

What is a Vela incident and when do you need to add one?

Incidents are records about a survivor's experience of abuse. All survivor services and shelter enrollments must be connected to an incident so that we can connect services with victim experiences of abuse.

The settings you select allow us to categorize abuse for reports and analyze patterns. Incidents have 3 important elements:

- 1) The victimization settings, which categorize the abuse for which the survivor seeks services
- 2) The primary/secondary distinction, which further categorizes the survivor's experience
- 3) The relationship to offender setting, which identifies how the victim is connected to the offender.

Primary vs secondary victims:

Primary Victim: Survivor of any age or gender that identifies as having experienced domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking, human trafficking, or another crime

Secondary Victim: Survivor of any age or gender that has a relationship to the primary victim, is affected by the primary victim's situation, and receives services from your agency.

The distinction between primary and secondary victims of violence classifies survivors who are the direct recipients of abuse as primary victims. Survivors who are affected by the abuse of the primary victim are secondary victims.

CDVSA has one exception to this, which is that children who witness domestic violence or assault are considered primary victims with a VOCA victimization type of child abuse, in addition to their secondary victimization (usually secondary victims of domestic violence, but could be secondary victims of sexual assault or child abuse), because it is a crime to expose children to domestic violence or assault in Alaska.

When multiple members of a family or group are receiving services, select the incident settings for each survivor independently. There is no limit to the number of primary victims or secondary victims within a family or group. You can define a survivor as a secondary victim of abuse whether or not the primary victim also seeks services from your agency.

Relationship to offender:

Determine relationships for secondary victims independently from those of primary victims. Make sure the survivor you are considering is the one you are serving, regardless of whether they are a primary or secondary victim.

Abuse disclosed	Survivor is	Offender is	Victim's relationship to offender is
Child survivor was abused by step parent	Primary Victim (abused child)	Step parent	Other family or household member
Survivor's child was abused by survivor's spouse	Secondary Victim (parent of abused child)	Spouse	Current or former spouse or intimate partner
Survivor is a child who's parent was assaulted by their boyfriend.	Primary victim of child abuse AND secondary victim of DV	Parent's boyfriend	It depends on the child's relationship to their parent's boyfriend. Could be other family or household member, acquaintance, or stranger.

Relationship to offender type definitions (from VAWA):

Current or former spouse or intimate partner: Choose this if the perpetrator is a person with whom the program participant has a child in common OR is a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the program participant as a spouse or partner. Note that this is different from the dating relationship described below.

Other family member or household member: Choose this when the victim is related to the offender by blood, kinship, or a similar relationship. Family is defined to include both traditional and non-traditional family structures, including foster parents, grandparents and other relatives, single parents, gay or lesbian parents, extended family, clans, etc.

Dating relationship: Choose this if the program participant and perpetrator were involved in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature before or at the time of the incident.

Acquaintance: Choose this if the victim knew the offender before the victimization occurred but did not identify the offender as family or as an intimate partner. For example, the victim was a neighbor, employee, co-worker, friend, fellow schoolmate, or student of the offender.

Stranger: Choose this when the victim did not know the offender before the victimization occurred.

Relationship unknown: The relationship to the offender was not known at the time of reporting. The victim may have chosen not to disclose the offender, or the agency did not collect this information.

When to Create a New Incident

- The first time the survivor receives services from your agency
- When an ongoing survivor seeks services, and any of the following are different from the previous incident in Vela:
 - Presenting issue is a different type of abuse
 - The offender is not the same person as in a previous incident
 - The survivor's abuse status (primary or secondary) has changed from the previous incident

Ultimately, you should create a new incident for an ongoing client when the settings in the client's previous incident(s) don't categorize the reason they are currently seeking services. This should not be every time they seek services.

Vela Victimization Settings for CDVSA Programs

Victimization settings are the information that categorizes the survivor's experience of abuse.

- Each combination of settings identifies a specific crime experienced by an adult or child.
- These settings need to be entered consistently at all AK crisis centers for accurate data.
- Although Vela allows you to "mix and match" different combinations of settings, only the settings below enable victimizations to be reported correctly and consistently.
- Survivors can experience multiple crimes. Consider what victimization(s) the survivor is presenting with, i.e. why they are actively seeking services. It may be appropriate to add multiple incidents so you can connect different services with different experiences of the survivor.

Domestic Violence, Child Abuse, and Teen Dating Violence

Field Name	Adult DV	Child DV/abuse	Teen (13-17) Dating Violence
Primary/Secondary	[either]	Primary if survivor is child, secondary if survivor is adult witness	[either]
Victimization	Domestic Violence	Domestic Violence	Teen Dating Violence
DV/SV?	—	—	Domestic Violence
VOCA Victimization	Domestic and/or Family Violence	Child Physical Abuse or Neglect	Teen Dating Victimization

Child exposed to DV

Field Name	Child exposed to DV: add two incidents Note: Try to make sure a service is connected to each incident. You can do this by prorating the first service the survivor receives (e.g. if they receive 1hr of advocacy, add 2 services with 30 min for each incident) or, if they receive more than one service, attach at least one to each incident.	
Primary/Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Victimization	Domestic Violence	Domestic Violence
DV/SV?	—	—
VOCA Victimization	Child Physical Abuse or Neglect	Domestic and/or Family Violence

Human Trafficking: Sex Trafficking, Labor Trafficking

Field Name	Adult or Child Sex Trafficking	Adult or Child Labor Trafficking
Primary/Secondary	[either]	[either]
Victimization	Human Trafficking	Human Trafficking
DV/SV?	—	—
VOCA Victimization	Human Trafficking — Sex	Human Trafficking — Labor

Sexual Assault, Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Field Name	Adult Sexual Assault	Child Sexual Assault	Adult Survivor of Childhood Sexual Assault
Primary/Secondary	[either]	[either]	Primary
Victimization	Sexual Assault	Sexual Assault	Sexual Assault
DV/SV?	—	—	—
VOCA Victimization	Adult Sexual Assault	Child Sexual Abuse/Assault	Adults Sexual Abused/Assaulted as Children

Strangulation

Note: Strangulation usually occurs in the context of DV or SA. Therefore, you should create 2 incidents for survivors who have experienced strangulation: one for the DV or SA abuse associated with it, and one for the strangulation. When providing services, select the incident most closely associated with those services. Strangulation is mapped to Adult Physical Assault in Vela for reports.

Field Name	Adult Victim	Child Victim
Primary/Secondary	[either]	[either]
Victimization	Other	Other
DV/SV?	—	—
VOCA Victimization	Strangulation	Strangulation

Stalking

Field Name	Adult/Child Stalking		
	Adult/Child Stalking Non-Intimate	Adult/Child Stalking w/ Domestic Violence	Adult/Child Stalking w/ Sexual Violence
Primary/Secondary	[either]	[either]	Primary
Victimization	Stalking	Stalking	Stalking
DV/SV?	Not Applicable	Domestic Violence	Sexual Violence
VOCA Victimization	Stalking/Harassment	Stalking/Harassment	Stalking/Harassment

Bullying

Note: VOCA defines bullying as between a child or a group of children and another child. “Bullying” associated with an adult (primary) victim should usually be categorized as stalking/harassment, or might be considered domestic violence if within a DV context. Adults can be secondary victims of bullying if they are seeking services due to a child’s experience of bullying.

Field Name	Adult Victim	Child Victim
Primary/Secondary	[either]	[either]
Victimization	Stalking	Other
DV/SV?	Not Applicable	—
VOCA Victimization	Stalking/Harassment	Bullying (verbal, cyber, or physical)

Additional victimization types

For survivor experiences not included in the above tables, you should generally classify survivors with a **main Victimization of “Other”** and a **VOCA victimization that describes the specific crime**. If the crime occurred in a DV context, consider why the survivor is seeking services and determine whether you need to add an incident for the other crime experienced *in addition to* the main victimization of DV (see number 3 under “tricky examples,” below).

We are required to submit explanations for VOCA victimization types of “other.” Therefore, we ask that check if a survivor’s experience fits into one of the 25+ VOCA victimization categories. If you have examples of crimes that are common among survivors at your organization but that you do not feel fit into a VOCA victimization definition, please contact the research analyst to discuss.

Definitions of main VOCA victimization types for CDVSA:

These definitions are provided by the Federal Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) [Terminology guide](#), with a few minor tweaks due to Alaska State Laws. If you would like to look at the definition for all VOCA victimizations, please reference the guide linked above. This list only contains the most common victimization categories. Additional victimization types can be found in the OVC guide. We use these to categorize survivor experiences for all subgrantees, regardless of whether they receive VOCA funding.

Domestic Violence:

Victimization Type: Domestic and/or Family Violence

A crime in which there is a past or present familial, household, or other intimate relationship between the victim and the offender, including spouses, ex-spouses, boyfriends and girlfriends, ex-boyfriends and ex-girlfriends, and any family members or persons residing in the same household as the victim. Involves a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone.

The following are examples of some behaviors and activities that may indicate a victimization of **domestic and/or family violence**, if the perpetrator was related to the victim as described above:

- Blame
- Frighten
- Humiliation
- Hurt/injured
- Isolation
- Manipulation
- Terrorize
- Intimidation

Victimization Type: Child Physical Abuse or Neglect

Physical abuse that is nonaccidental physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) because of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, or otherwise harming a child, that is inflicted by a parent, caregiver, or other person. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caregiver intended to hurt the child. Physical discipline, such as spanking or paddling, is not considered abuse as long as it is reasonable and causes no bodily injury to the child.

The following are examples of specific crimes should be reported as **child physical abuse or neglect**:

- Abandonment
- Child neglect
- Endangering the welfare of a child
- Exposure to drugs/alcohol
- Exposure to DV/assault
- Nonviolent child abuse
- Nonviolent child cruelty
- Violent child abuse
- Violent child cruelty

Victimization Type: Teen Dating Victimization

The occurrence of physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional violence within a teen (13-17) dating relationship, including stalking. It can occur in person or electronically and might occur between a current or former dating partner.

The following are examples of specific crimes/activities/behaviors and should be reported as **teen dating victimization**:

- Emotional violence
- Physical violence
- Psychological violence
- Sexual violence
- Stalking

Sexual Assault:

Victimization Type: Adult Sexual Assault

Includes a wide range of victimizations/crimes that include attacks or attempted attacks generally involving unwanted sexual contact between victim and offender. Sexual assaults may or may not involve force and include such things as grabbing, fondling, and verbal threats. Also included is rape, which is defined as penetration of any kind, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration of a sex organ by another person, without the consent of the victim; may also include penetration of the mouth by a sex organ by another person.

The following are examples of specific crimes and should be reported as **adult sexual assault**:

- Attempted rape
- Attempted sexual assault
- Fondling
- Forcible sex offense
- Incest
- Indecent liberties
- Indecent exposure
- Non-forcible sex offense
- Rape
- Rape by instrument
- Sexual assault/misconduct
- Sexual assault with an object
- Sodomy

Victimization Type: Adult Sexually Abused/Assaulted as Children

Adult survivors of sexual abuse and/or assault which was suffered while they were children. For examples of sexual abuse/assault that may have been experienced, see child pornography and child sexual assault.

Victimization Type: Adult Physical Assault (includes Aggravated and Simple Assault)

Simple Assault: Assaults and attempted assaults where no weapon was used, or no serious or aggravated injury resulted to the victim. Intimidation, coercion, and hazing are included.

Aggravated Assault: An unlawful attack by one person upon another, inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault usually is accompanied with the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm.

The following are examples of specific crimes and should be reported as **adult physical assault** (either simple assault or aggravated assault):

- Affray
- Aggravated assault
- Aggravated battery
- Attempted homicide
- Attempted murder
- Battery
- Brandishing a weapon
- Gun violence
- Simple assault
- Strangulation
- Threat with a weapon

Victimization Type: Child Sexual Abuse/Assault

This may include activities such as fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution by a parent, caregiver, or other person. This definition includes teen sexual assault.

The following are examples of specific crimes and should be reported as **child sexual abuse/assault**:

- Child exploitation through prostitution
- Child molesting
- Teen sexual assault (though this might be considered part of a teen dating victimization incident if the survivor's relationship to offender is "dating relationship." In such scenarios, consider why the survivor is seeking services. It may be appropriate to add two incidents.)
- Rape of a child
- Statutory rape

Stalking/Harassment, Bullying:

Victimization Type: Stalking/Harassment

Individuals are classified as victims of stalking or harassment if they experienced at least one of the behaviors listed below on at least two separate occasions. In addition, the individuals must have feared for their safety or that of a family member as a result of the course of conduct or have experienced additional threatening behaviors that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.

Stalking behaviors include: making unwanted phone calls; sending unsolicited or unwanted letters or e-mails; following or spying on the victim; showing up at places without a legitimate reason; waiting at places for the victim; leaving unwanted items, presents, or flowers; and posting information or spreading rumors about the victim on the Internet/social media, in a public place, or by word of mouth.

The following are examples of specific crimes/activities/behaviors and should be reported as **stalking/harassment**:

- Harassment
- Threatening behavior

- Harassing phone calls
- Intimidation
- Menacing
- Stalking
- Terroristic threats
- Threatening conduct
- Threatening gesture
- Threatening telephone call
- Threatening words or statements

Victimization Type: Bullying (Verbal, Cyber, or Physical)

Repeated, negative acts committed by one or more children against another child. These negative acts may be physical or verbal in nature—for example, hitting or kicking, teasing or taunting—or they may involve indirect actions such as manipulating friendships or purposely excluding other children from activities. Implicit in this definition is an imbalance in real or perceived power between the bully and victim. Similar conduct conducted by an adult against another adult would likely be considered “stalking/harassment.”

The following are examples of specific activities/behaviors and should be reported as **bullying**:

- Bullying through emails
- Creating fake profiles
- Posting embarrassing pictures/videos
- Hitting or kicking
- Spreading rumors
- Testing or taunting

Human Trafficking:

Victimization Type: Human Trafficking (Labor)

Obtaining a person through recruitment, harboring, transportation, or provision, and subjecting such a person by force, fraud, or coercion into involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (not to include commercial sex acts).

The following are examples of specific crimes and should be reported as **human trafficking (labor)**:

- Forced Labor
- Human trafficking, involuntary servitude
- Labor trafficking

Victimization Type: Human Trafficking (Sex)

Inducing a person by force, fraud, or coercion to participate in commercial sex acts, or the person induced to perform such act(s) has not attained 18 years of age.

The following are examples of specific crimes and should be reported as **human trafficking (sex)**:

- Commercialized sex
- Commercialized vice
- Human trafficking, commercial sex acts
- Sex trafficking
- Seduction
- Transporting persons for prostitution

Tricky Examples:

- 1) An adult survivor was non-consensually filmed or photographed in an intimate act. What should their victimization be?

The victimization you should choose depends on the broader context in which the incident occurred. We do not have a separate victimization type for non-consensual filming or photography. If it occurred in a DV or SA context, you should use that as the victimization. Otherwise, it would typically be considered stalking or harassment.

- 2) Revenge porn (e.g. an adult client took consensual photos in an intimate partnership, and their former partner release those photos after their intimate relationship ended)

The victimization you should choose depends on the broader context in which the incident took place. If the context is DV, you should select DV as both the victimization and VOCA victimization. For example, if a client is in a relationship where they are experiencing intimate partner violence, and the offending partner has been trying to control the client by threatening to release intimate photos, this is DV. If the release of the photos leads the survivor to receive services that relate primarily to the release of the photos as opposed to the intimate partner violence they experienced in the relationship, it might be appropriate to add an additional incident as a primary victim of Stalking: Stalking/Harassment to attach to those specific services.

- 3) An adult client experienced a different victimization (e.g. arson, robbery, harassment) in the context of domestic violence. How should I enter the incident?

Generally, abuse that occurs in an intimate partner relationship with DV should be considered part of the DV incident, with the exception of strangulation, which should get its own incident.

If a client is receiving services for DV more broadly, and another victimization they experienced in a DV context, it would be appropriate to add two incidents and choose the most relevant one for each service, or to split services and tag a portion of each service to each incident. For instance, someone who comes in having experienced physical assault in a DV context may get one incident with Domestic Violence: domestic and/or family violence, and one with Domestic Violence: Adult physical assault if they receive services specific to each. If they discuss both incidents during advocacy sessions, it would be appropriate to add two separate advocacy sessions (one for each incident) with the time recorded for each session reflecting the approximate amount of time spent on that specific incident.