



Practical aspects of supporting hate crime victims during criminal proceedings

Gefördert vom



Bundesministerium
für Familie, Senioren, Frauen
und Jugend

im Rahmen des Bundesprogramms

Demokratie *leben!*



Schleswig-Holstein
Ministerium für Inneres,
ländliche Räume,
Integration und Gleichstellung





- ZEBRA offers support for victims of right-wing motivated, racist and antisemitic attacks in the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, Germany
 - Funding by a federal program as well as the federal state
 - Working independently of all government agencies
 - professional, free-of-charge and partisan (pro-victim)
- Support includes but is not limited to
 - psychosocial counselling
 - information about legal options and support for clients in decision making processes
 - practical support, e.g. during medical rehabilitation or criminal as well as compensation proceedings



- Support during different phases of criminal proceedings with specific challenges arising
- provided support and challenges vary from case to case
 - as attacks vary
 - as victim's needs vary
 - as criminal proceedings vary in their performance, their dynamics and their outcome
- Aims
 - Prevention of secondary victimization due to the proceeding's course
 - Empowerment to take an active role
 - Facilitation of the participation in the proceedings to be a resource in coping with an attack



Directly after an attack

- Psychosocial support and crisis intervention
- Possibility of reversal of victim and perpetrator
- Assessment of the victim's legal situation
- Counselling on the possibility of filing charges
- Counselling on further legal support
 - Rejection of reversal
 - Possibility of accessory prosecution
 - Compensation



During investigation

- Support in coping with slow proceedings and a lacking flow of information
- Psychosocial preparation and reflection of bearing witness
 - Potentially stressful to give an account of the attack
 - Perpetrator-centered questioning
 - Partly insensitive investigators, e.g. carrying out victim blaming
- Support in coping with the closing of the proceedings
 - As e.g. perpetrators could not be evidentially identified
 - As e.g. attacks are considered legally insignificant
 - Consequences for the victim's sense of safety and protection



During trial

- Support and company while attending trial
 - Encountering the perpetrator
 - Heavily formalized, perpetrator-centered course of events
 - Attempts of defense lawyers to challenge the victim's perception
- Trial preparation
 - Knowledge transfer
 - Psychosocial preparation
 - Challenge perceived powerlessness to facilitate active participation
- Support in coping
 - e.g. hate crime dimension of an offense was not approved in the prosecution or the court's decision
 - e.g. sentences are perceived as unjust