

When it's time

...to tell your story

...to get answers

...to be heard

Why Consider Victim-Offender Dialogue?

Every crime is unique, and so is why crime victims and survivors participate in the VOD process. Many victims and survivors feel frustrated by the limitations of the traditional court process, in which offenders may be tried and convicted without ever taking direct accountability for their actions. Some survivors deeply desire an opportunity to convey the crime's impact on them and their families. Some have questions that only the offender can answer. Some want reassurance that the offender will not harm others. Since many of these thoughts, feelings, and questions continue to linger for years after the crime, many victims and survivors may feel they are stuck in their healing journey and wish for an opportunity to meet with or exchange information with the

offender in their case. A trained facilitator can help victims and survivors decide whether VOD is right for them and when it's time.

In the wake of crime...

"WHY did this happen to me? To my loved one?"

"I have important questions that only the offender can answer."

"I want to know whether they are truly sorry or not."

"I need them to know how they have impacted my life."

"I've never received an apology."

"In court, the offender never even looked me in the eye."

"As a victim, I needed to have an opportunity to speak. I needed to have an opportunity to go before him. This program allowed me to have that."

-Family Survivor of Vehicular Homicide

POST-SENTENCING
VICTIM-OFFENDER
DIALOGUE (VOD)

IN COLORADO



Victim-offender dialogue (VOD) is a facilitated dialogue between the victim or survivor of a violent crime and the offender in their case. VOD is considered a victim centered Restorative Justice process separate from the justice system.

The VOD process allows the victims and survivors to be heard and have their questions answered. As a Restorative Justice process, the dialogue also allows the offender to hear and know the effect of their actions to take true accountability for the harm they have caused.

While VOD can lead to healing and other personal benefits for the victim or survivor, forgiveness is never an expectation or goal. The VOD process is about meeting the victim or survivor's needs, whatever those may be while maintaining a safe environment.

What is the Process Like?

First, all dialogue processes are victim initiated. The offender cannot initiate a dialogue. All parties agree to participate voluntarily.

The offender must take responsibility for the actions that resulted in the offense. A trained facilitator team will assess this with the offender's supervising agency.

Facilitators then conduct thorough screenings and preparation meetings separately with the victim/survivor and the offender to ensure safety and readiness for participation. Victims and survivors can meet with their facilitators as long as needed and change their minds at any time. When everyone is fully prepared, a one time facilitated dialogue occurs in a safe, structured environment. The victim/survivor makes decisions

that guide the dialogue.

Some victims and survivors may choose to exchange information with the offender in the form of written letters as an alternative to a face-to-face dialogue or even meet with a surrogate offender. Your facilitators will help you decide what is right for you.

Is My Case Eligible?

In Colorado, crimes eligible for the VOD process include those listed in the Colorado Victim Rights Amendment (VRA), such as murder, manslaughter, homicide, vehicular homicide, assault, and robbery. Currently, VOD is not available in cases involving sexual crimes or domestic violence crimes. VOD program administrators and trained facilitators will assess cases to determine eligibility.

VOD is...

- Victim-Initiated
- Voluntary for Everyone
- Accountability-Focused
- A Facilitated Process
- Honest and Respectful

VOD is not ...

- Offender Initiated
- A Legal Process
- Mandated or Compelled
- Forgiveness-Focused
- Mediation
- Diversion

Talk to a trained facilitator about your options.

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North Star Victim and Community Services (NSVCS) supports DOC and DYS in

Victim-Centered Restorative Justice practices. NSVCS staff are experienced facilitators who can provide information and assistance.

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