

Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance

Adopted by the COVA Board of Directors, Date April 19, 2006

CODE of PROFESSIONAL ETHICS for VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

Victims of crime and the criminal justice system expect every Victim Assistance Provider, paid or volunteer to act with integrity, to treat all victims and survivors of crime-their clients-with dignity and compassion, and to uphold principles of justice for accused and accuser alike. The goal of the Victim Assistance provider is to assist victims in accessing services, promote healing, and helping victims to regain control. To these ends, this Code will govern the conduct of Victims Assistance Providers:

I. In relationships with every client, the Victim Assistance Provider shall:

1. Respect the interests of the client as a primary responsibility.
2. Respect and protect the client's civil and legal rights.
3. Respect the client's rights to privacy and confidentiality, subject only to laws or regulations requiring disclosure of information to appropriate other sources.
4. Respond compassionately to each client with personalized services.
5. Listen to the client's statement of events as it is told, withholding opinion or judgment.
6. Provide services or access to services to every client without attributing blame.
7. Foster maximum self-determination on the part of the client.
8. Serve as a victim advocate when requested and, in that capacity, act on behalf of the client's stated needs without regard to personal convictions and within the rules of the advocate's host agency.
9. Should one client's needs conflict with another's, act with regard to one client only after promptly referring the other to another qualified Victim Assistance Provider.
10. Observe the ethical imperative to have no sexual relations or sexual contact with clients, in recognition that to do so risks exploitation of the knowledge and trust derived from the professional relationship.
11. Avoid conflicts of interest and discloses any possible conflict to the program or person served, as well as to prospective programs or person served.
12. Provide opportunities for colleague Victim Assistance Providers to seek appropriate services when traumatized by a criminal event or a client.

II. In relationships with colleagues, other professionals, and the public, the Victim Assistance Provider shall:

1. Conduct relationships with colleagues in such a way as to promote mutual respect, public respect, and improvement of service.
2. Make statements that are critical of colleagues only if they are verifiable and constructive in purpose.
3. Conduct relationships with allied professionals such that they are given equal respect and dignity as professionals in the victim assistance fields.
4. Treat with respect, and represent accurately and fairly, the qualifications, views, and findings of colleagues and use appropriate channels to express opinions on these matters, taking steps to quell negative, unsubstantiated rumors about colleagues and allied professionals.
5. Share knowledge and encourage proficiency and excellence in victim assistance among colleagues and allied professionals, paid and volunteer.
6. Provide professional support, guidance, and assistance to Victim Assistance Providers who are new to the field in order to promote consistent quality and professionalism in the victim assistance field.

7. Seek to ensure that volunteers in victim assistance have access to the training, supervision, resources, and support required in their efforts to assist clients.
8. Serves the public interest by contributing to the improvement of systems that impact victims of crime.

III. *In her or his professional conduct*, the Victim Assistance Provider shall:

1. Achieve and maintain a high level of professional standards and competence.
2. Understand his or her legal responsibilities, limitations, and the implications of his/her actions within the service delivery setting and performs duties in accordance with laws, regulations, policies, and legislated rights of persons served.
3. Accurately represent his or her professional title, qualifications, and /or credentials in relationships with person served and in public advertising.
4. Not discriminate against any victims, employee, colleague, allied professional, or member of the public on the basis of race/ethnicity, language, gender, age, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, social class, economic status, education, marital status, religious belief, or HIV status.
5. Not reveal the name or other identifying information about a client or a case to the public without clear permission from the client or legal requirements to do so.
6. Distinguish clearly in public statements one's personal views from positions adopted by the organization(s) for which she or he works or is a member.
7. Not use her or his official position to secure gifts, monetary rewards, or special privileges or advantages.
8. Report to appropriate authorities the conduct of any colleague of an allied profession that constitutes mistreatment of client or that brings the profession into dishonor.
9. Report to appropriate authorities any conflict of interest that prevents oneself or a colleague from being able to provide competent services.

Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance

I, the undersigned applicant, hereby certify that I have read and agree to follow the *Code of Professional Ethics for Victim Assistance Providers*.

Print Applicant Name: _____

Signature of Applicant: _____

Date: _____

Please complete this form and attach it to your completed credential application.