

Keeping a Victim Focus

Supporting Survivors after
an Exoneration

Monica L. Urbaniak, LMFT-S

Dallas Area Rape Crisis Center

The National Center for Victims of Crime is pleased to provide the slides used in our July 7, 2011 Webinar, "Supporting Survivors After an Exoneration."

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Victims' Rights and Services During the Post-Conviction and Exoneration Process



This Webinar was produced by the National Center for Victims of Crime under cooperative agreement 2009-SZ-B9-K010, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this Webinar are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S.

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR
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Victim Centered Response

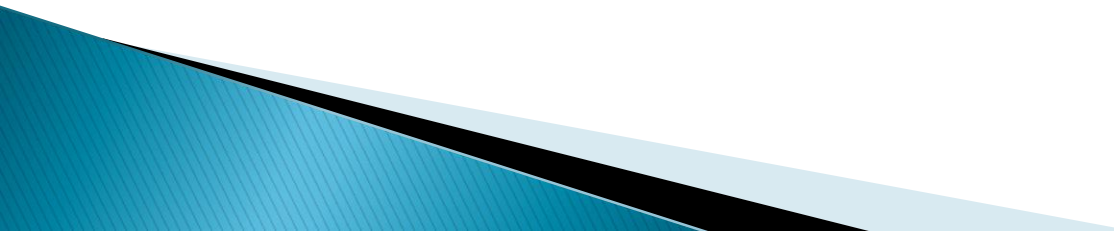
▶ What is it?

- Guiding philosophy of design, delivery and evaluation of agency/organization response and care
- Tenets:
 - Considers the victim **FIRST**
 - **Safety is primary**
 - Based in belief/compassion
 - Strength/resilience focused
 - Promotes agency through information & support
 - Use of effective collaborations/coordination of care
 - Continued agency assessment and development

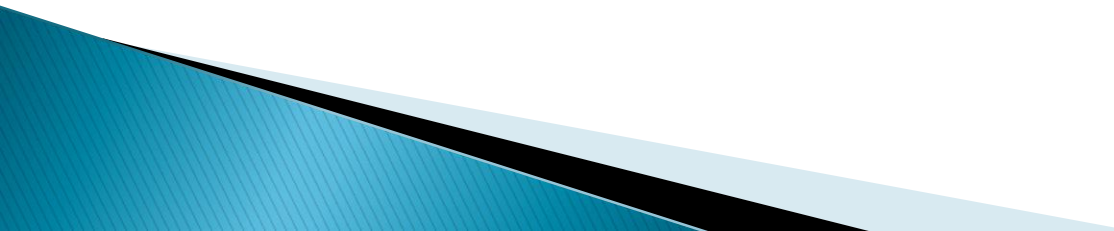
Physical Safety

- ▶ Unique
- ▶ Information essential for safety planning
 - How connected is survivor to process?
 - Will they be notified of exoneration/confirmation?
 - Any legal remedies available?
 - Who knows about situation?

Emotional Safety

- ▶ Reopening of wound
 - ▶ Treatment history?
 - ▶ Assist victim in accessing supportive services
 - ▶ Privacy vs. information sharing for support
 - ▶ Boundaries and trust are very important
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Psychological Safety

- ▶ Important to acknowledge victimization
 - ▶ Ability to be safe with oneself
 - ▶ To feel effective in the world
 - ▶ To be able to exercise self control
 - ▶ To direct one's own attention and focus
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Listening & Advocacy

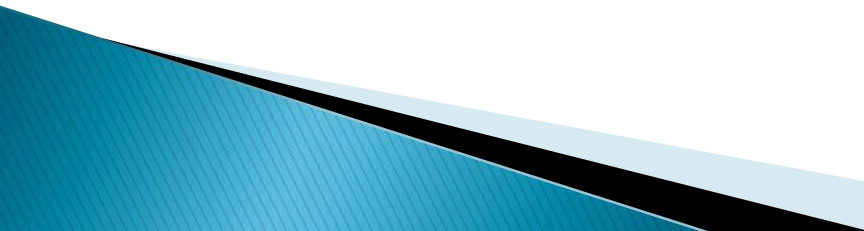
- ▶ “I’m still a victim”
 - Provision of services should not be dependent upon exoneration/confirmation

- ▶ Listening with:
 - Belief
 - Compassion
 - Patience

Advocacy Considerations

- ▶ Confidentiality
 - Who knows about original assault?
 - Who knows about exoneration?
 - Between service providers, others involved in the process
- ▶ Information
 - What is the process?
 - Victims rights
 - Role clarification: DA's office, Advocate, Counselor, etc.
- ▶ Preparation
 - Anticipation of steps in the process
 - For reactions by victim, by others, by exoneree
 - Media

Advocacy Considerations Cont.

- ▶ Flexibility
 - ▶ Tangible tasks for victims – assist in reestablishing sense of control
 - ▶ Engaging other service providers, collaborative partnerships
 - Bridge building – Not bridge burning
 - ▶ Support at different times, different levels
 - ▶ Being with: Ex. meeting with investigators, reading letter, listening to tape, exoneration day/confirmation hearing, aftercare
 - ▶ Hope
 - ▶ Realism
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Support Group Structure & Focus

- ▶ Open vs. Closed
- ▶ Topical vs. Process
- ▶ Victim Readiness
 - Emotional readiness
 - May have survivors at very different stages in the exoneration process and in the healing process
 - Each exoneration circumstance is unique
- ▶ Facilitator Considerations
 - Knowledge of/experience with exoneration/confirmation process?
 - Role in organization/agency?
 - Gender? Temper?
 - Multiple Facilitators?
 - Education? Experience? Licensure?

Support Group Education & Process

During

Confusion

Guilt

Self-doubt

Incredulity

Anger

Fear

After

Exoneration/Confirmation

Confusion

Guilt

Self-doubt

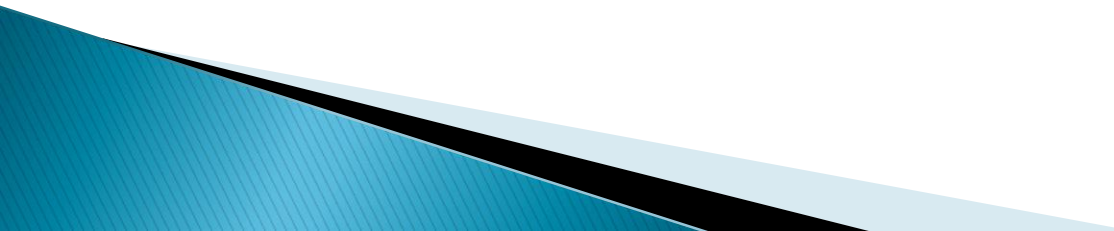
Incredulity

Anger

Fear

Relief

Support Group Considerations

- ▶ Safety, safety, safety
 - ▶ Enlist survivors in support group design, implementation & evaluation
 - ▶ Victim-centered throughout
 - ▶ Collaborations – DA's office staff, etc.
 - ▶ Encourage activism, survivor mission
 - ▶ Peer support outside of group
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Monica L. Urbaniak, LMFT-S
Dallas Area Rape Crisis Center
monica@dallasrapecrisis.org
972-468-6053

