

Victim's Voice Guidelines

Preparation of a Victim's Voice is completely voluntary.

When submitted by a victim, the Victim's Voice is to be written in the victims own words.

A Victim's Voice gives you the chance, at the time that the offender has been accepted into the Mental Health Court Program, to tell the Mental Health Court Team how the criminal offence has affected your life. If the Victim's Voice is filed with the Mental Health Court, it is one of the factors which will be considered by the Mental Health Court Team in preparing a support plan for the offender.

The Victim's Voice should only include information about the harm done to you, or the loss suffered by you as a victim of the crime(s) for which the accused person has been accepted into the Mental Health Court.

Mission Statement of the Nova Scotia Mental Health Court:

The Nova Scotia Mental Health Court works with people with mental disorders who are in conflict with the law. The Court's mission is to help them connect to services, develop rehabilitation plans, and improve their well-being and living situations in order to decrease their likelihood of re-offending. The Nova Scotia Mental Health Court also weighs the potential risk of harm to the public in all decisions from eligibility through rehabilitation planning.

Participants in the Nova Scotia Mental Health Court Program must:

Acknowledge or Plead Guilty to their offence(s);
Have a Serious Mental Health Disorder that is related to their offences(s);
Attend Court on a regular basis (sometimes weekly);
Attend all professional appointments;
Take all medications prescribed by treatment provider(s);
Abstain from drugs and/or alcohol use, if required, and submit to substance use testing;
Not drive for at least 1 (one) year if the offence(s) are driving related; and
Be involved in the Program for at least 1 (one) year.

The Victim's Voice must be written on the Victim's Voice Form and returned to your local Victim Services office. It must be signed and dated. If you are writing and signing the form on behalf of a victim, then your first and last name and your relationship to the victim and/or crime should be printed clearly in the space provided on the form and it must be signed and dated twice. The Victim Services office will file the Statement with the Mental Health Court.

Once the Victim's Voice has been filed with the Mental Health Court, copies will be provided to the Mental Health Court team including the accused and/or their lawyer and the Victim's Voice will become a part of the sealed Mental Health court file. If the accused at any point or for any reason does not continue with the Mental Health Court the Victim's Voice will not become a part of the originating Court File.

This completed form should be submitted to Victim Services, Department of Justice.

For office locations, call toll-free 1 (888) 470-0773 or visit website:

http://novascotia.ca/just/victim_Services/contact.asp