



Florida Council Against Sexual Violence

Because Sexual Violence Shatters Lives, Wounds Communities, and Perpetuates

Introduction

Sexual violence continues to be a significant problem in Florida that can destroy lives. When victims' needs are not met, and they do not receive social and emotional support, they may be subject to revictimization. The Statewide Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Advisory Committee believes that victims are entitled to be treated in a dignified, sensitive, and competent manner, which requires allied professionals work together. By providing a coordinated, multidisciplinary victim-centered approach to sexual assault investigations and service provision, responders can help minimize the trauma that victims experience and encourage others to come forward and seek help.

A SART is a community-wide multidisciplinary coordinating group that promotes a comprehensive response to sexual violence. SARTs benefit communities by:

- Ensuring victims have the best and most comprehensive services available
- Helping bring perpetrators to justice
- Providing a forum for discussion and problem solving for service providers, investigators, and prosecutors
- Assisting communities in creating coherent and effective protocols
- Informing professionals about emerging technologies in forensic science, including toxicology and biology (DNA) where there are continuing advances and improvements in the techniques and processes being employed
- Improving communication and fostering a good working relationship amongst agencies

The Statewide SART Advisory Committee encourages communities to use this toolkit and other resources such as networking and in-person training to help develop new SARTs and maintain those that have already been established. For further assistance with SART development contact Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV) at 850-297-2000.

Using the SART Toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide users with a step by step guide for creating and maintaining a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) in the state of Florida. It was designed to be used by communities that are in the first stages of SART development as well as by communities that have an established SART and would like to strengthen it.

The structure of this toolkit is based on an 8 step model¹. This model is derived from research conducted by the FCASV and draws on models used in other states such as California, Minnesota, Washington, Oregon, and Texas. Fundamentally, the model emphasizes victim-centered approaches to sexual violence treatment, prevention, and education. The steps were designed to be straightforward and applicable to both rural and urban communities. FCASV recognizes that many communities are struggling to do more with less, and this model exhibits cost-free alternatives to building and maintaining a SART.

While the model does have steps 1-8 listed, it is important to remember that the steps do not necessarily need to be completed sequentially. For example, community A may have had a long established SART that has seen a marked decrease in participation and thus decides to skip steps 1 and 2 and go right to step 3, while community B may be just starting a SART and need to start right at step 1.

Inside this kit users will find a glossary of terms, a SART recommendations checklist, detailed explanations of the 8 step process, activities to help communities complete each step, example memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and protocols, and additional resources.

¹ See “Steps in Creating a Victim-Centered Sexual Assault Response Team”

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Glossary of Terms

Active Listening - Communicating understanding of a person's message through paraphrasing and reflective statements.

Advocate - One that argues for a cause; a supporter or defender; one that pleads in another's behalf; an intercessor.

Baseline Data - Basic information that is gathered before a program begins.

Certified Rape Crisis Center - A center that is certified by FCASV and provides 24-hour hotline, information and referral, crisis intervention, advocacy and accompaniment for general, medical and legal support to primary and secondary victims/survivors. In addition, it may provide individual and group counseling for primary and secondary victims, prevention education and training, forensic examinations, shelter and follow-up services.

Confidentiality - The ethical principle or legal right that an advocate will hold secret all information relating to a patient/client, unless the patient/client gives consent permitting disclosure.

Core Members - Members of the SART who are involved and engaged from the beginning of the development process and whose presence is necessary for the SART to be successful.

Crisis Intervention — A helping process that focuses on the resolution of an immediate crisis through the use of personal, social and environmental resources. Crisis intervention, generally, is a process of helping someone who is experiencing acute upset resulting in a temporary inability to cope by using their usual problem solving devices, according to a definition by.

Empowerment - To give power and authority to; to enable or permit; or to invest with power and authority. Empowerment is the opposite of oppression, and oppression is at the root of sexual violence.

Founding Members - The individuals who initiate the creating of the SART.

Jurisdiction - Where and when law enforcement has authority to enforce laws.

Medical/Forensic Exam - The initial forensic physical examination of rape victims to collect evidence for prosecution. The supplies used to collect the evidence is sometimes called a rape kit.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – A formal document outlining the terms and details of an agreement between parties.

Prosecution - The institution and carrying on of a criminal action involving the process of seeking formal charges against a person and pursuing those charges to final judgment. In Florida the state attorney’s office for each of the state’s 20 judicial circuits conducts the prosecution of persons accused of crimes.

Protocol – The product of discussions in which agreements are made and documented to create guidelines and assign roles and responsibilities for members who respond to sexual violence cases.

Rape - A sexual act conducted against someone’s will by force or threat of force or in situations in which an individual is unable to give consent.

Rape Kit - A rape kit contains the evidence that is generally collected at a hospital or medical facility after a victim is raped. It includes evidence such as DNA, stained clothing, skin from underneath fingernails, hairs and semen.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) – A registered nurse who has been specially trained to provide comprehensive care to sexual assault patients, who demonstrates competency in conducting a forensic exam, and has the ability to be an expert witness.

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) – A multidisciplinary group made up, at minimum, of representatives from local law enforcement agencies, crime laboratory, the state attorney’s office, the local rape crisis center, and the local forensic medical facility who work together to do the following:

- promote consistency and coordination by and between community agencies and departments, sexual assault centers and providers of care and services
- provide a comprehensive set of recommended practice responses to sexual violence
- provide guidance to communities in their efforts to strengthen their responses to sexual violence
- assist communities in the evaluation of their current policies and practices and in setting goals
- assist communities in identifying policy directions

Sexual Battery - The legal term for rape or sexual assault in Florida. Section 794.011(h), Florida Statutes, defines sexual battery as “oral, anal, or vaginal penetration by, or union with, the sexual organ of another or the anal or vaginal penetration of another by any other object; however, sexual battery does not include an act done for a bona fide medical purpose.”

Sexual Harassment - Unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior that interferes with a person's life, work or education. This behavior can include verbal or physical acts as well as acts that create a hostile environment.

Victim — A person who has been the object of a sexual offense.

Victim-Centered Care - Care that puts sexual assault victims in control and empowers them to be active participants in their recovery. This includes listening to, believing and supporting rape victims, respecting their decisions, providing them with easy-to-understand information about resources and services available to them and exploring their options. Victim-centered care empowers rape survivors to be active participants in their recovery.

SART Recommendations Checklist Detailed Explanation

Building and maintaining a successful Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) can be overwhelming if it is not well organized. FCASV has compiled a checklist to help guide team members on organization, implementation, and evaluation of SARTs. Recognizing that every SART is different, FCASV based these recommendations on best practices gathered from a wide variety of SART models across the country.

Recommendations have been divided into four main categories:

Membership

Included in this category are minimum recommendations of who should be serving on your SART. Absence of any one of these members does not mean that the SART will be unsuccessful, but the participating SART members should keep recruitment of these individuals a high priority.

Protocol and Decision Making

This category contains specific recommendations for SART protocol and decision making. In order to be effective, SARTs must first form a clearly defined mission statement that details what the group aspires to accomplish. Next, every member needs to have indicated their commitment to the mission by having signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Following the MOU process, the SART should develop a protocol. The protocol is a detailed explanation of how the SART will work to fulfill the aspirations stated in the mission statement. Guided by a victim-centered approach to sexual violence, the protocol should be tailored to suit the circumstances of the community that the SART will be serving. Key elements of the protocol are detailed explanations of each SART member's responsibilities as they relate to sexual violence and how these members will work together to provide services when a victim comes forward. Additional key elements of the protocol are a clear designation of how the SART will handle the decision making process for the group, conflict resolution, leadership designation, and revision and renewal of the protocol overall.

Meetings, Coordination, and Implementation

One key component of a successful SART is organization. The checklist provides recommendations for meetings, record keeping, and overall team coordination. By following these recommendations, teams can help ensure the longevity of the SART and be more prepared for transitions and adaptations over time.

Evaluation

Evaluation of SART activities and organization is an ongoing process. By consistently evaluating the progress of the SART and seeking feedback from

both team members and the larger community, the team will be better able to understand its successes and how it may need to change its policies.

How to Use the SART Recommendations Checklist

1. Be mindful that meeting all of the recommendations may take some time. The checklist is meant to be a guide, not a requirement, for SART success.
2. Review the checklist at a SART meeting. Ask members to discuss each of the points and decide whether they are meeting the recommendation.
3. Check off recommendations that have been reached. Cross out recommendations that the team determines to be unnecessary for their SART success. Add recommendations that the group thinks are important but are not listed.
4. Create a plan for meeting the recommendations that have not been reached but the SART members still regard as important.
5. Follow-through with the plan and evaluate what changes have taken place. Make additional plans as necessary.
6. Regularly review the list to be sure that the SART is meeting the set recommendations.

SART Recommendations Checklist

Membership

- Representative(s) from local law enforcement agencies
- Representative(s) from local forensic medical facility
- Representative(s) from state attorney's office
- Representative(s) from local rape crisis center
- Representative(s) from local crime lab
- Representative(s) from county health department
- Representative(s) from additional service providers

Protocol and Decision Making

- Clearly defined mission statement
- MOU signed by every SART member
- Clear policy of decision making process implemented
- Conflict resolution policies in place
- Protocol based on victim-centered practices
- Protocol lists specific policy regarding leadership positions, how they are appointed, length of term, and how they are replaced if unable to fulfill term requirements
- Protocol includes provisions for revision and renewal of policies

- Protocol takes into account community needs using baseline data

Meetings, Coordination, and Implementation

- Meetings set at regular intervals (at a minimum on a quarterly basis)
- Designated coordinator(s) with term limit
- Designated storage place for all documents
- Record keeping system implemented
- System of community notification of SART activities implemented (i.e. brochures, meeting minutes, updates)
- Accurate lists of community resources distributed to all SART members
- Training on protocol (contingent upon skills assessment) implemented and repeated as necessary

Evaluation

- Plan in place for evaluation of protocol
- Scheduled timeline for evaluation set and implemented

Steps in Creating a Victim-Centered Sexual Assault Response Team

Step 1: Initiate SART

- Articulate the problem
- Identify who has influence
- Choose core members
- Establish mission
- Develop your message



Step 2: Establish Commitment

- Get members' commitment to SART in writing
- Generate a collective vision
- Produce an MOU

Step 3: Get Organized

- Establish officers
- Create basic operations policy for SART



Step 4: Collect Baseline Data

- Identify community needs using baseline data
- Compile accurate lists of community resources

Step 5: Develop Protocol

- Describe how agencies will work together and with victims
- Decide how breaches of protocol will be addressed



Step 6: Implement Protocol

- Access which skills are needed
- Hold a group training on protocol based on skills assessment

Step 7: Evaluate and Revise Protocol

- Meet and address ongoing tasks
- Establish a monitoring tool
- Make changes as necessary



Step 8: Keep it Going!

- Meet regularly
- Engage new team members
- Stay relevant to community

STEP 1: Initiate SART

Introduction

Communities start SARTs for a variety of reasons; some want to create a clear system of communication between service providers, some want to establish new support systems for victims of sexual violence, and some want to take proactive step to help victims navigate the medical, legal, and advocacy systems available in their communities. One of the most common reasons for developing a SART is because community members have encountered problems with their existing system and want to find a way to fix them. Step 1 describes some actions that can be taken to initiate a new SART, but can also be used to help existing SARTs to remind them of their mission and goals and identify problems that may be impeding their progress.

Articulate the Problem²

In order to create an effective, victim-centered SART, there must be a small group of individuals who are dedicated to creating the foundations of the organization and are willing to commit time to the project. Because community members often initiate SARTs in reaction to a problem they have encountered in their system, it is important that these problems are clearly articulated and addressed in the SART goals and mission statement. Thus, from the very beginning, founding members should establish why it is they need a SART in their community. Questions for founding members to consider are as follows:

- 1. Why do you need a SART in your area? (Be specific and use examples)**
- 2. How would your SART address the issues listed above?**
- 3. Who are the core members that you would want to commit to serving on your SART?**
- 4. Who has influence to bring the desired members to the table?**

Choose Core Members

Once these questions have been answered it is time for the founding members to begin to recruit other core members. At this point, the core members should be individuals who are enthusiastic about the new SART and want to be in on the ground level of building it. Together, these core members can determine which other members they think are essential to a successful SART. The FCASV recommends that the following agencies be represented in every SART:

- Local law enforcement agencies
- Local forensic medical facility
- State Attorney's Office
- Local rape crisis center
- Additional service providers such as the local domestic violence program, health department, military advocacy

² See accompanying exercises "Articulating the Problem"

Spheres of Influence

It is important that core members understand their relationship to one another and how each of individual agency mission contributes to the overall SART. One tool that can be used to help define this relationship is the Spheres of Influence³. To complete the Spheres of Influence exercise complete the following steps:

1. Draw a large circle in the center of a piece of paper and label it with your SART name.
2. Draw smaller circles that overlap the edges of larger circle. Write the names of the core members in the smaller circles.
3. Have each core member write down their mission in regards to sexual assault services. For example, a law enforcement agency may have the mission to investigate crimes, provide referrals, and seek justice.
4. Compare the missions of each core member and discuss the commonalities and differences.

Once the commonalities and differences have been established, it is time to move on to forming the SART mission and goals.

Establish Mission

Every SART should have a clear mission statement. Typically, a good mission statement clarifies the group's philosophy, purpose, and values. The mission statement doesn't have to be particularly long or complicated, but it does need to connect with the community it serves. The compilation of the mission statement is a group process and should include participation of all core members.

Fundamentally, the mission statement reflects *what* the group is trying to accomplish. Using the information gathered by articulating the problem(s) and identifying the commonalities in missions of each core member, the core members can craft the mission statement. This is the time to think about the big picture and put down in words what the group is working for. The mission statement will guide the activities of the group through the rest of the SART development process.

Once these questions have been answered, founding members can begin to strategize about how they will get community members to commit to participating in the SART and supporting its mission.

³ See accompanying exercise "Spheres of Influence"

STEP 2: Establish Commitment

Introduction

Once the founding members have articulated their problem, established a mission and goals, and identified who has influence in their community, it is time for them to start recruiting for the team and getting others to make a commitment to participate in the SART. Step 2 describes how founding members can develop their message, generate a collective vision, and get other groups to commit to the SART.

Developing the Message – 3 Cs and an F Rule⁴

Founding members first need to develop the message that they are going to send to potential participants. This is a good time to consider using the 3 Cs and an F rule. The 3 Cs and an F rule is a simple way for founding members to prepare for recruiting important SART members and is described as follows:

- 1.** Make a **CONNECTION** with the potential member. Define the relationship that the potential member has with the SART. Answer the following questions:
 - Why does this person and/or their organization have an interest in the SART mission?
 - What does this person and/or organization have to gain from participating in the SART? What does this person have to lose from not participating in the SART?
- 2.** Put the mission of the SART into **CONTEXT** for the potential member. Answer the following questions:
 - What are some specific examples of how the SART would work in your community? How would this potential member play a role in this example?
 - What are some current issues that your community is facing that a SART might be able to help with? (Think back to Step One – Articulate the Problem).
- 3.** Ask the potential member to make a **COMMITMENT** to serving on the SART. Answer the following questions:
 - When you ask the potential member to make a commitment, what exactly are you asking them to commit to?
 - How can you clearly delineate your expectations for potential members?
- 4.** Have a plan to **FOLLOW-UP** with the newly committed member. Answer the following questions:
 - How and when will you follow-up with this new member?

⁴ See accompanying exercise “3 Cs and an F”

- How will you ensure that this new member is updated on the proceedings of the SART and is included in the next steps of the SART development?

It is important to keep in mind that some potential SART members will be easier to recruit than others. Some will be active from the beginning of the process and others may have to be convinced further. The 3 Cs and an F rule should be prepared for all potential members, but in the case of the potential member that needs further convincing, more techniques may be necessary. One tool to use when trying to recruit resistant members is power mapping.

Recruiting Resistant Members – Power Mapping⁵

Power mapping involves identifying ways to communicate with individuals about how SART participation will benefit their organization. This method requires that founding members think carefully about the potential participant’s interests and identify individuals who can help them in communicating their message. Using the basic power map template from this guide, fill in the map as follows:

1. Clearly identify the individual that you want to focus on. Place his or her name in the center rectangle on the map.
2. In the bubbles directly connected to the center rectangle, identify other organizations and/or interests that you view to have a direct influence on the target individual.
3. In the outer boxes, identify individuals that either you know as a professional contact or those to whom you have a personal connection to and is linked to the target individual.

Once you have completed your map, discuss your options for reaching out to the potential member. Choosing the communication line that is most direct and incorporates the closest SART allies is important. It is also important that the potential member be approached in a way that is positive and encourages participation rather than in a way that is coercive or threatening. For example, after creating a power map strategize with the team to make a list of the positive things that the potential member will gain from joining the SART. Avoid using negative incentives such as “if you don’t join our SART we will not include you as a resource provider in our publications.” Rather, use a positive incentive: “By joining our SART you will broaden your ability to communicate about the services you provide to the community.”

Producing an MOU

Once you have recruited the necessary members to your SART, it is time to generate a memorandum of understanding (MOU). An MOU is simply a document outlining the terms and details of an agreement between parties.

⁵ See exercise “Power Mapping”

The MOU contains a clear listing of all participating agencies, including authorized signatures, that confirms the commitment of each individual agency to work together towards the mission and goals of the SART⁶. It typically also contains a list of statements that describes the extent to which the individual agencies are willing to cooperate with one another. An MOU is different from a protocol in that it lists the overall mission and goals of the SART, rather than the actual process that each agency will engage in in response to a sexual assault.

Components of an MOU vary from community to community, but FCASV recommends that they have the following minimum components:

1. Title of the SART and date that the MOU was written
2. A brief description of the SART and its mission statement that indicates that undersigned are supportive of the overall concept of the SART
3. A list of specific goals for the SART
4. Signature space indicating the name, agency affiliation, and date of signature for every SART member
5. The document should not be labeled as belonging to any individual agency (i.e. should not be on letterhead unless such an item has been developed specifically for the SART)

⁶ Examples of MOUs from are included at the end of the user guide.

Step 3: Get Organized

Introduction

By the time your team has reached this Step 3, you have likely grown in membership and are ready to get to work on establishing some of the basic operations policy for the group. The basic operations policy does not have to be long or elaborate, it just needs to state how it is that you would like the group to operate. Some groups may want to use Roberts Rules of Order to run meetings while others may prefer to keep it less formal. What is important at this stage is that the group creates some “ground rules” that the group will continually refer to as it develops, implements, and makes changes to protocol. FCASV recommends that the operations policy designates officers (including nomination and approval process, length of terms, and succession procedures), explains how membership is approved, outlines how protocol is developed and changed, and how the team will evaluate itself.

Officer Designation

Because SARTs are a collaborative by nature, it is important that each agency represented on the team have an equal voice in the process. However, this does not preclude the team from selecting individuals to help keep the SART organized and on task. Models for leadership in SARTs vary from state to state, but at a minimum most have a coordinator that takes on such duties as setting up meeting times, taking and storing minute notes from meetings, tracks paperwork, and facilitates meetings. In addition to the coordinator, you may see the need for a team chair or a secretary. The more individuals that are willing to take on responsibility for SART operations the better.

Basic Operations Policy

To ensure the longevity of the group, FCASV recommends that the basic operations policy clearly answer the following questions:

1. What leadership positions will your SART have?
2. How and for how long will these positions be appointed?
3. If one of the leadership positions becomes vacant on short notice, how will the group ensure that all important documents and information are returned to the SART?
4. How will the initial protocol be approved?
5. How will changes to the protocol be approved?
6. What will the SART do to evaluate its progress?
7. Who will be in charge of maintaining and distributing important documents and information?

Conflict Resolution

In any group there is bound to be some sort of conflict, thus SARTs should prepare in advance for conflict resolution by having a plan for resolution in place. There are many models for conflict resolution and the model(s) that the SART uses should be based upon the characteristics of the group. However,

below are some general principles that can guide SARTs in their conflict resolution plans.

Seven basic operating principles to establish for resolving problems:

- A decision-making philosophy grounded in the concept of "what is best for the victim" and "what is in the best interest of the community";
- A commitment to the SART approach;
- Understanding that mistakes and conflicts are expected and that they introduce problems to be solved;
- Understand that problems and/or conflict are opportunities for improvement;
- Protocols and constructive methods for resolving mistakes and disagreement will be developed in response to problems;
- Problems will be addressed, and not be allowed to continue unresolved;
- Always take a constructive approach no matter how difficult the problem;
- Recognize that some problems do not lend themselves to immediate resolution, and taking the "long view" may be indicated.

Anticipate Challenges and Potential for Conflict Rather than be Reactive

• **Turf Issues**

Turf issues may surface at any of the planning, organizing or implementation stages. Problems usually arise from conflicts in mission and goals, and occasionally are related to stylistic personality differences. The challenge is to build operating relationships that can withstand the confrontation of conflicting points of view.

• **Mission and Goal Conflicts**

If the focus of the conflict is organizational mission and goals, approach the issue with interdisciplinary training. Identify the mission and goals of each agency or discipline, describe the philosophy, parameters, protocols and operating procedures, and discuss the limitations by which they operate. Training and an objective problem-solving approach facilitate understanding and achieving balanced perspectives about each agency. This can prevent personalization and polarization of conflicts.

• **Difficult Personalities**

It is also important to recognize that difficult personalities may occupy key positions for years. Thought must be given to finding avenues of working with them. Sometimes a pathway can be found through a mutual concern, an issue, or a helpful third person from

the same discipline. Building upon small pathways can enlarge the scope of the working relationship.

- **Personalization of Conflicts**

Personalization of conflicts causes rifts, which are the challenges to bridge building. There must be a commitment to working together "for better, for worse" coupled with a realization that all the parties "will have to come back for another day for another issue." No purpose is served in breaking relationships needed for another day. With this attitude, trust builds over time and proponents of firm positions or attitudes can shift and grow as new information and experiences generate fresh perspectives.

Step 4: Collect Baseline Data

Introduction

One of the most important, and often skipped, steps in the SART development process is the collection of baseline data. Baseline data can be a combination of many different items including an assessment of current practices in the community regarding sexual violence, area demographics, statistics about sexual violence reporting, jurisdiction definition, transportation capabilities, lists of available services in the area, etc. Collection of baseline data may seem unnecessary to some groups because they feel that they are already active in their community and know it well. However, collecting baseline data is a critical step in determining what needs the community has and how the SART may fulfill those needs.

Needs Assessment Survey⁷

Collection of baseline data can include accessing census data for the given area and picking out relevant variables and measurements. It can also mean gathering information from each SART member agency to get a better picture of who, where, and when individuals are accessing services. Comparing the data gathered from SART members with that which is available from the census is one way to establish which populations are being served as well as which are not. Data comparison can be as sophisticated as the SART is willing to make it. At a minimum, however, the SART should have a basic understanding of the community it serves including how many reports of sexual violence have occurred in the past year(s), the nature of the crimes, and where and when they were reported. Additionally, the SART should gain access to reports that include the number of individuals (including victims and secondary victims) who sought services for sexual violence, and what the nature of those services were, regardless of whether or not they reported the crime to law enforcement, in the past year. A worksheet that is helpful for collecting, titled “Needs Assessment Survey” is available as a tool for SARTs working on collecting baseline data.

Resource Assessment

Perhaps the simplest baseline data that can and should be gathered by every SART is a resource assessment. This is a list, including telephone numbers, websites, and addresses, of every available resource to victims of sexual violence in the SART service area. This includes non profit agencies, law enforcement, medical facilities, health departments, for profit institutions and faith-based organizations that provide specialized services for victims of sexual assault, governmental organizations, statewide coalitions, and major national and international organizations that deal with issues surrounding sexual violence. This list should be compiled into one document that is continually updated and distributed to every SART member and their respective organization.

⁷ See Exercise “Needs Assessment Survey”

Step 5: Develop Protocol

Introduction

The protocol development stage can seem like a daunting task for developing SARTs, but it is essential for every SART to have one, and it does not have to be a difficult process. Developing a protocol can be hastened by staying organized and keeping the mission of the SART in mind.

Purpose of the Protocol and Measurement Criteria

The protocol is meant to provide a standardized structure for members to follow once they have received a report that a victim of sexual violence has come forward and is requesting services. The protocol is not meant to supersede the policies and procedures of any individual entity. Rather, it is a detailed plan of action for SART members to follow so that every victim that comes forward is afforded a consistently high quality and efficient response. The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape advocates for the development and implementation of SART protocol because it “will increase victim access to the team, improve victim interaction with community resources, and increase successful prosecutions.” To that end, they have published the following measurement criteria for meeting these goals, and the FCASV supports these criteria:

- Procedures and protocols will be developed to allow activation of the SART by the victim from various points of entry to the system
- Procedures and protocols will be developed for the team that clearly define each member’s roles and responsibilities
- Procedures and protocols will be developed to address confidentiality issues
- Procedures and protocols will be developed to address victim consent issues
- Procedures and protocols will be developed to address aftercare and follow-up
- Procedures and protocols will be reviewed by the team on a regularly scheduled basis to ensure their effectiveness

Point of Entry Flow Chart

One way for SARTs to begin to develop protocol is to consider case scenarios in which a victim would come forward to request services. This can be done by creating point of entry flowcharts. The San Diego County Sexual Assault Response Team released a document in 2001⁸ that detailed their standards of practice and included a diagram that outlined the components of their team. In this diagram the sexual assault victim remains at the center of the SART process and SART members are divided into categories. SARTs that are forming protocol can do use a similar structure to help define the ways that a victim might enter their system and the resulting SART engagement that they envision

⁸ See “Regional SART Model – San Diego County”

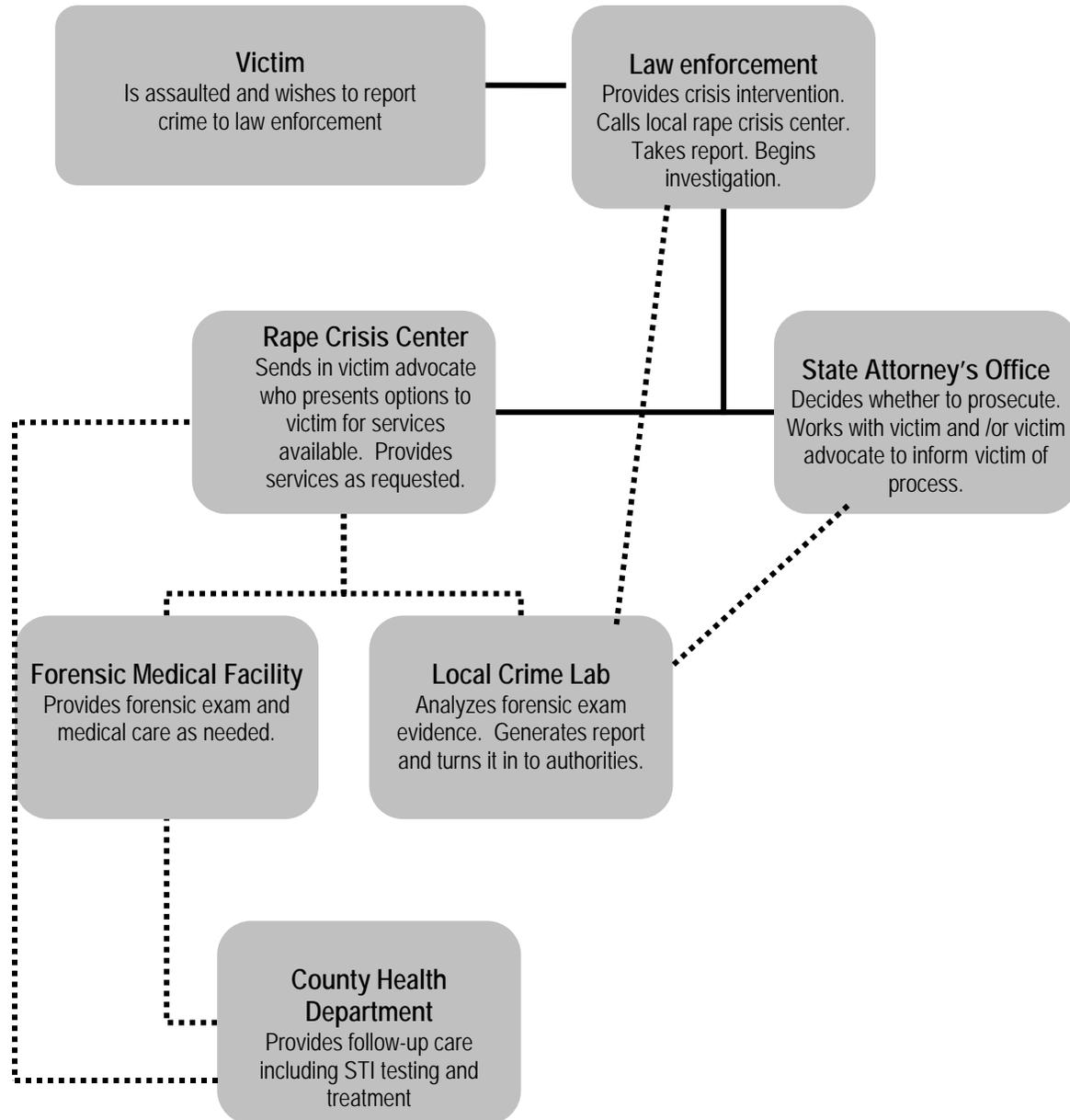
taking place. To do so, first make a list of all SART members and their agencies and categorize them into groups. For example, you may choose to divide them into five groups: law enforcement, rape crisis, state attorney's office, crime lab, and medical facilities. Next, think of a scenario in which a victim may enter the SART system. According to the circumstances of the scenario, make a flowchart that illustrates how the steps that each SART member should take to activate the system. This can be as detailed as you like.

An example of a point of entry flowchart is located on the next page. In this flowchart, the case scenario is listed at the top and then a sketch of the resulting actions on behalf of the SART are briefly described. By creating this chart, the point of entry for the victim into the system is clearly defined, as are the general steps that each category of SART members should take. The direct actions based on the requests of the victim stated in the scenario are linked with a solid line, and those that are possible actions are linked with a dotted line. Thus, the victim's wishes remain central to the reaction of the system.

By developing flow charts for several different scenarios, SART teams can help define the most important steps that they feel each member should follow when a survivor comes forward. Those steps can then be translated into protocol. At a minimum, protocol should include a list of steps for each member to take if are contacted by a victim of sexual assault. These steps should take into account victims who want to report and those who do not.

Point of Entry Flowchart

Scenario: Jennifer, 21, was attending a party at an acquaintance’s home when she met a man who introduced himself simply as “Matt.” After socializing with Matt for about two hours, Jennifer agreed to go with Matt to his apartment to watch a video. While Jennifer was at Matt’s apartment he forced her to have sex. The next morning, Jennifer went to her local police department to report that she had been raped.



Indicates direct contact



Indicates contact dependent on victim’s choices once contacted

Step 6: Implement Protocol

Introduction

Once your SART has developed a working protocol, it is time to start the implementation step. The individuals that regularly attend SART meetings should by this time be well versed in the need for services for victims of sexual violence. However, others charged with carrying out the protocol may not. Thus, it is important that the team plans a way for their colleagues to become familiar with these concepts and how following the protocol will benefit them. In some cases this may require a group training or in other cases it may be as simple as having a meeting in which the new protocol is introduced.

Skills assessment

To help determine whether or not a formal training on the protocol needs to take place, SART members can discuss amongst the group the following questions:

How does the new protocol differ from the policies in place before its formulation?

- The more the protocol varies from previous policies, the more formal the training should be.

Have the individuals charged with carrying out the new protocol been adequately trained in crisis intervention as it pertains to victims of sexual violence?

- Anyone who is expected to provide services to victims of sexual violence needs to be competent in crisis intervention.

Do you anticipate that there will be resistance to implementing the new protocol on behalf of those responsible for carrying it out?

- If you expect that there will be resistance, it is important that service providers understand why the protocol has been adapted and how it will benefit them.

Are the individuals charged with carrying out the new protocol familiar with other SART members?

- A good SART protocol can only be carried out if the individuals that have to follow it trust that their community partners will cooperate with them. To help build this trust, these individuals should get to know one another on a professional level.

If the answers to these questions indicate that the larger group will have to make major adjustments in order to carry out the new protocol (i.e. the new

protocol is very different from past policies, is likely to meet resistance, and individuals charged with carrying it out have little crisis intervention training) the SART team may choose to hold a group-wide training that addresses these issues. If however, the SART members feel that the larger group will be able to adjust quickly and that they are competent in crisis intervention for victims of sexual assault, smaller more informal meetings may be appropriate. In either of these cases, it is important that the SART develop an implementation plan.

Implementation Plan⁹

An implementation plan is a brief outline of how the SART plans to activate the new protocol. It begins with a designation of when the SART aspires to put the protocol into effect. Next, it establishes what kind of training is going to take place (whether it is formal or informal), what the goals of the training are, and a preliminary agenda for the overall training. It is important to keep in mind that training can vary widely depending on the group. Some groups may need to gather all partners together to discuss the new protocol in a formal matter with a lead trainer, guest speakers, and group exercises. Others may not have the time and/or resources for this training and thus may opt to have smaller meetings that are hosted by individual SART members. In any case, those responsible for carrying out the new protocol need to be adequately briefed on why it has been put in place and what their roles will be in implementing it.

⁹ See “Implementation Plan”

Step 7: Evaluate and Revise Protocol

Introduction

Once your SART is fully up and running and you have implemented your protocol, it is important that the SART stay active and up to date on the progress and challenges that you are facing. One important step in this is the evaluation and revision process. In actuality, the team should be continually evaluating itself whenever it meets to discuss the community it serves. This can be done through regular group check-ins at meetings, including always reserving time for case review and sharing of challenges and successes. However, the evaluation process needs to take place in a more formal matter as well.

Survivor Surveys

One of the best gauges of SART success is the feedback received from the individuals that it serves. Often it is the case that when victims of sexual violence come forward they will be given a packet of information that includes phone numbers, pamphlets, and other resources available to them in the community. SART members may consider including in this packet an evaluation form that victims can voluntarily fill out and return. This form would have to be anonymous and include a self-addressed stamped envelope so that the victim's identity could remain anonymous. Suggestions for questions that might be included in a survey are listed in the Victim Experience Survey¹⁰. Of course, every SART needs to tailor the survey to suit the area and victims that they are serving and it is important to recognize that the surveys they receive are likely to be sparse and will likely reflect those who have had either an especially positive experience or especially negative experience with the system. Still, these evaluations are valuable piece of information that can be used to assess how well the SART is working and how it may need to be changed.

Quantitative Tracking

Another way that SARTs can help evaluate their progress is to keep close track of the number of victims that enter the SART system and the services they receive. A simple spreadsheet denoting such factors as age, race/ethnicity, and gender of the victim, as well as type of assault reported, where the event occurred, who the perpetrator was, and what services were provided to the victim can be used to compare services provided before and after the SART protocol has been implemented. This would take special organization on behalf of SART members as they would have to be sure that every record keeper was clear on the proper way to document cases and had a system for collating the reports from each member.

Focus Groups

Focus groups consisting of different target groups and a designated facilitator could be organized to gather information about how the SART protocol is

¹⁰ See "Victim Experience Survey"

working. The focus groups could be comprised of victims and survivors of sexual violence that had come into contact with the system, service providers charged with carrying out the protocol, or extended community partners who have observed the SART protocol. From this, SARTs could learn about how others view the effectiveness of the protocol and what changes may need to take place.

Protocol Revision

Whatever evaluation methods SART members choose to use, it is important that the group remain flexible and have the ability to adapt to the needs of the community and the overall mission of the group. It may be the case that after the protocol has been implemented the group discovers that there are factors included that are inappropriate for their community and need to be completely changed. It could also be the case that the protocol is working very well in the community. In that case, it would be good for the SART to consider ways that it can expand its efforts to even better serve victims and coordinate response to sexual violence in their area.

Step 8: Keep it Going!

Introduction

Once the groundwork of the SART has been completed and a protocol has been implemented it may seem that the team has finished their job. In truth, the job has only just begun. SARTs have to constantly work to stay relevant, retain and recruit new members, and continue developing new and better ways to help provide the best services possible. To this end, FCASV has compiled some strategies for SART maintenance.

Strategies for SART Maintenance

Sadly, sexual violence is not something that is likely to disappear from our communities. Thus, SARTs need to continually remain vigilant by communicating about the latest trends, continually recruiting community partners, and exploring new ways to achieve their mission. To do this, SARTs can practice the following exercises on a regularly scheduled basis:

- Develop a regular meeting process. Items to always include on the agenda are updates on local issues, case review, challenges encountered by SART members, and recent successes.
- Invite guest presenters to talk about specific issues going on in the community and nationally.
- Always reflect back on the mission and goals of the SART that were established in the beginning. Do they still suit the group? Is the group operating in a way that works towards the mission and goals?
- Consider how the group can expand its reach. Items to consider include:
 1. Ensuring that all victims have a safe place to turn to in their community.
 2. Increasing the cultural and linguistic competence of community programs.
 3. Expanding the availability of culturally competent and culturally specific services.
 4. Developing new leadership.
 5. Informing policymakers.
 6. Building partnerships with community groups.
 7. Increasing organizational capacity

Overall, it is critical that the SART continue to evolve and stay engaged in the community. FCASV provides ongoing training and technical support for SARTs that are available to help in this process. Take advantage of these opportunities!

Accompanying Exercises

Articulating the Problem

Founding SART Members Answer the Following Questions

1. Why do you need a SART in your area? (Be specific and use examples)

2. How would your SART address the issues listed above?

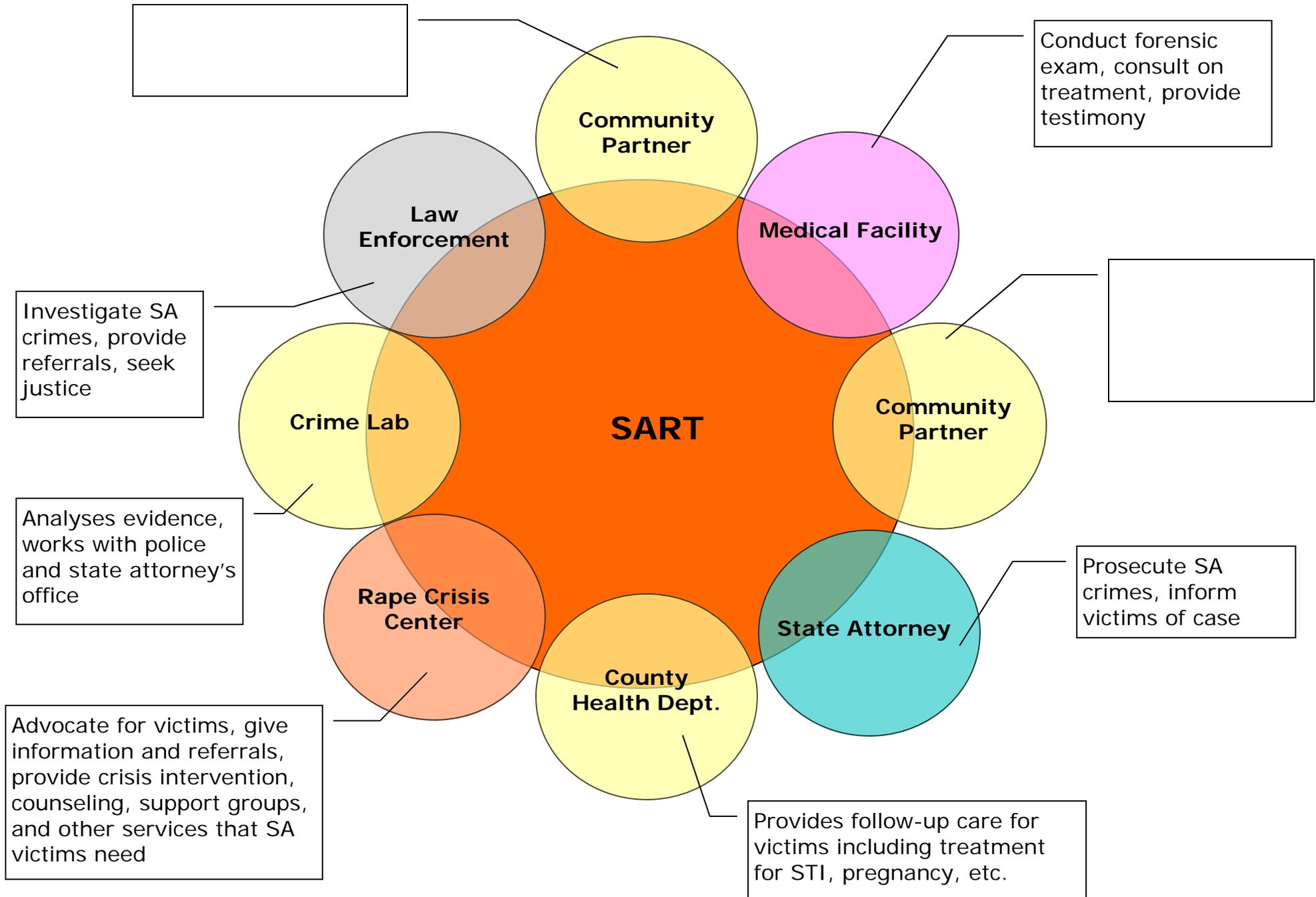
3. Who are the core members you would want to commit to serving on your SART?

4. Who has the influence to bring the desired members to the table?

5. What would be the overall mission of your SART?

6. What would be the immediate goals of your SART?

Identify Spheres of Influence



Developing the Message: 3 Cs and an F

MAKE A CONNECTION

Potential Member's Name and Position:

Why does this person and/or their organization have an interest in your SART mission?

What does this person and/or their organization have to gain from participating in your SART?

What does this person and/or their organization have to lose from not participating in your SART?

PUT THE MISSION INTO CONTEXT

Describe some issues that your community is facing that your SART would be able to help with.

Describe a specific example of how your SART would work to combat one of these issues in your community. How would the potential member play a role in this example?

ASK FOR A COMMITMENT

What are you asking the potential member to commit to?

What are your expectations of the potential SART member if they decide to join? How will these expectations benefit them?

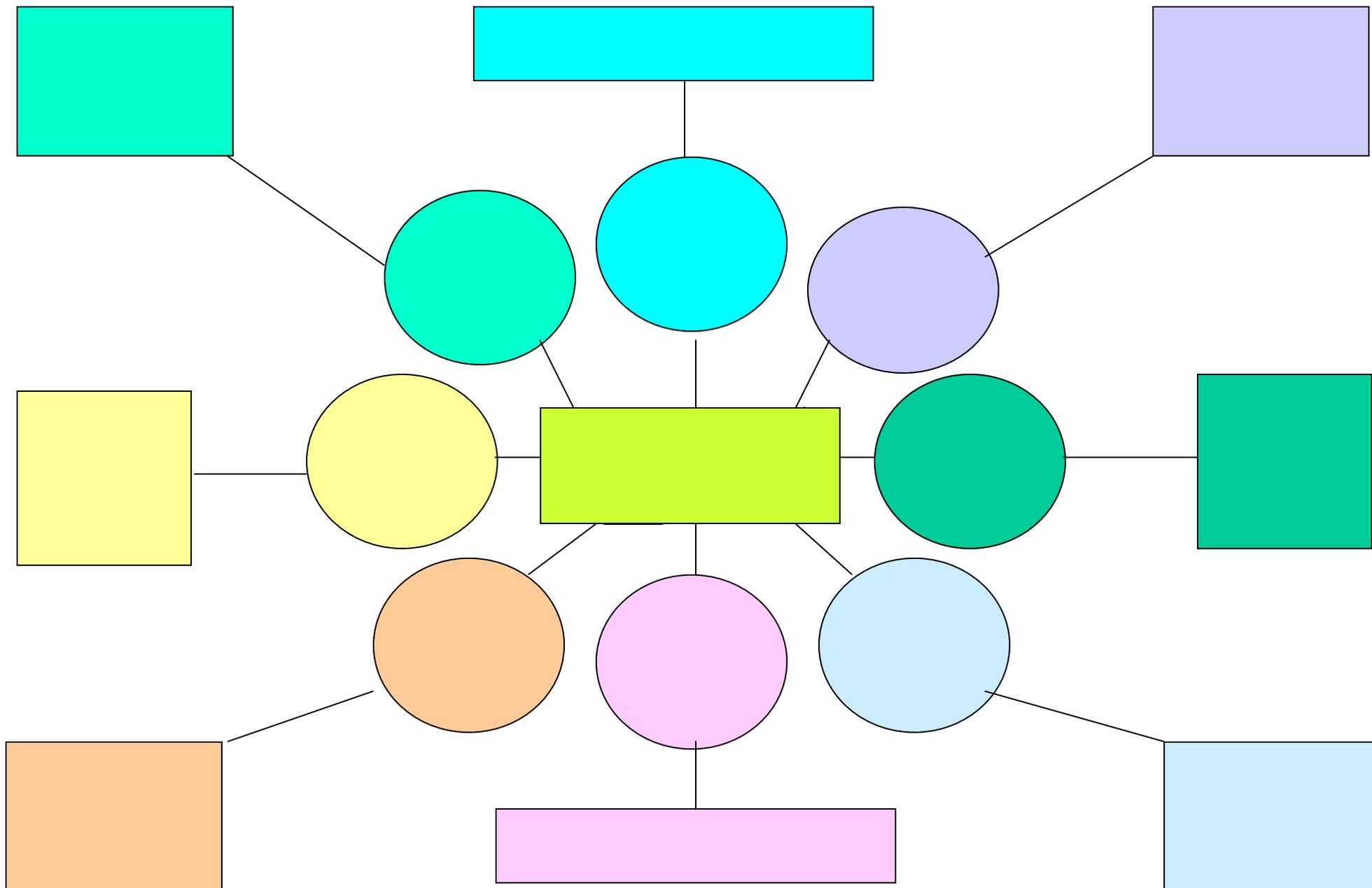
DEVELOP A FOLLOW- UP PLAN

How and when will you follow-up with this potential member?

How will you ensure that the potential member is updated on the proceedings of the SART and is included in the next steps of your SART development?

USING THE ANSWERS PROVIDED ABOVE, CREATE A SHORT NARRATIVE THAT YOU WILL DELIVER TO THE POTENTIAL MEMBER WHEN YOU MEET TO DISCUSS YOUR SART

Power Mapping



Needs Assessment Survey

Name of agency: _____

Sexual violence reports for year: _____

Total number of sexual battery or lewd and lascivious reports received by your agency (or the number of victims seen) for the year (whether case was charged or not):

(# of children) (# of women) (# of men) **(Total)**

Number of sexual violence cases that were taken from your agency to the State Attorney's office for charges to be brought against the perpetrator:

(# of children) (# of women) (# of men) **(Total)**

How many of your staff currently work with sexual violence victims? In what capacity do these staff members work with sexual violence victims?

Does your staff currently work directly with any of the following (in regards to sexual violence victims)?

Local rape crisis center _____

Law enforcement _____

State Attorney's Office _____

Local crime lab _____

Local forensic exam facility _____

County health department _____

Additional service providers (please list here)

Number of sexual violence reports received by month:

Month	# of children	# of women	# of men
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
November			
December			

List most common places that victims are reporting that the sexual violence took place:

Who was the perpetrator in relation to these victims?

Relationship	# of victims	Relationship	# of victims
Spouse		Grandfather	
Boyfriend		Grandmother	
Girlfriend		Cousin	
Father		Acquaintance	
Mother		Friend	
Step-Father		Neighbor	
Step-Mother		Co-Worker	
Brother		Stranger	
Sister		Uncle	
Aunt		Other (specify)	

List most common places that victims are reporting that the sexual violence took place:

Discuss any positive interaction and/or collaborative efforts you have seen or experienced within your community as a response to sexual violence.

Discuss any challenges and/or concerns you have seen or experienced within your community as it relates to response to sexual violence.

Discuss any future efforts you would like to see happen within your community in order to enhance services for victims of sexual violence.

Please identify populations in your community that you feel are underserved in regards to services for victims of sexual violence.

Other comments regarding services for victims of sexual violence in your community:

Implementation Plan

SART Name: _____

Today's Date: _____

Date that team would like to launch new protocol: _____

Large Group Training

Does the SART plan to host a formal training on the new protocol?

Yes

No (if no, skip to next section "Small and/or Informal Training")

If yes, list the date, times, and location of the training:

Who will lead the training? (List all involved)

What are the main objectives of the training?

List a preliminary agenda for the training:

Small and/or Informal Training

List the date, times, and location of the small and/or informal training:

Who will lead the small and/or informal training? (List all involved)

What are the main objectives of the small and/or informal training?

List a preliminary agenda for the small and/or informal training:

Protocol Launch

Who will be responsible for distributing information about the new protocol to the wider community? How will they distribute this information?

Victim Experience Survey

- Please check the box that applies to you: a. You were the victim of a sexual assault.
 b. Someone you know was the victim of a sexual assault.

If you checked "b", what is your relationship to the victim?

- What month and year did the sexual battery occur in? _____
- What city did the sexual assault occur in? _____
- What language are you most comfortable speaking? _____
- What was the first agency (i.e. police, hospital, crisis hotline, clergy, etc.) you contacted for help after the sexual battery? _____ How soon after the sexual battery did you seek help? () within an hour () within 4 hours () within 12 hours () within a week
() within 30 days () Other : _____

Law Enforcement

- Did you report the sexual assault to the police? YES NO (Please skip to #11)

If **NO**, please check if any of the reasons below were true for you:

- I reported it to a friend or family member
- I did not want the person arrested
- I did not want the police or court involved
- I handled it myself
- The perpetrator was my husband, family member, or friend
- I did not think the police would believe me, or I thought they would blame me for the rape
- I was too ashamed or embarrassed to report
- I was afraid of what the rapist would do if I reported the rape.
- Other reason: _____

Indicate the extent to which you agree with each item by placing a check in the appropriate box:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
• I understood the information that the police gave me.				
• The police treated me with respect.				
9. The police provided me with resources and referrals for victim assistance and follow up.				

Was the option of appropriate culturally specific resources and referrals offered to you?

- YES NO

Medical

- Were you seen for a medical evaluation? YES NO (Please skip to #16)
If YES, what is the hospital you were treated at: _____
If NO, what were the reasons?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
• I understood the information that the medical staff gave me.				
• The medical staff treated me with respect.				
• I was satisfied with the resources and referrals provided by the medical staff.				

- Was the option of appropriate culturally specific resources and referrals offered to you?
 YES NO

Advocacy

- Were you seen by a Victim’s advocate? YES NO (Please skip to #21)
If NO, what were the reasons?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
• I understood the information that the advocate gave me.				
• The advocate treated me with respect.				
• I was satisfied with the services and referrals provided by the advocate.				

- Was the option of appropriate culturally specific resources and referrals offered to you?
 YES NO

Victim Witness Program

- Were you assisted by a staff from a victim/witness service program? YES NO (Please skip to #25)
If NO, what were the reasons?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
• I understood the information that the victim/witness staff gave me.				
• The victim/witness staff treated me with respect.				
• I was satisfied with the resources and referrals provided by the victim/witness staff.				

State Attorneys Office

- Did you meet with a prosecutor from the State Attorneys Office? YES NO (Please skip to #29)
If NO, what were the reasons?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
• I understood the information that the prosecutor/attorney gave me.				
• The prosecutor/attorney treated me with respect.				
• I was satisfied with the resources and referrals provided by the prosecutor/attorney.				

Corrections/Probation Office

- Were you seen by a corrections/probation officer? YES NO (Please skip to #33)
If NO, what were the reasons?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
• I understood the information that the officer gave me.				
• The officer treated me with respect.				
• I was satisfied with the resources and referrals provided by the officer.				

- Is there anything else you'd like to share about the people or organizations you encountered?

If you would like to talk more about your concerns or issues this survey may have raised for you, I can have an advocate follow-up with you. Would you like an advocate contact you?

- YES
- NO

If YES, please complete the following contact information:

Name: _____

Phone Number where you can be reached: _____

Alternate number: _____

Is it safe to leave a message at the above number? YES NO

That completes the survey. Thank you so much for your time and your feedback! It will be used to further improve services provided to victims of sexual battery.

Would you be willing to be contacted by the Alachua County Coalition Against Sexual Violence Team to participate in a Focus Group to discuss the needs of sexual assault victims? *(You are not obligated to do this.)*

- YES If yes, then please also provide us with a phone number we can contact you at:
(____)_____.
- NO

Thank you for your time and feedback.

Example MOUs

**SAMPLE SART
OPERATIONAL AGREEMENT OR MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

This Operational Agreement stands as evidence of the commitment of the agencies listed below to implement SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) in this county.

It is hereby recognized that SART is an effective intervention method to ensure competent, coordinated, and effective intervention for victims of sexual assault. SART organizes interagency, multi-disciplinary response to SART for the benefit of the victim and the community. Each agency indicates their commitment to implementing and maintaining SART in the following ways:

- participating in SART planning and implementation;
- training patrol officers and detectives in the SART approach and by implementing first-responder training;
- training deputy district attorneys in the SART approach;
- establishing and obtaining training for the sexual assault forensic medical examiners;
- ensuring victim advocacy and continuity of care for survivors of sexual assault by involving rape crisis center advocates;
- involving the local crime laboratory in training sexual assault forensic medical examiners;
- ensuring coordination with the Victim/Witness Assistance Center to facilitate access to the Victim Compensation Fund, and other services;
- participation by all SART agencies in a monthly SART meeting to ensure smooth operations, problem solving and case review;
- development maintenance of a data base by each agency and a SART data base;
- a commitment to positive, constructive problem solving for the benefit of the sexual assault victim and the community;
- a commitment to effective case review to identify trends, themes, and system problems; and
- ensuring a culturally competent system of care especially including the planning and availability of interpreters.

Rape Crisis Center

Hospital or Sexual Assault Forensic
Medical Team

City Police Department

Crime Laboratory

County Sheriff's Department

Victim/Witness Assistance Center

County District Attorney's Office

Orange County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)

Memorandum of Agreement

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) stands as evidence of the commitment of the agencies listed to implement a SART in Orange County.

It is recognized that the SART is an effective intervention method to ensure that competent, coordinated and effective intervention services are provided to victims of sexual assault. The SART emphasizes an interagency and multi-disciplinary response to both survivors and the community at-large. SART partners indicate their commitment to implementing and maintaining the SART, to the extent these points relate to their organization or agency, by:

- Participation in the planning and implementation of SART initiatives;
- Support of the Victim Service Center 's Sexual Assault Treatment Center (SATC) as the certified sexual violence program/center for Orange County;
- Training of patrol officers and detectives in the SART approach by implementing first-responder training;
- Training of Assistant State Attorneys in the SART approach;
- Ensure training for the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE);
- Ensure victim advocacy and continuity of care for sexual assault survivors;
- Involve the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) in the training of SANE, Assistant State Attorneys, local law enforcement investigators and crime scene personnel in protocol development and case reviews;
- Ensure coordination with the Attorney General's Office, Bureau of Victim Compensation, to facilitate access to victim compensation and sexual battery claims programs;
- Participate in monthly SART meetings to discuss any issues/concerns related to providing services to sexual assault survivors;
- Provide an increased level of communication between the criminal justice partners during all phases of the criminal justice process;
- Develop and maintain a SART database for partners
- Ensure that there is a positive and constructive problem-solving atmosphere among all SART partners to manage an effective and responsive system to sexual assault survivors;
- Ensure a process for the effective review of cases, including analyses of trends and best practices in the areas of sexual assault response, treatment, intervention, analysis and prosecution; and
- Ensure there is a culturally competent system of care.

**Orange County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)
Signature Agreement**

Apopka Police Department Date

Eatonville Police Department Date

Edgewood Police Department Date

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Date

Florida Hospital Date

Lakeside Behavioral Healthcare Date

Maitland Police Department Date

Oakland Police Department Date

Ocoee Police Department Date

Office of the State Attorney, 9th JC Date

Orange County Health Department Date

Orange County Children's Advocacy Center/CPT Date

Orange County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) Date

Orlando Police Department (OPD) Date

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners Date

UCF Public Safety & Police Department Date

Victim Service Center of Orange County, Inc. Date

Windermere Police Department Date

Winter Garden Police Department Date

Winter Park Police Department Date

Additional Resources

Sexual Assault Response Team Models

Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force SART Handbook
www.oregonsatf.org

San Diego County Sexual Assault Response Team Standards of Practice
http://www.mysati.com/Downloads/SART_Standards.pdf

Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault Statewide Sexual Assault Response Team Manual
<http://www.ccasa.org/documents/Colorado%20Coalition%20Against%20Sexual%20Assault%20-%20SART%20Manual%20-%20Version%20I.pdf>

California Coalition Against Sexual Assault
SART Manual
www.calcasa.org

International Association of Forensic Nurses
Creating a Community Protocol for Sexual Assault Forensic Examinations
www.iafn.org

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape
Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Guidelines
www.pcar.org

Sexual Violence Justice Institute, Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Minnesota Model Sexual Assault Response Protocol
www.mncasa.org

Articles and Books

National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women
<http://www.vawnet.org/>

- Campbell, Rebecca. "The Effectiveness of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Programs"
- Katz, Koss, Schewe, Ullman, 2009. "Rape Prevention and Risk Reduction: Review of the Research Literature for Practitioners."

National Sexual Violence Resource Center
"Sexual Violence and the Spectrum of Prevention."
www.nsvrc.org

Toolkit to End Violence Against Women. National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women and the Violence Against Women Office.

http://toolkit.ncjrs.org/vawo_1.html

Francis, Kimberly, 2001. *Gauging Progress: A Guidebook for Community Sexual Assault Programs and Community Development Initiatives*. Organizational Research Services, Inc.

Ledray, Linda, 1994. *Recovering from Rape*. Henry Holt and Company. New York, New York.

Robinson, Lori S. 2002. *I will survive*. Seal Press. New York, New York.