Understanding Repeat Victims through Feedback
from Officers, Community Partners, Repeat Victims, and VSU Staff/workers

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Background VSU

In October 6 of 2016, the first Victim Services Coordinator was appointed. The job for her appointment came from the ELERV grant. The goal was to identify gaps in victim service and to formulate strategic plans to address those gaps. Partnerships with local victim agencies were fostered with a focus on strengthening service collaborations in Saginaw. Since 2016, SPD has been updating the mission, vision, values, and policies in the department. In June of 2017, a new coordinator took over as 'Victim Services Specialist and Unit Coordinator'. VSU has done an outstanding job with updating monthly newsletters, community engagement, aiding in policy review, training and education, and partnership with researchers. There have been numerous IACP-based trainings with SPD. There have been many research projects to measure community members perceptions of law enforcement and law enforcement perceptions of training. Researchers and practitioners from Casper, WY, Chattanooga, TN, and Saginaw, MI were able to collaborate and share ideas from the ELERV project with various project ideas. Each research project that SPD has underwent is a logical step from the last one and this JRSA grant would further that understanding to better serve victims. The past grants awarded to SPD have been successful and more work is still needed. See appendix for more information on Saginaw, crime statistics, and related materials.

Research and Current Proposal

Repeat victims come in contact with police more and are a unique population. In some cases, repeat victims account for 3% of the population but are 80% of victims harmed by crimes (Bland & Ariel, 2020). Xie and Lynch (2017) found that when victim services are used, there is a 40% reduction in repeat victimization. The need for understanding victimization and repeat victimization is needed. Victimization does increase in certain areas with higher levels of disadvantage such as poverty (Turanovic, Pratt, & Piquero, 2018). There is a need to understand victims and the gaps in service to better serve them. This research will address that gap. With this current proposal, two more workers will be added for assisting in data analysis to better understand victims and the services provided to them. These workers will be working remotely and must pass a full SPD background and fingerprinting check prior to training and having access to VST software. Data analyzed will focus on police reports and victim surveys. For this current project proposal, the information will be deidentified and combined in such a way that anonymity is maintained with victims. The Center for Victim Research (2016) argues that a gap analysis will cover the 4 following questions. First, "What are the current victim services available in our community?". Second, "What is the ideal set of victim services our community might offer?". Third, "What gaps exist between the current and ideal states of victim services?". Lastly, "What steps are needed to move from the current state toward the ideal state so that victims' needs can be met more effectively?" This research is important because it will evaluate Saginaw Police Departments Victim Services Unit from an evidence-based approach and through the understanding and research, it will better serve victims of crime. There is a disconnect between research and policy and this research will bridge that gap. It is imperative to understand gaps to better serve the public and victims. The research is clear that victims will benefit from evidence-based services applied in an effective manner (Dusenbery & Langness, 2019).

Officer Feedback Survey
In April of 2021, a survey was administered to understand officer perceptions of victims and repeat victims. This survey was administered in paper form over 3 days to cover all shifts. Time was given before each shift to discuss the project with officers. It was explained that the responses were anonymous and that officers are to put the finished surveys in the locked box when complete (only the researchers have access to the locked box). At the same time, an electronic version of the survey was launched with Survey Monkey. There were 28 respondents (63% response rate). The last five respondents were online survey respondents (R24 to R28). R01 corresponds with the first survey respondent, R02 the second and so on.

Results
1. What barriers do you see in serving victims and responding to victims?
Police/citizen interactions not moving forward with prosecution/change situation (n=21)
Most of the responses in this area include officers feeling that the victim is not doing enough to improve their situation. For example, "the victims want us to help them but sometimes they don’t want to help themselves" (R04), "mostly victim cooperation and not wanting to improve their own situation" (R07), "…play the victim and get suspect arrested but never intended to follow through from beginning" (R10), "changing their mindset on getting them out of the current situation" (R14), and "Lack of trust in police. Lack of follow through by victim after immediate threat is over. Desire/ attempt to resolve without law enforcement" (R17). Also noted was, "Some victims repeatedly put themselves in bad situations and refuse to change their behavior" and "victims not showing up to court—suspect not getting prosecuted" (R20), and "not willing to share information or follow up—usually in love the next day :) " (R21). There are challenges in getting victims to show up to court--"Victims don't usually want police help…” (R22), "victims not following through with prosecution or cooperating with police" (R23), "they continue to return to the hostile situation we just got them out of" (R24). R25's commented, "The victims willingness to accept help".

Perceptions (n=9)
From the responses, it can be seen that some officers believe there is "hate against police" (R01), "cultural, age, gender, race" barriers (R12) and challenges in "speaking with them, and getting them to talk honestly" (R19). along with "majority of victims do not want to talk to PD (R02). Another noted, "victims often don't like to talk to the police for various reasons: 1. lack of compassion 2. lack of belief 3. lack of prosecution" (R13). Further, "we (police) are a momentary fix" (R05) and "they have no issue calling us but often lack trust and follow through" (R09). Some believe, "lack of understanding of the victim's viewpoint" (R03).

Resources/time (n=6)
Another theme is resources and time available to be spent with victims and cases. R02 wrote, "PD does not have enough time to be fully invested with a victim due to high call numbers" and R03 "lack of time to serve the victim to the best of my ability". Similarly, R06 said, "caseload is too heavy to deal with all victims at an acceptable level", R08 wrote "not enough officers-slow response and then once on a scene officers have to rush away for the next call". R26 also noted resource limitations: "Limited Victim Services staff. VSU staff are all contracted employees that need to be internalized (made city employees.)"

Policies/procedures (n=5)
The last area for themes of question 1 includes policies/procedures that officer felt limited them from their duty. For example, R01 argued, "the new laws put in place that stops us from making an arrest." and R11 noted "courts do nothing". R15 wrote, "most victims we come across fail to
follow through w/ the court process—especially in a domestic violence situation, due to getting back together with suspect, financial reasons, social status reasons, etc." and R17 "Lack of understanding of process, specifically court process. Irritation with how long things may take".

2. What challenges do you see with repeat victims or calls to the same address?

**Perceptions/Fatalism (n=15)**
The first major theme for this question was perceptions and fatalism. R02 wrote, "They do not do anything to help themselves. They want PD to fix all of their problems" and R07 "the victims do not want to make the changes required to escape the situation". R08 argued, "...Victims have to want to better their situations and it takes some effort on their end to do so". R03 noted difficulties with dealing with repeat victims: "...they only want help for the night, not long-term. If they want help long-term they feel they cannot get it or fear testifying against their abuser. They still rely on their abuser for money, vehicle transport, etc". Similarly, R05 noted, "...we still continue to see them in the same situations". R09 wrote, "the people that use us the most—ironically—often hate us the most. Lacking basic life skills, they call 9-1-1 for everything." R13 argued there are challenges because "The victim often doesn’t want to press charges" and R14 wrote, "I find it hard to change their mindset from them being scared and wanting to stay in the relationship to being courageous enough to leave". R17 noted a "Lack of follow through by victim. Lack of community support encouraging them" and R20 "No matter how many calls or assaults victims always seem to end up back with the problem". R22 wrote, "Providing the same services. I have had victims tell me I'm not going to do anything... Some victims to feel like the system has failed them and they have no way out" and R24 "They only want a 'right now' fix and go back to the situation next day 'referring to domestic calls'—victims don't want to be victims". Similarly, R25 noted a barrier of the "willingness to change their lifestyle" and R26 "There is probably frustration with the system including victims". R27 noted the challenges of "The victims are afraid to tell really what happened to them due to a loss of [income/retribution]."

**System/Procedures/Court (n=11)**
The next major theme for this question was systems/procedures and follow through with the court system in prosecuting offenders. R01 wrote, "They never follow through with the courts to get the suspect charged" and R04: "the challenges I see with repeat victims are they always want something done but when it's time for court they do not want to show up". Similarly, R06 noted, "refusal to prosecute and show up for court" as well as: "Victims don't show up for court. The prosecutor won't proceed without them and the case gets dropped" (R18). R19 wrote, "they never go to court and always call for the same person that they let back in their life". R23 noted, "Victims using police as a weapon to get someone arrested. I have seen victims change stories and lie per witnesses to get someone arrested". R10 wrote: "Never press charges. No consequences for victims not coming to court. Courts don't follow through with injunction order penalties". There were perceptions of challenges noted with: "courts do nothing" (R11), "We don't get backed by the prosecutor's office. Victims are not held accountable to show to court"(R12), "Victims drop charges and every time we go back to same address the assault gets worse" (R16), and "Victims drop case, refuse to appear in court but continue to call 911 for police services." (R28).

3. Do you feel you are making an impact on helping victims?
For this question, there were 28 responses. Of that, 60.71% (n=17) answered Yes. A full 25% (n=7) answered No. Four respondents wrote "sometimes" in by hand (14.29%).
4. Do you want more training in areas on victims, such as domestic violence?
A full 15 officers (53.57%) noted they wanted more training in the areas of victims, such as domestic violence. Thirteen (46%) noted they did not want more training in this area.

5. Do you see the VSU as having a positive impact on victims?
The officers reported that the VSU is having a positive impact on victims. A full 75% answered Yes. Only 10% (3 people) said No. Another 14% (4 people) were unsure/sometimes.

6. What do you find rewarding when responding to victims?
**Help/cooperation (n=14)**
Officers note they are helping victims. R01 wrote, "[when] they follow through with the help", R06 noted, "helping them during times of crisis", and R22 wrote, "actually being able to help the one's that needs help", as well as R16 "Trying to help victims". R11 noted, "removing the danger" and similarly, R24 "generally you can either remove them or suspect from that specific situation in the moment". Similarly, R15 "Being able to get the victim out of the immediate danger of the situation, specifically in DV situations—seeing the relief of children directly affected" and R19 "when you can see that somebody was truly scared, and then feel safe when responding". Another key area is cooperation. R02: "When the victims make positive progress to better their lives", R03: "When a victim responds to your help and show understanding. When you later see they evict or get a PPO against their abuser (showing they really wanted/needed the help)", R05: "What I find rewarding is when I respond to victims is their full cooperation with the criminal process", R10: "when they truly want help", R13: "when the victim [cooperates]", R14: "When I am able to breakthrough and make them understand it's not their fault".

**Follow through (n=12)**
Another major theme was 'follow through'. Here the officers are noting the later parts of the process and/or change they want to see. R04: "When it actually changes their lives and gets them out of a bad situation", R07: "Hearing a positive outcome", R08: "When you deal with someone once, talk to them and try to help them—and then don't see them again", R17: "resolving/ending a long-term problem". R18 noted, "when a victim actually takes steps to get out of a bad situation—divorce, move out, PPO, etc." Prosecution can be a challenge, as R20 noted "when someone actually goes through with prosecution". Further, R21: "If they follow up they usually remember the officer who helped them and ask for them to continue to help them which makes you feel like you have made an impact". R23 wrote: "where you get a victim out of a domestic violence situation and they stay away", R25: "if they accept the help and want to change", R26: "Able to provide help that is truly needed and will hopefully lead to permanent and needed changes.", R27: "When you hear the abuse ends and they feel safe!" and R28: "Seeing justice for victims after they follow through in the adjudication process."

7. What do you find discouraging when responding to victims?
**Repeat calls/ no change or worse (n=11)**
With this first theme, there was a sense of repeat calls to the same location without any change in the situation or the situation getting worse over time. R01 "If we have to keep going back to the victim and you have tried to help them every time..", R02: "responding to the same victims who do nothing to change their situation", and R04 noted, "they stay in a bad relationship or situation when police give them the resources to get out of one". Similarly, R16: "the repeat victims who
don't want help", R25: "the victims wanting help but not wanting to change", R26: "Responding to repeat victims over and over for years.", and R27: "When they allow the suspect to continue to abuse them and the family." R08 wrote, "repeat victims or when talking with victims and not seeing in them that they are ready for a change" and R23: "having past incidents with repeat victims that have a history of not following through" R05 noted that the situation can worsen with, "finding a victim in a worse situation after I have made contact with them" and R22: "Repeating the same call, knowing they will end up hurt really bad if they don't take the help"

**Interactions (n=9)**

Another key theme was interactions and perceptions of victims in those interactions. For example, R01: "or when the victims dislike you and don't want your help because you're the police", R03: "victims that seem to not want help, just want the abuser gone for the time being", R06: "failure to cooperate during the entire adjudication process", and R07: "the victim refusing to cooperate and testify putting them right back at the start". There are challenges with what victims want. For example, R09: "they are often upset, demand something be done, but after a cooling off period have no intent in pursuing the matter", and R13: "when the victims doesn't want to cooperate". Officer note, "Lack of commitment. Family/friends that enable the problem to continue" (R17), "They rarely want or take help" (R21) and "some victims call us but generally don't want out help once we arrive" (R24).

**Courts/follow-up (n=9)**

Another common theme officers note is the court system/follow-up. Some officers feel, "police are a pawn in relationship" (R10) and R11: "courts do nothing", as well as R12: "the prosecutor's office just closes the case when a victim does not show up to court". R14 noted, "when they fail to appear in court or they tell us they will not pursue criminal charges. Too often we make arrests and they're out and we keep responding to the same house" and R15 "Knowing the vast majority of the time, the suspect will never/or very rarely see any type of conviction". R18 wrote, "they don't show up for court and repeat the same behaviors over and over", R19: "they don't pursue charges", R20: "not going to court and not removing themselves from the problem" and R28: "Victim who are reluctant to follow through and refuse to appear in court."

8. What else is needed on the scene to support officers?

**Nothing/blank (n=12)**

There were 4 blank responses (R09, R13, R18, and R26). There were 3 responses for "nothing" (R07, R16, and R28) with R28: "Nothing in regards to victim services". There were two N/A (R15 and R19). There was one "?" (R23).

**Victim Services Advocate/ mental health workers/ victim focused/education/support (n=11)**

Officers noted the need for a victim services advocate. R03 wrote, "a victim services advocate" and R05: "actual victim service advocates and mental health workers are needed to support officers", R20: "victim support". Further, R21: "a good working knowledge of all that is actually available to victims. Maybe a cheat sheet, something simple, for us to refer to?". R22 thought,"VSU provides enough resources" while R24: "Don't know if possible or realistic, but having an "on call" VSU member, someone we could reach out to or victim could right then and there" Another noted, "Trust. Education for the victim. Long-term support throughout the entire process for the victim" (R17). Also noted "officers often times don't have any ways to transport victims, children, pets on scene. A resource that could be called to help would be nice seeing as a lot of times the victim won't or can't leave because of transportation issues" (R14), R06: "nothing
on scene, just support from the community and nation as a whole", R10: "a true victim", and
R25: "Everyone wants social workers to handle calls instead of the police...."

**Officers/support from admin (n=7)**
Officers also noted the need for more officers and support. For example, R01: "more officers! Better
gear and more support with command staff", R02: "more officers so they have more time
on calls", R04: "more officers", R08: "more officers—more time". Having more officers would allow
More officers so we can respond in a timely manner" (R27) and R12 "more officers on
duty to spend more time to investigate calls". R11 noted, "being backed by admin".

9. What else is needed to support repeat victims?

**Support system/education/training/counseling (n=12)**
There were twelve responses in this theme. Some thought, "more training. More time to talk to
the victims. More services to help those that feel they can't get out" (R03), R18: "Education on
how to change their situation and break the cycle of violence", R09: "education—conflict
resolution and basic life skills. They call us for everything and we usually respond even if it's not
specifically a law enforcement matter. Creates a drain on our already short resources" and R27:
"education and resources to increase their independence". Others wanted more exposure to the
VSU: R07: "continued use of VSU", R14 "more time with VSU and patrol initially on scene",
R16 "on-scene support services on major calls", and R21 'understand there is a support system
for them'. There was also a focus on engagement with the family and community: "family and
encouragement to follow through" (R06), R02: "a positive support system", R17: "community
engagement. Change to community perceptions of what is acceptable behavior by offenders",
and R19: "counseling"

**Victims coming forward/change/’way out’ (n=10)**
Another key theme from the officers was wanting the victims to come forward/change/find a
way out. There were 10 responses in this category. For example, R01: "I think we have
everything we need. We just need the victims to act on the help provided", R15: "someone or a
group of people who can work directly with the victim when the intent is not get the victim away
permanently", and R04 "not sure, maybe the victims changing their mindset and wanting to
change their life". R20 noted, "help to show they are the only ones who can truly change the
situation they are in after the police have done what they can do" and R23 wrote, "victims
actually need to be victims so they can be helped out of bad situations". R05 noted, "A way out
of their current atmosphere is needed to support repeat victims" and R08: "They need to want to
put forth some effort to contact help". R10 wrote: "to stop going back to suspect", R11: "they
need to make better decisions", and R22: "just something to help them realize we are the help,
maybe time?"

**Nothing/ N/A (n=5)**
There were 5 responses with nothing/N/A. Of that 2 were blank and 1 was unknown. R08:
"nothing—there's tons of resources at the end of the day."

**Prosecutor's Office (n=2)**
There were two responses regarding the prosecutor. R12 wrote: "being backed by the prosecutor's
office" which notes a lack of support from the prosecutor. R13 noted: "for the prosecutor's office
to follow through with charges even if the victim doesn't show up to court".

10. What additional tools, skills, partnerships, etc. would help you to better serve victims?

**Nothing/N/A (n=12)**
The first theme and the one with the most response in that category was 'nothing/n/a/blank'. There were 12 total answers in this area. There were 6 blanks (R09, R10, R13, R23, R24, R26). There were 4 nothing/nones (R01, R08, R25, R28). There were two n/a (R19, R22).

**Time/Resources/Training (n=9)**
Officer also seemed to want more time, resources, and training to better serve victims. There were nine responses in this area. Of that two noted time; R02: "time", R03: "more training". R04 asked for "trainings, more communication between the resources we have like victim services", R05: "more police working, mental health workers, and victim support advocates coming out full-time to scenes would help better serve victims", R11: "more officers", R15: "more training and more on-call organization who can respond to or at least be available immediately to assist with getting the victims and children out of the house", R18: "education on how to change their situation and break the cycle of violence", R21: "that additional info of what is available", and R27: "training"

**On-call advocate/counselor (n=5)**
There were four responses in this area. R03 wrote,"on-call advocate that could come to scene". Similarly, R06: "advocates that are not police officers encouraging follow through" and R16: "people to call/contact to assist victims right away". R20 asked about social workers: "social workers?" R02 wrote, "counselor".

**Courts/prosecution (n=3)**
There were three responses in this area. R12 wrote, "more prosecution; UGR is uncooperative with male police officers". R14 wrote, "better prosecution without victims". R17 noted, "more frequent follow up from prosecutor's office"

**Shelters (n=2)**
There were two responses in this area. R07 wrote, "more resources like Underground Railroad and shelters". R14 wrote, "better relationship with Underground Railroad"

**11. What are some things the department could do to help you serve victims more efficiently and more thoroughly?**

**Opinions/support/overtime (n=9)**
In this area, there were 9 comments. R01 wrote, "let us do our job" and R02 noted, "treat the employee[s] [better]". Some officers noted the need for support and communication; R04: "Communicate better", R11: "support the officers" and R12: "more overtime for patrol to decrease crime so they don't become victims in the first place". R17 noted the need to "continue to act professional to build trust". R18 recommended: "detective bureau could make contact with victims a day or 2 before court and remind them to show up" and R22: "make it more publicly known there are services". R26 "More frequent follow through with victims by DB [detective bureau]. VSU staffed by city employees. Growing VSU."

**Officers/resources/training (n=8)**
In this area/theme there were 8 responses. The main comment was the need to hire more officers. Also tied into this theme was resources and training. R01: "Hire more police and give us the gear needed", R02: "hire more employees", R03: "Offer more time and officers (to help give more time) to allow me more time to speak to victims", R07: "more officer and detectives allowing for better response times and more complete investigations", R08: "more officers. Poor morale also keeps officers from doing a good job", R14 "more training and resources", R15: "having a victim service worker being assigned to detective bureau (DB) with their primary role being immediate victim contact", R21 "giving the info of what is available for them", and R27: "More officers"
**Blank/n/a/none (n=8)**
The next most frequently occurring theme was 'blank/N/A'. There were four blank responses (R09, R10, R13, R24). There were two N/A responses (R05, R19). R25 wrote, 'nothing'. R06: "we are doing great with the VSU in place"

**Courts/prosecution (n=4)**
The least occurring theme for this question was 'courts/prosecution'. Some officers noted a need to move forward with the case even without victim cooperation. R16 wrote, "prosecute suspects without victims". R20 noted, "work harder to go through and work with victims on prosecution" and R23: "the prosecutor's office to follow through with charges without cooperating victims. This will be next to impossible". Similarly, R28 "Make sure victims are served subpoenas and make sure victims are brought before a judge if they refuse to appear for those subpoenas"

12. If your mother, father, brother, sister, or spouse were the victim of violent crime, what level of trauma-informed service and support would you feel they likely would receive from the following...(scale from 0 (worst) to 10 (best))

**Patrol**
With this question, 42.9% answered 5 or below and about 57.1% above that. Higher numbers are better scores and the average was 6.07 (s.d.=1.961). The low was 2 and the high was 10 with 7.1%. The results show an approximate bell curve shape forming.

**Investigations**
For this answer, the low was 0 with 1 person responding as such. The high was 1 also with one person. The distribution is bell-shaped. The average score is 5.25 (s.d.=2.102). The modal category was 5 with 35.7% of the respondents. About 70% of the respondents answered 5+

**Victim Services**
Respondents answered favorable with this question, showing support for Victim Services. The high was 10, the low was 3 and the average was 7.46 (s.d.=1.895). Around 18% answered 10, the highest score. About 80% answered 6 or higher.

13. What should be done or could be done to enhance service levels in patrol?

**Police/resources (n=21)**
The overwhelming response for this question was "more officers". The respondents argued more officers are needed to enhance service level in patrol. For example, R01 wrote, "More police means more time we can spend on a call helping the victims", R02: "More officers, smaller workload", R03: "More officers" (also R10, R12, R16, R27, R28), R04: "More training and more officers", R05: "More police hired", R06: "We need more cops, they are too overworked", and R07: "More officers allowing for more complete investigations". R09 put the situation into context with numbers. R09 wrote, "Staffing increase. Almost 100 positions lost in the last 20 years. Current pay and benefits make hiring and retaining officers difficult". More overtime. Special details", R14: "Continuous trainings and resources", R15: "More officers on the street to have improved response times", R17: "Greater/increased staffing to afford officers more time for
every incident", R18: "We need more officers on the road to respond to calls faster", R19: "more training", R20: "more police. quicker response", R23: "More manpower. Officer burnout is horrible nationwide", R26: "More training about victimization and trauma."

**Suggestions (n=6)**
Officers also made suggestions to enhance service levels in patrol. For example, R08 wrote, "Better morale" and R21 "More info available that is not too time consuming to go through to find info". R22 argued for "accountability" and R24 "On-scene VSU member". R25 explained: "ultimately it is the nature of the person who enters police work. There generally is a lack of care and compassion. It would start by the type of person becoming a police officer." R26 noted: "Accountability for those that don't provide adequate service or…professionalism."

**Blank or n/a (n=2)**
There were two responses that were blank. R11 was blank. R13 was blank.

14. **What should be done or could be done to enhance service levels in investigations?**

**Officers/time/resources/training (n=9)**
When asked about enhancing service levels in investigations, the majority of responses were focused on more officers. R01 wrote: "more officers" (also R06, R10). R07 wrote, "more detectives and upgraded technology and processes", R12 "more detectives so they can spend more time with cases; i.e. more thorough", R15 "more detectives so caseloads are lowered which would allow for quicker follow-up and warrant issuing", and R28 "More detectives so they can have time to investigated cases". Similarly, R09: "staffing increase" and R17 "greater/increased staffing. community education about law enforcement".

**Suggestions (n=7)**
There were suggestions to increasing service levels in investigations. R03 wrote, "more effort in reaching out to victims". R08 wrote, "better morale", R21: "make it as easy as possible for patrol to read and disseminate out to others", R22: "accountability" and R25: "our detectives seem to have a fairly non victim orientated attitude. There seems to be a push to close cases quickly and not necessarily effectively. I think the detectives need to be rotated through the position to keep fresh people in the position." R26 noted, "Oversight of case accountability and follow through." and R27: "More communications with victims".

**Blank or n/a (n=7)**
The next recurring theme was blank or n/a. There were three blank responses (R02, R11, and R13). There were two n/a responses (R05, R19). R04 wrote, "not sure" and R23 "?"

**Courts/prosecuting (n=5)**
There was a theme of courts/prosecution: R14 "possibly better explanation on the court process to encourage them so they appear in court and potentially lower the number of repeat responses", R16 "pressing charges even if victim doesn't want to" and R18 "detective bureau follow up with victims as the court date gets closer" Further, R20 "Try and work with victims more on prosecution not just get rid of cases when victim says they do not want to press charges" and R24 "Informing victims that if they don't press charges, the case will be dropped. Many victims are surprised when PD patrol inform them on scene"

15. **What should be done or could be done to enhance service levels in victim services?**

**Blank/unknown/ or n/a (n=15)**
In the first theme, there were five blank responses (R02, R11, R13, R18, and R24). There were three unknown (R09, R10, and R01: "unknown what they do to help the victims". There were
three n/a's: R03, R05, and R19. There were two "nothing" (R22 and R28). R08 wrote, "no idea" and R23: "?"

**Police/resources (n=5)**

There were five responses for this theme and they focused on police and resources. R15 wrote: "more funding and volunteers" and R16 "quicker response in major cases". R20 wrote: "more people and also more police" and R21 "make it known that there is more for victims; they do not have to live that way even in impoverished communities". R26 wrote: "Staff VSU with city employees and increase partnerships with victim service agencies."

**Working well (n=4)**

There were four responses in this theme implying that 'this are going well and change is not needed'. R06 wrote: "it's working well" and R07: "VSU is doing a great job and their help is appreciated". R14 wrote: "continue what is being done as that seems to be working" and R27: "I think they are doing a great job at this time."

**Communication (n=4)**

There were four responses in this theme and the focusing was on improving communication. R04 wrote: "more communication between patrol and victim services" and R12: 'I don't know much about VSU to say. Have VSU contact victims in person, not over the phone. What do officers know about a DV case…especially over the phone?' R17 wrote: "improved communication. Greater willingness from victim to participate (community improvement)" and R25: "have detectives who call back victims in cases and keep them informed".

16. Do you feel that trauma-informed victim response and support is a critical role of your responsibilities?

When asked if they feel that trauma-informed victim response and support is a critical role of their responsibilities, most respondents answered Yes (78.6%). Only 10.7% said No. Further, 3.6% (n=1) left the question blank and 7.1% said "maybe" (n=2).

17. Do you feel that trauma-informed victim response and support is an important element to maintaining public trust and support of the SPD, especially in challenging environments?

When asked if 'they feel that trauma-informed victim response and support is an important element to maintaining public trust and support of the SPD, especially in challenging environments?’, 85.7% answered Yes and 10.7% (n=3) answered No. One person (3.6%) left it blank.

18. If you were in an administrative position with wide-ranging decision-making capabilities, what action or actions would you take to improve delivery of services to victims?

When asked if they 'were in an administrative position with wide-ranging decision-making capabilities, what action or actions would they take to improve delivery of services to victims?', the respondents answered with the following themes: 'support/time/care/training', VSU-focused responses, 'prosecution/courts', blank, communication, and patrol.

**Support/time/care/training (n=13)**

This first theme covered a variety of responses from support/time to care and training. R01 wrote: "To make sure the units have full support to do their job. Hire more police to give patrol more time to help victims", R06 "*Hire more cops!", R07 "work with city hall to get 25 more
patrol officers", R09 "increase staffing and make the job more attractive to hire and retain good quality people", R12 "hire more staff", R14 "Increase man-power so officers are not feeling rushed to go from report to report and they can spend more time with victims", and R16 "More officers to give officers more time to spend with victims". Similarly, R17 "Increase manpower. Build culture of professionalism to promote trust. Increase special unit assignments. Increase funding." and R23 "Increase staffing, boost moral and combat officer burnout. I can't change the world but I could change the department I was in charge of". Further, R20 "more staff for quicker response…". R02 wrote, "Taking care of current employees. Happy employees work harder" and R22 "monthly meetings". In one of the most detailed responses, R25 wrote: "there is a lack of emphasis on how people are treated in public. The mentality of officers seems to be all about Major crimes and not having much care for minor issues. The minor issues are the real problems in society. There needs to be a heavier focus on minor issues. Ultimately at this point in society, no one want to be a police officer. The pay and benefits are not worth the problems encountered while being a police officer. This will be a stepping-stone career. Even being a police office, I am not necessarily a fan of police. I believe it is too hard to get rid of problem employees. By not getting rid of problem employees, it fosters an atmosphere where any behavior is acceptable.

**VSU-related (n=6)**

Another key theme were ideas related to the VSU. For example, R05 "If I were in an administrative position I would fight to get advocates full time with police response", R12 "Have VSU respond in the field as soon as patrol wraps up their investigation", and R15 "Having a victim service worker being assigned to detective bureau with their primary role being immediate victim contact". Another argued for a response care: R18 "domestic violence response car". Another promoted moving the case forward: R20 "more victim advocates make prosecution go through without victim". Another wanted more permanent funding: R26 "Staff VSU with city employees that are not contracted and funded through grants."

**Prosecution/courts (n=4)**

This area had four responses that aligned with prosecution/courts. R08 wrote: "meet with prosecutors and pressure them to push forward on good cases even if the victims are uncooperative", R13: "to strongly encourage the prosecutor's office to pursue cases without a victim", and R21 "prosecutors should be prosecuting without victims especially with injuries. We spend a lot of time writing and forming our reports mor the time for nothing". R28 wrote: "Ensure delivery of subpoenas to victims"

**Blank or n/a (n=4)**

There were 4 comments that were blank or n/a. Of that, 3 were blank (R10, R11, and R24). R19 wrote "n/a".

**Communication (n=2)**

There were two response for this theme. R04 wrote: "communication" is needed to improve delivery of services to victim but did not elaborate beyond "communication". R27 wrote: "Increase communications on all levels"

**Pamphlets/ patrol (n=1)**

There was one comment for this theme. This theme was centered on giving pamphlets to victims. R03 wrote: "Mandatory VSU pamphlets to all victims. A patrol officer is responsible with domestic violence response".

19. What else is on your mind?
Officers/Gear/Resources (n=6)
There were six responses in this theme that covered the need for officers, gear, and resources to better serve victims. R01 wrote, "SPD Patrol should be looked at as a victim. We need better gear and help on the streets when doing our job". R04 noted, "We need more officers!" and R07 "We need more officers", as well as R15: "unfortunately our department is like most in the state and country where we need more money to fund more positions". R06 wrote: "The community will only get the level of services that the budget can provide. Millage to increase cops were unsuccessful. They get what they pay for". R14: "I think VSU has done a great job in not only supporting victims but also officers! Increase funding!"

Nothing/Other (n=18)
There were nine blanks (R09, R11, R13, R16, R20, R21, R24, R25, R26). There were five n/a responses: (R05, R19, R22, R28 and R03: "N/A. We need a patrol level unit designed to domestic violence response but need more officers to do so". R02 wrote: "Nothing will change @SPD. IF it will cost the city or dept $ will not change!!" and R27: "nothing at this time". R23: "too much to put on the survey!"

Command/community (n=4)
There were four responses that covered the theme of 'command/community'. R08 wrote: 'Morale will never improve with current leadership. A happy worker is a productive one'. R12 wrote: "SPD officers are unmotivated as a whole. SPD officer presence is minimal. Admin does not encourage officers to prevent crime and be visible. Low liability on officers". R17 noted: "everyone in this field is interested in helping and resolving issues for our community. The current trend toward demonizing police is hurting our department and our community". R18 wrote, "Victims can only be helped if they want help"

Community Partner Feedback
Emails were sent out by the researcher in June and followed-up by an email with the Victim Services Unit. Of the 33 emails sent, 10 completed the surveys (30% response rate). This response rate is typical of electronic survey results (Dillman, 2014). When reading these results, R01 means the first respondent, R02 the second and so on. This allows for connections of ideas for the readers.

1. Are you getting more victim referrals from the Saginaw Police Department Victim Services Unit (since 2016)?
When asked if the agency was getting more victim referrals from the VSU, 7 answered Yes (R01, R03, R04, R07, R08, R09, R10), and 3 answered Unsure (R02, R05, R06).

2. How many of your new clients seeking services would you estimate are referred by the SPD VSU each month?
This question was answer in numbers and percentages, which can be difficult to interpret. R08 wrote that "35-40%" of new clients are referred by VSU each month while R05 wrote, "10 percent from police department. Not all coming from the VSU." and R10 noted, "100%". Others wrote numbers, like R06: 8, R04: 4, R09: 2, and R03: 1. Two respondents wrote "unsure" (R01 and R07. R02 wrote, "na".

3. What could the SPD/VSU do to help increase the number of persons who would take advantage of the services provided by your agency/organization?
Many themes showed up with this answer, such as 'happy with the current situation'. R04 wrote, "I'm happy with current process", R06: "I think they are already doing a great job, as this is a somewhat new service my company is able to provide.", and R07: "I think they're doing a great job already". Another theme is information: R03: "provide them information.", R05: "Get a tour of our facility so they can see what services we provide so they can give people updated information about our services and facility.". Another theme is 'access': R08: "The SPD/VSU need more staff to handle the volume of cases they see each day that need attention." and R10: "Easier access to victims. Maybe contact by telephone to get releases versus having to meet in person in order to obtain those, releases." R09 noted: "Make the call to the organization while present with the client/victim to make sure they get in contact with the right person, right away." R01 and R02 were blank.

4. What programs/policies are being implemented to target victims?  
This questions had a variety of answers. R01 wrote, "Handle w/Care". R03 noted, "none specifically. We do provide trauma related services". R05 wrote, "In house we have life skills classes to help our guests learn life skills to help with employment and independent living. We also refer our guest to outside resources, we connect our domestic violence victims with Underground." R08 wrote, "We have a county, state and national protocol that guides our program." R09 noted "Follow up calls" were being implemented. R10 wrote, "SLIVE initiative. Hospital-Community based violence intervention initiative." R02, R06, and R07 were blank.

5. What programs/policies that target victims seem to work?  
This question also had a variety of responses. R01 noted that "Handle with Care" seems to work. R03: "those with immediate or same day access" and R05 "The programs mentioned in 4 seem to work well for some. Underground has very good resources for domestic victims." R08: "It's always nice to provide incentives to participants such as transportation, gas cards or food vouchers. Maybe offering a virtual training vs. an in seat. Court orders usually provide incentive to all parties." R09 noted "follow up calls" and R10 wrote, "SLIVE initiative. Hospital-Community based violence intervention initiative." R02, R04, R06, and R07 were blank.

6. What programs/policies that target victims do NOT seem to work?  
This question only had 4 responses. R03: "transportation is an ongoing difficulty. R08 wrote, "Don't know." R09 wrote, "unsure". R10 wrote, "Not sure." The following were blank: R01, R02, R04, R05, R06, and R07.

7. What gaps do you see in service to repeat victims?  
For this question, there were 4 responses. R03 wrote, "access to safe housing." R08 wrote, "Personal contact from staff. With more officers and VSU workers they could be able to provide more face to face contact to encourage the victims." R09 wrote, "transportation, maybe? Perhaps some victims are unable to either start or continue in services due to inability to access the services." R10 wrote, "Their lack to embrace services presented."

8. Do you see any gaps in services to victims that the SPD/VSU should work toward addressing? Please describe those gaps in services and your thoughts about how an enhanced SPD/VSU relationship could help to overcome those gaps.
R03 noted, "similar to most community/social issues the need for safe affordable housing, transportation and adequate employment keep many people unsafe situations where they are victimized." R05 wrote, "Follow up on the victims for their encouragement." R08 noted, "More full time staff to support the program." R09 wrote, "Continue working on educating community on the availability of the VSU. I believe victims still assume they will be alone, unheard and unbelieved when they report a crime. They are scared to come forward." R10 wrote, "Not sure at the moment."

9. Do you feel that you/your organization have a good working relationship with the SPD VSU? Explain why or why not.
R01 wrote, "Yes, we have great communication and work well together to support families and children in our community." R03 wrote, "good relationship with the officers who make referrals for services. R05 noted, "yes, We work well with the SPD." R08: "Yes. Definitely. They are always communicating with our program staff members about the cases pending and report follow up information at our case review meetings." R09 wrote: "yes. communication is always good and very prompt." R10 wrote, "Yes. We communicate and physically, work well together."

10. Do you feel that you have a good amount of knowledge regarding programs and initiatives that have been developed by the SPD or VSU?
R01, R03, R08, and R10 all answered "Yes". R05 and R09 wrote, "Unsure". R02, R04, R06, and R07 were all blank.

11. Where do you get information regarding programs/initiatives that have been or are in the process of being implemented by the SPD or VSU?
There were a variety of responses for this questions too. R02, R04, R06, and R07 all had blank responses. R01 wrote, "The SPD Newsletter, committee presentations and individual conversations with SPD employees." R03 recommended, "email or SPD facebook page" R05 wrote, "I am not sure if we know everything that the SPD or the VSU does and offers to victims." R08 noted, "From Brittany or Elisha communication to our program and from the monthly newsletter and facebook page or postings." R09 wrote, "SPD Newsletter" R10 wrote, "Directly from the VSU coordinator"

12. How would you suggest that the SPD/VSU could increase awareness of programs and initiatives to its community partners? To the community?
R03 recommended, "attending community events." R05 recommended, "We would love to have a representative from SPD and of VSU come to our mission and present to our staff." R08 noted, "I believe they are doing an excellent job of communication and awareness in the community. They also serve on various boards in the community and encourage Officers to participate in community activities." R09 noted, "I love the town hall gatherings! Maybe a mailer/flyer to city residents." R10 noted, "Some type of community platform such as social media and the Michigan Banner, for example." R01, R02, R04, R06, and R07 were all blank.

13. Please name initiatives or programs that were developed by the SPD/VSU in the past few years.
R03 noted, "don't like how this question worded seems like a quiz." R08 wrote, "Front Porch Roll Call , SLIVE, Families Against Narcotics, COPS Community Oriented Police Strategies"
R09 wrote, "Hope not Handcuffs  Town Hall  Coffee with a Cop  Advocacy K9". R10 noted, "The Substance Abuse program that is initiated for individuals who overdose (can't remember the name off hand)." These were the only respondents for the questions; all others were blank.

14. What do you feel are the most effective services that the SPD VSU provides to victims? To the community?
R03 wrote the need for "immediate resources." R05 recommended, "Getting the victims out of difficult situations and referring them to agencies for help." R08 wrote the most detailed response with, "The VSU staff care about the community they work in and have a passion to help them on their road to recovery. They provide excellent attention to their victim assigned cases. In the past the Officers were not able to meet the victims' needs, due to low staff and large caseloads. With VSU they are able to assist victims and help connect them to the Officers to get the best services with their case. They also offer training to all the sworn officers about victimization, trauma to victims, strangulation, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and other topics related to victimization. They are working with numerous agencies in the community that can assist victims and educating the sworn staff about what services are available to share with the victims at the time of an arrest of the suspect. They are showing the community that the SPD cares about victims to the point of having an excellent national program that offers the best services available." R09 recommended, "Community engagement (as an answer to both). Being IN the community, promoting services, collaboration, assistance and goodwill." R10 noted, "The services which are initiated in person, that are partnered with community organizations."

15. Please indicate what the following divisions or departments within the SPD can do to better serve victims of crime (patrol, investigation, administration, professional/support staff):
R03 wrote, "patrol officers are the face of the SPD in the community, they should be supported by the administration and city government. Treat the patrol officers with the highest respect and pay them accordingly." R08 wrote, "All need to be victim centered and look at what the victims need. They should be working closely with the VSU to assist the victims and help them through the process of court and personal healing." R09 recommended: "patrol: believe victims and take accurate reports; investigation: believe victims, learn and utilize empathy, work with other professionals in order to help victims, FOLLOW THROUGH ON YOUR CASES; administration: practice what you preach, be an effective example for your staff. Let your words also be your actions. professional/support staff: unknown" R10 wrote, "Universal answer: Building community rapport and relationships." The rest of the answers were blank.

16. Is there anything else that you would like to share about the SPD VSU?
R03 wrote "no". R05 wrote, "We appreciate your hard work and dedication to keeping our city safe." R08 noted, "They are doing an excellent job with very few resources. This program should be funded by the City of Saginaw and not grant funds only. With more financial support they could serve more victims in our community and in turn make Saginaw a safer place to live." R09 wrote, "no" and R10 wrote, "Not at the moment."

Repeat Victim Feedback
From March 1 to August 15, 2021, there were 63 contacts made with victims. Of that, 21 (33.3%) were repeat victims. The follow analysis looks at better understanding repeat victims and their feedback for the Victim Services Unit. R01 corresponds to the first victim that completed the telephone survey in March up to R21 which was the last respondent for this data set. Two student workers completed the phone interviews. A response might fit two or more themes and could be separated as needed to fit the theme.

1. How were you treated during your interaction with the Victim Services Unit? These are the following themes:

**Friendly/respectful (n=11)**
R01 said "I was treated friendly and respectful, to the point that I could tell someone cared." R03 explained, "I was treated kindly when speaking with the VSU." R07 explained, "Good. The advocate was very kind and wonderful. They checked in which was nice, but I did not meet with them. I am doing this on my own, I went to school to become a domestic violence advocate."
R09 "Pretty well, they met all of the expectations that I had. The Victim Services Unit was perfect in the way that they made me feel that what happened wouldn't happen again and made sure that I had no lasting trauma." R11 explained, "Good" R12 said, "Pretty fairly, well I'm not sure because I was treated pretty crappy by the police officers until I opened my mouth and said something." R13 said, "Compassionately." R16 said, "I was treated pretty good. No complaints other than the fact that I had no access to paperwork for court. The only reason I found out about court dates and stuff was because I found it out myself." R17 noted, "I could tell they cared and they made me feel comfortable. They treated me very well." R18 said, "Awesome" R21 said, "It was good. they are great people. we talked about a bunch of things like life."

**Helped/supported (n=7)**
R02 said, "I think there is a new lady working there now, but she did fine. Like I told her, I just wanted him to leave I don't need any more problems with him" R05 explained, "Treated very well, made sure she had resources and reached out to her with court info and kept in the loop." R06 said, "They helped her out even though she doesn't really associate herself with wanting to work with the PD" R08 said, "Very well, they helped me out." R15 "I am getting more information now than I have in a while. But there is some type of disconnect. It took too long and I don't know why they are helping more than the officer and detective" R19 said, "They were very helpful. I am not from here and Brittany walked be through everything and gave me the numbers of everyone I needed to contact." R20 said, "Supported. I haven't talked to anyone from the police in so long, I am just tired of the issues with my neighbor. I told them that I would call back when I was able to keep a long log of issues."

**Negative (n=3)**
R04 explained, "More like with pictures that the police took, it was more shit on us. Because it took so long for the police to get there, the suspect got away. Nothing happened to the suspect, cost victim tons of money to get everything fixed." R10 said, "I wasn't getting any help. I got more help from the Underground Railroad until I had a different prosecutor with a different new case." R14 said, "I had no problem. There were some good police officers that helped out but there is also bad ones. Just like any other workplace, there are good and bad and you can't change that. The younger officers I feel like they just become a cop to get back at people in their community. The older cops are really good and do the right things because they have more experience. But other than that the police officers just do their job."
2. How can the Saginaw Police Department Victim Services Unit better serve you?

Suggestions (n=13)
R02 noted, "make sure the police close my case, I don't need him going to jail. just to leave my house"
R03 noted, "It would be helpful if they could find a shelter available for me." R04 said, "Do there job; if they have to come out themselves to see the destruction themselves. Seemed like phone tag with VSU, never once looked at house damages/car damages." R08 noted, "Move faster, they haven't moved very fast on the case." R10 noted, "Better communication. When the cases are going to court or when there is a hearing or trial victims do not know what is going on. We are left in the blind side and it is frustrating when we need information about" R11 said, "Follow up more often" R12 noted, "Have police officers that are more compassionate and have more common sense speak with the victims." R13 noted, "Well for the police, I wish they were more tough on habitual people." R14 noted, "The younger officers need more experience and need to become cops for the right reasons and not the wrong reasons. The police do their job because they want to, the prosecutors do not. The prosecutors just get their money and believe anything that someone tells them. I had a PPO issued on the suspect but she lied and the PPO got denied. As of lately the suspect has left me alone and I haven't had any issues. The only issues I had was back in the day but I have put that behind me now." R15 noted, "Do what you need to do when I call for help. Don't make someone else follow up with me later on" R16 noted, "Have more resources for contacting people. I was told I could get restitution but I did not because I was unsure of who to contact and didn't receive any sort of that information." R19 asked about follow through with, "I don't know what else the VSU could do but I would like to know if the officer actually told the jail staff that the suspect does have a severe medical issue. I am the victim, but I still don't want her to become ill because the officer didn't tell anyone." R20 notes issues with a roommate, "I just feel that something needs to be done with this guy. I can't keep paying for him to keep damaging my stuff…"

Cared/Satisfied/Nothing (n=8)
R01 wrote, "There is nothing more the VSU could do. It was nice to finally feel like someone cared about me." R05 noted, "Doesn't think there is anything they can do differently" R06 said "nothing" R07 similarly noted, "Nothing, I have not really dealt with the Victim Services Unit or met with anyone from there or gone into the department." R09 was satisfied, noting, "They did a great job, I have no complaints or suggestions to better serve me." R17 noted, "I don't really know how to answer this. They did a good job and made me happy." R18 said, "Nothing, they did a great job" R21 noted, "nothing, they are doing what they need to do..."

3. Recently, the Victim Services Unit helped you with a call for service. What was the crime that prompted the interaction? How can the Saginaw Police Department Victim Services Unit better serve you?

This answer breaks down as follows: there were 11 instances of domestic violence/family violence, 5 assaults, 3 destruction of property, 1 PPO violation, 1 stalking/harassment, 1 home invasion, and 1 child runaway.

4. Are you a repeat victim of the crime that brought you in contact with the Saginaw Police Department?

100% of the respondents answered Yes to this. This allows for separation of repeat and non-repeat victims.
5. Are you happy with the services that the Victim Services Unit helped you with? Please explain.

**Yes (n=16)**
R01 wrote, "Yes I am happy with the services that were provided to me through the VSU. I have a better understanding now of why the suspect has not been arrested and how I can try to protect myself." R02 noted, "I didn't need anything from them. So I guess" R03 wrote, "Yes because the advocate gave me information on PPO's that was beneficial." R05 noted, "Yes [no other comments]". R06, R07, R11, R17, R18 and R21 replied just "yes". R09 noted, "Yes I am very happy. I know that if I need anything I know where to go." R10 noted, "Yes, I am happy with the services provided." R13 noted, "Yes. They helped me with Underground Railroad, getting into programs and getting a therapist." R15 noted, "with them, yes." R19 noted, "Yes. Due to my daughter's mental health issues she becomes violent a lot. I try to handle things on my own but I couldn't this time. I have tried to get help in the past before we were in Michigan. I feel hopeful about the resources the VSU gave me, like it could work this time." R20 noted, "Yes. She gave me a to do list that could help me press charges."

**No (n=5)**
R04 wrote, "No, victim said there was no justice and is angry that the suspect to the crime was not caught." R07 noted, "I have not used any service because I am going through the process on my own and working on my own." R08 explained, "No services were really provided to me." R12 noted, "Honestly no, because the way they went about things. Things should or could have been done better." R14 explained, "I don't really remember what services were provided. I just know that the prosecuting attorney believed the suspect because she lied on my son and he took the plea and it cost me a lot of money." R16: "Not really. I feel like the suspect got nothing. He didn't have to pay any fines or get any jail time. I feel like justice was not served"

6. Did you utilize the services offered for past victimizations? Why or why not?

**Yes (n=6)**
R04 noted, "Claimed that even with services offered, suspect still came and returned to the victim's house." R07 noted, "I am utilizing Underground Railroad but not from a suggestion from Victim Services Unit." R10 said, "Yes, it is helpful when you have multiple cases and are able to use past services to help with current charges. I stay in contact with Underground Railroad and they tell me about counseling, where to go if I need a place to stay safe." R13 noted, "Yes. The services helped ease some of my stress." R15 noted, "yes, but they can only help so much." R18 noted, "Yes" without elaborating.

**No (n=10)**
R02 noted, "No. I can take care of my business" R03 noted, "n/a". R04 noted "no" without any additional comments. R05 wrote just "no". R06 noted "n/a". R08 noted, "None were really provided so no." R09 said, "No, there was no reason but I know I would be happy if I did use the services because they seemed very helpful." R11 said just "no". R12 said, "Not really, nothing was offered to me besides phone numbers." R17 noted, "I have not, I may possibly in the future. The lady I spoke with gave me quite a lot of services I could use. I just am unsure if I really want to."

**Neutral (n=3)**
R01 was blank. R14 noted, "I don't really remember." R16 noted, "Not really, I don't remember any of the other services that were provided or if there even was any."
7. What is your age?
There were 21 responses. The lowest age was 19. The highest age was 59. The range was 40. The mean was 34.62. The median was 32. The mode was 24.

8. What is your gender?
There were 21 respondents. Eighteen (85.7%) were female. Three (14.3%) were male.

9. What is your race?
There were 21 respondents. Eleven (52.4%) were African American. Ten (47.6%) were White.

VSU staff and student feedback
There were 98 responses covering 3/5/’21 to 8/18/’21. The follow are selected quotes that exemplify the theme.

1. What problems did you encounter today/this week?
   **Contact Issues**
   There were many issues in trying to contact victims such as the phone number being out of order, phone numbers changed, hanging up, advocates not being able to reach victims. For example, "One victim was deaf so I was unable to reach them on the phone", "Out of the 10 victims I attempted to contact only one answered", "I attempted to contact 12 victims today…4 of them have not spoken to an advocate yet." and "Her phone number is no longer working, so I had to mail a letter for a second time." Another noted, "I noticed that a lot of domestic violence cases change their phone number or their phone number is no longer in service." With some there was a "lack of participation and those that did engage were rude and had a misperception of the reality of law enforcement and the capabilities of the SPD" Other issues include: 'victims not remembering they were victims' and 'half the survey would be completed then hung up'.

   **Caseload**
   Another theme was a large case load with the VSU. "This weeks case load was quite high compared to what it has been." and "With the caseload rising, it has been slightly challenging trying to make contact with the victims of each case in a timely manner while also trying to complete all of the other tasks I have throughout the week." Some were 'not victims within SPD jurisdiction'. Another noted they 'need more time to call all the victims' Further, "The number of case assignments has been increasing each week. There is still a high number of cases that are not too time consuming, but the number of time consuming cases is also beginning to increase. This causes a delay in initial contacts."

   **Referral Challenges**
   Another theme was referral challenges. One noted, "The only problem I encountered this week was in dealing with a victim who was hesitant to get a referral for programs" and "Having to explain to a victim that there is not much that can be done in their situation. Doing the best we can and hoping for a positive outcome. But harassment cases are difficult because there are not many resources to assist and the prosecutors doesn't usually issue charges in these situations unless it is severe." Another noted, "I had one victim who was difficult to work with due to them having no transportation and needing to come down to SPD, but that was the only problem." Further, "I felt like I hit a roadblock when it came to resources available to them. I feel like Saginaw does not have a ton of services available to trafficking victims."
2. What barriers to service did you see?

**Referral Challenges**
There was a theme of referral challenges, such as: "victims say, "I will handle it myself" or "this happens are the time, I don't need any help" as well as "Through the one survey I did I found that victims feel lost if this is a first time occurrence. There are many hoops to jump through and it can get confusing" Another noted, "some victims wanted results that were not something the VSU could provide, nor the SPD. For example, they want the police to drive over to the suspects house and arrest them. SPD does not have the manpower to do that. The victim was not understanding of this." Similarly, "1. Lack of support from the criminal justice and legal/court systems.  2. Victim not answering the phone and/or having a full mailbox so a message can't be left.  3. Detectives un-assigning themselves from cases without an explanation in the system. The victims and VSU are left without reason." There were also issues with "Location barriers, transportation barriers, timing issues (victim needed custody exchange adjustments within 24 hours)" There can be time barriers: "This week, the only barrier to service I saw was when the agencies that offer resources/therapy to victims, are booked out for far periods of time. This in turn leaves a time lapse between when the crime took place and when they can finally talk with someone through therapy." Further, "victims not wanting to talk about a "private matter." Lastly, "victims not making contact after an unable to contact letter is mailed out."

**Contact Issues**
There were contact issues. "The biggest barrier to service that I see is being able to get in touch with victims", "unable to reach any victims", "not having a working phone number", "reluctant to talk about their experience with me even when I assured them that the conversation would remain private", 'missing and incomplete phone numbers and bad addresses', and "they do not return a call to the VSU.", as well as, "I found that some victims do not even have voicemail boxes set up. This is probably frustrating to advocates because they are unable to leave a message and that leads to the victims not being contacted." Another noted, "Tomorrow may be different, I will try to call again". Another point made: "Some cases from 2017-2020 I was not able to do anything with because the advocate was not able to make contact with them." There was an age difference noted: "I have noticed that it is difficult to contact the older repeat victims. For each separate case involving the same victim, there is a different phone number." Covid accommodations had to be made: "COVID restrictions at the courthouse - victims have to schedule times to drop off PPO paperwork and it is not the most user friendly."

**Large caseloads and Caseload Issues**
Another theme was large caseloads to handle: "Due to the case intensive cases I dealt with this week requiring more time than usual, I was not able to complete follow up with several victims" Another noted, "The only barrier I ran into this week was when a victim came into SPD to give a report and calls were backed up so the victim had to wait quite some time for an officer." and "victims from two weeks ago have yet to be contacted." Further, "A barrier I saw today was that there was a case from last year that still does not have any notes or services listed in their file. This is interesting because normally I see notes and services or just one or another, never both of them not listed" Lastly, "I found that some of the victims from my list have not even been put in the system."

3. How are the follow-ups going? Explain.

**Contact Challenges**
There have been some challenges in contacting victims: 'victims not answering because of the phone number', 'phone no longer in service', 'slow' [to get contact made], 'goes to voicemail and hang ups', 'no one answered', 'victims not wanting to talk', and 'contact is "hit or miss" at times'. Another noted, "We are having to send out more and more letters to victims because they are not answering their phones, returning messages, not providing officers with correct phone numbers or their numbers are no longer in service." Also noted was, "Many victims just want to be rid of the case and don't have a lot of interest once they have acquired the basic info they need to know." Another issue: "Victims from 2017-2019 really don't remember their interactions and some just do not want to do the survey because they feel like their information wouldn't be helpful." Further, "The one struggle I've had this week was dealing with victims who maybe need shelter, but want to pick and choose which shelter they would prefer. I feel like many times, I want to help them more than they want to help themselves." Also noted, "Today I did one survey but the victim only gave few short responses no matter how I worded the questions and asked for more information. 3/4 questions I asked they answered with one word." Further, "some...needed a little more emotional support than normal, so the calls lasted quite a bit longer." Lastly, "survey it was very one worded and I could barely understand the victim."

**Contact-Good**

There was also a theme of good contact being made: 'Going well', "Follow-ups are going fine when the victim has interest in speaking with me.", "Follow-ups are going well. I have been making contact with most victims on the first attempt and the interactions have gone great.", "some are extremely appreciative to hear from me." and "Some victims are thankful to hear from me and some want nothing to do with me." Further, patterns were observed at times: "I did notice that more males answer after 2 pm. Most women that I have attempted to contact have answered the phone before 1 pm," and "It was nice to finally get a survey done and more and more people are answering the phones. I am not sure if it is because it is Friday or if it was because I called before noon." [later the student workers said there wasn't a pattern for successful contact, but the process is random]. Further, "I am getting used to the system and getting used to the victims not answering the phone. I'm glad that I spoke to one victim as that gives me hope that I will be able to make more follow-up calls and get some completed surveys soon." Also, "I was able to send an email to one victim for them to fill out on their own time." Further, "I was able to make contact with one victim and she preferred the survey link to be texted to her." contact can fluctuate: "we are having more people contact the VSU randomly." Lastly, "victim specifically told me who her advocate was and stated that she was wonderful."

**Discrepancies/Services/Caseloads**

Another theme was discrepancies and issues with service. For example, "I notice many victims giving different information than what they gave on the police report. Many will say nothing happened, when they obviously reported that something did happen." Also, "I am having one problem of victims not knowing that they are a victim of a crime, I don't know if that means a victim's family member is answering the phone or they just think they are not a victim." Further, "Some victims from two weeks ago have not had initial contact with VSU so I still cannot try to contact them." Also, "Some victims are upset when charges either do or don't get issued." Another noted, "Cases are becoming more time consuming...and case load is also rising."

4. What lessons have you learned this week from working at the VSU?

**Learning**
With this question, staff and student workers got to share what they learned from the project. For example, "I can try to explain to them why a suspect isn't just arrested simply because they file a report on them. Many victims think that will automatically get them arrested..." Another noted, "This week I learned that the schools can sometimes call the parent when a 'Handle With Care' has been sent to them." Another noted, "important it is not to take my work home with me to avoid burnout." Some like to share their story and for others: 'they may not want to share their story or don’t remember' Try to help everyone, but remember that, "That you cannot help every victim, some just do not want the help..." Another noted, "This week I learned how important it is to prioritize the tasks that I have to complete..." Workers must keep informed of the situation and one notes: "the cases where the victim feels like there is no danger at all, are the ones that are in fact in danger." Another noted, "I learned that a lot of the same names keep coming up when looking at cases..." Research and service both confirm DV is an issue: "I also learned that domestic and/or family violence is common in Saginaw." There is a need for team work: "I've learned that I can rely heavily on my Unit Coordinator to make sure things run smoothly inside of the VSU" The team needs to know about and work together: 'I am learning a lot about officers' Some victims have positive memories with the VSU: 'victims from years ago remember their interactions with VSU; especially before 2019' There are resources available: 'lots of resources if you Google SPD' The job can be challenging: 'VSU is overworked and needs resources' Seeing someone can affect interactions: "Having face-to-face interaction with a victim increases the likelihood that VSU personnel will have successful phone follow up." Victims can reach VSU many ways: "Also I learned that victims are able to walk into the police department and work directly with the VSU." There is a need for compassion: "I learned that sometimes, all these victims need is to feel like someone cares." Issues can be complicated with no easy solution: "I have found that if there is domestic violence between family members, typically victims do not want to press charges." Teamwork is vital: "This week I learned just how important it is to work as a team when needed." Further, 'warm weather brings more violence and DV cases'.

**Communication Issues**

The last theme is communication issues. For example, 'phone out of service, don't pick up, change numbers (especially domestic violence cases), or don't remember victimization'. Another noted, 'hard to reach them once they have services' and 'victims have short answers with no detail no matter how much I try to discretely pull it out of them.' Persistence is needed: "if they do not answer the first time, I learned that not all hope is lost for the opportunity to gain a survey and I can call them at a later time." Another noted, "I learned that repeat victims either change their number or don't answer random people calling them. The current victims/past 90 days victims are a little easier to get a hold of." Further, "Patience is key and that the public needs to be widely educated on the reality of the SPD and their resources." Another noted, "A simple phone call and allowing a victim to talk and feel supported can alter the course for that victim..." We need to be careful with assumptions (not everyone can read): "I had one adult victim say to me this week that they are unable to read...." Some victims/families want immediate results and that is a challenge: "victims and their families have an unrealistic timeframe" Victims are seen at trying times: "This week I learned how important it is to stay calm when the victim is in crisis. I learned that my behavior as an advocate can really help them to either calm down themselves, or could easily get them more worked up." There can be age differences in responses: "The younger victim seemed super uninterested and preoccupied and the older of the two seemed more interested" Another noted: "This week we were able to go out and participate in a community event through the City. I think it's important that we do that when we can because we are able to
show our faces to the community so they know who we are." Patience is needed: "[victim] took some of the frustration out on me. I knew she was experiencing many different emotions and I reminded myself of that and not to take anything she was saying personal." Another noted: "I learned that it can be difficult for advocates to reach the victim if the victim and suspect live together." Teamwork is needed: "This week I realized the importance on communicating with the detectives assigned to the cases."

**Conclusions**

From the Officer Survey Feedback, we can make many conclusions. We can see that the systemic issue of repeat victimization (especially in domestic violence (DV) cases) and feel helpless when the victims don’t want that for themselves. They feel like repeat victims feel failed by several systems and have no other choice but to stay. We also learned that officers are frustrated with the fact that the prosecutor’s office will not prosecute a DV case if the victim is not willing to cooperate. Officers feel that the suspect should be held accountable. We learned that officers with victims utilized the services provided to them by the officer and VSU staff. It is evident that there is a lack of department resources (number of officers and time on-scene) is causing a perceived rift between victims and officers because officers feel they are not able to spend an acceptable amount of time with each victim. Officers appreciate VSU staff for filling in the gaps. Officers and victims share many of the same negative perceptions of the court system. Officers feel like they are making an impact with victims, but there are so many other factors that create barriers. Repeat victimization is one of the most discouraging aspects of the job for law enforcement. Officers want more interaction between VSU and patrol. Further, the data show the department needs more officers. Sworn staff seem to appreciate the work the VSU does. In all of this information, we do not know how to give the officers what they need (more officers and better equipment) with lack of funding and resources.

This information can be used to better serve victims and the VSU in many ways. The VSU can try to provide more education to victims to pull them away from the systemic violence and if not, place more emphasis on safety planning for when victims choose to stay. VSU knows for certain that officers want more time on-scene with victims. The VSU will follow up with officers after contact is made with the victim so officers know the impact (positive) they had on the victim. VSU can attempt to work with the courts to help them make a better connection to victims. Officers provided a lot of information on what is needed to better support them in the field. The VSU can use this to generate ideas, programs and resources. The VSU will increase their communication with road patrol.

There are trainings that logically flow from these findings. There will be training related to why victim’s remain in domestic violence relationships/situations. Future training will also cover generational violence/crime. There will be training on 'how officers can assist with safety planning when a victim chooses to stay'. There will be training on what the VSU does. Relations with officers be maintained/fostered with ideas such as, VSU staff can provide more training opportunities to officers so they feel supported when dealing with repeat victims and have a better understanding as to why victims stay. Further, VSU will focus on providing more victim feedback to officers. Further, VSU will involve the sworn staff in more community activities

From the Community Partners Survey Feedback results, we know a few things. We know that many community agencies do not understand what the VSU does or how the staff operates. We know that transportation and victim follow through is a gap that affects most repeat victims. We know that community partners see an improvement from officer’s on-scene. We know that
partners see and appreciate the improved communication between SPD and their agency. We know the updates in the SPD newsletter and social media pages reaches majority of our community partners. We need more information on how to fix the staffing issue. We need more information on how community partners recognize the need to have more SPD officers and VSU staff.

This information can be used to better serve victims in a couple of ways. The VSU can use this information to create a better understanding of roles and duties between the VSU and community partner agencies. The VSU needs to promote their services more to the community – educate the community. There is a need to develop some type of mailer/flyer to send out to city residents. The information can be used to inform officers/policies/training in a few ways. First, have VSU staff tour facilities of new community partners/services. Second, VSU should put together a PPT (easiest to disseminate to all community service agencies) that showcases what the VSU does and how. Third, encourage officers to keep making referrals on-scene and have an understanding of what community services are available.

From the VSU/Student Worker Feedback we have conclusions: victim Advocates are struggling with large caseloads, they are unable to contact victims in a timely manner and spend as much time with each victim and on each case as they'd like to. To better serve victims the VSU could add another staff member or make the part-time position a full time position. Several restrictions put into place due to COVID were not user friendly - hopefully many of these service providers will now have that worked out or will address that concern. The VSU could possibly evaluate whether or not to halt taking on certain victimizations in order to reduce advocates caseloads. Certain individuals answer the phone more frequently during certain time frames - the VSU can try to put this theory into practice. More face-to-face interactions with victims could be productive. This information can be used to better train officers: make sure officers are handing out the VSU brochure to each victim on-scene, this will help the victim connect to the VSU or other services prior to the VSU reaching out.

From victim feedback surveys, we know victims are not being notified by the courts with hearing date information - the VSU can assist with that. Victims may not have a clear understanding of the role of the VSU staff. We know the majority of our repeat victims are victims of domestic violence. More victims choose to not use the services than to use them. Victims feel a lot of injustice due to the court system. Those that work with the VSU find it supportive and the resources beneficial, even though the victim may not use the service suggested. The VSU could use more staff, like patrol, so advocates don't feel rushed or are struggling with a large case load. From the surveys, there are still questions left unanswered: Why victims are not using the services provided to them?, How can this information be used to better understand/serve victims? The VSU can develop a stronger connection to the Victim Witness Program at the Prosecutors office to ensure hearing information is being sent to victims. Increase community education on what the VSU is and is not. Continue to develop MOU's with community service agencies to enhance the referral process. Increase the amount of follow up contact when applicable and continue to encourage victims to follow up with the VSU whenever they'd like to. This information can be used to better train officers too by increasing the amount of empathy and trauma. There can be informed training for sworn staff, increase domestic violence training. There can be training to educate officers on why DV victims choose to stay sometimes. Officers can be encouraged to continue to engage with victims when time is available.
The partnership between SVSU and SPD took hold with the ELERV grant. The VSU has moved forward in many aspects to better serve victims and train officers to the needs of the victims. It is essential for SVSU and SPD to partner in coming years to secure grants and funding where possible. It is important that SVSU and SPD continue to utilize students (such as internships and grants) to help with the workload to better serve the victims and the overall community.
REFERENCES


Appendix

Project Goals and Timeline

**Goal 1**
To promote and expand data-collection and analysis related to victims and law enforcement-based victim services.

***Hire 2 workers to follow cases, assist with data collection and data analysis. The job posting will be announced to SVSU students for this paid research opportunity. This work will be done remotely, except training and possibly some face to face interactions, as needed. Data will be deidentified and anonymous. Anonymous surveys will be sent to partnering agencies to identify gaps in service with victims, repeat victims, and victim type. The analysis will be quantitative (averages, highs/lows, etc.) and qualitative (looking for themes in the data). Student workers can meet with Victim Services Unit Coordinator to discuss any new trends or possible data collection needs. Workers will focus on gathering information and understanding repeat victims. Open, honest victim feedback is going to be crucial for the VSU. This will tailor our thinking for how to move forward and update/change/amend our current programming. Workers can attend SPD patrol roll calls to engage with officers, to determine what they see on-scene as victim needs and what officers need to better assist victims on-scene. Questions to consider:
How do officers feel about working with repeat victims? Is this discouraging or just an opportunity for them to make a positive impact on a victim? Do officers want more training in why they see so many repeat victims, especially since majority are domestic violence related? Do they see this as a reflection of ineffective VSU work? This will aid in the process evaluation that is focused on gaps ('what is being done?' "by whom?"). Student workers will enter data and electronic surveys will also be used to gather data. These workers will be interviewed and vetted by SVSU and SPD and must pass a background check. A deliverable for this goal would be to better understand repeat victims – the challenges they face – what circumstances are allowing them to be re-victimized – and why the services provided to them are not working and 2. If they did or did not utilize the services offered, why did they chose not to? Is there something VSU could have done better to assist or did the services not work? SVSU students will provide a third party in which is not a SPD rep and can be provided anonymous and honest feedback from victims.
It would be ideal if we would figure out if community agencies are getting more clients due to the VSU making more referrals to these organizations.
Officer Survey
Victim Survey Additions:
Are you a repeat victim of the crime that brought you in contact with the Saginaw Police Department's VSU?
Are you happy with the services that VSU helped you with?
Did you utilize the services offered? Why or why not?

**Goal 2**
To improve LEV program planning and implementation

***Process evaluation, feedback from VSU workers.
Focus on understanding victim follow-up at various stages of involvement with VSU. Feedback with VSU, VSU support and partners will focus on what is being implemented?, what works?, and what doesn't work? Each worker will be keeping a log of challenges and gaps in service from a weekly perspective. All information will be anonymous and combined.
Other process evaluation questions to focus on: What problems were encountered with implemented VSU services? Have all goals been met this past year? How? What new objectives for this quarter/year remain? What lessons were learned along the way? Other questions to consider: Are VSU personnel in need of new or additional resources to do their job better? Are there certain areas within the SPD that seem to create a gap of service for victims – do things get hindered in certain areas? Data will be collected from SVSU students asking these questions and there will surveys for VSU staff to take. Anonymity will encourage the staff to be very honest. The unit cannot grow if people are not honest about what is not working. Once we get this evaluation process going during the JRSA grant period, VSU can implement research findings into the VSU as a bi-yearly or yearly evaluation moving forward.

VSU logs: full-time and part-time VSU-related persons, including student workers will discuss challenges and barriers as they happen. This can be a daily or weekly report of challenges noted by victims, such as no cell phones, trouble getting to services from lack of transportation, etc. A survey link will allow information to be gathered quickly.

VSU feedback

Goal 3
To contribute to the evidence base for law enforcement-based victim services.

***Process evaluation and trend analysis; focus on repeat victimization and victim typology.
Data analysis with repeat victimization and special populations will add to the understanding in an evidence-based manner. There will be a focus on follow-up with victims to ensure their needs are met and any gaps in service are identified. See notes in Goals 1 and 2. The information gathered will not only be used to amend/create better programming for the VSU – but can be used to share with other LE agencies that are want to develop a VSU program and need a better understanding on how to navigate certain populations. This will become a staple within the VSU after this funding ends. But JRSA funding will be used to get the ball rolling and inform VSU on how to obtain this information, analyze and sustain.

Goal 4
To establish and strengthen the relationships between LEV grantees and researchers.

**Monthly virtual meetings to discuss challenges and progress and review findings/reports to date. This relationship goes back years to the Project Safe Neighborhood grant (final report was completed in October of 2016 by SVSU researchers), the ELERV Project (2016-2019 with SVSU researchers), and the OVC 15600 Victim Services Tracking grant. The practitioners and researchers will be collaborating frequently to define research questions, objective, review findings, and formulate recommendations. An open communication with emails and phone calls will keep the researcher and VSU in constant contact. Findings will be disseminated to JRSA, OVC, and SPD, and partners at the state and local levels as the agencies see fit. At least two 30 minute bi-weekly telephone conferences will be made each month as this grant is shorter and needs to cover a lot of ground in 6 months. VSU personnel will have weekly or biweekly contact with the SVSU students in regards to feedback survey results. In additional to meetings, students are to either present SVSU or VSU with suggestions to enhance our services, from a research standpoint. After analyzing the data, if SVSU is seeing a theme and knows of prior research or work done to alleviate the issue or amend current operations that would be a great thing to discuss. Students will work at SPD as needed to complete the tasks.

Time Line
All operations will be 3/1 to 9/1/2021
Upon hearing of results, SVSU will work with SPD on job posting and start the interviewing and background checks for the two prospective workers.

Two Virtual Meetings: April and August
- April: introduce projects and partners
- August: share project results and lessons learned

Officer Feedback Survey (emailed 4/1 and data collection stops 4/15)
Community Partner Survey (emailed 6/1 and data collection stops 6/15)
Focus is the final report due 9/1/2021

Surveys

**Officer Feedback Survey**
1. What barriers do you see in serving victims and responding to victims?
2. What challenges do you see with repeat victims or calls to the same address?
3. Do you feel you are making an impact on helping victims?
4. Do you see the VSU as having a positive impact on victims?
5. What do you find rewarding when responding to victims?
6. What do you find discouraging when responding to victims?
7. What do you find discouraging when responding to victims?
8. What else is needed on the scene to support officers?
9. What else is needed to support repeat victims?
10. What additional tools, skills, partnerships, etc. would help you to better serve victims?
11. What are some things the department could do to help you serve victims more efficiently and more thoroughly?
12. If your mother, father, brother, sister, or spouse were the victim of violent crime, what level of trauma-informed service and support would you feel they likely would receive from the following...(scale from 0 (worst) to 10 (best))
13. What should be done or could be done to enhance service levels in patrol?
14. What should be done or could be done to enhance service levels in investigations?
15. What should be done or could be done to enhance service levels in victim services?
16. Do you feel that trauma-informed victim response and support is a critical role of your responsibilities?
17. Do you feel that trauma-informed victim response and support is an important element to maintaining public trust and support of the SPD, especially in challenging environments?
18. If you were in an administrative position with wide-ranging decision-making capabilities, what action or actions would you take to improve delivery of services to victims?
19. What else is on your mind?

**Community Partner Feedback Survey**
1. Are you getting more victim referrals from the Saginaw Police Department Victim Services Unit (since 2016)?
2. How many of your new clients seeking services would you estimate are referred by the SPD VSU each month?
3. What could the SPD/VSU do to help increase the number of persons who would take advantage of the services provided by your agency/organization?
4. What programs/policies are being implemented to target victims?
5. What programs/policies that target victims seem to work?
6. What programs/policies that target victims do NOT seem to work?
7. What gaps do you see in service to repeat victims?
8. Do you see any gaps in services to victims that the SPD/VSU should work toward addressing? Please describe those gaps in services and your thoughts about how an enhanced SPD/VSU relationship could help to overcome those gaps.
9. Do you feel that you/your organization have a good working relationship with the SPD VSU? Explain why or why not.
10. Do you feel that you have a good amount of knowledge regarding programs and initiatives that have been developed by the SPD or VSU?
11. Where do you get information regarding programs/initiatives that have been or are in the process of being implemented by the SPD or VSU?
12. How would you suggest that the SPD/VSU could increase awareness of programs and initiatives to its community partners? To the community?
13. Please name initiatives or programs that were developed by the SPD/VSU in the past few years.
14. What do you feel are the most effective services that the SPD VSU provides to victims? To the community?
15. Please indicate what the following divisions or departments within the SPD can do to better serve victims of crime (patrol, investigation, administration, professional/support staff):
16. Is there anything else that you would like to share about the SPD VSU?

Repeat Victim Feedback Survey
1. How were you treated during your interaction with the Victim Services Unit?
2. How can the Saginaw Police Department Victim Services Unit better serve you?
3. Recently, the Victim Services Unit helped you with a call for service. What was the crime that prompted the interaction? How can the Saginaw Police Department Victim Services Unit better serve you?
4. Are you a repeat victim of the crime that brought you in contact with the Saginaw Police Department?
5. Are you happy with the services that the Victim Services Unit helped you with? Please explain.
6. Did you utilize the services offered for past victimizations? Why or why not?
7. What is your age?
8. What is your gender?
9. What is your race?

VSU staff and student worker feedback
1. What problems did you encounter today/this week?
2. What barriers to service did you see?
3. How are the follow-ups going? Explain.
4. What lessons have you learned this week from working at the VSU?
Background Saginaw

Saginaw Michigan is located on the eastern side of the lower peninsula of the state. Saginaw is the largest city in Saginaw County, with approximately 50,000 residents (48,323 in 2018) and the 35th most populous city in Michigan according to 2014 United States Census estimates (United States Census Bureau, 2018). In the past half century, Saginaw has experienced financial changes (loss of the automobile industry associated plants) that have influenced the criminogenic risk of the city while decreasing the resources available to address the challenges brought about by those changes. The challenges were compounded with lower property values and less tax revenue collected. The median income for Saginaw residents was $29,582 in 2019. The relationship between crime and concentrated poverty is evident in the criminology literature (see Sampson, 2019). Saginaw’s violent crime rate (per 100,000 residents) was more than five times the national average, four times the Michigan rate, and eight times the rate of the adjacent township. More than one-third (34.5%) of the residents in the City of Saginaw are living below the federal poverty level (United State Census Bureau, 2019). In the mid-seventies, the Saginaw Police Department (SPD) had more than 200 uniformed officers. By the early 2000’s that number had been reduced by half. The force remains at nearly historic lows with 55 uniformed officers (2015-2016). Saginaw has its challenges and saw 42 homicides from 2016-2018. There is a need for funding and technical assistance to better serve victims of crime. Currently SPD has 52 sworn personnel with only 47 able to work full duty. SPD had 26 homicides in 2020.

Sample Month for Reference (November, 2020 stats)
The Victim Services Report for November of 2020 shows that SPD provided service for 156 victims. There were 136 new victims served for the new fiscal year beginning 10/1/2020. For the month of November, racial analysis shows that 91 victims were black (58%), 12 were Hispanic (7.6%), 50 were white (32%), and 3 were other/multiple races (1.9%). Gender analysis for the last month shows that 32% of the victims were male and 67% were female. One person did not report. The modal category for victims with regard to age was 25-59 year olds (62%). This is followed by 18-24 (20.5%), 60+ group (8.9%), 13-17 group (4.4%), and 0-12 (3.2%).

Of the 156 victims for the month of November, 152 were VOCA standard victimizations. The modal category was for domestic/family violence which had 80 cases (52.6%). The next highest category was for stalking/harassment with 15 cases (9.8%) and adult physical assault (also 9.8%). There were 11 cases of vehicular victimization, 7 for burglary, 5 for violation of court (protective) orders, 4 cases of child physical abuse/neglect, 4 cases of child sexual abuse, 3 cases of adult sexual abuse, 3 cases of robbery, and one case each for child pornography, ID theft, kidnaping, survivors of homicide victims, and teen dating victimization.

There were 113 information and referrals. Of that, there were 71 (62.8%) cases for information about the criminal justice process, 68 cases for well-being check, 66 messages left for victim, 56 cases for information about victim rights/notifications, 54 referrals to other victim service programs, 39 referrals to other services/supports/resources, and 4 mental health/substance referrals. There were 38 cases of personal advocacy/accompaniment. These were under the category of personal advocacy. There were 13 cases of emotional support or safety services for crisis intervention. There were 4 cases of individual counseling. There were zero cases of emergency shelter/safe house in November. There were 28 cases of criminal/civil justice system
assistance. There were 16 cases in the notification of criminal justice events area. There were 9 cases of victim impact assistance. There was 1 other emergency/justice-related case. Under "other services", there were 99 actions. Sixty eight were sent 'unable to contact letter', 40 were sent VSU brochure to the victim, and 16 received brochure from LE. There were 10 people that were sent sympathy letter, 9 were sent VSU brochure to family of DOA, 5 sent a survey, and 2 sent a letter of support. In November, there were 213 people receiving Stop Grant-Domestic Violence assistance, 9 receiving Stop Grant-Sexual Assault assistance, and 36 receiving Stop Grant-Stalking assistance.