

# Becoming Victim-Centered...

Use and customize these ‘simple rules’ to guide your victim-centered approach to working with victim/survivors of sexual violence:

- **Consider the victim first.**  
The victim/survivor and their unique needs and abilities should be considered first.
- **Listen generously.**  
Listen with belief; acknowledge the violation. Listen with patience; walk with survivors as they determine their own path. Listen with compassion; give voice to the victim’s experience. Listen with faith; believe in the victim/survivors’ resilience. Listen generously to victim/survivors, colleagues, team members, community members to affect the change we seek. Create safe places for people to tell their stories.
- **Promote victim self-agency.**  
An agent is “one that acts or has the power or authority to act.” Promoting victim self-agency is about providing the supports and information that enable the victim/survivors to act in their own best interest relative to the unique circumstances of their lives. In this context, crisis intervention is about providing the supports necessary to re-engage or increase a victim/survivors’ own coping abilities to the point decision-making is again possible. Informed decision-making means the victim/survivor knows what could be gained or lost in the options available to him or her. Assistance should be geared to providing information and support to help in decision-making relative to the victim/survivor’s own goals of establishing *safety, healing, and seeking justice*.
- **Coordinate and collaborate in the victim’s interest.**  
Coordinating disparate and fractured elements of a response can improve a victim/survivors’ experience and lead to better cases. Coordinating primarily in the system’s own interests can re-victimize victim/survivors and jeopardize case outcomes.
- **Ensure victim-safety.**  
Ensure victim/survivors have the information, resources, and supports to be or move toward safety. This can include access to confidential services, privacy protections, access to legal remedies for protection, notification of an offender’s release, and consideration of the unintended consequences to victim/survivors of the policy and procedural decisions we make.
- **Seek just solutions for all.**  
Be honorable, fair, lawful, suitable, and free from bias.
- **Hold self and others accountable.**  
Be able to explain and answer for our own actions and decisions. Ask others to do the same.

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