

NVAA LEARNING ACTIVITY

CHAPTER 22.3: SPECIAL TOPICS, VICTIMS OF GANG VIOLENCE

INSTRUCTOR GUIDELINES

Key Concepts/Objectives to Emphasize in Instruction and Learning Activities:

1. Characteristics that are unique to victims of gang violence. (22.3-12 to 22.3-13)
2. Key components of a vertical gang victim assistance unit. (22.3-14 to 22.3-15)
3. Recommended changes in policies, programs, and protocols to improve rights and services for victims of gang violence. (22.3-16 to 22.3-17)

Objectives:

1. Understand the unique needs and characteristics of victims of gang violence.
2. Develop appropriate solutions/services to meet the unique needs of victims of gang violence.

Description of Activity and Faculty Guidelines:

There are a number of unique characteristics shared by victims of gang violence as identified by an OVC-sponsored focus group (see pages 22.3-12 and 13). This exercise is designed to help students formulate responses that address these unique characteristics.

Prior to the discussion, the instructor divides students into fifteen groups. Cut each of the attached “fifteen unique characteristics” as a slip of paper for each group. Ask each group to take five minutes and identify three to five solutions or services that can address its “unique characteristic.”

The instructor will identify two student volunteers who can process out group responses on an overhead transparency, allowing each group to identify its unique characteristics, and offer one solution/service.

Can Be Utilized As:

_____ Individual Activity X Small Group Activity X Large Group Activity

Anticipated Amount of Time Required: 15 Minutes

- 03 for small group division.
- 05 for small group discussion.
- 07 for processing out small group responses to the large group.

RESOURCES NEEDED *(Please check all that apply:)*

- Tear sheets and felt pens
 - VCR/monitor
 - Overhead projector and screen/LCD and laptop
 - Blank overhead transparencies and overhead pens
 - Masking tape
 - Index cards
 - Individual or group worksheets (*cut into slips of paper*)
 - Timer
 - Other (*please describe*):
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SELECTING TOPIC FOR GROUP ACTIVITY

Make copies of these three pages and cut each “unique characteristic” into strips. Each group will pull *one strip* from a hat. Please ensure that there are enough strips to accommodate the number of groups.

(1) Victims and witnesses must face the *entire community* of the gang, as opposed to a *sole* perpetrator, which can mean greater or more far-reaching intimidation and retaliation.

(2) There tends to be a lack of sympathy for victims of gang violence, often because of false assumptions made regarding their “contribution” toward the crime.

(3) If a victim has gang affiliations, there is also a lack of sympathy and services from the criminal justice system, their families, and other victims. Because of restrictions on individuals who, in some way, “contribute” to their crimes, victims’ rights, services, and compensation are non-existent or very limited.

(4) Victims and witnesses are often intimidated by gang members into not cooperating with the justice system at all; those who resist such tactics are very often subject to gang intimidation during court proceedings.

(5) In many court settings, victims and witnesses must use or wait in the same hallways as gang members.

(6) When gang-related convictions result in prison and/or jail sentences, adult and juvenile correctional agencies often lack clear policies and procedures to ensure inmate security and to prevent possible further victimization, intimidation, or gang retaliation.

(7) Attitudes toward and services available for victims of gang violence can be affected by a community's attitudes toward gangs, which varies from "despise" to "respect."

(8) There is a lack of personal support for victims of gang violence.

(9) The popular media portray victims of and witnesses to gang violence in a negative and sensational manner. Gangs are often "glamorized," and the media fail to adequately show the *consequences* of gang violence on victims and witnesses.

(10) In some cases, both victims and perpetrators of gang violence cross generations.

(11) Victims of gang violence may be affected by cultural norms and mores that include a “general distrust of government;” as such, they may be hesitant to access services that are in any way related to government, or be willing to be witnesses within the justice system.

(12) Victims Of Crime Act (VOCA) victim assistance dollars cannot be used to assist witnesses who are intimidated or to provide protection to victims and witnesses of gang violence.

(13) Most communities do not provide any funding, such as relocation assistance, to help ensure the safety of gang violence victims and do not have effective victim assistance programs for them.

(14) Geographical location and poverty of some victims of gang violence combine and equate to a lack of support and services.

(15) Children who are victimized by gang violence or who lose a loved one to gang violence have unique grief and recovery issues.