

The Ideal Victim

Criminal Justice

Christie on which victims are readily recognised, and which are not.

An analytic concept about recognition, not about who deserves help.

The ideal victim is

Seen as weak relative to the offender

Engaged in a respectable activity

In a place they cannot be blamed for

Harmed by a stranger who is clearly bad

Able to claim the status without threatening others

Consequences

Non-ideal victims are believed less often

Attrition is higher where the label fits poorly

The victim-offender overlap complicates it

Services can mirror the same hierarchy

It describes recognition, not worth

Educational reference. Christie's 1986 concept describes how victim status is granted socially, not who is entitled to support.