

HAMDEN POLICE DEPARTMENT



VICTIM SERVICES PROJECT

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THE HAMDEN VICTIM SERVICES PROJECT
IS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT OF MEMBERS OF
THE HAMDEN POLICE DEPARTMENT,
THE SOUTH CENTRAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE SUPERVISORY BOARD,
AND THE HAMDEN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

OCTOBER, 1976

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PREFACE:

The victims of crime can be assisted in many ways by the police. The importance of improving the services rendered by the police in all facets of law enforcement becomes especially acute when considering the needs of the victim.

This project seeks to increase the effectiveness of the police in handling the victims of crime. The program has been planned and implemented through the cooperative effort of three separate public agencies. Each agency recognized the need for such a program and supported these efforts through the commitment of substantial amounts of time and energy of staff members.

The involvement of many people has served to make this program a reality.

Chief John P. Ambrogio of the Hamden Police Department possessed the insight and sensitivity to recognize the need for such a program and provided full support and commitment to all phases of the project.

Inspector Donald Rhone of the Hamden Police Department served as coordinator for project activities.

Mr. John Gervasio and Mr. Robert Keating of the South Central Criminal Justice Supervisory Board, were instrumental in the research and planning of the project as well as having served as instructors for the Victim Needs Awareness Training.

Dr. Thomas Tondo of the Hamden Mental Health Service assisted in shaping the program and also served as an instructor in the training efforts.

Finally, it is all the officers and men of the department who will prove this program to be a successful effort to improve police-victim interaction.

HAMDEN VICTIM SERVICES PROJECT

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Hamden Police Department, serving a community of about 53,000 has been involved in several innovative projects during the past two years which have contributed significantly to the quality of police services delivered to the residents of Hamden. A new system of police patrolling implemented by the Hamden Police Department has gained nationwide attention. The department has moved into a new era in which existing police operations are constantly reviewed and reorganized to ensure maximum productivity and the attainment of professional standards.

In March, 1976 the Hamden Police Department began a planning period for the purpose of developing a program which would improve the way police respond to the needs of victims of crime. The program became a joint venture among the Hamden Police Department, the South Central Criminal Justice Supervisory Board and Hamden Mental Health Services. A research effort was undertaken which focused on locating and examining current police/victim programs throughout the country. It was soon clear that very few programs existed and those which were operating were located primarily in major urban cities. The Hamden Victim Services Project is perhaps unique at this point in time because it has been developed in a small, suburban police department and has initiated activities which have not necessitated the creation of a new department unit or the addition of new staff personnel.

It is often said that victims of crime are the forgotten people in the criminal justice system, but very little has been done to correct this situation. Those who have been victimized by crime, particularly burglary, assault or rape, often experience traumatic upheaval in their lives. The police, as a component of the criminal justice system, can render many meaningful services to assist the victim of crime. By improving police/victim interaction it is hoped that we can reduce victim alienation from the criminal justice system and begin to reestablish the importance of the victim's role in our justice system.

The Hamden Police Department believes that it is moving in the right direction by initiating this project, and will continue to search for avenues leading to the improvement of its service to the victims of crime.

II. VICTIM SERVICE PROGRAMS

Only in the last five years has there been any significant change in the manner in which the criminal justice system has served the victim of crime. There are several states which have enacted legislation and initiated programs which provide financial compensation and other services to the victims of crime. In general, most victim programs function with social service professionals delivering a variety of services to clients received by referral from the police department. Most programs have been initiated by "seed money" grants acquired by large urban cities.

The following abbreviated typology of victim programs, (drawn from a report prepared by Dr. Robert Reiff of the Center for the Study of Social Intervention, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York), expresses the diversity of models of programs and services which are intended to aid the victim.

The Victim Witness Model - programs of this type seek to ensure that victims and witnesses cooperate in the arrest and prosecution of offenders. Such services as transportation to court, improved court appearance notification processes, and day-care facilities are examples of the assistance given to victims. One drawback of this model is that few offenders are apprehended, thus very few victims of crime receive any services.

The Referral Service Model - this model seeks to bridge the resources of the criminal justice system and the social service system. Victims who have suffered through a crime are pointed in the right direction toward the help they may need from various social service agencies, i.e. replacement of stolen food stamps.

The Advocacy Model - a program of this type would seek to establish itself as a spokesman for victims. Broad changes in the manner in which the criminal justice and social agencies deal with crime victims would be sought through legislative action, public organizing, and other methods. The focus would include an examination of the assistance (preventive, protective, legal, and social) given to crime victims.

This typology is included here to aid the reader in placing the Hamden Victim program into perspective. However, a further discussion of programs is offered to provide information on a few specific victim programs currently operational in large police departments.

There are very few police departments which have integrated Victim Service Units into their organization. Two departments can be cited as examples of programs which include elements of the above models:

II Victim Service Programs

The Sacramento, California Police Department established a Victim Services Program in early 1975.

The program has several elements, including; changing the role of the patrolman from 'report taker' to 'preliminary investigator', providing information to victims on police procedure and court processes, and providing transportation to crime victims for court appearances. One of the major elements of the program is the creation of the Victim Advocate, a sworn officer whose responsibilities include court appearance notification, case process notification and prosecution advocacy on an individual case basis.

The Rochester, New York Police Department has a Victim Services Center which acts as a referral source for victims and notifies victims of the progress of their case through form letters.

In Rochester, New York and Sacramento and Fremont, California, and Dallas, Texas police officers have received some training which specifically focused on victim needs and police/victim interaction.

The cities of Fremont, California and Portland, Oregon have Victim Service programs which have produced research findings which show that victims most often respond positively to receiving case progress notification, even when active investigation has been suspended.

During the planning phase of the Hamden project, we made a very strong effort to acquire information on existing programs. Very few programs currently exist. Even more scarce are programs that are operating in small towns of 50,000 population or less. Few programs operated without the addition of professional staff on a full-time basis, a luxury most small police departments cannot afford.

The Hamden Victim Service Program reflects a recognition of our limitations but illustrates our commitment to improve to an optimal level the services rendered to the victims of crime. The elements of the program involve actions which, as part of patrol or investigative services, have been improved or altered to use existing department resources to aid crime victims in the best possible manner. Improved effectiveness in interpersonal interaction with victims and improved provision of information to crime victims are the most desired results of this program.

III. THE HAMDEN VICTIM SERVICES PROGRAM

OVERVIEW - PROJECT ELEMENTS

The Hamden Victim Services Program has sought to design and implement improvements in the services which the police department delivers directly to the victims of crime. The elements of the project reflect our efforts to introduce services which could be rendered by existing department resources. There are several very important actions the police can take to assist victims while incurring very little, if any, additional cost to the department's operational budget.

The desired results of the Hamden project are:

- . To improve the victim's sense of well-being after the occurrence of a crime
- . To improve the information given to and received from the victim
- . To improve the community's perception of the police department

The activities conducted in this project have all been directed toward the achievement of these results.

The program evolved through the collaborative efforts of the Hamden Police Department, the South Central Criminal Justice Supervisory Board and the Hamden Mental Health Service. A planning period was initiated in March, 1976 and produced the direction of the program as well as initial design of some project elements. The components of the project are presented below in capsule form. An expanded description of these components follows this overview.

VICTIM ATTITUDES SURVEY

Members of the South Central Criminal Justice Supervisory Board (SCCJSB) designed a questionnaire to measure the attitude and perceptions of a sample of Hamden police officers. Fifty-one officers comprised the group and gave responses to approximately 20 statements concerning crime victimization. The instrument was administered in late July, 1976 and provided program planners with insights useful in the development of the Victim Needs Awareness Training curriculum.

SERVICING VICTIM PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

VICTIM NEEDS AWARENESS TRAINING

An eight-hour curriculum was developed which focused on all aspects of victim services. All department personnel attended

classes designed to improve their awareness of victim/police interaction. Members of the Hamden Police Department Training Division, SCCJSB, and Hamden Mental Health services shaped and conducted the training efforts.

HAMDEN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE COUNSELLING

The Hamden Mental Health Service provides psychological services to all residents of Hamden. Members of the Hamden Mental Health Service have become acquainted with the literature concerning crime victim needs and have developed a counselling focus which deals with the problems people may face when they become the victim of a crime. The Center has a 24-hour answering service for intake of requests for assistance.

SERVICING VICTIM INFORMATION NEEDS

VICTIM INFORMATION GUIDE

A pamphlet has been designed which informs a victim of the procedure used to investigate his case, suggests steps the victim should take in response to the victimization, outlines his legal rights and provides information on counselling services available.

CASE NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Victims of crime appreciate being notified of the progress of their case. The Hamden Police Department will begin to notify crime victims (in selected categories, particularly residential burglary and personal crimes) via telephone of the status of their case. Final mechanisms of this process will be set into place by November, 1976.

SOCIAL SERVICE REFERRAL SYSTEM

Each police officer currently has a notebook which details all area social service agencies. This resource book will be updated and expanded. Police officers will be re-oriented toward the effective utilization of these services for victims and other police clients.

CONTINUED PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Project planners have not terminated efforts to develop and implement services for the victims of crime. An exchange of information with police victim service programs in other departments will hopefully result in the identification of victim service activities which may be transferrable to the Hamden Police Department.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The program was developed through the collaborative effort of Hamden Police Department personnel, staff members of the SCCJSB (the regional criminal justice planning office) and the Hamden Mental Health Service (the Town-supported psychological and psychiatric services agency).

Project activities were initiated in March, 1976 and many major program elements were implemented by the end of September, 1976. In chronological order, the phases of the program occurred as follows:

MARCH - JUNE -PLANNING PERIOD

Program planners began discussions in March, 1976 and continued throughout the project. A "formal" planning period ended in June when the direction of the project had been determined and some initial project activities had been proposed.

MAY - JUNE -VICTIM INFORMATION GUIDE

The pamphlet was the result of the intensive work by the SCCJSB and Hamden Police Department personnel. The final product represents the seventh draft of the guide. The State's Attorney for New Haven County composed the section on Victim Rights.

JULY - VICTIM ATTITUDES SURVEY OF POLICE OFFICERS

A questionnaire of about 20 items was administered by shift commanders to an "at random" sample of 51 officers.

AUGUST- VICTIM NEEDS AWARENESS TRAINING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The curriculum for the training efforts was developed through research and a series of meetings of SCCJSB, Hamden Police Department and Hamden Mental Health Service members throughout the month of August. Content and structure were designed, and materials collected during August for the class sessions.

SEPTEMBER -VICTIM NEEDS AWARENESS TRAINING

Training sessions were held on three separate days, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Each session was attended by 25-30 patrolmen, detectives and supervisory personnel. The "trainers" were SCCJSB, Hamden Police Department and Hamden Mental Health Service personnel.

OCTOBER - IMPLEMENTATION OF VICTIM INFORMATION GUIDE

The decision was made to delay the implementation of use of the Guide until the training sessions had been completed. It was felt that the men would not perceive it as 'just another handout' after completing the training exercises.

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER - DEVELOPMENT OF CASE NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

A telephone case progress notification system will be implemented by November, 1976.

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER - SOCIAL SERVICE REFERRAL SYSTEM

The present police officer social service notebook will be updated and expanded by December, 1976.

CONTINUOUS - EVALUATION AND PROGRAM EXPANSION

Program planners will monitor and evaluate project activities and seek to add other victim service activities.

The Victim Services Project will soon assume a regional focus. The SCCJSB will be instrumental in assisting other South Central region departments to develop similar programs.

HAMDEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

VICTIM SERVICES PROGRAM - PROJECT ACTIVITY CHART

1976

	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
1. Research and discussion of victim services, review of concepts, determination of project direction, development of program components	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX										
2. Design and development of of Victim Information Guide				XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX							
3. Administer questionnaire to assess Hamden Police Department personnel attitudes and perception of victims						XXXXXX					
4. Development of Victim Needs Awareness Training curriculum					XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX						
5. Conduct Training Classes							XXXXXX				
6. Initiate use of Victim Information Guide								XXXX			
7. Establish case notification system									XXXXXX		
8. Readminister questionnaire										XXX	
9. Monitor, Evaluate and Revise program elements							XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX				

- . Many victims are very emotionally affected by the occurrence of a crime
- . They would like more human relations training
- . Victims want to be kept informed of the progress of the investigation of their case
- . They would like a better knowledge of social service agencies to which referrals can be made.

The information received in the completed questionnaires helped shape the training curriculum and added support to the establishment of program components. The questionnaire will be re-administered to the officers who completed it in late July in order to measure any changes which may have occurred through the training effort.

STATEMENTS PRESENTED FOR RESPONSE

1. The police should have no role in "victim services" since this is primarily the domain of other social service agencies.
2. Most people, even though they may not have been at home at the time, are very emotionally affected by the occurrence of a burglary to their home.
3. There is very little the police can do directly to actually help the victim of crime.
4. Question not related to victim services.
5. Because the police are available 24 hours a day, it is important that they be prepared to assist crime victims in the best manner possible.
6. Some of my fellow officers have a hardened attitude to crime victims or show little sympathy or understanding.
7. Sometimes I might act unsympathetically to a crime victim because I have "seen it all before".
8. Most social service agencies do not provide assistance at the time of day or night when most citizens require their help.
9. Victims of assault, burglary, or rape have contributed to the crime happening to them.
10. Question not related to victim services.
11. Question not related to victim services.
12. Question not related to victim services.
13. Question not related to victim services.
14. Victims blame the police for letting the crime happen to them.
15. It is important for the policeman to be as sympathetic and understanding as possible when dealing with victims of assault, burglary or rape.
16. I should have more human relations training because so much of my job involves dealing with community residents on a personal basis.
17. Most officers in the Hamden Police Department are currently doing the best job they can in dealing with the victims of assault, burglary and rape.
18. I do not feel adequately prepared to effectively respond to the human needs of the victims of burglaries, assaults and rape.

19. Most victims of crime are satisfied with the police service they receive.
20. Most victims of crime would like to be kept informed of the progress of the investigation of their case.
21. Special training for policemen in how to be more sympathetic and understanding with crime victims probably wouldn't be very successful because you can't teach someone to be more sensitive.
22. Question not related to victim services.
23. Victims of crime are the forgotten people in the criminal justice system.
24. Question not related to victim services.
25. Question not related to victim services.
26. Question not related to victim services.
27. I would like to have a better knowledge of the social service agencies in this area so that I can make referrals to the people I handle during my patrol work.

IV. SERVICING VICTIM PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

VICTIM/POLICE INTERACTION:

The victim of a crime and the police officer that serves him both bring a complex set of emotions, attitudes, skills, and perceptions to the interaction in which they become involved. Each goes through a series of reactions which shapes their responses to the other. Victims are very often in a crisis situation, they have experienced an unbalancing episode in their lives. They can't believe that the upsetting event has happened and often lash out in blame and anger at a convenient target.

In some situations, it is the officer who is confronted by the hysterical victim who insists that the police have failed in their role as protectors. Regaining control over their lives and coping with the emotional upheaval caused by the victimization may be a very difficult process for many victims. Burglary victims may lose the feeling of safety and security which their home once offered. The victim of rape has been assaulted both physically and emotionally and suffers at the hands of the criminal and society.

We strongly believe that the police officer can be very helpful in assisting a person to cope with his crisis and put his life back into balance. The officer can be more effective when he has the ability to understand the victim's reactions, how to handle these reactions, and can then help the victim through his crisis.

The police officer also goes through a series of reactions when he arrives on the scene and must learn to understand his own feelings in order to be effective. Police officers are often under a great deal of stress from many sources and may sometimes handle a crime victim after having just come from a tension filled assignment.

When an officer bounces from call to call during busy times, his level of tension rises and accompanies him on each succeeding call. He might receive a call which involves a burglary victim and must quickly deal with his own emotions in order to help the victim with their crisis.

Police/victim interaction is the first opportunity the criminal justice system has to assist the person victimized by crime. The police officer must be well prepared with the skills necessary to be effective in helping the victim. This facet of police service was the focus of an intensive training effort in the Hamden Police Department.

VICTIM NEEDS AWARENESS TRAINING

Improvement in the skills of interaction in the police officer was the focus of a training curriculum utilized in this project. Nearly all Hamden police officers were involved in an eight-hour day which was fully devoted to Victim Needs Awareness. The training sessions, which were conducted on three separate days and which included patrol and investigative personnel of all ranks, involved each squad in rotation of its regular monthly training day. (This day is a normal part of the work schedule and does not involve any overtime costs).

The sessions were planned and conducted through a collaborative effort of members of the Hamden Police Department Training Division, SCCJSB and Hamden Mental Health Service. It was a very unique classroom experience because the 'students' were not listening to a lecture, but were intensely involved in exploring the emotional reactions of victims and searching their own reactions for the most effective responses for helping victims.

The training class was designed in a manner which would allow the police officers the opportunity to analyze the empathetic process in handling crime victims. A film, "Someone Else's Crisis", which portrays a variety of people in realistic enactment of becoming victims, (i.e., a young boy who has lost his dog, a couple whose home has been burglarized, an old couple who has been robbed at gunpoint in their small grocery store, a woman who has had her purse snatched and a woman who has been raped) was used. These are situations which are frequently handled by police officers and thus are somewhat 'routine'. The victim, however, may experience the situation as a very traumatic event.

The policemen had the opportunity to observe the "victims" and identify with them at the time when they were experiencing their emotional responses to what had happened to them. It gave them the chance to examine their own reactions in these types of situations and helped them to better understand and to have a more effective response to the victims' needs.

Response is a key element in the process of police/victim interaction. All officers have a good attitude toward victims but they might still behave in a way which is not the most effective in helping the victim. Each officer tries his best to comfort and reassure a victim and develops methods that fit his own personality. The ability to effectively comfort someone is a complex of skills that each man develops through his years of experience. Rarely have the officers had the time to slow down this process and analyze the techniques of communication which comprise the response to a victim.

We feel that these training efforts have had a meaningful effect on the manner in which the Hamden police officer interacts with the victim of crime. The officer is more able to offer an immediate and valuable social service to the victim.

The curriculum of this training follows this page.

HAMDEN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE COUNSELLING

For some people the experience of being victimized by a serious crime may be so devastating that more intensive helping must be sought. The Hamden Mental Health Service is a Town-supported social service agency which offers counselling and psychological services to all residents of Hamden. The agency is staffed by full-time professionals and operates Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.. A 24-hour answering service ensures immediate response.

Members of the staff have become acquainted with the needs of victims and can provide counselling which responds to these needs. One staff member assisted in the Victim Needs training efforts.

Victims are informed of the availability of these counselling services when the officer responds for the preliminary investigation. The police officer can also summon the immediate response of an "on-call" professional from Hamden Mental Health Service to a situation in which such intensive assistance would be vital to the victim.

The alliance between the Hamden Police Department and Hamden Mental Health Service is a very beneficial service to the community.

VICTIM NEEDS AWARENESS TRAINING

COURSE CURRICULUM

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Hamden Victim Services Program
- B. Elements and philosophy
- C. The police officer's role in the Hamden program
- D. Abbreviated typology of Victim Services Programs
 - 1. Victim - witness model
 - 2. Referral service model
 - 3. Victim advocacy model
- E. Police victim programs - 2 examples
 - . Sacramento
 - . Rochester
- F. Setting the tone for the training session
 - . Define trainer's role as joint searching exercise
 - . Define trainee's role
 - . Goals of training session
 - . Share information gained in trainer's research
- G. Why are the police concerned about victims
 - . Delivery of helping service
 - . Improves image in community
 - . Tactical: improved information flow

II. CONCEPTS OF VICTIMOLOGY

- A. General historical synopsis of the victim's role in the common law and criminal justice.
- B. The impact of victimological orientation in criminal justice
 - . Victimization surveys
 - . Compensation and restitution programs
 - . Victim crisis intervention programs
- C. Victimological orientation and the police
 - . Unique position of the law enforcement function
 - . Unique role of the police function - early interaction
- D. Police interaction with the victim
 - . Relation to interaction with other clients
 - . The need for positive interaction in police procedure
 - . Police are the primary "representative" of the criminal justice system

III. HELPING TECHNIQUES

A 40-minute delivery of information designed to identify and discuss tactics and strategies which comprise the interpersonal interaction with crime victims. Drawn primarily from crisis intervention techniques, these behaviors consist of non-verbal and verbal communications methods which, when identified and utilized, can help the officer to be effective with the victim. Examples relating the techniques to police/victim interaction are cited throughout the presentation.

A. Non-Verbal Techniques

1. Eye Contact
2. Body Posture
3. Physical Distance
4. Body Contact
5. Vocalization

B. Verbal Techniques

1. Active Listening
 - a. clarification
 - b. summarization
 - c. allowing silence
2. Stating the obvious
3. Personalized Statements
4. "Mind-reading"
5. Sharing feelings
6. Handling sex questions

IV. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF VICTIMIZATION

This component of the training helps trainees to identify victim needs, understand the psychological stages victims progress through, and recognize the opportunities they have to assist victim of crime in coping with their problem.

- A. Victimization as an emotional disruption
- B. Types of victimization to which the police respond
 - a. non-criminal
 - b. criminal
- C. Psychological Reaction:
States of victimization (Exploration of Police:
Victim interaction)
 - a. Denial
 - b. Blame
 - C. Anger
 - D. Integration and Resolution

V. EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISES

Using a behavioral film, these exercises are designed to give the trainees the opportunity to observe victimizations and police response and then explore their "experience" of it. Intensive classroom discussion seeks to identify emotions and perceptions of both victim and police officer and relate these to ineffective and effective interaction.

Five victimization situations are portrayed in the film and serve as the seed for group discussion.

1. A young boy loses his dog
2. A married couple in their 30's is burglarized
3. An elderly woman is assaulted by a young man who steals her purse
4. An elderly couple are robbed at gunpoint in their small grocery store
5. A young woman is raped.

VI. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

- . Summary of training session experiences
- . Short information content retention exercise.
- . Trainee evaluation of class

We are indebted to the work of Dr. Robert Flint, Department of Psychology, University of Minnesota, for his fine monograph: Instructors Manual for Someone Else's Crisis.

V. SERVICING VICTIM INFORMATION NEEDS

In addition to servicing the psychological needs of the victim, the Hamden Police Department has developed avenues which seek to meet the victim's informational needs as well. The common perception of the police response to a crime is that an officer arrives on the scene, takes a report and does very little else. The victim often does not see an officer again or receive any follow-up information from the police department.

Most people are unfamiliar with the steps the police will take in their investigation, the steps they can take to protect themselves, and the rights they have as a victim. The police officer can act as a valuable resource in the provision of useful information to the victim.

The Rand Corporation study The Criminal Investigation Process (1975) has indicated that the information provided by victims to the police officer can often be an important element in the solution of the crime. Improved interaction skills facilitate this flow of information. Encouraging victims to cooperate fully with the police requires that the victim has at least some positive expectations that their efforts will be appreciated. The Rand report, in a major recommendation, suggests that programs be designed which increase the victim's desire to become involved.

The Hamden Police Department has approached this problem by developing information and feedback sources for the victim of crime.

VICTIM INFORMATION GUIDE

The department, with the assistance of members of the SCCJSB, has developed a pamphlet which an officer gives to a victim at the preliminary investigation. It is designed to answer the many questions which often arise after a victimization occurs. The pamphlet stresses the importance of the collaborative effort of the police and citizen in solving the case. The pamphlet was written with the primary focus of providing information to victims of burglary, assault and rape.

The components of the pamphlet are:

- a. Working together - an introduction which describes the importance of police and victim working together. The officer signs his name and writes in the case number assigned to his report of the crime.
- b. The Role of the Hamden Police Department - Describes the steps the police investigation will follow.

- c. What You Can Do - Describes steps the victim can take to assist the investigator, specific notes for burglary and assault.
- d. Crime Prevention Services - Describes the services available from crime prevention specialists in the department.
- e. Your Rights as a Victim - a section, written by Mr. Arnold Markle, State's Attorney for New Haven County, which indicates the protections the victim has.
- f. Counseling Services - informs the victim of the availability of services from the Hamden Mental Health Services.

A sample of the Victim Information Guide is included in the back of this report.

CASE NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Many victims will call the police department several times after the initial investigation has been completed in order to find out what progress has been made with their case. Some police departments, like Fremont and Sacramento, California and Rochester, New York have established policies of informing victims of the status of the investigation of their case. Follow-up evaluation conducted in Fremont indicates that people want to know what has been done with their case and appreciate being informed of its status, even though the investigation may not have met with positive results. These departments use form letters to notify clients of the outcome of their case.

The Hamden Police Department will design and implement a telephone call-back system which will keep the victim informed of the progress of the investigation of the crime. Case investigation suspension and closure, as well as arrests made and property recovered will comprise the information supplied to the victim. Disposition of arrested and convicted offenders will be available upon request. The volume of crime allows the telephone call-back method to be a manageable avenue of information feedback. Preliminary plans are to locate this activity in the Investigative Services Division.

SOCIAL SERVICES REFERRAL SYSTEM

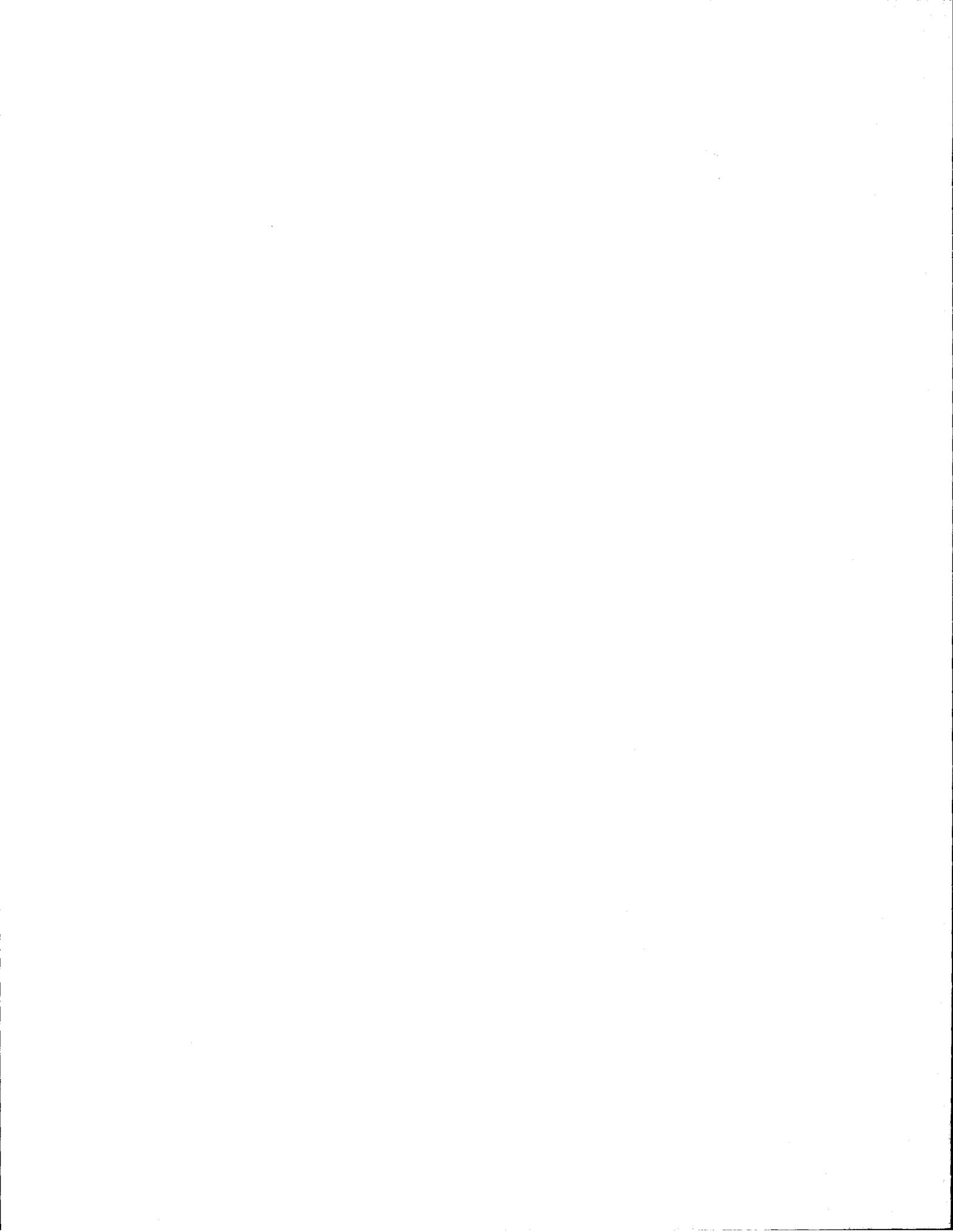
Currently each patrol officer has a notebook which lists the social service agencies in the region. This notebook will be expanded, updated, and an assessment will be made of the quality and availability of the services offered. Members of the department will be encouraged to make full, effective use of the referral resources available to them.

SUMMARY

The Hamden Victim Services Project is a cooperative effort among public agencies to improve the services rendered to the victims of crime. We have initiated efforts to better meet the psychological and informational needs of victims. It is our hope that the elements of this program will do much to strengthen the alliance between the criminal justice system and the victim.

There is much more that we can do. The police have an important role in helping the victim cope with the problems they face.

We will continue to explore more avenues which lead toward improving the manner in which the police interact with the victims of crime. The importance of the role of law enforcement in servicing the victim can no longer be neglected.



END