Role Clarification and Professional Wellness

Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services Program

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Housekeeping

Audio:
• Click the audio icon and then choose “Select Speaker” to use your computer’s speakers for sound.

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• Raise virtual hand if you have a comment or when asked by facilitators. Select the dropdown for other options.
Housekeeping

Poll Questions:
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Chat Box
• Visible to attendees and hosts/presenters
• Use to chat to whole audience and to respond to presenter questions

Handouts:
• Handouts can be downloaded via the Files box.

Closed Captioning
• Click the “CC” icon at the top of your screen to enable captions
Presenters

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Objectives

1. Demonstrate knowledge of role expectations, boundaries, and the purpose and practice of professional wellness.

2. Prepare for review of victim services role in your agency and identification of professional wellness options.
Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services as a Profession

- Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services is a developing profession – what does that mean for us?

- Brings both **flexibility** and **responsibility** to maintain clear roles and boundaries
Vicarious Trauma

The **emotional and psychological cost** to people working and volunteering in law enforcement, victim services, emergency medical services, fire services, and other allied professions, **due to exposure to victims of trauma and violence**; related terms include compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress.

Office for Victims of Crime, “Glossary of Terms” in The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit; [http://vtt.ojp.gov/glossary](http://vtt.ojp.gov/glossary)
A **multifaceted** approach to promote a healthy work environment, build effective and collaborative relationships among employees, and maintain high-quality work performance.
Professional Wellness

- Self-initiated (informal)
- Agency-supported (formal)
Making the Connection

Professional Role

Professional Ethics

Professional Wellness
Putting it into Practice
Audrey is a Victim Services staff member with Heroville Police Department. An investigator with the Sex Crimes Unit requested that she initiate a priority response to a case involving a 25-year-old female, Karen, who reported being sexually assaulted by her boyfriend.

Karen relayed to Audrey this incident was the most recent of several and described how her life had dramatically changed during their 3-year relationship. Karen currently has 2 children (ages 2 and 1), dropped out of college and no longer works outside the home. Karen expressed concerns about the safety of herself and her children (her boyfriend reportedly has been physically violent on multiple occasions), her ability to provide a home and basic needs for her children, the lack of contact with family and friends, and feeling defeated by her current circumstances.
Scenario #1 (continued)

Over the next several months during the investigative process, Karen maintained regular communication with Audrey and relayed using many of the resources initially offered. Karen contacted a domestic violence agency that provided temporary shelter and case management that assisted with job placement and childcare. Karen filed a protective order against her boyfriend and has found more permanent housing where she feels safe.

Karen’s relationships with her family remain strained and she describes feeling alone and unsure of herself. Karen contacted a sexual assault agency and several counselors who have wait lists for counseling. Karen described contacting two counselors but not feeling comfortable and asked to continue talking with Audrey as she finds it helpful.
Scenario #1 (continued)

The assigned investigator presented the case to the prosecutor who reached a decision to file charges. Audrey tells Karen that a Victim/Witness Coordinator at the prosecutor’s office may be in touch with her. Due to the relationship they have developed over the past several months, Karen asks Audrey to maintain regular contact with her until the conclusion of the case.
Scenario #1 – Poll Question

What should Audrey do?

A. Audrey reinforces her role as a system-based advocate, clarifies the benefits of counseling, and agrees to maintain contact with Karen throughout the prosecution to discuss court updates.

B. Audrey agrees to maintain regular contact with Karen recognizing staffing shortages in the Victim/Witness division at the prosecutor’s office may limit their contact with Karen.

C. Audrey agrees to maintain regular contact with Karen until arrangements can be made for a ‘warm hand-off’ to the Victim/Witness Coordinator and encourages Karen to utilize available support networks.
Scenario #1 – Group Discussion

Professional Role

Professional Ethics

Professional Wellness
Agency Support

- Resources
- Equipment & Uniforms
- Professional Development
Putting it into Practice
Scenario #2

Kevin is a Victim Services staff member with Wrightville Sheriff’s Office that has just completed his 5th month of employment. After returning to work following a 3-day absence due to illness, he found that multiple cases had been assigned to him. A vicarious trauma training opportunity is scheduled for Thursday morning. Because he is scheduled to be the on-call staff member starting Friday, he is considering skipping the training.
Scenario #2 (continued)

Friday afternoon, Kevin responded to a domestic violence incident in which the suspect had left the scene and was not yet located. The victim, Veronica, had no injuries that required medical treatment but expressed feeling very unsafe staying at the residence. During the incident, the suspect had broken several windows and kicked in both doors to the residence.

Veronica expressed concern that the suspect would return as soon as law enforcement left. She relayed he had done this a couple of times before and ended up physically assaulting her each time. Kevin decided to bring Veronica to the Victim Services office to complete safety planning and referrals.
Scenario #2 (continued)

Over the next several hours, Kevin contacted all local shelters who advised they had no available beds. Veronica contacted all identified family and friends who expressed concern with Veronica staying with them due to the suspect’s violent history.

Kevin was able to identify a local church who was willing to pay for 3 nights in a hotel. Upon dropping Veronica off at the hotel, Kevin informed her that an investigator would be assigned Monday and would be contacting her. Veronica expressed being very scared and asked for Kevin’s cell phone number in case the suspect contacted her over the weekend.
Scenario #2 – Poll Question

What should Kevin do?

A. Kevin attends the training; he reviews safety planning and resources with Veronica at the hotel and purchases some food from the hotel pantry; he speaks with Veronica twice over the weekend to review resources (he blocked his number from caller ID)

B. Kevin does not attend the training so he can prioritize contact on newly assigned cases; he leaves resource information with Veronica and calls her on Saturday to review options; during the call, she relays she hasn’t eaten since Friday, so Kevin brings her $40 for food

C. Kevin asks to meet with his supervisor about prioritizing upcoming responsibilities; prior to coming to the Victim Services office, he has Veronica pack essential items for 3 days; he encourages Veronica to call 9-1-1 for any emergency needs after taking her to the hotel
Scenario # 2 – Group Discussion

Professional Role

Professional Ethics

Professional Wellness
Role Intersections

- Peer Support
- Sworn Personnel in VS Role
- Mental Health/CIT
- Chaplains
- Debriefings
- Internal Affairs
- Relationships with Colleagues
Putting it into Practice
Scenario #3

Michelle is a Victim Services staff member with Bigtown Police Department. Michelle was asked to respond to a priority incident involving the death of a 2-year-old child who was hit by a vehicle near the neighborhood park.

Upon arrival Michelle was advised that Chaplain Paul would also be responding to officially notify the parents, Julio and Katarina, who were on their way home from work. The assigned investigator advised an older sibling, 9-year-old Samantha, had witnessed the incident and indicated the parents only speak Spanish. Upon Chaplain Paul’s arrival, he primarily communicated with the sibling due to the identified language barrier.
Scenario #3 (continued)

Michelle uses Language Line to speak with Julio and Katarina when they arrive. Arrangements were made for Samantha to temporarily stay with a family friend and resources were reviewed with Julio and Katarina related to funeral homes and grief support. They asked for additional information on what would happen next and expressed concern about the involvement of so many government officials due to their current immigration status.
The assigned investigator asked to speak with Michelle privately and advised he was really concerned about one of the responding officers. The officer is new to the agency and the investigator advised this is his first deceased child call. The investigator said the officer has been sent home for the day but would be contacting Michelle in the next few days.

The investigator also asked Michelle to be available the next day for an interview with Julio and Katarina.
Scenario #3 – Poll Question

What should Michelle do?

A. Michelle reviews her role with the family, speaks with Chaplain Paul to clarify on-going contact with family members, and clears her schedule to attend the planned interview the following day.

B. Michelle meets with Chaplain Paul after the response to review Language Line use and role clarification, provides additional information to Julio and Katarina about agency policies/practices, arranges for an objective interpreter to be available for the interview, and sends vicarious trauma information to the officer.

C. Michelle reviews role parameters with Chaplain Paul and the investigator, provides information to Julio and Katarina about investigative actions and available resources, and reviews role with responding officer along with providing available resources for vicarious trauma.
Scenario # 3 – Group Discussion

Professional Role
Professional Ethics
Professional Wellness
Putting it all Together

Professional role, ethics, and professional wellness are ALL job responsibilities.

This may require a philosophical shift for some agencies.
Reminders

Quarterly Meetings

*Topic: Role Clarification & Professional Wellness*

All 1p – 3p EST

TA Tracks 2 & 9: Monday, May 10th
TA Tracks 3 & 4: Tuesday, May 11th
TA Tracks 5 & 6: Wednesday, May 12th
TA Track 7: Thursday, May 13th
*Registration links sent previously

Supplemental Webinar

*U/T Visas*

June 2021
*Registration link will be sent out soon

Next LEV Webinar

*Building Effective Partnerships*

July 13, 2021
*Registration link will be sent out soon
Questions?