

# B Victim Impact

## Overview of the Session: At a Glance

Presentation: Overview of Victim Trauma	5 minutes
Activity: Analysis of Video Segments	20 minutes
Presentation: Unique Features of Bias Crime and Its Impact on Bias Crime Victims	15 minutes
Victim Presentation and Discussion	20 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>	<b>60 minutes</b>

## Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify elements of victim trauma
- Identify the unique features of bias crime
- Understand the impact of bias crime on victims

## Materials and Equipment



*Time:* 60 minutes



*Videos:* “Understanding Why,” *Prime Time Live*, October 28, 1993, available for purchase from the Federal Document Clearinghouse at (800) 225-5222 (be sure to allow at least four to six weeks for delivery)

“Hate on Trial,” *60 Minutes II*, October 12, 1999, CBS Network, (800) 934-NEWS, or CBS Video, 19 Gregory Drive, So. Burlington, VT 05403; (800) 542-5621



*Handouts:* Assessment of Victims’ Physical, Emotional, and Financial Injuries



*Transparencies:* Secondary Injury; Unique Features of Bias Crime; Bias Crime: Victim Impact; Bias Crime: Community Impact; The Ripple Effect of Bias Crime



*Equipment:* Overhead projector; screen; flipchart, VCR; monitor

## Instructor's Notes

### I. Presentation: Overview of Victim Trauma (5 minutes)

Bias crime victims experience many of the same difficulties and traumas as victims of other crimes, but bias crimes also have a unique impact.

#### Crisis of Victimization

Many victims experience a crisis as a result of their victimization. Morton Bard, author of the *Crime Victim's Book*, defines the crisis of victimization as “a sudden, arbitrary, unpredictable event that is threatening to the self and produces a disruption in the emotions and behaviors of the threatened person.”<sup>1</sup> Crime victims experience this crisis as a result of the primary and secondary injury or harm.

#### Types of Victim Trauma or Injury

- Physical injury
- Psychological trauma
  - initial crisis
  - long-term stress reactions
- Financial loss
- Secondary victimization by society and its institutions

#### Note to Instructor

**Explain** that the video to be shown is an actual portrayal of a hate crime victim and the reenactment of a hate crime. It is very graphic and involves serious physical and psychological injury. **Explain** that participants may have trouble viewing the film and may wish to leave the room if they believe it will be particularly disturbing. It may be helpful to have victim assistance professionals available after this session to assist anyone who has strong reactions to the video.

### II. Activity: Analysis of Video Segments (20 minutes)

*Pre-screen* and *select* one of the two recommended videos listed at the beginning of this section, both of which portray hate crime victims. *Ask* participants to keep the types of victim trauma in mind when they view the video segment.



*Show* video segment.



*Distribute* Handout B1, “Assessment of Victims’ Physical, Emotional, and Financial Injuries.” *Explain* that this assessment list was prepared to be used with victims of any type of crime to understand the degree of victim trauma.

*Ask* participants to divide into small groups to complete Handout B1, based on the victim portrayed in the video.

After they have completed the checklist, *reconvene* all participants to the larger group. *Ask* participants from three different groups to report to the larger group on one type of victim injury:

- physical
- emotional, or
- financial



*Record* their answers on a flipchart.

*Explain* that, as the assessment checklist shows, some aspects of victim harm are felt immediately. Others are felt later, as a result of resuming daily life at home, in the community, and at work, and negotiating the medical, legal, insurance, social service, and/or criminal justice systems.

Use Transparency B1, “Secondary Injury.”



**SECONDARY INJURY IS THE VICTIM’S PERCEIVED REJECTION BY AND LACK OF EXPECTED SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY.**

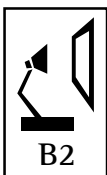
- Victim trauma may be exacerbated by the insensitivity of others. This is known as “secondary injury.”
- Most crime victims experience some type of secondary injury as they attempt to deal with the systems that provide physical or mental health care, process insurance claims to recover losses, or adjudicate offenders.
- Bias crime victims may experience more severe secondary injury because professionals who work within the system that serves the victim tend to have the same prejudices and biases as the rest of society.
- As a result of personal bias and prejudice, professionals—like other individuals—may minimize the impact of the crime on the individual.
- Bias crime victims frequently feel betrayed and hopeless when they confront institutional prejudice.
- Secondary injury can also occur as victims of bias crime interact with family, friends, and acquaintances, as well as the clergy, the media, and others.



Ask participants for examples of secondary injury to the victim portrayed in the video. Record their answers on a flipchart.

**III. Presentation: Unique Features of Bias Crimes and Their Impact on Bias Crime Victims (15 minutes)**

Use Transparency B2, “Unique Features of Bias Crime,” to describe key points. *Explain* that, in addition to the primary and secondary injuries that victims face, there are unique features of bias crime that are important to understand.



**UNIQUE FEATURES OF BIAS CRIME<sup>2</sup>**

- Bias crime is more likely to be seriously injurious or lethal than any other assaultive crime.
- Bias crime, in part motivated by fear, often escalates when the members of the dominant culture think they are under attack; for example, a number of Arab-Americans were harassed or even physically assaulted during the 1991 Gulf War.

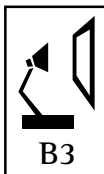
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- Bias crimes are usually perpetrated in groups. Group-instigated crime has a significant impact on the victim for several reasons:
  - There is a diffusion of responsibility among offenders.
  - Crimes committed by groups tend to be especially vicious, which can exacerbate the physical and emotional trauma to the victim.
- A large number of bias crimes seem to be aimed at individuals who are not only members of an identified group but also perceived as infringing on another group's "territory." Northeastern Professor Jack McDevitt analyzed 452 cases of bias crime that occurred in Boston from 1983 to 1987 and found that 57 percent of the crimes were attacks on persons walking, driving through, or working in a neighborhood, or on families moving into the area.<sup>3</sup>

Similar to all crime victims, bias crime victims often suffer from shock, disbelief, and denial. Their emotional turmoil is comprised of rage, terror, confusion, frustration, blame, and grief. These emotional reactions are compounded because the victims are chosen due to a characteristic of their identity. Bias crime victims may experience especially acute effects of primary and secondary victimization. The particular effects of primary victimization, resulting from the impact of the crime itself, are reviewed below.

Use Transparency B3, "Bias Crime: Victim Impact," and *describe* the key points.



### BIAS CRIME: VICTIM IMPACT

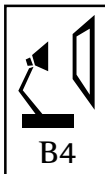
- Victims of bias crime are attacked for being "different," for being misunderstood, and for being hated. Because the basis for their attack is their identity, they may suffer a deep personal crisis.
- Victims of bias crime are targeted due to a core, immutable characteristic of their identity. This may lead to a feeling of increased vulnerability because they are attacked for something that they cannot change.
- Trauma may be compounded because of the nature of the attack and its root in hatred or prejudice. It is very difficult for a bias crime victim to resolve that the crime was motivated by hatred as opposed to another motive, such as an economic one. Research shows that people who are physically or psychologically attacked for reasons of prejudice suffer more than people who are victims of similar attacks not motivated by prejudice.<sup>4,5</sup>
- If their membership in a target group is readily visible, victims of bias crimes may feel particularly vulnerable to a repeat attack. This heightened sense of vulnerability may result in the feeling of hopelessness. They may become afraid to associate with other members of the group that has been targeted or may fear seeking needed services, believing that these actions increase their vulnerability.

*(continued)*



- Bias crime victims' grief can be more intense than other reactions, arising in part because victims lose their sense of community or feel betrayed by the American system.
- Victims of bias crimes who are minorities may feel the crime has been diminished because of societal stereotyping, prejudice, or institutional indifference.
- As a result of the victimization, bias crime victims may respond by more strongly identifying with their group—or, conversely, by attempting to disassociate themselves or deny a significant aspect of their identity.
- Assumptions about life and worldview may be shattered. For bias crime victims who are members of a minority culture, this may be particularly devastating because their worldview may have been very different from the dominant culture's worldview.

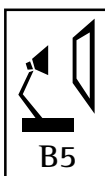
Bias crime affects more than the individual victims. Use Transparency B4, "Bias Crime: Community Impact," to discuss the effects of bias crime on the community.



### **BIAS CRIME: COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- When individuals are targets of hate because of their race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation, their victimization is projected outward to all members of their community.
- Other members of the same group feel victimized, and members of other commonly targeted groups are reminded of their vulnerability to similar attacks. All members of the targeted group suffer injury and intimidation.
- Places of worship are often targeted by bias crime offenders; these attacks on sacred spiritual symbols, which may harm victims more than other acts of vandalism, also harm other members of the community.
- Hate crimes are highly likely to exacerbate racial or other intergroup tensions. They may create civil disturbances, even riots, and result in retaliatory hate crimes.

Use Transparency B5, "The Ripple Effect of Bias Crime," to discuss the chain-reaction of impact that can ensue from a single hate crime.



### **The Ripple Effect of Bias Crime**

The effects of hate crimes are far-reaching. As message crimes, hate crimes affect society on many levels and in many different ways, creating a chain reaction that ultimately serves as fertile ground for further prejudice, social unrest, hate crime, and fear. Possible effects of hate crimes are as follows:

- The immediate victims suffer serious physical injury, psychological trauma, and/or financial loss.
- The specific group that has been targeted receives a message that all of its members are potentially at risk.
- Other groups commonly targeted for hate crimes receive a frightening reminder of their potential victimization by individuals who view them as “different.”
- The community in which the crime occurred suffers the stigma of hatred as well as a potential increase in intergroup tensions and escalation of hate activity.
- The social order—in the affected community and beyond—is disrupted, often resulting in civil unrest, retaliatory violence, and copycat incidents.
- The civil rights of all individuals are at risk, especially if hate crimes are not properly and swiftly addressed.

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#### IV. Victim Presentation and Discussion (20 minutes)

It is most compelling if a victim of bias crime is recruited for the training to make a presentation about his or her personal experience as a victim of bias crime (see page 5 for more information on recruiting a victim to present). The presentation should include the following:

- The victim’s personal experience as a victim
- The impact of the bias crime on the victim
- The response of the criminal justice system to the victim
- The response of other professionals, institutions, and friends and family members to the victim
- The victim’s recommendations, if any, to improve the response to bias crime victimization

After the presentation, *ask* participants if they have any questions or reactions. After a brief time for questions, *thank* the victim for his or her willingness to present.



If it is not possible to recruit a victim to make a presentation, *use* any of the following videos, which include victim interviews.

- “The Truth About Hate: Teen Files Series”  
March 1999  
AIMS Multimedia Orders  
9710 DeSoto Avenue  
Chatsworth, CA 91311  
(800) 367-2467, ext. 349  
<http://www.aims-multimedia.com/>  
Public Performance licensed video: \$142.45  
Private Home Use licensed video: \$29.95

- “Hate Crimes: Training for Police Officers”  
November 25, 1990  
Anti-Defamation League  
Materials Library  
22-D Hollywood Avenue  
Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423  
(800) 343-5540  
Video segment: 12 minutes
- “Roy Smith’s America”  
March 3, 1998  
20/20  
ABC Network  
(800) CALL-ABC

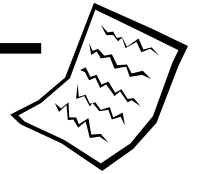
After viewing the victim segment(s), *discuss* the video. After a few minutes of discussion, *ask* for volunteers to answer the following questions:

- *What types of victim trauma were involved?*
- *What unique aspects of victimization were involved?*
- *What changes, if any, would you make in response to the victim?*
- *What was the impact of the crime on the community?*

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## References

- <sup>1</sup> Bard, M. and Sangrey, D. (1986). *The crime victim’s book*. Brunner/Mazel.
- <sup>2</sup> Young, M.A., NOVA (1993). *Victim assistance: Frontiers and fundamentals*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- <sup>3</sup> McDevitt, J. and Levin, J. (1993). *Hate crimes: The rising tide of bigotry and bloodshed*. New York: Plenum Publishers.
- <sup>4</sup> Hutson, H. R., Anglin D., Stratton, G., Moore, J. Hate crime violence and its emergency department management. *Ann Emerg Med* (June 1997). 29:786–791.
- <sup>5</sup> The Prejudice Institute (1997). *Factsheet on ethnoviolence*. Baltimore: The Prejudice Institute.



# Assessment of Victims' Physical, Emotional, and Financial Injuries

## Physical

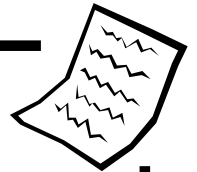
- What is the degree of victim injury?
- What is the severity and impact of the injury?
- Will the injury create a long-term disability?
- Has the crime aggravated a previously existing physical or medical condition?
- Is the injury a visible one? Will there be permanent scarring or disfigurement?

## Emotional

- Has the lack of a physical injury resulted in other people discounting the seriousness of the incident?
- What previous life experiences with victimization, oppression, or discrimination, if any, have a bearing on the recent victimization?
- What emotions are being experienced?
- Does the victim fear revictimization?



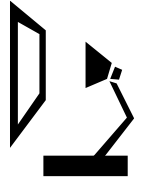
## Handout B1 (cont'd)



- Is emotional stress interfering with basic life activities, such as eating, sleeping, and ability to concentrate on the task at hand?
- What are the unique vulnerabilities of this victim? What degree of social support exists?
- What bearing does the offender's motivation have on the victim's emotional reaction?
- What factors relating to the commission of the crime exacerbate the victim emotional reaction, such as the degree of degradation the victim experienced and the degree that this victimization affects all members of this class or community?

## Financial

- What is the degree of financial loss?
- Has the crime interrupted the victim's ability to earn income? Is this jeopardizing the victim's financial security?
- Has the victim had expenses relating to child care, transportation, or other costs associated with the crime?
- Does the victim have insurance that covers the loss or injury?
- Does the loss or damage of property pose immediate hardship, such as the need to find alternate housing or transportation?



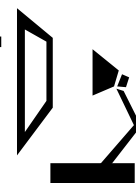
## **SECONDARY INJURY**

Secondary injury is the victim's perceived rejection by and lack of expected support from the community.



## UNIQUE FEATURES OF BIAS CRIME

- More likely to be seriously injurious or lethal than other assaultive crimes
- Often escalates when members of dominant culture think they are under attack
- Usually perpetrated in groups, which may
  - diffuse offenders' responsibility
  - exacerbate trauma to victim
  - exacerbate the viciousness of the attack
- Aimed at individuals perceived as infringing on another group's "territory"



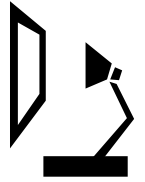
## BIAS CRIME: VICTIM IMPACT

- Because the basis for the attack is their identity, victims may experience a deep personal crisis.
- Stress and feelings of vulnerability may be heightened or prolonged because the victims have been attacked for something they cannot change.
- Trauma may be compounded because hate crime victims experience violence *and* hatred.
- Victims of bias crime may feel particularly vulnerable to a repeat attack. They may become afraid to associate with other members of a group that has been targeted or fail to seek needed services.



## BIAS CRIME: VICTIM IMPACT (cont'd)

- Victims' grief may in part stem from losing their sense of community or feeling betrayed by society.
- Victims may feel the crime has been diminished because of societal stereotyping, prejudice, or institutional indifference.
- Victims may respond by identifying more strongly with their group.  
*or*  
They may reject the aspect of themselves that was the target for their attack.
- Assumptions about life and worldview may be shattered.



## BIAS CRIME: COMMUNITY IMPACT

- Victimization of individuals because of race, religion, sexual orientation, etc. is projected outward to all members of that community.
- Members of other commonly targeted groups are reminded of their vulnerability.
- Attacks on places of worship and their spiritual symbols may harm victims and the community more than other acts of vandalism.
- Hate crimes are highly likely to exacerbate intergroup tensions. They may create civil disturbances, even riots, and result in retaliatory attacks.



# THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF BIAS CRIME

