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INTRODUCTION

Enhancing law enforcement’s response to crime victims is both challenging and worthwhile. Beyond the direct impact on victims, these efforts can increase collaboration with law enforcement and strengthen relationships with the larger community. No law enforcement agency has successfully prevented every crime, but all agencies can care about every victim. Such a philosophy starts and ends with the expressed and modeled values of agency leadership.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE

Building a victim-centered agency represents a profound organizational and cultural transformation for many law enforcement agencies. This change requires a deliberate shift in some law enforcement values and strategies and may involve changes in policy, staffing, and training. Chief executives and their top leadership teams play a pivotal role in the success of any such effort. Top leadership must commit to building a victim-centered organization from the start of any effort. This commitment should be modeled through the agency’s core values, words, and actions. Leaders are responsible for articulating a clear, understandable vision for the future. The vision should explain its importance; how it benefits victims, the community, and the agency; and describe success.

Changing an organization’s culture takes strategy, commitment, and time. Law enforcement leaders need to recognize that implementing the ELERV Strategy will be a time-consuming process. Leadership should commit the requisite energy and resources to achieve sustainability. A victim-centered organization should be committed to consistent assessment and improvement, identifying internal and external performance measures and desired outcomes. Once early goals and performance measures are identified, law enforcement leaders must communicate clear expectations and guidelines for culture change. This clarity reduces the risk of working in silos. It also supports a coordinated response to victims based on an agencywide understanding of shared goals.

The ELERV process was instrumental in effecting meaningful cultural change in our department’s handling of the needs of victims. At times, the change process has been difficult and arduous. Periodically, the slow pace of change was frustrating. Nonetheless, the scope of the change has been both dramatic and demonstrable. The ELERV process worked to facilitate needed, meaningful change into our department and into our community.

Chief Keith McPheeters
Casper Police Department
EFFECTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS

► emphasize that every member of the agency has a role to play in enhanced response to victims.
► incorporate enhanced victim response strategies into the agency’s mission, vision, core values, policies, and procedures.
► initiate, develop, and support sustainable infrastructure that reinforces enhanced victim response.
► highlight and communicate the benefits of enhanced response to victims.
► ensure victim response training is available for all personnel on a regular basis.
► foster collaboration and partnerships with law enforcement agency-employed and community-based victim services personnel and other community partners.
► include victim response in every aspect of agency management (e.g., policy development, staffing, training, communications).
► incorporate victim response goals and skills assessments into hiring practices, personnel performance evaluations, and promotional processes.
► sustain long-term agency commitment to enhancing victim response.

ESTABLISHING A LEADERSHIP TEAM

Ideally, the agency’s chief executive or highest-ranking member should be the most prominent champion of implementing the ELERV Strategy. The chief executive communicates with the agency, its partners, and the general public. Often, this person sets the agency’s values and priorities. For most agencies, it is unrealistic for the chief executive to spearhead the day-to-day implementation tasks. Additionally, one of the foundational tenets of the ELERV Strategy is that everyone at the agency has a role to play in enhanced victim response. Therefore, agencies are encouraged to build a diverse leadership team to develop goals and implementation plans. The leadership team should represent all ranks and disciplines. Its members should take part in all events that may include the topic of enhancing the agency’s response to victims. This includes formal and informal occasions such as cadet and in-service training; new employee orientations; roll call briefings; union, town hall, city, and partnership meetings; and community events. Team members should discuss key points about the agency’s efforts and progress.

ELERV RESOURCES

ELERV Leadership Team Roster
LIMITED FUNDING is often cited as one reason law enforcement agencies are unable to establish or expand victim response efforts. The ELERV Strategy can be implemented with zero or limited additional funding requirements for the agency. Many aspects of the ELERV Strategy focus on changes to victim response approaches and do not require additional personnel or units. While not required, some agencies may choose to hire personnel to focus on direct response to victims. Investing financial resources into ELERV Strategy implementation can help grow and sustain progress and further communicate the agency’s commitment to victims.

A variety of outside funding sources are available to support implementation efforts. For example, many agencies use state or federal grant funding to establish new programs. Agencies can apply for new grant funding or may be able to coordinate with existing grant resources, laying the groundwork for long-term funding support. Most grants have an application process. Some applications call for lengthy justification narratives, program designs, budgets, and data collection plans. Some agencies use grant writers who are well-versed in these processes. Agencies are encouraged to identify or consider investing in professional grant writing support. The return on this investment can be exceptional and may require much less time and money than hiring a full-time grant writer or developing the skills within the agency.

Personnel can also learn grant writing and management skills by shadowing professional grant writers. Personnel participation in the application process can support long-term skill development within the agency without delaying the start of implementation. If an agency does not have dedicated grant writers, the following steps may help to develop a successful grant application:

- Participate in online or in-person grant management training and/or orientation sessions. Many larger grant funders (e.g., Office for Victims of Crime) make this type of training available free of charge to potential grantees.
- Review samples of successful grant proposals and budgets. These may be available on funder websites or can be requested from past grantees.
- Identify an internal or external partner who has experience applying for similar grants to serve as a peer reviewer.
- Consider partnering with another agency with grant management experience to apply for funding together.

Any agency considering ELERV implementation needs to consider what efforts it will take to allow for permanency in their department. This often has a fiscal or budgetary note attached to it. However, where one’s budget lies, so do their priorities.

Chattanooga Police Department
One agency hired an outside grant writer for several thousand dollars and earned a grant worth several hundred thousand dollars. The agency’s designated grant manager participated in the application process and learned alongside the grant writer. During the next grant cycle, the grant manager developed a new program proposal and submitted a complete application without the use of outside resources. The grant was awarded to the agency, and the grant manager now assists other departments.

Another agency partnered with a community-based advocacy organization to apply for funding. The law enforcement agency was the lead agency on the grant application with the community-based advocacy organization serving as a contractor. The community agency had a long history of successful grant applications and program implementation and provided the law enforcement agency with administrative support and guidance. The agencies established a memorandum of understanding and contract for services to further solidify the partnership and expectations of each agency. This allowed the law enforcement agency to establish victim-specific resources they would not otherwise be able to support through the agency budget. The success of this partnership later supported another successful application for additional multiyear funding.

While grant funding can be an effective way to start efforts, it is vital that agencies plan for sustainability and incorporate victim response initiatives into the agency’s permanent budget. Agencies are encouraged to approach grant funding with a transition plan in mind. The use of external, grant funding can serve as a “proof of concept” to stakeholders. Early commitment to sustainability sends a clear message that the agency is dedicated to enhanced victim response and reduces the likelihood that efforts will end when the funding ends.

**ELERV RESOURCES**

**Strengths and Challenges of Funding Sources**

**RESOURCES FROM THE FIELD**

**Applying for VOCA Funding**
LEADERSHIP

AGENCY MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES STATEMENTS

Leaders can promote culture change and clear expectations. Reviewing and revising the agency’s mission, vision, and values statements is a good start. Many agencies rely on decades-old statements. Some statements might not accurately reflect current priorities. Including victim-centered language in these statements conveys the value the agency places on victim response. Developing new mission, vision, and values statements can also be an effective start to implementing the ELERV Strategy and should be one of the leadership team’s first tasks. Determining agency values and the commitments the agency will uphold for victims and the community they serve should drive this process.

RESOURCES FROM THE FIELD

Sample Mission, Vision, and Values Statements

ESTABLISHING A STEERING COMMITTEE

After developing a leadership team, agencies should establish a Steering Committee. Steering Committee members will provide guidance on implementation issues. They can help develop goals, review proposed policy revisions, recommend solutions to implementation issues, support partnerships, and ensure consistent progress on established goals. The size, membership, and frequency of committee meetings will depend on the size of the agency and community. Steering Committee members should be representative of the community and include internal and external stakeholders. When identifying potential members, agencies should promote diversity and inclusiveness. Agencies are encouraged to include crime victims and members who have worked with underserved populations, as opposed to relying only on long-established partnerships. Having a variety of voices to support implementation is important. Diversity in membership also promotes sustainability when key personnel changes occur.
The Steering Committee reviewed the IACP recommendations document, the baseline findings, and potential revisions to policy and training curriculums. While the Steering Committee was not the final approving body of steps taken by the department, their insight was invaluable and more often than not, it was taken into consideration when making changes.

Chattanooga Police Department

DEVELOPING AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

An agency’s implementation plan should outline the steps necessary to achieve identified goals. The four core principles of the ELERV Strategy (leadership, partnering, training, and performance monitoring) should anchor the work. The leadership team should meet on a regular basis to develop the implementation plan and ensure it aligns with the agency’s strategic plan. The implementation plan should reflect the agency’s five-year vision and should be reviewed and updated at least annually. It should be detailed enough that tasks can be prioritized and undertaken incrementally.

The implementation plan should be shared with the Steering Committee before being finalized. Once complete, the implementation plan should be widely shared throughout the agency, with community members, and with partners. This demonstrates transparency and encourages accountability. The implementation plan can be a foundation for strategic conversations, partnership development, funding requests, and other activities that support agency efforts.

Sample ELERV Implementation Plan
DEVELOPING GOALS

Developing evidence-based goals (both short- and long-term) can help create a roadmap for implementing enhanced victim response. Before developing goals, agencies are encouraged to collect data from internal and external sources. Using this data can support implementation efforts that address actual agency and community needs, rather than the priorities of individuals.

Data collection often highlights multiple opportunities for enhanced services. Prioritizing the most pressing issues and developing clear, actionable goals are important. Identifying areas where positive impact could be quickly demonstrated can build momentum and encourage buy-in. For example, revising the agency’s mission, vision, and values statements to be more victim-centered can send a clear message about the direction the organization is headed.

The SMART goal model can be used to define and track strategic goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound. The process provides clear direction, a framework for using resources wisely, and a method for measuring progress. Goals should be both aspirational and attainable.

For example, using feedback from crime victims, a police agency identifies a need to increase follow-up contact with victims after a crime has occurred and the case has been assigned to the agency’s investigations division. A SMART goal may be:

In at least 90 percent of assigned cases, the investigator will call the victim within 72 hours of case assignment. Investigative supervisors will monitor compliance at the end of each month.

- **Specific**—This goal is specific in that it answers these questions:
  - **Who?** Investigators and investigative supervisors
  - **What?** Call each victim
  - **When?** Within 72 hours of case assignment
  - **How often?** In at least 90 percent of assigned cases; compliance monitored monthly
  - **Why?** Lack of timely contact from investigators was identified as a barrier to victim participation.
**Measurable**—The agency can track whether individual investigators are taking the required action (calling victims) in the time frame identified (within 72 hours of case assignment). They can then measure whether the division as a whole is meeting the identified goal.

**Achievable**—Factors such as staffing levels, caseloads, training, and existing tracking systems can be considered.

**Relevant**—Victims’ feedback showed the lack of timely contact from investigators was a barrier to participation.

**Time bound**—Compliance target dates are included in the goal statement (monthly). Staffing levels, caseloads, and access to resources can be considered when determining realistic time frames.

Developing and addressing two to three SMART goals leads easily into action planning. As each goal is achieved, new goals can be developed to move forward.

**DEVELOPING AND USING ACTION PLANS**

The implementation plan serves as a guide. Developing specific action plans can help narrow larger goals into more manageable steps. Trying to accomplish too much at one time can lead to frustration and delay progress. Action planning can help organize and prioritize tasks. Action plans are easily customizable and can be tailored to meet the needs of the agency. The following components are typically included:

- SMART goal
- Action steps
- Name of person/people taking the lead on each action step
- Names of internal/external partners who will assist with each action step
- Tools/resources needed for each action step
- Deadline for completion of each action step
- Target date for completion of SMART goal

Action plans can also guide action in other areas. For example, an agency may set a goal of improving their response to victims of domestic violence. An action plan can be developed around training for domestic violence investigators. Based on this action plan, the agency can allocate funds for specialized training on this topic. When justifying the decision to send investigators to this particular training, the agency can point to the action plan that identifies this training as a step toward meeting their identified goal.

"Initially, the department and our internal team attempted to tackle all the recommendations and identified issues at once. It was not until the department developed an action plan to direct the project that progress was actually made."

Casper Police Department
GENERATING BUY-IN

Generating buy-in can be challenging when implementing new initiatives. Culture change may be met with resistance and skepticism. Agencies can take steps to secure buy-in early and maintain momentum over time.

“There was concern that the initiative would be just another meeting and there was resistance to change. Many of the internal staff were concerned that this was not traditional law enforcement–based policing, and it is something that the department and its staff had never done before.”

Saginaw Police Department

INTERNAL BUY-IN

Resistance to change is natural. Acknowledging resistance is the first step in addressing it. When communicating the vision, the chief executive should convey understanding around organizational transformation. Clear communication and transparency are key to securing buy-in from internal personnel. Personnel should be reminded that a strategic plan is in place, and they will have a voice in implementing and adapting that plan. Agencies must find ways to engage all staff members, regardless of rank or discipline. Personnel benefit from receiving information about plans for enhanced victim response, understanding the rationale behind these plans, and having the tools and training to implement the changes. Personnel who have opportunities to participate and take ownership of implementation activities are less likely to resist organizational and cultural change.

Agency leadership must embrace the ELERV Strategy and show that the changes are a new way of doing business and not just a time-limited project. Leaders should think strategically and identify creative ways to communicate these important messages.
The majority of the methods used to create buy-in at numerous levels surrounded the basic idea of keeping staff involved in the process. Their input was routinely sought to identify gaps within service delivery to victims and staff resources and how these aspects critically affected the way they did their jobs. The leadership team was readily available to answer questions and ease any concerns the staff had. The team also provided opportunities for relevant training that would help them accomplish their mission and emphasize the importance of victim support and community engagement.

Saginaw Police Department

EXAMPLE

One agency hired a victim services coordinator (professional staff member) to lead ELERV implementation activities. To demonstrate support for this new staff member and her role and authority in the organization, leadership strategically placed her office. It was located in the command staff hallway and right outside the chief’s office. This sent a visual and practical message to all agency personnel that this staff member had access to and was part of the agency’s leadership.

The victim services coordinator made intentional efforts to engage with both sworn and professional colleagues at patrol briefings, during routine ride-alongs, and in their offices and hallways. She kept her office door open throughout the day and encouraged people to stop by and discuss cases, resources, and other victim-related topics. The Victim Services Coordinator presented at command staff meetings and was added to the agencywide Policy Review Committee to ensure policy development and decisions included a victim-centered, trauma-informed lens.

As the Victim Services Unit grew, the victim services coordinator position was reclassified, and the title was changed to victim services director. Her duties expanded to include more administrative responsibilities and training and supervision of all Victim Services Unit personnel. These deliberate actions solidified the agency’s dedication to enhanced victim response and promoted a smooth transition for personnel.
Informal leaders can support agencywide dissemination and understanding of victim-centered principles, practices, and the value of prioritizing victim response. Top organizational leaders must show support for implementation efforts. However, it will be personnel in lower ranks and professional roles who will carry out the day-to-day activities with victims, community members, and community partners. Agencies are encouraged to identify individuals who show skill and interest in victim-centered work and demonstrate leadership among their peers. These leaders may attend specialized training, develop and participate in targeted implementation activities, participate in internal and external working groups, and attend community events promoting enhanced response to victims.

These individuals should be encouraged to provide feedback and input throughout implementation. They should be empowered to serve as leaders and resources for peers in their respective departments. Including informal leaders during implementation also supports sustainability. Often, these individuals are promoted through the ranks into supervisory and leadership roles. This leadership model encourages innovation, reflects ideas from many perspectives, and spreads ownership and accountability.

The department slowly started to integrate the ELERV Strategy by sending staff to innovative training on topics not routinely discussed. The team also began to seek out staff that could potentially become informal leaders. The department found that it was more effective to have more staff involved at the patrol level, primarily because they were the staff having the most interaction with victims and the ones that would potentially be working with the department for the longest period of time. Four officers were initially selected. These officers began receiving specialized training and development opportunities. These officers were also in the beginning phases of becoming subject matter experts in areas surrounding various victimization topics and would soon be developing presentations for their fellow officers on the topics.

While these four officers were excelling, many of the other officers were also beginning to buy into the notion of policing with a victim-centered and trauma-informed lens. It is important to provide opportunities for staff to take on leadership roles in new program development and to support them throughout the process. Informal leaders can carry this strategy to new heights when given the chance to take ownership of new programs and projects and are actively involved in the implementation phase.

Saginaw Police Department
Agencies are encouraged to expand positive messaging around ELERV Strategy implementation. Building incentives into participation in early implementation phases can help. Participation should be highlighted as a leadership opportunity. Agencies may want to include demonstrating victim response skills in the selection process for specialized assignments, training opportunities, promotions, and agency commendations or awards.

Implementation goal progress should be communicated widely and often throughout the agency. This may include providing updates during formal occasions such as command staff meetings, unit meetings, or in agencywide informational emails or newsletters. Individual successes should also be highlighted and publicized within the agency. For example, supervisors of officers and professional staff who demonstrate effective victim response are encouraged to notify the person’s higher chain of command and include the commendation in the individual’s personnel file. This recognition celebrates successes in implementation and positively reinforces the skills and behaviors inherent in effective victim response. Acknowledging successes in informal settings is also important. This may include recognition of an example of effective victim response during a daily briefing. Encouraging peer-to-peer storytelling of positive victim response in routine interactions is another example.

The department sends out notifications to the officers and command staff to recognize good work and reinforce the importance of the culture change that the ELERV Strategy pursues. This effort has proven to be a strong driving force regarding officers following through with the ELERV implementation and leadership staff highlighting the shift toward victim-center policing being the new strategy within the department.

Saginaw Police Department

During organizational and cultural change, it is critical that agencies provide personnel with outlets to provide feedback, both positive and negative. The changes are more likely to endure if personnel take ownership of and participate in implementation. Ways to receive feedback from agency personnel include surveys, monitored suggestion boxes, focus groups, discussing successes and challenges at supervisor and unit meetings, and routine requests for feedback in day-to-day conversations. Asking for frequent feedback can also highlight gaps in training, the need for additional information sharing, and potential future obstacles. The agency’s responsiveness to feedback and willingness to assess and adapt strategies are equally important. Including those who bring issues forward in developing solutions can also promote buy-in and ownership.
At one agency, victim services personnel responded to crime scenes to support victims in the immediate aftermath of a crime. At first, they wore uniforms that resembled patrol uniforms. Patrol and investigations personnel provided feedback to their chains of command that the uniforms were confusing to victims, the public, and community partners. They reported this caused safety concerns on scene because people could not tell the difference between officers and victim services personnel.

Agency leaders listened to this feedback, asked for more information from all sides, facilitated discussions among the affected professionals, and implemented an improved response. Victim services personnel changed to plainclothes attire and wore vests and windbreakers that identified them as victim services personnel with the police agency. This process allowed many perspectives to be considered. It also created opportunities for sworn and professional personnel to work together to determine the best course of action.

Even when steps are taken to encourage buy-in and participation, agencies will have personnel who persistently resist the changes being made. This may appear as passive resistance, including:

- showing reluctance to work with others on implementation activities or share meaningful information,
- failing to carry out new training concepts and practices, and
- not participating in feedback opportunities.

Resistance may be more direct and can include:

- open hostility toward personnel participating in implementation activities,
- counterproductive storytelling about responses to victims,
- undermining agency leadership messages or directives, or
- encouraging others not to participate.

In many cases, resistance to change can be addressed through transparency, open dialogue, and direct conversations. Some resistance may decrease over time or as a result of natural or social consequences. However, agencies must be prepared to hold all members of the agency accountable for their roles in victim response. A plan to address personnel who are not meeting the new standards should be established. This plan should be shared with all personnel, so expectations are clear.
The department found it was important not to wait for the “non-believers” to get on board with the ELERV Strategy or the new direction the department was taking. Other police departments looking to implement the ELERV Strategy should be prepared to let the non-believers sit on the sidelines while progress is being made and their peers begin receiving internal and external accolades. Most will come around eventually, and if not, be prepared to utilize corrective actions if need be with those who actively oppose the department's efforts, mission, and updated policies and procedures.

Saginaw Police Department

Culture change requires flexibility and patience. Laying the foundation for buy-in and participation are important for success. Realistic expectations about the pace of change is needed. Some changes may come only after personnel experience the positive impact of enhanced victim response and observe sustained benefits.

**Example**

One agency had difficulty gaining buy-in for victim-centered practices and their new Victim Services Unit (VSU). Resistance came from sworn personnel in the patrol and investigative divisions. These personnel did not understand the need for the VSU. They were skeptical of non-sworn personnel participating in traditional law enforcement practices.

Less than one year into ELERV implementation, a mass casualty event occurred in their community. A multi-agency response was required. Personnel from multiple ranks and disciplines worked together. The VSU responded to the scene with their sworn colleagues. They were involved at every investigative phase and in the long-term aftermath of the event. Sworn personnel and professional staff worked together to meet the needs of the victims and their families.

As a result, coordination and internal team cohesion took hold. Personnel from both disciplines better understood each other's roles and areas of expertise. Sworn personnel saw the benefit of having specialized victim services personnel on staff. This event marked a turning point. Working together, they recognized the value of putting new ideas and philosophies into practice.
Some implementation strategies will not be successful. Change could not occur as quickly as expected or desired. What works in one community might not work in another. Agencies implementing the ELERV Strategy must be willing to change their approach as needed. Staying curious, flexible, and persistent can lead to lasting success.

One day, you wake up and those small increments start to add up, and you start seeing bona fide, legitimate, enduring change. That is the beauty of cultural change. It has an enduring capacity to impact things for the better.

Casper Police Department

**EXTERNAL BUY-IN**

Building relationships in the community and with community service providers is essential. Many agencies enjoy positive relationships with their communities. Relationship-building is especially important for agencies facing challenges in community-police relations. Progress will be difficult without these relationships and the trust they create.

Communities often support law enforcement initiatives. However, agencies should still prepare for some resistance. Community members may feel as though past initiatives have not produced noticeable change. Community partners may resist changes if they feel their role and expertise are not supported. Resistance may also occur if perceived competition for scarce resources and funding exists.

Addressing these issues can be challenging. Sending a clear message that implementing the ELERV Strategy is the agency’s new way of doing business is a place to start. Concerns of the community and community partners should be addressed directly. Opportunities for feedback should be available. Agencies are encouraged to include crime victims, community members, and community partners in implementation activities whenever possible. This conveys that the changes are a joint effort between the agency and the community it serves.
Overall, the community appeared to be pleased with the department’s commitment to see this through. However, many had a “wait and see” approach before fully buying into what the department was striving to do. Because they had entertained similar overtures from the department before, some of the community’s inherent skepticism made sense and certainly provided additional motivation into the efforts within the department.

Chattanooga Police Department

Securing buy-in from external stakeholders is important. These stakeholders should receive timely information about the agency’s plans to enhance their response to victims. Regular updates on progress should also be provided. This level of transparency serves multiple purposes. It allows the agency to

- respond to resistance with facts,
- manage messages and narratives,
- share success stories in real time,
- reinforce performance and behavior that supports the agency’s goals, and
- promote understanding and support for the agency’s efforts.

External stakeholder buy-in can be strengthened by

- providing updates through agency webpage, e-blasts, and social media platforms;
- including victim response data in reports to city management and elected officials;
- publishing summaries of current crime trends and response efforts;
- providing progress reports and answering questions at community meetings and public forums (e.g., City Council, community-wide working groups, town hall meetings, citizen police academies); and
- highlighting implementation milestones through the media (e.g., press releases, interviews, press conferences).
The department made a concerted effort to notify the community of its goals in relation to ELERV and the victim services field. Upon receiving the ELERV award, the department sent out a media release to notify the greater Chattanooga and Hamilton County region of the project. Additionally, Chief Fletcher took steps to include ELERV and the newly formed VSU into his talking points for every engagement, from City Council to other public venues such as Community & Police Interaction Committees (CPIC) and town hall meetings.

Furthermore, multiple interviews were set up with the media in an effort to gain coverage on the work done by the CPD and its research partners. The VSU also worked with the city’s IT department to create a VSU tab on the CPD’s website, which heavily featured the ELERV grant and the seven critical needs of victims. Another step that the department took was hosting a community forum with the research partners to present the initial findings of the assessment and baseline data. Some of the action plans that had been created were also shared so the community could anticipate where the initiative was headed. Community forum invitees included CPD partner agencies, different institutions of higher education, and the individuals and/or agencies that participated in the focus groups.

Overall, these efforts to inform and engage the community and departmental partners served the project well as many individuals that often interacted with the CPD became familiar with ELERV principles.

Chattanooga Police Department
INSTITUTIONALIZING IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS

Victim-centered philosophies and practices should be institutionalized into the very fabric of the organization. Agencies are encouraged to develop a stand-alone victim response policy if one is not already in place. Including victim-centered practices in agency policies and documents helps with sustainability. It sets clear expectations and fosters accountability. Victim-centered skills and practices can also be included in personnel performance evaluations. This practice shows that these skills are valued by the agency.

First-line supervisors should be tasked with observing, evaluating, and reinforcing these skills. Victim response knowledge and skills can also be included in promotional processes. Scenario-based tests and knowledge and skills assessments should include victim response questions. Similar questions can also be included in hiring practices and onboarding for all personnel. Keeping victim-centered practices at the forefront of daily activity helps build skills and achieve lasting change.

The department developed internal mechanisms that would require performance monitoring and staff accountability. One way this was accomplished was through incorporating victim-related policies and procedures into the promotions process at the department. Chief Roddy began implementing these efforts through the captains’ interviews by asking them specifically about how victim services accomplishes the department’s mission, vision, and values. Furthermore, he asked candidates to conceptualize cases with a victim-centered, trauma-informed perspective.

After the captain promotion process, victim-related standard operating procedures and policies were included on the list of policies to be studied for the lieutenant and sergeant promotions process. This means that those officers are tested not only in the written portions but also during the interview and task portions of testing. The incorporation of victim-related topics into the promotions process was another way in which the department made concerted efforts to innovate on ELERV principles and further the reach of the initiative.

Chattanooga Police Department
SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession planning is crucial to organizational transformation. Culture change is often driven by one or two highly motivated and influential champions within the organization. Sustainability can be in doubt if transition plans are not made well in advance of key personnel changes. Though sometimes challenging, changes in key personnel during implementation can be positive. Agencies can set the stage for long-term success and sustainability by incorporating victim-centered principles into mission, vision, and values statements. These principles can also be incorporated into agencywide policies and procedures. Agency leaders and ELERV Strategy champions should identify, mentor, and coach future champions at every opportunity. Ongoing training and reinforcement from the top down and bottom up also support sustainability.

“...It can be a challenge to implement any comprehensive initiative, especially in law enforcement agencies where changes in staffing levels and assignments, promotions, retirements, and administration changes are routine. While consistent turnover can contribute to a “start and stop” pattern, it also provided fresh ideas and sometimes reinvigorated the team when a staff person was promoted or stepped into a role, particularly if they were inclined toward victim-centered work.”

Chattanooga Police Department
Core values should be continually reinforced through multiple avenues. They should be supported by appropriate budgetary and agency infrastructure. Needs in these areas will change over time and should be included in early planning discussions. Succession planning supports long-term success and agency incorporation of victim-centered philosophies and practices. When the appropriate steps are taken, future leadership would be ill-served to abandon successful, well-supported, and strategically built victim response efforts.

CONCLUSION

Law enforcement agency leaders can effectively guide their organizations toward long-term change and success. Key steps include:

- implementing effective, collaborative policies and practices,
- allowing for continuous feedback to and from internal and external stakeholders, and
- using meaningful performance measures.

“If a future administration was to come in and not believe in the value of prioritizing effective victim response, they would have to take very deliberate steps to dismantle all that has been meticulously and strategically built over the last three and a half years. The department took strides to make sure that sustainability was a part of every conversation when it came to ELERV implementation.”

Chattanooga Police Department