


**INCLUDING VICTIM INPUT IN THE SUPERVISION OF SEX OFFENDERS**

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**MISSION, VISION, BELIEFS**

- Promote justice
- Victim centered
- Believe in victim rights
- Importance of remaining sensitive to and respectful to the needs of victims
- Enhancing safety




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**WHAT VICTIMS SAY ABOUT HOW THEY ARE TREATED**

**VICTIMIZED  
BROKEN PROMISES  
INSENSITIVE  
HELPLESS FORGOTTEN  
DISEMPOWERED  
IGNORED**

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**COMPLAINTS CJ PROFESSIONALS  
HAVE ABOUT VICTIMS**



- They don't understand
- They have unrealistic expectations
- They don't know what they want
- Too busy to deal with their drama
- I don't know what to say
- They make minor issues into big issues

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**COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS NEED  
TO CHANGE THEIR VIEW OF  
VICTIMS TO "CLIENTS"**

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**WHAT DO VICTIMS NEED/ WANT?**

- To be heard and validated- Empowerment
- Accurate Information
  - Status of the case
  - Location of offender
  - Criminal Justice process
  - Conditions
- Personal Safety
- Acknowledgement and enforcement of their rights




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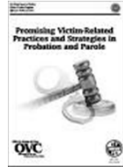
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**GENERAL VICTIM RIGHTS  
PERTAINING TO COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS**

- Information and notification of status of case
- Participation in sentencing and revocation hearings
- Input into sentencing, release, and revocation decisions
- Protection from unwanted contact
- Restitution to help pay for losses



\*Promising Victim Related Practices in Probation and Parole Training Curriculum Package, APPA

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**COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT  
OF SEX OFFENDERS**

- Key aspects of Supervision
  - Public Safety
  - Offering meaningful opportunities for positive change
  - Risk and Needs Assessment
  - Specific Rules
  - Development of Case Supervision Plan
  - Regular Contacts
  - Referral to Treatment
  - Therapeutic Polygraphs to assist in treatment and to verify compliance with conditions




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**COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT  
OF SEX OFFENDERS**

- Key aspects of Treatment
  - Accepting responsibility and modifying cognitive distortions
  - Developing victim empathy
  - Controlling sexual arousal
  - Improving social competence
  - Developing relapse prevention skills
  - Confronting/challenging discrepancies, cognitive distortions
  - Both approach and avoidant goals




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### DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

- Victim Empowerment Through Input Tool (2005)
  - Very insensitive form and mostly about probation's needs
- General Questions for Victims (2008)
  - Open ended questions full of jargon and still all about probation's needs
- Focus group (2011)
- Developed and Implemented Program (2012)




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### FOCUS GROUP

- Invited 6 victims to an anonymous focus group co-facilitated by VSC and APO
- Discussion points:
  - Prior attempts to talk to probation in past
  - Desire to have dialogue with probation
  - Do they feel that they have information that would be valuable to probation and treatment
  - Do they have questions about probation
  - How can probation help victims
  - How can we increase willingness of victims to talk to probation




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### FOCUS GROUP

- Introduced them to our concept
- Follow up discussion points:
  - Where and who should attend meetings
  - How should they be scheduled
  - What information should be provided
  - How can we limit re-victimization
  - How should we approach sensitive questions
  - Thoughts on brochure




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**WHAT VICTIMS TOLD US**

- They thought meetings would be beneficial and empowering to victims
- We need to recognize that each victim is different and their willingness and degree of participation will vary with victims and over time
- VSC should provide information about program and schedule meetings
- VSC Advocate, Counselor (if in treatment), Probation, and any support person (if desired) should be at the meeting

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**WHAT VICTIMS TOLD US**

- Meetings should occur at VSC and be informal (no suits or badges)
- We should provide information conditions; what probation can and cannot do; what input victim can have; and contact information (avoid jargon)
- Victim should have an opportunity to discuss offender and the offense understanding that the choice is the victims
- The need to make sure we train staff on how to talk to victims




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**PROGRAM DESIGN**

- Victims are provided with brochure early in the process
- Meetings are scheduled through VSC, are held at VSC, and are at convenient times
- Meetings include Victim, APO, VSC, and other support persons
- Meetings are informal




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**PROGRAM DESIGN**

- Introduction/ Confidentiality
- Goals of probation
- Purpose of the meeting
- Explanation of our SO unit/ Contact information
  - Sentence and conditions
- Explanation of what probation can and can not do
- Their concerns- safety
- Do they feel they will do it again? Why?
- What do they feel will prevent them from doing it again? Why?




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**PROGRAM DESIGN**

- Do they think there are other victims? Why?
- Are there places the offender should not go?
- Are there things that we should not allow offenders to do?
- Do you feel comfortable talking to us about what happened?
- Next steps/ Support and Safety Plan (if needed)




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**BENEFITS REPORTED BY VICTIMS**




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**BENEFITS REPORTED BY PROBATION**

- Enhanced Assessment
- More comprehensive Case Plan
- Able to ID risk factors/ Warning signs
- Reduced period of denial




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**BENEFITS REPORTED BY TREATMENT**

- Enhanced Assessment
- Reduced period of denial
- ID and break through cognitive distortions
- Targeted polygraph questions
- ID and target risk factors
- Gained vital information to assist in treatment




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**BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION**

- Victim fed up by the time they get to us
- Not all victims engaged with VSC
- Victim has already invested so much time and loss money in the system
- Re-victimization
- Feelings about sentence (Probation is a joke)
- Probation and advocates lack a relationship




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**IMPLEMENTATION IN YOUR  
COMMUNITY**

- Develop relationship with key partners
- Assess current victim centeredness in your jurisdiction and specific needs of your community/area
- Panel of survivors
- ID key players
- Slow and deliberate
  - Don't get frustrated when things don't start overnight

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