Victim Centered Prosecution

Alison Chandler, Deputy District Attorney
Shannon Mahoney, Victim Assistance Program Manager
Contra Costa County District Attorney’s Office
10:45 – 12:15

Caitlin

Las Vegas
San Francisco
Concord, CA
Oakland
Unknown
San Jose, CA
Reno, NV
Pittsburg, CA
Los Angeles

Collaboration Makes A Difference
Success Starts with Collaboration

–Within the county
–Within Community Partners
–Statewide
–Nationally

Contra Costa County Collaboration
The Law Has Provided for a Victims’ Rights Shift

Historically the CA justice system has been centered around the rights of the defendant.

Victims’ Rights Shift

- Marsy’s Law in the California Constitution
- Expanded on who is defined as a victim
- Victims must be informed of rights
**Victims’ Rights Shift**

- Right to be notified, attend and speak at hearings and confer with prosecutor
- Prevent disclosure of confidential information
- Additional protections from the defendant
- Restitution must be ordered

**Taking Advantage of the Shift**

- Victims Now Claim Their Stake!
- Prosecutors/Advocates Educate in Court
- Law Enforcement Reaches Out Early
- Team Approach to Prosecution

**REQUIRES COLLABORATION AMONG COMMUNITY PARTNERS**
Don’t Forget the Big Picture

THIS IS A LIFE!

Giving People What They Need

• You are the resource
• Never say no, offer an alternative
• Know your community, make sure they know you
• Participate in awareness/education
• Facilitate connections
Utilize all Resources Available

• Closed captioned trial testimony
• Victim Impact Statements by Skype
• Court House Dog
• Continuing education

Partner Up

– Law Enforcement
– District Attorney’s Office
– Victim Advocates
– Community Partners
Ongoing Obstacles

- Defendant Centered System
- Remedies Not Strong Enough
- Complicated Cultural Considerations
- Cases Have Proof Problems
- Restitution Shortcomings
- Language Barriers

Don’t Let Obstacles Get in Your Way!

Deconstruct Perceptions
Moving Forward

• Start from the Ground Up
• Build community around victim for safe community
• Prepare for the unknown
• Rebuild and Empower for Life
• Utilize ALL tools for Success!

Thank You

Shannon Mahoney
Victim Assistance Center
smahoney@contracostada.org
(925) 957-8651

Alison Chandler
Deputy District Attorney
achandler@contracostada.org
(925) 957-8735