

## Being Victim-Centered

Victim-centered means something different to agencies and teams. Victim-centered means that all responders have designed their practices, policies, and protocols to reflect best practices that can be adapted to meet the needs of all victims/survivors. By using these principles to shape our work, responders have opportunities to ensure greater support for V/S, better case outcomes, greater public safety, and accountability for perpetrators.

### **Prioritize the Needs and Wishes of Victims/Survivors**

Victims/survivors requests must be honored whenever possible. When developing a response, writing policies, or conducting training, emphasize the importance of helping victims/survivors achieve their own goals for safety, healing, and seeking justice.

### **Listen Generously**

One of the most important aspects of responding to sexual violence is to listen to victims/survivors and acknowledge the violation. Responders must listen patiently and compassionately in order to understand the whole story. Our time is a critical resource we can offer to all victims/survivors as well as to colleagues, team members, and community members. Through listening, we learn about gaps and strengths and can act on that information.

### **Promote Victim/Survivor Autonomy**

Victims/survivors have the right to self-govern and to choose what is best for them. You can promote autonomy by providing victims/survivors with accurate, unbiased information or resources that supports informed decision-making. Service providers accept the decisions and support victims'/survivors' autonomy

## **Coordinate and Collaborate to Improve Victim/Survivor Experience**

Coordinating across disciplines can improve a victim's/survivor's experience and lead to better cases. Collaboration should have clear rationale for how it will improve experiences and case outcomes rather than a focus on how it will help systems.

## **Ensure Victim/Survivor Safety**

Ensure victims/survivors have the information, resources, and supports to achieve safety. This includes confidential services, privacy protections, legal options, notification of an offender's release, and policies/procedures that account for safety.

## **Develop Just and Responsive Solutions for All**

Be honorable, fair, lawful, and free from bias. Responders must adapt their work to meet the needs of marginalized communities. This requires reflecting on who does and does not engage systems and responders. Discover the gaps and build responses that meet the needs of all.

## **Hold Yourself and Others Accountable**

Use every opportunity to step-up, to learn, and to do better work together. Be willing to critically and objectively evaluate yourself, your peers, and your agencies. Feedback is how we grow.

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