

Center For Sex Offender Management

A Project of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice

The Collaborative Approach to Sex Offender Management

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Introduction

Most convicted sex offenders are released from the custody of the criminal justice system into the community at some point following sentencing or after a term of incarceration. Given time and opportunity, many of these offenders will continue to sexually reoffend. Therefore, a comprehensive and cohesive network of interventions must be in place to control their manipulative and sexually deviant behaviors. Only through collaborative approaches can those responsible for sex offender management contain these offenders and minimize the risk of future sexual victimization.

Collaboration in sex offender management is not a new concept. Practitioners and researchers have long recognized that only by venturing beyond traditional reactive, adversarial approaches to criminal justice can we address the complex nature of sex offending and the impact that sexual assault has on victims and society. In numerous jurisdictions, criminal justice agencies and community organizations have successfully forged partnerships, recognizing the enormous potential for impacting crime and reducing costs when agencies share information, develop common goals, create compatible internal policies to support those goals, and join forces to analyze problems and create responsive solutions.

Yet, collaboration in managing sex offenders is far from universal. Many localities, struggling to implement basic policies and practices related to sex offender management, may not consider collaborative approaches attainable. Even when agencies

are committed to working together, they may be entrenched in organizational structures and philosophical perspectives that threaten collaborative thinking or activities.

This brief explores why collaboration is essential in managing sex offenders in the community and discusses the challenges of such an approach. It also addresses how jurisdictions can promote shared responsibility among key policymakers and practitioners for decision-making on offender management issues.

Why is Collaboration Essential to Managing Sex Offenders in the Community?

In "Partnering in Response to Sexual Violence," David D'Amora and Gail Burns-Smith note:

"Professionals in the treatment, victim advocacy, and criminal justice fields have struggled with the enormous scope of sexual violence for years. Each of these systems has worked to develop more effective approaches to address the individual and societal issues involved. A variety of successes have been achieved in each of these fields, including better treatment outcomes, changing social views, and more successful prosecution and accountability. At the same time, we have not been able to eliminate the problem. Despite our best efforts, sexual violence remains a pervasive societal problem, and, when the system responds inadequately to offender behavior, victims can be further hurt by system-induced trauma."

Established in June 1997, CSOM's goal is to enhance public safety by preventing further victimization through improving the management of adult and juvenile sex offenders who are in the community. A collaborative effort of the Office of Justice Programs, the National Institute of Corrections, the State Justice Institute, and the American Probation and Parole Association, CSOM is administered by the Center for Effective Public Policy.

Collaboration among stakeholders working with sexual assault victims and sex offenders is vital to confront continuously the secrecy, manipulation, and deception that characterize sexual offending behavior. However, justice system and community agencies have historically worked independently and sometimes at odds with each other in their efforts to manage offenders and protect victims. A collaborative approach requires that involved agencies operate interdependently, working in concert to minimize the ability of offenders to circumvent the goals of community management and maximize victim safety and support.

The sex offender management field is fairly united in the belief that the responsible management of sex offenders requires rigorous community supervision and sex offender-specific treatment. While collaboration among supervision officers and treatment providers is essential to managing this population, a host of other justice system and community agencies should be involved. For instance, victim advocates and service providers can speak to victim safety needs at all stages of offender management. Law enforcement officers are critical in gathering and interpreting evidence. Prosecutors make charging decisions and can refuse to accept pleas that downgrade charges to non-sexual assault cases. Judges are empowered to order offenders to receive the supervision and treatment that is paramount to reducing recidivism risk and enhancing public safety. Defense attorneys counsel offenders on probation and parole, explaining the expectations of the court (e.g., that their compliance with community supervision restrictions may reduce their risk of recidivism and incarceration). Those conducting physiological tests (e.g., polygraph or plethysmograph examinations) assist the courts, supervision officers, and treatment providers in monitoring offenders by encouraging them to disclose sexually deviant and criminal behavior committed while under community supervision. Criminal justice officials oversee registration and community notification of sex offenders, and may work with victim advocates to educate residents about convicted offenders living in their

neighborhoods and about preventing future victimization. A network of others, including families and significant others, and in juvenile cases, school staff and social services workers, may also assist in monitoring offenders in the community.

Collaboration at the case management and policy levels is the key to a comprehensive and cohesive response to victims and offenders. These entities must not only share information about each offender, but should also work together continually to evaluate the offender's progress and discuss whether modifications should be made in the offender's treatment contract and supervision plan, based on information they might learn from one another. Community management of sex offenders in some ways resembles a puzzle. Small pieces of information taken alone have little significance. However, when the pieces are put together, the picture that emerges often provides important information regarding the offender's activities.

What is Collaboration?

In daily use, the word "collaboration" is commonly interchanged with terms such as "networking," "cooperation," and "coordination." Chris Huxham, in *Collaborative Advantage*, provides definitions of these terms in an effort to distinguish collaboration.

- *Networking* is the exchange of information for mutual benefit.
- *Coordination* is the exchange of information and the altering of activities for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.
- *Cooperation* is the exchange of information, the altering of activities, and the sharing of resources for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.
- *Collaboration* is the exchange of information, the altering of activities, the sharing of resources, and the enhancement of the capacity of another for the mutual benefit of all and to achieve a common purpose.

It is *the effort to enhance the capacity of another* that makes collaboration different. Blank et al. (1992) differentiates among cooperation, coordination, and collaboration (see Table 1). They emphasize that collaboration is characterized by:

- mutual beneficial and well-defined relationships;
- common goals decided by all those involved;
- jointly developed structure, shared responsibility, and many levels of communication;
- comprehensive planning;
- mutual authority and accountability for success; and
- sharing of resources and rewards.

Collaboration thrives on divergent insights, offering a process through which parties can see various aspects of a problem, can explore their differences, and search for solutions (Gray, 1989). Collaborations involve formal and sustained commitment and rely on the conviction that, while retaining uniqueness and autonomy, organizations that share values and goals can often accomplish more by working together than on their own (Raley, 1993).

Jurisdictions and agencies should assess whether they are truly collaborating in their efforts to manage sex offenders. While all kinds of partnerships can be helpful in managing sex offenders, collaboration is the only approach with the highest potential to create comprehensive and cohesive responses to sex offenders that promotes public safety and reduces victimization.

Forming Collaboratives in an Adversarial System

The historically adversarial nature of relationships among some practitioners involved in sex offender management complicates fostering and maintaining collaboration. The “rules” of the criminal justice system often position parties as adversaries who seek to defend the interests of their individual disciplines. Criminal justice

professionals also may not be inclined to support efforts of those working on sex offender issues outside the legal system. Likewise, community-based agencies sometimes do not want to be involved in justice system initiatives. Many at the collaboration table also compete for shares of the same limited funding—such competition makes it hard for them to adopt an “all for one, for the greater good” attitude. Similarly, policymakers who face competitive election may find it difficult to have an “all for one” attitude with their non-elected colleagues, or colleagues who may be potential competitors for their positions.

Collaboration requires players to step out of adversarial roles in their pursuit of common goals. Despite obstacles, many agencies that are positioned as adversaries have established collaboratives to address specific issues in sex offender management (see Table 2 for a comparison of adversarial versus collaborative approaches (Gray, 1989)). For example, in the past, supervision agents and treatment providers restricted their face-to-face contacts. Now, many jurisdictions expect these practitioners to have ongoing face-to-face interactions to facilitate information sharing and case related decisions.

In the past, probation administrators, treatment providers, and directors of state advocacy organizations typically sought support from their state legislators solely for their own interests. Now, in some states, these policymakers jointly seek legislative support for initiatives related to sex offender management and victim recovery.

In the past, it was unheard of for private defense attorneys or public defenders to be part of collaborative solutions to sex offender management. Now, a few jurisdictions have successfully involved these practitioners on collaborative teams. In the past, judges and court administrators were hesitant to get involved in collaborative efforts because they viewed them as a threat to their judicial neutrality. Now, more judges and court administrators have found ways to preserve the decisional independence of the judiciary while participating in collaboratives.

Table 1: Distinguishing Features: Cooperation, Coordination, and Collaboration

	Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration
Vision and Relationships	Based on individual relationships that may be mandated by a third party.	Individual relationships are supported by the organizations they represent.	Commitment of organizations and their leaders is fully behind their representatives.
	Organizational missions and goals are not taken into account.	Mission and goals of the individual organizations are reviewed for compatibility.	Common mission and goals are created.
	Interactions occur as needed and may last indefinitely.	Interaction is usually around one specific project or task of definable length.	One or more projects are undertaken for longer-term results.
Structure, Responsibility, and Communication	Relationships are informal; each organization functions separately.	Organizations involved take on needed roles, but function relatively independently of each other.	New organizational structure and/or clearly defined and interrelated roles that constitute a formal division of labor are created.
	No joint planning is required.	Some project-specific planning is required.	Comprehensive planning is required that includes developing joint strategies and measuring success in terms of impact on the needs of those served.
	Information is conveyed as needed.	Communication roles are established and definite channels are created to facilitate interaction.	Many levels of communication are created beyond those needed to merely promote interaction, as clear information is a keystone of success.
Resources and Rewards	Resources are separate, serving the individual organization's needs.	Resources are acknowledged and can be made available to others for a specific project.	Resources are pooled or jointly secured for a longer-term effort that is managed by the collaborative structure.
	Rewards are mutually acknowledged.	Rewards are mutually acknowledged.	Organizations share in the products; more is accomplished jointly than could have been individually.
Authority and Accountability	Authority rests solely with individual organizations.	Authority rests with the individual organizations, but there is coordination among participants.	Authority is determined by the need to balance ownership by individual organizations with expediency to accomplish purpose.
	Leadership is unilateral and control is central.	Some sharing of leadership and control.	Leadership is dispersed and control is shared and mutual.
	All authority and accountability rests with the individual organizations, which act independently.	There is some shared risk, but most of the authority and accountability falls to the individual organizations.	Equal risk is shared by all organizations in the collaboration.

Nevertheless, moving beyond adversarial roles with some agencies or individuals may seem impossible. Rather than just giving up, however, many jurisdictions continue to struggle with how to involve all relevant disciplines in collaborative efforts, no matter how unwilling some entities seem to shift from their adversarial positions. Some jurisdictions have made an effort to facilitate communications with these agencies or individuals and seek their pledge to not subvert or undercut the collaborative team's work.

In cases where an individual on the team is undermining collaborative efforts, several jurisdictions have sought the involvement of more supportive practitioners from the same disciplines to counter or reconcile disagreements.

Table 2: Comparison of Adversarial and Collaborative Approaches

Adversarial	Collaborative
Rules position parties as adversaries.	Parties positioned as joint problem solvers.
Third parties intervene before issues are mature.	Issues identified before positions crystallize.
Characterized by positional bargaining.	Characterized by interest-based bargaining.
Facts used to buttress positions.	Joint search used to determine facts.
Characterized by polarization of parties and issues.	Characterized by search for underlying interests.
Face-to-face contact restricted among contending parties.	Face-to-face discussions encouraged among all.
Seeks winning arguments.	Seek workable options.
Yields all-or-nothing resolution of issues.	Yields resolution by integrating interests.
Narrows options quickly.	Broadens field of options.
Authority for decision rests with chosen judge.	Authority for decision rests with parties involved.
Characterized by suspicion and high emotion.	Characterized by respect and application of reason.
Parties often dissatisfied with outcome.	Outcome must be satisfactory to all parties.
Often fosters bitterness and long-term distrust.	Promotes trust and positive relationships.

Catalysts for Collaboration

Collaboration changes the way we work and requires a profound shift in our conception about how change is created. What drives agencies and individuals involved in the management of sex offenders in the community to make such monumental changes in the way they work? Criminal justice agencies may begin working together in order to carry out mandated requirements of sex offender legislation. Frustration with the ineffectiveness of sex offender management policies may result in a push for more appropriate responses and subsequent collaboration. Locality-wide teams may form to deal with public outrage about a particularly heinous crime. Grant funding requirements may serve as the impetus for agencies to collaborate. These are but a few examples of scenarios that could prompt the establishment of collaboratives.

Different Approaches to Team Work

To build a collaborative team, jurisdictions must identify and include those individuals and agencies that affect or are affected by sex offender management. The inclusion of these agencies and individuals is essential to developing sound policies, delivering effective

Registration and Notification Laws Serve as the Impetus for Collaboration

The emergence of registration and notification laws has facilitated the formation of new partnerships, as these laws have required certain agencies to forge working relationships where none existed previously—particularly among law enforcement and supervision agencies. These agencies are often required to share responsibility for notifying sex offenders of their duty to register, carrying out registration, and informing the community of the offender’s presence. Many agencies quickly learned that conducting notification about the presence of sex offenders in the community stirred tremendous emotional responses among citizens. The act of notification itself – the distribution of a letter, the use of Web sites, the hanging of a poster, or even door-to-door visits – brought forth a rush of public fear, anxiety, and questions. Increasingly, collaboration efforts among law enforcement, the victim advocacy community, treatment providers, and supervision officers have emerged to understand and deal with these community fears and needs. These “community notification teams” address the public’s broad needs—to understand how to protect themselves and their families, to understand the authority of the criminal justice system and its limits, to understand the nature of sexual offending behavior, and to understand the resources available to respond to victimization.

offender management, and responding to the needs of victims and the community. Collaboration in the management of sex offenders is needed on at least three levels, case management, local policy, and statewide policy.

Case management teams are the essential first level of collaboration, with the primary purpose of sharing information about specific

The Sex Offender Intensive Supervision Unit of New Haven, Connecticut, supervises high-risk adult sex offenders (age 16 and older) identified through risk assessment by probation and treatment staff. The supervision team consists of probation officers, three treatment providers, and a victim advocate. The addition of the advocate in 1998 was the result of collaboration among the state Court Support Services Division (which houses probation), treatment providers from the Center for the Treatment of Problem Sexual Behavior, and the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS). The advocate's role is to include systemically the victim's perspective in decision-making and to provide regular contact with victims and their families.

cases. Information is shared among those most closely involved with monitoring sex offenders under community supervision—supervision officers and treatment providers. In some communities, the case management team may also include polygraph examiners, victim advocates and other service providers, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers. Teams that manage juvenile sex offenders commonly include school counselors, staff, administrators, and child protection workers.

Local policy teams address policies and practices that guide how the system manages offenders—from the investigation of a sexual assault to the supervision of the offender post-conviction. These teams benefit from involving officials representing every aspect of

The Fort Peck Tribes of Montana are working to establish a more comprehensive sex offender case management team. The tribes have collaborative structures in place that are strengthened by a culturally sensitive, victim-centered approach to services. For example, the Child Protection Team (CPT) meets once a week to discuss juvenile cases. It includes representatives from Tribal Criminal Investigations, courts, FBI, Social Services, Juvenile Services, Crisis Center, Indian Health Services, Tribal Mental Health, schools, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Seven CPT members, along with a judge, form the CSOM Resource Site team. While the Resource Site team is committed to improving responses to sexual assault, they recognize there is a substantial amount of difficult work ahead of them. Not only do they have to determine how to best coordinate tribal, state, and federal cases, but the community lacks adequate resources to provide for basic supervision and treatment of sex offenders, particularly juveniles. To share responsibility for day-to-day coordination tasks, they are hoping to expand the team to include broader representation from federal, state, and tribal agencies and the community.

the system, including law enforcement, prosecution, defense attorneys, the judiciary, corrections, supervision agencies, treatment providers, victim advocates, child protective services, and other service providers. These teams sometimes form as a component of an umbrella group designed to improve community response to sexual violence.

Statewide policy teams are generally formed to address policies and procedures at a state level, including the establishment standards that apply to all localities, setting standards for the selection of contract treatment providers, establishing protocols for the conduct of community notification meetings, or creating guidelines for the supervision of sex offenders. These teams mirror local policy teams, representing all components of the criminal justice system and including strong participation of the community, and in particular, victim advocacy organizations.

In Oregon in 1990, participants at a conference for probation and parole officers conceived the idea of a statewide "sex offender supervision network" and subsequently obtained support from the state Department of Corrections. The network has since expanded to include treatment professionals, prison counselors, prosecutors, victim representatives, police, and members of the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision. The network works on development of consistent sex offender case supervision, evaluation and treatment, and training and skill enhancement opportunities for officers supervising sex offenders. The network provides a forum for discussion of departmental policies, interdepartmental collaboration, legislative initiatives, and resources for public education efforts. It also provides statewide training, promotes research, and is working on the development of statewide standards for community supervision of sex offenders.

Issues to Consider in Developing Collaborative Approaches

As agencies and individuals within a jurisdiction begin working as a team to create more effective sex offender management strategies, they should consider:

- *Team composition*—Agency representatives with decision-making authority are essential to the team's

ability to collaborate on issues that impact policy and practice. Team membership should also extend to those who carry out critical day-to-day activities, as they often provide valuable and creative solutions to problems.

- *Stakeholder incentives*—Successful engagement of stakeholders requires an assessment of what each person brings to the effort and, in turn, what they have to gain from it. Their continual involvement requires the constant monitoring of goals and outcomes to ensure that individual and group needs are being met.
- *Explicit mission and goals*—One essential first task is the definition of team mission and goals. Because the team is multi-disciplinary with members who serve a variety of interests, the mission is central to identifying the common ground that all perspectives can support. Once the mission is clear, the team can develop long- and short-term goals. The work of defining a mission and goals typically does not happen at one meeting. Rather, it emerges over time and through discussions among group members.
- *Vision*—A vision statement guides short- and long-term collaborative work and goes hand-in-hand with the creation of a mission and goals. A vision statement asks team members to consider what a more effective system of sex offender management would look like in their jurisdiction. When a team gets bogged down in their work and loses focus, a vision statement can help remind team members of what they are seeking to accomplish.
- *Operating norms*—As with any group, it is important at the outset to agree upon a set of operating norms. These can be as simple as how often, when, and where the group will meet, and as complex as how team discussions will be managed to ensure that all members have an equal opportunity for input. Issues such as whether designees can attend these meetings should be discussed, as well as the expectation that members have of one another.

- *Team structure*—There are a variety of structures that teams create to accomplish their work. These can take the form of an oversight group, a subcommittee structure, or working groups. As larger teams develop more complicated substructures, they must also develop methods to communicate across groups.
- *Communication*—Constant and open communication among team members provides an opportunity for members to understand the goals and activities of others' agencies. It also facilitates the sharing of knowledge and can serve as an avenue for creative problem solving and support. Communication often leads to cross-training and greater integration of activities among the personnel of the involved agencies.

Jefferson County, Colorado, has established several mechanisms through which system wide actors and advocates can work together to ensure the most effective management of juvenile sex offenders.

A sex offender working group, known as *SAFE—Jeff Co.* (Sexual Abuse Free Environment—Jefferson County) represents probation, law enforcement, schools, the Division of Youth Corrections, victim advocates, the county Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC), human services, and treatment providers. The deputy district attorney responsible for juvenile sex crimes chairs this group. *SAFE Jeff Co.* addresses broad system issues and capitalizes on the strength of the collaborative to address identified problems and needs. It meets monthly and has several active subcommittees that meet with greater frequency.

The *Sex Assault Review Team* meets monthly for the purpose of reviewing in depth each juvenile offender who is under pretrial supervision at the JAC. The meetings include issue identification and active problem solving on a variety of treatment, school, and supervision issues. Team members include JAC supervision staff, school personnel, the supervisor of the specialized probation unit, the director of the victim advocacy center, staff from the county Probation Department's Pretrial Services Unit, the victim-witness coordinator from the county District Attorney's office, staff from the Division of Youth Corrections, treatment providers, social services personnel, and the juvenile sexual assault prosecutor.

The *Jefferson County Probation Juvenile Supervision Team*, a specialized unit within the probation department, meets regularly to coordinate their activities, review cases under post-trial supervision, and provide guidance and support in the management of cases.

- *Consensus*—In collaborative processes, decision making by consensus of participants is essential. Consensus builds both internal and external support, maintains the cohesion of the collaboration, explicitly provides for conflict resolution, and offers the greatest promise for consistency in policy development and program implementation (Gray, 1989). Some collaborative teams use the “thumbs” process for coming to consensus. In this process, team members first share their opinions about a particular issue. “Thumbs up” means they are in favor of the proposal, “thumbs down” indicates they are opposed, and “thumbs sideways” means they don’t feel strongly either way. Team members then discuss the issue until they come to a solution agreeable to all.
- *Strategic planning*—Having defined the mission and goals, collaborators must develop a workplan made up of activities with concrete deliverables and timelines that assign individual responsibility for carrying out those activities. Workplans are vital documents that change constantly as work is accomplished, plans evolve, and new issues emerge.
- *Leadership and staffing*—The collaborative team needs a leader or a “champion”—a person with the time, resources, position, skills, and energy to propel the progress of the team. Without effective leadership, the best of intentions will succumb to competing demands and interests. Collaborative teams also need staffing support for activities such as planning meeting agendas, reminding members of meeting dates, and preparing meeting records to serve as institutional memory. Staffing can be provided by a single person or shared by several members of the team.
- *Institutionalized collaboration*—To ensure the continued commitment by the agencies represented within the team, signed agreements which highlight joint decision making, articulate agreement of the team’s mission, and outline specific

roles and contributed resources are recommended.

- *Evaluation*—Successful collaborations are evolutionary in nature and should adapt to the changing environments and cultures in which they operate. Circumstances may change because of unforeseeable events or by virtue of the progress of the collaborative effort itself. Process and outcome measures should be instituted to evaluate the effectiveness of the effort, so teams can institute changes to their approach as needed. Tracking outcomes gives team members a sense of their accomplishments along the way.

The Colorado’s Sex Offender Management Board was legislatively established in 1992. The board includes representatives from the Judicial Department, the Department of Corrections, Human Services, the Department of Public Safety, as well as district attorneys, public defenders, treatment providers, police, polygraph examiners, community corrections staff, and victim advocates. Its mission is to advance the management of sex offenders in the state and ensure the effectiveness of sex offender programs and services. In 1998, the Board published statewide standards for systematic management and treatment of sex offenders. In 1999, it expanded its standards to include lifetime supervision and the management of developmentally disabled sex offenders.

Challenges to Overcome

The process of facilitating collaboration rarely is without difficulties. The recruitment and retention of stakeholders presents challenges, especially considering the time demands on participants at the early stages of team development. Maintaining commitment can also be problematic when deliverables are slow and sometimes go without notice. Power disparities, differing perceptions of risk, and changing political and institutional cultures present some of the most challenging impediments to collaborative efforts (Gray, 1989). D’Amora and Burns-Smith (1999) point to several additional factors which can impede collaborative initiatives, including turf fears and ideological differences, uncertainty about how to effectively utilize shared information, secondary trauma among team

members, system conflicts, and insufficient resources to support the effort.

Involved parties must recognize that shifting from a fragmented response to a more collaborative approach is a long-term process of building upon successes, failures, and growing relationships among collaborators. It is critical that collaborators develop strategies to address challenges. Some strategies may include:

- promoting local and state level discussions to explore how collaboration can help improve responses to both victims and offenders;
- encouraging cross- and multi-disciplinary training among involved justice system and community agencies;
- promoting the establishment of information sharing and networking forums for professionals across disciplines;
- building an appreciation and respect for the work of professionals from other involved disciplines;
- supporting research and evaluation on the impact of collaboration in this field;
- helping agencies build their capacity to collaborate in this area; and
- encouraging jurisdictions to access available resources and technical assistance to promote collaboration on sex offender management.

Laboratories for Collaboration

A number of jurisdictions that have developed innovative practices in the field of collaborative sex offender management have been identified by the Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM) as resource sites. They represent a diverse demographic mix of urban, rural, and tribal communities. While each jurisdiction approaches sex offender management in a unique way, common elements of the project's resource sites include:

- goals that are directed toward public safety and offender accountability—this

involves a deliberate, comprehensive approach to sex offender management;

- progress on enhancing collaborative efforts—the ideal sex offender management team includes representatives from probation and parole, victim advocacy, treatment, the judiciary, prosecution, law enforcement, the defense bar, polygraph examiners, and legislators (juvenile focused teams should also include representatives from schools and social services);
- continual assessment and improvement of their sex offender management practices;
- a workplan that reflects an articulated mission, as well as the team's values, and goals;
- a data collection effort that is outcome based and directed toward identifying policies and practices which help prevent future victimization; and
- plans to institutionalize efforts to ensure that the work outlives current team membership.

The Jackson County, Oregon, sex offender management team includes probation and parole officers, community-based treatment providers, polygraph examiners, deputy district attorneys (who prosecute all of the sex crimes), police representatives, victim treatment providers, the juvenile offender treatment team, and a representative from the state's Child Protective Service agency.

The team holds monthly meetings. Until recently, these meetings had been facilitated by probation officers. The team subsequently decided to elect a moderator for a six-month term, and then rotate this position. Network meetings focus on policy, collaborative procedural issues, individual cases, and strategies to meet local needs. Although judges are not formal members of the team, they are kept informed by team members. The judges' understanding of issues and offender dynamics are regarded as central to the team's effectiveness.

The Jackson County team collaborates at the policy level and in daily activities. Daily activities are carried out by a "core team," which consists of parole or probation officers, private treatment providers and private polygraph examiners (who have been formally recognized as approved treatment providers and polygraph examiners). The core team maintains frequent telephone and memo contact with one another. In addition, the treatment providers and probation and parole staff hold monthly meetings to review individual cases.

The specialized probation officers have also formed their own informal "team within a team." They meet weekly to review problems, generate ideas, provide emotional support, and offer informal peer supervision.

CSOM is assisting its resource sites in advancing their collaborative practices through the exploration of new initiatives, information sharing, training, and technical assistance. CSOM is also inventorying, documenting, and analyzing the accomplishments of the sites and making available these lessons to others in the field.

Conclusion

Developing a collaborative approach to sex offender management is a daunting but essential undertaking. Building relationships among individuals representing different agencies and interests—many of whom have traditionally played adversarial roles—is a key challenge. However, agencies charged with the management of sex offenders are compelled today more than ever to cross traditional lines in their work toward a common mission—to end further sexual victimization.

Contact CSOM for further information on how the project can support state and local collaborative efforts in your jurisdiction to more effectively manage sex offenders under criminal justice supervision in the community.

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