

Advancing a Victim-Centered Approach to Supervising Sex Offenders: *A Toolkit for Practitioners*

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INTRODUCTION

When people are asked about their career goals, “I want to supervise sex offenders” may not be a common answer. Supervising sex offenders can be particularly challenging and the stakes are high in a number of ways, such as the following:

- The intensely personal and intrusive nature of sexual violence, the complex dynamics involved, and the effects on victims are unlike most other crimes.
- Responsibility for victim and public safety weighs heavily on officers’ shoulders, and high levels of scrutiny can lead to added pressure.
- Sex offender-specific laws and agency policies have “widened the net,” resulting in increased workload demands for officers, usually without additional resources.
- The potential for burnout and vicarious trauma for officers who work with these cases is heightened.

Professionals who accept these challenges provide a valuable service to survivors and their families, the public, and sex offenders by:

- holding sexual abusers accountable for their behaviors and the harm caused to victims;
- enhancing victim and public safety through various risk management strategies;
- using evidence-based strategies to reduce reoffense risk and support lasting behavioral change among perpetrators; and
- helping ensure that supervision practices are responsive to — and do not run counter to — the rights, needs, and interests of sexual assault survivors.

Collectively, these goals and roles reflect what is referred to as a “victim-centered approach” to supervising sex offenders. This approach recognizes that the traditionally offender-focused nature of sex offender management inadvertently can create systems that appear indifferent to the interests of sexual assault victims. In turn, some sexual assault survivors and their families may feel ignored, invalidated, or further traumatized by the system that is designed to protect and support them.

Purpose of the Toolkit

Probation officers are uniquely positioned to implement victim-centered practices at various decision points, as they have responsibilities that begin prior to sentencing and continue throughout the term of probation supervision. Parole officers have similar duties for post-release supervision for those persons who have been incarcerated for part of their sentence. Alongside sexual assault victim advocates and sex offender treatment providers, supervision officers largely embrace a victim-centered *philosophy*, yet they report a strong need for additional information and resources to help them apply this philosophy to their day-to-day *practices* (Center for Sex Offender Management, National Sexual Violence Resource Center, Resource Sharing Project, and Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers, 2016).

This toolkit was designed to inform and guide the implementation of a victim-centered approach to supervising sex offenders in the community. It was developed in partnership by the Center for Effective Public Policy's Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM), the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), and the Resource Sharing Project (RSP), and was funded by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW).

Intended Audience

The toolkit materials are geared primarily to supervision agencies (i.e., probation, parole, community corrections) who have direct case management responsibilities for adult males who have committed sex offenses.¹ It is also intended to be a resource for sexual assault victim advocates and other victim service providers, given their pivotal roles in a victim-centered approach. In addition, the toolkit may be instructive for agency leaders, managers, and supervisors, as they are influential in setting the tone and culture within their agencies. Lastly, the material can be informative for others with a role and stake in sexual violence prevention, including policymakers, the courts, professionals who conduct specialized evaluations and deliver treatment interventions for perpetrators, practitioners within and outside the criminal justice and correctional systems, and the public.

Terminology/Definitions

For the purposes of this resource, the following terms are used throughout this document:

- **Victim-Centered Approach:** A philosophy, principle, and practice that recognizes sexual assault victims as primary clients of the justice system, and whose safety, rights, and interests are a paramount consideration when designing and implementing perpetrator management strategies.
- **Sexual Violence/Abuse/Assault:** Terms used interchangeably when referencing behaviors of a sexual nature (contact and non-contact) that are directed toward another person without that person's consent, or toward someone who is unable to provide consent.
- **Victim/Survivor:** A person who has experienced sexual violence/abuse/assault, as defined above. Terminology preferences may differ based on points in time, life circumstances, speak-

¹Since adolescents who offend sexually differ from adults in significant ways, strategies for adolescents should be considered separately (see, e.g., Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers, 2017). Similarly, females — who represent roughly 10% of the persons known to offend sexually — require gender-responsive approaches.

ers, and contexts. For example, “victim” is commonly used in criminal justice settings to convey that this is the person who was wronged; in the counseling and recovery process, the term “survivor” may be used more frequently to convey a sense of strength and a regaining of personal agency (CSOM et al., 2016).

- **Perpetrators/offenders:** Used interchangeably in this toolkit to refer to adult males who have committed acts of sexual violence/abuse/assault, as defined above, and who have been convicted of acts of a sexually violent/abusive nature and are involved in the criminal justice system.
- **Secondary victims:** Individuals in addition to victims who are likely to be impacted by sexual violence (these might include spouses, partners, significant others, family, friends, or other members of the community).

Note: Using labels such as “victim/survivor” and “sex offender/perpetrator” is not the authors’ preferred approach; behavioral descriptions such as “persons who have been sexually abused” and “individuals who have committed sex offenses” are more ideal. For economy of presentation and ease of reading, both approaches are used in this toolkit.

Toolkit Content and Uses

The toolkit contains:

- An overview of the “building blocks” of a victim-centered approach (i.e., rationale, underlying tenets, evidence-informed supervision, specialized aspects of sex offender supervision, opportunities and implications for practice);
- tools to self-assess current practices;
- a list of 10 areas to consider with specialized pre-sentence investigations (PSIs) for sex offense cases;
- resources to guide specialized PSI reports and victim impact statements;
- victim-responsive communication approaches for supervision officers;
- examples of innovative victim-centered approaches in three states;
- a list of supplementary resources; and
- references.

The toolkit can be used as a standalone resource and/or as a companion resource to augment two additional resources developed through this initiative: an e-curriculum about victim-centered supervision for sex offenders and an online tool that highlights key decision points and activities throughout the course of supervision that have implications for victim-centered practices.



SECTION 1

Understanding the Backdrop: The Importance of This Work

Officers who supervise sex offenders have long championed a “no more victims” approach. This rallying call reflects their recognition of — and commitment to — the role they play in preventing sexual violence and increasing public safety. Preventing sexual violence requires a comprehensive

set of evidence-based strategies targeting influences at individual, relationship, community, and societal levels (Basile et al., 2016). Historically, prevention has been discussed in the context of its ultimate goal: stopping sexual violence before it begins. However, a comprehensive sexual violence prevention framework also recognizes the importance of strategies needed after sexual violence is perpetrated (e.g., after offenders are convicted and are under community supervision) to interrupt and mitigate the long-term harmful effects on victims and their loved ones, promote healing and restoration, and prevent individuals who have already perpetrated from committing additional sexually abusive acts (Basile et al., 2016).

No more victims.

There is no question that preventing sexual violence is a pressing need, as underscored by the facts below.

- **Sexual violence affects millions of individuals in the United States annually, making it a significant public health issue.** Recent estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reveal that approximately 1 in 3 women — and 1 in 6 men — experience some form of contact sexual violence over the course of their lifetime (Smith et al., 2017). These figures translate into lifetime estimates of 43,758,000 female victims and 19,522,000 male victims of contact sexual violence. The numbers increase substantially when non-contact sexual violence is included.
- **Sexual violence cuts across age, socioeconomic, ethnic, cultural, and other lines.** Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable, but individuals across the life span experience sexual abuse. Disproportionately high rates of sexual violence are reported by members of groups who tend to be marginalized and whose perspectives are often underrepresented, such as women of color, individuals in the LGBTQ community, and persons with disabilities (Smith et al., 2017).

- **Sexual assault victims are most commonly abused by someone they know, such as a family member, intimate partner, or acquaintance, and the perpetrator is typically a male** (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2010a). The overwhelming majority of child victims (as high as 90%) — and adult victims (upward of 70%) — have some level of familiarity with the person who perpetrated the abuse (U.S. Department of Justice, 2015; Finkelhor, 2012). There is no “profile” of individuals who offend sexually, but the data consistently reveal that males are responsible for the vast majority (roughly 90%) of sexual assaults (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2006).
- **Most incidents of sexual violence are not reported.** Less than one-third of rapes and other sexual assaults of persons 12 years of age and older are reported to police (Truman & Morgan, 2015). Determining reporting rates among young children is more difficult, but recent estimates indicate that roughly 38% of child sexual abuse cases are reported (see, e.g., London, Bruck, Ceci, & Shuman, 2003; Ullman, 2007). Many factors affect if, when, how, why, and to whom victims disclose their experiences. Particularly salient are the extent to which they perceive the environment and culture to be one in which their safety and well-being matter to others, and whether they have trust and confidence that those in the system will respond effectively.
- **Sexual victimization is linked to numerous adverse effects on survivors in both the short term and long term** (see, e.g., NSVRC, 2010b). For example, in the immediate and short term, victims may experience a wide range of emotions, including confusion, shock, denial, fear, anger, numbness, shame, and guilt. Over time, sexual violence can impact victims’ quality of life across multiple domains, including physical health (e.g., chronic pain, frequent headaches), mental health (e.g., depression, anxiety, PTSD), intimate and other relationship functioning (e.g., mistrust, social isolation, withdrawal), and behavioral health (e.g., substance abuse, eating disorders, high risk sexual and other problem behaviors), and it can shorten life expectancy (NSVRC, 2010b). In addition, trauma can impact brain development and functioning, which can further influence survivors’ adjustment, whether or how they disclose and recall details of the sexually abusive experiences, and how they access and respond to services.
- **The financial costs and economic impact of sexual violence are profound.** Recent statistics indicate that the estimated lifetime cost of rape is \$122,461 per victim, or a population economic burden of nearly \$3.1 trillion (Peterson, DeGue, Florence, & Lokey, 2017). This estimate includes:
 - \$1.2 trillion (39% of total) in medical costs;
 - \$1.6 trillion (52% of total) in lost work productivity among victims and perpetrators;
 - \$234 billion (8% of total) in criminal justice activities;
 - \$36 billion (1% of total) in other costs, including victim property loss or damage.
- **Some sexual assault victims experience trauma as a result of their encounters in the criminal justice system.** The dynamics of sexual violence commonly lead victims to have feelings of powerlessness and a loss of control in their lives. Shame, self-blame, fears of others’ reactions, threats by the abuser, and cultural norms that condone violence or blame victims create an environment that is isolating and silencing. As such, survivors may experience what is referred to as “loss of choice and voice.” Being listened to, believed, and treated with dignity and respect, and receiving supportive services and advocacy, can help survivors feel empowered, regain a sense of personal agency, and promote healing.

Unfortunately, for some victims, the “loss of choice and voice” — and other trauma — are exacerbated when they seek justice from the criminal justice system. This results when the system becomes almost exclusively focused on the rights and interests of the criminal defendants; victims may feel that their safety, rights, needs, and interests are being ignored. In addition, survivors and their families can become overwhelmed by a system that is complex and difficult to navigate. These experiences can lead victims to feel betrayed or re-traumatized by a justice system they hoped would protect them.

In response to the sheer volume of sexual violence cases that are processed in the criminal justice system, and the number of sex offenders who will ultimately be supervised by probation officers in the community, a movement is underway to consider how to manage this population in a way that mitigates additional trauma to victims and, to the degree possible, prevents additional sexual victimization. The next chapter of this toolkit, “Making the Case: The Rationale for a Victim-Centered Approach to Supervising Sex Offenders,” further explicates the rationale for implementing a more victim-centered approach to supervising sex offenders under community supervision.

Factors Influencing Disclosure

Many variables affect a victim’s decision to report — or not report — having been abused sexually. Some opt to confide in a parent or other family member, intimate partner, close friend, spiritual confidant, or the legal authorities; for some sexual assault survivors, reporting the abuse to the authorities and seeking justice are important steps in their personal healing process. Many other victims do not have a desire or need to share this information with others. Some factors that influence the decision not to disclose include:

- the intensely personal nature of sexual violence;
- feelings of shame, self-doubt, and self-blame;
- the perceived level of safety and support in their family, home, or community;
- fears about being met with disbelief, stigmatized, rejected, dismissed, or blamed;
- safety concerns that stem from threats or fear of retaliation; and
- differential availability and access to legal, medical, crisis intervention, advocacy, and other needed services.

The nature and quality of the victim’s relationship to the perpetrator are also important factors, particularly when the perpetrator is an intimate partner, parent, sibling, or another person on whom the victim relies for emotional, social, financial, and other support. Relatedly, the increasingly punitive and strict penalties and other laws applied to sex offenders leave many victims in a difficult position. Reporting the abuse could come at such a high price to the person who abused them (and potentially to the victims and families themselves) that there is a disincentive to coming forward and seeking help (Tabachnick & Klein, 2011).



SECTION 2

Making the Case: The Rationale for a Victim-Centered Approach to Supervising Sex Offenders

Policies formulated to manage sex offenders must have as a primary goal the prevention of future sexual victimization. Such policies must hold sex offenders accountable while providing support and safety for victims and their families.

– National Alliance to End Sexual Violence²

A victim-centered approach to supervising sex offenders is defined as “a philosophy, principle, and practice that recognizes sexual assault victims as primary clients of the justice system, and whose safety, rights, and interests are a paramount consideration when designing and implementing perpetrator management strategies.” Victim-centered approaches ensure that:

- victim safety and well-being are at the center of policy and practice decisions;
- strategies are trauma-informed and facilitate healing, empowerment, and personal agency; and
- preventing further harm to victims — particularly system-induced trauma — is an explicit goal.

²See <http://endsexualviolence.org/where-we-stand/community-management-of-sex-offenders>.

Victim-centered practices are an integral part of a comprehensive model of sexual violence prevention and take the form of crisis intervention, medical and legal advocacy, support groups, evidence-based treatments, and access to community resources (Basile et al., 2016). Such strategies are designed to improve outcomes for survivors and lessen the long-term risks for experiencing behavioral, psychological, and health consequences (Basile et al., 2016). At the heart of a victim-centered approach to sex offender management is the question “What’s best for the victims and the community?” (English, Pullen, & Jones, 1996).

Why Is a Victim-Centered Approach to Sex Offender Management So Critical?

- **Because sexual assault victims are the persons most affected by sexual violence. Arguably, sex offender management laws and strategies are designed with the interests of victims in mind.** Yet victims are not generally asked about their needs or expectations for justice; the assumption is that all or most victims are seeking retribution (see, e.g., CSOM et al., 2016; Spoo et al., 2017).

Sexual assault survivors have diverse experiences, interests, and needs. For example, some want the person who abused them to suffer severe consequences such as a long prison sentence, whereas others are more interested in the person receiving treatment to prevent them from committing additional sexual assaults. Some victims want the perpetrator to be prohibited from having any form of contact or communication with them, while others may wish to preserve some type of communication or relationship. In a victim-centered approach, system actors do not presume to know what is best for a given survivor — or for all survivors, for that matter. Rather, they recognize and respect individual differences and invite survivors’ perspectives when considering sentencing and post-sentencing decisions.

- **Because mounting evidence reveals that some sex offender management strategies run counter to the “no more victims” and “what’s best for victims and communities?” goals.** Research demonstrates that some sex offender-specific policies (e.g., residence restrictions, registration, notification) do not have the intended effect of protecting victims, reducing reoffending, or preventing sexual violence (see, e.g., Tabachnick & Klein, 2011). In fact, there is evidence that certain approaches actually increase, rather than decrease, victim and community safety and result in collateral consequences that are harmful to victims and those close to them (see, e.g., Tabachnick & Klein, 2011). To be most effective in achieving the desired outcomes, policies and practices must be filtered through an evidence-based and victim-centered lens.
- **Because many sexual assault victims and their families experience negative encounters and are re-traumatized when seeking justice, relief, or assistance.** This can occur at various points in the criminal justice system, beginning at the point at which an allegation is brought to the attention of the authorities. Examples include:
 - insensitivity or indifference from law enforcement investigators or medical professionals conducting sexual assault examinations;
 - questions or comments that suggest that they are not being believed or that they are being blamed or judged for what happened to them; and
 - little or no information provided to them about the steps in the justice system process, what their rights are, or what services are available and how to access them (Campbell, Fehler-Cabral, & Horsford, 2017; Chen & Ullman, 2010; Shaw, Campbell, & Cain, 2016).

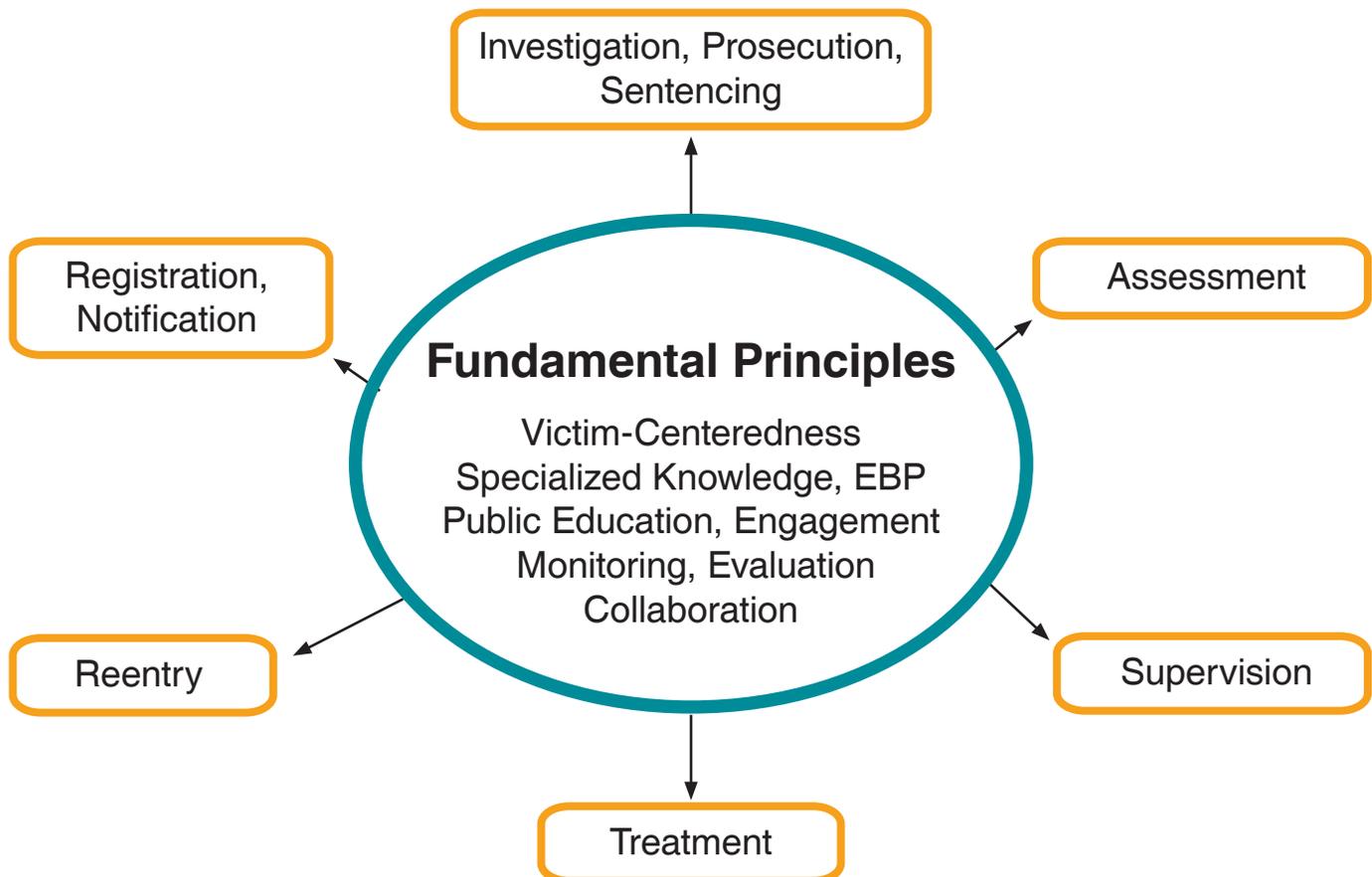
As a result, victims or secondary victims experience system-induced trauma and are less likely to participate in the legal proceedings or seek necessary assistance for themselves or someone else in the future (Campbell et al., 2017; Chen & Ullman, 2010; Shaw et al., 2016). When sexual assault victims are believed, validated, supported, empowered, and provided access to evidence-based, trauma-informed interventions, outcomes for victims are improved and serious long-term negative impacts are decreased (Basile et al., 2016; CSOM et al., 2016).

These and other concerns underscore the importance of a victim-centered approach.

Victim-Centeredness as a Key Principle of a Comprehensive Approach to Sex Offender Management

As depicted in the diagram below, the Comprehensive Approach to Sex Offender Management (CASOM) model, developed by the Center for Sex Offender Management, provides guidance about the various components of a multifaceted sex offender management system, the range of stakeholders who must be involved, and the underlying principles that should guide sex offender

Comprehensive Approach to Sex Offender Management (CASOM) Model

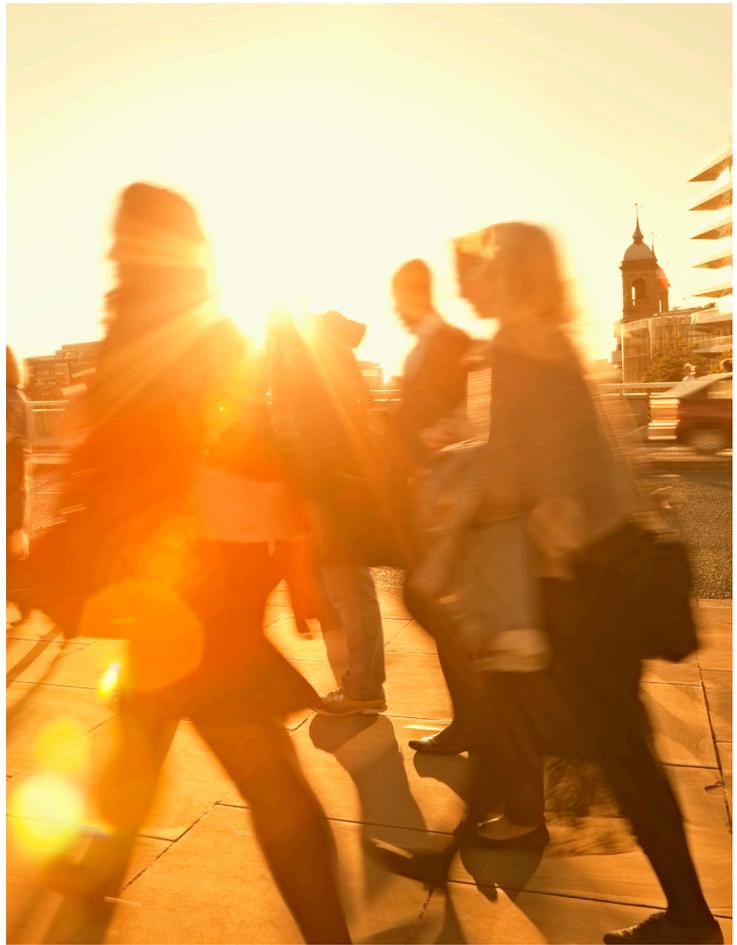


(Carter, Bumby, & Talbot, 2008)

management approaches, including victim-centeredness (Center for Sex Offender Management, 2008). The CASOM model holds that all system actors play a role in preventing system-induced trauma and promoting positive outcomes for victims and communities.

For each of the six sex offender management components identified in the model above (investigation/prosecution/sentencing, assessment, supervision, treatment, reentry, and registration/notification), there are multiple ways in which victim-centeredness should be operationalized, including:

- utilizing specialized, trauma-informed, collaborative sexual assault response teams during the investigation phase;
- consulting with survivors and their families when plea bargains are being considered (in the absence of such communication, the negotiated plea may send a message to survivors that what happened to them was less serious or harmful, that they are not believed, that offender accountability is not a priority, or that their perspectives are not important);
- providing prosecution-based victim witness specialists or victim advocates who support survivors, explain the court processes, and provide referrals for services;
- adopting vertical prosecution (i.e., a prosecutor follows a case from initial referral through prosecution) to ensure continuity and prevent survivors from being “handed off” and having to retell their experience to a different prosecutor;
- ensuring judges are well-versed in trauma-informed approaches and the diversity of victims’ experiences, needs, and expectations;
- conducting assessments that take into account research-supported risk factors such as access to victims, the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and victim, and offense-related interests or arousal;
- employing treatment approaches that challenge pro-offending attitudes and beliefs such as victim blaming and hostile attitudes toward women, and that facilitate perspective-taking and victim empathy;
- putting in place multidisciplinary case management teams that include victim advocates to represent victims’ voices and interests and to assist with safety plans and perpetrators’ supervision plans;



- developing reentry plans that take into account post-release conditions that address the safety of victims and potentially vulnerable persons; and
- using risk-differentiated registration and notification approaches that are based on factual information about who commits sex offenses and who is most likely to be victimized.

Why Are Supervision Officers Well-Positioned to Facilitate a Victim-Centered Approach in Sex Offense Cases?

- **Most convicted sex offenders are, or will be, residing in the community under supervision.** Over 220,000 individuals are under criminal justice supervision for a sex offenses (Kaeble & Bonczar, 2017). Roughly one-third of all registered sex offenders residing in the community are being supervised by probation, parole, or community corrections agencies (Harris, Levenson, & Ackerman, 2014). And the vast majority of incarcerated sex offenders will be released to the community eventually.
- **Over the span of sex offenders' supervision terms, survivors have many information needs, questions, and concerns.** For example, survivors may desire information about the status of the case, where the perpetrator resides and works, the conditions the perpetrator must follow, the person's compliance with supervision and treatment, the mechanisms that are in place to protect them and their loved ones, and whom to contact or what to do if they have concerns about suspicious behavior or safety. Supervision officers are the logical resource to whom survivors can turn for this information.
- **Victims' rights come into play at multiple points throughout offenders' periods of supervision and officers have a duty to uphold these rights** (American Probation and Parole Association, n.d.; CSOM et al., 2016). Each state, tribal jurisdiction, and territory has codified victims' rights. While there are some variations, core rights for victims that are particularly germane to community supervision include the following:
 - the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and sensitivity;
 - the right to protection and safety;
 - the right to notification and information;
 - the right to be heard and provide input;
 - the right to be present at proceedings;
 - the right to privacy and confidentiality; and
 - the right to receive restitution (American Probation and Parole Association, n.d.; CSOM et al., 2016).

These rights, and the accompanying opportunities for victim-centered action, will be explored in greater detail later in the toolkit.

- **Sexual assault survivors have valuable perspectives and information that can inform supervision strategies.** Because sexual abuse is often committed by someone related to, intimately

Collaboration Is Essential for Enhancing Victim-Centeredness

Effectively and meaningfully adopting a victim-centered approach requires engaging community-based and/or system-based victim advocates, survivors themselves in instances where they express interest and desire, and potentially other stakeholders, such as victim service providers, child welfare personnel, and offense-specific treatment providers. Such engagement may include basic communication, coordination, or, at the highest level, collaboration and partnerships — recognizing the shared goal of preventing additional sexual victimization. Investing in building these multidisciplinary partnerships can help ensure that the rights and needs of victims are incorporated into all elements of sex offender management.

involved with, or otherwise known to the victim, survivors often have insights into the perpetrator's modus operandi, triggers, or precursors that signal risk. This information can be especially helpful for identifying supervision conditions, developing supervision/case management plans, and establishing and monitoring safety plans for survivors.

- **As the lead case managers for sex offenders under supervision, officers have significant influence and reach that can leverage a victim-centered approach.** Supervision officers can be conveners and collaborators with representatives from other agencies and disciplines — including victim advocates and victim service providers — who bring valuable expertise, credibility, insights, and awareness of resources. For example, officers can:
 - coordinate multidisciplinary teams that include victim advocates to represent survivors' interests when making case management decisions;
 - engage victim advocates to support survivors with developing victim impact statements or to assist with victim notifications; and
 - bring together the various professionals necessary to make victim-centered and trauma-informed decisions about the viability and implementation of family reunification goals, when appropriate.

Sections 3 and 4 of this document will help supervision agencies and officers ground themselves in the principles of evidence-based correctional practices and in specialized and victim-centered approaches to managing sex offenders in the community. Taken together, these approaches offer great promise in holding offenders accountable, reducing their risk to reoffend, and preventing additional victimization.



SECTION 3

Creating a Solid Foundation: Specialized Strategies Within an Evidence-Based Framework

Evidence-Based Principles and Practices in Offender Supervision

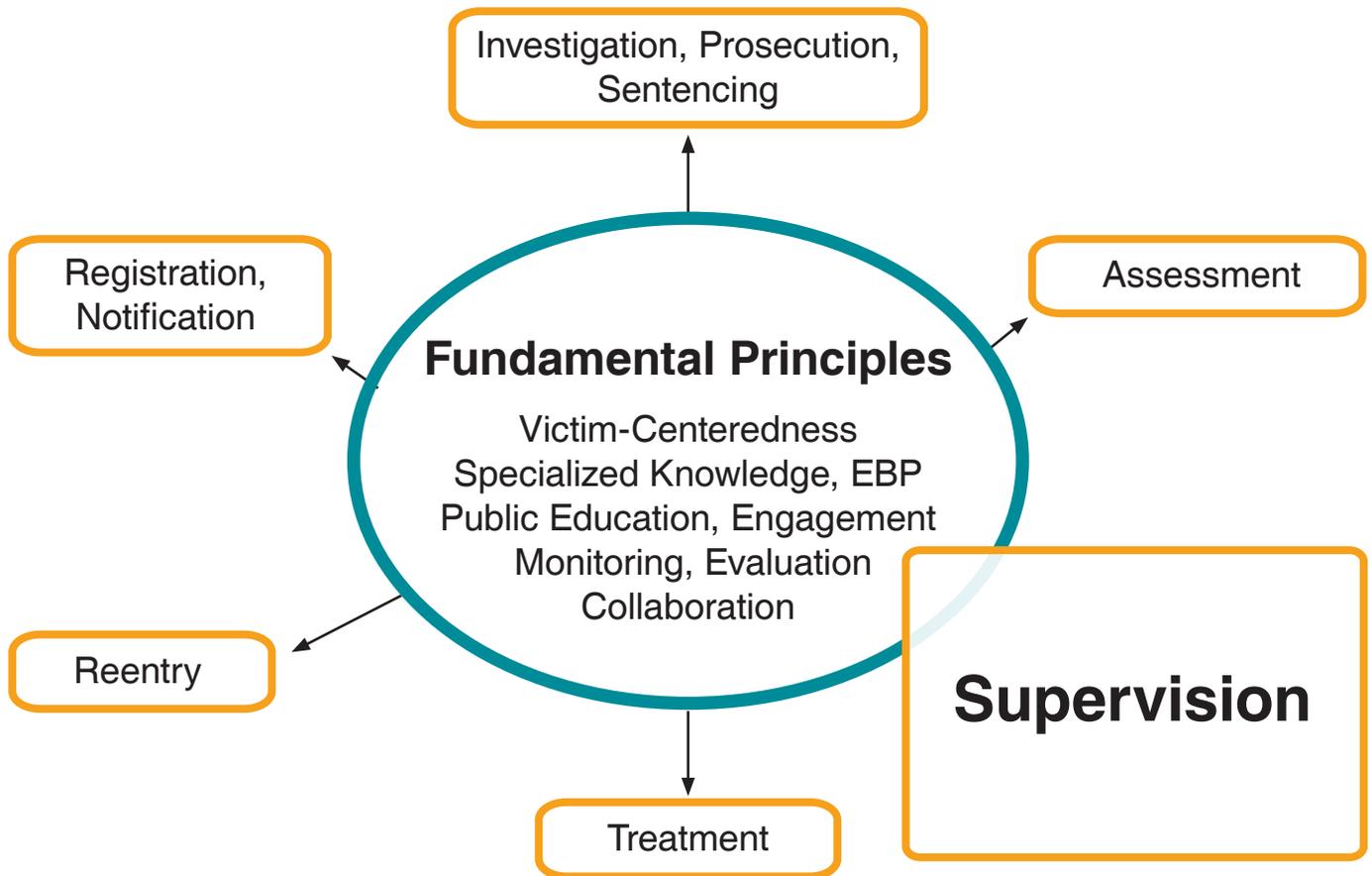
Historically, officers responsible for supervising sex offenders have made efforts to manage or contain risk through the use of restrictions, external controls, and punitive sanctions. However, for more than two decades, research has strongly indicated that punishment- and sanctions-based approaches are not effective in reducing recidivism. Supervision is more effective when officers employ a balanced model that pairs traditional risk management strategies with interventions that build skills, promote behavior change, and reduce recidivism risk (Bonta & Andrews, 2017; Latesa, Listwan, & Koetzle, 2014).

The core principles of effective correctional intervention — for both sex offenders and the broader justice-involved population — are the principles of risk, need, and responsibility (RNR). The RNR model indicates that interventions are most effective for moderate- to high-risk offenders; when factors linked to recidivism (i.e., criminogenic needs) are the focus; when effective behavior change methods are used; and when individual characteristics that may support or interfere with a given person's response to intervention are considered (Bonta & Andrews, 2017).

These principles translate into evidence-based behavioral interventions commonly referred to as core correctional practices (CCP) (Bonta & Andrews, 2017; Bonta, Rugge, Scott, Bourgon, & Yessine, 2008; Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Robinson et al., 2012) which focus on having officers:

- create a strong professional alliance with individuals on their caseloads;
- involve clients in the development of their supervision plans, which fosters internal motivation to change;
- model prosocial attitudes and behaviors, such as effective communication styles, in their interactions;

Comprehensive Approach to Sex Offender Management (CASOM) Model



(Carter, Bumby, & Talbot, 2008)

- capitalize on opportunities to teach concrete skills, such as effective problem solving, that will allow justice-involved individuals to achieve their goals and meet their needs in healthy, non-harmful ways;
- reinforce supervision compliance, prosocial attitudes and behaviors, and goal attainment;
- address supervision noncompliance effectively, using timely and proportional responses;
- link offenders to programs and services that can support stability, change, and risk reduction (e.g., sex offense-specific treatment); and
- work closely with offenders and others in the community to help create or strengthen positive offender support systems in an effort to build prosocial relationships and patterns of behavior.

Some suggest that the relational aspect of these evidence-based supervision practices may be particularly challenging for officers who supervise sex offenders, given social, cultural, and structural contexts; however, when officers engage in these core practices rather than using the majority of the time during face-to-face supervision contacts to focus on compliance with conditions, important changes in behavior and recidivism reduction are more likely to be achieved (Bailey & Sample, 2017).

Dosage

A growing body of evidence also suggests that correctional programs and community supervision are more effective when the cumulative amount — or dose — of interventions (e.g., contact hours, units of service, duration) is proportional to individuals' risk level. Low-risk offenders require minimal dosage, whereas moderate- and high-risk individuals require higher doses (Day et al., 2017; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005; Makarios, Sperber, & Latessa, 2014; Sperber, Latessa, & Makarios, 2016). Studies show that risk-based dosage, particularly for moderate- and high-risk individuals, significantly reduces recidivism (Day et al., 2017; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005; Makarios et al., 2014; Sperber et al., 2016). However, there appears to be a point of diminishing returns, after which additional dosage does not continue to have a positive impact and potentially undermines effectiveness (Day et al., 2017; Makarios et al., 2014; Sperber et al., 2016).

Incorporate Specialized “Sex Offense-Specific” Strategies

In addition to adhering to the evidence-based core correctional practices and approaches described above, officers supervising sex offenders must use specialized sex offense-specific approaches. Since this population poses different risk, needs, and stakes than the general correctional population, the following specialized supervision approaches are critical (see, e.g., CSOM et al., 2016; Cumming & McGrath, 2005; English et al., 1996; Lobanov-Rostovsky, 2014):

- **Specialized training:** Officers should receive specialized training on a wide range of topics, including the dynamics of sexual assault and its impact on victims, the diversity of sex offenders, risk factors linked to reoffending, assessing risk of sex offenders, the state of the research on sex offender management policies and practices, understanding sex offense-specific treatment, the roles of victim advocates, and collaboration. This ensures that officers are trained to conduct high-quality pre-sentence investigations, develop appropriate case management plans, and provide effective supervision.
- **Specialized assessment tools:** Sex offenders share a number of risk factors with the broader justice-involved population, but they also have a number of unique static and dynamic risk factors; hence the need for sex offender-specific instruments to assess their risk of reoffense (see, e.g., Gotch & Hanson, 2016). Several empirically validated, sex offense-specific risk assessments have been developed and are particularly beneficial for informing supervision levels, conditions, and case management plans; assessing changes in risk during routine supervision contacts; and developing victim safety plans (Gotch & Hanson, 2016).
- **Specialized pre-sentence investigations:** Pre-sentence investigations for sex offenders should include information above and beyond that covered in “traditional” pre-sentence investigations for other justice-involved individuals (Cumming & McGrath, 2005). They should provide a comprehensive picture of the defendant — reflecting the unique “sex offender-specific” risk factors — and of victim interests and safety considerations. For example, the specialized PSI should provide information about the sexually abusive behaviors that brought the defendant to the court's attention, the impact on the victims and secondary victims (the victim impact statement is an extremely important part of the PSI process), the defendant's sexual history, prior criminal behavior (including other sex offending behaviors), risk factors and protective factors, reoffense risk, strengths and assets, and current status with respect to education, employment, finances, and housing. The analysis of this information leads to comprehensive, well-grounded, victim-responsive recommendations to the courts that can promote effective



sentencing decisions, as well as post-sentencing supervision and management strategies that address victim protection and safety, offender accountability and risk management, and risk reduction (e.g., sex offense-specific treatment and other behavior change interventions; Cumming & McGrath, 2005).

- **Specialized conditions:** In addition to standard or “general” conditions (e.g., curfew, reporting requirements, employment requirements), officers should use specialized conditions to reduce and manage risk and unique dynamics associated with sexual assault. Common examples of specialized conditions include no-contact orders, required participation in sex offense-specific treatment, travel restrictions, GPS or electronic monitoring, prohibited or limited/monitored internet access, and restrictions on housing and employment. Since each person and situation is unique, supervision conditions should be imposed selectively, based on factors such as the perpetrator’s risk level, risk and protective factors, motivation, and amenability, and the survivor’s rights, needs, and interests in a given case (Cumming & McGrath, 2005). A “one size fits all” approach — using blanket supervision conditions — can result in conditions that are not relevant for the person under supervision, may hamper their ability to be successful in meeting risk-reducing goals, and can mean that officers are not focusing their time and resources on the specific individuals and factors that pose the greatest risk to victim and public safety (CSOM et al., 2016; Cumming & McGrath, 2005; Lobanov-Rostovsky, 2014).
- **Specialized collaborative partnerships:** To enhance supervision and management efforts, officers must collaborate with key stakeholders, including victim advocates, law enforcement officers, offense-specific treatment providers, and housing and employment representatives, whose complementary roles and responsibilities support the attainment of shared goals.

Applying evidence-based principles and core correctional practices as the foundation for specialized supervision strategies means that officers should:

- utilize reliable, sex offense-specific and general risk assessment tools to identify the recidivism risk of individuals on their caseloads;
- prioritize time and resources, including specialized technologies such as GPS/electronic monitoring and polygraphs (when warranted), for moderate- to high-risk sex offenders;
- provide risk-differentiated supervision dosage (e.g., contact hours, supervision length, referrals to risk-reducing programs and services), using greater dosage for higher-risk sex offenders;
- selectively recommend or apply specialized conditions that address the risk factors identified for a given individual;
- ensure that case management plans and office and field contacts focus primarily on changeable risk factors linked to sexual, violent, and general recidivism;
- capitalize on supervision contacts as opportunities to promote change, utilizing techniques and strategies demonstrated by research to be effective in reducing recidivism;
- engage clients in the development of success-oriented supervision plans that take into account approach goals, not solely avoidance goals;
- identify incentives and reinforce positive change and supervision compliance; and
- respond to all instances of supervision noncompliance consistently and in a timely manner, while taking into account reoffense risk and using strategies that are proportional to the nature and severity of the noncompliant behaviors.

Practices such as these not only increase the effectiveness of supervision but lead to cost savings as a result of reduced rates of reoffending (Drake, Aos, & Miller, 2009).³

This chapter provided foundational information about the research that supports good correctional practice and specialized sex offender supervision and the benefits of using those strategies. Chapter 4 will focus on how to integrate victim-centeredness into these approaches as correctional agencies work to avoid retraumatization of victims and to prevent additional victimization.

³Appendix A is a self-assessment tool that supervision officers can use to determine how evidence-based and sex offense-specific their agencies' and their own practices are.



SECTION 4

Going The Distance: Identifying Opportunities and Taking Action

An evidence-based supervision model, bolstered by specialized sex offense-specific strategies, can go a long way in helping achieve the “no more victims” goal that is shared by supervision officers, sexual assault victim advocates, and other criminal justice system and community stakeholders. Taking it to the next level — implementing a victim-centered approach — requires officers to capitalize on the various decision points and supervision processes that intersect with victims’ rights, needs, and interests and, at each point, to answer the question “What’s best for the victim and community?”⁴ Throughout, officers can move toward victim-centeredness by:

- recognizing sexual assault survivors as primary clients;
- building and maintaining partnerships with sexual assault victim advocates;
- adopting evidence-informed strategies that reduce reoffense risk and support positive change, not only for victims but also for those who perpetrate;
- respecting the voices and choices of sexual assault survivors;
- using a trauma-informed lens to guide interactions and interventions; and
- honoring victims’ rights.

⁴Appendix B is a self-assessment tool that supervision officers can use to determine how victim-centered their sex offender management practices are.

Mutual Understanding of Respective Roles, Responsibilities, and Perspectives

By establishing ongoing relationships with victim advocates, supervision agencies can demonstrate a strong commitment to a victim-centered approach. Ideally, victim advocates would be invited to join multidisciplinary case management/supervision teams. In addition, they might be asked to review victim impact statements, participate on planning councils or task forces, speak to treatment groups, or work with supervision agencies and other professionals to conduct community meetings, offer educational opportunities, or work on prevention initiatives.

Promoting victim-centered supervision practices requires that supervision officers and victim advocates understand one another's roles, responsibilities, and perspectives. For example, officers should:

- be aware of the different focuses and approaches of different types of victim advocates (e.g., community-based advocates and system-based advocates);
- appreciate the diversity of sexual assault victims whom victim advocates support, the range of survivors' experiences, the various ways in which sexual assault can affect them, and the different outcomes that they may seek in their cases; and
- understand the range of interventions and community resources that support healing/recovery.

Victim advocates should:

- have an understanding of the goals, objectives, and strategies for sex offense-specific treatment and supervision; and
- appreciate the diversity of the sex offender population and the ways in which these variations can impact intervention, management, and prevention (CSOM et al., 2016).

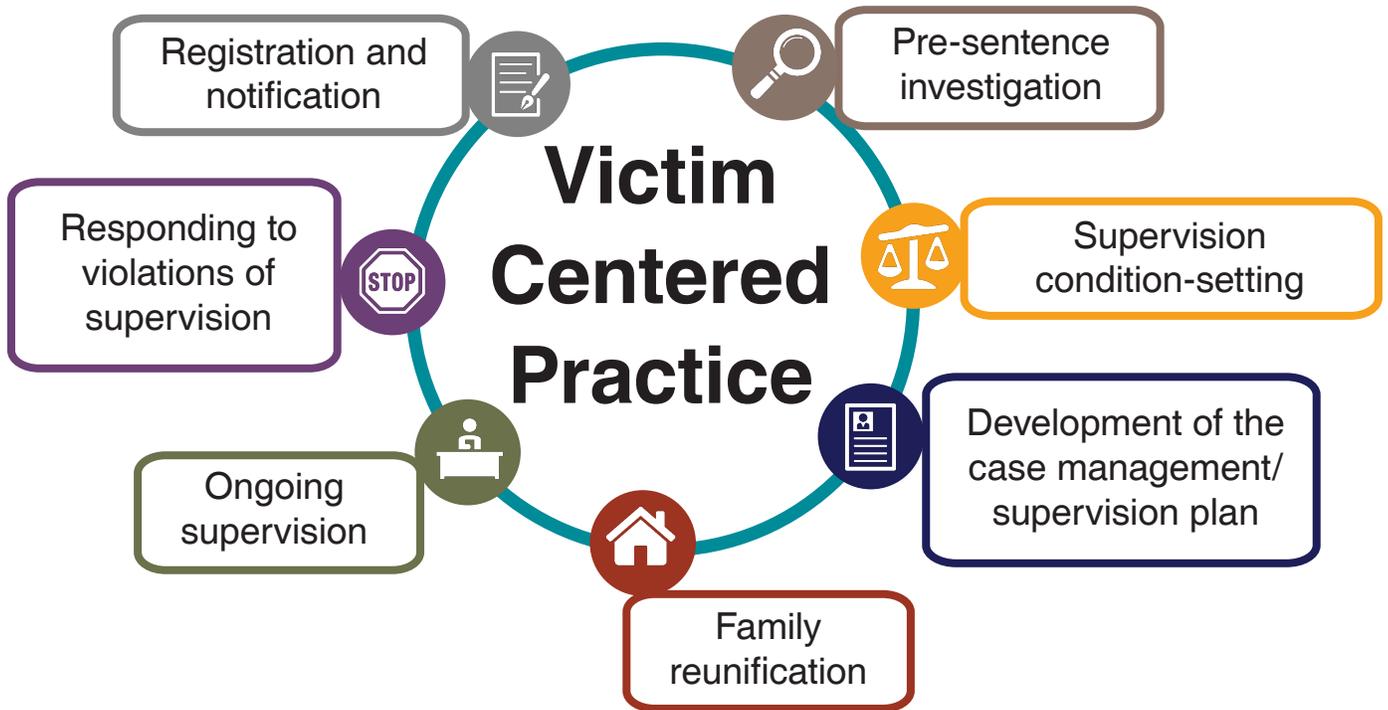
Victim-Centered Actions

Officers supervising sex offenders in the community can put the philosophy of victim-centeredness into action at the following decision points:

1. Specialized pre-sentence investigations
2. Supervision condition setting
3. Development of the case management/supervision plan
4. Ongoing supervision
5. Family reunification

6. Responding to violations of supervision
7. Registration and community notification

These are not mutually exclusive or necessarily linear; in fact, in some instances, they intersect and overlap. For the purpose of illustrating the different possibilities for victim-centered action, each phase or opportunity is presented separately below.



1. Specialized Pre-Sentence Investigations

Perhaps the first opportunity probation or court officers have to employ a victim-centered approach is through the specialized pre-sentence investigation (PSI) process. In addition to information related to the defendant and the offense, the PSI includes recommendations for probation conditions — should the person be placed on probation — as well as the victim impact statement (VIS). Although not required in all jurisdictions, specialized PSIs for sex offense cases are considered a best practice to inform sentencing and post-sentencing decisions because they address the unique and complex dynamics of sexual assault and allow victims to tell the courts about this very personal trauma and its impact on them (Cumming & McGrath, 2005).⁵

Officers can demonstrate victim-centeredness during this phase in the following ways:

- **Document the sexually abusive dynamics thoroughly in the PSI report, as the conviction of record may not tell the full story.** Many sex offense cases are resolved through plea agreements that reduce the original charges from sex offenses to non-sex offenses or from felonies to misdemeanors, or they may include fewer counts. This can send unintentional messages to survivors and others (e.g., family members, perpetrators, public) that the crimes were less serious, extensive, or harmful. Survivors may feel invalidated and ignored,

⁵Appendix C lists 10 areas to address when developing PSIs for sex offense cases, and Appendix D offers a sample outline of a specialized PSI report for sex offenders.

blamed or not believed, misled or betrayed, and unimportant to those in the criminal justice system. Keeping the sexually abusive dynamics visible in the report (as long as statutes or policies permit this) can help prevent system-induced harm to survivors, provide validation, and promote offender accountability.

- **Elevate the sexual assault survivor’s voice through the victim impact statement.** As noted previously, the dynamics of sexual abuse often have a silencing effect on victims (i.e., the loss of voice). They can later feel unheard or invisible throughout the criminal justice system, despite being the persons most impacted by the sexual assault. When survivors do not feel respected by, or included in, the process, they may become even more disillusioned and their healing process may be impeded. Furthermore, in the absence of critical perspectives and information that survivors provide, the sentencing decision, supervision conditions, and supervision and treatment approaches for perpetrators may not be as effective. Ultimately, this compromises victim and community safety.

The VIS is the mechanism through which officers and court officials uphold victims’ rights to provide input and be heard. Survivors can convey to the court, in their own words, the trauma they experienced, how it has affected them and others in their lives, safety concerns and other interests they have, and any other information they believe the sentencing judge should consider. Supervision agencies should ensure that their officers have readily available and up-to-date guidelines and instructions for obtaining a victim impact statement and including it in the PSI. In situations where the victim has not been afforded the critical opportunity to provide a VIS or sufficient time to complete it, it may be necessary for the officer to submit a request to the courts to reset the sentencing hearing until this can be accomplished.⁶

When initiating the process of obtaining the VIS for the PSI report, the investigating officer or other court official should:

- **notify** the victim of their right to provide a VIS and explain how it is used;
- **explain** options for providing the VIS (e.g., in writing, verbally, videotaped, other allowable methods) and who will have access to it;
- **encourage** victims to share any questions or concerns;
- **invite** them to complete a VIS;
- **offer** guidelines, resources, or other assistance that may be needed to complete the VIS (e.g., support from a victim advocate, language interpretation services, typing, transportation);
- **allow** sufficient time for the victim to complete the VIS; and
- **respect** their choice. Not all survivors will want to provide a VIS. A survivor’s decision can be affected by multiple factors, such as where they are in their own internal processing and healing, cultural and family influences, the relationship with the person who abused them, concerns about how the perpetrator or others will react, privacy interests, and trust in the system.

⁶Appendix E contains information for obtaining and recording a VIS, including a sample cover letter informing victims of their right to provide a VIS, answers to some commonly asked questions about the VIS, a sample VIS form, and a sample checklist for documenting financial losses.

- **Provide recommendations in the PSI report that are specific to the victim’s safety and other needs.** After all, this is the point of adopting a victim-centered approach and seeking survivors’ input: to demonstrate that the criminal justice system values them as a key stakeholder, that their voices have been heard, and that their interests are being considered. If PSI recommendations are solely perpetrator-focused, survivors and others may be left asking, “What’s the point?”
- **Engage victim advocates.** Completing a VIS can be cathartic and empowering, and it can contribute to a sense of personal agency for some sexual assault survivors. It can also be quite difficult, as survivors may be struggling with the effects of the abuse, hesitant about reliving the trauma, and fearful about what will happen at sentencing. Therefore, victim advocates are a valuable resource during the PSI and VIS processes. For example, at the individual case level, a victim advocate can:
 - assist probation staff with the initial outreach to survivors (including locating them) and notifying them about their right to provide a VIS;
 - serve as a liaison between the survivor and the officer, as some survivors may be more comfortable expressing themselves to a victim advocate or other professional;
 - provide support to the survivor should they choose to complete a VIS;
 - offer to be present with the survivor at the sentencing hearing for support; and
 - link them to community resources for survivors.

At the system level, victim advocates can support the PSI process in sexual assault cases by:

- providing training to officers about the VIS, what should be included, and ways to engage survivors effectively when seeking a VIS;
- raising officers’ awareness about the wide range of factors that can influence survivors’ decisions to

What should be included in the victim impact statement?

- Emotional, psychological, physical, and other damage caused
- Impact on victim’s intimate, and/or family relationships
- Medical care, mental health services, or other interventions needed as a result of the victimization
- Financial losses and impact (e.g., work leave, medical expenses, lost contributions to household income or benefits, lost child support, counseling)
- Restitution needs
- Potential collateral impact (e.g., social/community stigma or isolation, residential instability)
- Additional concerns or interests

For more information about victim impact statements, see <https://victimsofcrime.org/help-for-crime-victims/get-help-bulletins-for-crime-victims/victim-impact-statements> and https://www.ncjrs.gov/ovc_archives/reports/impact/impact.htm.

complete a VIS, the nature of information they choose to share, and the methods they prefer to use;

- helping develop or adapt VIS templates, guides, informational materials/brochures, and processes that are culturally, developmentally, and otherwise relevant for diverse groups of survivors; and
- identifying strengths and gaps in current policies and practices related to the PSI and VIS.

By conducting quality, specialized pre-sentence investigations, and ensuring survivors have the opportunity for their voices to be heard, officers can establish a tone of accountability and trust that can foster survivors' confidence and participation in the criminal justice system process, validate their experiences and feelings, and support empowerment and healing, while providing valuable information to encourage victim-centered decision-making at sentencing and post-sentencing, and throughout the supervision process.

When I read my victim impact statement in court, it was the first time I felt like anyone actually listened to me and was truly interested. I can't speak for other victims, but that was a turning point for me.

- Anonymous Survivor

2. Supervision Condition Setting

Conditions may be determined by the judge at sentencing, a paroling authority, or the supervision agency once the case has been assigned, depending on the jurisdiction. When judges set supervision conditions, it is often based on the recommendations from the probation officer or other person who conducts the PSI. For perpetrators returning to the community post-incarceration, the conditions may be set by a releasing/paroling authority or supervision agency.

If imposed judiciously and thoughtfully, specialized conditions contribute to a victim-centered approach to supervising sex offenders. They can be mechanisms to enhance perpetrator accountability; provide safeguards for identified victims who may remain vulnerable or fearful, other potentially vulnerable persons, and the public overall; and leverage perpetrators' participation in risk-reducing treatment.

There are several ways officers can approach condition setting to support evidence-based, trauma-informed, and victim-centered practices:

- **Invite survivors' perspectives about the types of conditions that will help make them feel safe, that they perceive to be just, and that they believe are important, given their knowledge about the perpetrator.** Some survivors desire strict controls and restrictions; others may have more punitive interests; and still others may want the perpetrator to be required to receive treatment to prevent them from reoffending. In some circumstances, such as when the person is a family member or intimate partner, survivors may have concerns about, or be opposed to, certain conditions being imposed because of the potential negative impact on themselves,

children and other family members, or even the perpetrator. For example, nonoffending partners, children, and other family members may lose financial, parenting, or other support from the person who committed the sexual abuse; experience housing disruption or be forced to relocate; or suffer stigma, social rejection, and harassment because the person in their family is a registered sex offender.

Survivors' requests about specific conditions cannot always be accommodated for a number of reasons; however, in a victim-centered approach, all concerns, requests, and questions must be heard, respected, considered, and responded to promptly.

- **Recommend or impose victim-responsive, individualized conditions based on factors that are relevant to a given case.** The victim impact statement, other information from or about the victim, the police report, the psychosexual evaluation, risk assessments, and other data from the specialized PSI can help guide the supervision officer and/or the court in considering the most appropriate conditions to address victim safety, feelings of vulnerability, and other interests that survivors may have. Persons who commit sex offenses are a diverse population, as are the victims of these crimes. Therefore, conditions should be individually tailored and assessment-driven, based on a given perpetrator's risk, intervention needs, and circumstances (which can change over time) and the safety needs, interests, and life circumstances of the victim (which can also change over time).
- **Be strategic and selective when recommending or imposing specialized conditions.** Some argue that a blanket set of conditions for all sex offenders yields better outcomes for victims and communities. However, the “more must be better” and “better safe than sorry” approaches run *counter* to victim-centeredness; they fail to take into account the individual circumstances of a given case, including the needs and interests of victims and their families.



Furthermore, the “more must be better” approach makes it difficult for officers to monitor and enforce conditions effectively and prevents them from focusing on the cases that require the closest monitoring, which can reduce victims' confidence in the system's ability to protect them. Again, conditions should be individually tailored, assessment-driven, and informed by the circumstances of each case.

- **Make restitution a priority for those survivors who report financial and other losses as a result of the sexual abuse.** This conveys to all parties that there is some type of accountability to the victim for the losses they experienced. Financial losses are one aspect of a crime. For victims who are struggling to make ends meet, even during the best of times, restitution can help prevent, or help them recover from, a financial crisis. Even when that is not a primary concern, restitution can contribute to a sense of justice and accountability. When the victim is not available, or does not want to receive financial payments from the offender, restitution can be awarded to a local victim advocacy organization as a proxy.

An individual who has been convicted of the rape of an adult may or may not present a risk to their own children. Similarly, some individuals who have sexually abused a child outside of the family pose a risk to children in their own home, whereas others may not. Imposing a blanket condition that prohibits contact with all children for all persons convicted of any sex offense is not always prudent. Some victims and families may desire ongoing involvement and contact, and may be able to establish a safe environment; others may not. Imposing a condition such as this should be carefully assessed on a case-by-case basis.

- **Provide survivors with information about conditions** to uphold their right to notification and information, when they request to be notified. Officers should include as much detail as possible about the purposes and potential benefits and limitations of the conditions and about other safeguards that have been put in place to reassure survivors that their well-being is a priority. In addition, officers should explain the rationale for imposing (or not imposing) specific conditions. It may also be helpful to explain the circumstances under which conditions can be modified (e.g., based on new information, changes in risk, the perpetrator's compliance or noncompliance, changes in the survivor's needs and life circumstances). Lastly, survivors should know whom to contact if they have any concerns or questions regarding safety for themselves or others, suspicious behaviors, or potential violations of conditions.

3. Development of the Case Management/Supervision Plan

The supervision or case management plan is the individualized “roadmap” that outlines the goals, terms and conditions, expectations, and strategies for the person convicted of the sex offense(s). Specialized risk assessments and psychosexual evaluations of the perpetrator are generally used to determine supervision levels, contact requirements, expectations and goals, and strategies to attain those goals. In a victim-centered approach, developing the supervision plan is explicitly viewed as an opportunity to ensure that the victim's safety, needs, and interests are being considered.

Examples of ways in which officers can implement victim-centered practices when developing the supervision or case management plan include the following:

- **Seek survivors' input, recognizing that they may have unique insights and knowledge that can inform the supervision plan.** Depending on the nature of the relationship or their level of familiarity with the person who sexually assaulted them, survivors and their loved ones may be able to shed light on the perpetrator's behavior patterns, grooming techniques, and risk factors — as well as strengths and protective factors — that may not be readily apparent to the officers.

- **Assess suitability of housing and employment plans through the lens of victim safety.** These suitability assessments should take into account not only identified victims but also individuals who are potentially vulnerable, given the perpetrator's offense patterns, risk, and modus operandi. Depending on the circumstances of the case, officers can develop strategies to mitigate this risk through supervision that addresses proximity of the perpetrator's home to the victim's home or other at-risk groups; safety planning for victims and perpetrators; and recommendations for structural changes (e.g., door alarms) or "house policies" that address boundaries, operating norms, privacy, "eyes on" supervision, and bystander interventions.

- **Include victim advocates on multidisciplinary case management/supervision teams.** This helps to ensure that survivors' interests and perspectives are represented and to determine whether the strategies in the supervision plan realistically address victims' safety concerns or may have the potential for unintended collateral consequences. Beyond the individual case at hand, having victim advocates on multidisciplinary teams can help team members routinely think about supervision strategies and safety plans through a victim-centered and trauma-informed lens.

- **Recognize that alternative models of accountability may be appropriate, given the victim's relationship with the perpetrator.** In some situations, and with the victim's permission, it may be desirable to explore alternative models of accountability. Often, these alternative models

Depending on the individual circumstances of the case, specialized conditions that can support a victim-centered approach to supervising sex offenders may include the following:

- no contact with the victim(s);
- prohibited, restricted, or supervised contact with minors;
- required approval for home plans (e.g., location, occupants);
- required approval for employment circumstances (e.g., type, location, coworkers);
- restricted travel or leisure activities;
- GPS monitoring, and/or travel restrictions;
- prohibited, restricted, or closely monitored access to computers, phones, or other devices (e.g., for persons whose offense dynamics, victim access, and other risk factors are linked to such use, such as internet-facilitated offenses, cases involving internet stalking or harassment);
- sex offense-specific treatment and other relevant interventions (e.g., to address interpersonal violence, anger management, substance abuse); and
- restitution to victims for costs incurred as a result of the sexual abuse.

are most appropriate when the victim and perpetrator know one another, or when they are from the same community (such as a college, neighborhood, or faith group). One alternative model is restorative justice conferencing programs. Restorative justice approaches can contribute to a victim-centered approach by acknowledging harm not only to the victim but also to the victim’s loved ones and to the community.⁷ Another alternative model is Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA). COSA is a promising evidence-informed supervision strategy that utilizes well-trained community volunteers to support community reintegration and stability for high-risk sex offenders, particularly those who lack community supports (see, e.g., Wilson, McWhinnie, Picheca, Prinzo, & Cortoni, 2007).



These models of accountability communicate that long-term, meaningful behavior change, reparation, and restoration — not punishment or banishment — can be important end goals for some. If ultimately determined to be an appropriate goal for supervision and treatment, such approaches must be very carefully planned and closely monitored to ensure that the goals are being met and that survivors are not further harmed by the process. This requires collaboration with victim advocates, treatment professionals, and others.

4. Ongoing Supervision

Over the course of the perpetrator’s term of supervision, when officers are responsible for the routine and ongoing implementation and monitoring of the supervision plan, there are many opportunities to implement victim-centered practices:

- **Honor survivors’ rights to information and notification.** Many survivors have a variety of questions, concerns, and information needs that arise while the perpetrator is under supervision. Common questions pertain to the perpetrator’s current status in the system, the goals and strategies used for supervision, any changes in the person’s conditions of supervision, and their compliance with requirements and expectations. For some survivors, having this information can offer a level of control or predictability, help them feel empowered, and provide reassurances. It can also increase their confidence that the system views them as valuable stakeholders whose voices are heard and respected. At the same time, depending on information and the way it is presented, it can sometimes trigger traumatic memories or even raise safety concerns; therefore, some survivors may choose not to receive any further information about the person who sexually abused them once the sentence has been ordered.

⁷One promising victim-centered restorative justice program, RESTORE, uses victim–offender conferencing as an alternative to standard criminal justice processing for some sexual assault cases (see, e.g., Koss, 2014).

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN SETTING CONDITIONS AND DEVELOPING SUPERVISION PLANS

In a victim-centered approach, officers should consider the following questions when making decisions about conditions and developing the case management/supervision plan:

1. What safety concerns has the survivor or survivor's family expressed?
2. What is the nature of the relationship between the survivor and the person who offended sexually? Does the survivor have — or wish to have — an ongoing relationship with the person who committed the offense?
3. Does the survivor express a desire for alternative resolution/restoration strategies?
4. What information might the survivor have about the person's offense patterns and risk factors that could inform conditions or the supervision plan?
5. Is this supervision plan likely to provide realistic assurances and adequate safeguards for the survivor?
6. Are these strategies likely to help the offender lead a more prosocial life and regulate harmful behaviors?
7. What are the victim's needs with respect to restitution?
8. What do the risk level, risk factors, motivations, history, and patterns of the perpetrator indicate about individuals who may be particularly vulnerable or at risk?
9. What environmental factors need to be addressed in this case to decrease perpetration opportunities?
10. What conditions or strategies can help address these issues?
11. What safeguards are already in place?
12. Will any conditions place a hardship on the survivor or family members, or create other collateral consequences that must be weighed?
13. What are the potential benefits and risks to survivors and others from imposing — or not imposing — certain supervision conditions?
14. Are the conditions relevant, realistic, and enforceable?

Taking the time to establish conditions and develop supervision plans in the context of these questions can help increase the likelihood of successful outcomes and promote a victim-centered approach.

To ensure that they uphold victims' right to information and notification throughout supervision, officers should take the following steps:

- **Provide the initial notification** about the sentencing decision and respond to any questions, concerns, or needs victims may have, such as safety planning, and provide information about local resources, services, and supports for victims, as well as contact information should they have further questions or concerns.
- **Ask survivors if they would like to receive ongoing notifications.** If they would, ask them about the best ways to be in touch.
- **Frame field contacts as an opportunity to assess in “real time” any potential risk factors that may compromise the safety of victims or other vulnerable individuals.** Field contacts, particularly home visits, are essential to observe or collect information firsthand that otherwise may not be readily evident or disclosed in an office visit or telephone contact. Through their routine presence in the field, supervision officers can demonstrate to survivors, families, and others — including perpetrators — that they are committed to protecting victims, public safety, holding offenders accountable, and promoting stability and lasting change.
 - **Assess the safety** of the victim and others who may be particularly vulnerable or at risk in the context of the perpetrator's offense history, modus operandi, and risk factors.
 - **Observe the interpersonal dynamics between individuals in the household** in cases where the perpetrator returns to live at home and has a history of abusing intimate partners or children in the home. Identify ways to engage survivors and others in the household privately to explore how things are going. Inquire about their safety needs and whether they feel threatened directly or implicitly, and determine if they fear the consequences that the perpetrator may face.
 - **Build and maintain relationships with community supports and volunteers.** This network of collateral contacts can provide officers with additional “eyes and ears” in the field.
 - **Review and support behavior management and safety plans with the offender.** Inquire about any challenges the individual has experienced, support problem-solving to reinforce relapse prevention plans, engage community supports, and promote behavior change. Help offenders practice coping skills and manage their risk; model healthy boundaries; and reinforce those who are challenging victim-blaming or offense-supportive attitudes and statements. Survivors and others affected by abuse in the home (e.g., family members, other children) can also be a source of positive support-building and can help strengthen protective factors.
- **Honor privacy and maintain the confidentiality of victim information,** including where the information is kept and who has access to it. Victim information should be limited to those with a “need to know.” Where automated systems are in place, ensure that victim information is kept separate from offender file information (see, e.g., APPA, n.d.).
- **Support restitution fulfillment.** Supervision officers can help perpetrators understand the value — both for survivors and for themselves — of fulfilling their restitution obligations. For example, fulfilling restitution obligations is a way for perpetrators to acknowledge and repair some of the damage that they have done, and to demonstrate commitment to a prosocial

lifestyle. Officers can then work with the offender to identify ways that they might obtain the necessary resources to fulfill restitution obligations.

- **Respond effectively to disclosures about additional victims over the course of supervision.**

As perpetrators engage more fully in the change process over the course of supervision and treatment, they may become more open and insightful about their patterns of behaviors, recognize the impact of those behaviors, disclose additional victims, and become more motivated to ensure that these victims are able to receive any assistance they need. This is a complex situation that requires careful consideration as survivors have their own reasons for coming forward or not, may not realize that what happened was abuse, may not be able to communicate that what they experienced was abuse, may be in an environment that is safe and supportive and not want to revisit the abuse, or may not want others to know that they were abused.



Policies must be in place so that officers know what to do when perpetrators disclose additional victims. These policies should include information such as the following:

- Supervision officers are among those professionals required to report sexual abuse and assault.
 - Engage victim advocates and service providers to find out what victims might want/need.
 - Consider carefully the dangers of cold calling a newly disclosed victim. Remember that victims didn't disclose for a reason; this should be approached very carefully.
- **Partner with victim advocates during the supervision phase.** Advocates can help supervision officers understand behaviors and dynamics that frequently occur with victimization; shed light on the needs of victims and on specific goals (such as whether they desire an ongoing relationship with the perpetrator and, if so, under what circumstances) that will contribute to healing, safety planning, and supervision strategies, recognizing that victims' needs and goals may change over time; and provide insights that may help the supervision officer better manage other similar cases.

5. Family Reunification

When sexual abuse is perpetrated within a family unit or household, the dynamics can be particularly complex and challenging for all parties to navigate. The extreme violation and betrayal of trust can cause irreparable damage to relationships, leading some victims and other family members to sever ties completely with the person who committed the abuse. Others may be less certain and need a temporary break to feel safe, begin to cope with the effects, and consider next steps.

Many want to maintain some level of relationship with the person who committed the abuse, but they want the abuse to stop, want the abuser to receive treatment, and need help restoring relationships and creating a safe and healthy environment (Tabachnick & Pollard, 2016).

Supervision officers inevitably will face decisions about reunification. Some officers and other practitioners are strongly opposed to the notion of family reunification under any circumstances. They may view the family dynamics as unalterable, consider the safety risks too high, be skeptical about whether individuals who perpetrate sexual abuse can change, or believe that there are no benefits — and potentially only further harm — that can come from it. Some may be skeptical about why anyone would want to be reconnected or reunified and believe that punishment and permanent separation are the only appropriate options (Gilligan & Bumby, 2005).

However, some perpetrators pose a low risk, families may have many protective factors, victims are ready to reunify, and safety plans are already in place. In order for family reunification to occur effectively, decisions and practices must be grounded in a trauma-informed and victim-centered approach (Tabachnick & Pollard, 2016). The process of reunification must be gradual, deliberate, and incremental; it should be flexible and responsive to changes in the perpetrator's risk, protective factors, progress in treatment, and compliance with supervision, as well as to changes in survivors' and family members' lives and healing process or stage of their reactions to the abuse; and it should address victims' comfort, needs, and safety. Family reunification requires collaboration among advocates, treatment providers, victim therapists, and supervision agencies. Indeed, it should only be considered if all the professionals involved agree that the parties are ready to embark on the process, that safety can be maintained for everyone in the family, and that reunification is a positive decision for everyone involved (Gilligan & Bumby, 2005; Tabachnick & Pollard, 2016).

In the context of family reunification, supervision officers can support victim-centeredness in multiple ways:

- **Acknowledge the harm** caused to all parties by the perpetrator's behavior (Tabachnick & Pollard, 2016).
- **Understand the circumstances surrounding the abuse.** This may include the nature of the relationship, how long the abuse was perpetrated, and the extent to which the perpetrator takes responsibility and commits to change (Cumming & McGrath, 2005).
- **Seek to understand, acknowledge, and respect survivors' beliefs and values regarding reconnection or reunification.** Survivors may have conflicting loyalties. Clearly, there



are many factors that may affect their desire to reunify, including cultural or religious influences, emotional attachments, and reliance on the perpetrator for social, family, emotional, or financial support (Tabachnick & Pollard, 2016).

- **Appreciate the potential benefits and healing value of reconnection and reunification.** Reconnection and reunification can benefit some survivors' and families' healing process. It can strengthen skills and protective factors, enhance family stability and functioning, build self-efficacy and empowerment for those who were harmed, and leverage accountability and meaningful change for the person who committed the abuse. It can literally change the balance of power within the family (Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers, 2014; Gilligan & Bumby, 2005; Tabachnick & Pollard, 2016).
- **Establish a relationship with the survivor and other affected family members.** It is important that the relationship be built on trust so that survivors and other affected individuals are able to express safety and other concerns.⁸
- **Employ a trauma-informed, gradual, incremental, collaborative, deliberate approach.** As "convener," or team leader, the supervision officer should ensure that all stakeholders (e.g., treatment provider(s) for the offender, victim services provider, victim/child advocate, caregiver) are at the table and deciding collectively if reconnection or reunification is advisable. Reconnection or reunification cannot occur when victims are opposed to it or when any of the professionals with a role in the process believe that it is contraindicated or not in the best interests of the survivor. If the decision is made to move forward with family reunification, it must be done in a collaborative, gradual manner.
- **Support the team in establishing and implementing comprehensive safety plans for all persons involved.** These plans should recognize risk factors, warning signs or red flags, patterns, and protective factors and strengths.⁹ Officers should make sure the offender, victim, and, in the case of sexual assault of a child, the nonoffending partner, understand expectations, the importance of boundaries, and what to do if they feel that they need help.
- **Continually monitor and reevaluate the safety and well-being of all family members after reconnection or reunification.** Acknowledge and remain mindful of the potential risk, keeping victim safety and the best interests of victims and other vulnerable individuals in the home paramount. Supervision officers should conduct home visits to assess in real time the adherence to safety plans and other expectations of the reunification plan; assess communication patterns and observe the dynamics in the home between the perpetrator, survivor, nonoffending partner, or other family members; and gather information from collateral contacts who are serving as additional eyes and ears in the field.

It is not always possible for everyone to live together in one household again, but some healing, learning, boundary-setting, and accountability may occur that allows for some ongoing contact and relationships, if the survivor desires. In situations when family reunification is agreed upon but has to be halted or cannot continue, it is important that survivors be supported in dealing with the additional feelings of loss or trauma that they may experience (Tabachnick & Pollard, 2016).

⁸See Appendix F for victim-responsive communication do's and don'ts.

⁹See elements of a safety plan in Tabachnick & Pollard, 2016.

6. Responding to Violations of Supervision

Supervision officers have a duty to hold the person who sexually abused the victim accountable and to ensure that the person is following the conditions and expectations that are designed to reduce and manage the risk to victim and public safety. When the perpetrator fails to comply with the conditions of supervision, the survivor and others in their life may feel threatened. By addressing noncompliance quickly and with certainty, officers can demonstrate to the victim, their loved ones, the public, and the offender that they are invested in accountability, preventing reoffending, and protecting victims and communities.

The ways in which officers address noncompliance can “make or break” the perceptions of survivors and others about whether the officer or the justice system overall is genuinely interested in hearing and addressing their concerns.

- **Educate victims about the risk factors that may signal noncompliant or violation behavior** and invite them to share any risk factors of which they may be aware. As was mentioned previously, depending on the nature of the relationship, survivors may know the offenders’ behaviors and modus operandi better than anyone and be well-positioned to identify “red flags” for noncompliance or violations.
- **Keep open the lines of communication with victims and collateral contacts.** Officers should assure survivors and their loved ones at the outset of supervision that they are committed to their safety and to accountability, and that they can be contacted at any time if there are concerns about suspicious behavior or if conditions may have been violated.
- **Follow up on victims’ concerns in a timely manner.** Responding to survivors in a timely and sensitive manner, assuring them that their confidentiality will be maintained if possible, is critical. In addition, officers should maintain close contact with the victim after they’ve expressed concerns to ensure that they are not being further threatened by the perpetrator, and they should take steps to provide additional safeguards to the survivor or other vulnerable individuals, if warranted.

This is especially true in instances of intimate partner violence. Officers must be sensitive to what information about the noncompliance or violation they present to the offender and how they share that information; they should ask victims about the safest way to follow up with them; and they should determine whether any further steps need to be taken. For example, the offender may need to be removed from the home, or no contact orders may have to be put in place.

- **Make sure that victims are aware of their rights with respect to violations and noncompliance,** including their right to be present at any violation/revocation hearing processes and, in some circumstances, to offer input into responses to the violations or noncompliance.
- **Be candid and realistic.** Survivors should know that all instances of noncompliance will result in a response; however, they must understand that responses may look different depending on

the circumstance. For example, a violation may not result in a formal violation hearing, sanction, and/or revocation of probation, with the perpetrator being remanded back to custody. Rather, a violation may result in additional office visits, increased home visits, GPS monitoring, additional conditions, or treatment interventions, depending on the underlying reason for the violation and the discretion of the supervision agency.

- **Communicate to the victim the response to the noncompliance or violation.** Without knowing the response and being provided with a rationale for how the behavior was handled, the victim may believe that the behavior wasn't addressed at all or that the response was inadequate or inappropriate and that their concerns weren't heard. This can lead to further trauma to survivors and to mistrust of the system.

Engaging or collaborating with victim advocates can be beneficial to officers and survivors with respect to issues of noncompliance or violations. For example, victim advocates can:

- be a “sounding board” for survivors, who may be more comfortable sharing their concerns with victim advocates rather than with supervision officers;
- communicate with officers about victim safety concerns, report suspicious behaviors that potentially violate conditions, and report unwanted communication from an offender or an actual reoffense;
- participate in or conduct notifications to survivors about violation behaviors, for those who wish to receive such information;
- explain to victims any violation/revocation hearing processes and their rights to participate or be heard, help them prepare should they choose to participate, and support them through the process; and
- help survivors with safety planning, as needed.

A multidisciplinary team — including a victim advocate — can be particularly helpful at this time to assist with information gathering, strategizing about ways to address the violation, reviewing goals and plans, and supporting supervision officers in carrying out their responsibilities. Depending on the nature of the violation, this may be a time to consider or update protection orders, safety plans, and other safeguards and precautions in order to ensure victim and community safety, as well as to revise the case management/supervision plan to address skill deficits that may have contributed to the violation or noncompliance.

7. Registration and Community Notification

Registration and community notification laws are mechanisms to track sex offenders and increase public awareness about registered sex offenders who may be residing in a given community, such that victims and other citizens can take protective measures when warranted. Registration and notification can be one means of addressing victims' rights, needs, and interests — specifically the right to be informed; the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and sensitivity; and the right to protection. At the same time, there is a heightened potential for registration and notification to run counter to victim safety, needs, and interests. For example, even though sex offender registration laws expressly prohibit victims' identities from being included in the publicly accessible information in the registries, if members of a community are aware that a sex offender is living in the

area, they may try to guess the identity of the victim, who is often a member of the perpetrator’s family or household. The victim’s identity may be inadvertently revealed — taking away their right to privacy and confidentiality — or someone may be incorrectly identified as a victim.

The opportunity for supervision officers to contribute to a victim-centered approach through duties related to registration and notification include the following:

- **Ensure that individuals on their caseloads are compliant with registration requirements.** Holding offenders accountable and ensuring compliance is central to a victim-centered supervision approach and demonstrates a commitment to offender accountability. When sex offenders are not where they say they are, or cannot be located, officers cannot effectively ensure protection safeguards.
- **Verify/support the accuracy of sex offender registries.** Officers can ensure that sex offender registry information is accurate for those under their supervision. This accuracy is necessary in order for survivors, the general public, law enforcement, and others to be able to effectively use the information as intended (e.g., safety measures, prevention).
- **Collaborate with law enforcement.** Officers can help educate law enforcement about sex offenders’ risk factors of which they should be aware.
- **Use address and employment verification contacts** to help identify indicators that may signal victim safety concerns or vulnerabilities and, equally important, to educate employers and housing officials about the negative impacts of registration/notification on victims, families, and the public.
- **Participate in collaborative approaches to community notification.** In some jurisdictions, community notification meetings are convened by multi-disciplinary teams that include advocates. This demonstrates that different entities with different points of view (supervision officers, victim advocates, community members, law enforcement, and other stakeholders) are working together toward the shared goal of community safety.

Victims and family members, family members of the perpetrator, and the public may have questions about registration and notification, such as:

- What is the purpose of registration and notification?
- What do I do if I learn that a registered sex offender lives near me?
- What are steps that I can take to protect myself and my family?
- Why do some registration requirements vary from person to person?
- How will this affect me, my children, and/or other family members?
- How might registration and notification affect me or my loved ones if the perpetrator is in the family?
- Do registration and notification make me safer?
- What if I have information about someone who is on the registry?
- Who is responsible for making sure that registration is enforced?
- How is registration different from supervision overall?
- Can a person be removed from the registry? If so, how?

Supervision officers, victim advocates, and law enforcement officials can partner to help answer these and other questions.



- **Remain attuned to the potential adverse impact of registration and notification on survivors, secondary victims, and families.** Children, intimate partners, and other family members of registered sex offenders can be impacted adversely by registration and notification (Frenzel, Bowen, Spraitz, Bowers, & Phaneuf, 2014; Lasher & McGrath, 2012; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009; Tewksbury & Levenson, 2009).
 - Financial hardships can result from the offender’s loss of employment or difficulty finding employment because they are on the sex offender registry.
 - Survivors, secondary victims, and families may be stigmatized, subjected to negative public sentiment, threatened or harassed by neighbors and others in the community, or socially isolated, shamed, and ostracized from social networks because a person in their circle of trust is on the registry.
 - Children may be stigmatized, bullied, shunned, and treated differently by teachers and peers.
 - Survivors, secondary victims, and families may have their lives disrupted. For example, they may be forced to move or their homes may be vandalized.
 - For survivors and others close to them, community notification can resurface emotions and memories associated with the abuse or raise safety concerns (Tabachnick & Klein, 2011). Officers should partner with victim advocates to offset the potential for negative impacts as a result of registration and notification.
- **Utilize community meetings as opportunities to educate the public about the goals of supervision, sex offenders in general, and community notification practices.** Supervision officers can
 - reinforce the goal of community safety;
 - provide general information about the supervision process and systems of accountability;

- share factual information about individuals who commit sex offenses and about common dynamics and relationships;
- help the community understand the kinds of information contained in the sex offender registry and how they can use/access the registry in ways that can support victim safety and prevent future victimization; and
- discuss other prevention-related initiatives that can strengthen the community and decrease the incidence of sexual assaults and other crimes.

Conclusion

As outlined in this chapter, supervision agencies have an inordinate amount to gain by including victim advocates in their work and in considering the perspective of victims in their policies, procedures, and everyday practice. While historically this idea may have seemed somewhat radical, collaboration between justice agencies and victim advocacy organizations is becoming much more common. We remain hopeful that these partnerships will continue to grow and evolve over time in order to best serve the needs of the victims of sexual violence and of the larger community. For several examples about how several such collaboratives have operationalized this kind of practice, see Appendix G of this document.

Victims are no longer on the sidelines in the sex offender management process. They now have a key place at the table.

- Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, 2008

APPENDIX A

Exploring Current Practices, Part 1: Evidence-Based and Specialized Approaches to Supervising Sex Offenders

The questions in the self-assessment below are designed to help you to consider the extent to which supervision policies and practices in your jurisdiction are aligned with current “best practices,” and to begin to consider ways in which adjustments may be beneficial.

	Yes	No
1. Does your agency utilize a specialized model of supervision for sex offenders?		

	A lot	Fairly little	A moderate amount	None
2. How much training have you received about specialized supervision of sex offenders?				

3. Does your agency have policies, procedures, or protocols/manuals that provide standards/clear guidance for the following?	Yes	No	Not sure
• Conducting specialized pre-sentence investigations for sex offenders			
• Developing victim impact statements for pre-sentence investigations for sex offenders			
• Using specialized, sex offender-specific risk assessment tools to guide supervision decisions (e.g., supervision level, supervision/case management plans)			
• Developing individualized supervision/case management plans			
• Modifying supervision/case management plans periodically over the course of supervision			
• Developing individualized supervision/case management plans			

4. In your jurisdiction:	<i>Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
• How often are specialized pre-sentence investigations for sex offenders conducted?				
• How often are specialized supervision conditions imposed for sex offenders?				

5. Which of the following are used in your jurisdiction to assess recidivism risk for sex offenders? (Check all that apply)	
• Validated sex offender-specific risk assessment tools (e.g., Static-99R, VASOR-2, Stable-2007, Acute-2007)	
• Validated “general” risk assessment tools (e.g., COMPASS, LSI-R)	
• Professional judgment/discretion	
• Don't know/other _____	

6. How often do you use validated sex offender-specific risk assessments for the following?	<i>Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
• Conducting pre-sentence investigations				
• Determining supervision levels/contact requirements				
• Recommending/setting probation conditions				
• Developing initial case management/supervision plans				
• Adjusting case management/supervision plans over time				

7. How true are the following statements in your jurisdiction regarding sex offenders?	<i>Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision strategies (level, intensity, contacts) are differentiated by assessed risk level 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision/case management plans and activities focus primarily on criminogenic needs (i.e., changeable risk factors) 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision strategies are adjusted to take into account individual offender characteristics (e.g., learning style, motivation, culture, cognitive/developmental functioning) 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The supervision model is primarily focused on monitoring compliance and sanctions 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A “balanced” model is used (i.e., a combination of risk management, enforcement, and rehabilitative, risk-reducing, and change-promoting strategies) 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers use behavioral techniques (i.e., core correctional practices such as modeling, skill practice, reinforcement) during face-to-face contacts 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusting case management/supervision plans over time 				

8. When supervising sex offenders, how much time do you spend on the following?	<i>A lot</i>	<i>Fairly little</i>	<i>A moderate amount</i>	<i>None</i>
• Surveillance/monitoring				
• Searches (computer, phone, internet)				
• Searches (home, vehicle)				
• Responding to noncompliance/violations of conditions				
• Office contacts				
• Field contacts (e.g., home and employment visits)				
• Interacting with non-offending partners, families, and other supports				
• Developing supervision/case management plans				
• Using change-promoting behavioral techniques (e.g., reinforcement, modeling, skill practice)				
• Routine documentation/paperwork				
• Address verifications				
• Communicating with sex offense-specific treatment providers				
• Communicating with law enforcement				
• Communicating with victim advocates				
• Referrals to programs/services (i.e., substance use, mental health, housing, employment)				
• Participating on multidisciplinary case management teams				

Appendix B

Exploring Current Practices, Part 2: Victim-Centered Approaches to Supervising Sex Offenders

The following questions are designed to encourage your thinking about the extent to which your current practices reflect victim-centeredness and to consider potential actions you could take to implement a victim-centered approach.

	<i>A great deal</i>	<i>A moderate amount</i>	<i>A limited amount</i>	<i>Not at all</i>
1. To what extent do the sex offender-specific policies in your agency reflect a victim-centered approach?				
2. To what extent do you believe that your own practices reflect a victim-centered approach?				
3. Do pre-sentence investigations reflect a victim-centered approach?				
4. To what extent do officers collaborate with victim advocates and victim service providers in your community?				
5. To what extent are you familiar with local resources and services for victims in your community?				
6. How often do you communicate with victims or victim advocates for the following?	<i>Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
• Seeking survivors' input for victim impact statements for pre-sentence investigations				
• Notifying survivors about supervisees' current status in the system				
• Providing information about supervisees' compliance with supervision				

6. How often do you communicate with victims or victim advocates for the following? (Cont.)	<i>Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information about supervisees' participation/progress in treatment 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing restitution-related issues 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking a survivor's perspectives or input to guide case plans, conditions, or strategies for a given supervisee 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing key information about a given supervisee to guide safety plans for survivors 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing family reunification issues 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring safety concerns, perpetrators' suspicious/risky behavior, or potential violations of conditions 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging them (victim advocates) in providing information to supervisees about victim impact 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering referrals for resources/services in the community 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information about what supervision entails 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in multidisciplinary case management team meetings 				

7. What are the barriers to collaboration between victim advocates and investigation or supervision officers in your community? (Check all that apply)

- The lack of shared goals
- Not knowing who they are
- Lack of clarity about respective roles and responsibilities
- No written policies or memoranda of understanding
- Limited opportunities to interact
- Limited or no exposure to promising examples/models from other communities
- The lack of written resources (e.g., guidebooks, toolkits, curricula) to provide guidance or direction
- Professional mistrust/perceived competing interests
- Demanding workloads
- Other (please specify):

8. What specific steps can you take to enhance victim-centeredness in your routine practices?

9. What additional information, support, or resources might benefit you in this regard?

APPENDIX C

Quick Reference: 10 Considerations for Specialized Pre-Sentence Investigations for Sex Offense Cases

The purpose of the specialized pre-sentence investigation (PSI) is to provide the sentencing court with objective and comprehensive information about the defendant, the offense, victim and community impact, and other considerations to help the court make an informed sentencing decision. The following 10 areas are important to address when conducting a specialized PSI and documenting the findings.

1. **Governing Laws and Policies:** Statutes, codes, and agency policies provide critical direction regarding the scope of, and processes for, PSIs, including policies designed to protect the sensitive and confidential information in the PSIs. The investigator must be familiar with and adhere to any and all regulations.
2. **Record Reviews:** Officers should become familiar with the case by identifying, collecting, and reviewing comprehensive information from official records prior to interviewing the defendant. This information includes criminal complaints, police reports, affidavits, victim statements, plea agreements, and records pertaining to prior delinquency and criminal history, response to diversion, supervision, or incarceration, social/family services involvement, employment, education, military service, and treatment. This information should be concisely but thoroughly documented in the report.
3. **Offense Details:** The offense narrative should include a detailed description of the nature and range of the offending behaviors. This is particularly important, as the conviction type alone may not appear to be a sex offense or sexually motivated offense behavior, and may not reveal the extent of the behaviors. Even though a complete accounting of the crime may not always be needed by the sentencing court, such details are important for victim safety considerations, prison classification, release decisions, and community supervision conditions.
4. **Defendant's Version of Offense:** It is important to provide the defendant with the opportunity to describe the incident(s) resulting in the current legal involvement and to explore and document any discrepancies with the police report or affidavit. Officers should note if the defendant provides statements that indicate full or partial denial, minimization, justification, victim blaming, or externalization of blame. The extent to which the defendant takes responsibility for the offense and the defendant's attitudes about the victim or understanding of victim impact should also be documented.
5. **Defendant's History and Status:** Officers should interview the defendant to obtain information about the family background and current relationships with family; marital history and status; intimate partners; children/stepchildren; associates and gang affiliations; educational and/or employment history and skills; military service; cognitive/developmental functioning; substance use; and medical and mental health status, including prior and current treatment needs and stability. Given the nature of the offense, it is important to include information about the defendant's sexual history, development, consensual and non-consensual behaviors, and prior sex offenses, as well as internet and social media utilization, including types of devices, frequency, and purposes (e.g., entertainment, social, education- or employment-re-

lated). Officers should explore the defendant's willingness to discuss problem sexual behavior and other factors that contributed to the offense. In addition, officers should document the defendant's financial status and financial management skills; residential circumstances and stability, and prior residential information; leisure activities; companions; spiritual interests, religious affiliations, and practices; community supports; strengths, assets, and accomplishments; and specific risks and intervention needs. Follow-up interviews are often required.

6. **Victim Input, Impact:** The officer should make clear and reasonable efforts to contact adult victims or caregivers of minor victims to provide the opportunity for their perspectives to be shared with the courts, to determine the desired level of involvement in the case over time, and to obtain information not already shared by the victim that may be important for decision-making. A victim advocate may be an important resource for this process. Upon contacting the victim, officers or victim advocates should explain the purpose of obtaining the victim impact statement, relevant victims' rights, and post-conviction processes. The victim should be informed that the impact statement will be available to the court, prosecutor, defense attorney, and/or defendant pursuant to applicable statutes, and be advised to include information about emotional trauma, physical injuries sustained, any long-term disability, the need for medical and/or psychiatric care, financial expenses or losses, current or future safety concerns, and requests regarding specific conditions and/or other sentencing interests. Victims may elect not to provide victim impact statements; this should be respected and clearly noted.
7. **Psychosexual/Sex Offender-Specific Evaluation:** Ideally, the defendant will undergo a specialized psychosexual or sex offender-specific evaluation. The content and process of the evaluation should be congruent with established practice guidelines or standards, such as those of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers or state certification board. Generally speaking, the evaluation should include a thorough sexual history, as well as an assessment of risk to reoffend, intervention needs, amenability to treatment, and recommendations. The availability of any treatment recommended should also be included; this is especially important for cases involving special needs offenders. The findings should be summarized and included in the PSI report. If a psychosexual/sex offender-specific evaluation is not conducted, a recommendation to the court should be made and/or a referral provided. If, in the end, this type of evaluation is not conducted, officers should note the reasons why and indicate implications or limitations regarding the PSI.
8. **Collateral Contacts, Additional Information Sources:** Self-reported information is very useful; however, officers should make all reasonable attempts to verify information by communicating with other relevant sources. Officers could interview family members and significant others, make inquiries at educational/vocational institutions, investigate current/past employment, obtain treatment records and pursue other sources deemed to have knowledge about the defendant. In addition, officers should verify residence and conduct home visits, even if the defendant is currently incarcerated; interview any persons present in the home; and document observations regarding the environment, including potential risk factors and victim safety considerations in light of the defendant's offense, history, patterns, and case circumstances.

9. **Risk Assessment:** The defendant's current estimated risk for sexual, nonsexual, and violent recidivism is derived from empirically validated risk assessment instruments, including one or more validated tools specific to assessing risk for sex offenders. Risk assessments may have been conducted as part of the psychosexual evaluation (if conducted) or by the investigator trained to use such tools as part of the PSI process. Results of the risk assessment should be included in the PSI report.
10. **Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations:** All conclusions, impressions, and recommendations (to the extent that statutes/policies allow investigators to provide them) must be clearly noted and supported by data collected during the investigation process. Officers should include the assessed level of risk; factors contributing to public safety risk; victim impact and safety considerations; strengths and protective factors that support stability; aggravating or mitigating factors/circumstances; intervention needs and amenability to interventions; restitution; and special conditions or strategies needed to safeguard victims, reduce the defendant's risk, and ensure public safety.

APPENDIX D

Sample Outline: Specialized Pre-Sentence Investigation Report for Sex Offenders

- I. Identifying information, case header
- II. Current/index offense-related information
 - a. Official arrest/charge, plea, conviction of record
 - b. Defendant's statement/version
 - c. Victim's statement, including impact, safety concerns, requests
- III. Prior delinquency/criminal history, juvenile and adult
 - a. Arrests, adjudications, convictions, diversions
 - b. Supervision, placement, incarceration
 - c. Adjustment, compliance, outcomes, nature of completion/discharge
- IV. Personal history
 - a. Family of origin/background, structure, stability, functioning, trauma
 - b. Educational/academic attainment, functioning, adjustment, strengths/skills
 - c. Employment/vocational history, stability, adjustment, strengths/skills
 - d. Military service, accomplishments, adjustment/discipline, discharge type
 - e. Marital/intimate partner relationships
 - f. Sexual history, including summary of psychosexual evaluation, if conducted
 - g. Physical health, medical history
 - h. Mental health, behavioral health, substance use/abuse
 - i. Leisure/recreation, hobbies, interests, volunteer activities
 - j. Companions, peers/affiliates, community supports
 - k. Financial management, stability, assets/debts, civil judgments
 - l. Residential arrangements, stability, neighborhood/community influences

- V. Formal assessments, including specialized and general risk–need assessments
- VI. Summary, Recommendations
 - a. Defendant’s presentation, cooperation, amenability
 - b. Recidivism risk, sexual and nonsexual
 - c. Strengths, assets, community supports
 - d. Special needs
 - e. Victim impact, safety needs, concerns, requests
 - f. Restitution, crime victim’s compensation
 - g. Intervention/treatment needs, programs/services (institutional, community)
 - h. Recommendations, special conditions should probation be granted

APPENDIX E

*Sample Resources for Victim Impact Statements*¹⁰

The following resources were developed to assist representatives from the courts, community supervision, and correctional agencies who have responsibility for ensuring that crime victims have the opportunity to provide input about the impact that the crime has had on them, specifically through the victim impact statement:

- a sample/template for a cover letter that can be used when contacting victims about their right to provide a victim impact statement;
- answers to commonly asked questions about the VIS;
- a sample VIS form; and
- a sample checklist for documenting financial losses.

Please note that these are simply samples/templates. They should be personalized as desired and customized to reflect the laws and agency policies in your jurisdiction.

¹⁰These materials have been adapted, with permission from Anne Seymour and the Center for Sex Offender Management, from the Center for Sex Offender Management training curriculum entitled *The Role of the Victim and Victim Advocate in Managing Sex Offenders*, accessible at <http://www.csom.org/train/victim/index.html>. This resource includes the following attribution: “Developed by victim advocate Anne Seymour (Justice Solutions: Washington, DC, 2001). Some of these resources have been adapted from *Victim Impact: A Victim’s Right to Speak, a Nation’s Responsibility to Listen*, written by Janice Harris Lord and Ellen Alexander, and published by the National Victim Center and MADD in 1994. Special thanks are extended to Bob Wells, a Senior Instructor with the Behavioral Science Division of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, for his assistance in drafting and editing this document.”

Sample Cover Letter

Dear Mr./Ms. (*Last name*):

(*Agency name*) is committed to supporting individuals in our community who have been affected by crime. We regret that you have had such an experience, and are grateful for your participation in the criminal justice process. Your involvement and input are vital to holding the person accountable for the harm they have caused you and for helping ensure that you and others in the community are safe.

One of your most important rights as a victim of crime is the opportunity to tell the court how you and your loved ones have been affected by the crime. You can do this by completing a “victim impact statement,” which ensures that your voice is heard as part of the justice process. It is important for the court to understand — from your point of view — the crime that you experienced and its impact on you and your loved ones. The impact may be emotional, physical, financial, and/or some other type. Your victim impact statement will also give the court valuable information that can be used to hold the person accountable, prevent this type of crime from happening to you or others in the future, and help ensure that you and others in the community are safe.

To assist you, I have enclosed some information that describes the process for completing the victim impact statement. Any additional information you think is important for the court can be included as an attachment to your victim impact statement.

If you have any questions about completing your victim impact statement or other matters pertaining to the case, or would like information about services in our community that are available to victims of crime and that may be helpful for you, please contact (*name*) at (*area code/telephone number*).

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

(*Name, Title, and Agency*)

Enclosures:

- Victim Impact Statements: FAQs
- Sample Victim Impact Statement Form
- Sample Checklist for Documenting Financial Losses for Victim Restitution

Victim Impact Statements: FAQs

1. What is a victim impact statement and how is it used?

A victim impact statement offers an opportunity for your voice to be heard by our justice system. When completed, it is an important document that describes how the crime has affected you and your loved ones, and it provides information that the court will use to determine how best to hold the offender accountable for the harm they caused.

Specifically, this form has space for you to:

- describe the crime and its physical, emotional, and financial effects on you and your loved ones;
- discuss any concerns you may have about your safety and security;
- describe any life changes that you may have experienced since the crime occurred;
- offer suggestions for a resolution that is fair; and
- provide information that will give the offender the opportunity to take responsibility for actions that caused you harm and loss.

2. Do I have to complete the victim impact statement?

No, you do not have to fill out a victim impact statement; however, it may be helpful to the judge when considering what sentence the defendant should receive and/or what amount of money the defendant may have to reimburse you for expenses you have paid or owe because of this crime.

If the judge orders the defendant to pay you restitution, there is no guarantee that the defendant will be able to pay the entire amount; however, a court order for the full amount of your losses may help you pursue civil remedies for all of the financial losses associated with this crime.

Whether or not you choose to submit a victim impact statement is a decision made by you and your loved ones. It is a voluntary right that you have as a victim of crime.

3. What information should I include in my victim impact statement?

Below are types of information you may wish to include in your victim impact statement, as well as a sample victim impact statement form. The following suggestions and the attached victim impact statement form. Keep in mind that the suggestions that follow and the questions on the form are offered only as a guide. Only you know how to best describe the effects this crime has had on you and those close to you.

If you would like to tell the court about the emotional impact of this crime, you may wish to describe:

- how this crime has affected your lifestyle or those close to you;
- how your feelings about yourself or your life have changed since the crime;
- how your ability to relate to others has changed; and
- any counseling or other support you have obtained to help you cope.

If you or your family members were injured, you may wish to tell the court about the physical impact of this crime. You might include:

- the specific physical injuries you or members of your family suffered;
- how long your injuries lasted or are expected to last;
- any medical treatment you have received or expect to receive in the future; and
- how your physical injuries have affected your lifestyle, such as your ability to work or enjoy recreational activities.

It is also very important for the court to understand how this crime has affected your ability to earn a living and how it has affected you financially. If you have paid or owe money for bills because of this crime, please fill out the financial impact section of the form (question 3). Please be as accurate and complete as possible when listing your costs because this information will be used by the prosecutor, probation officer, and judge to help them determine what restitution the defendant must pay to you. “Restitution” is the possible payment by the defendant to you for any financial losses you may have suffered as a result of this crime. A separate checklist has been included to help you describe and document the types of financial losses you may have experienced or will be faced with in the future. (See “Sample Checklist for Documenting Losses for Victim Restitution.”)

We realize it may be difficult to describe in words how this crime has affected you, your family, and your friends; however, your input is vital to determining a sentence that is fair and just, and to holding the offender accountable for the harm they caused you. To make the process a bit easier, consider writing a rough draft of your statement before completing the final statement.

4. Who has access to my victim impact statement?

Your statement will become an official court document after it is given to the court, and will become part of the defendant’s permanent file. The judge, prosecutor, and probation officer will read your statement. In addition, prison and parole officials may read your statement if the defendant is sentenced to a prison/detention term.

The defendant and the defendant’s attorney will also be able to read what you have written. They may even be able to ask you questions about your statement in court. However, the defendant will not find out your address and telephone number because you are not asked to put them on your statement.

(Include for applicable jurisdictions) You also have the right to speak to the judge at the time of sentencing. If you would like to do so, please contact our office immediately so we can facilitate your oral statement to the court.

(Include for applicable jurisdictions) You also have the right to give your victim impact statement in the form of an audio or video tape or via teleconference if traveling to the sentencing hearing imposes an undue burden on you. If you would like to pursue any of these options, please contact our office immediately for further information and assistance.

(Include for applicable jurisdictions) The information you provide in your victim impact statement can be used to help the person understand how their criminal/delinquent actions have affected your life. While your personal contact information will not be revealed, the information you pro-

vide about victim impact — with your permission — may be integrated into offender casework to address personal accountability and victim empathy issues.

5. How will I, as a victim of crime, be compensated?

If you are a victim of a crime involving violence or personal injury, you may be able to receive financial help from the Crime Victim Compensation Program. This program can pay you back for certain out-of-pocket expenses for physical or emotional injuries received as a direct result of a crime. These expenses may include medical bills, counseling costs, and lost wages and support. This is not the same as restitution; this offers you the possibility of receiving money to help you with some of your medical bills even before you go to court.

You can file for benefits immediately following the crime even if no arrest has been made. If you would like more information about the possible benefits available or about how to apply for victim compensation, please contact our office for assistance, or contact the (state victim compensation program) directly at (*address, telephone number, email, and website*).

6. Where can I go for help completing my victim impact statement?

If you need assistance in completing your victim impact statement, please feel free to contact our office at (*telephone number*).

If you would like to speak to the judge at sentencing, please contact our office immediately so we can help set this up for you.

Sample Victim Impact Statement Form

If you need more space to answer any of the following questions, or if you have additional information that is not addressed by these questions, please use as many pages as you need, and simply attach these to this victim impact statement. Please return your completed victim impact statement to our office within (#) days.

1. Please describe how this offense has affected you and your family.
2. What was the emotional impact of this crime on you and your family?
3. What was the financial impact of this crime on you and your family?
4. What was the physical impact of this crime on you and your family?
5. What do you want to happen now?
6. Would you like an opportunity to participate in victim/offender programming (such as mediation/dialogue or victim impact panels) that can help hold the offender accountable for their actions? (NOTE: Only utilize this question if such programs are in place, and ensure that the victim has written resources that fully describe such programs.)
7. If community service is recommended as part of the disposition or sentence, do you have a favorite charity or cause you would like to recommend?
8. Please list any other information you would like to share with the court regarding the offense and how it has affected you and your family.

Sample Checklist for Documenting Losses for Victim Restitution¹¹

To ensure accurate and complete restitution orders, you are required to document your losses in writing for the court or supervision authority. The following considerations can help you document your out-of-pocket expenses and projected future expenses:

- Employer statements (letters or affidavits) that document unpaid time off from work you took as a result of injuries from the crime or your involvement in justice processes.
- Documentation of any workers compensation claims submitted and/or claims payments received.
- Copies of bills for services directly related to your financial recovery from the crime.
- Any receipts for items or services.
- Copies of your applications to and/or copies of checks received from the state victim compensation fund.
- Copies of insurance claims and related correspondence between you and your insurance company, as well as copies of any checks you have received to cover losses.

Immediate Losses

During the pre-sentence investigation, you should be asked to report information about your losses by completing or updating a financial worksheet and by providing documentation as described above. The range of these losses can include the following:

Medical Care

- Emergency transportation to the hospital.
- Sexual assault kit examinations that are not immediately paid for by a third party.
- All expenses related to the hospital stay, including the room, laboratory tests, medications, X-rays, HIV testing in cases involving the exchange of bodily fluids, and medical supplies.
- Expenses for care provided by physicians (both inpatient and outpatient), medication, and medical supplies.
- Fees for physical or occupational therapy.
- Replacement of eyeglasses, hearing aids, or other sensory aid items damaged, destroyed, or stolen.
- Rental and related costs for equipment used for any physical restoration (e.g., wheelchairs, wheelchair ramps, special beds, crutches).

Mental Health Services

- Fees for counseling or therapy for you and your family members.
- Any costs incurred as a result of your participation in support or therapy groups.

¹¹From "Restitution Procedures," by A. Seymour, 1997, Promising Practices and Strategies for Victim Services in Corrections. Copyright 1997 by The National Center for Victims of Crime. Reprinted with permission.

- Expenses for medications that doctors may prescribe to help ease your trauma following the crime.

Time Off Work

- To repair damage following property crimes.
- To attend or participate in court or parole proceedings.
- To attend doctors' appointments for injuries or mental health needs directly resulting from the crime.

Other Expenses

- Crime scene cleanup.
- Costs of replacing locks, changing security devices.
- Expenses related to child or elder care when you have to testify in court.
- Relocation expenses.
- Fees incurred in changing banking or credit card accounts.

Projected Expenses

Victimization often results in injuries or losses that are long term in nature. While it is not possible to accurately document such projected expenses, it is possible to document expert opinions as to future financial obligations you might incur as a direct result of the crime.

Seek documentation (a letter or affidavit) from professionals who are providing you with medical or mental health services. The documentation should offer an estimate of your future treatment needs, as well as related expenses. Such costs can include:

- long-term medical treatment;
- physical or occupational rehabilitation or therapy;
- mental health counseling or therapy; and
- time that must be taken off from work to receive any of the above services.

The justice system professional responsible for assessing your restitution needs should provide this documentation to the court or paroling authority.

APPENDIX F

Victim-Responsive Communication Approaches: Do's and Don'ts for Supervision Officers

<i>Do</i>	<i>Don't</i>
DO communicate trust, support, and confidence.	DON'T be judgmental or question victims' motives or decisions.
DO ask "How are you doing?"	DON'T "second guess" how the victim reacted to the crime, either at the time it was occurring or in the aftermath of a violent act.
DO allow victims time to tell what happened and to describe how they are feeling in their own words.	DON'T avoid the victim or their reactions to the crime. Listening to and validating their experiences and emotions are critical to their reconstruction after a crime.
DO reassure victims that their feelings are quite normal and natural, even though they may seem a bit unusual or scary.	DON'T be "over helpful" by making decisions and choices for victims. Since no victim chooses to be victimized or has control over a violent act committed against them, the ability for victims to regain control over their lives and to make decisions affecting their lives becomes very important.
DO demonstrate empathy, letting the victim know that any feelings of anger, distress, frustration, and fear are common and understandable.	DON'T attempt to assume the role of a victim advocate or victim services provider, or to know all of the "right" answers.
DO be willing to listen to the victim if they want to talk about the crime and its effects. Use silence constructively.	DON'T talk more than the victim, and don't be afraid of silence.
DO remain calm and nonreactive.	DON'T express (even inadvertently) frustration about the victim's sense of urgency, requests, concerns, or anxieties.
DO offer specific program/contact information for victim advocacy and services (e.g., names, email addresses, links).	DON'T give the appearance of "passing off" the victim to a victim advocate or victim services provider.

APPENDIX G

Innovations In Victim-Centered Approaches to Sex Offender Supervision

Jurisdictions around the country are working to implement or sustain victim-centered approaches to supervising sex offenders in the community. Their efforts, which include inviting victim advocates to be members of sex offender management teams and hiring dedicated “victim officers,” allow victims to receive more comprehensive assistance and advocacy than they traditionally have been offered (Center for Sex Offender Management, 2000) and offer the best opportunity to increase public safety. Highlights of three jurisdictions’ work are provided below.

Connecticut¹²

In 1996, the state of Connecticut launched a promising initiative to include community-based victim advocates as members of sex offender management teams. This approach has expanded, and represents a unique and successful collaboration between the Court Support Services Division (which houses probation), sex offender treatment providers, and victim advocates (who are employed by the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence). In this model, victim advocates, hired with funds from the state, provide notification of offender releases, safety planning, short-term crisis counseling, and referrals for services (including information about how to access resources through victim compensation programs). They also:

- gather pre-sentence investigation victim impact statements;
- assist victims in filing for restitution or completing victim assistance applications;
- provide information and guidance on civil matters;
- help organize and participate in the reunification process, and take part in family meetings, when desired and appropriate;
- provide information to offender family members and individuals close to them on the supervision process, and offer referrals for services, when needed; and
- accompany probation officers during community meetings to discuss general issues regarding sex offenders and victims.

Team members have found that because of the efforts of victim advocates, significant others may be more aware of an offender’s risky patterns of behavior and potential noncompliance with supervision conditions and, in turn, are more willing to cooperate with monitoring the offender’s behavior to promote safety and accountability. Advocates report that the implementation of this model has yielded better outcomes for victims, and has resulted in clearer communication and increased awareness in the community about sex offender management generally. Preliminary indicators also suggest that this approach results in lower recidivism rates.

¹²The Connecticut and Rhode Island profiles are adapted with permission from Promoting Collaboration Between Victim Advocates and Sex Offender Management Professionals: A Resource Package, Center for Sex Offender Management, National Sexual Violence Resource Center, Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers, and Resource Sharing Project, 2016.

Nebraska

The state of Nebraska has made important strides toward implementing a victim-centered approach to sex offender supervision by hiring dedicated “victim officers” in four probation districts: Lincoln, Omaha, Grand Island/Kearney, and North Platte. These officers do not carry a supervision caseload; instead, their time is fully allocated to working with and providing support to victims of domestic or sexual violence when the offenders responsible for these crimes are under the probation district’s supervision.

In a court process that can lead to revictimization and creating more trauma, it is important to have someone involved that is not only knowledgeable of the court process but also educated in the empathetic efforts geared toward the men, women, and children who have been victimized.

– Nebraska Victim Officer

Victim officers are responsible for writing the victim portion of the pre-sentence investigation (PSI) reports for all court cases, including sexual assaults. They begin their work by initiating contact with each victim who is participating in a PSI, and they ensure that victim rights established by the state of Nebraska are enforced. The officers explain the court process and what stage the case is in, and they inform victims of their right to submit a victim impact statement, should they wish to do so. Victim officers maintain contact with victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault during the entire period of the defendant’s supervision, checking in with them monthly or more often, depending on the circumstances of the case (e.g., if there is something to report regarding the status of court proceedings and upcoming hearings). They can also be available for court hearings if a victim requires support. Victim officers also play an important support role for supervising officers, who can ask questions about how best to address victims’ needs and concerns and about resources available in the community to support victims.

Victim officers are sworn in as probation officers and participate in an eight-week general probation officer training (that includes topics such as Motivational Interviewing, specialized assessments, and case management). Additionally, they are required to undergo specialized training (obtained through a 40-hour victim academy provided by a local college as well as participation in victim-centered conferences) that focuses on key elements of a victim-centered approach, how to interact with victims of trauma, and a general understanding of sexual and domestic violence. They also collaborate closely with outside community agencies such as sexual assault coalitions/rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters, and other victim agencies; as a result, they are very knowledgeable about resources that are available in the community to support victims.

Victim officers work in partnership with these service agencies with collaborative goals in mind, creating task forces to provide wraparound services for victims, serving jointly on committees, and partnering in public events to build awareness and support for victims of sexual assault. Victim officers also collaborate with other court agencies, such as county attorneys, to create a safer court environment and to reduce the trauma that can accompany testifying in court.

Rhode Island

In Rhode Island, victim advocates serve as members of sex offender supervision teams. Their goal is to be the one point of contact for victims. Specifically, advocates in sex offender supervision units provide information to the victim, victim's family, or other appropriate secondary victims who were affected by a given offender in the unit. They share information about an offender's status, supervision conditions, and pending court action and provide direct support services, information, and referrals to victims and their families as needed. When deemed appropriate, they also play a role in offender treatment programs (to generally provide a "victim presence and perspective" rather than to discuss a particular case) and accompany supervision unit staff on offender home visits. Victim advocates are active participants in monthly reentry staff meetings, and, as part of their core mission, provide advocacy, referrals, and support for victims as offenders return to the community.

Victim advocates in Rhode Island recommend action steps such as the following to advance effective, collaborative efforts for the sex offender supervision team:

- Identify who the victim advocates, treatment providers, and/or supervision officers are in one's community who might serve as members of a multidisciplinary sex offender supervision team.
- Reach out to them and make a connection. For example, schedule an appointment to visit one another's offices and agencies, or attend one another's staff meetings to provide an overview of respective roles and responsibilities.
- Co-sponsor, develop, and/or participate in cross-training events and workshops.
- Develop local system maps that delineate where practices could be improved to be more victim-centered.
- Identify promising practices in other jurisdictions and consider adapting or implementing those approaches in one's own jurisdiction.
- Develop joint grant or funding proposals to address the shared goal of ending sexual victimization.

APPENDIX H

Supplemental Resources

The information below highlights several organizations, agencies, and documents that supervision officers and other stakeholders can access for additional information about the topics covered in this toolkit.

[American Probation and Parole Association \(APPA\)](#) is an international association that provides training and resources for its members who represent pretrial, probation, parole, and community corrections agencies. In addition to hosting national training institutes twice a year, APPA develops monographs and guidebooks, conducts research, and operates an extensive information clearinghouse on various supervision-related issues, including victim-related practices in probation and parole.

- [Promising Victim-Related Practices Fact Sheet Series](#)
- [Promising Victim-Related Practices in Probation and Parole Training Curriculum Package](#)
- [Public Hearing on Victim Issues in Probation and Parole: Recommendation Report](#)
- [Tracking Sex Offenders with Electronic Monitoring Technology: Implications and Practical Uses for Law Enforcement](#)

[Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers \(ATSA\)](#) is an international, multidisciplinary organization dedicated to preventing sexual abuse, largely by encouraging sound research and evidence-informed assessment and treatment for adults and juveniles who have offended sexually. In addition to creating formal practice guidelines, ATSA has developed a number of public policy papers, fact sheets, and research documents that can be useful for stakeholders across disciplines, including supervision officers. ATSA also offers referrals to local treatment providers.

- [A Reasoned Approach: Reshaping Sex Offender Policy to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse](#)
- [Risk Assessment for Males Who Have Engaged in Harmful or Illegal Sexual Behavior](#)
- [Sex Offender Treatment for Adult Males](#)

[Center for Effective Public Policy \(CEPP\)](#) is a nonprofit organization that provides training, technical assistance, and resource development for criminal justice agencies and practitioners, including probation and parole. CEPP administers multiple national initiatives and projects relevant to community supervision, including [parole](#), [reentry](#), [violations](#), [justice-involved women](#), and [evidence-based decision-making throughout justice systems](#). In addition, CEPP operates the [Center for Sex Offender Management \(CSOM\)](#), highlighted below.

- [Behavior Management of Justice-Involved Individuals: Contemporary Research and State-of-the-Art Policy and Practice](#)
- [Dosage Probation: Rethinking the Structure of Probation Sentences](#)

[Center for Sex Offender Management \(CSOM\)](#) is a national resource center that supports jurisdictions with effectively managing adults and juveniles who have offended sexually. Established in 1997, CSOM provides training, technical assistance, and downloadable resources for stakeholders,

including community supervision officers and administrators, victim advocates and service providers, judges and other court officials, specialized evaluators and treatment providers, releasing authorities, lawmakers, and the public. CSOM also operates an information clearinghouse and has produced multiple [policy and practice documents](#), guidebooks and toolkits, [training curricula](#), and [webinars](#) on a wide range of sex offender management-related topics, including specialized supervision, collaboration with sexual assault victim advocates, assessment, treatment, and reentry. CSOM developed the Comprehensive Approach to Sex Offender Management (CASOM) model, which has become a nationally recognized model framework for collaborative, multidisciplinary, evidence-informed, and victim-centered strategies.

- [The Comprehensive Approach to Sex Offender Management](#)
- [Engaging Advocates and Other Victim Service Providers in the Community Management of Sex Offenders](#)
- [The Role of the Victim and Victim Advocate in Managing Sex Offenders: A Training Curriculum](#)
- [Supervision of Sex Offenders in the Community: A Training Curriculum](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) operates under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, and is the leading public health institution in the country. Its Division of Violence Prevention conducts research on the incidence and prevalence of violence, risk and protective factors, the effectiveness of violence prevention programs, and the adoption and dissemination of prevention strategies. The Division's comprehensive sexual violence prevention framework recognizes the importance of strategies at individual, peer/family, community, and societal levels, which include but are not limited to promoting healthy social norms, creating protective environments, implementing victim-centered approaches, and intervening with persons who have perpetrated or who are at risk of perpetration.

- [Stop SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence](#)
- [National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](#)
- [Sexual Violence Prevention: Beginning the Dialogue](#)

[Council of State Governments \(CSG\) Justice Center](#) is a nonpartisan entity providing practical, contemporary, research-driven resources, tools, and assistance to criminal and juvenile justice stakeholders and allied partners on pressing justice-related issues. Focus areas include corrections, the courts, justice reinvestment, law enforcement, substance abuse, and reentry. The CSG Justice Center also administers the National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC), the nation's primary clearinghouse on offender reentry, which offers monthly [webinars](#), national training events to facilitate peer-to-peer networking, a monthly electronic [newsletter](#), and online state and local [reentry directories](#) that can help supervision officers and others identify service providers and programs for justice-involved persons in their communities.

- [Sex Offender Management Policy in the States: Strengthening Policy and Practice](#)
- [The Reentry of Adults Convicted of Sexual Offenses: A National Survey of Reentry Professionals](#)

[National Criminal Justice System Reference Service \(NCJRS\)](#) offers a library of resources of federally funded initiatives on a wide range of criminal justice issues, including supervision and sex offender management. For a compilation of some of the recent Department of Justice-sponsored

publications specifically related to sex offender supervision and management, see <https://www.ncjrs.gov/sexoffenders/supervision.html>.

[National Institute of Corrections \(NIC\)](#) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons, that provides training, technical assistance, and information services to federal, state, and local corrections agencies. NIC maintains a clearinghouse of [documents](#) on promising and evidence-based correctional practices, including a [compilation of resources](#) pertaining to sex offender management. NIC also administers a [Learning Academy](#), through which institutional and community corrections employees can access free training modules on various topics, including evidence-based decision-making and correctional practices, probation and parole, and reentry.

- [Working with Victims of Crime: An Integrated Approach for Community Supervision Professionals](#)

[National Sexual Assault Coalition Resource Sharing Project \(RSP\)](#) is led by the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault in partnership with the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault and the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, and is part of a national movement of sexual violence-related services and resources. The RSP was created to help state sexual assault coalitions across the country access resources needed to develop and succeed as they work to support survivors and end sexual assault. Initially designed to provide technical assistance, support, and the dissemination of peer-driven resources for all state and territorial sexual assault coalitions, the RSP has expanded its efforts to provide technical assistance in other areas through OVW technical assistance grants.

- [Action, Engagement, Remembering: Services for Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse](#)

[National Sexual Violence Resource Center \(NSVRC\)](#) is the nation's primary information center and clearinghouse on matters pertaining to sexual violence and prevention. NSVRC disseminates an extensive range of resources, including fact sheets, research summaries, guidebooks, position statements, training curricula, media talking points, prevention initiatives, and innovative programs. With these resources, NSVRC assists coalitions, advocates, and others interested in understanding and eliminating sexual violence. In addition, NSVRC provides technical assistance and training to state sexual assault coalitions, victim advocates, and other key stakeholders, including criminal justice practitioners and the public, to promote comprehensive, evidence-based, and trauma-informed strategies specific to sexual assault survivors; prevention of sexual assault, including campus sexual assault; community engagement; and collaboration between victim advocacy organizations and sex offender management practitioners.

- [Considering Family Reconnection and Reunification after Child Sexual Abuse: A Road Map for Advocates and Service Providers](#)
- [The Impact of Sexual Violence](#)
- [What Is Sexual Violence?](#)
- [The Advocate's Guide: Working With Parents of Children Who Have Been Sexually Assaulted](#)

[Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking \(SMART\)](#) operates within the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. It provides guidance to jurisdictions nationwide to implement the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006; tracks sex offender management-related legislative and legal developments; administers grant

programs related to registration, notification, and other strategies; and operates the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW). The SMART Office developed the Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative (SOMAPI) to assess and provide an overview of the current state of research and practice in sex offender management, resulting in a comprehensive SOMAPI report, including community supervision strategies and information on internet-facilitated sex offenses.

- [Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative](#)

[Office on Violence Against Women \(OVW\)](#) is an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. It provides federal leadership in developing a national capacity to reduce violence against women and to administer justice for — and strengthen services to — victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. This is in part accomplished by administering formula-based and discretionary grant programs and providing funding to local, state, and tribal governments, courts, nonprofit organizations, and community-based organizations. OVW grant programs help provide victims with the protection and services they need to pursue safe and healthy lives while simultaneously enabling communities to hold offenders accountable for their violence.

[Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center \(OVC TTAC\)](#) is a federally funded resource that enhances the capacity of victim assistance organizations by providing training and technical assistance opportunities, supporting professional development, enhancing services to the community, and enhancing outreach to underserved victims of crime. Most relevant to supervision agencies, OVC TTAC has developed several resources for criminal justice agencies and community supervision officers on improving interactions with victims.

[Washington State Institute for Public Policy \(WSIPP\)](#) carries out practical, nonpartisan research to identify “what works” and to determine costs versus benefits of strategies in a variety of policy areas important to the state, such as healthcare, prevention, mental health, adult corrections, and juvenile justice. WSIPP maintains a [cost–benefit analysis database](#) of promising and evidence-based programs, and produces documents regarding such [policies, programs, and strategies](#), including a number of community supervision-focused and sex offender management-related topics.

- [Inventory of Evidence-Based and Research-Based Programs for Adult Corrections](#)
- [Benefit–Cost Results](#)

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