

Victim Personal Statements

Criminal Justice

The case for giving victims a voice at sentence, and the evidence on effects.

The case for

- Gives victims a voice in the process
- Records impact the charge may not show
- Can improve perceived fairness
- Informs the court about harm caused
- Acknowledges the harm publicly

The concerns

- Take-up and quality vary widely
- Expectations of influence may not be met
- Risk of inconsistency between similar cases
- Little evidence of therapeutic benefit
- Can be experienced as one more demand

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

The voice and fairness rationale is better supported than any claim of therapeutic effect or sentencing impact.

Educational reference. Findings on victim statements are mixed and depend heavily on how a particular scheme is implemented.