

Life after Death?

Elaine was killed by a drunk driver and nothing can bring her back. **But her family found hope by facing the offender.**

“The day after the mediation session, I could feel that a lot of tension I had been carrying around vanished. I had a sense of relief and realized it was because I had to let go of feelings of vengeance and despair. The mediation had allowed me to turn my thoughts back to a constructive direction and feel optimistic about the future.”

“But I harbor no bitterness or hate toward her. I respect her for having the conscience and the courage to face us, express her remorse and take responsibility for what she had done. I rejoice at each of her accomplishments on the job of repentance and repair, and sincerely wish her well in making a better life for herself and her family.”

*Elizabeth S. Menkin, sister of Elaine
San Jose Mercury News
September 4, 1994*

Mission of the Office of Victim Services

To work in partnerships to make a positive difference in the lives of crime victims by affording them meaningful participation throughout the Ohio corrections process.

Other Services Offered

- Crisis intervention and advocacy throughout the corrections process
- Addressing victim concerns regarding inmates and parolees under our jurisdiction
- Providing information regarding inmate or parolee status
- Victim notification
- Notification and support for surviving family members throughout the execution process
- Community education/outreach
- Referrals to other state and local community services

For additional information contact:

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Rehabilitation and Correction
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VICTIM- OFFENDER DIALOGUE



Ohio | Department of
Rehabilitation & Correction

Why would a victim want to meet with an offender?

Historically, victims of crime have been left out of the justice process and were not afforded the same rights as offenders in their cases. There are many reasons a victim might have interest in meeting with the person who harmed them or their family member(s).

- They often have questions only an offender can answer. Questions we have heard include: “What actually happened?” “What were my loved one’s last words?” “Why did you pick me?”
- Victims may want to tell the offender about how their lives have been affected by the offender’s criminal behavior and how they feel about the crime.
- Victims often want to know about the offender’s life inside the institution or what kind of person they are or have become.

Why would an offender want to meet with a victim?

- Offenders may want the opportunity to apologize to the victims and to express remorse for their actions.
- Answering questions is one way the offender can attempt to make amends to victims.

- When an offender looks into the eyes of the person(s) they’ve harmed, they often feel true remorse and can begin to turn their own lives around.

What is Victim-Offender Dialogue?

Victim-Offender Dialogue is a process in which the victim of a violent crime and the offender who committed the offense(s) meet. The focus is on the harm done to the victim and the offender’s responsibility in the reparation of that harm.

The Dialogue Process

- Requests for Victim-Offender Dialogue must be made through the Office of Victim Services.
- All dialogues are victim initiated; offenders **cannot** initiate a dialogue.
- Dialogue preparation can take anywhere from several weeks to years before an actual meeting takes place.
- Offenders must agree to participate; they cannot be forced into the process.
- Because Victim-Offender Dialogue is not for everyone, each case is carefully reviewed by the Office of Victim Services.
- We do not conduct dialogues involving domestic violence.

- Each case is assigned to one or two trained facilitators who will meet with both the victim and offender individually to prepare for the dialogue.
- It is recommended that both the victim and offender have a support person with them throughout the process.
- The Victim-Offender Dialogue process cannot be used by offenders in an attempt to obtain an early release from prison or supervision.

If you are a victim and are interested in the Victim-Offender Dialogue Process:

- Contact the Office of Victim Services at 1 (888) 842-8464.
- You will be asked to provide background information about your interest in dialogue.
- Keep in mind that determination of the appropriateness of a dialogue is at the discretion of the Office of Victim Services and the Managing Officer where the offender is located.
- The Victim-Offender Dialogue program cannot be utilized to circumvent the Department’s no visitation policy between victims and their offenders.