

# Victim Impact Statement Guidelines for Children and Youth



## What is a victim impact statement?

A victim impact statement is a written statement describing how the crime hurt you and how the crime made you feel.

## What is the reason for a victim impact statement?

A victim impact statement is your chance to tell the Judge, Crown Attorney, Defense Counsel and accused, in your own words, how the crime has affected or is still affecting you. The judge is required by law to consider your victim impact statement, if you provide one, before sentencing the accused.

## Do I have to write a victim impact statement?

No. Writing a victim impact statement is voluntary. That means it is your choice whether you want to write one. No one can force you to write a victim impact statement. You can also change your mind about writing a victim impact statement anytime before the offender is sentenced.

## Who will see my victim impact statement?

You provide your victim impact statement to the Victim Services Regional Coordinator whose job is to make sure the statement gets to the right people at court on time. Your victim impact statement will be provided to the Judge, Crown Attorney and Defense Counsel. It will also be shared with the accused.

The victim impact statement is only used if the accused person is found guilty of the crime involving you. Victim Services will keep a copy of your victim impact statement. If the offender is sentenced to jail, certain officials who make decisions about the offender's release may request a copy of your victim impact statement from Victim Services. The media also could report on what you say in your victim impact statement.

## When should I write my victim impact statement?

You should speak to the Victim Services Regional Coordinator about when your victim impact statement may be needed.

## Will I have to attend court when my victim impact statement is used?

Maybe. The Defense Counsel has the right to question you about what you put in your victim impact statement. This does not happen very often, but is possible. You will be told if this is to happen.

You also have the right to read your victim impact statement in court if you want. If you think you might want to do this, please let the Victim Services Regional Coordinator or Crown Attorney know.

## Can someone else write my victim impact statement for me?

In most cases the victim of a crime writes the statement. In some cases a parent or guardian will write the victim impact statement on behalf of their child. You can speak to the Victim Services Regional Coordinator if you want someone else to write the victim impact statement for you.

## Can someone help me write my victim impact statement?

You can have a family member, friend or someone else that you trust help you with your victim impact statement. You can also contact the Victim Services Regional Coordinator in your area for help.

## How Do I complete the victim impact statement?

You can write or type your victim impact statement using your own paper. It can be as long or as short as you want it to be and should be in your own words. You can also draw pictures to show how you feel.

You can write about how you have been impacted emotionally (your feelings), physically (your body), and financially (your money). Below are some questions to help you think about what to include. There may be others.



**Emotionally:** Think about how you have been feeling since the crime happened.

- Have there been changes in your eating or sleeping habits?
- Have you had nightmares?
- Has there been a change in your mood?
- Do you have any worries or fears?
- Have there been changes in your schoolwork, school attendance or grades?
- Have any of your relationships with family or friends changed?
- Have you gone to counseling due to what happened?
- Has there been a change in how you feel about yourself?
- Were there things you enjoyed doing before that you do not do anymore because of what happened?

**Physically:** Think about how you were hurt or any medical problems you have had since the crime.

- What are some of the physical injuries you have suffered?
- How long did the injuries take to heal or how long will it take to heal the injury?
- What medical treatment did you get or will you need in the future?
- How have the injuries changed your day to day activities?

**Financially:** Think about money you may have had to pay out, or lost as a result of the crime. *\*Talk to a Victim Services Coordinator if a family member had to pay out money because of the crime.*

- Did you miss time from work?
- Did you have to pay for any medical, dental, ambulance or treatment costs?
- Did you have to pay for prescription medication, physiotherapy, chiropractic treatment, etc.?
- Was your property or personal belongings damaged, lost or destroyed?

## Important points to remember before writing your victim impact statement

- Do not write about what happened. Write about how it has made you feel.
- Do not include what you think about the person who hurt you.
- Do not write about what you think should happen to the person who hurt you.

It can be difficult to have to think about how you have been affected by the crime. If you feel like you want to talk to someone about your feelings please have your parent or guardian call Victim Services for assistance.

If you have any questions about the victim impact statement your parent or guardian can call Victim Services at the following locations:

Location	Phone:
St. John's	(709) 729-0900
Carbonear	(709) 945-3019/945-3046
Clareville	(709) 466-5808
Gander	(709) 256-1028/256-1070
Grand Falls-Windsor	(709) 292-4544/292-4548
Corner Brook	(709) 637-2614
Stephenville	(709) 643-6588/643-6618
Port Saunders	(709) 861-2147
Happy Valley-Goose Bay	(709) 896-0446/896-3251
Nain	(709) 922-2360
Marystown	(709) 279-3216