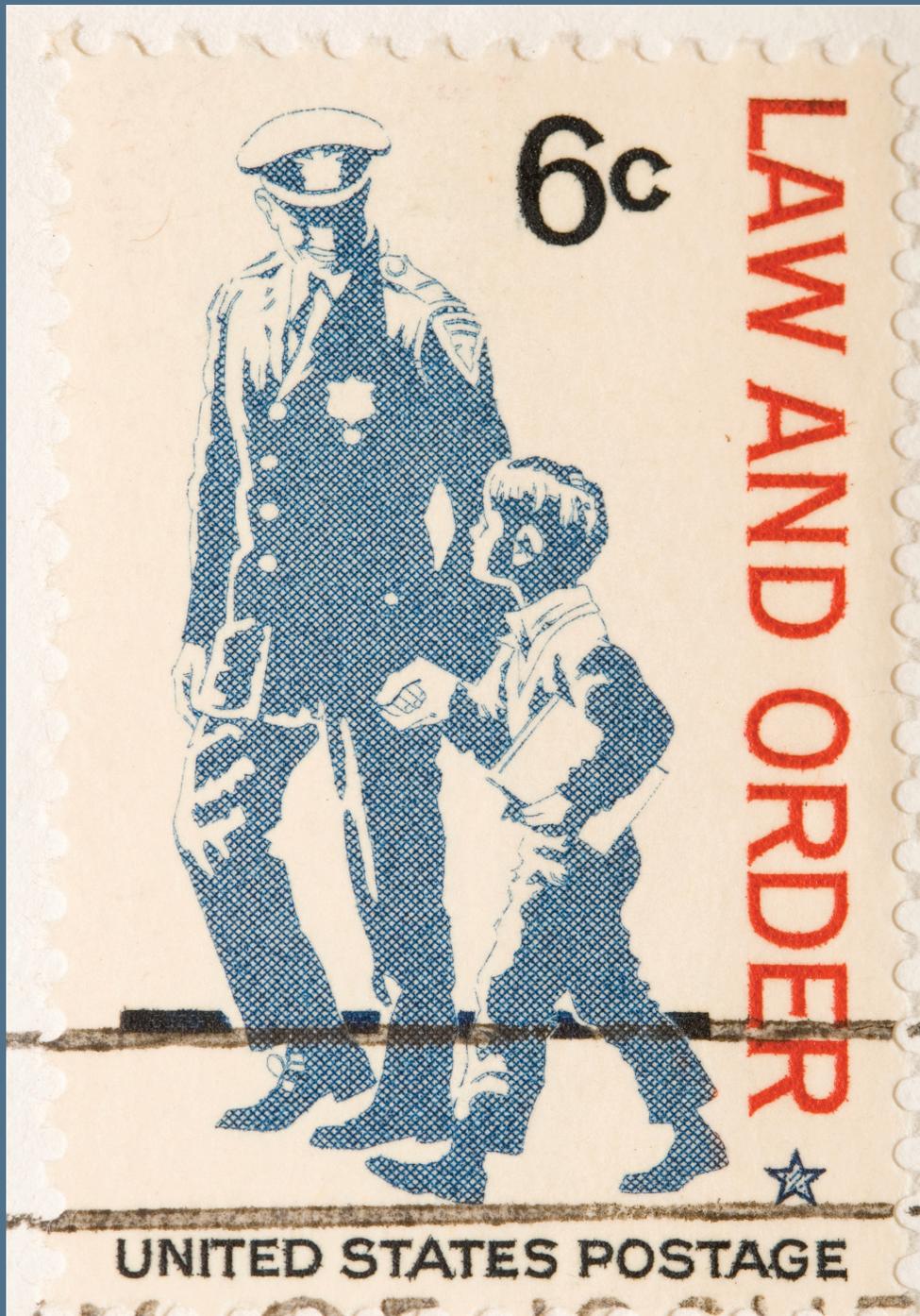


Community Policing and Victim Services in Texas



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Crime Victims' Institute • Criminal Justice Center • Sam Houston State University

...from the Director

The Crime Victims Bill of Rights, which was added to our Constitution in 1989, provides victims of crime among other things with the right to be treated with fairness, respect, and dignity throughout the criminal justice process. District attorneys offices and law enforcement agencies are required to have a person designated as a victim services provider. In smaller or more rural jurisdictions the persons designated to serve victims may also have other responsibilities. Victim services are often limited due to insufficient funds, staff, and understanding. These limitations are not always related to the service providers themselves.

Many victims do not avail themselves of the victims services provided in the community. Sometimes this is due to being unaware of what is available, and at other times victims may conclude that it is not worth the trouble. Perhaps they conclude that there is little that the police can do.

Community policing is a strategy that endeavors to foster positive contacts between patrol officers and members of the community. It is designed to establish trust between the police and the community. Enhancing services to victims of crime is an offshoot of this strategy.

This report focuses on the intersection of community policing and victim services in Texas. We hope it will be informative and be the catalyst for innovative ways to assist victims of crime.



Glen Kercher
Crime Victims' Institute



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Crime Victims' Institute is to

- conduct research to examine the impact of crime on victims of all ages in order to promote a better understanding of victimization
- improve services to victims
- assist victims of crime by giving them a voice
- inform victim-related policymaking at the state and local levels.



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Executive Summary

This report focuses on the concepts of community policing, primarily the key tenets of police-community partnerships and problem solving, for improved police services to crime victims in the State of Texas. The report details the extent of victimization in the United States, as well as Texas, and then details the extent of police services for victims and victims' services. The report explains how community policing may enhance services to victims by defining community policing, its tenets, and how community policing would better deliver victims' services. By way of example, it details two issues: repeat victimizations and domestic violence. The report then concludes with a discussion of future partnerships between the police and victims.

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Community Policing and Victims' Services:

Willard M. Oliver

Texas is no different from most other states across the nation that wrestles with the problems of victims' services. Programs for victims are often lacking, and where they are seemingly strong, there is usually insufficient funds. Other hurdles include the low usage of victims' services by the victims themselves, as well as the problem of revictimization. Preventing victimization and adequately responding to victims' needs in the aftermath of a crime is a concern for not only those in the criminal justice system, but for every member of the state. In particular, this is a key concern for the police, and although most agencies have a Victim Liaison Officer (VLO) responsible for coordinating victims services, these police officers are often assigned other duties or are simply overwhelmed with the number of cases they are required to manage. Additionally, one person is often unable to adequately provide services for so many victims; rather, it takes a collaborative effort. As community policing is fundamentally about collaboration with various partners, focused particularly on the needs of the community at the neighborhood level, and oriented toward educating the public, a police department or sheriff's office adoption of community policing practices may serve as a means for enhancing victim services in the state of Texas.

In order to understand why this might be, it is important to first look at the extent of victimization in the United States and Texas, to understand the current status of victims' services with respect to police services for victims, and to understand why community policing may prove to be a means for improving police services to victims. Understanding and defining community policing will assist in understanding how police services could be improved upon, and drawing upon two examples, repeat victimization and domestic violence, this report will attempt to demonstrate how community policing encourages partnerships between the police and victims in order to solve the problems facing victims in the state of Texas. Future possibilities for partnerships are also discussed.

Victimization in the U.S.

According to the most recent National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) report,¹ U.S. residents age 12 and older experienced an estimated 20 million violent and property victimizations in 2009. The majority of these were property crimes (15.6 million), but there were 4.3 million violent crimes. While these rates of violent and property crime were the lowest recorded since the inception of the National Crime Victimization Survey in 1972, and victimization rates have been falling since 2000, the number of victimizations is still high in America, and therefore a serious problem that still needs to be adequately addressed.

According to the 2009, National Crime Victimization Survey² males, blacks, and persons age 24 or younger continued to be victimized at higher rates than females, whites, and persons age 25 years or older. More specifically, males were victims of violent crime at rates slightly higher than females. Males experienced higher rates of robbery and aggravated assault than females, while females were more likely to be victims of rape or sexual assault. Blacks were more likely than whites to be victims of overall violent crime, including robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault, while being only somewhat more likely to be the victims of sexual assault. Hispanics were found to be more likely victims of robbery than non-Hispanics. Further, in keeping with past findings, the young, those under 25, were more likely to be the

victims of crime than those 25 and older. In a large portion of the victimizations, the offender was known to the victim. For males, 45% of the victims knew their offender, while 68% of female victims knew their offender.

Understanding the characteristics of victimization is critical to the police in developing programs to respond to victims; however, still more critical is the need for victims to report their victimizations to the police. It is estimated that nearly half of all violent crimes and approximately 40% of all property crimes were reported to the police in 2009. In regard to violent crimes, usually the more serious are reported to the police, while the less serious, or less traumatic, are not. The percentage of robberies reported to the police was 68%, the number of aggravated assaults was 58%, and the percentage of simple assaults was 42%. In regard to property crimes, most motor vehicle thefts were reported to the police (85%), little more than half of burglaries were reported (57%), while less than half of all thefts were reported (32%). The report did note, however, that since 2000, the rates of violent and property crime reported to the police have remained fairly stable (See Table 1).

Table 1. Percent of Violent & Property Crimes Reported to the Police, 2009

Type of Crime	Percent Reported	Standard Error
Violent Crime	48.6%	1.85%
Rape/Sexual Assault	55.4%	8.96%
Robbery	68.4%	4.30%
Aggravated Assault	58.2%	3.74%
Simple Assault	41.9%	2.15%
Property Crime	39.4%	0.92%
Burglary	57.3%	1.74%
Motor Vehicle Theft	84.6%	2.33%
Theft	31.8%	0.96%
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2010). Criminal Victimization, 2009. Washington: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, p. 8 & 14 .		

Recognizing that certain characteristics are associated with victimization and that many know their offender, the police have the opportunity in working with those likely to be victims to reduce victimization. Also, the fact that not everyone reports their victimization would suggest that police programs working with the community should incorporate awareness of this problem in order to encourage increased reporting of victimizations.

Victimization in Texas

According to the Texas Department of Public Safety,⁶ the overall crime rate in Texas increased very slightly by .3 percent from 2008 to 2009. More specifically, the violent crime rate dropped by 3.3 percent, while the rate of property crime increased by .8 percent. Focusing on what the Texas Department of Public Safety classifies as “Family Violence Offenses,” law enforcement agencies in Texas reported a total of 196,713 family violence incidents involving 212,106 victims and 207,315 offenders in 2009.

The National Crime Victimization Survey Report does not provide state level data, it is an estimate for the nation as a whole. The Crime Victims’ Institute of Texas, however, has conducted an annual survey of victims, modeled after the National Crime Victimization

Survey Report, and the information it includes across the span of the survey (2004-2006) provides a very similar perspective to victimization across Texas.^{7, 8, 9} The findings of the survey, in general, are that the majority of crime victims were property-crime victims, that there was a high level of fear, and that approximately half of those surveyed owned a fire-arm for protection.

The majority of those who were victims of a property crime were a victim in their own residence, the majority of these being damage to property. Men and women were equally likely to be the victims of property crimes, but those ages 18 to 34, single, never married, minority, renters, and persons making more than \$30,000 each year, were more likely to be the victims of property crimes. The majority of victims did in fact report their crimes to the police (73%, 73%, and 52% in the years 2004, 2005, and 2006 respectively). One interesting finding in 2005, however, was that of those who reported their property crimes to the police, 43% reported they were dissatisfied with the police response, while 41% reported they were satisfied.

In regard to violent crimes, most victims (67%) were threatened or attacked with physical force (grabbing, punching, or choking) and nearly half were victimized in or near their home (45%). Approximately one-third of the victims were threatened or attacked with a weapon (36% in 2005, 33% in 2006). The majority of victims tended to be those between 18 and 34, male, a minority, single, never married, renter, and making an annual income of less than \$30,000 a year. A majority of the victims of violent crimes did report their victimization to the police (73%, 73%, and 43% in the years 2004, 2005, and 2006 respectively). Of those reporting their victimization to the police in Texas, 44% stated they were satisfied with the police response, while another 44% stated they were dissatisfied.

The information regarding both property and violent crime victimization suggests certain patterns in the characteristics of victims, as was seen in the national data. Recognizing this information can assist Texas police in creating programs to prevent victimization. More importantly, the three years of Texas crime victim surveys suggest that the police in Texas have room for improvement in their response to victims of both violent and property crimes. In light of the fact that citizen satisfaction with the police response after reporting their victimization is equally mixed, police services for victims should be an important topic in the state of Texas. It is this topic which will be explored more fully in the next section.

Police Services for Victims

In order to more fully understand the delivery of police services for victims in the state of Texas, a review of the current status is needed. Fortunately, that was conducted in 2006 by the Crime Victims' Institute (2007),¹⁰ providing some insightful information regarding the current status of police services. The study surveyed (among others) the Victim Liaison Officers across Texas in various city police departments and county sheriff's offices. A total of 230 Victim Liaison Officers were surveyed and their demographic information collected. The study found that the majority of Victim Liaison Officers tended to be white, (74%), females (55%), who had experienced an increase in the number of victims served over the previous three years (45%), despite a reduction in crimes over the same time period. Interestingly, when asked the priority these officers give to their duties as the Victim Liaison Officer, 44% reported it was a low priority due to other duties, while 36% stated it was their primary duty, despite having other office duties. Only 20% reported it was their highest priority. It should also be noted, although not surprising, that the majority of Victim

Liaison Officers reported that their agency did not incorporate victim services into their mission statement (73%).

With regard to the type of services the Victim Liaison Officers in Texas provided to victims, it would appear that most are very limited. In regard to emergency services, 29% provided medical care, 22% provided shelter for the victim, and only 6% provided direct financial assistance. A majority (63%), however, did report that they provided “on-the-scene” counseling, 46% provided crisis intervention, 36% offered follow up counseling, 23% provided mediation, and 22% provided a 24-hour hotline. The majority also provided certain advocacy and support services to the victims such as property return, referrals, and explanation of the criminal justice process. Very few provided employer intervention (17%), assistance with medical appointments (12%), or legal counsel (9%). In regard to court related services, the Victim Liaison Officers reported that some of their agencies provided notification (32%), victim impact statements (27%), and transportation (25%). Few reported providing court orientation (15%), having witness reception areas (20%) or providing child care (6%). In terms of providing public education, only 35% reported offering these types of services, while 23% reported they provided training, and only 6% stated they promoted any type of legislative advocacy.

The primary reason that most of the Victim Liaison Officers gave for the lack of services stemmed from a lack of funding, time, and understanding. Written comments from these officers highlight this fact. In regard to a lack of funding, one wrote “Our department does not have the funding to guarantee a Victim Liaison position.”¹¹ Another Victim Liaison Officer, when addressing the issue of time, explained that “I’m the Crime Victim Liaison for my department, along with the Community Oriented Police Sergeant and the Patrol Sergeant for the 3-11 shift.”¹² Finally, one Victim Liaison Officer was quite blunt in addressing the lack of knowledge when s/he said, “Police officers and sheriff’s deputies do not understand victims’ rights and do not want to understand.”¹³ Again, it would appear that police services for victims in the state of Texas are greatly in need of improvement.

The study,¹⁴ concluded, after a review of the various reasons for limited police services for victims, by making several key recommendations — areas which could be improved. One of the realities noted is that when 80% of the Victim Liaison Officers in Texas perform duties beyond assisting victims “it is difficult to understand how victims are well served by it.”¹⁵ There is the reality of budget and staffing levels, as well as mission creep. If an officer is assigned solely to a specific job function, often additional duties that seem related are added to their job description. The Victim Liaison Officer is assigned Community Policing duties, juvenile delinquent responsibilities, school resource officer duties, etc., because they all appear to be inter-related. Yet, the reality is each additional function diminishes the ability of the officer to perform any one of those duties. One other issue, closely related to job function, is that of the rise in the number of victims serviced by a Victim Liaison Officer. It is often the case that the number of cases they are required to manage will increase over time, thus diminishing their ability to deal effectively with all of the victims. A Victim Liaison Officer handling 20 to 30 victims may be manageable, but if that number increases to 150 to 160, little assistance will probably be rendered to any of them.

The report,¹⁶ also noted that there is a lack of education and training for Victim Liaison Officers. Further, it is encouraged that enhanced coordination among service providers should be the focus of future efforts. The report argues that “collaboration is important to work out referral and coordination procedures, to educate members about the vagaries of each agency’s procedures and to encourage multi-agency grant submissions to a community.”¹⁷ Finally, it is

argued that enhanced education and training among service providers can effectively increase collaboration efforts, thus the two issues that need to be addressed can be addressed simultaneously. If jurisdictions provided training to not only Victim Liaison Officers from the police departments and sheriff's offices, but also to the prosecutor's office and local community outreach groups, the collaboration during training can cross over to collaboration among these various agencies when working with the victims of a crime.

Victim Service Program Use and Non-use

The study reviewing Victim Liaison Officers in the State of Texas,¹⁸ also noted that there are other reasons that police services for victims fall short — reasons that are not directly related to the Victim Liaison Officers themselves. In many cases, victims choose not to use victim services even when they are available. The respondents in this study noted that the primary reason victims did not use these services is either because they were never made aware of the services (44%) or because they did not think it was worth the trouble of trying to use the services (49%). Others chose to obtain assistance from family and friends (33%), had other resources to assist them such as insurance or savings (17%), or simply felt they were not in need of assistance (8%). It is difficult to assist those who do not want assistance, but that is not inherently a justification for not providing the services to those who wish to use such services. Further, as Victim Liaison Officers are not the only ones who can provide victims' services, often they must rely upon whether the Victim Assistance Coordinators within the prosecutor's office or they must rely upon Community Victim Advocates. Here one of the major impediments to service provision comes in the form of poor communication between agencies, a lack of cooperation, and barriers that arise between agencies over what are commonly referred to as territorial issues. Interestingly, it is many of the Victim Liaison Officers voicing these difficulties in victim service provision.

Unfortunately, the study's findings are not all too surprising. Past research into the use and nonuse of victim services programs has consistently found low usage.^{19, 20, 21, 22, 23} Some of the researchers have argued that the only victims that use such services are those that have no access or means to access elsewhere.²⁴ In addition, they have found that many do not report their victimization to the police because they do not think that it will make a difference or because they do not want to be labeled a victim.²⁵ Some have also noted that victims often do not trust the police,²⁶ hence they do not report the crime to the police. And, even when they apparently do report their victimization to the police and seek out victim services, they are typically not satisfied with their experience.^{27, 28} One recent study,²⁹ concluded that a victims' decision not to seek assistance, may very well be akin to the same reasoning that many crime victims never report their experience to the police in the first place. The recommendations from most of these studies include educating the public about victim services, adequately staffing victim service programs, and providing better training to those working with crime victims.³⁰

It is evident from both these studies that highlight the low usage of victims' services and the survey conducted in the State of Texas:³¹ Texas is not vastly different from other states and their problems with crime victims' use of victim services programs. Not only are there apparent deficiencies in the staffing, budget, training, and collaboration among Victim Liaison Officers, but there are deficiencies in making the public and victims aware of the services, encouraging them to use the programs, and generating a productive positive outcome for both real and perceived impact of the victim service provision. Finding a means for overcoming these deficiencies appears to be a primary goal not only for victim services in the state of Texas,

but across the nation. There is one potential positive response to these deficiencies and that is the adoption of community policing on the part of agencies across Texas. As community policing is fundamentally about collaboration with various partners, focused particularly on the needs of the community at the neighborhood level, and oriented toward educating the public, a police department or sheriff's office adoption of community policing practices may serve as a means for enhancing victim services in the state of Texas.

Community Policing Defined

Community policing has been defined in many ways by many agencies, yet all have several key underlying tenets that are almost always present. Therefore, community policing can be defined, broadly, as “a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.”³²

The foundations of a successful community policing strategy are the close, mutually beneficial ties between police and community members.³³ Community policing consists of two complementary core components, community partnership and problem solving. To develop community partnership, police must develop positive relationships with the community, must involve the community in the quest for better crime control and prevention, and must pool their resources with those of the community to address the most urgent concerns of community members. Problem solving is the process through which the specific concerns of communities are identified and through which the most appropriate remedies to abate these problems are found.³⁴

Community policing does not imply that police are no longer in authority or that the primary duty of preserving law and order is subordinated.³⁵ However, tapping into the expertise and resources that exist within communities will relieve police of some of their burdens. Local government officials, social agencies, schools, church groups, business people — all those who work and live in the community and have a stake in its development — will share responsibility for finding workable solutions to problems that detract from the safety and security of the community.

The goal of community policing is to reduce crime and disorder by carefully examining the characteristics of problems in neighborhoods and then applying appropriate problem-solving remedies. The “community” for which a patrol officer is given responsibility should be a small, well-defined geographical area. Beats should be configured in a manner that preserves, as much as possible, the unique geographical and social characteristics of neighborhoods while still allowing efficient service.

Patrol officers are the primary providers of police services and have the most extensive contact with community members. In community policing efforts, they provide the bulk of the daily policing needs of the community, and they are assisted by immediate supervisors, other police units, and appropriate government and social agencies. Upper level managers and command staff are responsible for ensuring that the entire organization backs the efforts of patrol officers.

Effective community policing depends on optimizing positive contact between patrol officers and community members. Patrol cars are only one method of conveying police services. Police departments may supplement automobile patrols with foot, bicycle, scooter, and

horseback patrols, as well as adding “mini-stations” to bring police closer to the community. Regular community meetings and forums afford police and community members an opportunity to air concerns and find ways to address them.

Officers working long-term assignments on the same shift and beat become familiar figures to community members and become aware of the day-to-day workings of the community. This increased police presence is an initial move in establishing trust and serves to reduce fear of crime among community members, which, in turn, helps create neighborhood security. Fear must be reduced if community members are to participate actively in policing. People will not act if they feel that their actions will jeopardize their safety. Although the delivery of police services is organized by geographic area, a community may encompass widely diverse cultures, values, and concerns, particularly in urban settings. A community consists of more than just the local government and the neighborhood residents. Churches, schools, hospitals, social groups, private and public agencies, and those who work in the area are also vital members of the community.

Establishing and maintaining mutual trust is the central goal of the first core component of community policing — community partnership. Police recognize the need for cooperation with the community. In the fight against serious crime, police have encouraged community members to come forth with relevant information. In addition, police have spoken to neighborhood groups, participated in business and civic events, worked with social agencies, and taken part in educational and recreational programs for school children. Special units have provided a variety of crisis intervention services. So how then do the cooperative efforts of community policing differ from the actions that have taken place previously? The fundamental distinction is that, in community policing, the police become an integral part of the community culture, and the community assists in defining future priorities and in allocating resources. The difference is substantial and encompasses basic goals and commitments.

Community partnership means adopting a policing perspective that exceeds the standard law enforcement emphasis. This broadened outlook recognizes the value of activities that contribute to the orderliness and well-being of a neighborhood. These activities could include: helping accident or crime victims, providing emergency medical services, helping resolve domestic and neighborhood conflicts (e.g., family violence, landlord-tenant disputes, or racial harassment), working with residents and local businesses to improve neighborhood conditions, controlling automobile and pedestrian traffic, providing emergency social services and referrals to those at risk (e.g., adolescent runaways, the homeless, the intoxicated, and the mentally ill), protecting the exercise of constitutional rights (e.g., guaranteeing a person’s right to speak, protecting lawful assemblies from disruption), and providing a model of citizenship (helpfulness, respect for others, honesty, and fairness).

These services help develop trust between the police and the community. This trust will enable the police to gain greater access to valuable information from the community that could lead to the solution and prevention of crimes, will engender support for needed crime-control measures, and will provide an opportunity for officers to establish a working relationship with the community. The entire police organization must be involved in enlisting the cooperation of community members in promoting safety and security.

The second key component of community policing — problem solving — is a broad term that implies more than simply the elimination and prevention of crimes.^{36,37} Problem solving is based on the assumption that “crime and disorder can be reduced in small geographic areas by carefully studying the characteristics of problems in the area, and then applying the appropriate resources” and the assumption that “Individuals make choices based on the oppor-

tunities presented by the immediate physical and social characteristics of an area. By manipulating these factors, people will be less inclined to act in an offensive manner.”³⁸

Eck and Spelman (1987)³⁹ explain that:

The theory behind problem-oriented policing is simple. Underlying conditions create problems. These conditions might include the characteristics of the people involved (offenders, potential victims, and others), the social setting in which these people interact, the physical environments, and the way the public deals with these conditions. A problem created by these conditions may generate one or more incidents. These incidents, while stemming from a common source, may appear to be different. For example, social and physical conditions in a deteriorated apartment complex may generate burglaries, acts of vandalism, intimidation of pedestrians by rowdy teenagers, and other incidents. These incidents, some of which come to police attention, are symptoms of the problems. The incidents will continue so long as the problem that creates them persists. (p. xvi)

As police recognize the effectiveness of the problem-solving approach, there is a growing awareness that community involvement is essential for its success. Determining the underlying causes of crime depends, to a great extent, on an in-depth knowledge of community. Therefore, community participation in identifying and setting priorities will contribute to effective problem-solving efforts by the community and the police. Cooperative problem solving also reinforces trust, facilitates the exchange of information, and leads to the identification of other areas that could benefit from the mutual attention of the police and the community. The problem-solving process, like community partnership, is self-renewing.

For this process to operate effectively the police need to devote attention to and recognize the validity of community concerns. Neighborhood groups and the police will not always agree on which specific problems deserve attention first. Police may regard robberies as the biggest problem in a particular community, while residents may find derelicts who sleep in doorways, break bottles on sidewalks, and pick through garbage cans to be the number one problem. Under community policing, the problem with derelicts should also receive early attention from the police with the assistance of other government agencies and community members. Therefore, in addition to the serious crime problems identified by police, community policing must also address the problems of significant concern to the community. Community policing in effect allows community members to bring problems of great concern to them to the attention of the police. Once informed of community concerns, the police must work with citizens to address them, while at the same time encouraging citizens to assist in solving the problems of concern to the police.

The nature of community problems will vary widely and will often involve multiple incidents that are related by factors including geography, time, victim or perpetrator group, and environment. Problems can affect a small area of a community, an entire community, or many communities. Linking these incidents and understanding their scope is the key to analyzing the problem, which then allows community policing officers to develop solutions, in concert with the community, for resolving the underlying causes of the problem.

Taken together, community partnerships and problem solving form the basis for the adoption of community policing. In terms of community policing services and its application to victims services, not only would the police work with groups and organizations whose goals

are aimed at helping the victims of crimes, police would partner with the victims themselves in order to employ problem solving measures to assist victims in dealing with their victimization and to prevent future victimization.

Community Policing & Victims

The application of community policing to victims' services has been implemented in a number of jurisdictions across the United States. Research into these programs, from a variety of perspectives, has proven to be very successful and have demonstrated significant changes. Police officer perceptions of victims and victimization, victims' satisfaction with the police, as well as their confidence in the police, and overall reaction to the implementation of community policing, have all demonstrated positive returns.

Traditionally, police have not been seen as highly sympathetic to victims, and in particular to those who are victims of intimate partner violence.⁴⁰ The adoption of community policing, given the fact it is supposed to be focused on community partnerships and problem solving, would suggest that police officers may have a more positive attitude toward victims of intimate partner violence.⁴¹ In fact, one study found that community policing officers were more positive in their response to intimate partner violence and were more willing to work with victims of these crimes.⁴² Additionally, a more recent study,⁴³ discovered that community policing officers had more positive attitudes toward victims, finding that they recognized the complexity of the problem, were more aware of the barriers the women faced in leaving the relationship, and that they were inclined to believe that intimate partner violence was a serious and worthy problem that does demand police intervention. This is a far cry from the old days when intimate partner violence was simply "a family matter."

While the change in police perception is important for community policing to be successful, it is also clear that crime victims must also be satisfied with the police services they receive. While overall, police officers tend to receive a generally favorable rating by citizens,⁴⁴ satisfaction with their job performance tends to be mixed with various factors, such as race, residential location, and age, being a factor.^{45, 46, 47} One line of research into victim satisfaction with community policing officers,^{48, 49, 50} finds that the strongest correlate for victims satisfaction with the police comes from the officer's perceived helpfulness. In other words, when the victim saw the community policing officer as being sympathetic and helpful, victims tended to have a high level of satisfaction with the police. Because community policing is oriented toward working with citizens in partnerships to solve problems, one study concluded that "a close adherence to the principles of community oriented policing will lead to increased levels of citizen satisfaction."⁵¹ Additional research,⁵² has also found that where community policing has been widely adopted, citizens are more likely to report crimes to the police, enhancing their awareness of both crimes and victims.

Both police and victims' perceptions appear to have improved under the adoption of community policing and this is both important and positive in the delivery of police services for victims. However, while it is important that perceptions change, it is more imperative that behaviors change. It is reasoned that with changes in police and citizen perceptions regarding issues such as intimate partner violence, the ultimate goal for community policing is to reduce the behaviors that lead toward victimization. While this is more difficult to assess, recent research in this area is beginning to find some evidence that the adoption of community policing can in fact change behavior. A number of studies have found that awareness of community policing on the part of citizens is related to the adoption of household protective measures (e.g.,

purchasing home burglary alarms).^{53, 54, 55} One study,⁵⁶ however, found that citizen awareness of community policing was associated with an increase in protective behaviors in general — changes in personal behaviors that are associated with reducing rates of victimization (e.g., not staying out late at night, avoiding certain areas, carrying a cell phone). It is argued that because community policing uses many different mobilization devices to communicate with the public (e.g., newsletters, neighborhood meetings, etc.), it is more successful in encouraging people to think about their safety and to prevent potential victimizations.

In light of the fact that community policing has demonstrated its ability to improve police perceptions of victims, to enhance victims' satisfaction with the police, and to alter behaviors that assist in preventing victimization, it would appear that the adoption of this philosophy of policing would serve crime victims well in the state of Texas. How to bring victims into community policing is the subject of the next section.

Community Policing & Victim Services

Recent program initiatives sponsored in part by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and the National Center for Victims of Crime, have begun to assess how to bridge the gap between community policing and victims. The project started with the premise that community policing would be significantly enhanced by the development of a stronger relationship between crime victims and police.⁵⁷ Drawing upon the two primary tenets of community policing, police-community collaboration and problem solving, the project pulled together police and victims (and victims' advocacy groups) to find ways in which they could solve the problems of victimization. The project revealed a number of key themes deriving from the police and victims collaborations and they are as follows:

Victims are stakeholders. Police usually treat victims as clients, with services being delivered to them. While victims of crime do need help, they are also key participants in the immediate response to the crime, the ongoing investigation of the incident, and efforts to prevent a recurrence. By approaching victims as powerful and resourceful stakeholders, police can have a greater impact on crime and perceptions of community safety.

Victim service organizations offer unique opportunities for partnership. Victim service organizations (VSO) have unique knowledge and capabilities that could enhance efforts to investigate and prevent crime. Victims often give different kinds of crime-related information to counselors at victim service organizations than they would to police officers. Still respecting the confidentiality of their clients, victim service organizations can identify patterns of crime as well as gaps and deficiencies in police services that police may not know of otherwise, participate in problem solving activities, and help to prevent repeat victimization. Through their work with victims, VSOs can play an important part in community policing.

Productive relationships between police and victims require better communication. Victims often have too little information about police procedure and what happens during the initial response to and subsequent investigation of a crime. Interaction with a victim should include an educational component designed to increase understanding and facilitate a victim's active participation in problem-solving.

Reducing the risk of repeat victimization is an important component of effective response to crime. The risk of re-victimization increases with each victimization. By working to prevent repeat victimization, police can reduce the occurrence of crime and enhance individual and community safety.

Partnerships are key to preventing repeat victimization. There is an opportunity to transform society's response to crime by building collaborative relationships between victims of crime, the organizations that serve them, and police. Because the time that officers can spend with victims is limited, police organizations should develop responses that include civilian employees and other non-police agencies and organizations. By breaking down organizational barriers and building strategic alliances, police can improve the response to victims without necessarily increasing their workload.

Police and victim service organizations can find common ground in preventing crime. Sometimes language gets in the way of collaboration. Crime prevention is something that police organizations tend to do at a community or group level. Victim service organizations are often hesitant to focus on crime prevention because they are usually focused exclusively on the aftermath of crime. However, victim service organizations, especially those working on domestic violence and stalking, often assist individual victims with safety planning to develop strategies to maximize the victim's safety. Collaborative efforts using both these approaches could prove to be very effective.

The initiative found that community policing can be greatly enhanced by working to prevent repeat victimization and building collaborative problem solving relationships with victims and victim organizations. They conclude that that, "It is time to bring the victim into community policing."⁵⁸ The follow-on question, of course, is how? How do police partner with victims in order to build these collaborative problem solving relationships? The answer is found in a number of programs, two of which will be discussed here. The first is addressing the issue of past victimizations and trying to prevent future victimizations, namely by assessing repeat victimizations and working closely with victims who fall into this category in order to prevent further victimizations in the future. And the second is dealing with the victims of intimate partner violence, or domestic violence, after the victimization has occurred.

Repeat Victimization

Repeat victimization occurs when the same person or target suffers more than one crime incident over a specified period of time.⁵⁹ Patterns of repeat victimization can occur in a wide range of crime types including burglary, automobile theft, assault, robbery, witness intimidation, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, hate crimes, and vandalism. A person or target may suffer the same type of crime repeatedly (for example, repeated burglaries) or different types of crime.

An individual's risk of repeat victimization depends on a number of variables, including personal characteristics, perpetrator characteristics, and crime type. Police personnel should never use general repeat victimization rates to establish the risk faced by an individual victim. Victims should simply be informed that the risk of re-victimization exists, that the risk is highest during the first few months after an incident, and that the overall risk increases as the number of victimizations increases.

A fundamental tenet of community policing holds that police should work with community-based partners to solve problems. The most difficult aspect of problem solving is the identification and effective analysis of problems. Police organizations use an array of macro-level tactics to identify and analyze crime problems. Data are collected, crime maps are analyzed, patrol officers are surveyed, and community organizations are consulted. This approach depends on a high level of resources and tends to only identify problems once they have become big enough to draw police attention.

In contrast, identifying and preventing repeat victimization is problem solving that starts at the micro level. Because repeat victimization affects individual people and targets, effective problem solving begins at an individual level and moves to larger groups when appropriate.

To fully understand the nature of repeat victimization and develop effective responses, law enforcement agencies must capitalize on non-traditional as well as traditional sources of information. It's essential, for example, to look beyond arrest data and calls for service and consider residential, business and environmental surveys, victim and offender interviews, mapping/GIS data, and social services data. The next task is to analyze this data. Thorough data analysis can yield surprising information about underlying causes, illuminating problems and pointing the way to solutions. Only through sound analysis can the detailed picture needed to fashion effective responses emerge. Without it, opportunities to develop alternative, non-traditional responses are likely to be missed and strategies to prevent repeat victimization are likely to fail.

When creating a police organization's focus on preventing repeat victimization of individuals, a number of the principles governing policing operations will change. Crime prevention has to be a primary police activity before any victimization occurs, and once it does occur, the quality of first response to the safety and well-being of the victim must also improve. That first police response must also not be in the end of the services to victims, but rather the beginning of a longer period of intervention involving other units of the police organizations, as well as partner organizations (e.g., victims service providers, etc.). It is these collaborations that will become critical and reducing or collapsing the boundaries between these organizations is critical to successful police services to victims. More importantly, because community policing is about partnering to prevent crime, victims can partner with the police in response to their own victimization and join with police and other community stakeholders to work on community problem solving efforts.

This last concept sounds difficult and runs counter to past practices of policing, but incorporating the philosophy of community policing into police response to victims makes sense because the crime victims have the greatest stake in the crime event and can prove to be powerful partners with the police. As partners, victims can help solve crimes, reduce their own future risk for revictimization, and they can assist the police in preventing other similar crimes in the community.⁶⁰

While the partnership with the police can take time to develop, there are other responses to victimization that the police can take — many of these still incorporating the victim in the process. The three primary ways of responding to repeat victimizations is protecting victims by blocking future opportunities against specific persons or places, shifting the responsibility for repeat victimizations, and increasing the actual or perceived risks of apprehension for offenders, primarily repeat offenders.⁶¹

The second method, shifting responsibility, is not about abdicating responsibility under community policing, but rather finding other means of dealing with the victimization. If the victimization came about because of someone walking home alone, finding an escort may be the answer. If the victim, such as in a domestic violence case, had no other place to go and remained in a bad situation at home, finding a domestic violence shelter and letting the victim know how to access it in the future and when they should access it, may be one means of shifting the responsibility. Community police officers should remain involved, but letting other groups assist is key to this method. Another means for shifting responsibility may be in having the business management of a repeat victim establishment, such as a convenience store, alter

its security measures. This would reduce the number of victimizations not only to the store, but to the employees that work at that location.

Finally, increasing the risks to the offender may include temporarily increasing surveillance, such as patrols by the police, employing a neighborhood watch to patrol a certain area, installing electronic surveillance, or providing panic alarms to victims of repeat offenders. Additionally, reducing the rewards for the offenders, such as installing tracking devices in vehicles (e.g., the Lojack system), marking or etching property, and controlling the amount of cash a retail store has available at any given time.

Providing for the victims of crimes and working in collaboration to prevent future victimization is a worthwhile cause for all those involved, for it reduces the number of calls for service to the police, it reduces the number of victimizations that cost the individual, and society, so much, and together it improves the overall quality of life of not only the victim, but the community as a whole.

Domestic Violence

Another Office of Community Oriented Policing project was the assessment of how problem solving methods could be employed in community policing in order to better address the problem of domestic violence.⁶² The project worked on developing a comprehensive and collaborative response strategy for implementing a community policing approach to serving the victims of domestic violence. It was reasoned that a comprehensive and collaborative approach to reducing domestic violence was more likely to succeed than piecemeal approaches, with the realization that this type of approach required a significant commitment from all participating. The project noted that although some communities have adopted a more integrated approach engaging advocates, police, and the criminal justice system, for the most part, recidivism remains high. In the small studies of these integrated domestic violence approaches, there is evidence that victim satisfaction is high but insufficient evidence that recidivism and revictimization rates have decreased.⁶³

To improve the likelihood that a comprehensive approach reduces recidivism and victimization requires a continuum of responses depending on the most reliable research and covering the different points in time most important to reducing domestic abuse: before an incident to keep it from occurring, during an incident to stop the immediate violence, and after an incident to reduce or prevent revictimization. It involves responses that focus on victims and potential victims and strategies that focus on offenders and potential offenders. As well, it involves the improved identification and reporting of cases of abuse between current and former intimates and dating partners. The following are some of the recommendations made for addressing the problems of domestic violence from a comprehensive and collaborative perspective.⁶⁴

Educating collaborative partners. Each partner in a domestic violence reduction collaborative brings a unique perspective and body of knowledge. It is important for members of domestic violence collaborations to operate with precise and accurate information about what does and does not work and about the dimensions of the problem in your community. Do not assume that other professional groups participating in the collaborative have the most up-to-date knowledge about the problem or are following prescribed protocols.⁶⁵

Tailoring the police response on the basis of offender and victim risk. Some researchers advocate a graded response to domestic violence. They view batterers along a contin-

uum — some are easily dissuaded from rebattering, others require increased actions — and a graded or tiered approach to control offender behavior can be effective. For instance, we know that a percentage of batterers is deterred from rebattering simply by having the police called on them, so encouraging reporting is essential; others may be deterred with the additional application of a restraining order. More is required to keep other batterers from rebattering, which suggests a need to refine assessments about who these batterers are. Some researchers also suggest a graded approach to victim safety for similar reasons: some victims are at low risk of being revictimized and some are at higher risk.⁶⁶

Educating potential victims and offenders. Some police agencies participate in domestic violence awareness campaigns and school programming, such as classroom instruction to teens about dating violence and ways to handle conflict. Domestic violence prevention messages may target the general population or specific populations. For example, campaigns may be designed to encourage victim reporting, deter potential offenders, or raise the consciousness of potential witnesses of abuse (neighbors, friends, relatives). However, the effect of these prevention strategies is unknown.⁶⁷

Encouraging domestic violence victims and witnesses to call the police. Police and other members of a domestic violence reduction collaborative should encourage people to call the police if they are victims of, witnesses to, or know a victim of domestic violence. Prevention and education efforts should include this as a core message. A study of more than 2,500 domestic violence victims concluded that calling the police had a strong deterrent effect on revictimization, even when the police did not make an arrest, when the offender had a prior history of violence against the victim, and when the assault was sexual. Calling the police was beneficial even when the violence was severe. In addition, offender retaliation did not appear to be more likely even when a victim rather than a third party called police.⁶⁸

Encouraging other professionals to screen for domestic violence victimization and make appropriate referrals. The American Medical Association adopted domestic violence screening and referral guidelines for medical practitioners. Physicians should screen injured women patients to determine if domestic violence was the cause of the injury. Medical professionals should also discuss domestic violence with pregnant patients during prenatal checkups. Physicians' documentation of specific incidents of domestic abuse can be critical to the successful prosecutions of batterers.⁶⁹

Providing victims with emergency protection and services after an assault. Battered women's shelters protect women from further harm after an assault, sometimes on referral from the police and sometimes not. Typical services include a domestic violence hotline, temporary housing, information and referrals to other social services, safety planning, victim advocacy for emergency benefits or at court proceedings, and referrals for legal services.

Assessing the threat of repeat victimization. Like the previous information detailed above, insuring against repeat victimization is critical to community policing services provided in the case of domestic abuse.⁷⁰ One study found that in 50% of domestic violence-related homicides, officers had previously responded to a call on the scene.⁷¹ This underscores the role of first responders in addressing the needs of those involved in domestic violence cases. Gathering accurate information about past abuse, including unreported incidents, is critical in assessing a victim's current risk and tailoring appropriate offender interventions. Police can be trained to use risk assessment instruments (e.g., Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment)⁷² in order to determine the degree of risk a victim has of re-victimization or death. Such instruments are usually more valid than an officer's perception or judgment.

Arresting offenders. Many U.S. police agencies adopted pro-arrest or mandatory arrest domestic violence policies in the 1980s and early 1990s. Propelling these policies were legal decisions establishing civil liability against the police for failure to protect women victims of domestic violence. Generally, pro-arrest laws and policies apply not only to spouses, but to unmarried partners, former intimates, and persons who had or raised a child together. In many jurisdictions the laws or policies apply to both heterosexual and homosexual relationships.

Police interventions in domestic violence incidents have expanded beyond merely separating and counseling the parties; they've become full-blown criminal investigations in which witnesses are interviewed, neighbors are canvassed, injuries are photographed, physical evidence is collected, future threats are assessed, and victims are referred to follow-up protective services and helped to plan for their future safety. In addition, some states permit police to seize firearms from alleged batterers, and federal laws generally prohibit convicted misdemeanor batterers or those against whom there is a valid order of protection from possessing a gun. All U.S. states now permit police to make warrantless arrests for both misdemeanor and felony assaults.

Issuing and enforcing restraining orders. Restraining orders (also known as “stay away” or protective orders) are intended to prevent offenders from further harassing, threatening or contacting the victims. Courts have made restraining orders widely available to domestic violence victims, whether or not they file a police report. Courts may issue a temporary (time-limited) restraining order even when the “party being restrained” is not present or represented. Protective relief may be temporary or permanent. Violation of these orders is now a criminal offense in all U.S. states. Domestic violence restraining orders are frequently violated although some offenders may be deterred by them. Some research findings suggest that a victim is more likely to seek a protective order if the partner had a criminal history of violent offending, which may be why so many orders are violated; those with robust abuse histories may be the least likely to be deterred by written limits so police are advised that more must be done in these cases.

Aggressively pursuing criminal prosecution of severe domestic violence cases. Police pro-arrest and mandatory arrest policies have generated significantly larger caseloads for prosecutors. Similarly, prosecution policies against dropping charges (“no-drop”) even when the victim expresses such a desire (the functional equivalent of “mandatory arrest” for police) has further strained prosecutorial resources. Although such police and prosecution policies can have the beneficial effect of reducing an offender’s urge to retaliate against the victim because responsibility for the prosecution is no longer in the victim’s hands, it is not yet clear whether such policies have limited further violence or have had the unintended consequence of discouraging some victims from calling police in the first instance.

Establishing special domestic violence courts. There are more than 200 domestic violence courts in the United States.⁷³ The proliferation of these courts is part of a wider trend toward specialty courts: drug court, mental health court, drunk driving court, etc. Advocates for specialty courts believe they result in improved outcomes: an increase in specialty knowledge critical to case handling (including the dynamics of the underlying crime/behavior, whether it is battering, drinking, or schizophrenia, depending upon the court), timely attention to the case, and a concentration of appropriate resources that traditional courts do not have that can lead to more effective case handling.

Providing treatment for batterers. Some batterer treatment programs are voluntary; others are court-mandated. In some jurisdictions, prosecutors recommend these programs as

part of pre-trial diversion; in others they are part of court-ordered mandatory sentencing. Many states now mandate batterer treatment. Batterer treatment programs may take a variety of forms. Many offer group treatment with a focus on anger management. Others include individual assessments and individual counseling, and substance abuse and/or mental health treatment.

One example of this total collaborative approach to improving police services in domestic violence response is found in the Martinsburg Police Department in West Virginia.⁷⁴ The Martinsburg Police partnered with other criminal justice and social service agencies. They collected information from a variety of sources such as victim and offender demographics, number of protective orders sought, number of criminal complaints filed, and characteristics of victims served by a women's center. One finding of their analysis was that officers often had insufficient information at their disposal to help them on the scenes of domestic violence incidents. This was partly because they did not have a consolidated source of victim and offender data. Officers had no way of knowing if there was an active protection order against the suspect, whether there was a history of abuse, or whether the suspect possessed firearms. This lack of information resulted in fewer arrests, lenient criminal charges, and less successful prosecutions. Analysis of court data revealed that 80% of all domestic violence charges were dismissed in court, and that the small number of convictions resulted in lenient sentences.

This finding led to the development of a Domestic Violence Follow-Up Program and form, which included a list of objective criteria to help officers determine when to make follow-up calls to domestic violence victims. If an incident met certain criteria, the officer would inform the victim and suspect of a possible follow-up call within the next seven days, with a potential second visit in 21 days. Use of this form facilitated more comprehensive data collection and record keeping. In addition, emphasis was placed on improving the communication and training of various agencies involved in addressing domestic violence, with the hope that it would improve cooperation from victims in case processing, and increase the number of charges leading to prosecution and conviction. Police reports showed that officers conducted a first follow-up in 58% of the domestic violence cases and 13% had second follow-ups. The percentage of cases dismissed decreased by 17% and offender convictions increased by 10%.⁷⁵

Future Partnerships

The concepts of community policing, specifically community partnerships and problem solving, are important to the development of improved police services for the victims of crimes in the state of Texas. The adoption of these concepts is not easy and no agency should take the adoption of community policing or its collaborative efforts with victims lightly. A panel of top police chiefs engaging in community policing across the country, recently met together to discuss the challenges community policing faces and the future of this engaging philosophy of policing.⁷⁶ The police chiefs stated that in the face of relatively low crime rates, it is sometimes more difficult to maintain partnerships addressing the problem of crime, but that the police need to redouble their efforts in order "to continue to engage the community in public safety efforts and stress mutual accountability and responsibility for crime and disorder issues."⁷⁷ Still further, they note that "the police department should continue to reach out to communities that have historically been less engaged in order to develop trust between the community and the police," and they explain that "these groups may include youths, minority communities, and residents of specific geographic areas,"⁷⁸ and, of course, victims.

Finding ways to incorporate victims into the community policing process, through partnerships and problem solving, will no doubt be difficult. It may start with the victims' advocacy groups, but at the core, it must find ways to incorporate victims into the process. Incorporating victims into neighborhood watch programs, neighborhood police-citizen partnerships, and other such existing programs may prove beneficial. Other possibilities include police partnering with victims' advocacy groups and working through these organizations to partner with victims. Two recent methods have demonstrated some unique possibilities as well.

The first is the establishment of a multi-jurisdictional task force.⁷⁹ Most people are probably familiar with the establishment of terrorism multi-jurisdictional task forces and drug multi-jurisdictional task forces. Under the implementation of community policing and dealing with the issue of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and various sex crimes, multiple agencies have begun working together in multi-jurisdictional task forces to address these problems through multiple agency partnerships and shared agency problem solving.

The second possibility is beginning to partner with organizations and institutions that have some bearing on the problem, but are often not brought into the fold of crime prevention. One such example comes in the form of information sharing and collaboration efforts between law enforcement and the medical communities.⁸⁰ Operating under the collaborative goal of prevention, this partnership has the potential to prevent victimization, as well as respond more effectively and efficiently to actual victimizations in order to prevent the problem of revictimization in the future.

Appendix

Resources for Law Enforcement and Victim Services

Police Departments in Texas:

Austin Police Department Victims' Services Page

www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/victim.htm

Austin Police Department Community Outreach

www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/community.htm

Bexar County Sheriff's Office Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE)

www.co.bexar.tx.us/BCsheriff/vine.htm

Carrollton Texas Police Department Victims' Rights page

www.cityofcarrollton.com/index.aspx?page=887

Dallas Police Department Victim's Services Page

www.dallaspolice.net/index.cfm?openid=5&page_ID=7909&subnav=55

Dallas Police Department Community outreach page

www.dallaspolice.net/index.cfm?subnav=53&page_ID=1194

Dallas Police Department Community programs

www.dallaspolice.net/index.cfm?subnav=53&page_ID=1194

Houston Police Department Victim's Service Unit

www.houstontx.gov/police/vsu/

Houston Police Department Community policing

www.houstontx.gov/police/keep_houston_safe/index.htm

Texas Organizations:

Texas Department of Criminal Justice Victim Services Division

www.tdcj.state.tx.us/victim/victim-home.htm

Texas Department of Public Safety Victims' Services

www.txdps.state.tx.us/administration/staff_support/victimservices/pages/index.htm

Texas Youth Commission, Services to Victims of Juvenile Crimes

www.tyc.state.tx.us/programs/victims.html

Texans for Equal Justice Victims' Service and Rights Information

www.texansforequaljustice.org/index.shtml

Office of the Attorney General of Texas Crime Victims' Information
www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/sapcs.shtml

Office of the Attorney General of Texas Victims' Rights
www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/victim_rights.shtml

National Organizations:

National Organization for Victims Assistance
www.trynova.org/victiminfo/elderly/

Bureau of Justice Statistics Victim Characteristics
bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=92

National Center for Victims of Crime
www.ncvc.org/ncvc/Main.aspx

National Center for Victims of Crime Victims' services
www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbID=DB_Links137

Witness Justice: Help and Healing for Victims of Violence
www.witnessjustice.org/

U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/

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