BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM ADVOCATES AND SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS

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Building Capacity to Reduce Sexual Victimization by Promoting Collaboration Among Victim Advocates and Sex Offender Management Practitioners

An OVW-Supported Initiative
To enhance community capacity to jointly address sexual victimization – specifically through collaboration between sexual assault victim advocates and sex offender management professionals.

OVERARCHING GOAL OF THE INITIATIVE
OBJECTIVES OF THE INITIATIVE

- Explore perspectives, practice trends, strengths and challenges regarding collaboration
- Assist with facilitating cross-disciplinary dialogue, collaboration
- Disseminate information, tools to the field
- Provide TTA to promote collaboration
TODAY’S SESSION

- Context for, overview of project
- Findings from needs assessments completed by victim advocates and sex offender treatment providers
  - Perspectives on collaboration
  - Potential shared goals
  - Current trends, practices regarding collaboration
  - Barriers, strengths, needs
- Examples of collaboration at national, local levels
- Available TTA, next steps
TODAY’S PRESENTERS

Ms. Karen Baker  
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Ms. Maia Christopher  
Executive Director, Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers  
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WHY COLLABORATE?
EMOTIONAL REASON – MY FAMILY
To what extent do you believe multidisciplinary approaches are effective in reducing and preventing sexual violence?

- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Not at all effective
BELIEF IN EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Victim advocates: 87%
Sex offender treatment providers: 96%
Designed to explore

- Cross-disciplinary understandings about sex offender management- and survivor-related issues
- Perspectives about collaboration
- Current practices, barriers, supports
- Need for TTA
THREE NATIONAL SAMPLES

- Victim advocates (N=323)
- Sex offender treatment providers (N=370)
- Probation/parole officers (N=166)
KEY FINDINGS

Victim advocates and sex offender treatment providers
SHARED GOALS ARE VITAL FOR COLLABORATION
Do you believe that victim advocates and sex offender management professionals hold similar beliefs about goals that they could jointly share?

- Definitely
- Somewhat
- No
TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU BELIEVE VICTIM ADVOCATES AND SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS COULD SHARE THE FOLLOWING GOALS?

- Increasing community safety
- Reducing recidivism among known perpetrators
- Ensuring that the rights, needs, interests of survivors are addressed
- Increasing understanding/appreciation of one another's missions, roles, and responsibilities
- Preventing sexual violence from occurring in the first place
- Educating the public about sexual violence and its prevention
- Promoting well-informed sex offender management laws and policies
"TO WHAT EXTENT TO YOU BELIEVE VICTIM ADVOCATES AND SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS CURRENTLY SHARE THE FOLLOWING GOALS?"

- Increasing community safety
- Reducing recidivism among known perpetrators
- Ensuring that the rights, needs, interests of survivors are addressed
- Increasing understanding/appreciation of one another's missions, roles, and responsibilities
- Preventing sexual violence from occurring in the first place
- Educating the public about sexual violence and its prevention
- Promoting well-informed sex offender management laws and policies
A COMMON FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE ACROSS DISCIPLINES IS IMPORTANT
Victim advocates’ confidence understanding key sex offender management related issues

Sex offender treatment providers’ confidence understanding key survivor-related issues

Both groups’ confidence understanding ways victim advocates can inform, contribute to sex offender management efforts

Perceived benefit of additional knowledge from the other’s discipline
How confident do you believe victim advocates are in understanding sex offender management-related issues (e.g., perpetrator characteristics, motivators, offense-specific treatment and supervision)?

- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not confident
VICTIM ADVOCATES’ CONFIDENCE IN UNDERSTANDING SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT-RELATED ISSUES

Current sex offender management strategies, practices in your community
- 56%

Sex offender registration and notification laws, processes
- 73%

What probation/parole supervision for perpetrators entails
- 58%

What treatment for perpetrators entails
- 53%

Research on what works to reduce sex offender recidivism
- 52%

Understanding perpetrators of sex offenses
- 82%

Percentage indicating moderate to great deal of confidence
POLLING QUESTION

- How confident do you believe sex offender treatment providers are in understanding survivor-related issues (e.g., impact of sexual assault, needs and interests of survivors, what works to promote healing/recovery, local resources)?
  - Very confident
  - Somewhat confident
  - Not confident
SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT PROVIDERS’ UNDERSTANDINGS OF SURVIVOR-RELATED ISSUES

- The impact of sexual violence on survivors/families: 97%
- The needs/interests of survivors of sexual violence: 90%
- "What works" to support survivors in healing, recovering: 83%
- Current resources in your community for survivors of sexual violence: 75%

Percentage indicating moderate to great deal of confidence
SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT PROVIDERS’ UNDERSTANDINGS OF SURVIVOR-RELATED ISSUES

- The impact of sexual violence on survivors/families: 97% indicating moderate to great deal of confidence.
- The needs/interests of survivors of sexual violence: 90%.
- "What works" to support survivors in healing, recovering: 83%.
- Current resources in your community for survivors of sexual violence: 75%.

Percentage indicating moderate to great deal of confidence.
Understanding ways in which victim advocates can inform or contribute to sex offender management efforts

- Victim advocates' confidence in their own understanding: 47%
- Victim advocates' confidence in sex offender treatment providers' understanding: 46%
- Sex offender treatment providers' confidence in their own understanding: 65%
- Sex offender treatment providers' confidence in victim advocates' understanding: 52%
### VICTIM ADVOCATES: POTENTIAL BENEFIT FROM TTA ABOUT KEY SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT-RELATED ISSUES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Victim advocates' beliefs</th>
<th>Sex offender treatment providers' beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current sex offender management strategies, practices in your community</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex offender registration and notification laws, processes</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What probation/parole supervision for perpetrators entails</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What treatment for perpetrators entails</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research on what works to reduce sex offender recidivism</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding perpetrators of sex offenses</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage indicating belief in moderate to great benefit
SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS: POTENTIAL BENEFIT FROM TTA ABOUT KEY SURVIVOR-RELATED ISSUES

- The impact of sexual violence on survivors/families: 73% moderate to great benefit, 96% overall
- The needs/interests of survivors of sexual violence: 81% moderate to great benefit, 95% overall
- "What works" to support survivors in healing, recovering: 76% moderate to great benefit, 95% overall
- Current resources in your community for survivors of sexual violence: 69% moderate to great benefit, 92% overall

- Sex offender treatment providers' beliefs about their own benefit
- Victim advocates' perceptions about benefit for sex offender management professionals
POTENTIAL BENEFIT FROM TTA TO UNDERSTAND WAYS IN WHICH VICTIM ADVOCATES CAN INFORM OR CONTRIBUTE TO SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT EFFORTS

Victim advocates' beliefs about themselves
- 87%

Victim advocates' beliefs about sex offender management professionals
- 92%

Sex offender treatment providers' beliefs about themselves
- 86%

Sex offender treatment providers' beliefs about victim advocates
- 88%

Percentage indicating belief in moderate to great benefit
Confident regarding own discipline-specific information
Less confident about understanding cross-discipline information
Limited confidence about how advocates can inform, contribute to sex offender management
Believe TTA on cross-discipline issues can benefit:
- Themselves
- Fellow practitioners
- Counterparts

Believe targeted TTA can enhance understanding of ways in which they can collaborate
COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN VICTIM ADVOCATES AND SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT PROVIDERS

What are some practical examples?
How often does collaboration between victim advocates and sex offender management professionals occur in your community?

- Always
- Often
- Rarely
- Never
“HOW OFTEN DOES COLLABORATION BETWEEN VICTIM ADVOCATES AND SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS OCCUR IN YOUR COMMUNITY?”

Victim advocates’ perceptions
- Rarely/never: 60%
- Sometimes: 29%
- Always/often: 11%

Sex offender treatment providers’ perceptions
- Rarely/never: 55%
- Sometimes: 37%
- Always/often: 8%
“ABOUT WHICH ISSUES SHOULD VICTIM ADVOCATES COMMUNICATE WITH SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT PROVIDERS?”

- Concerns about victim contact, safety
- Key information about a perpetrator to guide safety planning for survivors
- Survivors' input to inform perpetrator treatment planning
- Suspicious behavior, potential violation of conditions
- A perpetrator's progress in treatment
- Family reunification

![Bar chart showing the percentage of victim advocates and treatment providers' agreement on various issues.](chart.jpg)
VICTIM ADVOCATES’ PERSPECTIVES REGARDING INCREASING AWARENESS OF (AND PROVIDING INSIGHTS INTO) SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT

Obtain a broad understanding about treatment (e.g., talk with a provider to obtain this)

Observe a treatment group to see what treatment "looks like"

Attend a treatment group as a guest speaker
Victim Advocates’ Perspectives Regarding Increasing Awareness of (and Providing Insights Into) Sex Offender Treatment

- Obtain a broad understanding about treatment (e.g., talk with a provider to obtain this)
- Observe a treatment group to see what treatment "looks like"
- Attend a treatment group as a guest speaker

Percentage of respondents who should do vs. have done each activity.
SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT PROVIDERS’ PERSPECTIVES: WAYS TO ENGAGE AND LEARN FROM VICTIM ADVOCATES

Talk with a victim advocate about goals, objectives, and processes of sex offender treatment

Talk with a victim advocate about what is known about perpetrators

Invite a victim advocate to serve as a guest speaker on victim-specific issues

Invite a victim advocate to observe a sex offender treatment group

- What treatment providers believe should occur

- What treatment providers have done
SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT PROVIDERS’ PERSPECTIVES: WAYS TO ENGAGE AND LEARN FROM VICTIM ADVOCATES

- Talk with a victim advocate about goals, objectives, and processes of sex offender treatment
- Inviting a victim advocate to observe a sex offender treatment group
- Invitation to serve as a guest speaker on victim-specific issues
- Communication with a victim advocate about what is known about perpetrators
- Discussion about goals, objectives, and processes of sex offender treatment

Chart showing the percentage of treatment providers who believe certain activities should occur and the percentage who have actually done so.
FREQUENCY OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN VICTIM ADVOCATES AND SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT PROVIDERS: TREATMENT PROVIDERS’ PERSPECTIVES

- **Never, do not know who they are**: 25%
- **Never, do not see the need**: 1%
- **Rarely**: 28%
- **Varially, "as needed"**: 31%
- **Often**: 10%
FREQUENCY OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN VICTIM ADVOCATES AND SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT PROVIDERS: VICTIM ADVOCATES’ PERSPECTIVES

- Often: 11%
- Rarely: 28%
- Variably, "as needed": 22%
- Never, do not know who they are: 29%
- Never, do not see the need: 3%
EXTENT TO WHICH TREATMENT PRACTICES CAN BE IMPROVED TO BE MORE VICTIM-CENTERED: SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT PROVIDERS' PERCEPTIONS

- A great deal: 40%
- A moderate amount: 47%
- A limited amount: 12%
- None: 1%
“VICTIM ADVOCATES AND SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS SHOULD COLLABORATE MORE TO ENHANCE VICTIM-CENTERED RESPONSES TO CASES INVOLVING SEXUAL VIOLENCE”

Victim Advocates
- Strongly agree: 64%
- Agree: 34%
- Disagree/Strongly disagree: 2%

Sex Offender Treatment Providers
- Strongly agree: 66%
- Agree: 32%
- Disagree/Strongly disagree: 2%
FACTORS THAT EITHER HINDER OR SUPPORT COLLABORATION
What are some of the barriers to collaboration between victim advocates and sex offender management professionals?
Lack of clarity about respective roles, responsibilities
Limited/no exposure to promising examples, models
No written policies/MOUs
Lack of cross-training opportunities
Demanding workloads
Limited opportunities to interact

MOST COMMONLY CITED BARRIERS

Victim advocates
Sex offender treatment providers
Lack of a common vision
Professional mistrust
Perceived competing interests
Language/terminology barriers
Competition for scarce resources
Lack of written resources to provide guidance, direction
**Most commonly cited**

- Respect for one another’s unique perspectives
- Clear understandings of their respective roles and responsibilities
- Identified ways in which their roles can be complementary
- Cross-training activities

**Other factors noted**

- Striving to address conflict when it arises
- Meeting routinely
- Mutual trust
- Shared vision
- Long history of collaboration
PROGRESS TOWARD “BRIDGING THE GAP”

- Considerable progress has been made
  - Sex offender treatment providers' perspectives: 6%
  - Victim advocates' perspectives: 8%

- Small but important steps have been taken
  - Sex offender treatment providers' perspectives: 39%
  - Victim advocates' perspectives: 32%

- Little to no progress has been made
  - Sex offender treatment providers' perspectives: 54%
  - Victim advocates' perspectives: 57%

- It is not necessary to bridge the gap
  - Sex offender treatment providers' perspectives: 2%
  - Victim advocates' perspectives: 2%

- There is no gap
  - Sex offender treatment providers' perspectives: 0%
  - Victim advocates' perspectives: 1%
“THE TIMING IS GOOD TO PROMOTE COLLABORATION BETWEEN VICTIM ADVOCATES AND SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS”

[Bar chart showing responses to the statement: Strongly agree/Agree, Strongly disagree/Disagree, I don't believe they should collaborate. The chart compares responses from victim advocates and sex offender treatment providers.]
MOVING FORWARD: BRIDGING THE GAP
EXAMPLES OF BRIDGING THE GAP

- National sexual abuse prevention initiatives
- Joint statements, position papers about responding to and preventing sexual violence
- Co-sponsored awards
- Co-sponsored conferences, events
- Partnerships on grant projects
- Public education, PSAs
- Representation of victim advocates on multidisciplinary sex offender management teams
Statewide oversight, consultative bodies
Functions, mandates vary
Multidisciplinary representation, including victim advocates
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency or Discipline</th>
<th>Broad Policy Teams</th>
<th>Issue-Specific Teams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical evaluation</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrections</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defense bar</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judiciary</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile justice</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law enforcement</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paroling authority</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Probation/Parole</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosecution</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social, child protective services</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim advocacy</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(CSOM, 2010)
To enhance case management of sex offenders and promote victim safety

- Originally composed of sex offender treatment providers and probation, parole officers
- Recognized need for perspectives, insights from victim advocates
- Nearly \( \frac{3}{4} \) of needs assessment respondents report that victim advocates are part of such teams
PROMOTING COLLABORATION AND VICTIM-CENTEREDNESS VIA LOCAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY CASE MANAGEMENT TEAMS

Team members take active steps to incorporate victim's safety needs and interests into case management decisions

The perspectives about victims/survivors are heard

Victim advocates are an equally valued partner on the team

Victim advocates' agreement

Sex offender treatment providers' agreement
CROSS-DISCIPLINARY ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLES

- ATSA Executive Director is Vice Chair of the NSVRC Advisory Council

- NSVRC Director is Co-Chair of ATSA Prevention Committee and member of the Executive Board of Directors
COLLABORATING FOR PREVENTION

National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

- Karen Baker, President
- Maia Christopher Past President
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sample Letter to the Editor #1

Date: [Redacted]

Dear Editor:

Jerry Sandusky, Penn State’s former football coach, is on trial for child sexual abuse against 10 boys over 15 years. I understand that an indictment of a organization, but Penn State and American values of honor, integrity, and respect for others.

Jerry Sandusky deeply values his reputation. State may have violated these sexual abuse allegations.

It would be expected to see the prosecution and conviction of abuse, even by an ex-athlete in the public eye.

I generally believe, however, that nei sample letter to the editor.

Sample Letter to the Editor #2

Date: [Redacted]

Dear Editor:

I have seen many of my friends working to stop sexual violence. I do this because I believe it is essential to find ways to prevent child sexual abuse. The people I know work very hard to make sure children are safe and protected from harm.

As the country continues to learn about the characteristics of child sexual abuse, we need to be aware of the risks and take steps to protect children. This involves speaking with teachers, parents, and other concerned citizens.

We need to work together to protect these children. We can make our city safer for everyone.

Sincerely,

[Name]
Gail Burns-Smith Award

National Sexual Violence Resource Center
www.NSVRC.org

Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers
www.ATSA.com
Advocate
Nurse
Leader
Connector
NAESV
NSVRC

E.D. of Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services (CONNSACS)

Gail Burns-Smith (1946-2009)
SUMMARY, NEXT STEPS
Emerging consensus

- Collaboration is important to reduce, prevent sexual violence
- Multiple shared goals are possible
- A common foundation of knowledge is beneficial, needed
- Collaboration can be improved, enhanced

The timing is good, help is needed
GREAT NEWS - TTA IS AVAILABLE!
Off-site support

Limited on-site assistance

Potential topics:
- Building, sustaining collaborative partnerships at the local level
- Cross-training

Contact Leilah Gilligan, Project Manager
lgilligan@cepp.com
Presentations at national conferences

- National Sexual Assault Conference
- Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers
  - TBD

Web-based resource package

Series of webinars

- Today’s was #1 of 4
QUESTIONS, COMMENTS?
THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

Please complete the evaluation after signing off.