



# **National Association of Social Workers Chapter Replication Guide**

A component of the project

## **Victims of Crime: A Social Work Response Building Skills To Strengthen Survivors**

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## Overview of the Victims of Crime: A Social Work Response Project and Its Replication Guide

The purpose of this replication guide is to assist National Association of Social Workers (NASW) chapters in implementing their own versions of the Victims of Crime: A Social Work Response project. The Texas chapter of NASW, in partnership with the Schools of Social Work of the University of Texas–Austin and the University of Missouri–Columbia developed and conducted this national demonstration project to pilot test state-level products and materials that can be used by NASW chapters nationwide. Funding for the project came from the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime (OVC).

The goal of the Victims of Crime: A Social Work Response project is to enhance the capacity of professional social workers to respond to adult victims of violent crimes. The project addresses recommendations contained in OVC’s 1998 publication *New Directions from the Field: Victims’ Rights and Services for the 21st Century*. This comprehensive report on victims’ rights and services from and concerning virtually every community involved with crime victims throughout the Nation encouraged allied professionals to become more knowledgeable and involved in providing appropriate services to victims of crime. The psychological, physical, social, and financial impact of crime on individuals, their families, and their communities, along with the rapid growth of the victim assistance field, requires that all social workers have basic information about the effects of crime victimization, the rights of crime victims, and the services and resources available to them.

To meet the overall goal, the project has the following three objectives:

- To develop and implement an awareness campaign targeting professional social workers.
- To offer and conduct introductory training for social workers.
- To develop linkages between social workers and victim assistance professionals and organizations.

This replication guide is organized around these three objectives. Information about specific activities undertaken by the Texas chapter and suggestions about how to implement these activities are included in the guide.

Your NASW chapter may identify additional activities and help you find innovative ways to meet the stated objectives based on your resources and creativity. It is best to seek out activities beyond those listed here.

Drafts of this guide were reviewed, tested, and commented on by the staff of the Alaska, Florida, New York State, and North Carolina chapters. We appreciate their help with this project.

For more information about this guide or for copies of referenced resources, contact NASW/Texas (see For More Information).

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## **Objective 1: To Develop and Implement an Awareness Campaign Targeting Professional Social Workers**

To meet this objective, NASW/Texas published articles in association newsletters, developed a special newsletter edition, launched a crime victims and social work Web page, and conducted two surveys targeting social work practitioners and schools of social work.

### **Articles in Professional Association Newsletter**

NASW/Texas published a series of articles in the NASW/Texas chapter newsletter, *NETWORK*, on the following topics:

- Overall description of the project.
- Project advisory committee.
- Ninety-minute trainings conducted throughout the state.
- National Crime Victims' Rights Week.
- OVC services and funding.
- National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
- National Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
- Upcoming conferences and trainings.
- Working with special populations.
- Crime victim compensation.
- Hate crimes legislation, both national and state.
- Proposed U.S. Constitutional amendment for crime victims.
- Ethical issues in working with crime victims.
- Overview of the criminal justice system.

### **Special Newsletter Edition**

NASW/Texas published an eight-page insert in *NETWORK*, "Responding to the Needs of Crime Victims: An Introductory Guide for Social Workers." The guide, an overview of the victim assistance field, described what social workers should be aware of when they encounter an adult victim of violent crime. The guide contained articles on the following topics:

- What social workers can do to help victims of crime.
- History of the victim assistance movement.
- Services to crime victims.
- Rights of crime victims in Texas.
- Victim impact statements.

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- Crime victim compensation.
  - Violent crime and special populations.
  - Guidelines on approaching victims.
  - Posttraumatic stress disorder.
  - Safety planning 101.
  - Vicarious trauma issues.
  - Resources for more information.

**Note:** The above also can be published as separate articles (see list under Articles in Professional Association Newsletter). Chapters can customize the articles with content specific to their state. (Electronic versions of these articles are available from NASW/Texas.)

### **Crime Victims and Social Work Web Page**

The NASW/Texas Web page is a tool for communicating with its members and other individuals interested in victim assistance and related organizations. The Web page contains information about the project, including the content of the special edition newsletter, and links to other victim assistance resources. It can be accessed through the main Web page for NASW/Texas at [www.naswtx.org](http://www.naswtx.org). The Web page also can be used to disseminate the following information:

- Articles that have appeared in the chapter newsletter.
- Upcoming continuing education workshops.
- List of advisory committee members, including positions, places of employment, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers for those individuals willing to be contacted.
- Links to other crime victimization Web pages, including the OVC Web site, with brief descriptions of the Web sites.

### **Practitioner Survey**

NASW/Texas developed a practitioner survey to assess the training needs of Texas social workers who assist adult victims of violent crime and to identify practitioners with expertise in the field for a practitioner directory. The survey gathered information from social work practitioners about their current involvement with services to crime victims, the level of training they have received, their specific continuing education needs, and their areas of expertise in the field. The survey was mailed to all licensed social workers at the bachelor of social work and master of social work levels residing in Texas. Other NASW chapters might consider conducting a similar survey but using their chapter newsletter as a less expensive way to gather similar information.

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## **Objective 2: To Offer and Conduct Introductory Training for Social Workers**

### **Continuing Education Training**

A 3-hour introductory workshop on the victim assistance field was developed by the Texas chapter and is available for use by all NASW chapters. The main objectives of the training are the following:

- Identify the rights of crime victims.
- Describe the emotional impact of violent crime.
- Understand the role of victim impact statements.
- Describe services available to victims and survivors of violent crime.
- Identify resources available for victims and survivors of crime.

These objectives serve the project goal of enhancing the capacity of social workers to respond to the needs of survivors of violent crime; they also introduce professional social workers to the victim assistance field.

In Texas, the curriculum was certified for professional continuing education of social workers, licensed marriage and family counselors, and licensed professional counselors.

### **Local Unit Training Kits**

To assist in the delivery of the introductory training, trainers were given a kit that included the following:

- A trainer's manual.
- A participant manual.
- Exhibits—to be used as overhead transparencies, PowerPoint slides, or handouts.
- Participant evaluation forms.
- A trainer evaluation form.
- Index cards.
- Brochures from the Texas Attorney General's Office, which included the following topics: crime victim compensation, the rights of crime victims in Texas, useful hotline numbers, domestic violence personal safety plans, and the Texas Crime Victims' Institute.

**Note:** Other NASW chapters should gather pertinent victim assistance information from agencies and programs in their states. The project advisory committee might be useful in this capacity.

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## **Trainer Recruitment**

Social workers with experience in the victim assistance field should provide training to their local NASW units. Social workers who are comfortable with speaking publicly about their work can add local case examples that will increase the relevance of the training for the audience. Using local victim assistance professionals also accomplishes the objective of building professional linkages between social workers and local victim assistance professionals and organizations.

To identify potential trainers, a local chapter can—

- Identify potential trainers from individuals who are serving on the project advisory committee.
- Ask advisory committee members to identify social workers who might be interested in presenting crime victim-related training.
- Post a “call for trainers” on the local chapter Web site or in the newsletter. Contact local victim assistance programs to identify social workers who work at those agencies.

Because it may not be possible to identify social workers with specific expertise in victim assistance for all areas of the state, identify some trainers who are willing to travel to conduct training. In this scenario, local unit chairs may be asked to contact local victim assistance programs to invite them to attend the training and make a short presentation about their agency.

## **Training the Trainers**

Recruited trainers should be brought together for a train-the-trainers session to—

- Acquaint trainers with project goals, curriculum, trainer’s manual, and chapter staff assistance.
- Help trainers identify areas in the curriculum where they may insert information about community services.
- Review administrative issues related to training, including travel, honorarium (if available), and evaluations.

In addition to orienting the trainers on the 3-hour workshop, this meeting also provides an opportunity to introduce social workers in the victim assistance field from different parts of the state to one another.

Through its Training and Technical Assistance Center, OVC will provide a trainer to conduct either the training itself or a train-the-trainer session for chapters that are willing to implement the project or present the workshop at a state conference. To find out how local chapters can take advantage of this free training opportunity, contact the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center (see For More Information).

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## **Objective 3: To Develop Linkages Between Social Workers and Victim Assistance Professionals and Organizations**

### **Project Advisory Committee**

A project advisory committee composed of key local and state individuals in the victim assistance field should be assembled. Although it is helpful to have victim assistance personnel who are professional social workers on this committee, a social work background should not be the only criteria used in selecting committee members. It is important, however, to include representatives of the key organizations in the victim assistance field. A list of names can be compiled by contacting related organizations. Individuals from the list can then be asked who they think should be included.

Representatives of organizations that may be invited to serve on the project advisory committee include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Victim assistance coordinators at law enforcement departments.
- Victim assistance coordinators at prosecutors' offices.
- Victim assistance coordinators at probation departments.
- Individuals from the state coalition against domestic violence.
- Individuals from the state coalition against sexual assault.
- Personnel from the state crime victim compensation program.
- Personnel from the state victim assistance network.
- University faculty from schools of social work.
- Victim assistance coordinator at the local U.S. Attorney's Office.
- Personnel from the state department of public safety/criminal justice.
- Advocates at local domestic violence and sexual assault programs.
- Representatives from the state social work licensure board.
- NASW chapter volunteers with expertise in victim assistance.
- Individuals from local and state affiliates of Parents of Murdered Children.
- Individuals from local and state affiliates of Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

Advisory committee members should be given an overview of the project and its goals, objectives, and activities. Advisory committee members can be asked to—

- Help revise the training curriculum so that it is state specific.
- Identify resources available for dissemination to professional social workers in the field.
- Identify what they would like all social workers to know about their organizations and their work in the victim assistance field.

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- Identify ways for social workers to become more involved in the victim assistance field.
  - Write articles about their organizations for chapter newsletters.
  - Make presentations at local units and state conferences.
  - Disseminate information about the project to their constituencies.
  - Develop “next steps” for the project: After social workers in the state have been given an overview of the field, what would be helpful to local agencies or the field as a whole in the state? How can NASW get involved?
  - Identify what further training is needed by social workers in the area—such as indepth training on clinical issues and victims of crime.

Although an initial face-to-face meeting with the project advisory committee is encouraged, most of the work can be accomplished via e-mail.

### **Directory of Social Work Expertise in Crime Victim Assistance**

To encourage local victim assistance programs to make referrals to social workers with expertise in this field, chapters can collect names of experienced social workers for a database. The existence of this database can then be advertised to local crime victim assistance programs and statewide associations such as the police chiefs’, sheriffs’, and district attorneys’ associations. The chapter newsletter and Web site can be used both to collect names and to advertise the database.

### **Local Linkages**

NASW unit workshops provide opportunities for social workers and victim assistance professionals to communicate at the local level. Representatives of local victim assistance programs, including law enforcement agencies and battered women’s shelters, should be invited to participate in the training.

In Texas, such an association sparked ideas for future projects, including additional training focused on domestic violence and ethical issues in the field and social workers “riding along” with law enforcement personnel.

### **Final Thoughts**

The campaign to train all social workers in the state on issues of victims of violent crime had a substantial effect on the state affiliate of NASW in Texas. The program brought visibility to the chapter and emphasized and reinforced the value of social workers within the victim assistance community.

NASW members saw the project as an added value. Some of the new members appreciated the efforts of the chapter to do something tangible to assist victims of crime and further the professional development of social workers in the growing practice of victim assistance.

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## **For More Information**

For more information on this topic, contact

### **National Association of Social Workers**

750 First Street NE., Suite 700

Washington, DC 20002-4241

202-408-8600

Web site: [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org)

### **National Association of Social Workers/Texas**

810 West 11th Street

Austin, TX, 78701

512-474-1454

Web site: [www.naswtx.org](http://www.naswtx.org)

### **Office for Victims of Crime**

U.S. Department of Justice

810 Seventh Street NW., Eighth Floor

Washington, DC 20531

202-307-5983

Fax: 202-514-6383

Web site: [www.ovc.gov](http://www.ovc.gov)

For copies of OVC publications or information on additional victim-related resources, contact

### **OVC Resource Center**

P.O. Box 6000

Rockville, MD 20849-6000

1-800-851-3420 or 301-519-5500

(TTY 1-877-712-9279)

Ask OVC: <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/askovc>

Web site: [www.ncjrs.gov](http://www.ncjrs.gov)

Or order OVC publications online at [www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/AlphaList.aspx](http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/AlphaList.aspx).

For information on training and technical assistance available from OVC, contact

### **OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center**

10530 Rosehaven Street, Suite 400

Fairfax, VA 22030

1-866-OVC-TTAC (1-866-682-8822)

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