

A mosaic sculpture of a woman, likely a deity or historical figure, standing in a garden. She is holding a staff with a globe on top. The sculpture is made of small tiles and is set against a background of trees and a house. The image has a purple tint.

"Change will not come if we wait for  
some other person or some other time.  
We are the ones we've been waiting  
for. We are the change that we seek."

- Barack Obama

## Problem Statement

**T**he members of the victim service system have established a mission for Oklahoma Victim Service that by the year 2023 we will provide an atmosphere of safety, security, and stability through working together to interrupt the cycle of interpersonal violence; providing long-term support for victims and their children to heal from trauma; holding offenders accountable; acting as catalysts to create a state and culture free from violence; and empowering survivors to thrive.

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In an effort to move forward toward this mission, members of the victim service system completed the Threshold of Transformation: Strategic Vision for Victim Safety Comprehensive Needs Assessment. The voices were heard, the facts reviewed, and the trends in interpersonal violence incidents and victim services within the geographic boundaries of Oklahoma observed.

## **OBSTACLES**

Despite the numerous “wholesome seeds” which have been planted and the monumental efforts expended by numerous victim service providers, past and present, many obstacles remain before our vision of Oklahoma Victim Service providing safety, security, and stability for all victims will be attained. The needs assessment reveals how victims and members of the victim service system in Oklahoma are encumbered by over a century of systemic “unwholesome seeds” deposited in our store and collective consciousness through the complex and diverse history of our state, including the tribal nations and immigrants who are integral to our way of life. As such, each victim and each victim service provider enter every situation with a predisposition of expectations, reactions, and responses. In short, victims and members of the victim service system are humans and as such, are not perfect.

## **PUBLIC POLICY/JUSTICE**

Sadly, the societal issue of interpersonal violence does not receive adequate public policy attention and is not viewed as a serious, felony-level crime. More often than not, victims are not believed when reporting incidents of interpersonal violence. The victims who are believed rarely receive justice. The victims who survive the violence perpetrated by their abusers are still alive, and as such, the crimes are not homicides, i.e. crimes in which the victim is not expected to participate in prosecution. The victims who seek support are often unable to receive support due to lack of awareness of available assistance and/or jurisdictional confusion and restrictions. If a victim does manage to find support, she is often thrust into another environment dominated by “power and control,” the very environment she is seeking to escape. Through diligence, perseverance, and honest reflection by members of the victim service system, the comprehensive needs assessment brings to light these situations which negatively impact the current victim service system.



## BEST PRACTICE MODELS

The following sections of this report utilize the data gleaned from the comprehensive needs assessment to discuss the “wholesome seeds” which need to be nourished, the “unwholesome seeds” which need to be transformed, and the “indeterminate seeds” which need to be examined further. The outline for this discussion is based upon the following trauma-informed, evidence-based, best-practice, models, each of which will be described in more detail later in the report:

- Center for Disease Control’s Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices
- Praxis International’s Blueprint for Safety
- Office for Victims of Crime’s Achieving Excellence: Model Standards for Serving Victims & Survivors of Crime
- North Carolina’s Enhancing Local Collaboration in the Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault: A Coordinated Community Response/Sexual Assault Response Team Development Toolkit
- Wisconsin’s Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Coordinated Community Response Toolkit 2nd Edition, 2016

The report continues to utilize the socio-ecological and socio-economic models to develop the vision, promise, guiding principles and recommendations for development and implementation of the Vision for Victim Safety Strategic and Implementation Plans. These individual, relationship, organizational, community, and public policy steps will be necessary to move Oklahoma victim services from where they are now to where respondents indicate they want services to be upon completion of the process.

### Planting and Ripening Where do we want to be?

Interviewees and focus group participants were asked to provide five words describing victim services after implementation of the statewide strategic plan. . .

