

Mental Health

Remember: “No one is above having a human reaction”

Mental Health is an important component for the long term case management for victims and witnesses.

Reactions to trauma can be helped with providing mental health resources:

- Stress reactions, short term and long term
- To assist in processing grief reactions
- Injury or sustainable injury
- Witness/exposure to event
- Triggers
- Family Support

Considerations when providing mental health referrals to victims, survivors, and their families:

- Mental health needs will differ among diverse victim populations
- Victims, families, and survivors may not live in local area. Referrals will need to be for their area. You may want to connect with the individual's local Crime Victim Compensation office for appropriate referrals versus referring blindly
- Expect that some individuals or survivors may reject mental health services initially. An important component of case management is having mental health resources available for any stage
- Immediate stress reactions will surface immediately, but some will experience long term stress reactions that need to be addressed by ongoing mental health
- Understand that a huge surge of mental health referrals in one area may affect normal daily operations for those organizations providing mental health services; therefore communicate with mental health providers early to identify what changes in policies have occurred due to the high demand

Partners/Resources for mental health:

- Crime Victim Compensation (detailed information on CVC can be found on the CVC tab)-
 - Your CVC office will be able to assist you if the incident is criminal in nature.

- Be sure to contact them early on to find out how normal policies may change with a large scale incident.
- Local community mental health centers
 - These agencies have the resources to provide extended mental health services to the community, including secondary victims, witnesses, or those affected by the incident.
 - Identifying a point of contact for your local mental health agency is important
 - Identifying intake times, processes, cost, and availability to provide accurate information to the person you are referring
- Local VALE and VOCA funds can be a resource for providing funding to those agencies who are providing mental health services
- School mental health providers and psychologists
- Private therapists

Support Groups

Identify an agency that can host a victims' support group. This can start out under the guidance of a therapist or counselor, but it is not a therapy group. The group may choose to meet without a therapist or counselor too.

- Allow individuals to meet in a forum that invites cohesiveness after some have experienced powerlessness.
- Can be catered to assist individuals outside the original crisis setting and create a cohesive atmosphere to share and unite.
- Can increase a person's support system outside of family and reduce isolation

Cultural Considerations inside the mental health framework

Mental health services need to be provided that best serve each affected person. This includes services that are consistent with survivors' beliefs and specific cultural needs.

You may want to address the following aspects in providing services:

- Are there issues that need to be addressed within vulnerable populations?
- How are individuals going to be identified/reached if they are afraid to come forward?
- What cultural groups reside in your community that could provide outreach to victims?
- What group is best suited to address specific values, beliefs, and language issues?

- Who are the cultural brokers in your community or key gatekeepers to that group?
- Economic considerations in community, and how will those be addressed?

- Identify organizations that provide services to specialized populations
- Provide information and services in primary language.
- Have information available for those who may be hearing impaired including translator assistance