

VICTIM IMPACT

A Program of the Iowa Departments of Corrections and Correctional Services

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION IN RESPONSE TO CRIME AND VICTIMIZATION

VICTIM IMPACT CLASSES/PANELS**

Victim Impact Classes/Panels engage the assistance of victims/survivors from the community who volunteer to share their personal experiences of victimization with offenders. These shared personal experiences are invaluable in making the academic portion of victim impact classes come to life. It helps the offender understand crimes are committed against real people, and that a victim's life may be forever changed. This national program stresses personal responsibility, being accountable, and the consequences of criminal behavior, while emphasizing the victim perspective.

Victim Impact Classes/Panels is part of a national program developed by the Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime (visit: <https://www.ovcttac.gov/victimimpact>). The curriculum covers crimes such as: property crime, crimes against the elderly, child maltreatment, assault, domestic violence, sexual assault, robbery, drunk driving, homicide, and gang violence.

PROGRAM GOALS**

The primary goal of this program is to change offender behavior and decrease the likelihood of re-offending. Our primary concern is the well-being of potential speakers.

FOR PANEL MEMBERS**

For victim/survivor panel members, the potential goals of the Victim Impact Classes/Panels include:

- To provide a forum for the expression of feelings/thoughts resulting from victimization.
- To possibly gain something positive from a devastating experience.
- To assist in the effort to prevent similar crimes from happening to someone else.

"If the attitude of even one perpetrator can be altered, if they can be made to know and understand and feel the sorrow, the pain, the longing for the victim that results from this action, perhaps the life of a potential 'victim' can be saved." - A Victim

FOR OFFENDERS**

The goals of Victim Impact Classes/ Panels are designed so that the offender, through class assignments and victim speakers, will:

- Accept responsibility for past criminal actions.
- Understand the impact of crime on victims and the long-term impact of victimization.
- Develop personal safety skills with a focus on crime prevention.
- Contribute to their communities in a way that will prevent further victimization.
- Learn about Restorative Justice.

"The time spent sharing their stories opened my eyes to the pain caused by being irresponsible. It left an impact on me that I'll always remember." - An Offender

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative Justice views crime as a violation of the victim and the community. It defines accountability for offenders in terms of taking responsibility for their actions, working to repair the harm caused to the victim and community, and attending to needs that both led to, and were created by, the offense. It provides for active participation by the victim, the offender, and the community in the process of repairing the fabric of community peace and safety.

WHO TO CONTACT

Victim Impact Classes/Panels are being offered in most Iowa institutions (prisons) and judicial districts.
For more information on programs in your area, contact:

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