victim Counselors will share knowledge they have with clients as it relates to the client's situation. This may include but is not limited to the dynamics of violence, lethality issues, safety planning, effects on children, and the social, historical, systemic, and political issues that contribute to violent crime.
 8. Victim Counselors will accept what a client tells them about the violence.
 9. Victim Counselors should only withdraw services suddenly under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects.
 10. Victim Counselors who anticipate that services to clients will be ended or disrupted should notify those individuals promptly. Transfer, referral, or termination of service should be done in relation to the client's needs and preferences.
- E. Victim Counselors will equitably distribute time, goods, and services among all clients. Advocates will not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, disability (developmental, mental, or physical), economic or housing status, familial or marital status, gender identity, immigration status, national origin, physical appearance or size, political beliefs, preferred language, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or any characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law. Advocates will not impose their own religious, spiritual, or politically partisan belief system upon survivors or colleagues. Advocates will not retaliate against clients or colleagues for reporting concerns about discrimination in good faith.

1. Victim Counselors will practice and regularly engage in continuing education around cultural humility.
 2. Victim Counselors will be knowledgeable about and make appropriate accommodations for survivors with disabilities and/or language access needs.
 3. If one client's needs conflict with another client's needs, Victim Counselors will assist one client after promptly referring the other to another qualified service provider.
- F. Victim Counselors will assess clients to determine the nature of the violence, the extent of the violence, and the safety needs of the client. Victim Counselors will do nothing to increase the danger to or harm the client.
- II. The Victim Counselor has an Ethical Responsibility to keep records.
- A. Victim Counselors will keep records documenting services provided as mandated by funders in accordance with state and federal guidelines. Victim Counselors will obtain client consent before recording demographic data, and will not create or keep records that would result in harm to the client.
 - B. Victim Counselors will record statistical and factual information, not opinions, speculations, or conclusions.
 - C. Victim Counselors will allow clients access to their own records and explain to clients the purpose and extent of the program's data collection and recordkeeping.
- III. Victim Counselors have an ethical responsibility to themselves.
- A. Victim Counselors with education, training, and experience have the right to be called professionals and to be treated professionally.
 - B. Victim Counselors will collaborate with other professionals to promote and support recognition and fair treatment of the profession.
 - C. Victim Counselors will prioritize their own self-care to reduce burnout and proactively address the effects of vicarious trauma.
 - D. Victim Counselors will recognize when personal circumstances may compromise professional abilities, performance, or judgment, and will seek support to resolve those issues.
 - E. Victim Counselors will avoid relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of victims/survivors.

- IV. Victim Counselors have an ethical responsibility to employers and peers.
 - A. Victim Counselors will follow the policies and procedures of their employers.
 - B. Victim Counselors will treat colleagues with respect, fairness, and courtesy.
 - C. Victim Counselors should not assume professional responsibility for the clients of another agency or a colleague without appropriate communication with that agency or colleague as required by confidentiality.
 - D. When making public statements, Victim Counselors must clearly separate their personal views from positions adopted by organizations for which they work or are members.
 - E. Victim Counselors will report any conflict of interest that prevents themselves or a colleague from being able to provide ethical services, work cooperatively with colleagues or allied professionals, or be impartial in the treatment of any client, as outlined in their agency's policy.
 - F. Victim Counselors will report violations of the Code of Ethics by fellow Victim Counselors to the certifying agency in a timely manner.
 - 1. Depending upon the extent of the violation, it may be appropriate for Victim Counselors to intervene with the colleague in question or their supervisor to prevent further harm, and escalate the matter to the certifying agency if the issue continues.

Program Administration & Direct Service Standards

Crime victims have many needs that cannot be met by just one agency or provider. The following Standards identify the rights and services crime victims deserve and which are outlined in Iowa Code 915. All Programs have an obligation to know about these rights and services, and to work with partnering Crime Victim Centers in their local communities to provide holistic care to survivors.

Accompaniment

Definition:

Accompaniment is in-person, virtual, or other support provided to a crime victim as they interact with various systems following the crime.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall have policies for prioritizing accompaniment requests according to their capacity. Programs should collaborate with other Crime Victim Centers to fulfill such requests as needed.

Programs shall train staff to provide crisis intervention, crisis counseling, advocacy and resource referral as part of accompaniment services.

Victim Counselors have an obligation to know about the workings of various systems and explain the purpose and process to crime victims.

Programs shall take into account any health and safety concerns, as well as the preferences of the survivor, when making decisions about accompaniment.

Victim Counselors and Programs have an obligation to provide information to crime victims in the language they prefer. Language access partnerships and translation & interpretation services should be established proactively in preparation to meet those needs as they arise.

Best Practices:

Crime victims should be provided with written and oral information about criminal proceedings in advance, and offered an opportunity to ask questions.

Victim Counselors should explain the role of the crime victim during proceedings.

Victim Counselors should learn about how victims' cultures may impact their participation in criminal justice proceedings.

Programs that do not provide accompaniment services shall maintain relationships with agencies that do, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Assessment

Definition:

Assessment happens when the crime victim contacts the agency for services. Assessment includes gathering information about the person seeking services and offering information about the services the Agency can provide.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall have written intake procedures to gather necessary information to understand the survivor's need and request for service.

Programs shall - with the consent of the survivor - acquire demographic information required for reporting purposes.

Programs shall provide information about available crime victim services both verbally and in writing. Information shall be provided in a language requested by the crime victim.

Best Practices:

Agencies should provide information about Confidentiality as soon as possible.

If the needs of the crime victim go beyond the capacity or scope of the Agency, Victim Counselors will make referrals to other community providers who may be better able to fulfill these needs.

Bereavement & Grief

Definition:

Grief is the range of physiological, emotional, spiritual, social, and cultural responses that an individual or group may experience after a loss. Traumatic grief occurs after a sudden, violent loss. Grief responses are normal after a variety of losses, including a loved one, a home or job, a valued possession, or a prior sense of safety and control.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide training to staff about the range of bereavement and grief reactions which victims of crime may have - particularly but not exclusively survivors of homicide victims. This training shall include appropriate strategies for advocates to respond to grieving survivors' needs, and take into consideration the impact of trauma and factors such as age, culture, and other social identities on the grief experience.

Victim Counselors shall provide information and supportive counseling to grieving survivors about the range of human grief responses, tools and strategies for coping with and processing grief, and the variety of grief resources available. Information and supportive counseling shall be provided in a trauma-informed, culturally and developmentally relevant way, and in a language requested by the survivor.

Programs shall build relationships with professionals in the communities they serve who specialize in supporting those experiencing grief, particularly traumatic grief. Programs shall make referrals to these professionals to meet clients' medium- and long-term grief counseling and support group needs.

Programs that provide services to survivors of homicide victims shall build relationships with funeral homes and other death care providers in their service area in order to facilitate referrals and best meet the needs of survivors.

Best Practices:

Partnerships should be developed with grief counseling providers who practice cultural humility and are accessible to survivors of various backgrounds and needs. Programs should have MOUs established with such agencies and community partners in advance of service referrals being made.

Programs that provide services to survivors of homicide victims should work with hospitals, law enforcement, and other relevant entities within their service area to ensure that a victim counselor is present for death notifications whenever possible.

Programs that do not provide services specific to bereavement and grief shall maintain relationships with agencies that do, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Case Management

Definition:

Case Management services happen when the crime victim accesses the agency for on-going services. Case Management includes ongoing assessment of the survivor's need for support and service, and successful progress toward self-determined goals.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall have written case management procedures and guidelines for staff to document ongoing services and relationships with crime victims they serve.

Programs shall provide information about the range of case management services available to crime victims both verbally and in writing. Information shall be provided in a language requested by the crime victim.

Best Practices:

Programs should maintain relationships with a variety of human service providers in the community who can help meet the case management needs of crime victims. Programs should have MOUs established with such agencies and community partners in advance of service referrals being made.

Partnerships should be proactively developed with agencies and community groups who support people from all cultural backgrounds.

Case Status

Definition:

Crime victims have the right to have updated information about the status of the criminal case in which they are involved, per Iowa Code 915.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about the criminal justice and juvenile justice processes from the time charges are filed through the disposition of charges.

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about the role of victims in the criminal justice system and their right to know about each court event throughout the prosecutorial process.

Best Practices:

Programs that do not provide services related to case status shall maintain relationships with agencies employing Victim Counselors, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Programs should advocate that partnering agencies provide culturally responsive services to all crime victims.

Civil Legal Services

Definition:

Crime victims may have legal needs resulting from the criminal activity that are outside of the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Civil remedies can contribute to the empowerment of the crime victim in meaningful ways during and after their engagement in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide training to their staff about the range of civil legal needs crime victims may have as a result of their crime victimization.

Best Practices:

Programs should network with local civil legal providers in their communities who can support the crime victims they serve. Programs should support these civil legal providers in understanding the criminal and juvenile justice processes in their counties, and how these systems may intersect with the civil legal needs of crime victims. A referral process or MOU should be established for making referrals to local civil practices who are willing to support crime victims.

Partnering agencies should be culturally responsive and fully accessible for all crime victims.

Collaboration with Community Partners

Definition:

Programs shall develop and maintain relationships with community agencies who can support crime victims beyond the scope of their services, while avoiding duplication of services.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall keep updated information about community agencies that can support crime victims beyond the scope of their services.

Programs shall establish a referral process with community agencies who can also support crime victims.

Programs shall provide information to survivors about the services offered by community agencies both verbally and in writing. Information shall be provided in a language requested by the crime victim.

Best Practices:

Programs should cross-train with community partners to support other agencies in providing trauma-informed and client-centered services. Programs should also work to ensure that their community partners understand the criminal justice process and the range of needs crime victims may have.

Partnerships should be developed with agencies and community groups who support people from all cultural backgrounds.

Confidential Communications

Definition:

The confidentiality of the communication between the Victim Counselor and the crime victim is essential in protecting the safety of crime victims and ensuring their privacy. Confidentiality is both an ethical principle for Victim Counselors and a legal right for crime victims. Victim Counselors and Programs will hold secret all personal information relating to a crime victim until or unless the client provides written consent to disclose the information. Iowa Code 915 outlines the definition of confidential communications and the extent to which crime victims have privilege with identified providers.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide information verbally and in writing to crime victims about the level of confidentiality they can expect with that Program, and with the staff, volunteers and interns with whom they will interact. This information shall include the limits of confidentiality. Information shall be provided in a language requested by the crime victim.

Programs shall provide ongoing training to Victim Counselors - both staff and volunteers - about the Program's Confidentiality Policy and procedures for release of confidentiality.

Programs will have written procedures for crime victims to provide permission to Program Staff to release information to other service providers.

Programs will have written procedures for keeping crime victim client files and information confidential.

Programs or program staff who are unable to provide the same level of confidentiality as Victim Counselors under Iowa Code - such as Victim-Witness Coordinators or those holding certain professional licenses - shall clearly inform survivors of the limits of confidentiality and their obligations to report or pass along certain information. This shall include what information the staff or program would be required to report, to whom that information would be released, under what circumstances, and what to expect from such a process. Information shall be provided in a language requested by the crime victim.

Programs shall have written policies for protecting client confidentiality within the organization. Such policies shall account for potential conflicts of interest, consider survivor privacy, and promote a flow of information that allows staff to efficiently and safely serve clients.

Best Practices:

Programs should provide information about confidentiality upon first contact with the crime victim. Victim service staff should offer explanations about levels of confidentiality and what to expect from them and their Program, especially if the crime victim is working with other crime victim agencies.

Counseling/Supportive Counseling

Definition:

Supportive counseling is the provision of information, empathetic listening, feedback, clarification of options, and assessment to a crime victim in relation to the victimization. Supportive counseling uses a victim-centered, trauma-informed process to assist the crime victim in managing the emotionally significant events that result from being a crime victim.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide supportive counseling in a safe and secure environment where the highest level of privacy can be reasonably assured.

Programs shall provide relevant and ongoing training for victim services staff who provide supportive and ongoing counseling.

Programs shall continually assess the needs of the crime victim and provide supportive counseling if necessary. The Program shall have relationships with other professionals in the community who provide trauma-informed counseling and group counseling services, and will make referrals when the needs of the crime victim exceed the services provided by the Program or when the crime victim requests additional counseling services.

Best Practices:

Programs should advocate within professional networks for the development of trauma-focused counseling and therapeutic services in their communities. Programs should also advocate for therapeutic services to be provided in languages accessible to those living in the community.

Programs should develop partnerships with practitioners and community agencies/networks who support people from all cultural backgrounds.

Programs that do not provide supportive counseling services shall maintain relationships with agencies that do, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Court Events & Notifications

Definition:

Crime victims have the right to be notified of court events according to Iowa Code 915. Designated offices or agencies working in or in partnership with the County Attorney's Office may be primarily responsible for making such notifications. However, it is critical that all Victim Counselors understand the process of the criminal court system and how victims are notified of procedural court events.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about the criminal justice and juvenile justice processes from the time charges are filed through the disposition of charges.

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about the role of victims in the criminal justice system and their right to know about each court event throughout the prosecutorial process.

Best Practices:

Programs that do not provide these services shall maintain relationships with Victim Counselors who do, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Court Orientation

Definition:

Crime victims have the right to attend certain court events according to Iowa Code 915. It is critical that all Victim Counselors understand the process of the criminal and juvenile court systems and how crime victims can participate in procedural court events.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about the process of the criminal and juvenile court systems and crime victims' rights to participate in procedural court events.

Best Practices:

Program staff should attend formal court orientation meetings to better understand the criminal and juvenile justice processes. If no formal court orientation exists, Victim Counselors should attend court events as part of their training to better understand the criminal and juvenile justice systems so that they can better inform crime victims of such processes.

Programs should collaborate with other programs and agencies to develop a county-specific model for the court orientation process. This should include: written materials, courtroom orientation, and logistics of the court (i.e., transportation, safety/security issues, parking, etc.). This court orientation process shall also provide accommodations for individuals' accessibility needs, the age of the victim, and any urban/rural issues.

Programs that do not provide court accompaniment shall maintain relationships with programs that provide this service, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims. This includes orientation to these court events, which may be provided in person, by phone, or virtually.

Crime Victim Grievances

Definition:

Crime victims have rights according to Iowa Code 915. Programs shall have a process in place for crime victims to file a grievance if they believe their rights have been violated according to Iowa Code 915.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide information about their grievance policy to crime victims during the initial intake/assessment meeting. Information shall be provided in a language requested by the crime victim.

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about the Program's grievance policy and procedure.

Programs shall have relationships with other Victim Counselors in the community to whom they can refer crime victims if they choose to end services with the Program as a result of a grievance.

Programs shall maintain records of grievances, investigative procedures and outcomes.

Programs shall include in their grievance policy a range of appropriate remedies and accountability measures to respond to a grievance filed by a victim, and involve the victim in the accountability process whenever possible and if desired by the victim.

Best Practices:

Programs shall provide information and options to crime victims who want to file a grievance about their experience with any victim-serving program or agency, including the Program, other local or regional programs, Coalitions, and the Iowa Attorney General Crime Victim Assistance Division (CVAD). These options may include filing a grievance internally with the organization in question, with certifying organizations such as Coalitions, with funding organizations such as CVAD, and with relevant state or local civil rights departments.

Crisis Intervention

Definition:

Crisis intervention provides the person in crisis with the tools to manage the crisis and to move toward stability. Programs shall provide a range of services, including safety planning, to a victim during any crisis that may occur following a crime.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about crisis intervention, including assessing the situation with the crime victim and making appropriate referrals to outside agencies when the crime victim's needs exceed the services offered by the agency.

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about safety planning around both immediate and long-term safety concerns. Safety planning should include physical and emotional safety.

Best Practices:

Crisis can occur when someone's emotional, physical, safety, and/or financial needs are not being met. Programs should be prepared to assist and intervene with crime victims when they experience any number of crisis situations.

Crisis responses may be impacted by the individual's cultural background. Programs should provide training to Victim Counselors that includes cultural humility and the relationship between victimization and cultural influences.

Programs that do not provide immediate crisis intervention services shall maintain relationships with agencies that do, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Cultural Humility & Anti-Oppression

Definition:

Cultural humility is the continuous practice of self-reflecting, seeking knowledge, and engaging with those whose experiences differ from our own in a way that de-centers our biases and assumptions. It includes personal critique and awareness of the power dynamics within our interpersonal relationships. Anti-oppression work seeks to bring attention to, reduce, and eliminate power dynamics that cause harm within society - both on an interpersonal and systemic level.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about the cultural practices and beliefs of those living in the communities they serve.

Programs shall provide information about their services to all communities and groups whom they serve in their region. Information shall be provided in the languages that best serve community needs.

Programs shall make appropriate allowances in their yearly budgets for language access expenses such as interpretation, translation, and captioning. Budget constraints should not be a barrier to the provision of accessible services.

Programs shall have internal policies and practices that reflect an active commitment to employing and retaining diverse staff at all levels, including leadership.

Programs shall have internal policies and practices that reflect an active commitment to dismantling aspects of workplace culture that mirror structures of power, control, and domination in society. This includes combatting discrimination, microaggressions, abusive dynamics, and other harmful behavior by staff and leadership, whether toward clients, peers, or supervisees.

Best Practices:

Programs should maintain relationships with leaders and/or gatekeepers in communities and groups within their service area.

Programs should engage local communities and groups to provide training to their staff.

Programs should have staff and leadership that is diverse and reflects the demographics of the communities served by the agency.

Programs should have internal policies and practices that are explicitly anti-oppressive and anti-abusive in order to prevent and mitigate harmful power dynamics among staff.

Information and Referral

Definition:

Victim Service Professionals have an obligation to provide information and make referrals so that crime victims and their families can make well informed decisions as they navigate the criminal justice system, other institutions, and their own healing.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall receive training about the criminal justice process and be able to offer information to crime victims about the process. This includes Victims Rights Information, how victim notifications are processed and from what office, and Victim Compensation eligibility and claims processes.

Programs shall provide information about other victim services providers and resources - both community-based and systems-based - in their service area and wherever the survivor is located. This information should be provided both verbally and in writing. Information shall be provided in a language requested by the crime victim.

Best Practices:

Programs should network regionally and across disciplines and specific populations served.

Individual Advocacy

Definition:

Individual advocacy is an intervention provided by Victim Counselors that involves obtaining information to best assess their individual needs, and then providing support and information through all phases of the criminal and civil justice systems and processes, as well as other systems. Victim Counselors navigate alongside crime victims through these systems, assuring options and resources are presented to the crime victim as directed by Iowa Code 915, and as would be commonly accepted best practices within local communities. Victim Counselors can and should empower crime victims to speak and act on their own behalf.

Program Requirements:

Victim Counselors shall strive to develop an expert level understanding of the criminal justice system and local practices to assure all services are offered and provided to the crime victim.

Victim Counselors shall familiarize themselves with the processes and policies of various systems in the community which they may be called upon to assist survivors in navigating. This includes medical, educational, housing, social services, and other relevant systems.

Victim Counselors may provide personal accompaniment to crime victims to criminal and civil justice proceedings and other events and appointments related to the victimization. Victim Counselors should attend criminal and civil justice proceedings as part of their orientation to the Agency so that they can explain procedures to crime victims and help them predict and prepare for such activities as they may be required or requested to attend.

Victim Counselors shall engage with the survivor about aspects of their culture that are important to them in an effort to provide holistic services.

Best Practices:

Victim Counselors should develop professional working relationships with law enforcement, prosecutors, court personnel and other Victim Counselors to create and assure pathways for crime victims navigating the criminal justice system.

Programs should network with community agencies outside of the criminal justice system to be able to advocate for crime victims on a broad range of needs that may arise from the crime victimization. Partnerships should be developed with agencies and community groups who support people from all cultural backgrounds.

Programs that do not provide individual advocacy services to survivors navigating systems shall maintain relationships with agencies that do, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Outreach & Community Relationships

Definition:

Programs have an obligation to make the community at large aware of their services. Outreach and community relationships, in their many forms, make the community and potential crime victims aware of the Agency and the specialized services it provides to crime victims.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide information to the public about their services and the need for services for crime victims generally. This information should be provided both verbally and in writing. Information shall be provided in languages commonly spoken with their community. Programs should consider a variety of methods and platforms for disseminating information.

Programs shall meet proactively with various community groups to determine their needs and how to best work together to meet those needs and - if allowable by funding guidelines - prevent future victimization.

Best Practices:

Programs should provide information and brochures to law enforcement and other criminal justice professionals to provide to crime victims who may not immediately contact their Program. Programs should also inform these professionals about victim needs that go beyond the criminal justice system, with which the Program can assist survivors.

Programs should network with community agencies and groups outside of the criminal justice system, including media outlets, in order to promote referrals and collaborate on community education and outreach opportunities. Partnerships should be developed with agencies and community groups who support people from all backgrounds.

Programs should allow for involvement in community events in their yearly budgets.

Programs should seek to hire staff and leadership from within the communities they serve whenever possible, and should consider prior community-based leadership and advocacy experience to be valuable characteristics when evaluating candidates.

Release, Transfer, Escape

Core Standard:

Crime victims have the right to be notified when the perpetrator of their crime is transferred within, is released from, or escapes from custody as per Iowa Code 915.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about the automated victim notification system.

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about how crime victims can register with the automated victim notification system.

Best Practices:

Programs that do not provide this service shall maintain relationships with Victim Counselors who can assist crime victims with notification registration, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Restitution

Definition:

Restitution may be provided to crime victims to pay for specific reimbursement or replacement items as per Iowa Code 915.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall maintain training for all victim service staff about the eligible reimbursement and replacements items paid for by court ordered restitution as per Iowa Code 915.

Programs shall provide information about requesting restitution as part of the criminal justice proceedings in which they are involved. Information shall be provided in a language requested by the crime victim.

Best Practices:

Victims Service Providers should work collaboratively with the appropriate court or prosecutorial staff to ensure submitted claims are complete and expedited appropriately.

Programs that do not provide services related to restitution shall maintain relationships with agencies that do, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Restorative Justice

Definition:

Restorative Justice opportunities are typically provided to crime victims outside of the traditional criminal justice system and may occur after the criminal justice system has officially disposed of the criminal charges. Restorative opportunities can often meet the needs of the crime victim/survivor beyond the scope of the criminal justice system to foster accountability as defined by the victim.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall maintain training for all victim service staff about any restorative justice practices and opportunities available in the community.

Programs shall provide information about restorative justice opportunities provided by community partners. Programs shall maintain procedures for referring crime victims/survivors to restorative services provided by their community partners. Partnering agencies should be culturally responsive and fully accessible for all crime victims.

Best Practices:

Victim Counselors may use restorative practices when working with crime victims. If Victim Counselors provide this service, they should be appropriately trained to do so.

Safety Planning

Definition:

Safety planning is any formal or informal, written or oral, conversation or process through which the Victim Counselor works with the crime victim to identify and address risks as a result of the victimization.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide training to staff to develop safety planning skills.

Safety planning around immediate and long-term safety concerns should include both physical and emotional safety.

Safety planning should be responsive to the individual's cultural background.

Best Practices:

Programs should build relationships with a variety of other Programs and community-based agencies to holistically address the needs identified as part of the safety plan.

Programs should provide training to Victim Counselors that includes cultural humility and the relationship between victimization and cultural factors.

Programs that do not provide safety planning services shall maintain relationships with agencies that do, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Self-Care for Victim Counselors

Definition:

Self-care is an ethical obligation Victim Counselors have to the crime victims they serve. Programs have an obligation to support the professional self-care needs of their staff so that they can provide exemplary services to crime victims and the community at large.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall develop a written policy that includes the ethical obligation Victim Counselors have to maintain good self-care. This policy should include supervision practices that will support self-care practices for staff. This policy should include the Program's commitment to supporting staff in ongoing self-care practices.

Programs shall provide a combination of employee benefits that will support and encourage self-care, such as: fair and livable wages, paid time off including family and bereavement leave, paid overtime and/or compensatory time off, health insurance for staff and dependents, flexible schedules, work-from-home options, healthcare stipends or savings accounts, and employee assistance programs.

Programs shall have policies and practices that support and encourage a culture of trauma-informed supervision, community care, and inclusion among staff and leadership in order to support the wellbeing of all employees.

Best Practices:

Programs should provide formal and informal opportunities for victim service staff to engage with one another and maintain good self-care. Good self-care practices are ongoing and supported by co-workers and Program leaders.

Programs should employ trauma-informed agency assessments and update/implement trauma informed policies and procedures that benefit all Program staff.

Systems Advocacy

Definition:

Programs should engage in activities that improve system-wide responses to crime victims. Opportunities for systems advocacy are found within the criminal and juvenile justice systems, healthcare networks, educational systems, and community-based human service networks.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall identify networks and systems within their communities within which crime victims may interact or engage. Programs should build professional working relationships within such systems on behalf of crime victims.

Programs should think broadly about the needs of the crime victims they serve and go beyond professional networks to also build relationships within communities. Partnering agencies should be culturally responsive and fully accessible for all crime victims.

Best Practices:

Victim Counselors should be visible within the communities they serve. This means that Programs should attend community events as well systems related meetings, forums, and networking opportunities.

Partnerships should be developed with agencies and community groups who support people from all backgrounds.

Technology Use

Definition:

Programs may use technology in providing and expanding services to crime victims when there is a lack of transportation or other events (such as natural disasters, public health concerns, or other emergency situations) that prevent them from meeting in person. Agencies are also likely to use electronic databases to track, monitor and report services provided to crime victims. Agencies are encouraged to consider the logistical needs and ethical considerations that need to be addressed in these circumstances.

Technology used with crime victims may include: tele-counseling via telephone and/or web-based programs, text lines, chat rooms, etc. Technology used in collecting and managing client information and reporting aggregate client information for reporting purposes may include web-based software and the transmission of information through secure online venues.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall determine the most appropriate technology to use for service delivery after exploring some of the following considerations:

- Technology that is user-friendly and accessible for both the crime victim and staff;
- Technology that most effectively achieves the desired outcome for clients;
- Risk-benefit analysis of the technology system or program;
- Confidentiality protections;
- Data back-up, both maintaining data back-up when technology fails and deleting unnecessary and unprotected data.

Programs shall have policies in place to provide direction for staff to:

- Protect confidentiality with every client communication and data entry into client records;
- Protect confidentiality if staff must use personal devices when the agency is unable to issue devices to staff; and
- Maintain network security when transmitting data via WiFi, especially in the absence of an encrypted connection to client records and databases.

Programs shall consider how they might conduct intakes, assessments, and the full spectrum of agency services using technology. Additionally, agencies should consider how paperwork will be signed electronically by crime victims.

Best Practices:

Programs should secure technology that provides interpreter access.

Staff should use only technology and devices provided by their agency to maintain security and confidentiality standards.

Programs should have policies providing direction to their staff about social media usage on agency-issued devices.

Programs should include technology use and abuse as part of safety plans with crime victims.

Training

Definition:

Specialized training is required to ensure quality delivery of support services to crime victims. Training provides Victim Counselors with the knowledge and skills to provide solid information to crime victims and make professional judgments when working with crime victims. Training is an ongoing process that includes confidentiality-level (Victim Counselor) training, certification or specialist-level training, and continuing education. Victim Counselors should continuously seek out new information and learning opportunities.

Program Requirements:

Victim Counselor training: Programs staff will acquire the Victim Counselor training as provided by a qualified agency within the first six months of hire. This foundational training is required to ensure confidentiality under Iowa Code 915, as well as baseline knowledge and skills necessary to provide trauma-informed care to crime victims and survivors. This Orientation will be acquired by Victim Counselors interacting with crime victims and funded under VOCA.

Per Iowa Code, the Victim Counselor training must include the following topics:

- Criminal Justice System Response to Crime Victims
- Confidentiality
- Ethical Issues / Boundaries
- Advocacy Skills (systems and community based)
- Safety Planning
- Diversity: delivering culturally relevant services consistent with community assessment
- Self-Care
- Outreach & Systems Advocacy
- Social Change: prevention & collaboration

Specialist training: Victim Counselors who - by assigned role or by circumstance - work primarily with victims of certain types of crime shall complete specialist training in their area(s) of focus, and shall seek specialist certification with a statewide coalition (ICCC, ICADV, and/or IowaCASA) within one year of completing specialist training.

Continuing Education: Victim Counselors shall have at least 8 hours of annual ongoing training after participating in the Victim Counselor training. Those with a specialist certification shall obtain sufficient continuing education hours to maintain certification, as required by the certifying organization.

[Please note: Only direct hours spent in relevant trainings can be applied toward the continuing education requirement. Lunch, breaks and travel time do not count

toward continuing education hours. Certifying organizations may provide a list of pre-approved continuing education providers, topics, etc. on their website or in their certification guidelines. Questions about the suitability of a particular training or training provider for continuing education credit should be directed to the certifying organization.]

Programs shall have written training policies to ensure proper documentation of annual training hours for all staff.

Best Practices:

Agencies should regularly work with multiple professional and community partners to ensure that Victim Counselors, other professionals, and community members are able to better serve crime victims in a culturally responsive way.

Trauma-Informed Care & Healing-Centered Engagement

Definition:

Trauma occurs when individuals or communities experience the loss of safety, predictability, and control to a degree beyond their ability to cope. Trauma-informed care meets the needs of individuals and communities using strategies that account for the range of physiological, emotional, spiritual, social, and cultural responses which may occur after trauma. Healing-centered engagement is the long-term, non-linear process of supporting survivors of trauma in moving from crisis toward healing, as defined by the survivor.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall maintain training for all victim service staff about up-to-date best practices in supporting survivors responding to trauma. This training shall take into consideration cultural, historical, systemic, and other factors that may be part of survivors' trauma experience.

Programs shall support survivors in exploring and defining what the healing process may look like for them. Victim Counselors shall work with survivors toward client-defined long-term goals related to their wellbeing and stability.

Best Practices:

Victims Service Providers should collaborate with colleagues, community members, and survivors themselves to ensure they are meeting clients' immediate needs in a trauma-informed way, and offering them useful long-term tools and strategies for their wellbeing.

Victim Impact Statements

Definition:

Crime victims have rights as per Iowa Code 915. It is critical that all crime victims know about these rights regardless of their level of engagement in the criminal justice system. All Victim Counselors have an obligation to know about victims' rights and provide that information to the crime victims whom they serve.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall maintain training for all victim service staff about the Victims' right to make a Victim Impact Statement.

Programs shall provide information about Victims' Rights both verbally and in writing. Information shall be provided in a language requested by the crime victim.

Best Practices:

Victims Service Providers should work collaboratively with the CVAD when there are questions or concerns about the possible violation of victims' rights.

Programs that do not provide assistance with victim impact statements shall maintain relationships with agencies that do, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Victim/Witness Intimidation

Definition:

Crime victims have the right to petition the Court for protection when they are intimidated or harassed by the perpetrator of their crime or an associate as per Iowa Code 915.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about victim intimidation as outlined in Iowa Code 915.

Programs shall provide training to Victim Counselors about the process of applying for protection from intimidation or harassment as per Iowa Code 915.

Best Practices:

Programs that do not provide services regarding victim/witness intimidation shall maintain relationships with Victim Counselors who do provide these supports, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Partnering agencies should be culturally responsive and fully accessible for all crime victims.

Victims Compensation Assistance

Core Standard:

Victims Compensation Assistance is provided to crime victims to pay for specific services as per Iowa Code 915.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall maintain training for all victim service staff about the Victims Compensation Assistance Program and eligible services and replacement items.

Programs shall provide information about available Compensation services and replacement items both verbally and in writing. Information shall be provided in a language requested by the crime victim.

Programs shall provide information about making a Compensation Claim, while refraining from attempting to assess survivors' eligibility. Programs shall not make access to their other services contingent upon survivors' actual or perceived eligibility for Crime Victim Compensation.

Best Practices:

Victim Counselors should provide assistance to crime victims who want to file a Compensation Claim. This can include helping them complete the paperwork and acquiring or collecting supporting documentation for the Claim.

Victims Service Providers should work collaboratively with the CVAD Compensation staff to ensure submitted claims are complete and expedited appropriately.

Programs that do not provide assistance with victim compensation shall maintain relationships with agencies that do, and make referrals to streamline services for crime victims.

Victims' Rights Notification

Definition:

Crime victims have rights as per Iowa Code 915. It is critical that all crime victims know about these rights regardless of their level of engagement in the criminal justice system. All Victim Counselors have an obligation to know about victims' rights and provide that information to the crime victims whom they serve.

Program Requirements:

Programs shall maintain training for all victim service staff about the Victims' Rights outlined in Iowa Code 915.

Programs shall provide information about Victims' Rights both verbally and in writing. Information shall be provided in a language requested by the crime victim.

Best Practices:

Victims Service Providers should work collaboratively with the CVAD when there are questions or concerns about the possible violation of victims' rights.