



Syllabus Training 'Special needs: on individual and professional level'

Author: Joke Castelein (Rondpunt vzw) &
Muriël Booms (University of Leuven)

2018

VICTIMS OF ROAD TRAFFIC OFFENCES



This project is funded by
the Justice Programme
of the European Union



moderator
forum voor herstelrecht en bemiddeling



RONDPOINT
JE BONDGENOOT NA EEN
VERKEERSONGEVAL

COLOFON

Syllabus Training 'Special needs: on individual and professional level'

Editorial adress

Rondpunt vzw
Uitbreidingstraat 518 bus 2.01
2600 Berchem
Belgium

Responsible publisher

Rondpunt vzw
Uitbreidingstraat 518 bus 2.01
2600 Berchem
Belgium

Contact details

+323 205 74 80
info@rondpunt.be
www.rondpunt.be

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION	4
EU – PROJECT: AIM AND OUTPUTS	5
CHAPTER 1: THE NEEDS AFTER A ROAD TRAFFIC OFFENCE	6
1.1 Road traffic victims	6
1.1.1 Insurance	6
1.1.2 Judicial information and assistance	6
1.1.3 Psychosocial	7
1.1.4 Medical (rehabilitation and hospitalisation)	7
1.1.5 Reintegration (leisure, education, work, mobility, ...)	7
1.1.6 Contact with press	8
1.2 Bereaved relatives	8
1.2.1 Psychosocial	8
1.2.2 Insurance	9
1.2.3 Judicial assistance or information	9
1.2.4 Contact with the press	9
1.3 Are they special or not?	10
CHAPTER 2: INFORMATION	11
2.1 Aligned with the needs	11
2.2 Practical tools	13
2.2.1 Existing practical tools	14
2.2.2 Practical tools developed within EU – project	15
CHAPTER 3: INTERDISCIPLINARY COOPERATION FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS	17
3.1 What is interdisciplinary cooperation?	17
3.2 Why do professionals need to cooperate interdisciplinary?	18
3.3 What does (interdisciplinary) cooperation look like?	20
3.3.1 Cooperation on various levels: basic notions	20
3.3.2 Two 'out of the box' examples of interdisciplinary cooperation	21
3.4 How can you take part in establishing interdisciplinary cooperation?	24
3.4.1 Victim associations as promoters of (interdisciplinary) cooperation	24
3.4.2 Victim associations as organisations that can meet needs	25
3.5 Concluding thoughts on cooperation	25

INTRODUCTION

Prevention, raising awareness, road traffic safety, support, ... There are many ways in which professionals and victim associations try to help road traffic victims and their relatives. Our focus within the training 'Special needs of road traffic victims' will be on information, support and cooperation. The training was developed in the context of the EU project 'Victims of Road Traffic Offences', which has started in March 2017. In this syllabus, we present the content of this training with some extra information.

After describing the aim of the training and the EU-project in which it is embedded, the first chapter discusses the needs someone may have after a traffic crash. The various needs of road traffic victims, their families and bereaved relatives are described. Possible similarities or differences between these groups are presented and explained. We end this chapter by responding to the question whether these needs are special or not compared to other victim-types.

In the second chapter, we describe how information should be adapted to road traffic victims' and relatives' needs. More concretely, we outline important concerns professionals or volunteers should take into account in regard to developing information tools or delivering information to road victims or bereaved relatives.

The third and last chapter of this syllabus deals with the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation. We start with explaining what this entails and why cooperation is important. Afterwards, a short overview of how cooperation is organised in practice is presented – along with two inspiring examples. Finally, the role victim associations can play in establishing interdisciplinary cooperation is explained.

EU – PROJECT: AIM AND OUTPUTS

We, Rondpunt, the University of Leuven and Moderator, were inspired by previous research of the FEVR (European Federation of Road Traffic Victims, report of 2015). This research showed that road traffic victims do not always see themselves as victims of a criminal offence. Due to the unawareness of their legal status, they are often not fully aware of their rights and the support they are entitled to by the EU Directive 2012/29/EU.

Furthermore, we believe that road traffic victims can be perceived as a particularly vulnerable group. Despite the fact that road traffic crashes occur on a daily basis, its victims are often perceived as collateral damage of the way we want to live our lives and uphold our levels of mobility. As a consequence, society at large but professionals as well, do not always approach road traffic victims as victims. By not realising the impact of a traffic crash on victims' lives, professionals often do not inform victims about the appropriate support services nor do they refer them to these. This can cause extra harm.

Next to the acknowledgment and its consequences, another aspect that puts road traffic victims in a vulnerable position is the complex environment they find themselves in after a crash. They encounter various fields which are often unknown to them, such as the judicial world, the insurance procedures and the medical world. Consequently, road traffic victims are less likely to obtain the appropriate services and rights.

Therefore, we are working together in this project to:

- raise awareness about the needs of road traffic victims;
- strengthening professionals and victim-volunteers;
- improve the accessibility of support;
- enforce and stimulate professionals to work together in an interdisciplinary manner;
- raise awareness about restorative justice practices.

In relation to the EU-project, victims of road traffic offences are described as 'persons who are victim of criminalisable behaviour on the road, such as involuntary injuries, hit-and-run, drunk driving and excessive speed driving'. Through this definition, we refer to both (seriously) injured victims as victims who have lost their lives due to a road traffic offence. Furthermore, the project is also directed to bereaved relatives who have lost a loved one due to a road traffic crash and the relatives of a (seriously) injured victim.

By the end of our project, which lasts two years, we will have developed different outputs. During the first workstream of the project, we have gathered existing knowledge and strengthened it with further research on the needs, interdisciplinary cooperation and restorative justice practices. This has resulted in a summary and two reports (one on interdisciplinary cooperation and one on restorative justice in road traffic cases). We have also developed three participatory video's in which three victims of road traffic offences tell their story and indicate what they needed from others and professionals in dealing with their victimisation. The research on the needs of the target group has also resulted in a document on 'frequently asked questions' and a list of practical tools they can use after a road traffic crash.

Based on the outputs from the first workstream, we will develop a blueprint on how to cooperate interdisciplinary and how to develop a practical information guide for road traffic victims. Practical tools like the booklet 'what to do after a crash abroad', 'contact cards' about possible support and a 'rights leaflet' will also be created and can be used in every European country. Another output will focus on restorative justice and will present information on these practices and stories on how restorative justice is experienced by road victims and offenders with restorative justice.

CHAPTER 1: THE NEEDS AFTER A ROAD TRAFFIC OFFENCE

The needs that are discussed in this first chapter are found in the daily practice of Rondpunt – a Flemish centre of expertise for those involved in a road traffic crash. This centre has gathered information on the needs of road traffic victims over the years and in different ways. In fact, every person involved in a crash can contact Rondpunt concerning the help question or problems they encounter. We register these help questions in a database and have analysed them in 2017 to know more about the needs of road victims and their relatives. Furthermore, we have also analysed the search behaviour of the visitors of our website. Every person involved in a crash or professional can find information on different relevant topics. Based on both analyses, we determined what we found to be the various needs of road victims and bereaved relatives and deducted which possible questions they may have regarding those needs. Furthermore, we held focus groups with victims, their family and bereaved relatives to question them about what they needed and which information and support they received.

Because we found it interesting to know more about the needs of road victims and bereaved relatives separately, we have made a distinction between these two groups in our analyses. Firstly, we will present our findings in regard to road victims. Secondly, the needs of bereaved relatives will be described.

1.1 Road traffic victims

The needs of road traffic victims can be divided in several general topics: insurance, judicial, medical, reintegration, psychosocial information & assistance and contact with the press. In general, the needs of information and support on judicial and insurance matters are highly present amongst injured victims and their relatives (66%). Most of the given information or support deals with insurance matters (43%), followed by psychosocial help questions (30 %), mostly about professional assistance. Judicial help questions were third in our analysis with 23%. Needs on medical and reintegration level follow the other needs. Information about contact with the press seems to be less needed, but is still important to pay attention to.

1.1.1 Insurance

Most of the questions and search behaviour found through the analyses, concerned information on the compensation aspects after a crash. More specifically, information on the specific regulation of compensation for vulnerable road users and on civil liability is highly needed. Also questions about compensation after a crash during home-workplace travels were asked. Furthermore, road victims were looking for information on how claim settlements work and the role of medical expertise.

Possible questions:

- Which insurance is responsible for the compensations?
- What do we need to do when we want a compensation?
- What does a medical expert do? Where can we find a medical expert?
- How can we know more about the criminal file/judicial proceeding and what its current state is?
- What is the effect of a compensation on my benefit entitlement and vice versa? (cumulation)
- What does a counsellor for medical advice do? Where can we find such counsellor?
- When does an occupational accident insurance apply after a car crash? What do we have to do?

1.1.2 Judicial information and assistance

When it comes to the judicial aspects after a crash, road traffic victims are looking for information on civil

action parallel or integrated in the criminal proceedings. For example, they want to know more about the difference between a civil action and criminal proceedings, what a civil action entails, what they will have to do for it, ... The limitation period of indemnification is also a topic they want to know more about. In case of a criminal proceeding, questions were asked about the financial costs. Furthermore, they want to know how they can be informed about the judicial case file of the crash and how they can take part of a criminal proceeding.

Possible questions:

- For which damages and losses can we receive a compensation? And how?
- What does a medical expert do? Where can we find a medical expert?
- What happens in a judicial proceeding after a crash?
- What do we have to do during the course of a judicial proceeding?
- What is civil liability and how does it work?
- How can we be informed about the judicial case file?

1.1.3 Psychosocial

After a crash, road traffic victims and their family want to know how someone can cope with what happened. They want information about the emotions they experience and whether their own feelings are normal or not. But they do not only have questions about their own feelings, they are also wondering what the person who caused the crash might be feeling and thinking. Is that person feeling guilty, responsible, ... or not? Furthermore, they are looking for information on psychosocial support, both professional as help from victim-volunteers or self-help groups.

Possible questions:

- How can we cope with the feelings, consequences and the traumatic event?
- Where can we find professional help (from victim support services) to cope with what happened?
- How can we contact a self-help group to talk about what happened?
- Where can we find professional help from a therapist or psychologist? How can we contact a therapist or psychologist?

1.1.4 Medical (rehabilitation and hospitalisation)

Most 'medical' questions were asked about rehabilitation and more specifically where they can find a rehabilitation centre and which kind of programs exist. They are also looking for information about the administrative aspects of hospitalisation and the suffered injuries (paraplegia, acquired brain injury, amputation, ...). Besides knowing more about the injuries, they also needed information on how to cope and live with a disability. And finally, questions in regard of their time in the hospital or rehabilitation centre were also asked.

Possible questions:

- Which papers do we need to fill in during hospitalisation and keep for insurance or compensation purposes?
- What is an Acquired Brain Injury?
- Where can I find support to cope with my disability?
- What is life like in a rehabilitation centre?
- What can my family and myself expect during my time in the hospital?

1.1.5 Reintegration (leisure, education, work, mobility, ...)

Road victims want to know more about life after hospitalisation or rehabilitation. Information about home

care, possible adaptations to their home, extra tools to enable them to live independently, ... is important. But they are also looking for information on leisure activities after a crash or finding help to go back to work or school. All the possible levels of reintegration are present in the needs of road traffic victims. Even the aspect to raise awareness on the dangers of traffic and the consequences of road traffic crashes can be found in their needs.

Possible questions:

- Where can we find leisure/social activities for someone with reduced possibilities (as consequence of a crash)?
- Where can we find tools that can help us to live independently?
- How can we obtain home care?
- How can we find work that is adapted to our reduced possibilities?

1.1.6 Contact with press

There is a possibility that the media will report on the crash and follow-up with more questions. It is not always easy for road victims and their family to decide whether they want to answer those questions or not. It might even be the first time they are in contact with the press. Therefore, road victims and their family are looking for information about this topic. Such as how to handle an interview; how to respond to intrusive questions or negative comments on social media; how to file a complaint, ...

Possible questions:

- What should we do during an interview with the press?
- How can we file a complaint in regard to the media coverage?

1.2 Bereaved relatives

The needs of bereaved relatives can also be divided in several general topics: insurance, judicial, psychosocial information & assistance and contact with the press. Bereaved relatives are first of all looking for psychosocial information and support (65%), more specifically about saying goodbye, coping with loss and how to go on without a loved one. In regard to support, bereaved relatives want to know more about self-help groups. We hypothesise that relatives might feel more need to talk to someone who has been through the same experience. After these needs, the ones about insurance and judicial matters surface. Information about the press is last need of bereaved relatives. We found that bereaved relatives want to know more about this topic than road victims.

1.2.1 Psychosocial

The highest need of bereaved relatives is to know more about saying goodbye and the practical and administrative arrangements in regard to the farewell ceremony, legacy and will. After this information, they are in need of information about coping with the loss of a loved one. They want to know more about the mourning/grieving process and where they can find help. Mostly they want to know how to get in touch with other bereaved relatives and are looking for self-help groups. But information about professional support is also important. Furthermore, they want to know how to handle life without a loved one. For example: what to do with the items of the person who passed away, when and how do they go back to school or work, how to support other bereaved relatives with the same loss, ...

Possible questions:

- How can we say goodbye to our loved one?

- What should we do after the passing away of my partner/child/sibling/friend?
- How can I be there for someone else (child/sibling/friend) who is also coping with the same loss?
- Where can we find support to talk about our loss?
- Where can we get in touch with other bereaved relatives?
- What should we do with the personal items of the person who passed away?

1.2.2 Insurance

Bereaved relatives are also looking for information about compensation, more specifically with regard to the loss of a loved one in a crash. Furthermore, they want to know more about the rules of conduct that apply to insurance companies. Information about a crash that happened during, before or after work is also important. When relatives lost someone during such a crash, they want to know what the possible special or different rules are and what they have to do in such situation.

Possible questions:

- Is it possible to receive a compensation for our loss?
- What do we have to do when we want a compensation as bereaved relative?
- Can we ask the insurance company for information about the file?
- How should an insurance company behave towards bereaved relatives?
- What can we do after a crash that happened during, before or after work?

1.2.3 Judicial assistance or information

Bereaved relatives are looking for information on the difference between criminal and civil proceedings and about civil action. Information on accessing the criminal file, the financial cost of criminal proceedings and the limitation period are also important for them. Furthermore, they want to know what their role within a judicial proceeding can be and when the personal belongings of their loved one can be returned. Sometimes bereaved relatives are also looking for information about restorative justice practices or how to get in touch with the other involved parties.

Possible questions:

- Who is responsible for the crash?
- What happened during the last moments of their loved one?
- How can we take part in the criminal or civil proceedings?
- How can we get in touch with the person who caused the crash?

1.2.4 Contact with the press

Bereaved relatives might also be contacted by the press about the crash that their loved one was involved in. Therefore, they also need information on agreeing with an interview and what they can do to protect themselves to tell their story. Consequently, information about complaints towards a journalist is also important to offer.

Possible questions:

- Should we agree to give an interview?
- How can we protect ourselves during an interview?
- How can we file a complaint when the media coverage is incorrect/disrespectful/... ?

1.3 Are they special or not?

Victims of crime have received and gained more attention and recognition over the past years. Information and support for victims has consequently become more available. What we are wondering is whether this information and support is relevant for road victims as well to meet their needs. We can only determine this by asking ourselves the following questions 'Are the needs of road victims and their relatives special or not?' Because specific needs might require specific information and support.

In order to answer this question, we integrated this topic into the focus groups with road victims and bereaved relatives and interviews with victim support professionals. As a result of our research, we came to the following conclusion.

Every victim and relative has needs after being involved in a traumatic event. These needs may differ from one individual to another, but it can also differ between every victim-type. Professionals explained that some needs are general and count for all victims. Such as recognition, receiving basic information about coping process and possible support, ... Others needs are specific, as road victims and bereaved relatives confirmed.

The specific needs for road traffic victims often concern insurance matters, rehabilitation and reintegration. With regard to rehabilitation and reintegration, the severe physical injuries which can be caused by a crash (paraplegia, amputation, ...) often result in needs that other victim-types often not have. One injury that is more often present amongst road victims than other victims is a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Road victims with TBI frequently face difficulties when it comes down to reintegration. Not all professional have the right knowledge about this injury and are sometimes afraid to support someone with TBI. The impact of TBI is not always well-known which can lead to misunderstandings and unadjusted support. Furthermore, it is a complex injury because its consequences can change over time and this can cause difficulties in the settlement of the compensation on insurance and judicial level.

Turning to the insurance and judicial consequences of a crash, this is often a complex matter. The legal framework after a crash can be different from other crimes. The insurance aspects usually play a bigger part in the settlement for the road victims and bereaved relatives. It can cause additional and particular needs, for instance on administrative level, and can lead to extra feelings of distrust.

Furthermore, the 'intent' to hurt or kill someone is mostly not present in road traffic offences but committing criminal offences (such as drunk driving, speeding, ...) might be. Road victims and bereaved relatives can blame the person who caused the crash for the commission of the criminal offence, but not always that the offender wanted to cause harm to anyone. This aspect can have an impact on the coping process of the involved parties. An aspect that is often not present in other crimes and can also lead to a higher need to talk to the other party.

In conclusion, we have found that the needs of road victims and bereaved relatives can be divided in general needs which count for all victims and specific needs. We would like to add that we found some evidence that there is a difference between the needs of road victims and bereaved relatives. The needs of bereaved relatives often vary faster, are more intense and more straightforward. Professionals think that the needs of bereaved relatives are more intertwined with the mourning process which might be the cause of the difference with road victims. So, it might also be important to pay attention to possible different needs between victims and bereaved relatives.

CHAPTER 2: INFORMATION

The needs of road victims and their relatives are diverse. The previously mentioned results from our research findings prove that information and support is needed on different levels and topics. Road victims and bereaved relatives need information that can help them understand complex aspects as civil actions, criminal and civil proceedings, coping processes, ... but also information that can help them find support with regard to these aspects.

Therefore, you can say that the most important need is the need to be informed. Road victims and bereaved relatives want to know what is happening, what will happen and what they need to do. So, information is key!

To point out that this reflects the needs of road victims and bereaved relatives, we would like to use a couple of quotes from participants in the project.

"All info can be useful at any certain moment!"

***"All support can be useful, even if it is not immediately needed.
Knowledge of the existing support can be crucial later on the trajectory."***

To meet the need for information, it is important to align this need with the others. Just handing out information is not enough. The way information is delivered and about what, has to be taken into account. We will discuss this in the following part of the syllabus.

2.1 Aligned with the needs

As previously described, information is key to meeting the needs of road victims and their bereaved relatives. When professionals or self-help groups deliver information to them, the following points of attention are crucial:

- ***Clear information***

Professionals might deliver the information in a technical manner which might be high-threshold and difficult to understand. Often professionals keep on talking in the way they talk to their colleagues. They should try to adapt the information to the person who they are talking to. If 'technical' vocabulary is still necessary, the professional should try to 'translate' it. When it comes down to the judicial procedures, insurance and resources for people with a disability, road victims and relatives often mentioned that these aspects are already hard to understand and need even more 'translation'. Professionals working on these aspects should especially pay attention to this issue.

- ***On every aspect***

The trajectory of road victims and bereaved relatives is diverse and complex. From psychosocial to judicial, insurance, hospital, reintegration, ... matters. These different matters are often interrelated. Therefore, every professional should try to discuss every matter. If possible, they should at least try to provide some information and preferably refer them to the right services.

- ***To the point***

Giving too much information is not always the right way to go. It should be sufficient. Too many details are not always necessary when professionals inform road victims and their relatives about a certain topic for the first time. Nonetheless, extensive information can be necessary when that topic becomes relevant in the trajectory of road victims and relatives go through. So, professionals should try to estimate which kind of information their 'clients' need and should start with to the point information and elaborate more when necessary.

- ***Pro-actively***

Victims will not always seek help. Victims often resist the acknowledgement of being a 'victim'. In regard to road victims, we found that also professionals and society does not always perceive them as victims. If road victims themselves as well as professionals and society does not see them as victims, it will impact the decision to offer or search for help even more. The search for help is also influenced by the perception of the types of support available. Participants in our research declared that they did not always know which support was available. Therefore, services need to be proactive in informing road victims and their relatives. In other words, professionals should inform victims about the available support services without the latter asking for it.

Furthermore, our participants told us they had to search for information themselves. Searching for the information took a lot of energy and aggravated their emotional coping of what happened. The fact that they had to do this, left them with the feeling that they did not get the help they needed or deserved.

- ***Individualised***

Every trajectory is unique and the needs for information and support can differ between road victims and their relatives. But one thing remains: information is key at every post-crash stage. For example, a badly injured road victim lies in a hospital and his first need is to know more about the prognosis, recovery, ... The need for psychosocial or judicial information/support is not always present at this stage, but might occur later. Another victim, however, might need information about this support right away. Therefore, information about a certain aspect can be given but should definitely be repeated. But, most importantly, the information should be adapted to the needs of a road victim or relative at the time that it is given.

- ***Repeated***

Once information is given, professionals often think that this may suffice. However, this is not true. Road victims and relatives often told us that, due to their coping process and the many things they have on their minds, they do not always remember what has been said to them. Moreover, the information might not always be relevant to them at that time. Spreading various information throughout the trajectory is important. Sometimes road victims are not ready to receive certain information. They are occupied with a certain aspect in their coping process or rehabilitation process and therefore, might not be able to processing information that does not match the stage they are in. Road victims and bereaved relatives agreed that repetition of information is key for good support.

- ***Both verbally and written on paper***

As previously described, bereaved relatives and road victims do not always remember what has been said to them. Therefore, information should not only be delivered verbally but also on paper.

- ***Exchange of information between professionals***

Different professionals and services are involved in the life after a crash for both victims as relatives. But it is often perceived that these professionals do not communicate enough with each other, also within the same service. According to road victims and relatives, they have to repeat their story and questions every time they encounter a new professional. This often leads to additional frustration and can make it harder on

them to cope with what happened. Moreover, it can increase the chance for secondary victimisation.

- ***One contact person***

'We need one professional, one buddy who knows every organisation or the way to different services.' This need is something that has been reported for several years. The many services and information sources make it difficult for victims to find their way through the maze. They do not desire that professionals can answer every single question they have. But they do want someone who knows where they can find the answers to their questions and someone who can explain and even help them obtain their rights. 'The gateway' to information and support should be improved.

When professionals or self-help groups take these points into account, the needs of road victims and bereaved relatives can be met more properly.

2.2 Practical tools

Information can often be given through 'practical tools'. A practical tool is an instrument that aims at giving information that someone can use in their own situation. During our research, we found that a lot of practical tools have already been developed. We have presented a couple of these tools during our focus groups. Some of the most important remarks were:

- ***Do not keep developing tools***

Enough is enough. Road victims and their relatives told us that a lot of information exist and it is difficult for them to find what they need. Therefore, they asked not to keep on developing tools. But first, research if such a tool already exists. If not, then we should try to develop on. If a practical tool already exists, we should try to improve the distribution.

- ***Centralise information***

As mentioned before, a lot of informative practical tools already exists. Participants advised us that we should also try to integrate existing tools in our own tools. It might help with the distribution of the practical tools, but also simplifies the search for information road victims and their relatives go through.

- ***Different formats***

A couple of the presented tools were online tools. Participants pointed out that practical tools should also be delivered in different formats, if possible. Not everyone wants or can consult information online. So, it is important to try to produce the same tool in different formats (paper & online).

- ***Improve the knowledge of professionals***

Participants made clear that we cannot only focus on developing tools. It is also important to improve the knowledge of professionals (about the existing support and services, about ABI, about the way they communicate with the target group, attention for relatives, ...) and to stimulate them in offering these tools. So, tools which support road traffic victims as well as professionals can be useful. We believe that it might also encourage the individual engagement of professionals to support road victims. The more professionals know about the needs and how they can meet them, the more they might act on it.

- ***Improve referral and communication between services***

The trajectory of road traffic victims is complex. To help them with their complex help questions, they need support from different professionals from different sectors/services. Therefore, the participants hope that tools will be developed that can help them in their contact with these services and can increase referral and communication between services.

To conclude, every trajectory of a road traffic victim is unique and, either way, implies contact with different professionals and fields. The help questions can therefore be very diverse and complex. A practical tool should, as much as possible, try to respond to this diversity, uniqueness and complexity. The adaptability therefore is important. However, it is not always simple to develop flexible tools – for instance with regard to practical tools on paper.

Besides trying to develop tools with a high level of adaptability, the distribution needs to be better. Therefore, before starting to create a tool, a thorough research should be conducted to make sure that a similar tool does not exist. When interesting tools were detected during the research, it is advisable to refer to them. The more a tool is mentioned, the more it will get known. And it offers the possibility to briefly explain or outline certain topics and direct them to more detailed information. In this way, the need to give information in a brief way is met.

2.2.1 Existing practical tools

- ***Practical guide of Rondpunt***

Rondpunt developed a practical guide with information on every aspect of the trajectory of road traffic victims. It contains basic information about the police, insurance, psychosocial, rehabilitation, ... Beside information for the victims, bereaved relatives, witnesses and offenders of a road traffic offence can also find information. The practical guide can be ordered on paper or consulted online on the webpage of Rondpunt. Rondpunt tries to keep the practical guide as up-to-date as possible. This practical guide is available in Dutch, but within the EU project we are developing a blueprint of this guide. We hope we can inspire others to develop their own practical guide.

- ***Stuffed animal 'Zeppe'***

Zeppe, a stuffed animal, is used by police officers during their contact with children after a crash. Through offering this stuffed animal, they try to communicate with this target group. They ask them how they are feeling and if they need something. Often it is easier for a child to communicate through the stuffed animal after a shocking event. It makes it easier to express certain feelings and questions. This tool does not deliver certain information, but it facilitates a way to deliver information to children who are victims, witnesses or relatives or for them to ask information from adults.

- ***Victims choice website***

https://victimschoice.org.uk/victims_rights

This website, developed by Supporting Justice, provides information on victim services across the UK and identifies specifically services available in a victim's local area. Furthermore, it allows services to be reviewed by those who have used them. The website facilitates victims to find the right support and to make informed choices by knowing what's available and hearing the experiences of other victims. By entering the town/city or postcode, you can find the victim services located close to you. The website also delivers information about the rights of victims of crime. Although this is a tool that can only be used by UK citizens, this tool might be an interesting example to develop similar tools.

- ***Interactive tool about insurance and compensation***

<http://www.abcverzekering.be/gezondheid-ongevallen/interactieve-gids-vergoeding-lichamelijke-schade-na-een-ongeval>

A road traffic victim can learn more about the compensation for his/her physical injury as a consequence of a crash by using the interactive tool. By answering questions, the tool will give information on which insurance you should consult and how the physical injury will be compensated. Assuralia, a professional association of insurance companies in Belgium, developed this tool to offer some clarity in the complicated matter. The different compensation mechanisms and the matter of accountability can make it difficult for victims

and their relatives to know what to do or who to talk to. This tool offers them a first insight in the matter, but the answers cannot be seen as individual advice. This guide was valued by the participants of the focus group as very informative and a great initiative.

- ***Standardised documents concerning physical injury after a crash***

<http://www.abcverzekering.be/invuldocumenten-na-een-ongeval-met-lichamelijke-schade>

After a crash, road traffic victims have to go through many administrative proceedings in order to receive a compensation by the insurance company. These proceedings can be complex and difficult to cope with. Therefore, Assuralia offers some standardised documents to simplify this. When a road traffic victims or bereaved relative completes a document and receives a similar document to complete, he/she can hand out a copy of this standardised document. Consequently, they only have to fill out this kind of documents once. Also for the insurer, the use has its advantages. They can consult the necessary information much faster. Assuralia developed these documents in English, French, German and Dutch. You can find the following documents online:

- o Checklist of key documents in the event of injury
- o Questionnaire providing general information in the event of injury
- o Checklist of key documents in the event of death
- o Questionnaire providing general information in the event of death
- o Medical Certificate to be completed by a doctor
- o Medical Expenses Certificate to be completed by the doctor and the mutual health-insurance provider (mutualité/mutualiteit)
- o Medical Expenses form
- o Certificate from employer confirming loss of income
- o Form detailing travel expenses and parking charges

2.2.2 Practical tools developed within EU – project

- ***FAQ answers***

After analysing the help questions database of Rondpunt and the website statistics, we composed a list of frequently asked questions. Due to the remark of the participants that information should be delivered briefly and in an approachable way, answering these FAQ's could be a way to meet those needs. The current information on the website and in the practical guide is rather extensive. With the answers on the FAQ's we want to deliver a shorter version with reference to the pages where extra information can be found. We added an extra aspect to this tool. Besides the written version, we also developed short videos where someone from our team explained the answer to the question. The videos were spread via our social media channels (Facebook and Twitter) and website. The aim of the videos is to give an alternative to all the written information.

The frequently asked questions:

1. Which insurance is responsible for the compensations? What do we have to do when we want a compensation?
2. For which damages and losses can we receive a compensation? And how?
3. How can we cope with what happened, with how we feel and the consequences?
4. Where can we find professional help (from victim support services) to cope with what happened?
5. How can we get in contact with a self-help group to talk about what happened?
6. Where can we find leisure/social activities for someone with reduced possibilities (as consequence of a crash)?
7. Where can we find professional help from a therapist or psychologist? How can we contact a therapist or psychologist?

- ***Booklet 'Crash abroad'***

In the aftermath of a crash abroad, other rules and languages apply. This might make the search for the right information even more complex and difficult. Participants in our research, which were involved in a crash in Europe, suggested to develop a kind of introduction booklet on what to do after a crash abroad. During our research on possible tools, we found a lot of tools about certain aspects. These tools (website, brochures, search engines, ...) are very informative and discuss the specific matter in detail. Therefore, we developed a booklet which briefly informs road traffic victims and their relatives about each aspect and direct them to the existing tools. The booklet consists of separate pages and has the possibility to add information specific to the actual crash. E.g. space to add your own documents on the crash (police report, letters of insurance, ...) and to write down important information a victim or relative might need during their communication with services. We also added the rights a victim of a road traffic offence can benefit from due to the EU Directive 2012/29.

- ***Contact cards***

Road victims and bereaved relatives encounter a lot of different professionals. During these contacts, it is not always clear who can help them and with what. Furthermore, this can cause confusion amongst road victims and relatives about the support they can receive and received. With the contact cards we want to offer an overview of possible services they might encounter or need. At the front side, the name of the service is mentioned. We also added icons to point out which kind of support this service offers and if this support is free or not. On the back side, we wrote down in a couple of words what this service can do for a road traffic victim or relative and where they can find more information (such as contact info).

The aim of this tool is to help road traffic victims through their trajectory and to better direct them to the right services. Also, the professional can consult the tool to find the right service for the help question of a road traffic victim with his/her client. This can help to ameliorate referral and cooperation, but might also help to improve the knowledge of professionals about other services. We developed both a Belgian version and a European version. The contact cards tool can be adapted easily to changes and information/services can be added as well. For each service which might be missing, you can easily develop a contact card yourself. When the task, name or contact info of a service changes, you can adjust one of the cards without having to reprint the whole tool.

- ***Training for professionals on trajectory of road traffic victims***

We developed a workshop concerning the trajectory of a road traffic victim or relative. The different possible services which can appear or can be involved in the support are being discussed with the professionals. Firstly, we ask the participants to draw up a possible trajectory with services (which services and in which order). The participants start with a big whiteboard and different blank notes and develop a trajectory together on the board. Secondly, we discuss which services might be missing from the trajectory and what the professionals can do to support the trajectory (e.g. referral). During this interactive session, the facilitator integrates examples which show the importance of individual engagement of professionals and the guidance throughout the trajectory.

CHAPTER 3: INTERDISCIPLINARY COOPERATION FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS

Road traffic victims and/or their relatives have various needs. These needs are found to be similar to those of victims of crime in general, yet specific needs are experienced as well (cf. Chapter I). Throughout the trajectory of meeting these parallel yet specific needs, road traffic victims and their relatives encounter professionals from various fields: the medical world with its hospitals, rehabilitation centres and family doctors, the police, the juridical authorities including the judges, public prosecutor and lawyers, insurance agencies, victim support and other support services and the educational and employment systems. The focus of this chapter is in that providing support to victims of road traffic offences (RTOs), these professionals from various fields need to cooperate, ideally in an interdisciplinary way.

Victim associations, such as yourselves, can have an important role in establishing collaboration between professionals. This will be demonstrated throughout this chapter. For now, it is important to state that you can be a driving force in promoting cooperation and changing attitudes by sharing your stories and the stories of those you represent.

The third chapter of this syllabus will discuss interdisciplinary cooperation for road traffic victims and/or their (bereaved) relatives. First, the concept of interdisciplinary cooperation will be outlined. After clarifying what it is – and what it is not –, reasons for professionals to collaborate are discussed. The third section will first give a general notion of how cooperation can be implemented at different stages. Afterwards, two concrete examples of interdisciplinary cooperation are presented in order to give you a concrete idea how it can look like. The fourth section discusses what you – as members of a victim association – can do to promote interdisciplinary cooperation. This third chapter finishes by outlining some concluding thoughts.

3.1 What is interdisciplinary cooperation?

Now, what is 'interdisciplinary cooperation' and why is it that important? The best way to clarify this concept is probably by stating what it is not, which is multidisciplinary cooperation. Both types of cooperation can be placed at opposite sides of a continuum of collaboration. Although they both point to the cooperation of professionals from different fields in a complex issue, the nature – and more exactly the intensity of and engagement in the cooperation – is different.

When professionals work together in a multidisciplinary way, they approach a complex issue from their own discipline, expertise, perspective... through their own pair of glasses¹. The question what they, as a specific authority, can do for the victim/relatives is put forward. Similarly, the actions that are undertaken by different professionals occur sequentially or parallel but not integrated. The limited communication that takes place between the involved professionals in a multidisciplinary cooperation is about the individual actions they have carried or are carrying out.

Professionals that work together in an interdisciplinary way, on the contrary, share their expertise with the other actors involved and combine the knowledge of different fields. In other words, they approach an issue by looking through an 'integrated pair of glasses'. The way in which such interdisciplinary approach is created, is by agreeing on a common goal all professionals aim at achieving. Such goal is linked with meeting road traffic victims' and/or their relatives' needs and hereby reintegrating them into society and enhancing their quality of life. After the goal-setting process, all professionals aim to achieve it by working together – jointly and complementary. If a professional cannot fulfil a certain aspect, another will fill in the blanks.

¹ Aertsen, I. (2003). Het verticalisme in de slachtofferzorg [The verticalism in victim support]. As in P. Goris and D. Kaminski (Eds). *Preventie en het paars-groene veiligheidsbeleid*. Interuniversitair Netwerk Criminaliteitspreventie.

We believe that the interdisciplinary form of cooperation is much more desirable to meet road traffic victims' needs. Multidisciplinary cooperation is rather an ultimate minimum that should be met. Now, why don't we all just cooperate in an interdisciplinary way? The creation of cooperation between different fields is, unfortunately, far from easy. Because of the fact that every societal field has its own mind-set and expertise, they do not always look in the same direction and they do not always chase the same goals. In order to work together properly, their mind-sets have to be aligned in some way, which asks for both time and effort. Moreover, achieving a change in attitude and knowledge, which is necessary to make interdisciplinary cooperation work, is hard and it is work that should be carried out by individuals. Consequently, rather than putting it forward as something you just implement, we see achieving interdisciplinary cooperation rather as a process of growth. Professionals often start working together in a multidisciplinary way and, step by step, start integrating their knowledge by clarifying a common goal. Nonetheless, it is important to keep reaching for an interdisciplinary cooperation and not settle for a multidisciplinary one.

3.2 Why do professionals need to cooperate interdisciplinary?

Achieving (interdisciplinary) cooperation is not easy and takes a lot of effort and time, but it is definitely worth it. Several reasons for its importance are discussed in this second part.

First of all, collaboration is important to respond to the diverse nature of being a victim and its interrelated consequences. Becoming a victim of a RTO can have various consequences: physical consequences (both direct and/or psychosomatic), psychological issues (such as post-traumatic stress disorder, general and specific anxiety or depression) and socio-economic consequences (at the interpersonal, professional or financial level). Although these consequences have a quite different nature, they are in fact interrelated. In other words, the way one consequence is responded to can have an impact on another. An insurance agent or a medical specialist should, for instance, be aware of the way his/her actions influences the psychological state of mind of the victim. Research has for instance found that asking for compensation after a road traffic crash goes together with a higher chance of developing a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The nature of this relationship is unclear (do people who are vulnerable for PTSD ask for compensation more or does the process of receiving compensation leads to PTSD), but it does point to the interrelatedness of the consequences.

> *How can cooperation help?* Professionals who deal with road traffic victims and their consequences have to be at least aware of the interrelatedness. However, since 'being aware' is often not enough, all professionals should be convinced to pursue the same aim, such as enhancing the quality of life of the victim. By identifying these aims, and wanting to achieve them jointly, the interrelatedness of consequences can be responded to.

Second, collaboration is important to approach road traffic victims' needs in an individualised manner. Road traffic victims and relatives do not react identically to the victimisation, they do not endure identical consequences and, consequently, do not have identical needs. In other words, no victimisation is the same and even though a similar situation has occurred, victims react differently. Then, why do the consequences and needs differ? They are a result of personal circumstances of victims. In addition, needs are not static, but they change over time. While some victims might need psychological support soon after the crash, others only experience this need after a period of weeks, months and sometimes even years. The same is true for (direct or indirect) contact with the person who caused the crash: while some have the need of contact (soon) after the crash, others never feel the need to communicate with the other involved party.

> *How can cooperation help?* Only when professionals from different fields cooperate, they can react to these individual and varying needs. When professionals come across certain needs, they

should be able to inform and refer victims to the other service that can assist in meeting them.

Third, collaboration is necessary to ensure a continuing offer of support is provided to victims. Often, when a certain consequence of a road traffic crash is handled, the professional support terminates and victims are on their own again. For instance when the rehabilitation trajectory is completed, victims are sent home and have to find their own way of dealing with the new situation. For the new arising issues, for instance with regards to work, leisure activities and family life, they have to find support themselves. Sometimes they are not even aware there are services that can help them.

➤ *How can cooperation help?* In order to avoid the situation in which victims run into these obstacles on their own, professionals should collaborate to ensure a continuing offer of support. More exactly, a professional should be aware of the next steps the victims have to take, (s)he should inform the victim concerning which services might help and refers them to these services in advance. Following up whether the victim has indeed been in contact with the service where one referred him/her to and looking into whether the support works properly is additionally important. By verifying this, the cooperation inclines towards an interdisciplinary one.

Fourth, collaboration is important to respond to victims' (often) passive help-seeking attitude. After a RTO, victims and/or relatives often focus primarily on dealing cognitively with the experience and handling the physical consequences of the event². As a result, they might not be up to searching for support themselves – which is called a 'passive help-seeking attitude' in victimology research.

➤ *How can cooperation help?* It is important professionals react to this passive attitude in a proactive way. This means that the first professional who encounters the victim (often the police or hospital's emergency unit) has to inform about available support services without the victim having to ask for it specifically. In addition, professionals should refer the victim proactively to such support service. Ideally, and this is more interdisciplinary, professionals also verify whether the victim is supported well by this new service. By carrying out such follow-up, one can prevent victims get no support at all. Obviously, (interdisciplinary) cooperation is needed to make such proactive approach possible.

Finally, collaboration is necessary to guide road traffic victims through the labyrinth of services. As already touched upon, victimisation takes different forms. As a result, not all victims might experience a passive help-seeking attitude, or this attitude changes over time. Victims who do seek support, indicate it hard to find their way through the labyrinth of services. Especially the legal and insurance aspects in the aftermath of a RTO are perceived to be technical and complicated.

➤ *How can cooperation help?* Professionals that victims encounter in their trajectory after a crash are in the perfect position to guide victims through this labyrinth. They already are in contact with those impacted by a road traffic crash and, as a result, can offer them guiding support right away. It is much harder for victims to not find their way through the labyrinth and not being in touch with certain professionals anymore who might be able to help. Therefore, professionals can, by being proactive throughout their contact, help clarify victims' needs and, after doing so, help victims to reach the other services. In order to be able to inform, refer and follow-up on victims, cooperation between professionals of different fields should be developed.

² Dignan, J. (2005). *Understanding victims and restorative justice*. London: Open University Press.

3.3 What does (interdisciplinary) cooperation look like?

After a more theoretical presentation of what interdisciplinary cooperation exactly is and a discussion of its importance, the aim of this third part is to – in the first place – give you a general idea of how cooperation for road traffic victims can exist. Although we promote the creation of an interdisciplinary kind of cooperation, it also is a process of growth. As a result, we will discuss how cooperation in general is established as well since only after a while, this can turn out to become interdisciplinary. The second part of this section will present interdisciplinary cooperation in practice. Two concrete examples are presented which are rather ‘out of the box’. They are inspiring due to the fact they actually built around road traffic victims’ and relatives’ needs.

3.3.1 Cooperation on various levels: basic notions

What is outlined here, is based on our research on good practices of (interdisciplinary) cooperation in three European countries (the Netherlands, France and Belgium). The aim is to present the general framework, without going into too much detail. For more in-depth information, we invite you to consult other activities within the EU-Project³.

A first, preliminary, issue that arises even before talking about cooperation is the question where the initiatives and support for road traffic victims should be situated towards what already exists for victims of crime in general⁴. We believe that the integration of ‘the road traffic victim’ into the initiatives that exist for victims of crime has a higher chance of meeting road traffic victims’ needs. The integration has several benefits. First of all, road traffic victims’ and relatives’ needs are more or less parallel to those of victims of crime and, as a result, they could benefit from the range of services that already exist for this group. In addition, existing organisations are often larger and – as a result – house several kinds of expertise (juridical, psychological, criminological, ...) that can be combined and made available to victims. Due to road traffic victims’ needs on various fields, the availability of more and combined kinds of expertise can definitely be beneficial. Finally, the support provided to certain types of victims of crime often already involves cooperation schemes. The chance these schemes work without problems is higher when more types of victims are included – amongst others those impacted by a RTO. Choosing for integration – instead of the development of specific initiatives for road traffic victims – does entail that certain issues need to be taken into account. In short:

- The specific needs of road traffic victims should not be forgotten;
- Road traffic victims should have access to victim support services – also when they are not seen as ‘victims of crime’ in the juridical sense;
- Both road traffic victims and professionals should be aware of the fact road traffic victims have access to the different services for victims of crime in general – so that the right information is consulted/given and professionals (actively) refer victims to these services.

Continuing to build on the idea of integrating the support for those impacted by a RTO into the general framework for victims of crime, the next step is to look at what happens at the policy level for this larger group of victims. At this level, actors of different fields gather and develop policy on how to support victims of crime. When such gathering happens at national/regional level, ideally representatives of for instance of the criminal justice system, the insurance agencies, victim support services and the involved ministries are present. Especially for road traffic victims, but also for other victim types, the medical sector is also important to be included at this level. With regard to establishing cooperation, the result of policy actions at this level can be a (also legal) framework of kinds of cooperation that should be developed in the field. Although

³ The blueprint on interdisciplinary cooperation contains a step-by-step plan of how this kind of cooperation can be implemented in EU-countries. Please feel free to contact us and ask for this blueprint. For a more theoretical overview, we can provide you the report on interdisciplinary cooperation which presents good practices of three European countries.

⁴ European Union Agency For Fundamental Rights (2014). *Victims of crime in the EU: the extent and nature of support for victims*. Luxembourg: Publications office of the European Union.

the implementation depends largely on the services in the field – establishing such national/regional policy is a first step in promoting cooperation. In addition to these national and regional initiatives, local policy initiatives take place as well. Rather than providing a general framework, these initiatives coordinate the intervention of the involved professionals of different fields through the establishment of protocols/charters. The actors involved in these policy initiatives are local – for instance local hospitals and rehabilitation centres, the local police force, local victim support service, the mediation service and so on. In these protocols, ways of collaboration – ideally in an interdisciplinary way – can be agreed on. Since local authorities and professionals are involved, the agreements are more detailed than the national/regional policy initiatives. However, due to the fact they only apply locally, victims can be treated quite differently depending on where the victimisation took place or they live.

Although establishing policy on cooperation is important, collaboration is still something that takes place between professionals in the field. Depending on the framework created at policy level, the professionals have the possibility to develop actual collaboration themselves. Evidently, the different kinds of collaboration are important at this stage: does the cooperation only entail the provision of cooperation, does it additionally include (active) referral as well or – and ideally – does it lead to a coordination of the intervention and even the establishment of a ‘council’-structure. At least equally important is the development of actual, human, connections between the professionals involved. The creation of such partnerships is difficult owing to the fact the professionals all have different backgrounds. Ensuring transparent communication can facilitate the development of a network, along with training and team-building activities and regular (face-to-face) meetings.

3.3.2 Two ‘out of the box’ examples of interdisciplinary cooperation

Despite the outline presented above, the concept ‘interdisciplinary cooperation’ might still be vague. Consequently, in this section two examples of this kind of collaboration are highlighted. In our research within the EU-project, both examples are found to be very relevant for road traffic victims.

The Personal Injury Council

The first, interdisciplinary model worth discussing is established in the Netherlands and goes under the name of ‘Personal Injury Council’ (further: PIC; Letselschaderaad⁵). The PIC is a network organisation in which various interest groups and umbrella organisations are represented – amongst others Victim Support the

Netherlands, the Dutch Association of Insurers, medical advisers in insurance companies and personal injury experts. The council exists separately from the Dutch government and, in other words, is not dependent on recourses provided by the latter. The Minister of Security and Justice does have an observer status.

As can be deduced from the name and the involved professionals, the PIC aims at meeting the needs of those seriously and permanently injured, for instance by a RTO. More concretely, it aims at raising the settlement process (i.e. the process in which is asked for financial compensation for the suffered injuries) to a higher level by making it more clear and harmonious. Paying attention to this settlement process is specifically important because this part of the trajectory is often experienced negatively. In fact, it is often perceived as an ‘arena-like approach’ in which those injured have to convince ‘a jury’ that they in fact have injuries and experience related consequences. Professionals involved in this process often have insufficient attention for upholding a soft and sensitive attitude towards victims and, related to this, do not consider the interrelatedness of the consequences (as discussed before). The aim of the PIC is to avoid this negative impact and help those injured through the complex and unknown world of insurance and medical treatment.

⁵ www.deletselschaderaad.nl

So, what does the PIC actually do to help those with serious and permanent injuries? First of all, it brings together professionals of different fields that encounter this target group to share knowledge and increase understanding of those with personal injuries. By bringing all these professionals and interest groups together, the knowledge is shared and – throughout time – integrated. Second, the different professionals of different fields can signal issues they encounter in the PIC. Together, a solution for these issues can be sought. A way in which such solutions can be found – and this is also the third activity the PIC carries out – is by developing and managing a code of conduct for the treatment of personal injury.

Intermezzo: a code of conduct?

This code of conduct is, in fact, a part of a 'self-regulating' movement of the personal injury field. Such regulation is relevant in this field since the quality of support given by the professionals varies greatly. How is it self-regulating? If organisations and professionals that work with persons with personal injury comply with the code – and, thus, prove they apply it in their work – they receive a label and are included in a register. This label can be used to advertise their services and indicate they are 'capable of handling personal injury settlements in a sensitive way'. As a result, some professionals specialise in this matter and advertise their work in this field, leading to the emergence of 'personal injury lawyers' and 'personal injury experts'.

At the moment, the PIC is developing a specific section on 'traumatic brain injury'. This specific type of personal injury can be caused by a RTO and is rather unknown in other types of crime. Traumatic brain injury is a kind of injury that is often overlooked. Since it changes over time and is not visible, professions often do not take the possibility it exists into account. This is problematic since they often do not pay attention to it during the settlement process. As a result, the compensation granted can be insufficient to deal with the consequences of this injury. The PIC – through their code of conduct – aims to write down 'red flags' that could point to the presence of traumatic brain injury and, consequently, make sure that it is integrated in the settlement process.

Next to the activities mentioned above, the PIC also informs professionals who work with people with personal injury and personally injured individuals themselves via their website and guides. Finally, the PIC collaborates with the 'mediation counter'. This counter is an easy accessible organisation for all who suffer personal injury. When going to this counter, one encounters a neutral lawyer who gives information and advice on the settlement process. In addition, this lawyer also mediates between the personally injured and the professionals if a settlement process has reached an impasse. The mediation counter reports recurring problems and trends to the PIC. The Council can, consequently, take action and for instance adjust the code of conduct.

In conclusion, we can say the PIC is an example of interdisciplinary cooperation since professionals from different fields are represented and, by working together, an integrated knowledge can be developed. In addition, a common goal is set – raising the settlement process to a higher level – and joint action is taken, for instance by developing and maintaining the code of conduct. The work of the PIC meets road traffic victims' needs in the sense that it pays attention to the interrelated consequences of being a victim and it guides victims through the complex insurance-technical and medical field. Finally, this initiative is interesting since it exists separately from the government and does not rely on their willingness to make available funds to help this specific group.

Case management

A second inspiring model of interdisciplinary cooperation for road traffic victims is the one of case management. The basic idea of case management is that a 'case manager' takes the road traffic victims and/or

(bereaved) relatives by the hand and actively assists them throughout their trajectory in the aftermath of a RTO. More specifically, this case manager:

1. Helps in clarifying the needs the victims and/or relatives encounter;
2. Assists in the search for information to fulfil these needs;
3. Helps in creating and coordinating an 'step-by-step plan' involving professionals from different fields that is fully adapted to meeting their needs;
4. Helps carrying out this plan by assisting them in their contact with various services;
5. Finally, follows-up their needs so that the plan can be adapted to their changing needs.⁶

The aim of case management is to meet the victim's and their relatives' needs and hereby to contribute to the reintegration in society and enhance the quality of life. The result of such step-by-step plan is a continuing offer of support whereby the case manager is assisting in the difficult transitions between fields.

In the past, several pilot studies have taken place in Belgium and the Netherlands regarding case management – for different categories of people impacted by a RTO. With regard to injured victims and their relatives, it is found that case management can really be helpful. In this context, the relatives often adopt a 'case-manager like attitude', but since they are often unfamiliar with the different (juridical, medical and/or insurance) fields it is found to be too complex. A case manager is helpful here, both in the case of child and adult road traffic victim – although different emphases are necessary (e.g. children have more needs with regards to the educational system). With regard to bereaved relatives, it is found that they are appreciative of the work of case managers. Yet it does not always have an added value for this category since their needs are less diverse; the needs are intertwined with the coping process and less complex with regard to medical and insurance-related issues. Throughout the juridical process, however, a case manager like professional might be relevant. Rather than guiding victims throughout the whole trajectory, this professional might assist bereaved relatives through the juridical procedure. (S)he, for instance, assists bereaved relatives when they look into the juridical files or attends the trial together with the relatives.

Despite the positive findings and the proven added value of models of case management in previous pilot projects, it has not yet been implemented for road traffic victims and/or (bereaved) relatives. This mainly is a result of the lack of will to provide funds at the policy level. For the implementation of case management, budget is needed – regardless whether it should be arranged in a 'case managing organisation' or as a posi-

tion within a victim support service. In the Netherlands, there are explicitly planning to offer case management to road traffic victims. To this point, a Dutch case management system only exists for victims of other serious offences such as homicides, serious violence or sexual crimes.⁷

In conclusion, we can say the model of case management pays a lot of attention to road traffic victims' needs: it aims at approaching them individually (since no victim endures the same consequences) and the case manager actually provides continuing support by guiding victims and/or relatives from one professional to the other. Case management can be seen as interdisciplinary in the sense that it sets a common goal and professionals from different fields work together closely by establishing the step-by-step plan. Unfortunately, it has not yet been implemented in practice.

⁶ Maes, B., Verschuren, J., Westland, G., & Hutsebaut, K. (2009). *Eindverslag 'Conceptontwikkeling trajectbegeleiding voor gewonde verkeersslachtoffers'* [Final report 'concept development casemanagement for injured road traffic victims']. KU Leuven: Faculty of Psychology and Educational Science.

⁷ *Opmaat naar maatwerk 3.0: toevoeging verkeersdelicten*. (2017). Dupe: Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie.

3.4 How can you take part in establishing interdisciplinary cooperation?

Both road traffic victims and their relatives as bereaved relatives endure a variety of needs in the aftermath of a road traffic crash. Because these needs – sometimes specific, sometimes parallel to those of victims of crime – vary considerably and, as a result, an individualised approach is necessary. In meeting road traffic victims' and/ or their (bereaved) relatives' needs, victims associations have a crucial role.

3.4.1 Victim associations as promoters of (interdisciplinary) cooperation

Ideally, structural interdisciplinary collaborations between professionals already exists. This is, however, often not the case. We hope that through our presentation, this syllabus, the report and blueprint on interdisciplinary cooperation, the importance of collaborating in an interdisciplinary way to meet the needs of road traffic victims and/or their (bereaved) relatives has been proven in a convincing way. To promote this importance to those who are responsible for developing such kind of collaboration, your stories are, however, at least equally if not more important. As a result, victim associations are an important actor in promoting the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation.

Advocating the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation at policy level is crucial. Although cooperation in the field is vital, the development of a long-lasting and well-functioning collaboration starts at the policy level. In the different countries we have studied, pioneers promoting victims' rights and support were present at the policy structures where the first steps towards collaboration were taken – both with regard to national/regional and local initiatives (see examples).

For instance...

At regional policy level, a States-General on the support of road traffic victims was organised in Flanders (a part of Belgium) in 2007⁸. This States-General was preceded by nine working groups on themes relevant for the support of road traffic victims (e.g. medical support, psycho-social assistance, re-integration, mobility, police, judiciary, insurances, actors of RTOs and research and statistics). Each working group resulted in a report on the problems, existing good practices and policy recommendations which was presented at the States-General meeting in which several ministries but also victim associations for both bereaved relatives and relatives of children who survived a road traffic crash were represented. The outcomes of the States-General changed a lot in the Flemish landscape with regard to the support of road traffic victims and/or (bereaved) relatives – and victim associations were at the heart of creating this change.

However, also in local policy initiatives, victim associations can be involved. This is, for instance, the case in a protocol of the province West Flanders (Belgium), which aims at ensuring an optimal support by the police and provide a seamless transition to victim support and other support services. In addition, a cohesion of all involved sectors in the field is pursued and the protocol includes a step-by-step plan in which the tasks of the involved agencies at different stages are written down with regards to the victims and other professionals.

To promote for change (for instance interdisciplinary cooperation) at policy level is certainly not obvious. Therefore, a policy influencing tool is discussed in another activity within this EU- project. If you are interested in this tool, feel free to contact us.

⁸ Flemish Parliament. (2007). *Voor een betere opvang en begeleiding van verkeersslachtoffers. Rapport van de stuurgroep aan de Staten-generaal* [For a better support and assistance of road traffic victims. A report of the steering group to the States-General]. Brussels: Flemish Authority.

3.4.2 Victim associations as organisations that can meet needs

The development of general frameworks on policy level with regard to interdisciplinary cooperation is insufficient to really change the way road traffic victims and their (bereaved) relatives are treated in the aftermath of a road traffic crash. As a result, victim associations have a large role in convincing professionals to work in an interdisciplinary way as well.

As a victim association, you can meet victims' and relatives' need to talk about what happened and to find a place where one can express one's experiences and feel understood. The issue of recognition is important in the context of road traffic victimisation; although RTOs can have extremely serious consequences, they are often banalised and approached as just accidents. By providing an association for people who have endured the same experience, you can provide such recognition and – by the actions you undertake jointly – enhance the understanding of the broader society. Due to your importance and the crucial role you can play for road traffic victims and/or their (bereaved) relatives, you have an essential place between other professionals from different societal sectors in existing (interdisciplinary) collaborations.

Your role is twofold. On one hand, you are organisations where road traffic victims and/or (bereaved) relatives can go to in the aftermath of an crash – and by turning to you, you can actually fulfil road victims and (bereaved) relatives' needs. In addition, they may also share some needs which other organisations may be able to meet. As a result, you are also in an important referral position. Thus, both referrals to and from you are crucial in meeting road traffic victims' and (bereaved) relatives' needs. On the other hand, however, you are also aware of the needs of road traffic victims/relatives can have due to your own experience and encountering the needs of those who have endured similar incidents. In developing interdisciplinary cooperation – with the idea of an integrated approach that transcends different disciplines and aiming to achieve a common goal – your knowledge is essential.

As a result, we would like to encourage you to advocate for interdisciplinary cooperation by promoting its importance (for instance by using the information provided above) to professionals who deal with road victims. Especially relevant actors here are the medical sectors (hospitals and rehabilitation centres) and the police since they are often the services which encounter respectively road traffic victims and their relatives and both victims and (bereaved) relatives. Another important field is that of the victim support services. In the most ideal situation, however, cooperation networks already exist which can be consulted in this regard. By indicating the important role victim associations can fulfil, you can join the collaboration in the aftermath of a crash and refer to other services and being referred to yourselves by other professionals. From our part, we aim at promoting the crucial role victim associations can have in the aftermath of a road traffic crash to professionals through the blueprint on interdisciplinary cooperation, written for professionals, in the context of the EU-Project.

3.5 Concluding thoughts on cooperation

The development of cooperation strategies is important, yet far from evident as well. As a result, we have noticed – at least in Belgium – a tendency to back down from putting efforts into establishing cooperation by organisations advocating for road traffic victims' and (bereaved) relatives' rights. Instead, they concentrate more intensively on the change they – as an organisation – can establish. On one hand, this tendency surely makes sense. As mentioned, establishing cooperation is hard, takes a lot of time and effort and often goes along with disappointment. On the other hand, however, on the basis of our findings we believe road traffic victims' and (bereaved) relatives' needs can only be met fully if the involved societal sectors collaborate.

WHAT TO READ IF MORE INTERESTED

Information and support:

- > Contact cards
- > Booklet 'Crash Abroad'
- > Political Influence Tool

Interdisciplinary cooperation:

- > Report on good practices of inter-sectoral cooperation
- > Blueprint on interdisciplinary cooperation for professionals

Restorative justice:

- > Restorative practices in road traffic offences in Europe
- > Restorative justice in road traffic offences: a practical manual for professionals and victim-volunteers

This syllabus is one of the outcomes of the project 'Victims of Road Traffic Offences', funded by the Justice Programme of the European Union (JUST/2015/JACC/AG/VICT/9276).

Project partners

**Moderator vzw, Forum for restorative justice and mediation
Leuven Institute of Criminology, University of Leuven
Rondpunt vzw, Centre of expertise and ally after a road traffic crash**

Associate partners

**Victim Support Europe
European Federation of Road Traffic Victims
European Forum for Restorative Justice**

Information on the project: www.rondpunt.be/projecten/eu-project-victims-of-road-traffic-offences/

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Justice Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the author and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.



This project is funded by
the Justice Programme
of the European Union



moderator
forum voor herstelrecht en bemiddeling



RONDPOINT
JE BONDGENOOT NA EEN
VERKEERSONGEVAL