

## Who are the Facilitators?

The facilitators are volunteers from the community who have attended a specialized training which focuses on the dialogue process and working with victims and offenders. The facilitators' role is to prepare both the victim and offender independently for the face-to-face meeting. The facilitators will also be present when the actual face-to-face meeting takes place and provide subsequent follow-up with both parties.

## For More Information?

If you are the victim of crime or a homicide survivor and are interested in meeting directly or indirectly with the offender who committed the crime against you, please contact the Office of the Victim Advocate at 1-800-322-4472.

### Office of the Victim Advocate

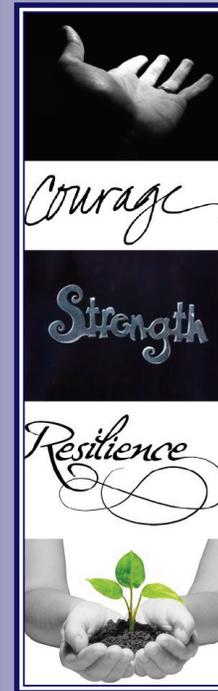
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PENNSYLVANIA  
Office of the Victim Advocate

# Dialogue Program for Victims of Violent Crime



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# Dialogue Program for Victims of Violent Crimes

The Office of the Victim Advocate began this program in 1998 after being contacted by many victims who were interested in meeting with the offender who committed the crime against them. The purpose of the program is to give victims a chance to communicate with their offender in a safe and secure way.

## What is Victim Offender Dialogue?

Victim Offender Dialogue is a process between the victim and their offender who is incarcerated in a State Correctional Institution, on state parole or has completed their state sentence. It gives the victim an opportunity for a one time face-to-face meeting with the offender.

This is an opportunity for the victim to express his/her feelings directly to the offender. They are able to confront the offender and let him/her know how the crime has affected their life. The victim can ask questions to which they have never been given answers and feel a sense of empowerment.

The program also gives the offender a chance to tell his/her story directly to the victim. The offender can answer questions the victim has.

While the offender is not required to admit guilt or take responsibility, it

gives the offender the opportunity to do so. The pro-gram also gives the offender an opportunity to gain a better understanding of how the crime impacted the victim's life.

Through this process, the crime is no longer a disconnected act. This may be the first time that both the victim and the offender have engaged in a dialogue about the offense with each other.

For those victims who do not want to meet the offender face-to-face, there is the option to engage in "indirect dialogue." This form of dialogue utilizes a letter exchange between the victim and the offender, using the same type or preparation as with a face-to-face meeting.

**This program is voluntary for offenders and their participation has no effect on their institutional or parole status.**

## The Process

The dialogue process is initiated at the request of the victim. The victim must contact the Office of the Victim Advocate to complete a formal intake with the Program Coordinator. The case will be placed on the waiting list, if applicable. Once the case is ready, it will be assigned to two volunteer facilitators. The facilitators will arrange individual preparatory meetings with both the victim and offender to prepare them for the face to face meeting.

After the face-to-face meeting occurs, the facilitators provide follow-up to each party to discuss their thoughts and feelings regarding the experience.

There is no set time frame for completing the dialogue program and progression through the program will vary from case to case. Either party has the right to put the case on hold or end the process completely at any time.

The face to face meeting will take place in a private room inside the offender's home State Correctional Institution or a private setting within the community if the offender is no longer incarcerated.