**Victim Services Unit Initial Contact Script – Template**

**Overview**

Victim Services Unit (VSU) personnel have access to law enforcement agency personnel, reports of crime and crisis circumstances, and associated agency processes. They also have access to victims and co-victims during key justice system intersection points. Ethical services by VSU personnel that focus on the rights and needs of those served can mitigate the effects of victimization and investigations that never progress to prosecution or remain unsolved.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Ethical services begin with the initial contact between VSU personnel and victims and co-victims. Communicating the role of VSU personnel is essential and can have cascading influences on interactions with other agency personnel and system professionals. Initial contact can also help victims and co-victims make informed decisions around accessing their rights, engaging in investigation activities, and connecting with resources.

**Intention of Victim Services Unit Initial Contact Script**

This template provides sample language and content for use by law enforcement agencies when establishing or revising guidance for Victim Services Unit initial contact with victims and co-victims of multiple victimizations categories. Agency personnel should review and revise the *Victim Services Unit Initial Contact Script – Template* to ensure consistency with appropriate statutes and agency policies, procedures, and practices.

**Additional Resources**

The following resources may provide additional, but not exhaustive, information:

* [Integrity Institute | Resources](https://integrityinstitutenc.com/resources)
* [OVC - IACP | Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services (LEV)](https://www.theiacp.org/projects/law-enforcement-based-victim-services-lev)

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"My name is [*VS personnel name*], and I’m a [*position title*] with the [*agency name*].  I’m sorry that we are connecting around these circumstances.

Part of my role is to help you understand justice system processes, act as a liaison with other personnel, and help you understand and access your rights. I can also help answer any questions you may have and connect you with support services.

It’s important that you understand my role and what happens to information we discuss. Because I work within a law enforcement agency, information shared with me and actions that I take are part of the record. If you tell me something that relates to the investigation or involves a threat to someone’s safety, other people will have access to that information – including the defendant if the case moves forward to prosecution. If you want to have a confidential conversation at any point, I’m happy to refer you to service providers who can offer that.

I’d like to go over some information and ask some questions to learn what your current needs are and how we can best help you. If there’s anything you’re not comfortable discussing right now, just let me know and we can revisit it later.

How can I help?"

1. Tibaduiza, E., Barrick, K., Durall, A., & Presler-Jur, P. (2022). Summary results from phase one of the LEV formative evaluation. U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)