

Victims Services
Behavioral Connections

Application Cover Sheet

Please read the following information before completing the Application

Victims Services provide a variety of services to adults and teens who have been victimized by sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, sexual harassment, and stalking. The services are offered free-of-charge to residents, victims and those who work in Wood County.

Volunteer opportunities:

- **Advocates** complete an extensive training (40+ hours) and are paraprofessionals, doing a job that staff perform, but in a volunteer capacity.
- **Interns** must have completed the advocacy training prior to being accepted as an intern (so plan accordingly). Interns typically work in the office for ten hours or more a week during a semester.

Advocates:

The volunteer victim advocates work with sexual assault and domestic violence victims/survivors during a crisis or emergency situation, whenever or however that is identified by the client. The client might reach out for help within hours of being victimized or they might not seek assistance for months or even years later. The volunteer advocates also provide on-going emotional support and advocacy services for sexual assault victims as long as needed following the crisis/emergency (follow-up and advocacy with domestic violence victims are provided by staff). The volunteer victim advocates are on-call after business hours Mon. through Fri. and 24-hours on the weekends and holidays.

The Advocates' duties include:

- Providing emotional support through personal contact, either by phone or face-to-face;
- Accompanying/meeting the victim at the hospital and/or police station;
- Providing guidance and support throughout the legal process;
- Referring victims to professionals and organizations for additional assistance;
- Helping the victim file for crime victims compensation, if eligible;
- Providing services to the victim's family, if requested.

Application

To apply, complete the Application and then schedule an interview with Julie Broadwell, the Victims Services Program Manager. Contact her via e-mail at victims@bc.wcnet.org or call 419/352-9504, ext. 3505 to schedule the interview. It is suggested that this is scheduled as soon as the application is completed. The interview will take about 45 minutes. You will be provided with directions when the interview is set.

Training Session

The training session includes classes, core groups, and several evaluations. During the 10 weeks, the advocates-in-training ("trainees") will receive approximately 40 hours of training. The training is extensive to ensure that advocates have had ample opportunity to gain knowledge and practice skills in order to be able to help clients.

Attendance is mandatory at all classes and core groups. Punctuality is expected. Topics covered in the classes include: crisis intervention, working with sexual assault and domestic violence victims/survivors, common reactions after a trauma, how to work with secondary survivors, the legal and medical systems, victims' rights, and referrals to other agencies/organizations. Core groups are led by other Victim Advocates. During core groups, the trainees participate in role-play activities covering material from the training manual or class. In small group settings, they are given the opportunity to ask questions and practice supportive listening techniques in a comfortable atmosphere.

To help the trainees become knowledgeable regarding the layout of the Behavioral Connections building where Victims Services is located, they will complete a Self-Guided Tour. This is scheduled on their own time, within the first two weeks of the training session, and takes about half an hour to complete.

Also, Trainees complete the “Checklist” during the last evening of core group. The Checklist tests the trainees’ knowledge regarding common policies and procedures, the completion of forms, and how to make appropriate referrals. During this evaluation, the trainee is paired with an advocate who asks a list of questions which must be answered in detail. After the Checklist, the trainees take the “Writtens.” This is not an exam, but an opportunity for the Program Coordinator to evaluate the trainees’ strengths and weaknesses through a written evaluation.

Following the Writtens come the “Orals.” This an experiential learning process, performed through role-plays, to evaluate the trainees’ skills in meeting a “client” face-to-face and also by phone. The trainee will be accompanied during their Orals by an advocate to provide observation and critique, along with the Program Coordinator. Once the role-play “contacts” are completed, the trainee receives feedback from the Coordinator and advocate regarding their performance on the Orals. When this is completed to everyone’s satisfaction, the trainee is a Victim Advocate!

Advocate Responsibilities

The new advocate signs up, based on their schedule, to take on-call shifts. These shifts are after business hours during the week, and all weekend and holidays. A shift is either 15 hours (Sun. through Thurs.) or 24 hours (Fri. and Sat.). It is the advocate’s responsibility to sign up on the shift calendar for the shifts, based on their availability. Typically, advocates must cover at least three shifts a month.

Advocates are assigned to work with on-going sexual assault clients—this includes staying in contact with the client and providing emotional support, advocacy, and information and referrals. Advocates are encouraged to schedule time as often as needed to meet individually with the Coordinator to discuss the progress in their cases. Advocates also assist Victims Services by leading Core Group sessions with new trainees, promoting services to crime victims (such as hanging flyers), and increasing awareness regarding crime victimization (at health fairs, etc.). Once Advocate status is attained, the expectation is that the volunteer gives a minimum of 12 months of service (this does not need to be continuous time) to the program. However, Victims Services will *gladly* keep volunteer advocates for much longer!!

Interns

Interns will only be accepted for an internship with Victims Services if they have completed the advocate training. This enables them to serve in every capacity as the staff during their daytime internship hours. Interns also pick a specific project to work on during the semester (DV Victims Storeroom, Sexual Assault Awareness Month activity, Clothesline Project, etc.) as well as assist with whatever is needed by Victims Services staff. Interns have set office hours and typically volunteer for 10 hours or more a week, for a semester.