

Organizational Assessment for Agencies Serving Victims of Sexual Violence

The work of responding to sexual assault and helping survivors rebuild their lives is done by advocates in an array of organizational structures throughout the US and its territories. The work can be taxing, and sometimes it is difficult to know if an agency is maximizing all of its strengths in service to sexual assault survivors. To that end, The National Resource Sharing Project (RSP) and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) invite you to reflect on your agency's skills, culture, values, structure, and environment.

This assessment tool will help identify strengths and strategies to cultivate deeper and broader services for all victims of sexual assault. It will enable an agency to develop plans for enhancing or creating sexual assault services by expanding on the strengths of the organization.

How to Use this Assessment Tool

The agency leadership can use this tool to assess the current state of the agency's sexual assault services, the collective sexual assault knowledge of the staff, and the agency's relationship with community partners. The board of directors may also use the tool to assess their own level of knowledge regarding sexual assault and agency sexual assault services. State coalitions may use this tool to help their membership assess statewide sexual assault response and construct a statewide plan.

Individuals or a team may complete this assessment tool. We recommend that assessors complete the tool on a regular basis to track progress and celebrate growth. If the tool is to be collected or used for purposes outside organizational planning and reflection, we recommend that this be discussed first. The tool was designed to encourage honesty and deep evaluation, and this work must happen in a trusting environment. The RSP and NSVRC will not collect any results from assessments.

This tool is broken down into three parts that focus on specific areas critical to effective sexual assault services. The first section examines the collective or sum total of staff knowledge and capacity to provide sexual assault services. The second focuses on the agency itself: the infrastructure, culture, policies, and procedures. The third section evaluates how the agency relates to the community concerning sexual assault services provision. Each section ends with reflection questions on strengths and areas of potential and brief action planning. It is not necessary to collect and analyze any agency documentation for this assessment, though you are welcome to do so.

From these three aspects of an agency, the assessor should be able to get a clear understanding of their ability to provide sexual assault services within a multi service organization. The length of

time needed to complete this assessment will depend on the taker, from less than 20 minutes for some to an hour for others.

Each agency operates in a unique environment with unique resources. The tool is a powerful addition to agency-wide strategic planning or to the work of smaller special projects. This assessment tool provides a roadmap for individualized growth that does not necessarily require expensive or complicated changes. Agencies have used this tool to enhance sexual assault services using varied amounts of human and fiscal resources. While this assessment examines the overall agency response, each individual at the agency shapes the collective knowledge and capacity to respond to sexual violence survivors. A personal assessment tool for individual advocates to evaluate their own skill level in serving victims of sexual violence is available at www.nsvrc.org. NSVRC, RSP, and your state, territorial or tribal coalition are available to assist you to as you implement enhanced services for victims of sexual violence.

The National Sexual Assault Coalition Resource Sharing Project (RSP) is a collaborative project of Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault, North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault, & Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs. The RSP helps state sexual assault coalitions across the country access the resources they need in order to develop and thrive. The project provides technical assistance, support, and the dissemination of peer-driven resources for all state and territorial sexual assault coalitions utilizing peer-to-peer technical assistance and the voices of survivors as guiding principles. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center, founded by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, is the nation's principle information and resource center regarding all aspects of sexual violence. It provides national leadership, consultation, and technical assistance by generating and facilitating the development and flow of information on sexual violence intervention and prevention strategies. The NSVRC works to address the causes and impact of sexual violence through collaboration, prevention efforts and the distribution of resources.

Organizational Assessment for Agencies Serving Victims of Sexual Violence

The Staff

Consider your staff as a group and assess the group’s knowledge of sexual violence and response. Please mark each statement from 1 (agency takes no action or statement is not true) to 5 (agency takes action, or statement is true) for agency staff’s knowledge of sexual violence and response. Space is provided for your comments and notes.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
 Strongly disagree/the statement is never true Neutral/the statement is sometimes true Strongly agree/the statement is always true
 The agency hasn’t thought about it The agency has some knowledge but not enough We feel confident and comfortable here
 We haven’t taken any action yet We sometimes try but sometimes forget to act The agency does a lot on this topic, has a plan

	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
1. The staff understands the prevalence of sexual victimization and can provide current information on the general frequency and facts surrounding sexual violence across differing communities.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. The staff receives specific advocacy training on sexual violence and core service provision.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. The staff understands the potential impact of sexual victimization.	1	2	3	4	5	
4. The staff is comfortable, willing and able to provide services to girls, teen and adult women who present as victims of sexual violence.	1	2	3	4	5	
5. The staff is comfortable, willing and able to serve boys, teen and adult men who present as victims of sexual violence.	1	2	3	4	5	

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		Comments
6. The staff has a good comprehension of gender identity, and is comfortable, willing, and able to serve transgendered people who present as victims of sexual violence.	1 2 3 4 5	
7. The staff is at ease serving secondary victims (i.e. significant others, partners, family, friends, etc).	1 2 3 4 5	
8. The staff understands the need and how to deliver culturally relevant services.	1 2 3 4 5	
9. The staff understands how multiple systems (criminal justice, advocacy and health care) operate in response to sexual violence and how the response is different from domestic violence.	1 2 3 4 5	
10. The staff has the ability to accurately screen and effectively respond to individuals who experienced sexual violence in the past (e.g. adult survivors of incest, child abuse, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5	
11. The staff understands the special needs and response to survivors using drugs/alcohol, self-injury or other such coping mechanisms to deal with sexual assault.	1 2 3 4 5	

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		Comments
12. The staff has the ability to accurately screen and effectively respond to individuals who experience sexual violence in the context of intimate partner violence.	1 2 3 4 5	
13. The staff is able to articulate how services may differ when working with victims who experience sexual violence <i>outside</i> the context of intimate partner relationships in comparison to those that experience intimate partner sexual violence.	1 2 3 4 5	
14. The staff possesses the knowledge to increase all options for victims of sexual violence including appropriate civil legal and criminal justice processes.	1 2 3 4 5	
15. The staff seeks opportunities to get necessary education to aid individuals who have experienced sexual violence.	1 2 3 4 5	
16. The staff has adequate and appropriate ongoing education on sexual violence.	1 2 3 4 5	

The Staff: Action Steps

What are the areas that you have identified above in which staff shows strength?

In what one or two areas do you see the best potential in staff for increased service?

How do the skills in the areas of strength for staff transfer to those areas having the best potential?

How can your staff use their strengths to enhance the areas identified for improvements?

The Agency

Consider the agency’s policies, procedures, documentation, training, and organizational culture. Please mark each statement from 1 (agency takes no action or statement is not true) to 5 (agency takes action, or statement is true) for the agency’s knowledge of and response to sexual violence. Space is provided for your comments and notes.

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		Comments
17. The agency does ongoing assessment of the community’s need for its services to victims of sexual violence.	1 2 3 4 5	
18. The agency has a mission statement that states the organization’s commitment to those that experience sexual violence.	1 2 3 4 5	
19. The agency has a concrete plan to provide services to victims who have experienced sexual violence.	1 2 3 4 5	
20. The agency has services that meet the unique needs of victims of sexual violence that are dealing with substance abuse issues or other coping mechanisms.	1 2 3 4 5	

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		Comments
21. The agency ensures that its name and outreach information adequately reflects all services provided so that an observer would know that sexual violence services are an integral part of the agency.	1 2 3 4 5	
22. The agency manifests a commitment to initial training and ongoing continuing education of all staff and volunteers to recognize and respond to victims of sexual violence.	1 2 3 4 5	
23. The agency has institutionalized resources in the agency, such as job descriptions, for those tasked with doing sexual violence work such as medical/legal advocacy, counseling and systems advocacy.	1 2 3 4 5	
24. The agency has staff available at all times (24 hours a day) to serve victims of sexual violence.	1 2 3 4 5	

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		Comments
25. The agency screens for the ability to respond to all victims of sexual violence in its hiring protocol and documentation.	1 2 3 4 5	
26. The agency has organizational documents (e.g. policies, procedures) designed to meet the unique needs of sexual violence survivors.	1 2 3 4 5	
27. The agency has its own budget for sexual violence or specific budget lines for sexual violence services.	1 2 3 4 5	
28. The agency has unique services that are specially tailored or created to meet the needs victims of sexual violence.	1 2 3 4 5	
29. The agency has specific goals established for their sexual violence programs.	1 2 3 4 5	

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		Comments
30. The agency has ongoing support services for victims of sexual violence including support groups, access to therapy, and services for non-offending parents or other secondary victims.	1 2 3 4 5	
31. The agency has staff that is able to assist victims of sexual violence in navigating multiple systems (advocacy, criminal justice, mental health, health care, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	
32. The agency has a plan that acknowledges, is proactive and responsive to vicarious trauma experienced by staff and volunteers.	1 2 3 4 5	
33. The agency portrays sexual violence services adequately in the annual report; for example it includes number of sexual violence victims served, highlights from the past year and an appropriate amount of material provided on sexual violence activities.	1 2 3 4 5	

The Agency

	Circle one, to your best estimate.				Comments:
34. The agency has ___ percent of its education and outreach programs committed to sexual violence education, awareness, outreach, and prevention programs.	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	
35. The agency has ___percent of its sexual violence educational programs and presentations that focus on reaching adolescents, teens or young adults provided to organizations such as: schools, youth-serving groups, colleges and other service providers to youth and young adults.	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	
36. The agency has ___percent of its advocacy and counseling programs dedicated to victims of sexual violence.	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	

The Agency: Action Steps

What are the areas that you have identified above in which the agency shows strength?

In what one or two areas do you see the best potential in the agency for increased service?

How do the skills in the areas of strength for the agency transfer to those areas having the best potential?

How can the agency use the strengths to enhance the areas identified for improvements?

The Agency in the Community

Please mark each statement from 1 (agency takes no action or statement is not true) to 5 (agency takes action, or statement is true) for the agency's relationship with the community on sexual violence and response issues. Space is provided for your comments and notes.

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		Comments
37. The agency has developed and maintained formal or informal working relationships with those providing services specific to sexual violence victims.	1 2 3 4 5	
38. The agency collaborates with partners that include a broad representation of various cultures, languages, disciplines and diversity of services.	1 2 3 4 5	
39. The agency does cross training with civil legal, criminal, advocacy and health care partners.	1 2 3 4 5	
40. The agency has outreach and awareness campaigns that incorporate sexual violence.	1 2 3 4 5	

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41. The agency ensures that Sexual Assault Awareness Month receives equal attention as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.	1 2 3 4 5	
42. The agency promotes attitudes, behaviors and social conditions that will reduce and ultimately eliminate the factors that cause or contribute to sexual violence (e.g. community education programs, agency policies).	1 2 3 4 5	
43. The agency actively seeks diversity in board members, employees and volunteers.	1 2 3 4 5	
44. The agency does specific community outreach and awareness building activities that are developed with and for traditionally underserved populations.	1 2 3 4 5	

The Agency in the Community: Action Steps

What are the areas that you have identified above in which the agency shows strength?

In what one or two areas do you see the best potential in the agency for increased service and visibility?

How do the skills in the areas of strength for the agency transfer to those areas having the best potential?

How can the agency use its strengths to enhance the areas identified for improvements?

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