

THE RESEARCH

Impact on Recidivism

The Iowa DOC Victim Advisory Council recently completed a report examining the effectiveness of Victim Impact Class (VIC) and its adherence to established guidelines for evidence-based practices. *There is evidence that the intervention is a contributing factor in reducing recidivism when offered as one of several complementary interventions within a treatment program or an offender case plan.* Specific examples include the STAR Program at ICIW and InnerChange Freedom Initiative at NCF. In addition, recommendations are offered to make the intervention more compliant with evidence-based practices. To read the full report, [click here](#).

VIC and Restorative Justice

In the context of restorative justice, VIC offers *added value* in promoting the healing of crime victims, preventing future victimizations, and ensuring the well being and safety of communities while enabling the participation of victims and community members in repairing the harm of crime.

VIC Improvements

In 2007, the Victim Advisory Council identified four specific areas in which VIC can be even more compliant with evidence-based practices and, thus, more effective in lowering recidivism. The recommendations will be implemented on an ongoing basis:

- Develop internal and external evaluations;
- Enhance current referral process to identify the right offender, at the right time for the right services in the right way;
- Establish higher training standards for facilitators; and
- Expand aftercare interventions.

STATE CONTACTS

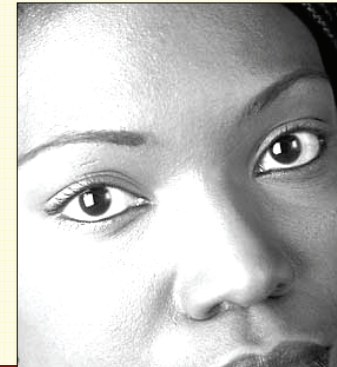
For information regarding training of facilitators, client referrals, available teaching resources, and related statewide committees, contact:

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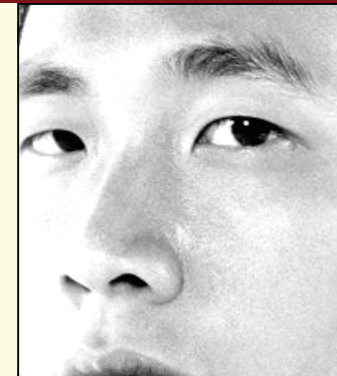
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**Iowa
Department of
Corrections**

*Some Things
Impact A
Lifetime*

Victim Impact Class



**An
Evidence-Based
Practices
Intervention**

The Research

Referral Criteria

Frequently Asked
Questions

Restorative Justice

THE RIGHT PERSON, THE RIGHT TIME

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What Are The Goals Of Victim Impact Class?

The goals are to complement existing treatment programs— or offender case plans— designed to help reduce recidivism by: 1) Increasing offender, institutional and community awareness of the long-term physical emotional and financial damage that crime inflicts on victims and the community; 2) Preventing future victimizations; and 3) Providing a forum for the expression of feelings and thoughts resulting from victimization.

What Is Victim Impact Class?

Iowa's curriculum is based on the California Youth Authority and Mothers Against Drunk Driving curriculum, *Some Things Impact A Lifetime*. The class is a minimum of 12 weeks long with sessions ranging from two and one-half hours to three hours based on the number of classes offered each week. The topics range from property crimes to homicide.

Do Crime Victims Participate?

More than 100 victims throughout Iowa volunteer their time to speak to offenders about the impact of crime as an integral part of the class. Victim Impact Panels help offenders develop empathy and recognize that every crime has a victim. Prison-based interventions typically conduct panels with multiple speakers at the end of the coursework while community-based interventions utilize panels upon completing each topic.

Who Teaches The Class?

Classes are taught by trained facilitators who create an interactive learning environment that includes small group activities and homework assignments. Staff members are selected based on interest, desire to teach, content knowledge and teaching expertise. All facilitators must complete a 40-hour experiential training and are evaluated on an ongoing basis.

REFERRAL CRITERIA

Assessment Instruments

The following guidelines were established by the Iowa Department of Corrections Victim Advisory Council:

- ✓ LSI-R score in the 24-40 range. Offenders scoring in this range, as opposed to those assessed as low or high-risk offenders, have been identified as most likely to be receptive to and benefit from VIC;
 - ✓ When appropriate, utilize HARE assessment for psychopathy to exclude anti-social personalities;
 - ✓ When Jesness personality assessment identifies as appropriate. The groups considered appropriate for VIC include CFM, CFC, MP and, possibly, NA. All others are excluded;
 - ✓ Assess offender readiness using motivational interviewing skills and the Stages of Change model. "Precontemplative" offenders will not be referred to VIC. "Contemplative" offenders may be considered on an individual basis; and
 - ✓ Rely on professional judgment of referring probation/parole officers and treatment staff.
- ### Individual Considerations
- ✓ Address clients' dual diagnosis issues before VIC participation; and
 - ✓ Address clients' personal victimization issues outside the VIC classroom. This can be completed before enrollment or in an aftercare intervention.



THE RIGHT SERVICES, THE RIGHT WAY