



Working with Victims of Crime: The Basics

Information Sheet: The Basics to Cover in an Initial Interview

Developed from Hill, J.K. (2004). *Working with Victims of Crime: A Manual Applying Research to Clinical Practice*, Ottawa ON: Justice Canada.

- ❖ One of the more important functions of a service delivery model is the identification of client needs and linking the client to services. Based on the above research and theory, the following issues are highlighted as major areas of inquiry when first few meetings with clients. However, gathering this information should be balanced with allowing the victim a chance to talk about her issues (Robinson, 2000). In other words, workers would be well served by keeping the following issues in mind as they talk to victim while allowing the victim to tell her story in her own words. This list is not a checklist, but a guide for informed clinical judgement.

Victim Characteristics: History

- ◆ Previous victimization (Childhood physical/sexual/emotional abuse);
- ◆ Previous victimization (other);
- ◆ Personal psychiatric history;
- ◆ Family psychiatric history;
- ◆ Previous PTSD, including severity;
- ◆ Coping skills used in the past.

Victim Characteristics: Current

- ◆ Personality characteristics;
- ◆ Rating of self-efficacy and resiliency;

- ◆ Demographics;
- ◆ Current coping strategies;
- ◆ Use of alcohol/drugs;
- ◆ Suicidality/ Homicidality assessment;
- ◆ Current mental status: Psychological disorders; etc.
- ◆ Presence of dissociation;
- ◆ Current support network;
- ◆ Primary location in the Transtheoretical Model;
- ◆ Victim's perception of what she needs.

Crime-related Characteristics

- ◆ Specifics of the criminal event;
- ◆ Severity of the crime;
- ◆ Use of credible threat;
- ◆ Use of weapon;
- ◆ Single incident or chronic victimization;
- ◆ Victim-perpetrator contact;
- ◆ Known perpetrator;
- ◆ Reaction of support system;
- ◆ Reaction of professionals (Secondary victimization);
- ◆ Extreme emotional or dissociative reaction to criminal event.

Other Information Sheets in this Series:

The Basics of Self-Care

The Basics of Victimization

The Basics of Victim Reactions and Coping

The Basics about Deciding to Refer to Mental Health Professionals

The Basics about the Stages of Change

References:

Robinson, D. J. (2000). *Three Spheres: A Psychiatric Interviewing Primer*. London, ON: Rapid Psychler Press.



Policy Centre for Victim Issues



Research and Statistics Division

August 2004