

## Engaging Advocates and Other Victim Service Providers in the Community Management of Sex Offenders

March 2000

### Introduction

Supervision agencies, treatment providers, and others who manage sex offenders in the community traditionally have been offender-focused in their work. They utilize a variety of methods, which include monitoring, use of sanctions, and treatment, to minimize the possibility of reoffense by offenders. Yet, they must also work to ensure that these methods do not re-traumatize victims of sexual assault or inadvertently jeopardize the safety of others. The most comprehensive and responsible approaches to community management of sex offenders are those which place paramount importance on addressing the needs and safety of past and potential victims of sexual assault.<sup>1</sup> With this in mind, justice system agencies and sex offender treatment providers in several jurisdictions have begun to join with victim advocacy programs and other victim service organizations to ensure that victim safety and support are the primary goals of their interventions with sex offenders.

Victim advocates are eminently qualified to assist in managing sex offenders from a victim-focused perspective, due to their history of working with and on behalf of sexual assault survivors. Their knowledge of the needs of victims can enhance sex offender management policy development, professional training initiatives, day-to-day practices, and community notification and education efforts. In addition, advocates and other victim service providers offer services to survivors to respond to issues that may arise when their perpetrators are released on probation or parole.

Anecdotal data (as cited throughout this paper) suggest that involving advocates and other victim service providers in the community management of sex offenders can facilitate more informed case supervision and treatment decisions, a greater degree of protection for victims and the public, and aid for victims in recovery.<sup>2</sup> Yet, this practice is far from mainstream. Many jurisdictions are struggling to implement basic policies and practices related to sex offender management and have not considered how to, or why they should, incorporate victim advocacy and support into this work. Conversely, advocates and other victim service providers often do not view collaboration with sex offender management programs as a priority. Despite the limited implementation of this practice, however, it is worthy of consideration by practitioners because of the promise it offers in enhancing the effectiveness of sex offender management in order to increase victim and public safety.

The purpose of this paper is to provide information, ideas, and resources that will encourage agencies managing sex offenders in the community to consider the benefits and feasibility of involving victim advocates and other victim service providers in their work. It is also meant to encourage advocates and other victim service providers to assess whether gaps in victim safety and support exist in their local sex offender management programs and to consider ways to address these gaps.

---

<sup>1</sup> Center for Sex Offender Management, *The Community Management of the Sex Offender: An Overview of Current and Promising Practice* (Silver Spring, MD, 2000) p. 1.

---

<sup>2</sup> The majority of practitioners who contributed information for this paper are members of the Center for Sex Offender Management's (CSOM) Resources Site teams. Currently, 16 jurisdictions are CSOM Resource Sites. They were selected because they have shown innovation in their management of sex offenders. For more information about these sites, contact CSOM to obtain a copy of *Case Studies on the Center for Sex Offender Management's National Resource Sites*. Beyond those jurisdictions mentioned in this brief, there may be other communities that involve advocates and other victim service providers in sex offender management. These communities are invited to contact CSOM to share information about their collaborative practices.

*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, and the State Justice Institute, CSOM is administered by the Center for Effective Public Policy and the American Probation and Parole Association.*

# Promoting Responses that Protect and Support Survivors

Sexual assault victim advocacy represents a philosophy of working with individuals and institutions to ensure that victims receive appropriate services based on their articulated needs. This philosophy also assures that community and governmental bodies are responsive to victims' needs and establish policies that condemn and prevent sexual assault.<sup>3</sup> Advocates help ensure that interventions that affect victims focus on promoting victim safety and well-being. In conjunction with other victim service providers, they give individual survivors access to and provide a wide range of services. On a systemic level, advocates encourage the justice system and community agencies to improve effectiveness of coordinated responses to sexual assault. They challenge practices that could harm victims and work to institutionalize change that supports survivors in making their own decisions about their protection and recovery.<sup>4</sup>

## PROVISION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM ADVOCACY AND SERVICES

**Community-based sexual assault victim advocacy programs** (often called sexual assault or rape crisis centers) typically are the primary local providers of advocacy services for victims of sexual assault. They generally are nonprofit, non-governmental organizations<sup>5</sup> that work to combat sexual victimization through provision of services, advocacy on behalf of victims, and training, education, and public awareness initiatives.

These programs usually offer free, confidential<sup>6</sup> services to victims and others who have been affected by sexual assault. Victims can utilize these services from the time of disclosure of the assault to the time they decide they no longer need assistance. They can access services regardless of whether they report their assault to the justice system. Services may include, but are not limited to:

- 24-hour crisis intervention, support, and safety planning, including phone hotline counseling and accompaniment through emergency medical and legal processes;

- provision of information and community referrals;
- advocacy on behalf of victims with various systems (e.g., criminal and civil justice systems, healthcare, social services, child protection, employers, and schools), including accompaniment (e.g., to investigative interviews, court, and other justice proceedings), and coordination and collaboration with system personnel;
- support groups and education programs;
- ongoing contact and assistance as needed to promote recovery; and
- mental health counseling.<sup>7</sup>

To improve community response or a particular institution's response to victims of sexual assault, these programs may coordinate or participate in activities such as the following:

- specialized professional training and technical assistance;
- prevention education and outreach targeted at specific groups;
- partnering with local organizations;
- community organizing and public awareness initiatives; and
- public policy development.<sup>8</sup>

There is usually one community-based sexual assault victim advocacy program in a particular jurisdiction or region. However, some areas do not have such a program or have a program that provides limited services. In larger jurisdictions or regions, there may be more than one community-based sexual assault advocacy program. These organizations often (but not always) work collaboratively to ensure adequate service delivery to all local geographic areas and victim populations.

**State coalitions of local sexual assault advocacy programs** currently exist in 48 states.<sup>9</sup> Coalition staff members usually advocate for public policy changes that benefit victims, promote public awareness about victimization, and provide training and technical assistance to member programs and other organizations. They also may seek and administer state and federal funding for their member programs.

A number of other groups may offer services that can supplement the work of community-based sexual assault advocacy programs. These entities include,

---

<sup>3</sup> Kristin Littel, Mary Malefyt, and Alexandra Walker, *Promising Practices: Improving the Criminal Justice System's Response to Violence Against Women* (Washington, D.C.: STOP Violence Against Women Grants Technical Assistance Project, 1998) p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Littel, Malefyt, and Walker, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> There are exceptions—a few sexual assault victim advocacy programs are branches of local government agencies.

<sup>6</sup> Some typical exceptions to confidentiality include cases that involve victims who are children or dependent adults, and clients who indicate that they are in imminent danger of serious harm to themselves or others.

---

<sup>7</sup> Some sexual assault advocacy programs offer victims and their significant others professional mental health counseling services on a free or sliding scale fee basis. However, many programs refer victims to local mental health providers for these services.

<sup>8</sup> For a further discussion of advocacy services for victims of violence against women, see Littel, Malefyt, and Walker, Ch. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Nevada and Rhode Island do not have state sexual assault coalitions as of this writing. Due to its small size, Rhode Island has only one sexual assault advocacy program. Similarly, the District of Columbia also has just one sexual assault advocacy program.

but are not limited to, government-based victim-witness offices, child advocacy centers, sexual assault nurse examiner programs, and sexual assault response teams and other multi-disciplinary groups. Victim service delivery can be optimized if these entities and advocacy programs coordinate their efforts.

**Criminal justice system victim-witness specialists**<sup>10</sup> can help ease victims' entry into and journey through the criminal justice system, due to their ready access to case information, their relationships with other criminal justice personnel, and their in-depth knowledge of the system. While their roles vary from one jurisdiction to the next, they are often responsible for tasks such as orienting victims to the criminal court process; informing victims of their rights, court dates, case status, and disposition; making community referrals; assisting victims with filing victim compensation applications; accompanying victims to court proceedings; and providing assistance with preparation of victim impact statements. Because they offer assistance to all crime victims during their involvement in the criminal justice system,<sup>11</sup> victim-witness specialists often are extremely busy and can spend only limited time on individual cases. They also may lack expertise on sexual victimization issues.

An important distinction between the support offered by victim-witness specialists and community-based sexual assault victim advocates is the degree of confidentiality afforded to communications with victims.<sup>12</sup> Victim-witness specialists are usually obligated to provide information about victims to criminal justice personnel that may facilitate the investigation and prosecution of their cases. In contrast, community-based sexual assault advocates are obligated to focus solely on the needs of victims. To this end, most community-based sexual assault advocacy programs have confidentiality policies that prohibit advocates from disclosing information about victims to a third party without their consent (a protection that may be based on state statute).<sup>13</sup>

**Child advocacy centers** typically provide services to assist abused and neglected children and their families. The establishment of these centers in over 300 localities has helped improve the investigative process in child sexual abuse cases. Agencies responsible for the protection of children can coordinate their efforts through these centers, in order to prevent further trauma to victims. While services vary across jurisdictions, the centers usually provide a child-friendly atmosphere to conduct investigative interviews; medically examine children suspected of being abused or neglected; provide support, education, and community referrals; and prepare children and their families for court. They also may provide counseling, community education, and professional training on child abuse issues.

Hundreds of **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) programs** have emerged over the last decade to improve the emergency medical-legal response to sexual assault victims. SANEs are registered nurses who have education and clinical preparation in the forensic examination of these victims. SANEs strive to collect forensic evidence from victims in a timely, compassionate, and respectful manner and ensure that proper emergency medical care is provided.<sup>14</sup> They also collect forensic evidence from suspects in sex crime cases.

**Sexual Assault Response or Resource Teams (SARTs)** or similar multi-disciplinary teams have been developed in many communities to coordinate immediate medical, legal, and victim service responses to sexual assaults. SARTs can work to ensure that each aspect of coordinated response protects and supports victims, facilitates optimal evidence collection, and streamlines the service delivery process.<sup>15</sup> As SARTs evolve, they could expand to address more comprehensive responses to both victims and offenders.

Some communities have established **multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional investigative initiatives**. These initiatives typically are grounded in a belief that law enforcement's response to sexual assault cases can be enhanced by coordination and collaboration among advocates, health care providers, prosecutors, judges, child protection workers, probation and parole officers, and others.

---

<sup>10</sup> "Victim-witness specialist" is a generic term used by the author to refer to staff from victim-witness programs based in criminal and juvenile justice systems. Terminology describing victim-witness staff varies across jurisdictions (e.g., some localities refer to their victim-witness specialists as victim advocates).

<sup>11</sup> In a few cases, victim-witness specialists may work solely with sexual assault, domestic violence and/or stalking victims.

<sup>12</sup> Littel, Malefyt, and Walker, p. 156.

<sup>13</sup> Littel, Malefyt, and Walker, p. 156. If victims are opposed to sharing requested information, advocates typically will contest attempts to obtain their records. If a subpoena is upheld despite challenges, however, an advocate must disclose the requested information or risk being held in contempt of court.

---

<sup>14</sup> Kristin Littel, "Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Programs: Improving Community Response to Sexual Assault Victims," *OVC Bulletin* (Washington, D.C.: Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, forthcoming).

<sup>15</sup> For further information on SARTs, see Littel, Malefyt, and Walker, pp. 246-250.

## Benefits of Advocate and Victim Service Provider Involvement

Engaging advocates and other victim service providers in managing sex offenders in the community can support the missions of agencies that supervise and treat these offenders, as well as those that provide assistance to sexual assault survivors. Potential benefits for these agencies may include:

- the needs of victims (whose offenders are supervised in the community) could be addressed more consistently and thoroughly;
- new victims identified in the course of offender supervision, as well as family and friends of sex offenders who disclose victimization, routinely could be offered assistance;
- gaps in services to sexual assault victims can be readily identified and remedied;
- case management and policy decisions related to managing sex offenders in the community could be enhanced by sharing information and expertise among advocates, other victim service providers, supervision officers, and sex offender treatment providers;
- more comprehensive and streamlined responses to sexual assault could be facilitated;
- collaboration among agencies on education initiatives could help increase public perception that community supervision of sex offenders is an appropriate and effective vehicle to prevent future victimization;
- agency staff may feel more professionally satisfied because they believe their collaborative efforts are truly helping to reduce sexual violence; and
- more systematic evaluations of the effectiveness of sex offender management and victim services could be facilitated.

When advocates and other victim service providers are involved in developing policies related to the community management of sex offenders, protecting victims and the public more readily can become major goals of sentencing, supervision and treatment plans, conditions of supervision, and the ongoing process of offender monitoring in the community. On a day-to-day management level, they can collaborate with the courts, supervision officers, sex treatment providers, and others to implement victim-sensitive practices and enhance the capacity of community supervision programs to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions and deter future victimization.

## Possible Roles for Advocates and Other Victim Service Providers

A 1997 study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, reported that approximately 265,000 sex offenders were under the care, custody, or control of correctional agencies in the United States. Of these, almost 60 percent were under some form of community supervision. Most offenders who are convicted of sex crimes will be released into the community at some point—either immediately following sentencing or after a period of incarceration in jail or prison. Effective community management of these offenders is critical in reducing the possibility that sex offenders will repeat their crimes; protecting past and potential victims; and educating the public about prevention strategies. Although there are variations in each locality, basic components of community management of sex offenders include rigorous supervision<sup>16</sup> and sex offender-specific treatment.<sup>17</sup> (See “Resource List” for selected publications related to sex offender management.)

At a minimum, advocates from community-based sexual assault advocacy programs should be familiar with sex offender management initiatives in their jurisdictions, in order to advocate on behalf of victims.

---

<sup>16</sup> Standard conditions and methods of supervision are not sufficient to manage sex offender cases and protect the public. Instead, supervision officers must be educated about sexual offending behavior, sexual victimization issues, and the history and patterns of offenders they supervise. They must be especially observant and vigilant in enforcing supervision conditions and acting upon violations. The following is a sampling of special conditions for sex offenders that may be routinely added to standard conditions of supervision: active participation in treatment; no contact with victims or their families; payment for victim treatment; no contact with children; no sexual contact or unchaperoned contact with anyone under 18 years of age; restrictions on driving and travel; disclosure of offender history to landlords, employers, police departments and school authorities, as applicable; residences must be approved by the supervision agency; no unapproved visits with family; curfew may be imposed; no purchase, possession or consumption of alcohol or drugs, and testing as required; must agree to submit to physiological tests as directed by supervising officers; and computer/Internet/technology restrictions.

<sup>17</sup> Because sex offenders are unlike other types of criminals, standard mental health treatment practices are not adequate. Therapists who are not trained to work with this population are ill prepared to deal with the complexity of these cases, the offender's seemingly paradoxical behavior, their highly manipulative personalities, and their secretive lifestyles. Current research indicates that only with sex offender-specific treatment, provided by professionals offering services that conform to the most recent literature about effective therapeutic interventions with this population, can patterns of behavior that lead to reoffense be disrupted. Therapists must let go of traditional codes of confidentiality and be willing to work as a team with supervision officers and others to reduce the likelihood of reoffense, while acting in the best interests of victims and the community. The most effective sex offender treatment approaches play a pivotal role in preventing victimization because offenders are held accountable for their actions; are required to confront their thinking errors, acknowledging their crimes and the harm that they have caused; and are required to develop specific skills and adopt new behavior patterns.

Beyond that, there are a variety of ways that advocates and other victim service providers can address victim and community needs in sex offender management, as discussed below.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Jurisdictions should develop community-wide and agency-specific policies to facilitate effective and consistent management of sex offenders. Advocates and other victim service providers can collaborate with criminal justice system professionals, sex offender treatment providers, and other stakeholders to assess whether the policies and practices of the sex offender management system adequately address victim issues, and assist in exploring and implementing strategies that improve systemic responses to victims. They can evaluate proposed policy additions or revisions to ensure that changes do not compromise the safety and interests of victims.<sup>18</sup> They can promote legislation that protects victims and communities and holds offenders more accountable (e.g., when necessary, advocate for changes in state registry and notification laws). They can help craft policies that broaden coordination among agencies and the

*The passing of community notification in Connecticut was the impetus for collaboration between the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS) and the State Office of Adult Probation (OAP). OAP invited CONNSACS to sit on the board that developed the state standards for sex offender registration and community notification. Because CONNSACS was involved in the implementation of the law, its staff were able to advocate for legislative amendments when they began hearing about unintended consequences on victims and others (e.g., a child being harassed at school because it was public knowledge that his father was a sex offender).*

*The director of the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault is a member of the state Board for the Treatment of Sex Offenders. (In addition, there are representatives from local victim services and intra-familial victim services, and a survivor of sexual abuse). The board has developed treatment standards and a provider accreditation process. It is currently conducting accreditation visits. The coalition director finds it useful to participate in visits to treatment programs—it allows her to recommend how providers can maintain a focus on victim safety. She also sits on a state board that is developing a civil commitment process for sex offenders and is working with the Corrections Department to develop policies and practices related to community notification.*

*In Jefferson County, Colorado, a policy-oriented group that addresses management of juvenile sex offenders includes the victim-witness specialist from the District Attorney's Office and a representative of the state Coalition Against Sexual Assault.*

continuum of streamlined, coordinated services related to sexual assault.

Advocates and other victim service providers also can involve practitioners from the sex offender management field in developing policies and practices related to victim services. They can help validate the need for services for victims with whom they interact; consider how best to promote use of these services; encourage coordination among various community victim service providers; and explore innovative ways to work towards ending sexual violence.

*The program administrator for the Colorado Sex Offender Management Board volunteers her time as co-chair of the board of directors for the state Coalition Against Sexual Assault.*

*In Connecticut, the director of the Center for the Treatment of Problem Sexual Behavior, with whom the state contracts to provide sex offender treatment services, is a member of the board of directors for the state Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS). In turn, the director of CONNSACS is a member of the state Association for the Treatment of Sex Offenders (CATSO). A trusting relationship between the two directors led to joint presentations to the media and state Legislature in which they supported each other's work and the priority of developing laws and services that address victim safety. Together, they serve as a powerful voice for victims.*

## COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION AND EDUCATION ABOUT PREVENTION

Community notification legislation enacted around the nation mandates that law enforcement and other officials notify various community members when a convicted offender is living in their neighborhood.<sup>19</sup> A few states invited advocacy groups to help plan and implement this legislation, and several jurisdictions are involving advocates in the process of door-to-door notification and community education on the issue. Probation or law enforcement officers can dispense information to community members about registration<sup>20</sup> and notification laws, convicted offenders living in their neighborhood, patterns of sex offending behavior, and whom to contact if they notice suspicious behavior. Advocates can offer the community a wealth of experience in prevention education. They can increase residents'

<sup>19</sup> The scope of community members who are notified typically varies based on sex offenders' perceived levels of risk to reoffend. See CSOM's *An Overview of Sex Offender Community Notification Practices* for a more thorough discussion of this topic.

<sup>20</sup> Registration laws require convicted sex offenders, upon their release, to provide local law enforcement agencies in the community with their names, descriptions of their conviction crimes, new addresses, and other information specified by state law. (Information drawn from Kim English, Suzanne Pullen, and Linda Jones, eds., *Managing Adult Sex Offenders on Probation and Parole: A Containment Approach*, Lexington, KY: American Probation and Parole Association, 1996) pp. 5-3.)

<sup>18</sup> Littel, Malefyt, and Walker, p. 251.

understanding of this crime; provide them with facts concerning who is at risk for victimization and by whom (given that convicted perpetrators represent only a portion of the actual population of sex offenders); and discuss practical strategies to reduce their risk of being sexually assaulted. They also can assist justice system officials in addressing resident concerns while helping to allay fears and reduce the possibility of vigilantism against offenders.

*Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS) works with the state Adult Probation Office to present community notification forums. Advocates help shift the focus of notification laws from merely informing the public about known offenders in their neighborhoods to preventing future sexual victimization. Such forums offer new captive audiences for advocates to educate about sexual assault and offer help to victims.*

*Advocates in Maricopa County, Arizona, and New Haven, Connecticut, have assisted justice agencies with door-to-door community notification.*

## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING, INFORMATION SHARING, AND NETWORKING

Victim advocates, along with other victim service providers, can be valuable resources on sexual victimization issues to those involved in sex offender management. They can provide training and information that enhances the ability of justice system agencies and treatment providers to create effective policies; identify victim concerns or potential problems in individual cases; and assist victims in addressing their needs. Training topics can include:

- introduction of local sexual assault advocacy program (role and services);
- local and state resources for victims;
- the nature and scope of sexual victimization;
- the impact of sexual violence on victims, their family and friends, and the community;
- the range of victim reactions to sexual assault, including post-traumatic stress disorder;
- the needs of specific victim populations, including secondary victims;
- intra-familial sexual abuse dynamics and family reunification issues;
- prevention of sexual re-victimization in individual offender cases;
- facilitation of victim involvement/cooperation in the offender management process (e.g., offering victims access to information and encouraging their input about the offender's incarceration, release, supervision, and treatment); and

- restorative versus retributive justice for victims and the community.<sup>21</sup>

*The Probation Department of Tarrant County, Texas, in conjunction with the Sexual Assault Advisory Council and the County Junior College, Northwest Child Abuse Training Project, developed a videotape featuring a group interview with several sex offenders under community supervision. The local Women's Center and other agencies utilized the videotape in their training programs. The interviewing officers used questions developed by Women's Center staff and other members of the advisory council.*

In addition, state coalitions, local advocacy programs, and other victim service agencies can involve sex offender supervision and treatment professionals in educating their respective staff on topics such as basic sex offender issues, the components of sex offender management, and the latest research in the field. Such information can provide advocates and other victim service providers with a clearer picture of how the criminal justice system handles convicted sex offenders and areas where victims of these offenders and the public could benefit from their assistance. It also can support or oppose specific legislation related to sex crimes.

Advocates and other victim service providers can also collaborate with supervision officers and treatment providers to educate other professionals (e.g., law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, child protection workers, legislators, and the news media) about sexual assault victim and offender issues, so that they are better equipped to make well-informed decisions about these cases.

*In Fredericksburg, Virginia, a sex offender treatment provider, a victim therapist, and the Rappahannock Council Against Sexual Assault collaborated to offer regional professional training on sexual victimization and sex offender treatment. The training was well attended and provided an opportunity for networking among participants from various disciplines.*

## VICTIM INPUT ON IMPROVING SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT

Community-based sexual assault advocacy programs typically rely on their experiences working with victims and victim feedback about programs and services to guide their agency policies and practices. Victim feedback obtained by advocates and other victim service providers also is an invaluable tool to assess the needs of victims and tailor to sex offender management strategies.

<sup>21</sup> Drawn from Beverly Brakeman-Colbath and Grace Yeh, *The Central Role of Victims in Managing Sex Offenders*. This document is one of a number of curriculum materials under development by the Center for Sex Offender Management.

*Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. created adult and teen victim advisory groups to help ensure that their policies and practices are victim-centered. The adult victim advisory group has provided the advocate in the New Haven Sex Offender Intensive Supervision Unit (see description in next section) with feedback on developing correspondence to victims and ideas for connecting victims with services. Also, one member of the adult advisory group agreed to be interviewed by a sex offender treatment provider about the impact of victimization on his life. A videotape of the interview is used in the empathy component of sex offender treatment around the state.*

## DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT

By involving advocates and other victim service providers in the day-to-day management of sex offenders, victims whose offenders have been convicted of sex crimes can receive more comprehensive assistance and advocacy than they currently are offered in most jurisdictions. If offenders disclose crimes with new victims during supervision or treatment, advocates and other victim service providers can work with supervision officers and treatment providers to consider ways to offer assistance to these victims.

Advocates also can help acknowledge and address victimization issues of family and friends of offenders. Since most sexual assault victims do not report their victimization or seek victim services, it makes sense to take advantage of the opportunity to offer help to this underserved victim population. This assistance can be instrumental in halting intergenerational violence and other dysfunctional behavior.

Advocates can help victims achieve their personal goals with the criminal justice system, instead of goals defined by prosecutors, judges, probation and parole officers, and sex offender treatment providers.<sup>22</sup> The advocate's role is to provide support and information, work to ensure that victims' wishes are heard, and act as a liaison for victims with criminal justice system professionals and other service providers. For example, advocates can encourage prosecutors to incorporate victim concerns in plea-bargaining. They can work with victim-witness specialists to assist victims in developing victim impact statements for pre-sentence investigation reports and in obtaining state victims' compensation.

Advocate and victim service provider involvement in the criminal justice component of sexual assault cases traditionally has tapered off after sentencing. However, victim safety and well-being must continue to be a priority when convicted offenders are released on probation or parole. Advocates and other victim

service providers can assist victims in many ways at this point, including:

- explaining the community supervision and treatment program to victims and clarifying that it is designed to protect them, rather than coddle offenders;
- making sure that victims are informed of changes in offenders' status in the criminal justice system and conditions of supervision;
- helping victims address their concerns and plan for safety;
- providing victims with ongoing support, information, and referrals;
- communicating with justice system agencies, treatment providers, and other stakeholders (e.g., those conducting physiological tests, schools, social services, and employers) on behalf of victims;
- facilitating victim input regarding supervision and treatment plans (e.g., assisting them in sharing concerns with supervision officers and making recommendations about probation conditions, victim empathy education, and restitution);
- ensuring that offender assessment is routinely repeated to identify risks and that appropriate changes are made to supervision and treatment plans;
- accompanying supervision officers on field visits to assess the danger offenders may pose to victims or potential victims;
- ensuring that treatment providers view their responsibility to the victim as equal to their responsibility to the offender with whom they are working—interventions they utilize must be in the best interest of the victim and the community (recognizing that what is in the best interest of victims and the community is also in the best interests of offenders);
- helping treatment providers develop victim empathy programs;
- participating in case review meetings and sharing information (with victims' consent) to promote informed case decisions that promote victim protection; and
- assisting victims in intra-familial sexual abuse cases to assess the risks involved in family reunification and, if reunification is to occur, monitoring the process to ensure safety.

A few jurisdictions (New Haven, Connecticut, and Maricopa County, Arizona) are utilizing a full-time victim advocate as part of a team that manages sex offenders in their community. Several other jurisdictions are considering creating similar positions. It is important to note that community-based advocacy programs typically supervise these advocates. A community-based advocate can be fully responsive to victims' needs, instead of being influenced or limited by the goals of the justice system. For example, the advocate in the Intensive

<sup>22</sup> Drawn from Littel, Malefyt, and Walker, p. 167.

**Full-Time Advocate Position Within a Sex Offender Unit**

*In 1998, a full-time advocate position was added to the Intensive Sex Offender Supervision Unit in New Haven, Connecticut, to systemically include the victim's perspective in decision-making and to provide regular contact with victims and their families. The addition of the advocate 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 Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS). The advocate was hired with Court Support Services funds, but is an employee of and supervised by CONNSACS. While she is based in the probation office, she works one day a week in the CONNSACS office.*

*Other unit staff include two therapists (average caseloads of 50 to 60 offenders each); three probation officers who do intensive supervision (average caseload of 25 offenders each); and one relapse prevention probation officer (average caseload of 50 offenders). The advocate has an average caseload of 100 cases, with about 25 being active at any one time.*

*The advocate's primary role is to initiate and maintain contact with victims and their families. She makes initial contact with victims by letter to provide information about their offenders' release. Each letter is followed up with a phone call, at which time the advocate: explains the work of the supervision unit, its emphasis on victim safety, her role as liaison and advocate for victims and their families, and her status as a CONNSACS employee; offers ongoing direct services; discusses victim concerns and ways to address these issues; and provides referrals to community resources. She estimated that she reaches about 35 percent of victims she attempts to contact by phone—they are willing to talk with her and want to utilize the ongoing services she offers. If she is not able to contact victims by phone, she sends additional letters as needed (e.g., to inform a victim that her offender has requested the state to shorten his probation/parole). The advocate also serves in several other functions, including those listed below.*

- *She works with offenders' families to help them understand the dynamics of sex offending and offenders' manipulative behavior. Through these interactions, the advocate has found that many offenders' partners have themselves been victims of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, either by the convicted offender or other perpetrators. The advocate offers these individuals assistance in their healing and in dealing with the offenders' re-entry in their lives.*
- *She accompanies probation officers and treatment providers on unannounced field visits at offenders' homes. Each team member typically notices different potential problems or offender violations. The visits may also provide the advocate with an additional opportunity to meet family members of offenders.*
- *She assists treatment providers on the empathy portion of treatment groups, helping them to present information in a more comprehensive and effective way.*
- *Probation officers, treatment providers, and the advocate participate in weekly case review meetings. Team members share information, discuss concerns and potential problems, and make decisions in each case. The advocate works to maintain the team's focus on victim and community safety and support. Team members frequently are able to make more informed decisions because victims and/or the offenders' family and friends disclose useful information (e.g., about offenders' violations of special conditions). The director of the Center for the Treatment of Problem Sexual Behavior credits this increase in information to the advocate's efforts to establish trusting relationships with victims and family and friends of the offenders.*
- *On occasion, the advocate assists law enforcement officers with door-to-door community notification and education forums. She has found that by being involved in door-to-door notification, she is better able to assess the possible impact of the offenders' presence in the neighborhood on victims and potential victims, and subsequently make more informed case recommendations.*

*The advocate indicated it took about a year and a half to incorporate her role into the unit's work of managing sex offenders in the community. While it took time to build trust and respect among team members and shift to a more victim-centered perspective, probation officers and treatment providers now are more often posing the question, "How would this team decision impact victims?" The team has started to meet routinely to discuss how to optimize their collaborative efforts. Due to the success of the New Haven team approach, two new advocate positions are being developed for sex offender supervision units in Hartford and New London, Connecticut.*

Sex Offender Supervision Unit of New Haven, Connecticut (see description above), indicates that victims react better to her once they know that she does not work for the justice system and that her parent organization's goals are supporting victims in recovery and preventing future victimization.

Advocates may be concerned that getting involved in the operational aspects of sex offender management could impede their ability to provide victims with confidential services. In order to deal with this issue in Connecticut, Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS) oversees the advocate who works in the New Haven Sex Offender Intensive Supervision Unit. CONNSACS developed procedures to request that victims whose offenders are being supervised by the unit allow this advocate to share

information with supervision officers and treatment providers, as appropriate. By supervising the advocate through the state coalition and developing clear protocols that apply to these limited cases, local sexual assault crisis centers avoid problems related to what the courts may require to be revealed about victims in other cases.

Other localities involve advocates and other victim service providers in day-to-day operations in more limited capacities.

*In Jefferson County, Colorado, the victim-witness specialist from the District Attorney's Office is part of a team that works with county school officials to deal with problems posed by the presence of juvenile sex offenders in schools and address victim safety issues. The victim-witness specialist and child advocacy center staff (who interview victims for child abuse and neglect investigations) also participate in monthly meetings to review juvenile offender cases.*

*The Women's Center in Tarrant County, Texas, collaborates with the Sex Offender Unit of the county Probation Department, through the department's Chaperone Education Program. The Probation Department requires an approved chaperone when an offender may come into contact with children or in other high-risk situations. Chaperones are usually the offenders' family members or friends. In addition to other requirements, chaperones must attend classes to prepare for their role. The Women's Center works with program staff to educate chaperones on victim issues and resources, and offers counseling and support for chaperones who identify themselves as victims. The Women's Center works with the county Parole Office on a similar initiative, mainly focusing on education on victim issues rather than counseling.*

*The director of the Women's Center, a therapist by background, also collaborates with a local sex offender treatment program to conduct several individual victim empathy sessions a year for offenders who are close to completing treatment. The offender pays a fee to the center for each session. The director views this activity as a way to attempt to reduce sexual violence in individual cases. While she continually evaluates how these sessions affect offender progress, as well as the comfort level for victims and staff in holding sessions at the center, treatment providers indicated that the sessions have made a positive impact on offenders' progress in treatment.*

underway, agencies may be more amenable to talking about how to better address victim and community needs in sex offender management.

Initiating discussions about collaboration usually is the work of a small group of agencies or individuals who have identified a need for change, determined how to interest others, and encouraged action. The agencies or individuals driving change will vary across communities. Those initiating contact should articulate the benefits of involving advocates and other victim service providers in managing sex offenders; identify their potential roles; work with each agency to identify problems or conflicts of interest that would impede progress in this area; and

*The Iowa Corrections Department saw a need to improve the quality and consistency of sex offender treatment and invited the state Coalition Against Sexual Assault, among others, to participate in a board formed in the early 1990s to develop treatment standards and an accreditation process.*

*In Colorado, early efforts to develop legislation, policies, and practices that standardized sex offender management were spearheaded by the state Division of Criminal Justice, in conjunction with the Department of Corrections, the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Youth Corrections, the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, and the Judicial Department. Input for the standards was sought from the state Coalition Against Sexual Assault and victim service programs, as well as many other agencies, individuals, and the public. The first standards were published in 1996 and revisions to the standards were made in 1998 and 1999.*

develop strategies to adequately resolve these issues. Examples of roadblocks to establishing dialogue may include those listed below.

## Strategies to Engage Advocates and Other Victim Service Providers in Sex Offender Management

### ESTABLISH DIALOGUE AMONG AGENCIES

The first step in exploring the feasibility of involving advocates and other victim service providers in sex offender management is facilitating discussion among relevant stakeholders. The difficulty of this task will depend on whether there is a history of collaboration to build upon. If partnering activities are already

*A sexual abuse advisory council has been in place in Tarrant County, Texas, for 17 years. It has addressed victim and offender issues and involves the advocacy program as well as agencies that manage sex offenders. The participation of these agencies in the council has helped ease the way for advocate involvement in sex offender management practices.*

- Functional working relationships may not exist among agencies of various disciplines. They may hold misperceptions or assumptions about each other that create barriers to partnerships.
- If there are multiple community-based advocacy agencies, supervision officers and treatment providers may be confused about which agencies to involve or believe that it is too overwhelming to involve all of them. They may assume all victim services are the same and believe it is sufficient to coordinate with just one agency to assist victims.
- Differences in language that each field uses to talk about sexual assault issues may hamper practitioners' ability to communicate.

It may be helpful for individuals initiating contact to first informally interact with staff from supervision agencies, treatment programs, advocacy programs, and other victim services to gauge interest and concerns, assess agency power dynamics, and determine the formality required to facilitate dialogue.

Meetings between staff from these agencies can be encouraged so they can become familiar with one another's work, be comfortable making referrals, and begin talking about collaboration.

*In Jackson County, Oregon, the Community Corrections Office is planning to hold a meeting of victim service providers to identify gaps in services for victims of offenders they supervise and to better coordinate resources. The office wants to clarify roles of each victim service provider and reduce duplication in order to make more appropriate referrals.*

Individuals initiating contact also should facilitate communication among sexual assault victim advocacy programs and other victim service providers to discuss how best to coordinate victim support in sex offender management. If identification of community-based sexual assault victim advocacy agencies is problematic, state coalitions may help identify programs that are members of their associations, follow standards for service provision (if standards exist), and identify potential sources of government funding.

If a community is just starting to develop or revamp its sex offender management program, it serves the interest of victims to involve advocates and other victim service providers right from the beginning.

*Since the formation of the Colorado Sex Offender Management Board in 1993, two member positions have been filled by victim service representatives from the state coalition and a rural sexual assault crisis center. The board also includes representatives from other victim service agencies. The board administrator indicated that one of the board's first tasks was to educate members about victim issues, so they all operated from the premise that the primary function of sex offender management is victim safety.*

## OVERCOME RESISTANCE<sup>23</sup>

Dialogue among agencies also may be impeded by resistance to the idea of involving advocates and other victim service providers in the community management of sex offenders. Reasons for resistance may include those listed below.

- Many current mainstream approaches to sex offender management do not promote collaboration with victim advocates.
- Agencies may be reluctant to collaborate due to concerns such as protecting their funding or

maintaining their reputations in the community. Individual professionals may think that collaboration will only make their jobs more difficult.

- Supervision officers and treatment providers may lack accurate information and training on victim issues and roles of local advocacy and victim assistance programs. Similarly, advocates may lack accurate information and training on sex offending behavior, adjudication and recidivism rates of arrested offenders in their jurisdiction, and how convicted offenders are managed by the local criminal justice system.
- Supervision officers and treatment providers may believe that involvement of advocates will not increase the effectiveness of their work. They may point to the void of research in this area.
- Advocates may be cynical about the efficacy of community management of sex offenders and lack information on promising trends in the field. For example, they may perceive that the main focus of offender supervision and treatment is offender rehabilitation rather than managing risks posed by offenders. Advocates may believe it is preferable (and feasible) to "lock sex offenders up and throw away the key."
- Advocates may not see working on sex offender management issues as part of their mission or a priority. Advocates who do this work may face disapproval and even hostility from other advocates who think they have crossed boundaries and are "sympathetic" to offenders. And while some may find it useful to be involved in making policy decisions on the issue, they may be more reluctant about working on offender issues on the day-to-day case management level.
- Supervision officers and treatment providers may find it difficult to deal with victims or may hold misperceptions about victims or offenders that prevent them from viewing their work from a victim-centered perspective. For example, they may think that they need not be concerned about the safety of adult victims who were not physically injured by their perpetrators.
- Treatment providers may worry that they are crossing boundaries when they address victim issues or fear that a victim-centered perspective will hinder their ability to effectively treat offenders.

Much opposition can be overcome by stressing that: 1) rigorous community management of convicted sex offenders is vital to victim and public safety; and 2) involving advocates and other victim service providers in the process of establishing these community management strategies potentially can improve the quality of responses to victims, offenders, and the public. Useful tactics for reducing resistance can include identifying common interests, frustrations and shared goals, and clarifying roles of each agency and ways they can contribute to the prevention of future

<sup>23</sup> For further discussion on overcoming resistance to collaboration in this area, see David D'Amora and Gail Burns-Smith, "Partnering in Response to Sexual Violence: How Offender Treatment and Victim Advocacy Can Work Together in Response to Sexual Violence," *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, The Official Journal of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers* 11 (October 1999): pp. 295-306.

victimization. Agencies and individuals should be encouraged to share their concerns and deal with misconceptions and unrealistic expectations. In order to promote exploration of new approaches responding to victims and offenders, agency staff should be provided with up-to-date research findings related to sex offender management and victim assistance. It is also critical to build agency capacity to do this work, which may entail ensuring that each involved agency is financially able to collaborate.

Identifying common interests and frustrations may help advocates, other victim service providers, and those already involved in sex offender management to overcome tendencies to merely complain about what is wrong with community responses to victims and offenders, rather than take action. Commonalties may include:

- a desire to make case decisions based on the most comprehensive information available;
- an interest in obtaining additional funding, resources, and personnel;
- frustration with the lack of appropriate responses to sexual assault cases by some agencies or professionals within the criminal justice system or treatment community;
- frustration that the range of victim services offered when victims enter the criminal justice system are not available or easily accessible after offenders are sentenced;
- an interest in more consistent and appropriate referrals to local victim services;
- an interest in more streamlined and collaborative approaches to victim services;
- an interest in addressing victimization issues of the family and friends of sex offenders;
- an interest in ensuring that victims are notified of their offenders' status in the criminal justice system;
- a desire to address problems related to offender registration and community notification laws; and
- an interest in educating the public about sexual victimization, offending behavior, and prevention.

While agencies do not need to agree on every issue, they usually can agree on numerous interests and frustrations and, in the process, identify shared visions and goals. Subsequently, agencies can make priorities among areas where improvements are needed and work jointly toward positive change.

*Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. partnered with the Center for the Treatment of Problem Sexual Behavior to present trainings for staff from their agencies and sexual assault crisis centers in the state.*

A variety of networking and training forums (e.g. cross- and multi-disciplinary training, routine meetings, and discussions via the Internet) can prepare

practitioners from various disciplines to work together on this issue. Such forums can help to establish a foundation of trust and respect among agencies; clarify each agency's roles in responding to sexual assault; build competence in addressing victim and public safety and support issues; encourage openness to new ways of working with offenders; provide information on emerging issues, trends, and research in each field; and explore partnering possibilities and resources.

## TAKE ACTION

Moving from a theoretical discussion to planning and implementing strategies to involve advocates and other victim service providers in sex offender management is the next challenge. Decisions about what approaches to utilize will depend on the strengths and gaps of the sex offender management program, advocacy agencies, and other victim

*Orange County, California, a CSOM Resource Site, is beginning to involve advocates and other victim service providers in sex offender management. While the Resource Site team eventually would like to place an advocate within the Probation Department, they are currently focusing on three smaller-scale initiatives:*

- *to develop procedures within the Community Service Program, Victim Assistance Program (which houses both the victim-witness program and the rape crisis center) to ensure that staff help sexual assault victims file the proper paperwork to be notified of their offender release into the community;*
- *to develop procedures that facilitate advocate collaboration with probation officers to encourage victims to provide information for the pre-sentence investigation report; and*
- *to develop procedures for the police to inform the Victim Assistance Program when they will be distributing flyers on notification of sex offenders living in neighborhoods and involve advocates in community education efforts.*

services; available resources; the level of existing collaboration among agencies; and the level of readiness for change. Strategies could range from relatively simple tasks such as inviting input about sex offender management from advocates, to more complicated endeavors such as developing a team approach that involves advocates in the day-to-day management of sex offenders. While it is critical that collaborators acknowledge the validity of all stakeholder concerns about specific approaches and work to resolve problems, they should also avoid becoming immobilized details of implementation and impeding action.

*In Iowa, some sexual assault crisis centers were invited to monitor their local sex offender treatment programs. This activity led treatment providers to make more victim referrals to the crisis centers.*

### ***Paving the Way for the Creation of an Advocate Position***

*Several factors played a role in the establishment of an advocate position to work on sex offender management issues in Maricopa County, Arizona. The county's status as a Center for Sex Offender Management Resource Site was critical to building interest and commitment to engaging advocates in sex offender management. The Maricopa County Resource Site team includes probation officers, sex offender treatment providers, judges, prosecutors, police, and representatives from the Center Against Sexual Assault (CASA). In the process of considering areas for improvement in the supervision of offenders, the team identified the need for better support for victims of offenders on probation. The team looked to the Intensive Sex Offender Unit in New Haven, CT, as a model of collaboration among probation officers, treatment providers, and advocates in managing sex offenders in the community.*

*Another factor that supported the creation of an advocate position was the history of successful collaboration between CASA and the criminal justice system. For example, the Mesa Center Against Family Violence, established in 1996 by the Mesa Police Department as a multi-disciplinary investigative initiative, is built upon partnerships. The center strives to provide comprehensive immediate responses to sexually assaulted and battered women and children. From the start, a CASA counselor has been a member of the team housed at the center that works collaboratively as needed on each case. Other team members include detectives, two child protection workers, a sexual assault nurse examiner, a county attorney, and government-based victim service staff.*

*With the support of the county Probation Department and the Mesa Police Department, CASA received a grant for this position. The advocate, who is employed and supervised by CASA, is currently housed in the Center Against Family Violence. CASA plans to move her position to the Probation Department in the future. Involved stakeholders still face the challenges of clarifying the advocate's role, identifying priorities among her tasks, and overcoming operational barriers to incorporating the advocate into the sex offender management team. However, practitioners are beginning to see that the advocate is meeting victim needs that have very seldom been met in the past. The overall consensus is that the advocate can help create a more comprehensive system to manage sex offenders in the community. The commitment of those involved to serve victims and their willingness to discuss their concerns likely will contribute to the jurisdiction's success in dealing with these challenges.*

Agencies may be more inclined to continue collaborating if they start with tasks that are relatively easy to accomplish and subsequently find their efforts successful. For example, a planning group could begin by identifying policies needed to facilitate consistent referrals by supervision officers and treatment providers to advocacy programs and other victim services. Then they can work to develop interagency agreements and seek endorsement from involved agency leadership.

Shifting the focus of sex offender management programs from offender rehabilitation and risk management to a more comprehensive victim-centered approach will not happen overnight, nor will it necessarily be easy. Those involved must recognize that collaboration is a long-term process of building upon successes, failures, and growing relationships among collaborators.

## **Seeking Resources**

Seeking resources to involve advocates and other victim service providers in the community management of sex offenders may seem like a daunting task, particularly to agencies that receive their funding through one or two primary sources. Like many sexual assault crisis centers, those interested in collaboration in this area most likely will need to seek out a variety of resources. However, the jurisdictions that already involve advocates and other victim service providers in sex offender management demonstrate that it is possible to obtain needed resources with a sufficient commitment of time,

research, and creativity. Resources are available in both the public and private sectors and can include volunteers, donations of in-kind support and supplies, technical assistance, training, peer support, access to information, and grant support.<sup>24</sup>

### **SUPPORT OF AGENCY LEADERSHIP**

Gaining the support of agency leadership to do this work is critical to long-term success. Those interested in initiating more victim-centered approaches to sex offender management can explain to agency leaders the benefits of involving advocates and other victim service providers in this work. Endorsement by leadership can allow funding, staff time, and other resources to be sought and allotted to this initiative.

*The director of the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault views addressing victim issues in sex offender management as part of her job. She pursues collaboration in this area because she has the support of her board, which realizes the importance of having someone with a victim-centered perspective at policy meetings concerning sex offender management.*

*The advocate in the Sex Offender Intensive Supervision Unit in New Haven, Connecticut, identified support of leadership from all involved agencies as one of the main reasons she is able to be effective in her position.*

<sup>24</sup> Center for Sex Offender Management, *Identifying Resources for Managing Sex Offenders* (Silver Spring: MD, 1999) p. 1. This publication provides descriptions/contact information for CSOM's partnership organizations, U.S. Department of Justice offices, national associations and organizations, and public and private organizations, as well as resource development tips. Contact CSOM for a copy of this document.

### **Sex Offender Management in Tribal Communities**

The Fort Peck Tribes of Montana, recently selected as a CSOM Resource Site, are working to establish a more comprehensive sex offender 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. The director of the Crisis Center, which provides tribal victim services, coordinates team activities. It includes representatives from Tribal Criminal Investigations, the courts, the FBI, Social Services, Juvenile Services, the 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 community and justice system 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 best to coordinate tribal, state, and federal cases, but the community lacks adequate resources to provide for basic supervision and treatment of sex offenders, particularly juvenile offenders. Given the enormity of the tasks at hand, there is some reluctance among individual team members to take responsibility for day-to-day coordination tasks. To better share the work, they are hoping to expand the team to include broader representation from federal, state, and tribal agencies and the community. While it will take time and creativity on the part of those involved, the tribes' history of victim-centered collaboration are assets in the process of developing an improved sex offender management system.

### **COMMITMENT OF AGENCY PERSONNEL**

Many professionals who work with sexual assault victims and sex offenders contribute significant time to collaborative initiatives because they believe their efforts contribute to a safer community, more rapid victim healing, and more successful offender reintegration into the community. They also may view collaboration as a vehicle to be more effective in carrying out their agencies' goals. Much can be achieved through professional commitment to the issue. For example, the majority of advocates, victim service providers, justice system personnel, and treatment providers who participate on policy-making entities that address sex offender management do not receive compensation for their involvement beyond travel, food, and accommodation reimbursements. However, their presence can have a profound impact on the sex offender management system to make decisions that protect and support victims.

### **AGENCY CAPACITY BUILDING**

While agency personnel may be committed to advancing a victim-centered approach to sex offender management, it is important to recognize that there are limits to individual and agency ability to devote existing resources to new tasks. Efforts to better address victim issues in sex offender management and prevent future victimization should include strategizing about how to build the capacity of supervision agencies, treatment programs, and advocacy and

*In Tarrant County, Texas, the Probation Department applied for funding through the Sexual Assault Prevention and Crisis Services Division of the State Attorney General's Office to expand its Chaperone Education Program. Recognizing that chaperones may have their own victimization issues, the State Attorney General's Office recommended that the Probation Department collaborate with the local sexual assault crisis center, the Women's Center, to enhance their project. The Probation Department subsequently negotiated a contract with the Women's Center to involve them in several aspects of the program.*

other victim service programs to do this work. Rather than competing for funds, agencies can assist one another in building overall jurisdictional capacity to do this work (e.g., by jointly applying for grants to support positions and projects). It is particularly important that involved stakeholders understand that community-based advocacy programs in many localities are significantly under-funded and thus challenged to devote existing resources to this work. These programs can benefit from the support of justice system agencies in maintaining and increasing resources to serve victims.

### **FUNDING**

Those interested in obtaining funding to involve victim advocates and other victim service providers in sex offender management should take advantage of one another's expertise and access to resources. For example, directors of community-based sexual assault advocacy programs typically have considerable grant writing and fundraising experience because their

*The Connecticut Court Support Services Division provided the state Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS) with funding to hire an advocate to work in the New Haven Sex Offender Intensive Supervision Unit.*

*The Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault is working with the state Corrections Department to identify funding for an advocate position which would assist with statewide community notification education.*

agencies' survival depends on funding from multiple private and public sources. Directors and supervisors of probation, corrections, law enforcement, and prosecution offices may be aware of state and federal resources and how to go about obtaining them. They also may be able to access justice system statistical information and utilize departmental equipment, supplies, and support staff to develop grant proposals and fundraising materials.

By working collaboratively, jurisdictions are best positioned to access the many grants designated for victim outreach and services, management of sex offenders, sexual assault education and prevention, as well as undesignated public and private funding. As a result, agencies may obtain funding from what they perceive to be an unlikely source.

Funding may be available through U.S. Department of Justice grant projects. A few examples include:

- state victim assistance grants of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)—many sexual assault crisis centers receive VOCA funding for direct victim service provision (visit the website of the Office of Victims of Crime, at [www.ojp.usdoj/ovc/](http://www.ojp.usdoj/ovc/) or call (800) 627-6872);
- the STOP grant of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which promotes a coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach to improving the criminal justice system's response to violence against women (visit the website of the Violence Against Women Office, at [www.usdoj.gov/vawo](http://www.usdoj.gov/vawo) or call (202) 616-8894); and
- the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program, which works to improve criminal justice system functioning, with emphasis on drug-related crime, violent crime and serious offenders (visit the website of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bja](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bja) or call (800) 688-4252).

Beyond the U.S. Department of Justice, there is potential funding from other federal and state agencies, local governments, private and community foundations, grant making public charities, individual donors, and fundraising campaigns. Information about foundations can be obtained in *The Foundation Directory*, available as a book or CD-ROM through libraries (visit the Foundation Center at their website at [www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org)). The Nonprofit Resource Catalogue is a website that provides links to resources for and about nonprofit resources ([www.clark.net/pub/pwalker/home.html](http://www.clark.net/pub/pwalker/home.html)).

## **INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Several national and state organizations (e.g., CSOM, the National Alliance of Sexual Assault Coalitions, state sexual assault coalitions, and state sex offender management boards) may be able to provide information and technical assistance to jurisdictions interested in involving advocates and other victim service providers in sex offender management. And while there is little literature on this specific topic, resources are available to help readers build their understanding of sexual victimization, advocacy and other victim services, community and justice system responses to sexual assault, the dynamics of sex

offending, and the sex offender management process. (See "Resource List.") In addition, jurisdictions and programs highlighted in this document may be willing to share their experiences with others. (Call CSOM for further information about these jurisdictions.)

## **Conclusion and Future Implications**

The concept and practice of involving advocates and other victim service providers in sex offender management is in its infancy. The practice may become more widely accepted and implemented as sex offender management programs shift the focus of their work to better address the needs and safety of victims and the community through interventions with offenders. However, there is general lack of awareness of the benefits of involving advocates and other victim service providers in this work on the part of supervision agencies, sex offender treatment providers, as well as advocacy programs and other victim service organizations. Strategies that may promote a more comprehensive victim-centered approach to this work and help overcome roadblocks to further developing this concept and practice include:

- educating stakeholders about the benefits of this approach;
- developing partnerships among organizations working to advance the field of sex offender management and state sexual assault coalitions and other policy-making organizations that address sexual assault victim issues, in order to mobilize advocate support;
- continuously identifying promising practices in this area and sharing this information with professionals in the field;
- promoting national, state, and local discussions about collaboration among supervision officers, treatment providers, advocates, victim service providers and other stakeholders;
- encouraging sexual assault crisis centers to take a leadership role in advocating for the needs of victims of sex offenders supervised in the community and new victims identified in the process of sex offender management;
- encouraging jurisdictions to access technical assistance to address victim issues in sex offender management;
- promoting the inclusion of advocates and other victim service providers on policy-making bodies that deal with sex offender management;
- encouraging cross- and multi-disciplinary training among supervision agencies, sex offender treatment programs, advocacy agencies, and other victim services;

- encouraging supervision agencies and sex offender treatment providers to involve advocates and other victim service providers in the day-to-day management of sex offenders;
- promoting the implementation of sex offender registration and notification laws, in conjunction with community education sessions presented by advocates;
- encouraging collaboration among agencies and legislators to improve laws that address sex offenders and victim safety issues;
- supporting research on the impact of collaboration among supervision officers, treatment providers, advocates, and other victim service providers; and
- helping agencies build their capacity to collaborate in this area (e.g., by supporting the development of sexual assault crisis centers where they do not exist; promoting coordination among advocacy programs and victim service agencies; and supporting the establishment of specialized sex offender supervision units that utilize a community supervision model and include a role for advocates).

## Acknowledgements

Kristin Littel authored this brief. CSOM would like to thank the individuals listed below for contributing information to this document.

- Elizabeth Barnhill*, Executive Director, Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Des Moines, IA  
*Gail Burns Smith*, Executive Director, Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS), East Hartford, CT  
*Deborah Caddy*, Director, Rape Crisis and Victim Services Program of the Women's Center, Fort Worth, TX  
*Cindy Carroll*, Adult Parole and Probation Officer, Jackson County Community Corrections, Medford, OR  
*David D'Amora*, Center Director, Center for the Treatment of Problem Sexual Behavior, Middletown, CT  
*Christine Edes Kling*, Director of Advocacy, Center Against Sexual Abuse, Phoenix, AZ  
*Jean McAllister*, Program Administrator, State of Colorado Sex Offender Management Board, Division of Criminal Justice, Colorado Department of Public Safety, Denver, CO  
*Patty McGeshick*, Program Director, Crisis Center, Wolf Point, MT  
*Susan Perdue*, Assistant Director, Community Service Program, Victim Assistance Program, Irvine, CA  
*Leah Wicks*, Probation Supervisor, Jefferson County Probation Department, Golden, CO  
*Joe Yanes*, Director of Field Services, Tarrant County Probation Department, Fort Worth, TX  
*Carrie Zimmerman*, Victim Advocate, CONNSACS, East Hartford, CT

## Resource List

### ORGANIZATIONS

Center for Sex Offender Management  
 8403 Colesville Rd., Suite 720  
 Silver Spring, MD 20910  
 Phone: (301) 589-9383  
 Fax: (301) 589-3505  
 E-mail: askcsom@csom.org  
 Internet: www.csom.org

Corrections Program Office  
 Office of Justice Programs  
 810 7th Street, NW  
 Washington, DC 20531  
 Phone: (202) 353-8123  
 Fax: (202) 307-2019  
 Internet: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/cpo/

National Alliance of Sexual Assault Coalitions  
 c/o CONNSACS  
 110 Connecticut Blvd.  
 East Hartford, CT 06108  
 Phone: (860) 282-9881  
 Internet: www.connsacs.org/alliance.htm

National Center for Victims of Crime  
 2111 Wilson Blvd., Suite 300  
 Arlington, VA 22201  
 Phone: (703) 276-2880  
 Fax: (703) 276-2889  
 Internet: www.ncvc.org

National Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
 125 N. Enola Dr.  
 Enola, PA 17025  
 Phone: (717) 728-9764  
 Internet: www.ncasa.org

National Resource Center on Sexual Assault  
 c/o Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape  
 125 N. Enola Dr.  
 Enola, PA 17025  
 Phone: (717) 728-9740  
 Fax: (717) 728-9781  
 Services offered by this new center are estimated to be available in mid-2000.

Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center  
 P.O. Box 6000  
 Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
 Phone: (800) 627-6872  
 E-mail: askovc@ojp.usdoj.gov  
 Internet: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc

State Sexual Assault Coalitions  
 Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault (508 Dale Ave., Suite B, Charlottesville, VA 22903-4547, Phone: (804) 979-9004) annually updates and publishes a listing of state sexual assault coalitions and local sexual assault crisis centers.

Violence Against Women Office  
 810 Seventh St., NW  
 Washington, DC 20531  
 Phone: (202) 616-8894  
 Fax: (202) 307-3911  
 Internet: www.usdoj.gov/vawo

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND INTERNET LINKS

### *Sex Offender Management*

English, Kim, Susan Pullen, and Linda Jones, eds. *Managing Adult Sex Offenders on Probation and Parole: A Containment Approach*. Lexington, KY: American Probation and Parole Association (APPA), 1996. Copies (cost \$30) can be ordered by calling the APPA at (606) 244-8207.

The Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM) produces publications on sex offender management, including:

- *An Overview of Sex Offender Community Notification Practices: Policy Implications and Promising Approaches;*
- *Case Studies on the Center for Sex Offender Management National Resource Sites;*
- *Compendium of OJP-Sponsored Projects Relating to Sex Offenders;*
- *Glossary of Terms Used in the Management and Treatment of Sexual Offenders;*
- *Identifying Resources for Managing Sex Offenders;*
- *Sex Offender Registration: Policy Overview and Comprehensive Practices;*
- *The Community Management of the Sex Offender: An Overview of Current and Promising Practice;* and
- *Understanding Juvenile Sexual Offending Behavior: Emerging Research, Treatment Approaches and Management Practices.*

Through its website at [www.csom.org](http://www.csom.org), CSOM offers many of these publications as well as a reference library on related organizations and documents.

### *Sexual Victimization*

Bachman, Ronet, and Linda Saltzman. "Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey," *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), 1995. This document can be obtained at no cost through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849, Phone: (800) 851-3420, Fax: (301) 519-5212, E-mail: [askncjrs@ncjrs.org](mailto:askncjrs@ncjrs.org), Internet: [www.ncjrs.org](http://www.ncjrs.org)). It is also available on BJS's website at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pubalp2.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pubalp2.htm).

Kilpatrick, D.G., C.N. Edmunds, and A. Seymour. *Rape in America: A Report to the Nation*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Victims of Crime and Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, 1992. To obtain a copy (cost \$10), call the National Center for Victims of Crime at (703) 276-2880.

Rjaden, Patricia and Nancy Thoennes. "Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey." *Research in Brief*. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice (NIJ), 1998. This document can be obtained at no cost through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (see above contact information). It is also available on NIJ's website at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/victdoc.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/victdoc.htm).

The National Coalition Against Sexual Assault, through its website at [www.ncasa.org](http://www.ncasa.org), offers information, articles, and fact sheets on sexual assault. The National Center for Victims of Crime also offers fact sheets on sexual assault topics through the *Infolink* section of its website at [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org).

### *Responses to Sexual Assault Victims*

Brakeman-Colbath, Beverly, and Grace Yeh (Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc). "The Central Role of Victims in Managing Sex Offenders." This document is one of a number of curriculum materials under development by the Center for Sex Offender Management.

D'Amora, David, and Gail Burns-Smith. "Partnering in Response to Sexual Violence: How Offender Treatment and Victim Advocacy Can Work Together in Response to Sexual Violence," *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, The Official Journal of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers* 11 (October 1999): 295-306.

Littel, Kristin, Mary Malefyt, and Alexandra Walker. *Promising Practices: Improving the Criminal Justice System's Response to Violence Against Women*. Washington, D.C.: STOP Violence Against Women Grants Technical Assistance Project, 1998. Copies (cost \$29) can be purchased from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (see above contact information). Internet: [www.ncjrs.org](http://www.ncjrs.org).

*Looking Back, Moving Forward: A Guidebook for Communities Responding to Sexual Assault*. Arlington, VA: National Center for Victims of Crime, 1993. To obtain a copy (cost \$40), call the center at (703) 276-2880.

*This project was supported by Grant No. 97-WT-VX-K007, awarded by the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.*