

## Simple Steps Victim Service Providers Can Use In Our Everyday Lives

Here are some simple steps Victim Service Providers can use in our everyday lives. These are not meant to be all-encompassing; simply thought-provoking, to help promote conversation and understanding of what training might be helpful.

### 1. Develop a well-rounded physical fitness program, including diet.

Maintaining adequate physical fitness is important in our everyday lives as well as for our safety.

### 2. Practice skills training and wellness training a minimum of an hour each week.

Go to as much wellness or any trauma informed, victim centered training as you can, even if it's on your own dime and own time. So much virtual training is now available at low cost or no cost. Webinars, podcasts and other online training can be utilized while traveling en route to meet with victims and survivors or during other "windshield time".

### 3. Become confident in your ability to handle yourself in a critical incident.

Victim service providers may be called upon to respond to critical incident scenes to assist crime victims and survivors. The Four Cs is a law enforcement critical incident response model that can also be useful for VSPs to address all critical incidents:

- Contain;
- Control;
- Communicate;
- Call for assistance.

What do each of these mean to you in your work and how would you carry them out? Becoming confident in your ability to handle yourself in a critical incident is key to being an effective VSP.

### 4. Improve de-escalation skills.

Whether online or in person, training that reinforces key aspects of de-escalation are worthwhile as some of these skills likely diminish over time, even for the most experienced and effective at using de-escalation techniques. Follow-up training can reduce that effect. Have you researched basic de-escalation skills to use in conversational situations?

### 5. Become well versed in recognizing verbal and nonverbal communication indicators.

While overt expressions like smiling or frowning may *seem* to reflect the true emotion of the person you're assisting, "micro-expressions" – quick, fleeting reflections of emotions that may or may not sync with the more overt demonstration of emotion you see – can tip you off to the *real* thoughts, motivation and mood of the individual.

There are myriad non-verbal signs that can communicate pending aggression – dilated pupils, hidden hands, dipping to the strong side as though grabbing something, mouth breathing/panting, hands defiantly on hips, contemptuous spitting, pacing, etc. Learn them, remember them and watch for them!

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### 6. Train in a self-defense system.

Should one ever be put into difficult situations where they need to make immediate decisions to defend oneself or others, making time for just one hour of martial art type training each week can be invaluable. Search for useful podcasts.

### 7. Have a prevailing mindset and conduct mental rehearsal drills.

For success in assisting victims and survivors in crisis situations, we learn as much as we can and we practice what we've learned. Mental rehearsal is crucial in effectively assisting crime victims in their most desperate moments. Awareness and mental rehearsal can also be necessary when considering personal safety. Have a prevailing mindset of successfully assisting the crime victim and an underlying mindset always of self-defense when providing direct services.

### 8. Plan and prepare, but don't be afraid to ask for assistance.

Some of our job descriptions may advertise use of discernment and summoning additional specialized resources when appropriate. Further, many training evaluations list "trainee relies on others to make decisions" as an example of unacceptable performance. How to balance?

However, we are in a helping profession. Our failure or refusal to ask for help when help is reasonably available can contribute to us providing less than the best assistance for crime victims and survivors and could also contribute to us getting injured. Let's Plan and Prepare, but not be afraid to ASK for assistance.

### 9. Situational Awareness.

Train to not only provide effective, trauma informed victim services, but also train to be situationally-aware at all times. Ask for whatever type of additional training whenever you feel it is needed in order for you to be the best and safest victim service provider possible!

### 10. Teamwork with Local Law Enforcement

Not only can you help local law enforcement in several ways to make their jobs easier and their cases stronger (stronger victims = stronger witnesses = stronger cases) but they can also help keep you informed on current drug trends, concealment techniques, cyber safety, and other safety awareness issues.

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#### **Additional Resources:**

[How police officers can improve their physical fitness \(police1.com\)](https://www.police1.com)

[Renner Gracie on the need for police Jiu-Jitsu training \(police1.com\)](https://www.police1.com)

[How the Four Cs model aids patrol response to critical incidents \(police1.com\)](https://www.police1.com)

[Calling for backup: Changing LE culture so officers are not afraid to ask for help \(police1.com\)](https://www.police1.com)

[Police de-escalation training project a team effort \(police1.com\)](https://www.police1.com)