

Victim-Centered Self-Assessment for Agencies & Organizations

Crime victims have 3 salient needs:

- to be safe
- to recover from the trauma of the crime
- to regain control of their lives

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF PARALLEL JUSTICE

Guiding Principle	In other words. . .
1. Justice requires helping victims of crime rebuild their lives	Responding to victims’ needs is an integral part of justice and is good for our greater society. If victims do not receive support to recover and healing, our communities ultimately suffer.
2. All victims deserve justice	The criminal justice system does not determine victims’ access to resources and assistance. Victims’ rights are not limited by type or category of crime they experience.
3. All victims are presumed credible unless there is a reason to believe otherwise	Victims’ responses to crime are as varied and individual as they are. Believing a victim can help prevent or counteract isolation and is crucial to recovery.
4. Victims’ safety is a top priority	Safety is a central part of civil society. Helping victims regain their sense of safety reduces the likelihood of re-victimization from subsequent crimes and helps victims move forward.
5. Victims experience no further harm	Victims are treated with compassion, respect, and dignity. Institutions strive to be flexible and expedient in assisting victims without causing new harm.
6. Victims’ rights are implemented and enforced	Victims’ legal rights are honored, and enforcement mechanisms are available when rights are not honored.
7. Victims have opportunities to talk about their experiences and needs	Telling one’s story and being heard are central to a victims’ healing and to a community’s understanding of residents’ stories and needs.
8. Victims are told that what happened to them was wrong and that every effort will be made to help them rebuild their lives	The person responsible for the crime is <i>always</i> the perpetrator and <i>never</i> the victim. When combined with meaningful supports, this simple acknowledgement counters self-blame and facilitates healing and recovery.
9. Victims’ needs are met through a comprehensive, coordinated community response	A response that includes collaboration among relevant systems and agencies - and is tailored to individual needs – improves services and victim-centered supports.
10. Decisions to best address victims’ needs are based on tracking relevant trends and utilizing reliable data	Action and response “requires an accurate understanding of the impact of crime in local communities and solid research evaluating the effectiveness of different interventions....”