



Arizona Sex Offender Management Board Victim Impact and a Victim-Centered Approach Adopted June 22, 2026

Victim Impact and a Victim-Centered Approach

Sexual violence and abuse are problems in Arizona. As communities are forced to face the issue of sexual violence and abuse, many efforts are directed towards issues other than the victim who has been violated, the child robbed of their childhood, and the recovery and healing of the victims and their families. Despite constitutional and statutory protections,¹ victims can be overlooked as the criminal justice system focuses on the legal issues and the needs of the offender. Victim healing increases when victims feel a sense of inclusion and empowerment, that their voices count and when they are treated with dignity and respect². A victim's experience with the justice system often "means the difference between a healing experience and one that exacerbates the initial trauma."³

The Standards set by the Arizona Sex Offender Management Board are designed to address the assessment, evaluation, treatment, and monitoring of adult and juvenile sex offenders. In order to accomplish the mission of effective management of adult and juvenile sexual offenders and eliminating sexual re-offense, professionals must first start with understanding the trauma and suffering of victims. This section provides some information for professionals working with adult sex offenders and juveniles who have committed sexual offenses on the impact of sexual assault and the needs of victims.

In Arizona, an estimated 1 in 3 women (36.2%) and 1 in 5 men (17.6%) will experience a sexual assault or attempted sexual assault in their lifetime⁴. Most victims first experience sexual abuse and violence as children or adolescents. Sexual abuse and violence is the most under reported crime in the United States. Only an estimated 19 – 23% of sexual crimes are reported to law enforcement.⁵ Far fewer are prosecuted. Research indicates the younger the victim and the closer the relationship, the less likely a victim will report⁶. Sexual abuse and violence violate victims. Victims may experience chronic and severe mental and physical health symptoms, as well as

¹ Purpose of the Victims' Bill of Rights to ensure that all crime victims are provided with basic rights of respect, protection, participation and healing of their ordeals. 1991 Ariz. Sess. Laws, ch. 229, § 2(2).

² Jorge, *What Works for Crime Victims: criminal justice, victims support centers and the emotional well-being of crime victims*, (Book) 2020.

³ Parsons & Bergin, *The Impact of Criminal Justice Involvement on Victims' Mental Health*, 23 J. Traum. Stress at 182.

⁴ Smith, S.G., Chen, J., Basile, K.C., Gilbert, L.K., Merrick, M.T., Patel, N., Walling, M., & Jain, A. (2017). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

⁵ Marchetti, C. A. (2012). Regret and police reporting among individuals who have experienced sexual assault. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association*, 18(1), 32-39.; *Criminal Victimization, 2016 (NCJ 251150)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

⁶ Kilpatrick, D., & McCauley, J. (2009). *Understanding National Rape Statistics*. National Resource Center on Domestic Violence; Paige, J. & Thornton, J. (2015). Healing from intrafamilial child sexual abuse: The role of relational processes between survivor and offender. *Children Australia*, 40(3), 242-259; Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (2006). *Extent, Nature and Consequences of rape victimization: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. U.S. Department of Justice.



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social, familial, economic and spiritual harm. These symptoms cross over into all aspects of victims’ lives, and victims often face long term impact and continue to struggle for recovery over the course of their lifetimes. Trauma from sexual assault changes the victim’s world view, self-perception and sense of power and control. Family members of victims and communities as a whole are also negatively impacted by sexual abuse and violence. While the effects of sexual abuse and violence on victims are unique and may vary over time, common consequences include:

Fear	Victimizations	Dissociative Disorders
Anger	Financial Loss	Sexual Behavior Problems
Guilt	Panic Attacks	Suicidal Ideation and Attempts
Shame	Hypervigilance	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
Anxiety	Low Self-Esteem	Minimization of Their Experience
Irritability	Substance Abuse	Increased Vulnerability to Others
Isolation	Disordered Eating	Impaired Sense of Self and Identity
Avoidance	Intrusive Thoughts	Nightmares and Sleeping Problems
Self-blame	Memory Impairment	Difficulty with Loss of Relationship and Intimacy
Depression	Self-Injuring Behaviors	Physiological Effects, such as Headaches/Chronic Pain
Flashbacks	Loss of Independence	Failure to Identify Their Experience as Sexual Assault or a Crime
Loss of Trust		

Often, victims report significant distress over not being believed and feelings of intense guilt and shame. Many victims and their family members have been subjected by the offender to long-term and intentional grooming behaviors. Large, long-term studies show that survivors of childhood sexual abuse face higher risks of cardiovascular disease, chronic illness, mental health disorders, suicide, injury, and premature mortality.⁷ These effects persist even after accounting for lifestyle behaviors. The harm to victims is substantially reduced when victims are believed, protected, and adequately supported. Acknowledging and addressing the impact to victims can aid in their long-term health and recovery. Recovery and healing of victims is possible and enhanced when teams operate with a victim-centered approach.

The supervision team should operate with a victim-centered approach. A victim-centered approach means that the needs and interests of victims require paramount attention by professionals working with sexual offenders. Individuals and programs working with sexual offenders should always have the victim and potential victims in mind. This means a commitment to protecting victims, not re-victimizing, being sensitive to victim issues, and being responsive to victim needs. A victim-centered approach requires an avenue to receive victim input and provide information to victims. This balanced approach has many benefits, including improved treatment and supervision of the

⁷ BMJ 2023, 381: e073613; JAMA 2001, 286 (24): 3089-3096; Nat. Med. 2023, 29; 3243-3258; *Commun. Med.* 5, 287 (2025); ACE Study (Felitti et al.) *Am. J. Prev. Med.* 1998;14(4).



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offender, increased accountability, enhanced support for victims, and a safer community. Collaboration and information sharing enhance the supervision team's ability to maintain a victim-centered approach. Understanding these offenses from the victim's perspective is important for comprehending the gravity of the offending behavior and seeing the full picture. Awareness of the impact of sexual assault and violence is necessary for providers to operate with a victim-centered approach. Professionals must recognize the harm done to victims, and apply this knowledge, to work effectively with offenders to internalize and demonstrate long-term behavioral change. The impact on the victim informs and guides the decision-making process and assists professionals in prioritizing the safety and needs of victims of sexual crimes.

The supervision team should help inform victims regarding the treatment and supervision process and share information on how this process demonstrates the commitment towards victim recovery, community safety, and no new victims.

The supervision team should respect the victims' wishes regarding their level of involvement and also understand that their interest may change over time. When communicating with victims, teams should consider what information regarding the defendant can be shared and explain that not all information of a defendant's file can be shared and why, and what information shared by the victim with the team will be communicated to the defendant and/or their representative.

The supervision team should discuss what information can and should be shared, taking into account what information is valuable for the victim, for the victim to feel safe, and for the victim to feel that the community as a whole is being protected. The supervision teams have legal and ethical considerations when determining what information is appropriate for sharing with victims and should exercise good professional judgment. Victims are assisted by understanding why decisions are made in the interest of public safety. Even with support systems in place, the criminal justice system is still difficult for victims. The supervision teams can honor and contribute to justice for victims by operating with a victim-centered approach.

Ongoing training regarding sexual victimization is recommended for all supervision team members and required by these standards to be an approved evaluator, polygraph examiner or treatment provider. Teams should (shall for juveniles) include a victim representative on the supervision team to ensure a victim-centered approach is being implemented.

Arizona Statutes and Guidance Pertaining to Victims

In accordance with Arizona Revised Statute (A.R.S.) § 13-3828, the Arizona Sex Offender Management Board shall develop and recommend methods of intervention for adult and juvenile



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sex offenders. The methods must prioritize the physical and psychological safety of victims and potential victims. The methods must also be appropriate to the assessed needs of the particular adult or juvenile sex offender, so long as there is no reduction in the safety of victims and potential victims.”

Arizona Constitution – Victims’ Bill of Rights

Arizona Constitution, Article II, Section 2.1: This constitutional amendment, approved by Arizona voters in 1990, establishes fundamental rights for crime victims, including:

- The right to be treated with fairness, respect, and dignity.
- The right to be free from intimidation, harassment, or abuse.
- The right to be present and heard at critical court proceedings.
- The right to confer with the prosecution.
- The right to refuse defense interviews.
- The right to prompt restitution.

Arizona Revised Statutes – Crime Victims’ Rights

A.R.S. Title 13, Chapter 40 (§§ 13-4401 through 13-4440): These statutes implement and protect the constitutional rights provided in Arizona's Victims’ Bill of Rights.

Some commonly cited statutes include:

- **A.R.S. § 13-4401** – Definitions of victim and victims’ rights.
- **A.R.S. § 13-4405** – Information and notice that must be provided to victims by law enforcement.
- **A.R.S. § 13-4419** – Victim’s right to confer with the prosecutor.
- **A.R.S. § 13-4426** – Victim’s right to be heard at sentencing.
- **A.R.S. § 13-4434** – Victim’s right to privacy and protection of identifying information.
- **A.R.S. § 13-4437** – Standing to enforce victims’ rights and seek remedies for violations.
- **A.R.S. § 13-804** – Restitution to victims.

Arizona voters overwhelmingly approved the constitutional amendment adding Crime Victim’s Bill of Rights on November 6, 1990. This Victims’ Bill of Rights is part of the Arizona Constitution and ensures that victims have a right to be treated with fairness, respect and dignity and have a right to be heard when relevant, informed and present at all critical stages of the criminal justice system. This constitutional amendment ensures all victims of and witnesses to crimes are honored and protected by law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and judges in a manner no less vigorous than the protection afforded criminal defendants. All post-sentencing agencies have



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obligations under the Crime Victim's Right amendment though victims must "opt in" to receive notification after sentencing.

Supporting Victims

The following are common needs of sexual abuse and violence victims and ways in which members of the community supervision team can support victims and contribute to their healing and recovery:

Needs:

- Caring, compassionate response
- Physical and psychological safety/protection
- Being believed
- Therapy and other resources
- Opportunities for input
- Information regarding the offender management, supervision, and treatment
- Accurate information being provided to the offender's and victim's support systems
- Information regarding safety planning (i.e. availability of protective orders and/or lifetime no contact injunction)

Support:

- Listen to victims and allow them to be heard
- Provide information about team members' roles and responsibilities
- Reassure victims that the abuse was not their fault
- Hold the offender fully accountable
- Validate the victims' experience
- Acknowledge victims' strengths and ability to heal/recover
- Be clear regarding what information can and cannot be shared
- Be willing to repeat information
- Be sensitive to where victims are in their recovery process
- Advocate, as needed, for therapy for victims
- Recognize the impact of the trauma on the victims' behaviors, beliefs and emotions, and how those may be expressed
- Thank victims for reporting and going through the very difficult criminal justice process
- Recognize the importance of how clarification, contact or reunification are implemented



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Common Victim Concerns and Safety Issues

- Location of the offender
- The negative impact of the victim encountering the offender in the community, especially in intra-familial cases, such as family functions
- The offender being able to manipulate the probation and treatment members in the same ways he/she manipulated the victim and victim's family
- Lack of trust that information regarding the offender's treatment and supervision is being provided
- The conditions of supervision, such as allowing contact with minors
- The offender continuing to deny, minimize or blame the victim for the abuse
- Whether or not the offender is demonstrating engagement in treatment and changing their behavior
- Whether or not the offender is telling the truth, demonstrating honesty through polygraphs or other means, and compliant on supervision
- Whether or not the offender is expressing genuine remorse for the abuse