Victim/Survivor Input Policy

The Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission on Sexual & Domestic Violence will seek survivor input to assess and advise our community’s institutional response and prevention practices.

This victim/survivor input policy will enhance the role of the Commission in effectively performing the following functions on behalf of the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County:

- Collect and disseminate data, including input from survivors, assessing strengths and gaps of institutional responses.
- Research and promote best practices and policies to increase safety, justice, healing, and accountability.
- Increase dialogue and problem-solving among institutions, systems, and services.
- Advise local governments and agencies.

The impetus for this policy was initially driven by a recommendation in the 2002 Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Audit. Specifically, the Audit recommended that Whatcom County ground policy and practice in the expertise of domestic violence victims. The Audit stated, “broad-based involvement by victims/survivors will be important to designing a community response that as much as possible addresses the diversity and complexity of victims’ lives and avoids unintended consequences.”

The Commission will use local, regional, and national research on survivor-centered practices to create context and formulate recommendations for sustaining strengths and changing systems to address gaps to meet the self-identified needs of survivors.

The Commission’s Director is responsible for implementing this policy and its accompanying operational guidelines for victim/survivor input.

Proposed Fall 2019