

Public Abstract

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Title:EXPLORATORY STUDY OF VICTIM ADVOCACY PRACTICES, STRATEGIES, RESISTANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS AMONG CRIME VICTIM SERVICE AGENCIES

Social work has long been a field of advocacy, and has progressively integrated into the crime victim advocacy movement by practicing in domestic violence shelters, prosecutors offices, law enforcement, child advocacy centers and community agencies. This study surveyed 110 victim advocates employed in these agencies to examine the practice of advocacy within the individual, administrative and policy levels, strategies of practice, agency relationships, and resistance to advocacy between agencies. Results show victim advocates practice at all advocacy levels, use all strategies of advocacy, and have mostly allied relationships. Differences in advocacy strategies and relationships were found in rural areas, where advocates are more likely to use moral reasoning and value-based advocacy, have more adversarial relationships with law enforcement and prosecutors offices, and experience more resistance. Recommendations include implementing multidisciplinary training, development of professional advocate standards, increased communication among agencies and implications for policy and future research.