



IS ADVOCACY RIGHT FOR YOU?

Program of
Lutheran Community Services
210 W. Sprague Ave.
Spokane, WA 99201
Tel: 866.751.7119 (24 Hours)
Fax: 509.747.0690

Your Resource for Information and Assistance

Spokane Crime Victim Service Center
1.866.751.7119

Lutheran Community Services
866.751.7119

SPOKANE CRIME VICTIM SERVICE CENTER

Your Resource for Information and Assistance

The decision to become a victim advocate is a substantial decision, and one that can result in significant rewards. As a victim advocate, you make a difference by becoming a part of the solution by working against the problem of violence.

Every victim/survivor responds in a different way. Every victim/survivor has the right to receive support and understanding from friends, families, and their communities; as well as from medical, legal, social service and criminal justice systems.

You have an opportunity to make a positive impact in another person's well being. Violent crime is a growing problem in our society that disrupts the lives of women and men, young and old. Victims are often left alone to deal with physical and psychological ramifications of violent crime.

- Who will listen to them as they describe their fears and concerns?
- Who will help them navigate the complex, and often painful road through the medical and legal systems?

You can be that trusted person!

For information about becoming an advocate, please call
509.747.8224



Call to Get Help
1.866.751.7119



WHAT IS A VICTIM ADVOCATE?



WHAT IS A VICTIM ADVOCATE?

Victim advocates work on behalf of crime victims in a variety of settings, including law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies, community based organizations, government programs, health care systems, and private practice settings. Practitioners include paid, full or part-time employees, student interns, and volunteers who work

in specifically designated victim advocacy roles, as well as counselors, criminal justice personnel, attorneys, clergy, doctors, and others who make it a priority to respond effectively to victims' needs in their work. Victim advocacy services respond to the physical, psychological, emotional, economic, legal, and social impacts of crime on victims.

Principles of Practice

The following are principles that guide the work of advocacy services to crime victims. Though specific policies and procedures exist in most agencies and organizations, the following is a general guideline to victim advocates in any role or practice setting.

- A victim advocate works to restore the crime victims' sense of safety, dignity, and personal power.
- A victim advocate respects and works to protect the civil and legal rights of all crime victims.
- A victim advocate respects victims' rights to privacy and confidentiality, subject only to mandatory reporting laws and other requirements for disclosure.
- A victim advocate provides services to each victim in a manner that is tailored to meet that victim's needs and promote his or her well-being as defined by the victim.
- A victim advocate is aware of the potential for one victim's needs to conflict with those of another, recognizes those conflicts when they occur, and responds to them in accordance with agency policy.
- A victim advocate provides services in a manner that is guided by the choices of the victim, responding without judgment to reasonable requests for information or assistance.

- A victim advocate responds to each victim with compassion, refraining from passing judgments, regardless of any opinions the advocate may hold about the victim's personality, way of life, or choices in dealing with the consequences of the crime.
- A victim advocate remains aware of his or her own attitudes, sensitivities, and fluctuating stress levels in order to prevent these factors from interfering with the provision of effective services.

Knowledge Base

Crime victim advocates possess the following knowledge and skills:

- A clear understanding of one's own motivation for working in the victim advocacy field.
- Knowledge of physical, emotional, psychological, economic, legal, and social impacts of crime on victims.
- A basic understanding of the process of recovery from the trauma of victimization.
- An understanding of the significance of culture differences assessing victims' needs.
- Knowledge of the criminal justice process and the roles of the various participants in that process.

- Knowledge of agency policies and procedures, including one's own role and function within the agency.
- Understanding of the concepts of safety and confidentiality and their importance in working with crime victims.
- Knowledge of resources in the community that are available to crime victims.
- The ability to assess actual and potential threats to the safety of a victim or others.
- The ability to effectively assess the need for consultation or referral in providing services to victims.
- The ability to work within the boundaries of one's defined role as an advocate, and be able to clearly communicate that role to victims.