



Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services

Core Concepts

The following “Core Concepts” are fundamental themes to build knowledge, skills and attitudes conducive to serving and supporting victims of crime. We will emphasize and revisit these Core Concepts throughout the eight-day curriculum. Concepts will be introduced in the forefront of the program, provided in participant learning resources, and posted in the training space. Core Trainers and participants will be responsible for upholding these concepts as ongoing themes (or lenses) through which the training content is learned.

- 1. Trauma Informed Practice:** A victim-centered and trauma-informed approach to service delivery will benefit victims of crime.
- 2. Informed Self-Determination and Confidentiality:** Informed consent and assurance of levels of confidentiality are the foundation for victim self-determination.
- 3. Life Versus Law:** Our hopes and ideals for the criminal justice system and services for victim assistance are different from a victim's experience of the current legal system and the existing victim services.
- 4. Spectrum of Supports and Services:** Victim services exist on a continuum with choice points and trigger points, which parallels a victim's experience of crime and its aftermath.
- 5. Stronger Together:** Collaboration between helping professionals and service-providing agencies is essential to positive outcomes for victims.
- 6. Self-Care:** Advocates and helping professionals are susceptible to vicarious trauma and thus need to engage in good self-care practices.
- 7. Systemic Power and Oppression:** Oppression by systems and imbalances of power within systems create barriers and obstacles for victims and survivors to access services and needed support. In addition, these are insults are added to injury when a victim experiences secondary wounds in the aftermath of a crime.
- 8. Unintended Consequences:** All our best efforts and intentions may create unintended consequences and collateral wounds for victims of crime as they navigate the services that are available to help them.
- 9. Complexity:** A variety of factors, conditions, circumstances and identities often complicate the process for the person harmed, for the people trying to help and for the person responsible for the harm, thus compounding obstacles to healing and accountability.
- 10. Language:** Language has the power to shape perceptions and actions. Being intentional about words can lead to more respectful, safe and empowering interactions.

- 11. Disproportionality:** People who are members of marginalized groups in our society are often disproportionately punished by the criminal justice system and underserved in the aftermath of a crime.

Main Content Areas

Vermont Victim Assistance Academy

- **Historical Overview of the Victim Services Movement**
- **Incidences of Crime in Vermont**
- **Types of Crimes (prevalent in VT)**
- **Overview of the Criminal Justice System**
- **State-based Victim Advocacy and Services**
- **Systemic Power and Oppression**
- **Disproportionality in Punishment and Service Provision**
- **Communication and Empathy Skill-Building**
- **Networking & Collaboration**
- **Resiliency**
- **Impact of Trauma informed by Brain Research**
- **Disenfranchised/Marginalized Populations**
- **Service Providers as Survivors**
- **Impacts of Crime**
- **Victim and Survivor Voices**
- **Interpersonal and Family Violence**
- **Adult and Child Protective Services**
- **Working with Victims with Disabilities**
- **Ethics in Victims' Services Skill-Building**
- **Offender Accountability**
- **Overview of Victim Services**
- **Alternatives to the Criminal Justice System**
- **Community/Restorative/Parallel Justice**
- **Youth Justice**
- **Crime Prevention**
- **Case Scenarios**
- **Systems Improvement**
- **Transfer of Learning & Action Planning**