



Code of Ethics

As adapted from the Texas Victim Services Association and Office for Victims of Crime.

Competence

- I will learn and adhere to all federal, state, and local laws that relate to the client population that I serve.
- I will learn and adhere to the policies and procedures of my agency or organization. If those policies or procedures are in conflict with this Code of Ethics, I will seek to resolve the conflict through the designated chain of command.
- I will share my victim assistance knowledge and experience with other paid and unpaid Victim Assistance Providers.
- I will obtain basic victim services training and continue ongoing training through conferences and reading to improve the quality of my service to clients.
- I will seek information to become more competent in providing culturally and spiritually-sensitive victim services.
- I will attempt to be aware of my own wellness issues and seek to resolve inadequacies through supervision, consultation, and/or treatment.
- I will not provide victim services while impaired by medication, alcohol, or other chemicals or while experiencing a mental or physical condition that impairs my ability to provide quality services.

Professional Responsibility

- I will conduct relationships with colleagues and other professionals in such a way as to promote mutual respect, public confidence, and quality services.
- I will use courteous and respectful language and behavior in expressing concerns about controversial matters.
- I will provide support, guidance, and assistance to those who are new to the field of victim services.
- I will represent and seek to serve the best interests of the entire field of victim services and not just the specific interests of my specialization.
- I will not misrepresent my academic credentials, professional credentials, or professional title to clients or to the public.
- If a licensed professional, I will be primarily bound by the Code of Ethics of my profession and secondly bound to this Code of Ethics if they are in conflict.
- I will not serve clients beyond my level of expertise or attempt experimental services for which I have not been trained.
- In situations where I believe the best interest of the client I serve is in conflict with agency policy, I will make an informed and appropriate referral to another service provider.
- I will use public and private funds entrusted to my use according to my organization's policies and procedures.
- I will report to appropriate personnel the conduct of any paid or unpaid colleague or professional that I believe is in violation of this Code of Ethics.
- I will report to appropriate personnel any irresolvable conflict that I believe is affecting my ability or the agency's ability to work respectfully with other colleagues or agencies.

Respect for the Rights and Dignity of Clients

- I will respect the client's right to self-determination, including choices about personal safety and perpetrator accountability.
- I will respect and attempt to protect the client's civil rights, constitutional victim rights, and statutory victim rights.
- I will respect the dignity of all people and not discriminate against any client on the basis of sex, race, color, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, political beliefs, marital status, mental or physical ability, economic class, or any other discriminatory basis.
- I will refrain from behaviors that communicate victim blame, suspicion regarding victim accounts of the crime, condemnation for past behavior, or other judgmental, anti-victim sentiments.
- I will seek to resolve any conflict between my client's best interest, agency policy, and the Code of Ethics in the manner most likely to adhere to the Code of Ethics.

Integrity in Relationships with Clients

- I recognize that my primary responsibility is to serve the best interests of the client.
- I will avoid conflicts of interest by providing services and making referrals based on the best interests of the client. I will disclose any potential conflict of interest to the client.
- I will preserve the confidentiality of information provided by the person served or acquired from other sources before, during, and after the course of the professional relationship.
- I will respect the client's right to privacy and confidentiality subject to applicable exceptions including child and elder abuse, suicidal or homicidal threat, and legal subpoena. I will explain these exceptions to the client early in our relationship.
- I will not reveal identifying information about a client to the public without written permission of the client or a legal requirement to do so.
- I will not engage in a personal relationship with a client (dual-relationship) that would exploit the client such as accepting substantial gifts, exchanging services, or offering special privileges.
- I will not engage in verbal or physical sexual relationship with a current or past client or the client's immediate family member.

Social Responsibility

To the degree that it is allowed by law and agency policy, I will seek to serve the larger public interest by working collaboratively with agencies, organizations, and the public to improve systems that impact victims of crime.