

Victim-offender dialogue brings together those impacted by crime and those who have committed offenses so they can **talk about what happened** and **make a plan to repair the harm** caused.

Individuals impacted by offenses **get answers** to their questions, find **closure**, and get a say in how their **harm can be repaired**. Those who have committed offenses have the opportunity to **take responsibility** for what they have done, **make amends**, and **move forward** in a positive way.

## About the Center for Dispute Resolution

The Center for Dispute Resolution (CDR) is an organization located in the Department of Communication at Missouri State University.

The CDR supports education, programs, training, and research related to managing conflict. Our community outreach includes the Victim-Offender Dialogue Program, a victim-impact panel program for youth, work in the public schools, Family Court programs, and more.

The CDR's programs are made possible thanks to the volunteer service of University students and community members. Contact us for more information on how you can support this work.

### For More Information

[www.MissouriState.edu/CDR](http://www.MissouriState.edu/CDR)

417-836-8831

[CDR@MissouriState.edu](mailto:CDR@MissouriState.edu)



Missouri State University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/Minority/Female/Veterans/Disability/Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity Employer and Institution.

Planning to Repair Harm:

## Victim-Offender Dialogue



SPONSORED BY:

## The Center for Dispute Resolution

[www.MissouriState.edu/CDR](http://www.MissouriState.edu/CDR)

[CDR@MissouriState.edu](mailto:CDR@MissouriState.edu)

417-836-8831



## Quick Facts

**2006**

*Year the Juvenile Victim-Offender Dialogue Program was established*

**2008**

*Year the Adult Victim-Offender Dialogue Program was established*

**450+**

*Youth and adults referred to victim-offender dialogue.*

**4000+**

*Hours of community service agreed to by youth and adults in the program.*

**60+**

*Community members and Missouri State students who have volunteered as victim-offender dialogue facilitators.*

# About Victim-Offender Dialogue

Victim-offender dialogue (also referred to as victim-offender mediation) is a face-to-face meeting between someone who has committed a crime and the person he or she harmed.

**Voluntary:** When offenders admit to what they did and are prepared to take responsibility for their actions, the Greene County Juvenile Office or Prosecutor's Office may offer them the choice to take part in victim-offender dialogue. Participation for victims is voluntary as well.

**Preparation:** Before parties sit down together, trained volunteer facilitators prepare everyone in advance. Facilitators also guide the face-to-face dialogue so everyone involved feels safe and comfortable talking together about what happened.

**Telling Your Story:** In a victim-offender dialogue, victims have the chance to talk about how the crime impacted them and express their thoughts and feeling about the incident. They often have questions about the offense that only the offender can answer. Offenders also get to tell their story and be heard. Through talking together victims and offenders see each other as real people and

often learn things about the other person they did expect.

**Repairing Harm:** Victim-offender dialogue includes a discussion of the harm that has occurred and how it can be repaired. Victims get a direct say in how offenders are held accountable, and offenders help choose how they make amends. Restitution plans may include monetary payments, community service at locations that are meaningful to victims, or other creative options. The Greene County Juvenile Office or Prosecutor's Office works to ensure offenders fulfill the agreements reached.

**Volunteers:** Victim-offender dialogues are facilitated by community volunteers who are trained and supported by the Center for Dispute Resolution.

**Community Impact:** Programs like this one have been shown to reduce recidivism, save taxpayers money, and increase people's satisfaction with the criminal justice process. Additionally, they help reaffirm adult and youth offenders as part of our community by giving them the opportunity to repair the harm they caused, rather than simply punishing them for it.