

# Ethics, Boundaries, and Confidentiality

## Transcript: U.S. Army Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness Outreach Webinar

*July 24, 2024*

### **Presenter:**

Alejandro Palacios, Victim Advocacy Training Manager at the National Organization for Victim Assistance

- Lytaria Walker: [00:04](#) Welcome to the Directorate of Prevention, Resilience, and Readiness Outreach webinar for July. At this time, all participants are in listen-only mode. However, you may ask questions at any time by placing them in the Q&A box. There will be several opportunities for questions throughout the webinar, and we should have some time at the very end as well. Today's webinar has been approved for one hour of live Continuing Education Units. Participants must obtain CEU certification through their local commanders by downloading the webinar presentation slides as attendance verification. The slides will be posted in the chat box at the end of the webinar and emailed to registered participants as well. Please note that the views of DPRR Outreach Webinar presenters are their very own and are not endorsed by the Department of the Army or the Department of Defense. This month, our guest is Mr. Alejandro Palacios. He is a Victim Advocacy Training Manager at the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA). He is formerly a Victim Advocate at the Office of Victim Services at the Arizona Department of Corrections. Palacios was the lead advocate of the Victim Offender Dialogue program, facilitating victim-initiated and victim-driven conversations between survivors and their offenders. He has also been a technology safety specialist at the National Network to End Domestic Violence, a trainer at the Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, and a provider of late legal advocacy services to victims of domestic and sexual violence at a domestic violence shelter in Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Palacios, sir, thank you so much for joining us this morning. Please take it away.
- Alejandro Palac...: [02:13](#) Good morning to you all, coming from Phoenix, Arizona. It's an honor to be here with all of you today to discuss this very important topic in the advocacy world: ethics and how it connects to boundaries, and also to the confidentiality of those

that we serve. As has been mentioned, please feel free to use the chat box, and towards the end part of the presentation we'll have some time for Q&A and interaction. So with that being said, let's get started because we have a lot of topics to cover. Let's review our learning objectives for today's session. First and foremost, we are going to define ethics. What are ethics and professional standards, and how do they relate to the work we do?

Alejandro Palac...: [03:15](#)

As individuals who assist those who have been through trauma and adversity, it is important that we fully comprehend how our services relate to ethics. We're going to talk about identifying ethical standards for victim advocacy as they relate to boundaries and confidentiality, which can be very tricky. I'm going to share some examples from my experience with ethical dilemmas and situations that we may come across while doing this work. Last but definitely not least we're going to explore difficult ethical scenarios and considerations for our ethical practices. Before we dive in into the actual content, I always want to start by making sure that we understand that throughout this conversation we're going to be using victim and survivor interchangeably.

Alejandro Palac...: [04:34](#)

On most occasions, the people that we serve prefer to self-identify, if you will, so we use those terms interchangeably. I think that it is important that we take a moment to clarify the meaning and the significance of this, because you'll likely hear that "survivor" is more empowering term and should be used over "victim." On the contrary, within the DoD, we are required to refer to those that we serve as victims. Why? Because that is a legal term. However, I truly believe that we should follow the lead of those whom we serve in regard to how they would like to be identified, making a very clear distinction that for some legalities they should be referred to as victims.

Alejandro Palac...: [05:47](#)

I've heard "victim," "survivor," or "thriver" based on my experience as a victim advocate with the Department of Corrections. I've worked with survivors of very heinous crimes, some who had experienced victimization three more than three decades ago, and they were still referring to themselves as victims. Some others call themselves a survivor: this all comes in part from personal perspective. It depends on the individual. We need to understand that "victim" is a legal term which provides certain rights and protections. When we refer to someone as a victim, we need to make a very clear distinction and also share with them that it does not imply weaknesses, assume guilt, or assign blame: it is still completely a legal term that assures that they get those rights and protections.

- Alejandro Palac...: [07:14](#) The term “victim” centers on the injustice and continuing battle for a restoration of justice. In regard to survivors, we know that it is an empowering term, personally, but it so often emphasizes that the crime, the situation, the trauma, or the adversity is something of the past, meaning that they have made advancements through their own healing process. The term “survivor” also centers on healing. It’s important that we understand the context related to the person who has had the traumatic experience because we need to have place in our language where we can use these terms interchangeably. In summary, within the criminal justice system, the term “victim” actually describes someone who has been subjected to a crime, which serves to provide statute to attain certain rights under the law.
- Alejandro Palac...: [08:29](#) This underlines the impact and the injustice of that crime. We need to make sure that we make it clear that this by no means refers to someone being weak. Moving on from these terms, let’s talk about advocacy. We need to set the foundation of what advocacy is before we dive into the actual content of fixed boundaries and confidentiality. Advocacy is the act of supporting or promoting a particular cause. In our case we are advocating on behalf of those who have experienced crimes, trauma, victimization. Advocacy is often undertaken by organizations, groups, or individuals to bring about change and influence decision-making. We know this from the history of victims’ rights and how it has developed from survivors of sexual violence survivors of all kinds of trauma and abuse.
- Alejandro Palac...: [09:46](#) In the advocacy world, ethical practices and responsibilities are of utmost importance because they are directly tied to the work that we do. Being directly involved in advocating for victims and survivors within a systems-based organization, such as the DoD, means that we are involved in constant change in how we advocate for those who have had traumatic experiences. We accompany those people throughout their healing, however that may look, and we share the knowledge we have gained from our experience and training following the information that they require. This knowledge covers things like what systems are available and how different systems work, how the various processes work, and what kinds of resources are available for them.
- Alejandro Palac...: [10:53](#) As advocates first and foremost, we know that we walk alongside those that we serve. We don’t follow behind them, and we don’t walk in front of them. We walk with them. We accompany them through the healing process. When we are involved in the advocacy world, we need to understand that we

may play a small role throughout this individual's healing process. We may be there to see them heal and overcome those traumatic experiences, but not all the time. As advocates, we are there to share our knowledge on the different systems, processes, and all the vast resources that are available. We play a very specific role, which is first and foremost that we do no harm. We are respectful of their decisions and the way they perceive their experience.

Alejandro Palac...: [11:52](#)

We respect their self-determination, and that relates directly to ethics. As advocates, we may not be in complete agreement with their decisions, and we may want to tell them, "I think you should make this decision. You should go A, B, or C instead of D, E, or F." However, we should respect their self-determination because they are the experts in their own lives. They know what's best for them at that particular time. We can definitely make sure that they have as much information as they can so they can make an informed decision.

Alejandro Palac...: [13:05](#)

We also do not provide judgmental responses, even though as human beings, we are often very quick to jump to judgement. We should be aware of that, and that should not guide our responses to those whom we serve. We also should be culturally humble, meaning that we cannot know it all. There's no single advocate, there's no single agency that can do it all, so we need to be open to hearing and learning from their experiences. We maintain very clear professional boundaries, which in a moment we're going to have examine more closely what are those professional boundaries and how they should look. Finally, part of the role of an advocate is to offer guidance, to be compassionate and kind, and to have no expectations of gratitude.

Alejandro Palac...: [14:09](#)

Remember, if you do this work expecting to receive a thank-you note or gift then you're not in the right profession. We do this because we care for them. We care that they don't experience further victimization. On occasions we do get that thank-you note, that email, that text message saying, "Thank you for what you did for me at that very difficult point in my life." They were not planning to be victimized, to visit your office to attain your resources. It can be very difficult to be thankful for it. We are always focused on doing the right thing, and when we actually define ethics we will see that doing the right thing can look very different for different individuals, however, we should focus on our ethical practices as advocates. That should drive our decision-making. Not only do we need to understand our role, but we also need to comprehend our values as advocates. The first values are empowerment and self-determination. We

provide the tools that they need in order for them to make the best decision that feeds their needs. We are informed, we act without judgment or an agenda. We promote anti-racism and non-discriminatory frameworks, of course, because we want to be inclusive of all individuals who might need our services.

Alejandro Palac...: [16:12](#)

We act from the standpoint of belief. This means that unless you have very clear and concise information that causes you to doubt someone's story, always start by believing in what they're sharing with you. If you have valid proof that they may be abusing the system or they may not be forthcoming or truthful about the situation, then you might need to evaluate from a more skeptical lens. We champion empathy and respect. Empathy is a very interesting concept when it comes to advocacy because we all have different levels of empathy at different times. It is very ethical to take a moment to assess what is our current level of empathy at any certain point in time. Then we can decide if we are at a point at which we can fully address the situation and fully assist this individual without causing any harm. You cannot pour from an empty cup. If we are doing this work and our empathy levels for whatever reason are not where they need to be, we can end up doing more harm than good.

Alejandro Palac...: [17:20](#)

Finally, of course, we have professional boundaries and respect their confidentiality. As I mentioned, we also offer guidance, we are compassionate and kind, we have no expectation of gratitude, and we do the right thing. There's an Etch-A-Sketch of a dog on the slide here, and this is a part of self-care. Before assisting another traumatized individual, you need to have cleared your Etch-A-Sketch. By that I mean take a five-minute break, stand up, have a drink of water or coffee, take a walk around the block: do whatever you need to do to clear your Etch-A-Sketch before engaging in another conversation with another impacted individual. If we do not do that, we will continue to start drawing on top of another drawing, and that will definitely impact the quality of the work that we do and the results of our advocacy services.

Alejandro Palac...: [18:26](#)

Now let's talk about ethics and why they are so important in this particular role that we have of assisting those we serve. Have you ever talked about or questioned what ethics are and why they are important to advocacy? The whole point is that when we have a code ethics, we use that as a guide of basic principles that are designed by the advocacy movement to conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity at all times, whether we are providing services to those that reach out to our agency or those that reach out to us directly.

- Alejandro Palac...: [19:23](#) Question from the chat: “What is the best way to address when the victim has shared with people that their advocate has not helped them and they feel that everyone during this process is working against them?”
- Alejandro Palac...: [19:40](#) Has anyone else come across this? I’ve come across this situation in my years of experience providing direct services, and it can be very difficult. When this information is going around, how would I address this situation? First and foremost, I will make sure that the services provided to this individual are documented. Next, I would need to have an empathic conversation with this individual. We have to understand that we cannot do it all. There’s no single agency that can do it all. With those that we serve, we need to be very clear: “My role can only cover so much of your particular needs, and I have assisted, and I have provided several options. We’ve done this A,B, or C thing. However, if these options do not fulfill your need or this is not what you’re looking for, myself as an advocate or agency cannot provide these other services, so let me make sure that I connect you with those who can actually provide the services that currently need.” That is a great question. Going back to the definition of ethics. Ethics is a system of moral values, and a set of principles or values that govern the behavior of individuals or groups, in this case, us as advocates and a group of advocates.
- Alejandro Palac...: [21:55](#) Ethics also provide a framework for us to make decisions that guides our actions in regards to what is considered right or wrong and also the good from the bad. I want to be clear that ethics can vary depending on cultural, social, and historical context. I should say that ethics can be influenced by factors such as religion, philosophy, and even politics. With that being said, ethics do play an important role in many areas of life from healthcare to business, to education, to government, and last but not least to victim advocacy. When we respond to individuals who have been through or are going through crises, we need to adhere to those ethical principles that are essential for building trust, for promoting our social responsibility, and for maintaining the integrity of not only ourselves as individual advocates, but also the institutions and the organizations that we represent.
- Alejandro Palac...: [23:28](#) Professional ethics, then, are a set of standards and a proven principle of conduct. Professional ethics are most effective when they are generated out of knowledge and skills within the profession, meaning from those experiences that we have in the field. That’s why when I do these trainings, I always seek interaction because there’s so much that I can share with you,

but I'm also learning from your experiences in the field providing those direct services such as a that question we just addressed. That's what leads our knowledge and what can potentially change the advocacy world. It is really important that we comprehend that our professional ethics should be not only defined, but also generated from the knowledge that we obtain from the direct fieldwork. Theory is important, of course, but also what are we seeing? What are we experiencing as we are providing direct services?

Alejandro Palac...: [24:44](#)

We as individual all have values. We have personal values, we have community values, and we definitely have professional values. Now, let me be very clear about this very real thing that may occur. Our professional values may come into conflict with our personal values or community values. These may without a doubt come into conflict with and compete against each other. If we're in that situation, what are we going to do? One of the things that I like to talk a little about is what is it that we have in common? Our personal values as individuals may vary, and that is okay.

Alejandro Palac...: [25:51](#)

We may vary in terms of our beliefs, accepting gifts, attending special events, discussing religion, or maintaining relationships with our clients. However, although our personal values may vary, we do have some things that are professional values. The values that we share within the field of victim advocacy and victim assistance are competence and integrity. Competence means that we are all able to act capably to do our work in a fair and balanced way. Our integrity is honesty, fairness, and respect. We all share a professional responsibility to do this work to the very best of our abilities. We all respect the rights and the dignity of others. I think that we're all in this because we have very real concerns for the welfare of others, and also some social responsibility in our personal values. Professional values are those that we share and they're the expectations for the field.

Alejandro Palac...: [27:00](#)

To sum this up, when we have a situation where our professional values may be in conflict or competing with personal values, professional values should always guide our decision making process. Our community values may also come into play. From our community values standpoint or personal values perspective, we may want to accept that gift. We may want to continue this dual relationship with someone that we're working with, but we should consider what our professional values are telling us. Professional values should always trump personal values, but they do come into conflict. That is very

real, and let me say it even this way, it is very normal. I've been in those situations on many occasions.

Alejandro Palac...: [28:04](#) So morals are systems of community beliefs and values that determine, as I mentioned, what is right or what is wrong, while our values determine good and bad. Ethics are our moral values in action that dictate our practical behaviors to create that standard of behavior that we have been talking about. It's the articulation of that standard of behavior that reflects those values and those morals. Ethical standards also improve and maintain the quality and consistency in our work. They protect us as well as our clients because they raise the profile of our profession. They motivate and inspire practitioners by giving us a more professional identity.

Alejandro Palac...: [29:30](#) The NOVA Code of Ethics was developed first by a board of directors in 1995. It has been updated throughout the years, which is a great resource for you because things in the real world change too. The Code needs to continuously adapt to our times and to how things have been changing. For advocates in particular, we know that the Code is a safeguard for the reputation of the individual in the profession, protects the public also from being exploited, and furthers the competent and responsible practice of our profession as helpers. The foundation of our NOVA Code of Ethics is based first and foremost on these values: client autonomy, privacy, and self-determination that is based on empowerment.

Alejandro Palac...: [30:41](#) Also, the fact that we're objective, honest, and transparent; and promote equity in the services that we provide. We don't pick and choose what services we are going to provide or the resources we are sharing. We share those vast amounts of information and resources that we have with everyone. There will be times in our system of values that will differ from those of survivors with whom we are working. One of our most significant ethical tasks is to avoid placing our own values and judgements on others as we are trying to help.

Alejandro Palac...: [31:43](#) We must be vigilant about not our elevating our goals, voices, and values over those of our survivors. They have their own set of values and judgments, and we should not supplant them with ours. All of this does require constant self-assessment and a constant check-in not only with yourself, but also regular check-ins with a trusted colleague. It could be a coworker at your same level or someone up the chain of command. You can even reach out to me or others to seek that guidance and that support. I'm telling you from my almost 15 years of experience in the advocacy world, on occasions we do come into potential

conflicts, and there is a very clear need for that self-assessment and regular check-ins with others that we trust and with whom we can be open about those experiences that we are having.

Alejandro Palac...: [32:48](#)

Moving on, let me talk for a bit about the power of holding space. This means that we need to challenge ourselves while doing this work to take a whole-person approach. This means to always see and remind yourself of the whole person in every interaction you have with those whom we serve. Remember that no one exists in a vacuum. They are more than just what you can catch on an initial conversation with them or just from what they are sharing. Just like us, they're made of everyday experiences. We need to encourage ourselves to see people as complicated and worthy of our time, regardless of how they engage with you or with the world. One of the most important and valuable services we can provide as advocates is to provide a safe space for them. This is a bit of an abstract concept, but once it clicks, it's a really useful framework to consider how we support those that we serve who have experienced trauma and victimization.

Alejandro Palac...: [34:04](#)

So remember, provide a safe space for them and see individuals from the whole personal approach: they are more than just their experiences that have led them to your services. As far as ethical practices, first and foremost we need to be honest and transparent. This ties directly to the question that was asked about people sharing that their advocate is not helping them. Advocates must be honest and transparent in our communication with those that we serve. We must be truthful and forthcoming about how we could potentially assist them to reach whatever objectives they have. The second practice is a strong respect for their human rights. We must respect the human rights of all individuals, which include those individuals with whom we may disagree.

Alejandro Palac...: [35:08](#)

The third point is conflict of interest. Advocates must avoid any conflict of interest that may arise from the nature of the work that we do, and we should not engage in activities that benefit either us personally or the organization at the expense of the cause for which we are advocating. Lastly, I want to emphasize on this final point. We must be accountable for the impact of our actions and ensure that our actions do not have unintended consequences. We should be accountable for the positive and the negative results of our advocacy work. I'm not saying that we do not make mistakes. Those things do occur.

Alejandro Palac...: [36:21](#)

However, when they do occur, we need to hold ourselves accountable so we can change them. We are aware and mindful

that these may occasionally occur, but accountability is key because we should always strive for perfection. Even though no one's perfect, striving for perfection is part of our pursuit of excellence. We must protect the confidentiality of information shared with victims and survivors, especially including personally identifying information and the very sensitive data that is shared with us. Be very mindful of the fact that those that we serve share with us very delicate information. When that occurs, we must obtain informed consent from individuals before using any of their information, including their stories.

Alejandro Palac...: [37:30](#)

I do share stories from my experience in my trainings, when I have informed consent. However, I do not violate the confidentiality of the victims by providing any names or identifying information. Respect for diversity is the next point. We must respect the diversity of perspectives and experiences within the communities that we work with. We should seek to amplify as much as possible the voice of marginalized groups and ensure that our work is inclusive and equitable. Finally, collaboration and partnership are essential. This is the third time that I say this today: there's no single advocate nor agency that can do it all. We as advocates should seek to collaborate and partner with different nonprofits or systems-based organizations and individuals who can help us achieve common objectives. We should be open to learning from others and sharing knowledge and resources so we can provide the best services to those that need us.

Alejandro Palac...: [38:39](#)

I'm going to pivot now to professionalism and the pursuit of excellence. Professionalism is an important aspect of advocacy ethics because it refers to the conduct, attitudes, and qualities that reflect the values and the standards of advocacy. As advocates, we should maintain high ethical standards that adhere to our code of ethics. Professionalism requires us as advocates to be honest, transparent, and accountable for our work. As advocates, we must maintain integrity and avoid any potential activities that could compromise the reputation of the agencies, organizations, and offices that we work for. Professionalism does require advocates to act with honesty and to be fair and impartial.

Alejandro Palac...: [39:48](#)

Cultural competency is the ability of individuals and organizations to understand, respect, and effectively communicate with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. We all come from different cultures and backgrounds, and cultural competency requires us to be open to understanding the diversity of the communities that we serve. This includes different cultures, different languages,

different beliefs, and not least importantly, different values. It's centered on that openness to seeing things differently.

- Alejandro Palac...: [40:30](#) What are some of the common barriers to ethical decision making? First and foremost, we need to remove the "judgement" factor. Ethical decision making becomes a skill with practice: it's not straightforward. However, trying towards understanding ethical principles and the relevant laws or regulations is the only way to start to practice ethics.
- Alejandro Palac...: [41:11](#) Without this understanding, individuals and organizations may potentially hold conflicting values, making it difficult to decide which value should be prioritize in any given situation. This may unfortunately lead to ethical dilemmas where there may is no clear right or wrong answer. And without recognizing these common barriers to making an ethical decision, emotions such as fear, anger, or anxiety can cloud judgment, making it even more difficult to make a rational decision. This all can definitely happen to individuals and organizations who make choices that are not consistent with their ethical practices.
- Alejandro Palac...: [42:06](#) Now I'll move on to talk about boundaries. Boundaries create and sustain a survivor-centered care. When we talk about these boundaries in victim services, we refer to the guidelines and the limits that must be respected by us as victim services providers to maintain a relationship with those that we serve, while ensuring that the services are ethical, safe, and effective.
- Alejandro Palac...: [42:36](#) These boundaries help ensure that victim services providers do not cross professional, legal, or ethical lines while providing those services. One example that I can share actually led to some pretty bad burnout on my part. At that point in time in the shelter where I used to work, the program didn't have funding for work cellphones. I was a bright and shiny new advocate trying to end domestic violence, which led me to violate professional boundaries and share my personal phone number. I started receiving calls from those to whom I was providing services. We as individuals are not crisis hotlines. That's not what we do. That can lead us, and certainly led me to vicarious trauma burnout.
- Alejandro Palac...: [43:40](#) These are very real situations that we may think when talking about professional boundaries. External boundaries set the foundation for empowerment, and internal boundaries support professionals to stay in their roles longer. When those internal boundaries are violated, it can often lead to potential burnout and vicarious trauma. Finally, appropriate boundaries uphold the framework of technical practices. It can be difficult to set

boundaries. Being in a helping profession can make it very difficult for us to establish clear boundaries. We need to understand that our external boundaries are our professional role, duties and expectations, methods of contact, availability, hours of operation, what topics are discussed in professional settings, and physical distance. Things like “you can reach me at this number during these work hours. If it’s after hours, if I receive an e-mail, voicemail, or a text message, I will be responding during my next work hours.” Physical contact boundaries are the most important!

Alejandro Palac...: [45:27](#)

So what are the actions that you can take to empower survivors while respecting and maintaining boundaries? Empowerment is based on not over-helping or being a savior. We cannot save them, that’s not what we do. We help survivors by uplifting their voice, staying in our own lane, supporting their choices (even if we disagree), reminding them of their agency, helping them reinstate control over their lives, and maintaining high respect at all times.

Alejandro Palac...: [46:30](#)

How do we set the stage for external boundaries? First and foremost, we explain our role succinctly and clearly. What is it that you can do? What is it that you cannot do? We need to create clear and real expectations and remember that knowledge is power. Share resources and appropriate referrals with your survivors. Those of you who have been at my training on the neurobiology of trauma know the importance of validation and normalizing their experience. Internal boundaries support us to stay longer in this field. First, they help us to understand that the nature of the work that we’re doing, being exposed to other individuals’ trauma can have an emotional toll, diminishing our levels of empathy, and impacting our control over our emotions. We need to be mindful about our extensions and our limitations.

Alejandro Palac...: [47:35](#)

We all have limitations. We cannot do it all. We need to be very clear and knowledgeable about what our own limitations are. Finally, our personal expectations impact us, and we need to be prepared. Internal boundaries are emotional, mental, and physiological. All of this makes sense on paper, but it can be very challenging. Our dedication and our commitment should not impact the work that we do in a way that getting attached is detrimental. If you feel like you are getting attached to an individual or to a case, and it’s impacting the services that you are providing to other individuals, you need to take a step back and have a conversation with a coworker or with your lead. We are always dedicated and committed, of course, but we should

not get attached in a way that is detrimental or has an impact on the services that we provide to others.

- Alejandro Palac...: [48:46](#) We need to be mindful about wanting to save, fix, heal, or solve any issue that those who we serve have. We listen to understand, not just listen to reply to them with our opinion, and we then uplift their voice. Remember, we can only do so much. Let's do our very best to help, not to save, not fix them because nothing is wrong with them. Something has happened to them, but there's nothing wrong with them. We should not try to fix them. We do not solve their situation for them. Our work is filled with connection and that leads to empathy. At NOVA, we talk about something called strategic empathy, which means that we have the empathy to listen to what they have to say, the intent to empower through the services that they need, but at the same time we set very clear boundaries.
- Alejandro Palac...: [50:14](#) We care for our survivors, but we need to care for ourselves as well. Self-care is ethical because it is a part of understanding and knowing our boundaries. Don't forget about your digital self. Remember that on average, we check our phones 262 times per day. Are we reading something that we need to or are we just numbly scrolling? Are we doing this to get our minds into something different that's not related to our work and do it as a form of self-care? What's the motive behind that? Finally, Remember that appropriate boundaries uphold the framework of ethical practices.
- Lytaria Walker: [51:28](#) Thank you Mr. Palacios, for your presentation this morning. We will now take a few questions from the audience. If you would like to ask a question, please type your question in the Q&A box and we will read them aloud. There will be a short delay before the first question is announced. Please ensure to type your question in the Q&A box. It's easier to follow than typing it in the chat box.
- Alejandro Palac...: [52:10](#) I want to readdress the fact that on occasions, and I've used this concept for quite a while now, we engage with our phones through numb scrolling, which is basically what many of us individuals who are exposed to secondary vicarious trauma do on occasions to not deal with the current emotions or whatever else is on our minds in regards to that exposure and locations. We may even lose track of time, and that's not the most appropriate or healthy thing to do with our time
- Lytaria Walker: [53:04](#) We have a question in the chat in the Q&A box: "These ethics webinars have been excellent guidance for us as volunteer

advocates. What other resources could we turn to if we're seeking guidance on ethics?"

- Alejandro Palac...: [53:19](#) That's a great question. I would suggest that you can reach out to us at NOVA through our Office for Victim Advocacy Ethics, where we can provide that support and that guidance based on our NOVA code of ethics. I want to provide the option of having NOVA as a resource for you all.
- Alejandro Palac...: [53:49](#) Dana asked a question: "Do you have any input on how to address a person who does not want to help themselves?" Yes. I have been in that situation on a couple of occasions, and we can only do so much. I suggest that we address the situation by sharing some pieces of advice and information that can be useful to this person, but of course they need to make the decision to help themselves. That decision may require days, weeks, or even months. The most important thing is to, as appropriate, remind this person that when they are ready, you'll be there for them. Just because they don't want to help themselves at this point in time, the door will stay open for when they may be ready to receive that assistance.
- Alejandro Palac...: [55:02](#) Next question: "How would you address a situation where a former client is requesting to be a friend or a follower on social media and wants to keep in touch?" Those situations also do occur. That is a very personal decision that I would suggest should be based on the type of services that were provided, how long it has been since those services were terminated, and if there's ever a need for this person to receive services again, make sure that you are not involved with those situations because there are now dual relationships at play. We're humans, we interact with each other, and that's ok. It is a very personal and delicate decision to make because if you give it a go and accept this person on social media, this person now has access to everything that you upload to your social media.
- Alejandro Palac...: [56:26](#) "What are the responsibilities to request information from law enforcement authorities?" Well, that depends because it will likely be based on the policies and the practices of local law enforcement or other local agencies as required by law.
- Lytaria Walker: [57:07](#) Unfortunately we have run out of time and we will need to conclude this morning's webinar. I do want to extend a very gracious thank you to Mr. Palacios for taking the time today to provide this great presentation for us. Thank you listeners for joining today's webinar as well. Once the webinar concludes, you will be prompted to complete a survey. We appreciate your feedback as this helps us to improve upon future webinars. If

you'd like to receive invitations for DPRR webinars and receive the latest news and information from the director of prevention, resilience and readiness, please go to DPRR's [website@armyresilience.army.mil](mailto:website@armyresilience.army.mil) and sign up for notifications there. We will be posting the webinar presentation in the chat box shortly and it will also be emailed to all registered participants. Thank you again for joining us today and have a wonderful rest of your day. Bye now.