

Clarification



WHAT IS CLARIFICATION?

Clarification is the process by which a youth offender communicates in writing to the person they hurt. In the letter, the youth offender accepts responsibility for their behavior and addresses what they are doing to make changes. Sometimes, clarification can involve a face-to-face meeting between the victim and the youth offender. Clarification is a victim-driven process and best done with the support of a skilled professional (therapist, spiritual guide, tribal elder) that has training in clarification.

IS A VICTIM REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE?

No. The clarification process is voluntary for victims and a victim can choose not to receive the letter or participate. Sometimes when victims are very young, a parent can receive the letter on behalf of their child. The needs of the victim are primary and will set the pace in the process.

HOW DOES FACE-TO-FACE CLARIFICATION HAPPEN IF THAT'S WHAT A VICTIM PREFERS?

For a face-to-face meeting to happen, the victim and youth offender each work with their own therapist or trained professional to prepare for the meeting. Coordination between therapists will be necessary. When both are ready, the meeting will take place in a location of the victim's choosing. Victims can also choose a support person to attend with them. Clarification can be done in one meeting or may take several meetings, based on the victim's needs.

WHEN DOES CLARIFICATION HAPPEN?

Clarification typically happens near the end of the youth offender's treatment program. This gives the youth offender the chance to build skills and have a deeper understanding of the impact of their behavior on their victim.

ARE CLARIFICATION AND REUNIFICATION THE SAME THING?

No. Clarification and reunification are two separate processes. Reunification is typically only used in family cases in which future contact is likely. Clarification is necessary for reunification to occur.

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WHY MIGHT A VICTIM CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CLARIFICATION PROCESS?

Although not guaranteed, clarification may provide the following:

- A physically and emotionally safe, supervised environment for contact
- Empowerment for the victim
- Opportunity for the victim to ask the youth offender questions
- Opportunity for the victim to assert feelings about the offending behavior
- Opportunity for youth offender to take responsibility for the offending behavior
- Opportunity for the youth offender to apologize for their behavior and whatever hardships the victim has suffered
- Support of the victim's decision to report the abuse (if applicable)
- Reinforcement that the youth offender is not angry with the victim for reporting
- Opportunity for the youth offender to share what they've learned in treatment
- Acknowledgment of thinking errors and a corrective message about the abuse
- Explanation of "grooming" and set-up behaviors including those that isolated the victim
- Recognition of ways in which the youth offender used manipulation to keep the abuse a secret
- Acknowledgment of how the abuse affected family and/or peer relationships
- Identification of steps youth offender is taking to ensure the abuse will not happen again
- Identification of what the victim needs to feel safe if future contact is wanted by the victim

HOW DO I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CLARIFICATION PROCESS?

Contact your victim advocate, County Juvenile Department / Oregon Youth Authority or District Attorney's Office for more information. You can also reach out to your therapist, spiritual guide, tribal elder, etc. If you don't have a professional you can speak to, resources are available.

We realize this information and process can be confusing and may even be upsetting for victims. Please remember that you or your child's participation is voluntary.