Enhancing Local Collaboration in the Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault:
A CCR/SART Development Toolkit

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EDUCATION ◇ ADVOCACY ◇ LEGISLATION

NORTH CAROLINA COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Introduction: Developing a CCR/SART

Why collaborate?

Currently in the United States, one in three women has experienced physical violence, and one in five women has experienced severe physical violence, by an intimate partner in their lifetime. One in five women and one in 71 men have been raped at some time in their lives.[1] In North Carolina specifically, there were 62 domestic violence related homicides in 2013.[2] However, arrest, prosecution, and conviction rates remain extremely low for these crimes. This is not only an issue of justice for individual cases. The majority of sexual assault and domestic violence perpetrators are serial offenders, and they are likely to continue to perpetrate violence in our communities if they are not held accountable for their crimes. Coordinated Community Response Teams (CCRs) and Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) can help to meet the needs of victims/survivors in our communities and to increase offender accountability.

This toolkit has been developed to guide North Carolina communities that are interested in increasing their collaboration across disciplines to more effectively respond to domestic violence and/or sexual assault. The implementation of CCR/SARTs is a proven strategy that can have significant impact.

What are CCR/SARTs and what do they do?

A CCR/SART is a multidisciplinary team of people who partner together to provide interagency, coordinated responses to domestic violence and/or sexual assault in order to: 1) meet the needs of victims/survivors, and 2) more effectively hold offenders accountable. CCR/SARTs often mainly focus on coordinating responses through the criminal justice system; however, some teams choose to concentrate on other services including the immediate needs of victims, prevention, and/or long-term assistance for survivors. This toolkit primarily emphasizes the role of CCR/SARTs in coordinating the efforts of responders within the criminal justice system. Teams accomplish this by implementing a variety of strategies, including:

- Internal information-sharing and training
- Community awareness about resources available and community commitment to victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence
- CCR/SART response protocols
- Case review

Meeting the needs of victims/survivors

When victims report sexual or domestic violence, the system that they enter into is often confusing and potentially retraumatizing. When the process is not streamlined and coordinated among the various responding agencies, it is often experienced by victims as a series of disconnected processes that feel disjointed and overwhelming. It is important that responders and service providers approach the response to domestic and/or sexual violence as one coherent process and take collective responsibility for a victim's experience during every stage, not just during "one piece" of the process.

The collaborative processes established by CCR/SARTs can not only help victims heal, but can also lead to better criminal justice outcomes. Victims choose not to participate in investigations and court proceedings for a number of reasons, including fear, harassment by the offender, and lack of support. Another reason why victims may discontinue their participation is lack of trust in the criminal justice system and confusion or frustration while

[1] Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[2] North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, http://www.nccadv.org/homicides_2013.htm.

attempting to navigate the process. Respectful, understanding, and supportive interaction with responders can have a major impact on the likelihood that victims will participate in prosecuting the crimes committed against them, whether for current or future offenses. Being connected with effective and comprehensive support services (through local advocacy and/or mental health agencies) also can provide the support needed for victims to continue to participate in these cases. The establishment of CCR/SART teams and CCR/SART response protocols can ensure that victims receive consistent and comprehensive services and referrals regardless of which agency they initially access to seek assistance.

Holding offenders accountable

Sexual assault and domestic violence crimes are significantly underreported. One major barrier to reporting is that many victims feel that they will not be believed and that services cannot help them, because of their own previous experiences, the experiences of others, or because it is something that their perpetrator has repeatedly told them. Even when victims do choose to report domestic violence or sexual assault crimes, the criminal justice process is a long road, and these cases are often extremely difficult to investigate and prosecute. Evidence and witnesses can be hard to find, and cases are often continued repeatedly, pled down significantly, or dismissed. This makes it difficult for victims when weighing their options, especially if sentences are short and their abusers consider them responsible for their arrests. CCR/SART involvement can strengthen cases, which can lead to more successful prosecutions.

"Success in criminal prosecution... We've prosecuted more cases since we've developed this stronger team."

-NC Assistant District Attorney

Dual CCR/SART approach

Response teams can be configured to address domestic violence only (CCR), sexual assault only (SART), or both domestic violence and sexual assault (dual CCR/SART). There are both benefits and complications that arise when choosing among these options. In many communities, a dual team approach is appealing because responders to sexual assault and domestic violence are often similar, and it may be a challenge to recruit the same people to separate teams.

However, it is difficult to truly address processes for both domestic violence and sexual assault on a dual team in as specific a way as is required to attain the intended outcomes. Not all stakeholders are the same for each of these issues, and the response required by each is very different. In dual teams, one issue often tends to take precedence over the other. For these reasons, it is generally preferable for teams to be separate in order to ensure adequate focus on both issues. Communities may consider having separate teams that meet back-to-back (thus reducing members' time commitment) or recruiting different agency representatives to each team.

In some communities, separate teams may simply not be possible due to the size of agencies and resources available. Although dual teams face a challenge in adequately addressing both domestic violence and sexual assault, the task is not impossible, and the work can still effectively be done. Therefore, the process outlined in this toolkit can be used for stand-alone CCRs, stand-alone SARTs, and dual CCR/SARTs.

How to use the toolkit

This toolkit is broken into five team development steps, as depicted in the following flowchart. Although we recommend the order of steps as presented here, team development is fluid and community-specific. Teams will often go back and forth between the steps presented as necessary. The toolkit includes an explanation and discussion of each step, as well as concrete activities that teams can use in their formation process.

Every community is different, and ultimately, you and your team are the experts on yours. This toolkit should not be seen as a rigid process to be entered into, but rather a source of guidance, compiled from experience and successes in other communities. Combined with your expertise about your specific community, the recommendations offered here can be adapted for a strategy that will maximize the successful development of a greater collaborative response.

Foundations for an Effective Team

- Relationship-based team building
- Shared leadership
- Strengths-based approach
- Honest and open discussion
- Consensus decision-making

Potential Areas for Action

- Developing CCR/SART response protocols- *suggested as an initial goal!*
- Creating resource guides/packets
- Strengthening SANE services
- Community education and outreach
- Engagement with specific populations

Step One: Developing the Team

- Recruit team members.
- Establish regular meetings.
- Conduct cross-training.
- Establish a leadership structure.
- Develop a mission statement.
- Create confidentiality statements.

Step Two: Identify and Prioritize Areas for Action

- Identify strengths and gaps in the response to sexual and/or domestic violence.
  - ↳ Service provider assessment
  - ↳ Service mapping
  - ↳ Data collection
  - ↳ Community assessment
- Refine potential areas for action by gaining a full understanding of practices/concerns identified and seeking out best practice.
- Prioritize areas for action by coming to consensus about what can be addressed that will have the most impact and on which progress can feasibly be made.

Step Three: Develop a Plan of Work

- Determine SMART objectives for each prioritized area for action.
- Develop an action plan.
  - ↳ Identify steps to be taken and resources needed to meet objectives.
  - ↳ Develop a timeline and determine who is responsible for each task.
- Determine how team will evaluate progress.

Step Four: Develop CCR/SART Response Protocols

- Develop agreed-upon interdisciplinary process for response to reports of domestic violence or sexual assault, including resources and referrals provided.
- Obtain formal acceptance of protocols by all involved agencies.
- Establish formalized agency-specific training procedures based on CCR/SART protocols.
- Establish a process for monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of protocols.

Step Five: Continuing Progress

- Monitor progress toward your goals and effectiveness of protocols the team has established.
- Periodically review progress to assess work completed, assess new challenges, and revise accordingly.
- Celebrate your team's achievements and successes.
- Determine how to share your successes and ongoing efforts with the community.

Questions to Ask During Step 2:

- **What can we continue or start doing?**
  - ↳ What are best practices? What are others doing, and what is working?
  - ↳ What supports victims and protects their confidentiality?
  - ↳ What helps increase offender accountability?
  - ↳ What might make victims more likely to access services and report to law enforcement?
- **What can we avoid or stop doing?**
  - What are the gaps? Where do victims fall through the cracks?
  - What practices might lead to retraumatization?

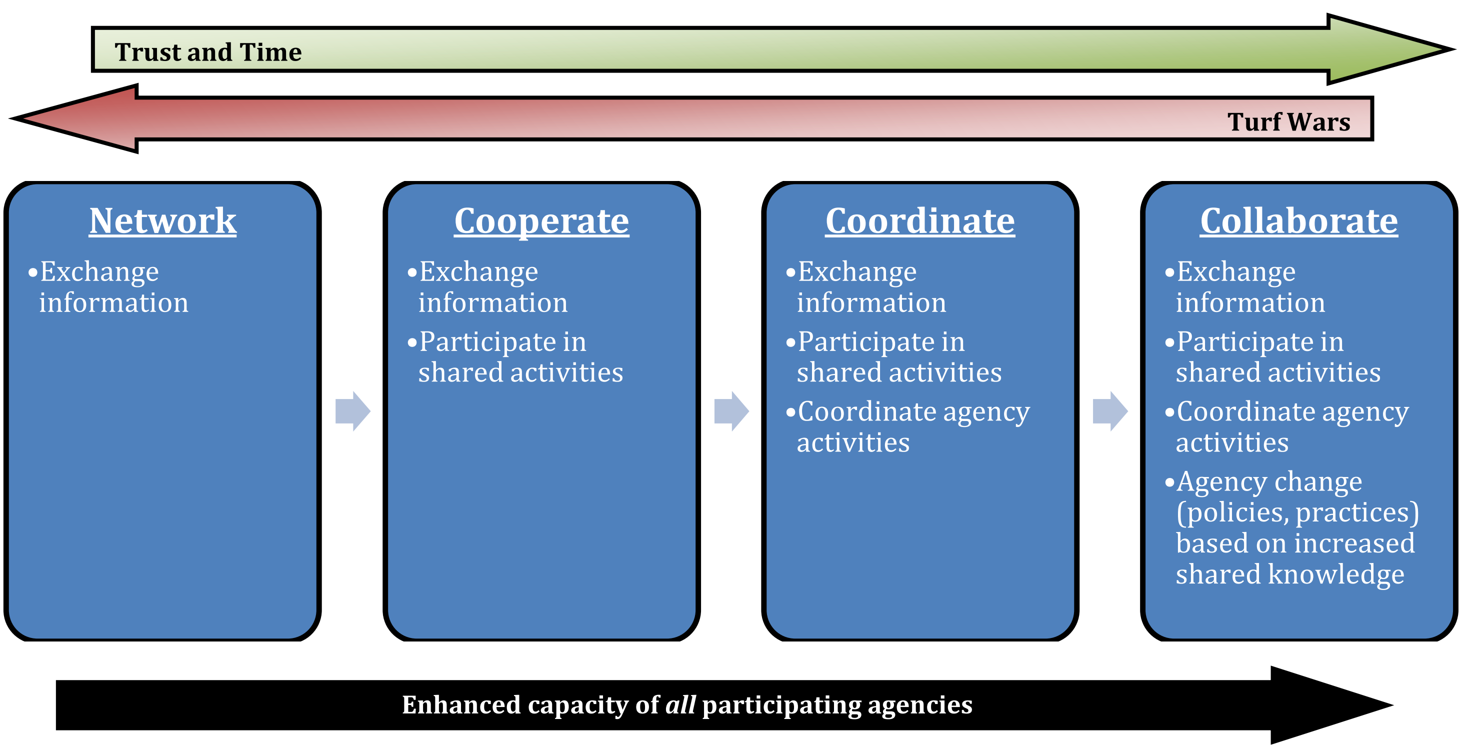
<u>Setting the Stage for Success: Foundations for an Effective Team</u>

The underlying approach as you build your team and establish collaborative agreements can greatly influence the success of your team. The foundational values and skills detailed here should be considered and prioritized throughout all stages of team development and maintenance. Prioritizing these foundations is important in order to successfully build a team in which community partners are fully engaged and invested. Building a team in this way may at times slow your progress, but it will maximize your team's long-term success and sustainability.

<u>Collaboration that works: How do we get there?</u>

Collaboration generally does not happen unless it is made a priority. It can be a long process and may require a lot of work, but it is worth the effort given what victims/survivors, individual agencies, and the field as a whole have to gain from a more coordinated approach to domestic and sexual violence. Collaboration must be viewed as an ongoing process. Agencies and community needs constantly change. As a result, building collaboration has to be a dynamic, evolving process in order to keep partners engaged and to ensure community needs are being met.

There may be various stages of partnership before agencies reach a point of real, effective collaboration. Over time, as agencies work together in ways that are respectful and helpful, they can develop relationships and increase trust. In turn, territorialism and turf wars should decrease. Collaboration can be far more than exchanging information. In the most effective collaborations, agencies gain a deeper understanding of one another's roles, activities, and strengths, and consequently the value of working in deeper partnership. They can become more motivated to move beyond basic cooperation and to begin coordinating their activities and policies for greater overall impact on their communities. Greater collaboration can create opportunity to increase the capacity of all participating agencies.



Adapted from: Torres, GW & Margolin, FS. The Collaboration Primer: Proven Strategies, Considerations, and Tools to Get You Started. Chicago, IL: Health Research and Educational Trust, 2003.

Foundational values for building an effective team

In order for teams to build effective collaboration, they must take the time to develop a strong foundational approach to their collective work. These values should be established early in the life of the team, and they should be intentionally incorporated at every step of team development.

- Relationship-based team-building
- Shared leadership
- Strength-based approach

Relationship-based team-building

Even when it is evident that agencies should be working in partnership, effective collaboration is ultimately about getting the *right individuals* from those agencies working together with strong trust, respect, and understanding of one another's roles. Collaboration can (and should) grow to be more institutionalized over time (through CCR/SART response protocol development, joint projects/programs, joint funding sources, etc.), but no matter how institutionalized collaboration becomes, the effectiveness of all collaborative efforts will ultimately be based on the strength of relationships.

Strategies for relationship-based team-building include:
- Schedule one-on-one meetings with partners when particular needs, questions, or problems come up, or just to check in with them.
- Attend (and volunteer your help at) events held by partner agencies (or potential partner agencies).
- Listen! Ask more questions than make statements. Approach potential partners as experts, and position yourself as a learner. Find out how their expertise could shape your team-building process.
- Respond. Do what you can to be a part of the solution to barriers and challenges expressed by your potential stakeholders/partners/team members in order to build trust.
- Be transparent. Be honest about your role and any concerns or barriers you face, rather than always trying to say what you think your partners want to hear.

Planning for sustainability

If your team is going to exert the time and energy it takes to build a CCR/SART, it is worth the extra effort to be strategic about developing your team in a way that will last.

Elements of sustainable CCR/SARTs include:
- Focus on outcomes
- Strong and continued relationship building
- Consistent focus on formalized team structures and procedures
- Shared leadership

Throughout the toolkit, strategies for building your team will be offered with these elements in mind.

"When you first create your (CCR/SART), you should ensure that your collaborative responses ...remain viable. Your (CCR/SART) must be able to survive staff transitions; social, political, and economic challenges; and the impact of emerging issues and scientific or medical breakthroughs that can affect team caseloads and resources." -OVC SART Toolkit

(See *Step 5: Continuing Progress* for more on sustainability.)

Shared leadership

This spectrum shows the various levels of team member involvement. Teams often make the mistake of centralizing control of the group among a few leaders, with all other team members serving only as sources of information and spectators. The goal of a shared leadership approach is that *all* team members will be active participants and will have a level of control over team decisions and the team process.

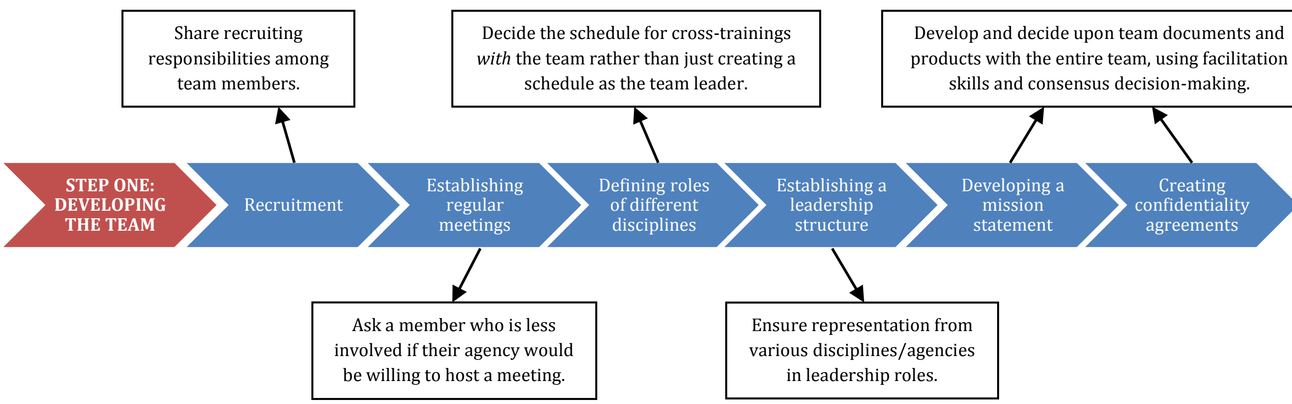
Building shared leadership isn't always easy:
- Hearing input from everyone and consensus decision-making can be time-consuming and difficult.

- Sometimes team members aren't willing to step up into a more active role or a more formalized leadership role.
- People convening the team have to be willing to give up some level of control over how the team develops and functions.

However, we have found shared leadership to be one of the most important elements that sets apart high-functioning, effective teams. Shared leadership can help to:

- Build investment and engagement of team members. Team members are more likely to remain engaged and to show up at meetings when they feel like their attendance adds value and can influence the process and decisions that are made.
- Build sustainability of teams.
- Incorporate more fully the varying (but equally essential) perspectives, expertise, and needs of various disciplines addressing sexual and domestic violence in your community. Your team will have a clearer grasp of any issues to be addressed and will be better positioned to have a positive impact when these various sources of knowledge and ideas are brought together.

Shared leadership is one of the most important aspects of highly effective teams, and it should impact how a team approaches all tasks. Therefore, strategies for practical implementation of this concept will be included in various sections throughout the toolkit. Below is an example of how shared leadership could impact the strategies a team might use as they progress through *Step One: Developing the Team*.



Strategies for cultivating shared leadership include:

- Be flexible. If you enter into this process with rigid ideas of what the team and team-building process will look like, you will have a much more difficult time getting beyond the initial stages to genuine, effective collaboration and all of the resulting benefits. Have a vision, but do not make it so concrete that there is no room for others to participate in shaping that vision.
- The *Shared Leadership Assessment* is an activity can be done as a team to encourage discussion or can be done among team leaders to assess progress. This approach can be revisited regularly to ensure that all team members have the opportunity to share their ideas and help shape the activities and direction of the team.

<u>**Activity:**</u> Instructions and resources for the **Shared Leadership Assessment** activity can be found at the end of this section on page 12.

Strength-based approach

In a strength-based approach, teams focus their discussions more on the resources and strengths of the team and how they can be used to reach their common goals, rather than always focusing their discussions on gaps, weaknesses, and problems to be solved. Although there are times when teams need to have candid discussions about problems, many teams focus on the negative a majority of the time. These discussions can be exhausting and demoralizing for teams, especially when the problems being discussed (such as domestic and sexual violence) are complex and don't have clear, immediate solutions. Alternatively, a strengths-based approach can:

- More effectively engage and motivate team members.
- Lead more quickly to solutions, rather than lists of seemingly unmanageable problems.
- Make it less likely that team members will feel attacked and/or singled out during discussions of problems.

Strategies for a strength-based approach include:

- When discussing a particular issue, begin the discussion by brainstorming the resources and strengths of the team and individual team members and how they can be used to address that issue. Refrain from evaluating any ideas during the brainstorm. In order to maximize creative problem-solving, allow the team to brainstorm freely, and ideas can be evaluated later (see *Foundational Skills for Leading Response Teams: Brainstorming* below).
- Sometimes you will need to have frank discussions about gaps and weaknesses. When you do have those discussions, try to follow them with a solution-focused discussion that draws from your knowledge of your teams' strengths.
- Remember to make time to acknowledge and celebrate your team's successes.

Foundational skills for leading response teams

Another essential aspect of a team's success is the manner in which the team and team meetings are conducted. People who are convening and leading teams must make sure to do so in a way that maximizes shared leadership, participation, and engagement among team members. Skills that are important for team leaders to utilize include:

- Facilitation
- Brainstorming
- Consensus decision-making

Facilitation

A good facilitator is focused on determining and making progress toward the *team's shared goals*. Facilitators do not lead according to their own individual agenda and opinions, but rather maximize the input of all team members and work to build a shared vision and goals. They guide discussions and activities to keep the team moving forward toward those shared goals.

Tenets of good facilitation include:

- Cultivating and demonstrating respect for all ideas and team members. All ideas are important. No idea or individual is more important than another.
- Encouraging cooperation. Create an environment that encourages team members to work together, through open discussion, small group discussions, and/or group activities.
- Being flexible. While managing the discussion, be sensitive to the needs of individuals and the team, and adjust the process and schedule as required.
- Listening and observing carefully. Be aware of what's going on in the room, whether it is spoken or unspoken, to be able to guide the team effectively. When responding to something a team member has said, it can sometimes help to re-phrase the comment in your own words and then ask them if their comment was fully understood.

- Encouraging discussion. The facilitator should not speak more than the other team members in the room. Ask open-ended questions to encourage thoughtful discussion and wait for a minute after asking a question to allow team members to think about their response. Use group activities to encourage and focus discussion.
- Acknowledging and responding to conflict and/or emotions. If there is conflict or emotion in the room, it is often more helpful to acknowledge it and respond directly, rather than trying to pretend that it is not there. Sometimes that may mean a frank, open discussion about underlying issues. If that is the case, ensure that the conversation is working toward positive solutions, rather than attacking and blaming. At other times, responding appropriately to conflict and/or emotion may mean taking a break, temporarily changing the subject, or even ending a meeting early in order to give everyone a chance to calm down and think more about the issue. Whatever the appropriate response in the moment, make sure to directly acknowledge the conflict and/or emotion, validate any feelings that team members may have, and clearly communicate an intention to work through the issue (whether in that moment or at a later time).
- Keeping the discussion moving forward. Ensure that the team discussion remains productive and that the team stays focused on their shared goals. If your team tends to get stuck on details or to get side-tracked during discussions, consider using a "parking lot"- a sheet of flip-chart paper where you make a note of issues that you do not have time to discuss fully at the moment, but that your team will return to at a later time. This validates and acknowledges the contributions and concerns of team members, while keeping the team focused and productive.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming allows your team to effectively solicit the input and ideas of team members and to make sure that their voices are a key part of the decisions made about the team's direction and activities. It creates new ideas, solves problems, motivates team members and develops a sense of team ownership. However, it also places a significant burden on the facilitator to manage the process, recognize people's involvement and sensitivities, and to then coordinate any follow-up actions.

When facilitating a brainstorming activity:
- Define and agree on the objective and time limit for brainstorming. Ensure everyone participating in the brainstorm session understands and agrees on the goal of the session. Keep the brainstorming objective simple. Allocating a time limit will enable you to keep the discussion focused and on track.
- Brainstorm ideas and suggestions. Brainstorming enables people to suggest ideas at random. The job of the facilitator is to encourage everyone to participate and to not dismiss anything. In order to maximize creative problem-solving, allow the team to brainstorm freely, and wait until later to evaluate the ideas. Waiting to critique ideas can maximize creative idea generation. Moreover, people may be less likely to participate if they feel that any unrefined idea will be criticized. During the random collection of ideas, the facilitator (or a note-taker) must record *every* suggestion, preferably on a flip-chart or white board (see the *Carousel* activity for assistance in the brainstorming process).

Activity: Instructions and resources for the **Carousel** activity can be found at the end of this section on page 13.

- Use visuals. Since brainstorming needs to involve the team, everyone must be able to see what's happening. Writing suggestions on a flip-chart or white board allows for everyone to see the initial lists, as well as to see how the lists develop during the exercise.

Consensus decision-making

In order to make the jump from brainstorming ideas to actually choosing strategies and taking action, group members need to determine how the team will make decisions. It is ideal for decisions to be made through consensus-building, rather than by vote or by a few key leaders making decisions by authority. In consensus decision-making, an issue and all of the potential solutions are discussed and negotiated until everyone on the team understands and agrees with what will be done. Consensus-building may be difficult and time-consuming, but the benefits often outweigh the challenges. When decisions are made by consensus, it is more likely that all team members will feel that they have had an equal opportunity to influence the decision, and they may be more likely to continue to support the group. There may be some decisions that make sense to approach differently, and a team may not always have the time to come to a complete consensus for every decision, but generally consensus decision-making is the best way to make team decisions.

When making a decision by consensus-building:

- Refine, assess, and analyze the options. With the team, analyze the possible impact and validity of the potential options. It might make sense to refine and re-develop the various choices according to the discussion (i.e., making changes to some options or combining aspects of various options) in order to come up with the strongest strategies (see the *All On The Wall* activity for assistance in refining and evaluating options).

Activity: Instructions and resources for the **All On The Wall** activity can be found at the end of this section on page 14.

- Prioritize/rank options. Prioritize or rank the options, taking into account potential impact and changeability (see the *Importance/Changeability Matrix* for assistance in prioritizing options).

Activity: Instructions and resources for the **Importance/Changeability Matrix** activity can be found at the end of this section on page 15.

- Verbalize the most highly-ranked or prioritized option. Clearly state the option(s) that seems to be the top choice(s) of the team according to the discussion.
- Assess agreement about the proposed strategy among the team. Determine whether all members of the team are in agreement about the proposed strategy. Team members may have varying degrees of enthusiasm for an idea, ranging from full agreement, to finding the strategy not ideal but acceptable, to not fully agreeing but choosing not to block the decision. All of these responses can be considered consensus. However, if any team member expresses disagreement and the desire to explore other options, the team should continue the discussion to determine how they can adjust the strategy to gain consensus of all team members.
- Clearly state the agreed-upon strategy, both verbally at the conclusion of the discussion and in writing afterwards. Conclude the discussion by clearly stating the agreed upon strategy and the next steps required in order to take action. Follow-up by explaining the agreed-upon strategy in minutes to be sent out after the meeting.

Setting the Stage for Success: Foundations for an Effective Team

Resources and Activities

Foundational values for building an effective team
- Shared Leadership Assessment

Foundational skills for leading response teams
- Carousel Activity
- All On The Wall
- Importance/Changeability Matrix

Shared Leadership Assessment

List your CCR/SART partners and circle the number indicating each partner's level of influence in the team development and planning process. This activity can be done as a team to encourage discussion or can be done among team leaders to assess progress. This can be revisited regularly throughout the life of the team to ensure that all team members have the opportunity to share their ideas and help shape the activities and direction of the team.

Partners	**Recipients of Services**	**Information Sources**	**Participants in Activities**	**In Control of Process**
1. ______________________	1	2	3	4
2. ______________________	1	2	3	4
3. ______________________	1	2	3	4
4. ______________________	1	2	3	4
5. ______________________	1	2	3	4
6. ______________________	1	2	3	4
7. ______________________	1	2	3	4
8. ______________________	1	2	3	4
9. ______________________	1	2	3	4
10. ______________________	1	2	3	4
11. ______________________	1	2	3	4
12. ______________________	1	2	3	4
13. ______________________	1	2	3	4
14. ______________________	1	2	3	4
15. ______________________	1	2	3	4
16. ______________________	1	2	3	4
17. ______________________	1	2	3	4
18. ______________________	1	2	3	4
19. ______________________	1	2	3	4
20. ______________________	1	2	3	4

Facilitator’s Guide to Carousel Activity

Purpose: Brainstorming ideas or potential solutions to a problem.

Materials:

- wall space for posting products
- magic markers
- flip-chart

Procedure:

1. Place multiple flip-chart sheets around the room, with a marker at each flip-chart. At the top of each flip-chart sheet, write a different category for brainstorming or a particular aspect of the problem to be solved.

2. Split participants into groups of approximately equal numbers, and assign each group a flip-chart sheet at which to start.

3. Set an amount of time during which each group will brainstorm and record all of the ideas/solutions for their particular category.

4. At the end of that time, invite each group to move clockwise to the next flip-chart sheet.

5. Ask the groups to read what the group before them came up with, and then ask them to add any additional ideas they can generate.

6. Continue with this process until each group has had an opportunity to brainstorm about each category.

7. As a large group, discuss each category, allowing the group to ask questions about ideas they don’t understand or to expand upon ideas further. If any additional ideas are generated during the large group discussion, add them to the appropriate flip-chart sheet.

8. Determine the next step as a group. Next steps may include further research on particular ideas or moving into a decision-making process.

Facilitator's Guide to "All on the Wall"

Purpose: Group consensus on a particular topic in order to take next steps.

Materials:

- wall space for posting products
- magic markers
- masking tape
- post-it notes or colored sheets of paper
- paper, pen for participants
- flip-chart

Procedure:

1. Each participant receives a pre-determined number of post-it notes or sheets of paper. On each, they will write one idea/option/area of action and put it on the wall or flip-chart. (Ideas can also be generated in other ways and transferred to post-it notes, such as through surveys or in a group brainstorm.)

2. Invite everyone to move to a location where they can see the wall easily.

3. Ask the group to help you move the pieces of paper around so that the items which are *the same or very similar* are physically grouped together on the wall. This step is called "establishing categories."

   TIP: The objective is not to force items into a group. Some items may remain "single" and separate. If you don't know whether two items "belong" together, defer to the members of the group who generated the items. They are the authorities on what the meanings are. Invite them to explain their thinking, if necessary. Only move or group items that those who generated them agree should be moved or grouped.

4. Continue with this process until all items have been added to the wall, considered, and either grouped or left as a separate item.

5. Taking one grouping at a time, ask participants to suggest a word or phrase which would summarize that grouping. Once consensus from the entire group of participants has been achieved on the wording, write the words on the flip-chart or on an additional post-it note or piece of paper and place it on or near the grouping. This step is called "naming the category."

6. Determine next steps. Examples include:
   - Prioritizing which category/examples to discuss/address first.
   - Prioritizing one activity within each category to address first.
   - Establishing a work group to address each category.

Importance/Changeability Matrix

Rate each idea/option/area of action in terms of importance and changeability. You can develop any scale that works best, but often the rating scale used is high/medium/low. This process can help a group identify which of their options are most likely to have the greatest impact.

	Importance	**Changeability**
Idea 1		
Idea 2		
Idea 3		
Idea 4		
Idea 5		

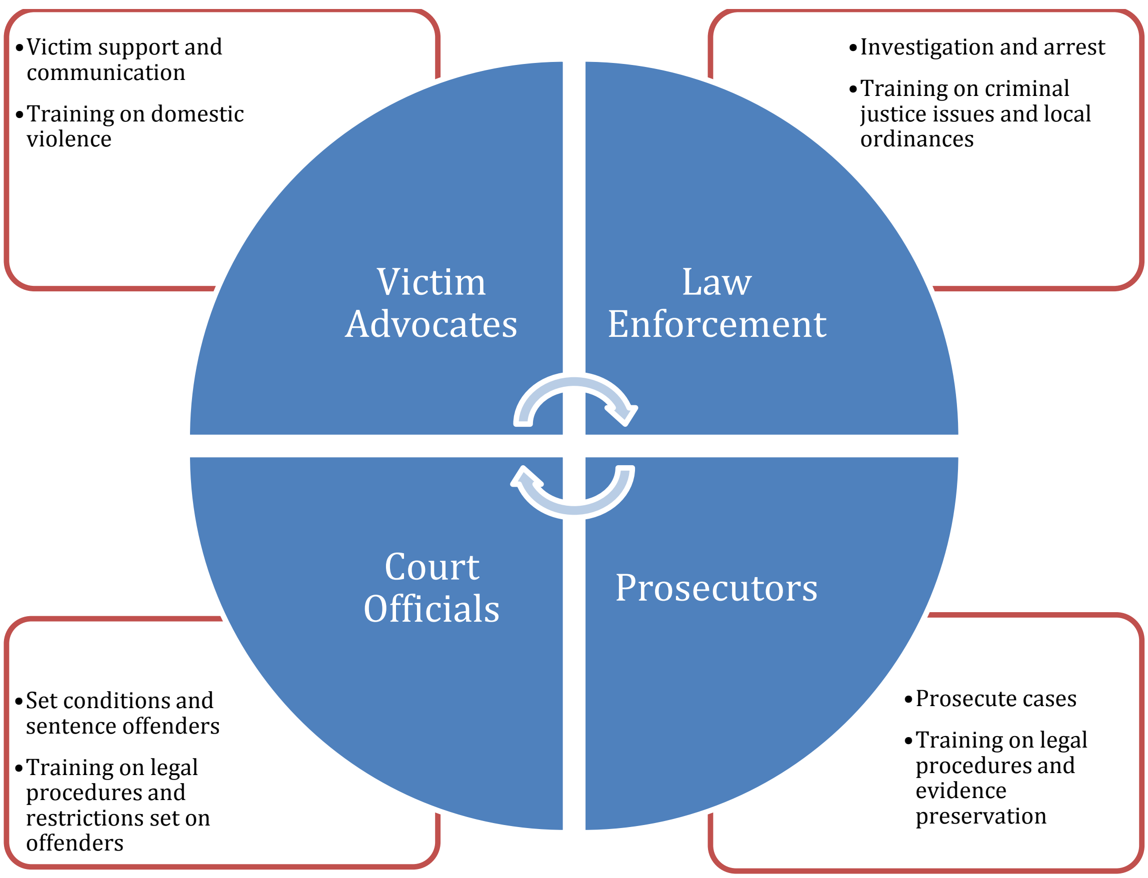
Step One: Developing the Team

Recruitment

Core disciplines included in multidisciplinary response teams

One of the primary functions of CCR/SARTs is to streamline and coordinate the criminal justice response to domestic and sexual violence in a community. In keeping with that goal, there are core disciplines that are especially important to include on a team. Whether the team is focused on sexual assault or domestic violence will impact who those key players are. Some teams operate with only these core disciplines involved; other teams recruit a number of additional agencies to participate. Depending on the team's focus, coordinators should prioritize recruitment from the following core disciplines.

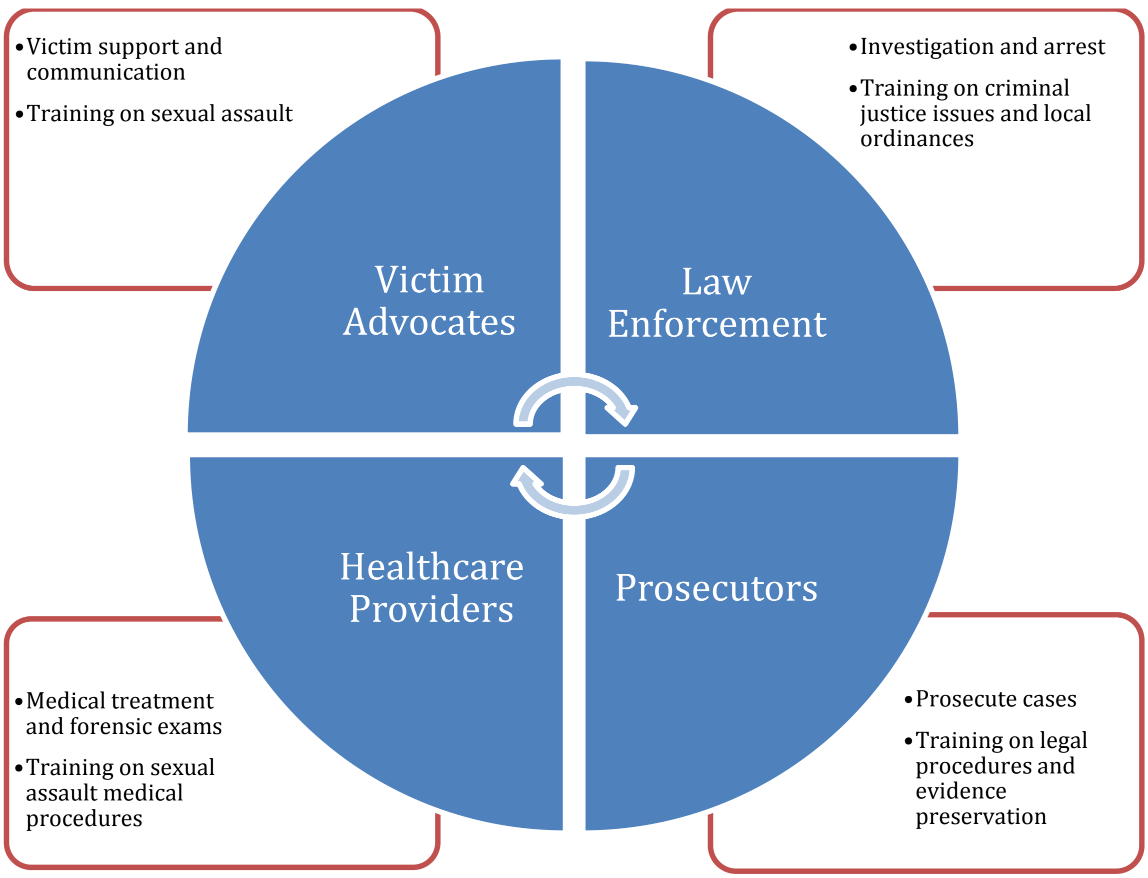
Domestic violence: Coordinated Community Response Teams



CCRs often primarily focus on coordinating the response of the criminal justice system to meet the needs of victims and hold offenders accountable. Some communities make this the priority of their teams, while others focus on other services including the immediate needs of victims, long-term assistance for survivors, and/or prevention. The emphasis on a particular system can be decided early on during the development process or can be expanded on after the initial phase. Teams often take on multiple issues through the formation of subcommittees (see *Step Three: Developing a Plan of Work* for more on subcommittees). This toolkit primarily emphasizes the role of CCR/SARTs in coordinating the efforts of responders within the criminal justice system. As a result, it encourages teams to prioritize the key disciplines within that system. However, even when individuals from these four sectors make up the core of CCRs, it is important to include diverse disciplines.

Victims of domestic violence can seek assistance in a variety of ways. They sometimes initiate contact with advocates at a domestic violence agency for support and resources. Other times, a call to law enforcement sets off their interactions with representatives of the criminal justice system and service providers. The multiple and complex options for victims can range from safety planning and support groups to civil and criminal procedures involving multiple players within the legal process. It is thus imperative that community players from diverse disciplines coordinate their efforts in order to assure victims' needs are being met and offenders are being held accountable.

<u>Sexual assault: Sexual Assault Response Teams</u>



The SART model focuses primarily on coordinating and improving the criminal justice response to sexual assault. Victim advocates, law enforcement, and healthcare providers (preferably SANEs if available) are the initial responders to many sexual assault cases, especially when victims choose to report the assault. Therefore, the coordination of services provided by these disciplines can have a significant impact on the immediate experience of a victim seeking help and engaging with the criminal justice system. The more cohesive the response of these particular responders, the stronger the likelihood that a victim will not be retraumatized as they seek care and participate in the investigation. This can greatly impact whether a victim will remain engaged with the criminal justice process, making successful prosecution significantly more likely. The likelihood of successful prosecution is also impacted by the coordination of careful, thorough evidence collection between law enforcement and healthcare providers.

Prosecutors may not be involved in the case until later as the case progresses. However, if communication between prosecutors and these initial responders is strong, it can help ensure that the entire criminal justice process is as smooth as possible for both the responders and the victim. It also can help responders determine what evidence is the most important to collect in order to provide the prosecutor the strongest case possible.

SARTs generally focus on adult sexual assault cases. Although child sexual abuse may involve some of the same stakeholders as adult sexual assault, it is preferable to address child sexual abuse through a separate multidisciplinary team, involving Child Advocacy Centers and Child Protective Services. Agencies focused primarily on child abuse may also participate on a SART, but it is essential to ensure that the team's discussion and activities remain focused on its stated mission.

Some SARTs, in addition to addressing the criminal justice response in their community, may also choose to take on additional projects, given the combination of expertise and experience on the team. These may include community education/awareness, victim services, policy advocacy, or prevention.

Recruiting for dual teams

When recruiting for a dual team, it is important to be mindful of recruiting appropriate representation to address both issues. Although many times the stakeholders addressing sexual assault and domestic violence overlap, it is essential to be aware of the ways in which they are different and to recruit accordingly. For example, many law enforcement agencies have separate Domestic Violence officers and Sex Crimes detectives. In order to truly address both issues, it is important to recruit officers from each area of focus to your team. Similarly, domestic violence cases are often adjudicated in district court as misdemeanor charges, while sexual assault cases are often adjudicated in superior court as felonies. Therefore, the court personnel handling these cases will often be different, and it is important to recruit representation from both.

Other potential stakeholders

Although recruitment efforts should prioritize the above key stakeholders, there are others in the community who can be valuable additions to a multidisciplinary response team. As you consider recruiting additional agencies, make sure that you choose to recruit members who make sense according to the focus of your team. Some potential additional team members for CCR/SARTs might include:

- 911 responders
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Hospital (additional for CCRs, core for SARTs)
- Court officials (additional for SARTs, core for CCRs)
- Probation
- Mental health agencies
- Department of Social Services (Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Work First, etc.)
- Health Department
- Child Advocacy Center
- School system
- Faith communities
- Survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence
- Batterer Intervention Program
- Landlords or other members of Continuum of Care team
- Animal control agencies and kennels (CCRs primarily)
- Self-contained communities (see below for more information)
    - Colleges and universities
    - Military installations
    - Prisons
    - Indian reservations

Animal control agencies and kennels

Often times, agencies have clients whose domestic violence situation is aggravated by their concern for their pets. Offenders often abuse animals, or threaten to harm them, as a means of controlling their partners. Pets also play a huge role in some survivors' plans to leave the relationship. Having a safe and affordable place for them to keep their pets is often a requirement before being able to secure a place for themselves. Some agencies are equipped to keep animals on their shelter premises, while others have developed relationships with local kennels. Animal control agencies are also vital partners for when the client wants to report the abuse of the animals. Having local animal rights advocates on CCR teams can be valuable to improving services for victims.

- Representation from specific communities (see below for more information)
- Services that intersect with domestic and/or sexual violence (see below for more information)

<u>Self-contained communities</u>

Colleges, universities, military installations, prisons, and Indian reservations often have their own services, response teams, and protocols that mirror the core disciplines of a CCR or SART (for example, student services, student health services, campus security, and a disciplinary system/honor court). These communities can sometimes be insular, with limited interaction with the outside community and outside services. However, the investigation and prosecution of domestic or sexual violence may require interaction and collaboration with the outside criminal justice system. For this reason, it can be important to have involvement of representatives from these places represented on your CCR or SART, to ensure the best possible collaboration and response to *all* victims in your community. Some CCR/SARTs choose to structure response teams more specifically focused on these communities as subcommittees of their broader CCR/SART.

<u>Representation from specific communities</u>

It is essential that the services of multidisciplinary response teams are accessible and relevant to *all* members of their communities. Therefore, it is important for teams to include representatives from agencies working with specific communities, particularly those who are traditionally underserved by sexual and domestic violence service providers. Inclusion of these agencies helps teams to more adequately address any particular needs or considerations specific to victims/survivors from these groups. Teams should seek out representation from *agencies who work with and advocate for these communities*, rather than relying on individuals who are already team members to represent a community of which they are a part. This strategy avoids asking any one person to speak for an entire, diverse population of people, and rather seeks the perspective of an *agency* that is able to draw from the various perspectives of its multiple constituents.

You may want to consider ensuring representation from the following specific communities. Teams should seek out information about the demographics and make-up of their specific area in order to ensure that their team adequately reflects the diversity specific to their community (see *Step Two: Identifying and Prioritizing Areas for Actions*).

- People of color
- People who are LGBTQ-identified
- People with disabilities
- People who are elderly
- People with limited English abilities
- People who are undocumented
- Immigrants
- Refugee groups

<u>Services that intersect with domestic and/or sexual violence</u>

Often, there are intersections between the clients that various social service agencies serve. For example, in some communities, there is a significant overlap in clients seeking substance abuse services and clients seeking domestic violence related services (both victim services and batterer intervention programs). Another example of this overlap is in homelessness services. When these intersections exist, teams may want to consider seeking representation from the appropriate social service agencies to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of referrals.

<u>Recruitment strategies</u>

- Share the responsibility for recruitment among your current team members.
- Make the agency being recruited aware of participating team members from similar disciplines.

- Seek a designated representative from each agency, taking into account their personal interest, the relevance of the team to that person's specific job, and their decision-making power.
- Invite prospective members as expert speakers to your team meetings.
- Take advantage of good timing for the agencies being recruited.
- Draw on personal relationships as appropriate to help make connections.
- *Making a case for collaboration: Talking points for various disciplines* is an informative resource that can be used to help team coordinators come up with strategies and messaging to recruit team members from the core disciplines.

"Find somebody that has an interest in it already and get them involved. It doesn't have to be the top lady or man on the food chain. It can be somebody that has an interest in it and wants to learn."

-NC Assistant District Attorney

Resource: **Making a case for collaboration: Talking points for recruitment to CCR/SARTs** can be found at the end of this section on page 36.

Establishing Regular Meetings

A strong, deliberate meeting structure is essential to maintaining the interest and engagement of CCR/SART members as well as guiding the team to make steady progress toward its goals. Disorganized, irregular meetings with lack of purpose can undermine team growth and sustainability and is often a primary cause of team breakdown.

> *"What I feel is that we can't have fluff at these meetings. We need to have a strong facilitator and we need to have a vision about where we're going and what we're about."*
>
> *-NC SANE Coordinator*

Planning response team meetings: Logistics

Although the content of a meeting is of utmost importance, basic logistics can also play a huge role in the success of teams. When planning meetings, facilitators should carefully consider the following factors:

- Meeting frequency
- Meeting day and time
- Meeting location
- Communication
- Food

Meeting frequency

Monthly CCR/SART meetings are ideal, especially in the first two years of CCR/SART development. Some CCR/SARTs do meet quarterly, but it is not recommended. Meeting too infrequently can slow progress and lead to loss of motivation, engagement, and attendance. An exception to this may occur later in CCR/SART development, when some teams divide into subcommittees. At that point, teams may decide to meet in subcommittees monthly and as a large group less frequently, perhaps quarterly (see *Step Three: Developing a Plan of Work* for more on subcommittees). Consider carefully what your team wants to accomplish, and realistically assess as a team how much time and preparation are needed to achieve your goals in a timely way.

Meeting day and time

Most CCR/SARTs meet for one to two hours each month in order to allow for productive discussion and decision-making. Consider what your team would like to accomplish each month and the amount of time needed to do so. Find the right balance for your team, weighing both the monthly goals of the team and outside obligations that may make it difficult to schedule meetings for longer than an hour.

Decide as a group which days and times work for the most people and schedule a meeting time that will remain consistent each month (e.g., third Wednesday of each month, 10:00-11:30am). Generally, a regularly scheduled meeting draws more consistent attendance than a meeting that is scheduled at a different time each month (even when team members have inconsistent schedules). However, be flexible as schedules fluctuate, and adjust your meeting time as necessary. When choosing your meeting time, you may want to consider prioritizing the availability of members representing the core disciplines (law enforcement, prosecutors, hospitals, court officials, and victim advocacy). Consider conflicts like weeks that prosecutors and law enforcement generally have to be in court.

Meeting location

Meeting rooms can be difficult to find, so many teams choose whichever space is most convenient to reserve. However, location can impact whether or not stakeholders regularly attend meetings and should be considered carefully. Consider the following when determining your meeting location:

- Choose as central a location as is possible. The distance team members must travel to attend meetings can significantly impact attendance. In the case of agencies that are remotely located, consider a location that will make any necessary travel as convenient as possible (right off a highway or main road, convenient parking, etc.). In communities where agencies are fairly dispersed, it may make sense to consider rotating meeting space so that team members can share responsibility for traveling (see *Consider fixed meeting space vs. rotating meeting space* below).
- Be strategic about the host agency. When a meeting is hosted at a particular agency, representatives from that agency are significantly more likely to attend. If there is an agency that is enthusiastic about team participation but inconsistently sends representatives to meetings, consider asking them to host. This can maximize the likelihood of their attendance by increasing their ownership of the team and minimizing their barriers to get to meetings.
- Ensure that your meeting space is friendly toward traditionally underserved communities. Be thoughtful about whether the meeting location may introduce unnecessary barriers to attendance for some people. For example, it is of utmost importance that all meeting space be wheelchair accessible. If transportation is an issue for many people in your community, especially people who are rural or low-income, ensure that your space is accessible by public transportation or is as easy to walk to as possible. The specifics of what spaces are considered safe, friendly, and accessible may vary in each community, so be thoughtful, ask questions, and make efforts to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Consider fixed meeting space vs. rotating meeting space. Some teams find that having a consistent meeting space increases attendance, because team members always know where to go and how to get there. It also minimizes potential for team members to get lost or go to the wrong location. On the other hand, rotating meeting locations can give multiple team members the opportunity to host meetings, which can increase team member engagement and ownership. Teams should weigh the pros and cons of these options specific to their particular team members and communities.

<u>Communication</u>

Clear, consistent communication and reminders about meetings are essential to keeping team members engaged and regularly attending meetings.

Before the meeting, send a reminder email to all team members and invitees that includes the following. Make sure to proofread carefully in order to avoid having to send multiple emails.

- Meeting day and time.
- Meeting location (make sure to include any parking instruction if necessary).
- Agenda (see below for more guidance).
- Ask members to inform you of any special accommodations needed.
- Consider asking for RSVPs.

As you develop the agenda, be sure to consider the primary objectives of the meeting as well as the amount of time you have. Many teams make the mistake of putting too many topics on the agenda and either rushing through important decisions or never getting to everything they have planned. Agendas should include:

- Name of group
- Location of meeting (including street address and room number)
- Time of meeting (start and end time)
- Mission statement (after it is developed)
- Agenda items
    - Include type of activity (i.e. discuss, review, decide, report)
    - Time estimate for each item
    - Name of persons responsible for each agenda item

In addition to a reminder email, consider calling key stakeholders to remind them of the meeting, especially if their attendance is sporadic or has lessened.

After your meeting, send a follow-up email within a week to all team members (regardless of their attendance at the meeting). The email should include:

- Thank-you for attending
- Meeting minutes
- Summary in the body of the email of agreed-upon next steps
- Next meeting date and time

Consider following-up directly (via email or phone) with new meeting attendees. You can ask them if they had any follow-up questions or input after the meeting. Ask them if they think their agency could benefit from regular attendance and what the team could do to increase those benefits. Reiterate the next meeting date and time, and express your hope that they will attend. You may also want to ask them if there is anyone else in the community who they think should be invited to the meetings.

Particularly if there was conflict, consider reaching out via phone to anyone who seemed uncharacteristically quiet or unengaged or who was an active part of any disagreements or difficulties during the meeting.

<u>Food</u>

In surveys and interviews about what makes CCR/SARTs successful, providing food at meetings is one of the most consistent responses. Many teams find it helpful to meet over a meal (usually breakfast or lunch). Consider including food in any budgets developed by the CCR/SART, or ask if each agency is willing to take a turn in providing food for meetings. (If your group meets monthly and has 5-6 consistent member agencies, then each agency would only need to provide food about twice a year.) You can also reach out to local businesses and ask them to support your efforts to make your community stronger and safer by donating food for your meetings.

<u>**Setting the stage: What to include in your first meeting**</u>

Once you have multiple people who have committed to your team (especially those representing core disciplines), you should schedule your first meeting. You should not wait until you have recruited everyone you intend to include. You will want to make sure that you have enough people committed to attending, without waiting too long so that the people you've recruited lose momentum. Make sure to begin and end on time to communicate from the beginning your respect for stakeholders and their time.

The first meeting of a CCR/SART is an important opportunity to show stakeholders that participation in the team will be beneficial. Therefore, the meeting should be focused, purposeful, engaging, and efficient. Be strategic about what to include. Your first meeting should provide context and structure without overwhelming attendees. The team will have plenty of time to discuss issues in greater detail in the upcoming months.

Some meeting topics and activities that can be effective during the first CCR/SART meeting include:

- What is a CCR/SART and what do they do?
- Shared understanding of sexual assault and/or domestic violence
- Basic and local information and statistics about domestic and/or sexual violence
- Outcomes of CCR/SARTs
- Where is this team headed?

<u>What is a CCR/SART and what do they do?</u>

A CCR/SART is a multidisciplinary team of people who partner together to provide interagency, coordinated responses to domestic violence and/or sexual assault in order to: 1) meet the needs of victims/survivors, and 2) more effectively hold offenders accountable. Teams accomplish this by implementing a variety of strategies, including:

- Internal information-sharing and training
- Community awareness about resources available and community commitment to victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence
- CCR/SART response protocols
- Case review

<u>Shared understanding of sexual assault and/or domestic violence</u>

Developing a shared understanding of sexual assault and/or domestic violence is vital. This is especially true for law enforcement and prosecutors whose use of particular terms often differ from those of other disciplines. Explain how you conceptualize domestic violence and/or sexual assault, and give others an opportunity to add their input into how they define the same or other terms. You do not need to determine and agree upon definitions in your first meeting, but you may want to revisit this discussion when you are working on shared statements and documents, such as your mission statement or your CCR/SART response protocols.

<u>Basic and local information and statistics about domestic violence and/or sexual assault</u>

Providing basic statistics and information about domestic violence and/or sexual assault can set the groundwork for why the team is convened and why these services are important. For reliable and up-to-date national statistics about sexual and domestic violence, see the 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey Summary Report, at http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf. In addition to national statistics, any information or statistics specific to your community offers team members an opportunity to discuss the needs for services in respect to advocacy, safety measures, and legal remedies. It will give all members the same starting point from which to discuss policy changes and collaboration.

<u>Outcomes</u>

It can be helpful to focus your attention on the potential outcomes of CCR/SARTs, especially criminal justice outcomes. The successes of other teams speak to the reason why continuing to participate in this team is worth the attendees' time and energy. Research evaluating CCR/SARTs repeatedly shows increased well-being of victims,[3] which can improve the ability to successfully prosecute cases. Much of the research on CCRs has shown positive victim services and safety outcomes and has indicated that collaboration among domestic violence responders has a positive impact on the criminal justice system. When CCRs are involved in cases, victims: [4]

- Are more likely to receive services.
- Have decreased PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) symptom severity, depression, and fear.
- Express greater readiness to leave the abuser.
- Demonstrate greater engagement with prosecution (court attendance and case disposition).

Research evaluating SARTs has emphasized the connection between coordinated response and successful prosecution. Cases involving Sexual Assault Response Teams:[5]

- Are reported more quickly.
- Yield more evidence.
- Are the strongest predictor that charges will be filed.

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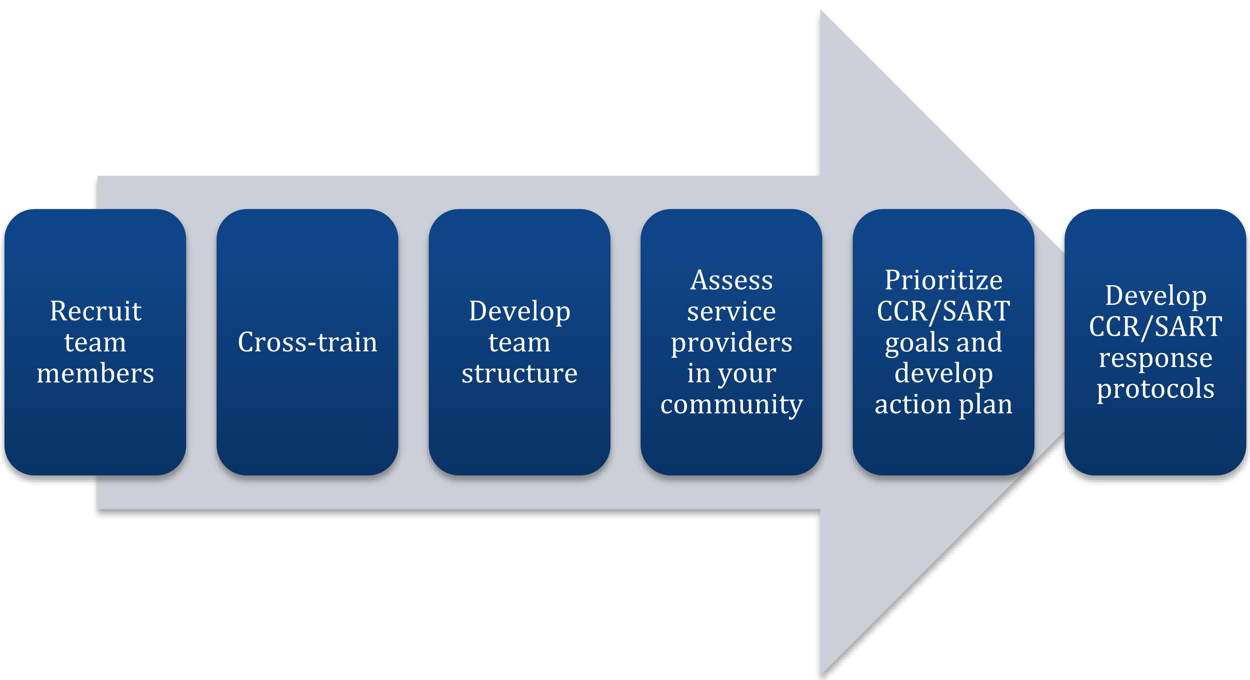
[3] Martin, Patricia Yancey. Coordinated community services for victims of violence. O'Toole, Laura L., Jessica R. Schiffman, and Margie L. Kiter Edwards (Eds). 2007. *Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 2/e.* New York: New York University Press.
[4] Hirschel, David. *The Benefits of More "Victim-Focused" Coordinated Community Responses to Intimate Partner Violence: A Critique of "The Impact of Victim-Focused Outreach on Criminal Legal System Outcomes Following Police-Reported Intimate Partner Abuse,"* by Anne P. DePrince, Joanne Belknap, Jennifer S. Labus, Susan E. Buckingham, and Angela R. Gover. *Violence Against Women, Aug 2012; vol. 18: pp. 897-905.*
[5] Nugent-Borakove, M. E. et al., Testing the Efficacy of SANE/SART Programs: Do They Make a Difference in Sexual Assault Arrest and Prosecution Outcomes?, 2006.

- Are more likely to lead to arrest.
- Keep victims better informed and engaged throughout the criminal justice process.

Interviewer: "Are there any more concrete positive things that you can point to that have resulted from this collaboration?"
NC Assistant District Attorney: "Success in criminal prosecutions…We've prosecuted more cases since we've developed this stronger team."

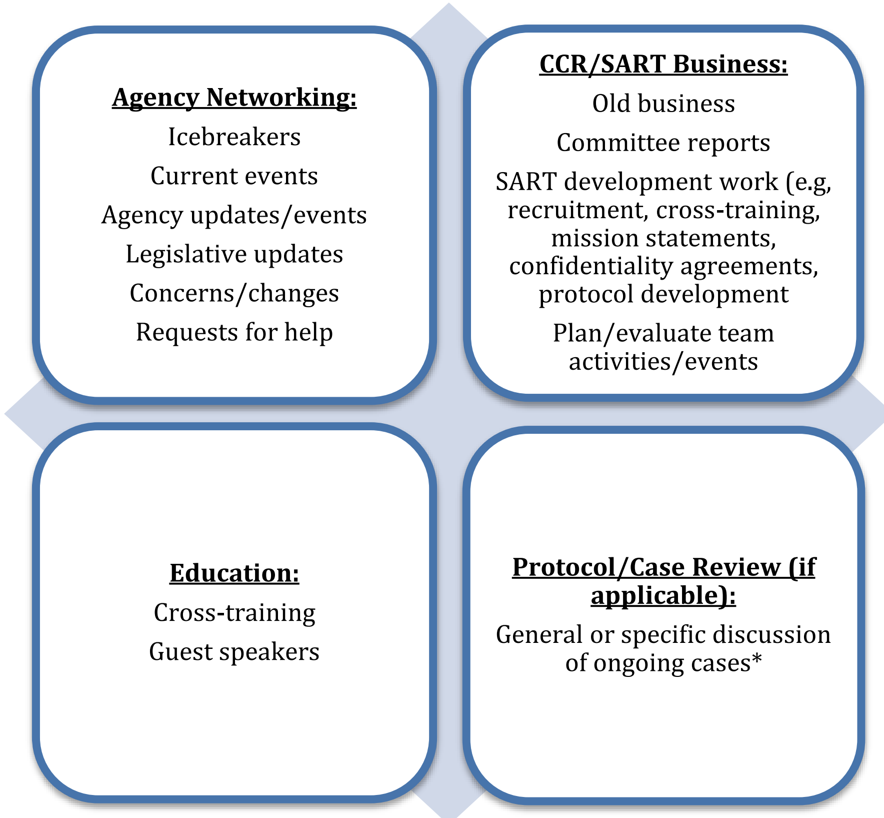
Where are we headed?
A simplified version of the detailed step-by-step process found in the Introduction can often help stakeholders get a clearer picture of what being a member of the team will entail. It will also provide assurance that the team has plans to be productive and that it has a means of achieving tangible, specific outcomes.



Continuing momentum: What to include in following meetings

In order to maintain team member engagement and momentum, it is important to continue to structure meetings thoughtfully and efficiently.

Meetings often are made up of a mix of activities and discussions from the following four categories as necessary and appropriate for your team's stage of development. Not every meeting has to include all four categories, and it is up to you and your team to determine how to break up the time in the best way for your team.



**Protocol and case review generally does not take place until after a team has developed and adopted CCR/SART response protocols and clear confidentiality agreements. Case review is generally restricted to specific responders involved in cases; usually victim advocates, law enforcement, prosecutors, and SANEs. Before engaging in case review with your CCR/SART, please see Step Four: Developing CCR/SART Response Protocols.*

Defining Roles of Different Disciplines

Who does what?

Interviews conducted about effective CCR/SARTs with representatives from various disciplines in North Carolina found that a clearly defined, respectful understanding of one another's roles is a key element to making collaboration work. Taking the time early in the team development process to allow each team member to explain their role in the response to sexual and/or domestic violence has the following potential benefits:

- Developing a more extensive, more accurate understanding of the entire response system, including strengths, gaps, opportunities for improvement, and challenges.
- Identifying overlap between services offered and opportunities to streamline services.
- Finding common ground and common goals between disciplines.
- Dispelling any incorrect assumptions about the approach of different responders.
- Identifying areas where greater collaboration could help meet particular challenges faced by each discipline.
- Developing personal organizational relationships that can enhance multiple aspects of each organization.
- Developing a shared language for how your team will talk about domestic violence and sexual assault cases.
- Giving various team members the opportunity to speak about their areas of expertise.
- Developing broader engagement and shared leadership (see *Setting the Stage for Success: Foundations for an Effective Team: Shared Leadership*).

Collaboration case study

A collaboration case study is a team development activity that allows your team to discuss each discipline's role in responding to a report of domestic and/or sexual violence. It can reveal ways that your team can work together to build each other's individual and agency capacity. Team members hear or read the details of a particular case, either by using a fictional case study or by inviting a survivor to come to the meeting to share their story (see inset *Sharing Survivor Stories Safely and Effectively* in the *Collaboration Case Study activity*). This activity offers team members the opportunity to talk about their roles and perspectives in a more structured, concrete way. It also removes the question of false reporting that can sometimes cause distractions in discussing the response to victims of domestic and/or sexual violence.

Activity: Instructions and resources for the **Collaboration Case Study** activity can be found at the end of this section on page 44.

Cross-training

Cross-training is an extremely helpful and strongly recommended step in team development. The process of cross-training should continue over a number of team meetings. Each team member, agency, or discipline should be given an opportunity to provide more in-depth, focused training about their role in a sexual assault and/or domestic violence case. Teams can structure cross-trainings in a variety of ways. The recommended approach is to have one cross-training on the agenda per meeting, in addition to other discussions/activities. This allows each team member the opportunity to train, while still allowing the team to make progress on other aspects of team development. Teams can choose how much time to set aside for cross-trainings, but 30 minutes is generally a sufficient amount of time for each session. Team members leading cross-trainings should be given autonomy to plan their content, but they can be guided by the following questions:

- What is your agency's role?

- What outcomes does your agency want to see?
- What are your primary challenges, and how could your CCR/SART partners help?

After each cross-training (and during, if the speaker is comfortable), team members should be allowed time to discuss and ask questions.

<u>Activity:</u> Instructions and resources for **Cross-training** can be found at the end of this section on page 49.

Establishing a Leadership Structure

Leadership Models

In the early stages of team development, it is a good idea to establish a formalized leadership base that goes beyond the team coordinator. Initially, this leadership model could be relatively simple and basic, and as time passes and you build a larger team, a more complex and extensive leadership model could be utilized (see *Step Four: Developing a Plan of Work* for information about subcommittees). Teams should prioritize involving representatives from various disciplines in their leadership structures.

Simple leadership models can incorporate a combination of the following roles:

- Chair/Co-chairs
  - Secures meaningful buy-in from team and community members.
  - Captures and keeps the team focused on shared vision/mission.
  - Guides direction and process of team.
  - Recognizes and addresses successes and challenges.
  - Communicates with stakeholders and team members outside of meetings as necessary to recruit, check in, and keep members engaged. *(This responsibility should be shared with other team members and leadership.)*
- Vice-chair
  - Works with Chair to fulfill their role.
  - Fills in for Chair when Chair is unavailable.
- Coordinator

  Often a representative from the DV/SA agency will take on this role of coordinating the logistics of the team and of meetings as a support to the team and team leadership.
  - Works with Chair(s)/Vice-chair to plan meetings and strategize about team's next steps.
  - Plans logistics of meetings (e.g., location, food, email reminders).
  - Communicates with stakeholders and team members outside of meetings as necessary to recruit, check in, and keep members engaged. *(This responsibility should be shared with other team members and leadership.)*
  - Communicates with technical assistance sources (e.g., NCCADV and NCCASA) in order to remain aware of best practices and communicates those practices back to the team.
- Secretary
  - Takes minutes during meetings and emails them to Coordinator/team per team procedures.

Putting a leadership structure into place

The first step to establishing a leadership structure is to identify people who are willing to take on those roles. One effective way to do this is through a nomination process during a team meeting, when people can either self-select as potential candidates or are selected by other team members as potential candidates.

During the meeting prior to the nomination process, engage the team in a discussion of what the different roles will entail. This will allow team members time prior to the nomination process to think about who would be a good candidate for each role as well as whether they would be willing to take on any of the described leadership roles. People are less likely to take on a role if they do not know what it will entail. During the nomination process, allow nominees to either accept or decline nominations.

If there are particular team members who you think would be strong leaders, it is a good strategy to speak to them ahead of time, let them know that you think they would be a good leader and why, and let them know that you plan to nominate them. When people have time in advance to think about accepting a leadership role, they are more likely to be enthusiastic about the nomination when it occurs, having already thought through whether they would like to take on the role. If you speak to a team member prior to nominations and they communicate that they would rather not take on that leadership role, you should respect their request and not nominate them. (However, should another team member nominate them, allow the nominee to speak for themselves during the meeting and decline should they choose to do so.)

Often, particular candidates for each role will rise to the top naturally out of the meeting discussion. However, if you have multiple potential candidates for each position, first consider flexibility in leadership structure to accommodate multiple willing leaders for your team. For example, if you were planning to have one Chair, but there are two strong candidates for the role, consider splitting the role into Co-chairs. If you do need to choose between multiple candidates, an anonymous team vote is an effective way to determine which person will take on that role. Although consensus-building is almost always a better option than voting, this is an exception, as you do not want to have team members comparing and contrasting the merits and drawbacks of fellow team members as potential leaders.

Developing a Mission Statement

A mission statement can often seem like a formality, and carefully crafting a mission statement for your team can seem like a waste of time. However, when thoughtfully developed, a mission statement can be used to guide your team's progress and easily communicate to others the purpose and focus of your team.

Purpose	Benefits	Should Answer
• Can create clarity and unity. • Can inspire and motivate. • Can allow you to solve conflicts and make decisions according to deeper principles. • Is a useful tool to consider potential new activities- "Is this in keeping with our mission?" • Can help explain your team to others.	• Focuses your energy and clarifies your purpose. • A mission statement is not just for internal use. It is a beacon that will attract new people and more resources to your cause.	• What do we do? • How do we do it? • For whom do we do it? • Why is our work important? • What outcomes do we want to see?

<u>Elements of a strong mission statement</u>

Additional questions to ask to determine the strength of your mission statement include:

- Is the mission broad enough that all agencies on the team can see how they can contribute?
- Is the mission something that would rarely change?
- Will the mission make sense to the community?
- Is the mission concise and specific?
- Will the mission inspire, and is it plausible?

<u>Themes to consider for inclusion in your mission statement</u>

Although all CCR/SARTs and communities are different, there are a few common themes among the mission statements of these teams:

- The CCR/SART will offer respectful and compassionate services to victims.
- The CCR/SART will efficiently and effectively coordinate responses to meet victim's needs and hold offenders accountable.
- The CCR/SART will take a victim-centered approach to the response to domestic and sexual violence.

<u>Victim-centered approach</u>

In simple terms, victim-centeredness means having a systematic focus on the needs and concerns of the victim in order to deliver compassionate services in a non-judgmental way. The victim's wishes, safety, and well-being must be a priority in all matters and procedures. A victim-centered approach not only can facilitate the healing process for the victim, but it can also instill trust in the response system and can help keep the victim engaged in the criminal justice process. Keep in mind that being victim-centered does not mean that only the victim matters or that if a team member makes a decision based on anything other than the victim, they are wrong and/or uncaring. Each team member has a variety of concerns, restrictions, and priorities that they must consider in addition to the victim's wishes and well-being as they make decisions about each case.

Developing your team's mission statement

Your team can develop your own mission statement by either working from mission statement language established by other teams, or by working collaboratively to produce your own. Using pre-existing mission statement language may facilitate a faster process and allows you to draw inspiration from how other teams are describing their work.

Activity: Instructions and resources for the **Mission Statement Examples Exercise** and **Sample Mission Statements** can be found at the end of this section on page 52.

Working collaboratively to develop your own language can be significantly more time-consuming, but depending on your team, may be rewarding. Sometimes this can give the mission statement more "teeth", as the group may be more invested in the process of creating it and agreeing to it.

Activity: Instructions and resources for the **Mission Statement Development Exercise** can be found at the end of this section on page 55.

Creating Confidentiality Agreements

Why is confidentiality important?

Ensuring that victims' rights are met and that confidentiality is protected is more than just good practice. It's the law. The Justice For All Act of 2004 states that "A crime victim has the following rights: The right to be treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity and privacy." If your agency receives funding pursuant to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), and/or Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), you must follow additional federal confidentiality requirements. However, not all agencies that interact with victims have the same restrictions regarding confidentiality. It is important to recognize and understand the different policies and laws regarding confidentiality pertaining to different disciplines represented on your CCR/SART, while also determining how to best address confidentiality among CCR/SART members.

Keeping confidentiality is critical to the relationship advocates build with victims/survivors. In fact, it is so pivotal that the law recognizes that there is a need to protect that trust. Advocate privilege as outlined in the NC General Statute N.C.G.S. § 8-53.12, *Communications with agents of rape crisis centers and domestic violence programs privileged*, details the circumstances under which information obtained from the victim should be kept confidential. It explains that communications between the agency and victim are privileged unless the victim waives this right or the judge determines that an exception should apply. If that is the case, then the information needs to be disclosed to the courts. However, if privileged information is shared with a third party (for example, with a CCR/SART), that privilege has been broken and that information is no longer protected. Therefore, it is extremely important for advocates to keep information shared by victims confidential and to assert privilege when asked for the information to be disclosed in a courtroom.

Practically, the opposite is true for prosecutors. Prosecutors are required by law, NC General Statute N.C.G.S. § 15A-902 *Discovery procedure*, to turn over all information about the criminal case to the defense attorney (however, they do not have to disclose statements made by the victim unless the information presents evidence that the defendant committed a lesser crime or did not commit a crime). Prosecutors should be extremely careful about the information that is disclosed during a CCR/SART meeting, as any information that becomes known to them becomes discoverable.

Understanding victims' rights, advocate privilege, and discovery are critical as your team determines how to talk about systems and maybe eventually individual cases. If your team does not carefully consider how to protect confidentiality and privilege, your team discussions could end up harming cases more than strengthening them, not to mention harming the relationship between victims and the agencies serving them.

Confidentiality agreements

Teams must discuss confidentiality concerns early in team development, and guidelines for maintaining confidentiality of victims should be collaboratively developed and signed by all members. Make sure to incorporate suggestions from all disciplines, as they each have varying concerns that must be addressed. Teams will have to revisit and revise confidentiality guidelines when developing protocol or case review processes later in team development. However, teams should have some form of guidelines in place from the beginning. Consider including the following principles:

- Identifying information about victims or their families will not be shared.
- Members will make every effort to avoid sharing extraneous case information that may lead to the identification of victims by other team members.
- Any information related to cases that is learned through the team will not be discussed outside the meeting room except as specified.
- Any information related to cases that is learned through the team will not be shared by any team member with their home agency except as specified.

- No written material with case information will leave the meeting room. Should any such documentation exist, a representative from a designated agency will collect all documents and shred them immediately upon leaving the meeting. Team members will not take any notes pertaining to cases during meetings.
- Each team member retains the responsibility to maintain confidentiality as required by their agency/discipline.

One structure that has worked particularly well for teams is to have the confidentiality agreement included on their meeting sign-in sheet. This ensures that everyone in the meeting has signed the agreement (rather than trying to keep track of individual members) and it also serves as a reminder at each meeting of the terms of the confidentiality agreement.

Resource: A sample **Confidentiality Agreement** can be found at the end of this section on page 56.

Step One: Developing the Team

Resources and Activities

Making a case for collaboration: Talking points for recruitment to CCR/SARTs
- Law enforcement
- Prosecutors
- Hospitals (specific to SARTs)
- Court Officials (specific to CCRs)

Collaboration case study
- Collaboration case study instructions
- Sample sexual assault case study
- Sample domestic violence case study

Cross-training
- Cross-training guide for team members
- Conducting an advocate cross-training for your team: What should you include?

Developing a mission statement
- Mission Statement Examples Exercise
- Mission Statement Development Exercise

Creating confidentiality agreements
- Sample Confidentiality Agreement

Making a case for collaboration: Talking points for recruitment to CCR/SARTs
Law Enforcement

Recruiting for your CCR/SART can seem daunting. Start by building relationships with individuals from potential partner agencies or by drawing on the existing relationships that you or other team members have already cultivated. In your conversations with potential team members, make sure to focus on the benefits and outcomes of team participation that are *specific to their discipline*. Express the specific ways that collaboration with other responders will make their particular job easier and improve the outcomes that are emphasized within their discipline. The following talking points are meant to guide conversations with potential team members. We do not recommend distributing them or using them as a handout, as personal conversations are always more effective.

Potential outcomes

Many law enforcement officers across North Carolina are involved in multidisciplinary teams in their counties to address sexual assault and/or domestic violence. In interviews in these counties, we asked what positive outcomes they've seen that have resulted directly from this collaboration:

> *ADA: "Success in criminal prosecution….We've prosecuted more cases since we've developed this stronger team."*

North Carolina detectives who were surveyed also noted that it was easier to keep up with victims throughout a case, because the various agencies involved in the collaboration helped to facilitate communication with victims when they were hard to find, but also because many victims stayed more engaged with the process and would take the initiative to stay in touch with law enforcement.

> *Detective: "I've had one or two [victims] call me and say, 'I just want to check in with you.' That tells me that person trusts me, believes in me, and believes in the system. Thinks things are going to go well."*
>
> *Interviewer: "And you would say that part of the ability to keep victims engaged and steady like that is your work with [local DV/SA agency]?"*
>
> *Detective: "That's right."*

Evaluation of multidisciplinary teams to address sexual assault

Research conducted by the American Prosecutors Research Institute in partnership with Boston College has shown more specific outcomes of increased collaboration in sexual assault cases:[6]

Cases involving Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) and Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs):

- Are **reported** more quickly.
  - For SANE/SART cases, the average time between the incident and the report was 5.6 days. For non-SANE/SART cases, however, an average of 33 days elapsed between the time the incident occurred and the time when the victim reported the assault.
- Yield more **evidence**.
  - SANE/SART cases yielded an average of 3.1 types of evidence; non-SANE/SART cases yielded only 1 type of evidence. DNA evidence was collected in 37% of SANE/SART cases, compared to only 10% of non-SANE/SART cases.
- Are more likely to lead to **arrest**.

[6] Nugent-Borakove, M. E. et al., Testing the Efficacy of SANE/SART Programs: Do They Make a Difference in Sexual Assault Arrest and Prosecution Outcomes?, 2006.

  - SANE/SART cases were 1.7 times more likely to result in an arrest than cases in which there was no intervention.
- Are the strongest predictor that **charges** will be filed.
  - SANE/SART cases were 3.3 times more likely to result in the filing of charges than cases without a SANE/SART intervention.
- Lead to increased **victim participation** throughout the criminal justice process.
  - Victims who received a SANE/SART intervention averaged higher participation levels (making police reports and giving formal statements, testifying and/or appearing at court hearings, providing victim impact statements, and cooperating with the prosecution) than those who did not receive SANE/SART services.

<u>Evaluation of multidisciplinary teams to address domestic violence</u>

Research evaluating CCR/SARTs repeatedly shows increased well-being of victims,[7] which can improve the ability to successfully prosecute cases. Building trust and support over time can lead to an increased willingness of victims to disclose details of the abuse, participate in prosecution, and seek assistance in the future. Each interaction with victims is an opportunity to build relationships, make referrals, and enforce offender accountability. Much of the research done on CCRs has shown benefits to victims in receiving services and staying safe and has indicated that collaboration among domestic violence responders has a positive impact on the criminal justice system. When CCRs are involved in cases, victims: [8]

- Are more likely to receive services.
- Have decreased PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) symptom severity, depression, and fear.
- Express greater readiness to leave the abuser.
- Demonstrate greater engagement with prosecution (court attendance and case disposition).

<u>Describing to law enforcement officers the nature of involvement in your local CCR/SART</u>

- Provide details of commitment (i.e., regularity and length of meetings, content of meetings).
- Provide opportunities for early participation without long-term commitment (inviting them to meetings as a guest or even as a presenter).
- Ask for their feedback about what would make participation in this team beneficial to them and the community.
- Ask how you can make the structure more compatible with their constraints.

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[7] Martin, Patricia Yancey. Coordinated community services for victims of violence. O'Toole, Laura L., Jessica R. Schiffman, and Margie L. Kiter Edwards (Eds). 2007. *Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 2/e.* New York: New York University Press.
[8] Hirschel, David**.** *The Benefits of More "Victim-Focused" Coordinated Community Responses to Intimate Partner Violence: A Critique of "The Impact of Victim-Focused Outreach on Criminal Legal System Outcomes Following Police-Reported Intimate Partner Abuse,"* by Anne P. DePrince, Joanne Belknap, Jennifer S. Labus, Susan E. Buckingham, and Angela R. Gover. *Violence Against Women, Aug 2012; vol. 18: pp. 897-905.*

<u>Making a case for collaboration: Talking points for recruitment to CCR/SARTs</u>
Prosecutors

Recruiting for your CCR/SART can seem daunting. Start by building relationships with individuals from potential partner agencies or by drawing on the existing relationships that you or other team members have already cultivated. In your conversations with potential team members, make sure to focus on the benefits and outcomes of team participation that are *specific to their discipline*. Express the specific ways that collaboration with other responders will make their particular job easier and improve the outcomes that are emphasized within their discipline. The following talking points are meant to guide conversations with potential team members. We do not recommend distributing them or using them as a handout, as personal conversations are always more effective.

<u>Potential outcomes</u>

Many prosecutors across North Carolina are involved in multidisciplinary teams in their counties to address domestic violence and sexual assault. In interviews with some of these prosecutors, we asked what positive outcomes they've seen that have resulted directly from this collaboration:

> *ADA: "Success in criminal prosecution….We've prosecuted more cases since we've developed this stronger team."*
>
> *ADA: "I also think people are more comfortable bringing cases to us…Sometimes I get cold calls from survivors of sexual abuse. And I just talk to them about their possible outcomes. They wouldn't call unless they knew we were serious about prosecuting sexual assault cases."*

<u>Evaluation of multidisciplinary teams to address sexual assault</u>

Research conducted by the American Prosecutors Research Institute in partnership with Boston College has shown more specific outcomes of increased collaboration in sexual assault cases: [9]

Cases involving Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) and Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs):

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- Yield more **evidence**.
    - SANE/SART cases yielded an average of 3.1 types of evidence; non-SANE/SART cases yielded only 1 type of evidence.DNA evidence was collected in 37% of SANE/SART cases, compared to only 10% of non-SANE/SART cases.
- Are more likely to lead to **arrest**.
    - SANE/SART cases were 1.7 times more likely to result in an arrest than cases in which there was no intervention.
- Are the strongest predictor that **charges** will be filed.
    - SANE/SART cases were 3.3 times more likely to result in the filing of charges than cases without a SANE/SART intervention.
- Lead to increased **victim participation** throughout the criminal justice process.
    - Victims who received a SANE/SART intervention averaged higher participation levels (making police reports and giving formal statements, testifying and/or appearing at court hearings, providing victim impact statements, and cooperating with the prosecution) than those who did not receive SANE/SART services.

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[9] Nugent-Borakove, M. E. et al., Testing the Efficacy of SANE/SART Programs: Do They Make a Difference in Sexual Assault Arrest and Prosecution Outcomes?, 2006.

Evaluation of multidisciplinary teams to address domestic violence

Research evaluating CCR/SARTs repeatedly shows increased well-being of victims,[10] which can improve the ability to successfully prosecute cases. Building trust and support over time can lead to an increased willingness of victims to disclose details of the abuse, participate in prosecution, and seek assistance in the future. Each interaction with victims is an opportunity to build relationships, make referrals, and enforce offender accountability. Much of the research done on CCRs has shown benefits to victims in receiving services and staying safe and has indicated that collaboration among domestic violence responders has a positive impact on the criminal justice system. When CCRs are involved in cases, victims: [11]

- Are more likely to receive services.
- Have decreased PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) symptom severity, depression, and fear.
- Express greater readiness to leave the abuser.
- Demonstrate greater engagement with prosecution (court attendance and case disposition).

Describing to prosecutors the nature of involvement in your local CCR/SART

- Provide details of commitment (i.e., regularity and length of meetings, content of meetings).
- Provide opportunities for early participation without long-term commitment (inviting them to meetings as a guest or even as a presenter).
- Ask for their feedback about what would make participation in this team beneficial to them and the community.
- Ask how you can make the structure more compatible with their constraints.

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[10] Martin, Patricia Yancey. Coordinated community services for victims of violence. O'Toole, Laura L., Jessica R. Schiffman, and Margie L. Kiter Edwards (Eds). 2007. *Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 2/e.* New York: New York University Press.
[11] Hirschel, David. *The Benefits of More "Victim-Focused" Coordinated Community Responses to Intimate Partner Violence: A Critique of "The Impact of Victim-Focused Outreach on Criminal Legal System Outcomes Following Police-Reported Intimate Partner Abuse,"* by Anne P. DePrince, Joanne Belknap, Jennifer S. Labus, Susan E. Buckingham, and Angela R. Gover. *Violence Against Women, Aug 2012; vol. 18: pp. 897-905.*

Making a case for collaboration: Talking points for recruitment to SARTs
Hospitals

Recruiting for your CCR/SART can seem daunting. Start by building relationships with individuals from potential partner agencies or by drawing on the existing relationships that you or other team members have already cultivated. In your conversations with potential team members, make sure to focus on the benefits and outcomes of team participation that are *specific to their discipline*. Express the specific ways that collaboration with other responders will make their particular job easier and improve the outcomes that are emphasized within their discipline. The following talking points are meant to guide conversations with potential team members. We do not recommend distributing them or using them as a handout, as personal conversations are always more effective.

Why collaborate?

Research examining the involvement of advocates in sexual assault cases found substantial differences in both patient experiences and decisions to report based on whether victims received the services of an advocate.

Patients who received the services of victim advocates:
- Were more likely to file a police report.
- Reported improved experience with police.
- Reported less distress from participating in the legal system and at emergency room discharge.[12]

Best practice research also determined specific cases when "extra counseling resources" (i.e., the services of an advocate) were especially important.

"Extra counseling resources" are especially recommended in cases where:
- There is a current or prior relationship.
- Threats are a barrier to participating in the process.
- Alcohol or drugs are involved.[13]

We know that the majority of sexual assault cases fall into one or more of these categories, as 86% of sexual assaults are committed by somebody known to the victim[14], and alcohol and/or drugs are commonly used to facilitate sexual assaults. Therefore, the most effective way to implement these recommendations would be to offer/encourage the services of a victim advocate in all sexual assault cases.

When patients are better supported (by greater collaboration and the inclusion of an advocate), the process of conducting forensic medical examinations tends to be smoother. This allows hospitals to provide better patient care as well as often resulting in shorter examination times. This means that the nurse conducting the examination can more quickly return to the floor and help to care for other patients.

Anonymous Reporting requirements

In your efforts to recruit hospital personnel, emphasize that becoming a part of the SART team will help them in their duty to comply with federal law. As a team member, they will able to coordinate with advocates, law

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[12] Campbell, R. (2006). Rape Survivors' Experiences with the Legal and Medical Systems: Do Rape Victim Advocates Make a Difference? *Violence Against Women* (12)*1*, 30-45.

[13] Burgess et al. (2006). SANE/SART Services for Sexual Assault Victims: Policy Implications. *Victims and Offenders*. Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

[14] Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

enforcement, and prosecutors to assure that patients' rights are being met. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (2005) is a federal law supporting efforts to end violence against women. States must comply with VAWA's mandate regarding forensic exams, which states that:

1. victims are not required to participate in the criminal justice system in order to receive a forensic exam, and
2. victims must not bear the cost for the exam (*regardless of whether they choose to report to law enforcement*).

"Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit a State, Indian tribal government, or territorial government to require a victim of sexual assault to participate in the criminal justice system or cooperate with law enforcement in order to be provided with a forensic medical exam, reimbursement for charges incurred on account of such an exam, or both." 42 USCA S. 3796gg-4(d) (1)

In accordance with this federal mandate, North Carolina must offer Anonymous Reporting as an option to all patients reporting sexual assault or attempted sexual assault. When patients choose to have a forensic medical examination conducted and evidence collected but choose not to immediately report to law enforcement, hospitals are expected to collect the evidence and to send the Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits to a central storage facility: Law Enforcement Services and Support Unit (LESS).

Resources for compliance with Anonymous Reporting requirements can be found at www.nccasa.org/resources/anonymous-reporting.

<u>Describing to hospital representatives the nature of involvement in your local SART</u>

- Provide details of commitment (i.e., regularity and length of meetings, content of meetings).
- Provide opportunities for early participation without long-term commitment (inviting them to meetings as a guest or even as a presenter).
- Ask for their feedback about what would make participation in this team beneficial to them and the community.
- Ask how you can make the structure more compatible with their constraints.

Making a case for collaboration: Talking points for recruitment to CCRs
Court Officials

Recruiting for your CCR/SART can seem daunting. Start by building relationships with individuals from potential partner agencies or by drawing on the existing relationships that you or other team members have already cultivated. In your conversations with potential team members, make sure to focus on the benefits and outcomes of team participation that are *specific to their discipline*. Express the specific ways that collaboration with other responders will make their particular job easier and improve the outcomes that are emphasized within their discipline. The following talking points are meant to guide conversations with potential team members. We do not recommend distributing them or using them as a handout, as personal conversations are always more effective.

Why collaborate?

For the purposes of recruitment to CCR teams, the term "court officials" refers to judges and magistrates. Magistrates issue criminal charges, set pre-trial release conditions, and in some counties in North Carolina, they also issue temporary restraining orders. Judges set pre-trial release conditions, issue temporary and permanent DVPOs/50Cs/restraining orders, decide on guilt, and sentence defendants. Their significant roles in criminal and civil proceedings greatly impact offender accountability, making them key to implementing systematic changes to how communities approach domestic violence.

Is participating in CCRs ethical for court officials?

Some judges and magistrates may be hesitant to participate on the CCR team because of their duty to remain non-partisan. However, it can be clearly conveyed to them that becoming a member of the team does not interfere with their partiality, but rather enhances their ability to hold offenders accountable and ensure victims' rights are met. However, there may be meetings or sub-committees where it is not appropriate for judges or magistrates to participate (for example, if a team decides to conduct case reviews). This is an issue that can easily be addressed.

The North Carolina Domestic Violence Best Practices Guide for District Court Judges, a 2012 best practices guide compiled by the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts, cites as best practice #6 *Actively Coordinate with Community Resources and Constitute Local Domestic Violence Advisory Committee*. This guide suggests that judges regularly convene with a local advisory committee to learn about community partners' roles, coordinate efforts, and review the court system process. "Partnering with community resources improves the court process and provides resources to families in domestic violence situations."[15] Thus, in recruiting judges and magistrates, one can make the case that joining the CCR team is a recommended best practice nationwide as well as in North Carolina specifically. Having court officials on the team will facilitate conversations around consistently implementing policies that address victim safety and offender accountability. For example, it provides a space for law enforcement, prosecutors, advocates, judges and magistrates to create a process where they can assure that all relevant information regarding a current case as well as past incidents is obtained prior to setting pre-trial release conditions.

> *"Community partners can have a positive impact on the victim's experience, the defendant's behavior and the efficiency and overall response of the court system."*
>
> *North Carolina Domestic Violence Best Practices Guide for District Court Judges, 2012, p. 11.*

[15] Parker, Sarah., Smith, John W. (2012). North Carolina Domestic Violence Best Practices Guide for District Court Judges. North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts,

Evaluation of multidisciplinary teams to address domestic violence

Research evaluating CCR/SARTs repeatedly shows increased well-being of victims,[16] which can improve the ability to successfully prosecute cases. Building trust and support over time can lead to an increased willingness of victims to disclose details of the abuse, participate in prosecution, and seek assistance in the future. Each interaction with victims is an opportunity to build relationships, make referrals, and enforce offender accountability. Much of the research done on CCRs has shown benefits to victims in receiving services and staying safe and has indicated that collaboration among domestic violence responders has a positive impact on the criminal justice system. When CCRs are involved in cases, victims: [17]

- Are more likely to receive services.
- Have decreased PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) symptom severity, depression, and fear.
- Express greater readiness to leave the abuser.
- Demonstrate greater engagement with prosecution (court attendance and case disposition).

Describing to judges and magistrates the nature of involvement in your local CCR

- Provide details of commitment (i.e., regularity and length of meetings, content of meetings).
- Provide opportunities for early participation without long-term commitment (inviting them to meetings as a guest or even as a presenter).
- Ask for their feedback about what would make participation in this team beneficial to them and the community.
- Ask how you can make the structure more compatible with their constraints

[16] Martin, Patricia Yancey. Coordinated community services for victims of violence. O'Toole, Laura L., Jessica R. Schiffman, and Margie L. Kiter Edwards (Eds). 2007. *Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 2/e.* New York: New York University Press.
[17] Hirschel, David. *The Benefits of More "Victim-Focused" Coordinated Community Responses to Intimate Partner Violence: A Critique of "The Impact of Victim-Focused Outreach on Criminal Legal System Outcomes Following Police-Reported Intimate Partner Abuse,"* by Anne P. DePrince, Joanne Belknap, Jennifer S. Labus, Susan E. Buckingham, and Angela R. Gover. *Violence Against Women, Aug 2012; vol. 18: pp. 897-905.*

Collaboration case study instructions

This activity allows your team to discuss each discipline's role in responding to a domestic and/or sexual violence case. Team members hear or read the details of a particular case, either by using a fictional case study (examples included) or by inviting a survivor to come to the meeting to share their story (see inset *Sharing Survivor Stories Safely and Effectively*). Team members then individually answer the following questions:

1. If you were assigned this case (at your particular agency), what would your goal(s) be?
2. What action steps would you take in order to reach those goals?
3. What would your greatest challenges be in this case?
4. Think of three referrals that you could make at some point during the process- either by giving these referrals to the victim or by contacting the agencies yourself for support, information, and/or collaboration on the case.

After individuals have had time to answer these questions, the team can discuss their answers to each question, as well as discussing ways in which interagency collaboration could potentially help this case to be handled more effectively.

Sharing Survivor Stories Safely and Effectively

Having a survivor share her/his story during a team meeting can be incredibly powerful and effective. However, it is essential that planners of such an event/activity are thoughtful and cautious about prioritizing the safety of everyone who will participate. Here are some points to consider:

- Safety of the survivor
  - Are they ready to share?
  - Do they feel free to reject the invitation?
  - Are they ready to answer questions about their experience?
  - Will they know team members?
  - Did they interact with team members as service providers after their assault?
  - Thank the survivor for their story and have them leave *prior to* your team discussion.

- Safety of the team members
  - Let team members know prior to the meeting that a survivor story will be shared.
  - Give a "trigger warning" prior to the story. Let them know that they should take care of themselves by leaving the room as necessary.
  - Have the hotline number readily available by passing out agency materials or including it on the agenda during team meetings. (If you have it posted and people need to write it down, they may be less likely to do so.)
  - Allow discussion and processing, even if the discussion goes off-topic from your plan for the activity.

- Use of the story to effectively accomplish goals
  - Think carefully about whether the details of this particular story will fit well with the purposes of your team. Will this story reflect the cases your team is most likely to encounter?

Sexual assault case study

Mandy and Tyra are high school students (both 16-years-old). Tyra's boyfriend Jim is a couple of years ahead of them in school, so he graduated already and is a college freshman at a nearby campus. Mandy was planning to visit Jim's campus, and he offered that she could stay with him. He said that Mandy could sleep in his room, and he would sleep on the couch.

Mandy arrived Friday night, and on Saturday night, Jim invited her to join some friends to go out for pizza. After dinner, all of Jim's friends went to go play pool, like they always did on Saturday nights. Although Jim usually joined them, and Mandy was excited to go, Jim said that he had a headache and that he wanted to go home. Since Mandy didn't really know anyone else, she went back with Jim. When they got back to the house, Jim's roommate was in the living room watching a movie. Jim took a few beers out of the fridge and offered one to Mandy. They each drank a couple of beers, and then Jim's roommate got up, turned off the movie, and went into his room. Jim began to speak suggestively to Mandy, which she laughed off and assumed it was just because of the beers. When he put a pornographic video in, she got upset and left the room immediately. She texted her friend Dawn, saying that she was really "creeped out" and wasn't sure how to tell Tyra. Her friend offered to come pick her up, but she said that she would just leave in the morning. She went to sleep shortly afterward, without speaking to Jim again. In the middle of the night, she woke up suddenly to find Jim on top of her in the bed, forcibly removing her clothes. She yelled for him to stop and began to struggle, but he forcibly held her down on the bed with his forearm, covering her mouth and making it difficult to breathe. He had forcible vaginal intercourse with her. After he finished, he told her not to worry; that he wouldn't tell anyone. He told her that Tyra would never forgive her for having sex with him.

Mandy left early the next morning, and she arrived home four hours early. She didn't tell anyone what had happened at first, but a week later, she broke down and told Dawn. Dawn convinced her to tell her parents, and they took her to the hospital. The nurse documented bruises on her collarbone, but no other medical injuries. Mandy agreed to report to law enforcement. When officers told her that they would need to talk to Jim and maybe Tyra, Mandy panicked and said that she had made a mistake and didn't want to go forward with the investigation. When law enforcement interviewed Jim, he confessed to having sex with Mandy, but he claimed that it was consensual.

Sexual assault case study discussion questions

Take a few minutes to answer the following questions individually.

1. If you were assigned this case (at your particular agency), what would your goal(s) be?

2. What action steps would you take in order to reach those goals?

3. What would your greatest challenges be in this case?

4. Think of three referrals that you could make at some point during the process- either by giving these referrals to Mandy or by contacting the agencies yourself for support, information, and/or collaboration on the case.

In your small group or as a large group, discuss your responses. Together, identify if there are ways in which interagency collaboration could potentially help the case to be handled more effectively.

Domestic violence case study

Laura and Ben have been married for about six months. He's always been protective of her, but lately he's been increasingly jealous and suspicious. Ben has also been demanding more of her time and preventing her from seeing her friends. At first, she thought it was sweet because he wanted to be with her all the time, but now she is embarrassed that she can never spend time with her friends. It also seems that he has been checking up on her lately. Ben been going to her job to "surprise" her, but it feels like he just wants to make sure she is there. Ben expresses his jealousy by scrutinizing what Laura does, says and wears. Before she left the house last week he turned to her and said "Why are you wearing a skirt and tank top? Are you trying to get some other guy's attention?" Laura just laughed it off. She wasn't sure if she was being paranoid. "Isn't it nice that Ben is being a protective husband?" she thought.

Laura is becoming more and more nervous all the time. Her coworkers are always saying that she seems jumpy. She dreads coming home in the evenings, because she never knows whether Ben is going to be in a bad mood. He seems to always pick a fight for no reason.

Three days ago, Laura was making Ben his favorite cookies, when he stormed in the room. Ben had received their cell phone bill. He started yelling and screaming "Who is Dan?! Why are you calling him?!" Laura became nervous and tried to explain that Dan is her uncle. Ben slapped her across the face and pushed her across the room. He then yelled and said "Don't you dare talk back to me!" Laura began to cry and tried to run away, but Ben grabbed her and threw her on their bed. He pinned her down, strangled her, and then just got up and walked away.

The next morning, Laura woke up to breakfast in bed from Ben. He apologized for his "temper" and said "I didn't mean to do all those things to you, but you did make me mad…" She didn't know what to do or say, so she just got up and went to work. He called about 20 times, but Laura just ignored his calls. She felt confused, but also determined that she would never let him hurt her that way again.

Laura wasn't planning on talking to anyone about what happened. But when she got to work, her coworker Isabelle noticed the bruises on her neck. Before she knew it, Laura started telling Isabelle about everything that had been happening over the last few months. Isabelle said she was concerned for her and that she was there for her no matter what Laura decided to do. Isabelle also told Laura about the domestic violence agency near their job. She offered to go with her during their lunch break, so that she can talk to an advocate about what is going on.

The advocate listened to Laura's account of the incident as well as to details of the relationship over the last few months. She then explained all of Laura's options, including getting a DVPO and filing criminal charges. After talking to her family and deciding to move in with her sister, Laura went to the police station the next day to report the assault and strangulation.

Domestic violence case study discussion questions

Take a few minutes to answer the following questions individually.

1. If you were assigned this case (at your particular agency), what would your goal(s) be?

2. What action steps would you take in order to reach those goals?

3. What would your greatest challenges be in this case?

4. Think of three referrals that you could make at some point during the process- either by giving these referrals to Laura or by contacting the agencies yourself for support, information, and/or collaboration on the case.

In your small group or as a large group, discuss your responses. Together, identify if there are ways in which interagency collaboration could potentially help the case to be handled more effectively.

Cross-training guide for team members

Thank you for taking the time to train our team about your area of expertise! As you plan your 30-minute session for our upcoming team meeting on ___________, please think about the following questions.

- What is your agency's role?
- What outcomes does your agency want to see?
- What are your primary challenges, and how could your CCR/SART partners help?

<u>Conducting an advocate cross-training for your CCR/SART: What should you include?</u>

The advocate cross-training is a great opportunity to inform your CCR/SART partners more about the work of your agency. As with all cross-trainings, focus on answering the following questions:

- What is your agency's role?
- What outcomes does your agency want to see?
- What are your primary challenges, and how could your SART partners help?

Make sure that the information you provide about your agency and the role of an advocate is specific to the focus of the team. For a stand-alone SART, focus primarily on your sexual assault services. For a stand-alone CCR, focus primarily on your domestic violence services. If you are a dual team, make sure that you adequately address both. There is often a tendency for agencies to focus on shelter and other domestic violence services, at the exclusion of the sexual assault services the agency provides. Make sure to specifically talk about both, in order to model to the team that you truly will address both issues as a team.

It is important to remember *not to sell your cause*. You are not training advocates, and you are not conducting a community awareness event. You are explaining your role, services, and agency perspective with your partner responders, some of whom are already well-versed on aspects of sexual and domestic violence.

In each community, there may be different important points to highlight during a cross-training. It is essential that you are responsive to your particular team's culture, structure, and needs. The following are some topics, information, and resources that you might want to include in your cross-training.

<u>What Is Your Role?</u>

What is your agency's mission? What services do you provide?
Focus on the services that your agency provides that are applicable to the team's focus.

How many survivor/victims do you serve?
Provide basic service statistics that are applicable to the team's focus. Consider including statistics that highlight services provided to people from traditionally underserved communities.

When should other responders and service providers contact your agency, and how can they do so?
In addition to providing your hotline number, provide information about how other responders and service providers can contact your agency to ask for assistance or to make a referral. Make sure to provide information about how they can contact your agency both during and outside of business hours.

Agency definition of domestic violence and/or sexual assault
Acknowledge that your agency's definition of domestic violence and/or sexual assault may be (and probably is) different than the legal definition. However, this definition guides your agency's response to people seeking support and services. Avoid any arguments about the "right" definition- simply present this information as your agency's guiding perspective as you fill your particular role in your community. Sample definitions are provided below.

Sexual Assault is any unwanted sexual contact where consent is not obtained or freely given, and can include attempted or completed rape, vaginal or anal penetration, oral sex, sexual battery (touching of a sexual nature), or penetration by an object.

Domestic Violence is a pattern of coercive behavior in which one person attempts to control another through threats or actual use of tactics, which may include any or all of the following: physical, sexual, verbal and psychological abuse. The behavior may occur during the relationship or after the relationship has ended.

Your area of expertise: Response to and impact of sexual assault and/or domestic violence for victims/survivors

When providing this information, remember that you are speaking to other professionals who already care about the issue. The purpose of cross-training is not to sell your cause. This is an opportunity to clearly explain your role as an advocate and the expertise you will contribute to the team as the provider in your community who most likely works the most closely and consistently with victims/survivors. The information you provide during the advocate cross-training can equip responders with a greater understanding of the reality of domestic and/or sexual violence and to empower them to more accurately interpret victims' response to trauma. You may choose to use stories from your agency (paying very careful attention to issues of confidentiality), but make sure that you maintain your focus on explaining the reality of domestic and sexual violence and not on evoking an emotional response about the issue. You might want to include the following important points:

- Discuss the various responses that victims may have to domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Make sure to emphasize:
  - Every victim has a unique response to their assault.
  - A victim's response is not reflective of the trauma or violence of the assault.
  - There are many reasons why victims who know their perpetrators do not report, and in the cases of domestic violence situations, stay with their abusers. Lack of reporting, delayed reporting, and staying with the abuser is not reflective of the truthfulness, trauma, or violence of the assault.
- Talk about both the short-term and long-term impacts of domestic violence and/or sexual assault on victims/survivors, including:
  - Physical effects
  - Emotional effects
  - Social effects
  - Financial effects

What outcomes does your agency want to see?

What are your agency's primary goals in the services you provide? This may have already been covered by your mission statement, and it most likely focuses on the wellness of victims/survivors and the primary prevention of sexual and/or domestic violence. However, this can also be an opportunity to mention ways that your goals may intersect with the goals of your partner agencies, such as offender accountability. Again, be honest about your priorities, but don't hesitate to draw connections to your partners when they exist. This is also a great opportunity to share research about the importance of including advocates in the response process in order to achieve some of those shared goals.

What are your primary challenges, and how could your CCR/SART partners help?

Be honest about your challenges and barriers! If you could provide every service on your own, you wouldn't be on a CCR/SART in the first place. Talk about how the existence of the CCR/SART could help each agency attain your goals and do your work more effectively. Explain to your partners why you need them. Be honest about your challenges and barriers, but remember to be diplomatic. When discussing challenges, be sure not to ascribe blame to other responders in the community. This is an opportunity to build understanding and bridges.

Mission Statement Examples Exercise

Choose three to four CCR/SART mission statements. The mission statements you choose should reflect your team's focus (domestic violence or sexual assault). Dual teams can draw from examples of both (see examples on following page). Hand out the sample mission statements to team members. Each team member should review the mission statements provided and take some time to individually answer the following questions:

- Which mission statement do you think is most effective?

- What are two things that you think make it effective?

- What could make it better?

- What are some phrases from each of the mission statements that you particularly like?

After everyone has had time to review the mission statements, discuss your answers as a team. As you discuss, record on a flip-chart any language that your team identifies with, and discuss why. Edit that language on the flip-chart as necessary in response to the discussion. As you develop a list of language that your team identifies with, you can begin to piece those statements together into a coherent mission statement.

Sample Mission Statements

Dual Teams:

Mitchell/Yancey Counties, NC: The Mitchell/Yancey CCR Team is committed to the reduction of domestic violence and sexual assault by coordinating a consistent message and response to domestic violence and sexual assault; promoting cooperation, coordination and communication among the criminal justice and other community systems with service providers; creating a safe community environment for victims of abuse; and ensuring that abusers are held accountable for their illegal and abusive behavior.

Wilson County, NC: To coordinate efforts among providers who serve and empower victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, to hold offenders accountable for their actions, and to enhance efforts to decrease incidences of violence in our community.

Stand-Alone SARTs

Pasquotank/Camden Counties, NC: The Pasquotank/Camden SART's mission is to coordinate a compassionate, professional response to adult sexual assault victims in an effort to raise awareness, promote community safety, and eliminate sexual violence in Pasquotank and Camden Counties.

Cherokee County, NC: To coordinate a consistent, respectful victim-centered response to sexual violence and to promote the prosecution of perpetrators in Cherokee County.

Cuyahoga County, OH:
- Provide equal access to services for all individuals who have been sexually assaulted regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income, ability, language, age, religion, or other personal characteristics.
- Develop and maintain professional relationships through respectful communication and cross-disciplinary education among team members.
- Educate professionals within the health, social, and justice systems and the community at large to overcome the silence and stigma surrounding sexual assault.
- Establish and implement countywide standards of practice to ensure consistent responses from providers who will be held accountable to the standards.
- Inform individuals about their rights and choices with regard to healthcare, social services, and the justice system.

Mahoning County, OH: To extend a healing and supportive attitude and approach to victims of sexual assault, their families, and, thereby, the community as a whole by making the crime of sexual assault a priority issue, by providing comprehensive and compassionate care to the victims, and by holding offenders accountable.

Stand-Alone CCRs

Iredell County, NC: The Iredell County Domestic Violence Task Force is committed to the reduction of domestic violence in Iredell County by coordinating a consistent message and response about domestic violence in hopes of:
- Interrupting the escalation of the violence;
- Ensuring that abusers are held accountable for their behavior;
- Redefining domestic violence as a serious crime in the minds of the public and criminal justice system;
- Reducing the exposure of children to domestic violence.

To accomplish this, the Iredell County DVTF has set the following goals:
- Develop sensitive and effective responses to survivors (by including them in the coalition and in the provision of services);
- Promote and develop practices which hold perpetrators accountable for their actions;

- Increase community awareness of abuse and violence issues;
- Provide opportunities for collaboration between service providers;
- Improve access to appropriate services.

Portage County, WI: The purpose of the Portage County CCR Team is to establish a coordinated countywide response to domestic violence and a policy of "zero tolerance" which will protect the safety of the victim and the public, hold the abuser accountable and educate the community. We believe that domestic abuse must be redefined as a serious crime in the minds of the public and the criminal justice system, and that the exposure of children to domestic violence in our community continues the cycle. Our goal is to interrupt the escalation of the violence, and to achieve accountability that provides abusers an opportunity for rehabilitation.

Racine County, WI: The Family Violence Community Coalition of Racine County is committed to developing, nurturing, and sustaining a community free of abuse and violence.
Our goals are to:

1) Develop sensitive and effective responses to survivors, through their inclusion in the Coalition and in the provision of services;
2) Promote and develop practices which hold perpetrators accountable for their actions;
3) Increase community awareness of abuse and violence issues;
4) Provide opportunities for collaboration between service providers; and
5) Improve access to appropriate services.

<u>Mission Statement Development Exercise</u>

Step 1:
Each person take a few minutes to individually answer the following questions from their personal perspective:

1. Our collaborative group will do what *(action)*:

2. For whom *(who do we serve?)*:

3. So that *(result of our action)*:

Step 2:
After writing individual answers, discuss as a full group. Have someone record the answers on a flip-chart.
Please take about 10-15 minutes to do Step #2 and don't forget to designate a recorder!

Step 3 (if needed):
Get a commitment from small sub-group (no more than two-four people) to develop a draft mission statement from the information generated for review at a later time by the full group.

This activity was adapted from the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence with their permission. It was created the under the following grant: This project was supported by grant #2005-WR-AX-0015 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, US Dept. of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Dept. of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

CCR/SART Confidentiality Agreement

The undersigned members understand and acknowledge that CCR/SART is a multidisciplinary group designed to coordinate and improve the delivery of services for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. We review general case and process information regarding domestic violence and sexual assaults in order to fulfill this mission. Members bring their diversity of background and expertise to the team and to identify and address gaps in or the failure of services.

Through their signatures, the undersigned acknowledge and agree that the privacy of survivors should be strictly maintained. This agreement specifically includes that:

- Identifying information about victims or their families will not be shared.
- Members will make every effort to avoid sharing any extraneous case information that may lead to the identification of victims by other team members.
- Case information learned through the team is confidential and will not be discussed or shared outside the meeting room except as specified.
- Case information learned through the team will not be shared by any team member with his/her home agency except as specified.
- No documents with case information will leave the meeting room. Should any such documentation exist, a representative from [Agency Name] will collect all documents and shred them immediately upon leaving the meeting. Members will not take notes pertaining to cases during meetings.
- No case review information will be photocopied or duplicated.
- Each team member retains the responsibility to maintain confidentiality as required by their discipline/agency.

Signed: Date: ____________________

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Step Two: Identifying and Prioritizing Areas for Action

Why develop areas for action?

Once you have begun meeting regularly with your team, it is important to start having focused discussions and planning about what your team will accomplish. This is key to keeping team members engaged and active. People are significantly more likely to continue their commitment to a team that is making active progress toward a goal. One of the most common reasons team members stop regularly attending meetings is due to a sense of stagnation and the feeling that their time spent at these monthly meetings is not accomplishing anything tangible.

CCR/SARTs are positioned to make a significant impact on the way domestic violence and sexual assault are addressed in their communities. Within the first six months of meeting, teams should begin gathering information about the current state of response to sexual assault and domestic violence. Potential areas for action will take shape as your team starts to see patterns in certain gaps in services, lack of consistent offender accountability, and need for improved victim safety. The potential sources of information detailed in this section will help you to ask yourselves the following questions as you consider potential areas of action:

- What can we continue or start doing?
    - What are best practices? What are others doing, and what is working?
    - What supports the victim for their healing and continued involvement with the criminal justice system?
    - What protects victim confidentiality?
    - What helps to increase offender accountability?
    - What might make victims in our community more likely to access services and report to law enforcement?
- What can we avoid or stop doing?
    - What are the gaps? Where do victims fall through the cracks?
    - What practices might lead to retraumatization and victims discontinuing their engagement with the criminal justice system?
- What issue do we feel uncertain about/need more information about?

During the beginning of the process, areas for action may be framed as problem statements rather than solutions. As your team goes through the process, you will learn how to reframe them into objectives that your team can proactively address.

Potential sources of information

One of the greatest potential sources of information for CCR/SARTs is the abundance of expertise among team members. However, it is important for teams to strategically assess their community to search for areas where response to domestic violence and sexual assault are particularly strong or weak. There are a number of resources that CCR/SARTs can utilize when gathering data about domestic violence and sexual assault response. Although each of these potential sources of information can yield important data, it may be impractical for teams to attempt to utilize all of them. Teams should pick two to three sources of information that are most relevant, accessible, and of interest to their particular team and community. By narrowing down to two to three sources, teams can seek out vital information, while not spending so much time on gathering data that they never quite get to the point of taking action. Teams can always revisit other sources of information in the future. The following are possible sources of information that can be of use to CCR/SARTs when coming up with potential areas for action:

- Cross-training
- Service provider/team member assessment
- Service mapping
- Data collection

- Community assessment
- Team member knowledge

Cross-training

During cross-training, team members are asked the question, "What are your primary challenges, and how could your CCR/SART partners help?" As well as stimulating team discussion, this question can shed light on a number of potential areas for action. During cross-training, you may want to keep a flip-chart sheet on the wall to make a note of potential areas for action that your team may want to address. This will help you capture the various issues that arise throughout team discussion as well as demonstrating to the team that cross-trainings and team discussion early on are productive and will be concretely connected to action that your team will take later.

Service provider/ team member assessment

A survey of service providers can be a valuable source of data as you assess the current state of domestic violence and sexual assault response in your community. You may choose to implement a survey of CCR/SART team members, or you may choose to survey agencies more broadly, including additional agencies in your community that interact with domestic violence and sexual assault victims/survivors. This can include, but is not limited to, law enforcement, the district attorney's office, medical providers, Department of Social Services, mental health providers, colleges and universities, and faith communities. When determining how broad of a survey your team will implement, it is important to consider a balance between breadth of information as well as the ability and time required to process and interpret the amount of data gathered. The right balance is different for every team. Some teams benefit greatly and learn a significant amount from a broad assessment of community service providers. Others find it more valuable to conduct a more limited assessment of team members only in that it allows them to delve more deeply into a smaller amount of data. Part of this decision will be impacted by the agencies currently represented on your team. If your team is missing any core CCR/SART member agencies (e.g., particular jurisdictions of law enforcement, hospitals, court officials), it may be worthwhile to conduct a service provider assessment more broadly in order to capture information from those key agencies. Length of your survey can be a major deterrent to getting responses to assessments, so choose carefully what information you are most interested in gathering. Service provider assessments should be one to two pages at most.

Activity: Instructions and resources for a sample **Service Provider Assessment** can be found at the end of this section on page 64.

Service mapping

Service mapping is a great activity that can help teams get a better sense of how processes currently work as well as highlighting areas for improvement. Teams create step-by-step flowcharts of what happens when domestic violence and sexual assault victims report to various agencies, highlighting if/when referrals are made to other agencies and areas where victims seem to fall through the cracks. The purpose of this activity is not to create a perfect representation or an extensive guide, but to gain a shared understanding of the basic process that a victim may encounter. In addition to highlighting areas where more referrals could be made, this process often emphasizes parts of the process about which different agencies are unaware or have conflicting understandings of agreed-upon procedures. This is a great starting activity for teams as they consider how they want the system to work in the future.

Activity: Instructions and resources for the **Service Mapping Activity** can be found at the end of this section on page 69.

Data collection

Another simple but informative source of information for your CCR/SART is community-specific data, both case data and general census data. Case data, especially when compared across disciplines, can give your team a more clear sense of what sexual and/or domestic violence looks like in your community- how many victims/survivors advocates serve, how many cases are reported to law enforcement, how many arrests are made, and how many cases are prosecuted. It is likely that there will always be at least some gaps in service numbers, as many victims/survivors want to seek services from a victim service agency, but do not choose to report to law enforcement. Also, for many victims who do report to law enforcement, prosecution and conviction may not always be feasible or the best option. For some victims, evidence is very hard to find and a strong case is difficult to build, and in some cases, a plea is a better option than going forward with prosecution. However, very large gaps in numbers may indicate service and referral gaps that the team could address. Service numbers can also be compared to census data to help your team determine if there are specific populations in your community that are not accessing services. This may illuminate other potential areas for action, as your team may want to consider addressing inaccessibility or lack of cultural relevance of services provided.

Resource: Data collection for CCR/SARTs can be found at the end of this section on page 70.

Community assessment

In addition to a service provider assessment, your team may want to consider conducting a widespread community assessment to assess community members' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs concerning domestic and/or sexual violence and the services available in your area. Although community members' understanding of sexual assault and domestic violence in general is interesting and relevant, their knowledge of services available and their perceptions of the quality of services is particularly applicable to your CCR/SART. Ensuring that community members are aware of options and are confident in the services offered should domestic and/or sexual violence occur can be an important issue that a CCR/SART is particularly well suited to address. For assistance and further resources about conducting community assessments, contact NCCADV, www.nccadv.org or NCCASA, www.nccasa.org.

Team member knowledge

Although these more formal sources of data are very helpful, never underestimate the value of your team members' experience and knowledge. Although you will be able to capture some of this expertise during cross-training and team discussions throughout your data-gathering process, make sure as you wrap up your process of identifying potential areas for action that team members have a chance to add or reframe some of the issues you have discussed. Knowledge among team members who are immersed in this work on a daily basis can sometimes clearly identify gaps that are missed by data and surveys.

Refining potential areas for action: Seeking out best practice

After your team creates a list of potential areas for action, the next step is to refine that list to effective solution-focused strategies. Your team can seek out information about strategies other professionals have utilized in order to address similar challenges and what has proven to be effective. Some reliable sources of best practice information include:

- North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, www.nccadv.org
- North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault, www.nccasa.org

- Ending Violence Against Women International, www.evawintl.org
- Battered Women's Justice Project, www.bwjp.org
- National Network to End Domestic Violence, www.nnedv.org
- Praxis International, www.praxisinternational.org
- AEquitas, www.aequitasresource.org

Many of the potential areas for action that your team identifies early on may be framed as problem statements, rather than possible solutions. For example, some of the potential areas for action that your team comes up with may be:

- Lack of consistent procedures across agencies.
- Community members do not know who to contact for help/support in the case of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.
- Lack of services offered in Spanish.
- Domestic violence charges are not pursued by law enforcement and/or prosecutors when the victim chooses to not participate.
- Hospitals do not regularly call sexual assault agency for victim accompaniment.

The next step in refining these items is to reframe them as solutions that your team may want to consider. For example, after researching best practices and brainstorming solutions, the above list may become:

- Establish CCR/SART response protocols *(addresses lack of consistent procedures and appropriate referrals not consistently being made).*
- Conduct community education about CCR/SART and services available to community across disciplines.
- Create brochure detailing response to domestic and/or sexual violence.
- Develop trainings and/or bring outside trainers to address best practices across disciplines.
- Secure translation services for all service providers and written materials and forms.

This list is far more actionable and will help your team to take the next step of determining which areas for action to prioritize.

Example areas for action

CCR/SARTs must be responsive to addressing the issues most relevant to their community. Areas for action should be prioritized based on a balance of importance of those needs and the readiness to address them. Those not addressed in the first round can be examined at a later date. However, one area for action that all teams should seriously consider is CCR/SART response protocols.

CCR/SART response protocols

In a recent national study of SARTs, researchers found that a core aspect of high-functioning response teams was the development and regular review of policies/protocols.[18] CCR/SART response protocols are a proven effective strategy to address the most common issues identified by teams, such as lack of consistency in services and procedures and lack of consistent or appropriate referrals. CCR/SART protocol development can be a long, at times difficult process that requires a lot of work, but the outcomes are certainly worth the effort (*see Step Four: Developing CCR/SART Response Protocols*).

[18] Campbell, R, Greeson, M, Bybee, B, & Watling Neal, J. (2013). Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Implementation and Collaborative Process: What Works Best for the Criminal Justice System?

Other example areas for action

Other areas for action that teams may identify include:

- Introducing team to community (community forum, media, brochures).
- Resource guides/packets to ensure that victims receive complete up-to-date information about their options and the resources available to them.
- Community education and outreach.
- Engagement with specific populations.

Every community is different, and the areas for action identified by each community will vary. However, ensure that your areas for action are informed by best practice in order to make certain that your team's efforts will actually lead to the outcomes that you want to achieve.

Prioritizing areas for action

After your team has identified and refined your potential areas for action into a list that is informed both by your community and by best practice, the next step is to prioritize which items on the list your team will address first. It is usually ideal to prioritize two to three areas for action so that your team is focused enough to accomplish your goals for those areas. If you have more than three areas that you've prioritized, your efforts may be spread too thin to see real, measurable progress in any area. The two primary criteria that you can use to prioritize your areas for action are your mission statement and potential impact/changeability.

Mission statement

It is easy for teams to lose sight of their purpose and to work on activities that don't get to the heart of what the team is there to do. Your team's first step in prioritizing areas for action should be to assess whether those areas for action will help achieve your mission. If the mission statement of your team is to "ensure a consistent, victim-centered response to domestic and sexual violence and to increase offender accountability", establishing CCR/SART response protocols and creating resource guides for victims are a good fit for that mission. On the other hand, conducting community awareness about sexual and domestic violence, while a good project, may not fit that specific mission statement quite as clearly. There may be a different team/agency in your community (for example, the local domestic violence and/or sexual assault agency) that might be better positioned to take on that task. Make sure that every area of action you prioritize as a team has a clear connection to your mission.

Impact/changeability

The next criteria that teams should use to prioritize areas for action are the potential impact they will have on your community and their level of changeability. For each area for action, discuss the level of *impact* that it would feasibly have if it were accomplished. What would change, and how much would it change? Make sure to be realistic when approaching this discussion. For example, CCR/SART response protocols are probably high impact. Having a clear, agreed-upon procedure for responding to domestic violence or sexual assault could increase consistency in response and referrals, promoting victim-centeredness and strengthening criminal cases. Distributing brochures, while potentially a good way to spread information, probably will be lower impact, because of limited reach and because information on its own does not always affect behavior.

Your team should also discuss the level of *changeability of each area for action*. How feasible is it that your team will be able to make progress on this issue? Again, CCR/SART response protocols are most likely medium to high changeability (depending on the particular community). It is a challenging process, but with the right effort and buy-in, it probably can be done. On the other hand, if your area for action is to train and certify 15 SANEs in your hospital at a time when funding is particularly low, that area for action may be less changeable.

Your team should prioritize areas for action that rank medium to high on both impact and changeability. This will set your team up to take action that is likely to succeed and likely to make a big difference in your community.

Activity: Instructions and resources for the **Importance/Changeability Matrix** activity can be found in the *Setting the Stage for Success* section on page 15.

Step Two: Identifying and Prioritizing

Resources and Activities

- Sample Service Provider Assessment
- Service mapping activity
- Data collection for CCRs and SARTs

CCR/SART Service Provider Assessment

The following tool was created by the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA) and the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV) for the Enhancing Rural Strategies (ERS) grant through the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). This assessment is a survey of service providers in your community— any agency who interacts with domestic violence and/or sexual assault victims/survivors. This can include, but is not limited to, law enforcement, the district attorney's office, medical providers, faith communities, mental health providers, and colleges and universities. Teams are encouraged to survey agencies broadly, including response team member agencies as well as agencies that are not represented on response teams.

This tool was given as a template to the ERS grantees, and they were encouraged to adapt it to their local needs. The tool is not meant to be used in its entirety. It has been written to accommodate both domestic violence and sexual assault, but it should be adapted to address the focus of the team: dual teams (domestic violence and sexual assault), domestic violence only, or sexual assault only. Teams should also consider prioritizing the most pertinent questions to their communities, in order to shorten the tool to encourage greater response. The last page of the assessment is to be completed by medical providers responding to sexual assault only.

If you are interested in using this tool in your own community, please contact the staff person at NCCADV or NCCASA responsible for CCRs or SARTs for permission or if you have any questions about adapting the assessment for your community's needs.

NCCADV
919-956-9124

NCCASA
919-871-1015

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CCR/SART Service Provider Assessment

Name:

Name of agency/organization:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

What is your agency's involvement with domestic violence or sexual assault? What services, referrals or support do you provide?

About how often does your agency serve people affected by domestic violence?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than monthly
- ☐ Never

About how often does your agency serve people affected by sexual assault?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than monthly
- ☐ Never

Does your agency have any staff members who are specifically assigned to work with cases or people affected by domestic violence or sexual assault? If yes, what are their job titles?

- ☐ Yes: ____
- ☐ No

Does your agency have a protocol in place about procedures to follow when domestic violence is reported or suspected?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Does your agency have a protocol in place about procedures to follow when sexual assault is reported or suspected?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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Does your agency have specific policies, programs, or resources in place for domestic violence or sexual assault victims/survivors who are:

Under 18	☐	Yes	☐	No
Male	☐	Yes	☐	No
People with disabilities	☐	Yes	☐	No
Elderly	☐	Yes	☐	No
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender	☐	Yes	☐	No
Undocumented	☐	Yes	☐	No
People with limited English proficiency	☐	Yes	☐	No

Is there domestic violence and/or sexual assault literature available at your agency?
- ☐ Yes, both domestic violence and sexual assault
- ☐ Yes, domestic violence only
- ☐ Yes, sexual assault only
- ☐ No

If yes:

Are any of these materials available in Spanish?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are any of these materials available in other languages? If yes, which languages?
- ☐ Yes: ____
- ☐ No

Do any of your agency staff members receive training on domestic violence or sexual assault?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes:

What are the topics of the training(s)? *(Check all that apply.)*
- ☐ Domestic Violence Basics
- ☐ Sexual Assault Basics
- ☐ SANE Training
- ☐ Other: ____

Who conducts the training? *(Check all that apply.)*
- ☐ Someone within our agency
- ☐ NCCADV (North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence)
- ☐ NCCASA (North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault)
- ☐ NCIAFN (North Carolina International Association of Forensic Nurses)
- ☐ NC Justice Center
- ☐ Other: ____

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What other agencies do you contact for information and/or support in domestic violence or sexual assault cases?

How could working more with other agencies involved in domestic and sexual violence cases help your agency?

What are the strengths of the system responding to domestic and sexual violence in our community?

What are the gaps in the system responding to domestic and sexual violence in our community?

How much of a problem do you think domestic violence is in our community?

- ☐ Serious problem
- ☐ Moderate problem
- ☐ Slight problem
- ☐ No problem at all

How much of a problem do you think sexual assault is in our community?

- ☐ Serious problem
- ☐ Moderate problem
- ☐ Slight problem
- ☐ No problem at all

Why do you think domestic violence happens?

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For Healthcare Providers Only:

How many sexual assault victims/survivors were treated at your agency during 2011? _______

Does your agency have any certified SANE nurses on staff?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes:

How many certified SANE nurses are on staff? _______

How do you handle sexual assault cases?

- ☐ We have a SANE nurse on call 24/7 whose priority is to take any sexual assault cases.
- ☐ We have 24 hour coverage of SANE nurses, but someone else will do the exam if they are busy with non-sexual assault patients.
- ☐ We have SANE nurses on staff, but we do not have 24 hour coverage.
- ☐ Other *(please explain)*:____

If no:

Who conducts forensic examinations when victims/survivors come to your agency? *(If you do not conduct forensic examinations at your agency, where do you refer them?)*

Does your agency have an anonymous reporting protocol for sexual assault victims/survivors?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Does your agency make Emergency Contraception available to rape victims/survivors? *(Check all that apply.)*

- ☐ Yes, we distribute Emergency Contraception directly to victims/survivors at our agency.
- ☐ Yes, we offer prescriptions for Emergency Contraception for victims/survivors to fill at a pharmacy outside of our agency.
- ☐ Yes, we provide referrals to other agencies where victims/survivors can access Emergency Contraception.
- ☐ No, we do not make Emergency Contraception available to rape victims/survivors.

Does your agency have protocol in place about the distribution of HIV prophylaxis to rape victims/survivors?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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Service mapping activity: How is the current response system working?

Directions and set-up (5 min)
Team members can create the flowcharts all together as a team or in small groups. If you decide to conduct the activity by small groups, split the team into four groups by discipline:

- Law enforcement/Emergency communications
- Hospital
- Victim advocacy
- Court Officials/Prosecutors

People who don't fall into these disciplines can be placed in one of the other groups (according to number of people in each group and closest fit to their discipline).

Creating flowcharts (20 min)
Each group will be given a sheet of butcher paper and markers to create a step-by-step flowchart of what happens when a victim presents to their discipline (i.e., calls 911, presents at the Emergency Room, or calls the domestic violence/sexual assault hotline).

- Highlight:
  - If/when referrals are made to other agencies
  - Places where they would like to see the response system get stronger
- Disclaimer: This does not need to be a perfect representation or an extensive guide, as we all know that many different circumstances can lead to different actions. This is the beginning of a brainstorm, so do your best to give the most accurate step-by-step overview that you can.
- Remind team members to focus on the system, constructive opportunities for change, and their own agency. If everything they highlight is framed as another agency's shortcoming, they might want to look more closely at how their own agency could help create a solution for what's not working.

Sharing flowcharts in the large group (20 min)
If the team conducted the activity in small groups, each group can choose one or more representatives to share their flowchart(s) with the large group. They will walk the group through their discipline/agency's process, explaining the steps, referrals, and places where they would like to see the response system get stronger.

- Time allowing, the group can ask any follow-up questions. (Each group should have about five-seven minutes.)
- A facilitator should take notes on flip-charts during the large group time of any areas for improvement brought up by the participants.

Data collection for CCRs and SARTs

CCR	Statistics
Domestic Violence Agency	• Number of victims served. • Number of victims provided shelter. • Number of referrals made to other shelters. • Number of repeat victimizations. • Number of cases with children involved. • Extent of abuse, fear, or threats. • Arrests- Dual, victim arrests. • Number of restraining orders applied for. • Number of restraining orders received. • Number of restraining orders dropped within first six months. • Number of restraining order violations. • Number of stalking cases. • Number of community referrals. • Information about victims (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, disability). • Relationship of perpetrators to victims. • Number and types of services provided.
Law Enforcement	• Number of dispatch 911/other calls for services. • Number of calls resulting in arrest. • Number of calls not resulting in arrest. • Number of dual arrests. • Proportion of male/female offenders. • Number of calls in which children are involved or observe violence. • Reasons for not arresting. • Number of calls with alcohol involved. • Number of cases assigned for investigation. • Number of cases submitted to the district attorney for review. • Number of cases prosecuted. • Number of domestic violence homicides. • Information about victims (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, disability). • Information about perpetrators (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, disability).

Prosecution	• Number of cases referred by law enforcement agencies annually.
	• Number of case filings.
	• Number of plea negotiations and sentences.
	• Enhanced sentences for repeat offenders.
	• Number of trials.
	• Number of cases by disposition (e.g., guilty, not guilty, no contest, mistrial).
	• Average and range of number of days from case filing to disposition.
	• Number referred to batterers' treatment or education program.
	• Number and severity of repeat offenses among those who have:
	    a. Been referred.
	• Successfully completed treatment of repeat offenses among those who have:
	    a. Been referred.
	    b. Successfully completed treatment.

SART	Statistics
Sexual Assault Agency	• Number of victims served who reported to law enforcement. • Number of victims served who didn't report to law enforcement. • Number and types of assault (e.g., rape, sexual battery). • Number of community referrals. • Information about victims (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, disability). • Relationship of perpetrators to victims. • Number and types of services provided.
Law Enforcement	• Number of sexual assaults reported to law enforcement. • Number of cases open. • Number of cases cleared by arrest. • Number of cases exceptionally cleared. • Number of cases unfounded (false). • Number of cases unfounded (baseless). • Number of cases suspended/inactivated. • Number of cases closed (no charged, no arrests). • Number and types of assault (e.g., rape, sexual battery). • Location of sexual assaults. • Information about victims (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, disability). • Information about perpetrators (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, disability). • Number of sexual assault forensic medical collection kits processed by crime labs.
Healthcare	• Number of forensic medical examinations performed. • Information about victims (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, disability). • Number and types of assault (e.g., rape, sexual battery). • Number of victims seen at campus health services. • Number of victims seen at Indian Health Services. • Number and types of services provided. • Number of healthcare providers subpoenaed to testify.
Prosecution	• Number of cases referred by law enforcement agencies annually. • Number of cases charged by prosecution. • Number of cases declined for charging by prosecution. • Number of cases dismissed (after charges filed- at victim's request). • Number of cases dismissed (for other reasons). • Number of guilty pleas as charged and sentences (criminal sexual conduct charges). • Number of guilty pleas to lesser criminal sexual conduct charges and sentences. • Number of guilty pleas (non criminal sexual conduct charges) and sentences. • Number of trials. • Number of guilty verdicts and sentences (at trial on at least one criminal sexual conduct charge). • Number of guilty verdicts and sentences (at trial on at least one non criminal sexual conduct charge). • Average and range of number of days from case filing to disposition.

Adapted from OVC SART Toolkit, WCADV/WCASA Domestic and Sexual Violence CCR Toolkit, and MNCASA Sexual Violence Justice Initiative

Step Three: Developing a Plan of Work

Establishing SMART objectives

Once your team has prioritized areas for action, the next step is to develop them into a set of objectives. Setting objectives is a critical part of the work of any team, and it is important that they are written in a way that maximizes your effectiveness moving forward. Objectives that are "SMART" are most effective to guide the team and help determine whether or not you are on track to achieve what you have set out to accomplish. Your team should develop at least one SMART objective for each area of action that you have prioritized.

SMART objectives are:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime-bound

Specific

Objectives should clearly state what the team is going to do. Your mission statement can include big picture ideas such as "to end domestic and sexual violence", but your objectives should clearly establish what steps you intend to take in order to move in that direction.

Not specific: "To coordinate domestic violence services by December 2015."

Specific: "To develop CCR response protocol by December 2015."

Measurable

Objectives should be written in such a way that your team clearly knows and has evidence of when they have accomplished the objective. To make sure your objectives are measurable, ask yourselves questions like, "How much?", "How many?", or "How will we know when we've accomplished this objective?"

Not measurable: "To increase community awareness of the SART and sexual assault by December 2015."

Measurable: "To plan and conduct two community awareness events about sexual assault and SART services by December 2015."

Achievable

Objectives should stretch and challenge your team, but it's important for them to be achievable. They should represent substantial progress while also being realistic and fitting within the scope of your team's knowledge, skills, abilities, and influence. They should also be tangible enough to be accomplished in a determined amount of time. If an objective is impossible to attain, your team may become unmotivated. Achievable objectives motivate people.

Not achievable: "To develop sexual assault and domestic violence protocols within six months."

Achievable: "To develop domestic violence response protocol within 18 months."

Relevant

Objectives should be relevant to the work of the team and in line with the mission statement that your team has established. Make sure that your objectives are pertinent to the team as a whole, rather than being pertinent to only one specific agency on the team. CCR/SARTs can quickly fall into a pattern of doing work that is really the purview of the local domestic violence/sexual assault agency, rather than setting objectives specific to the multidisciplinary group that has been convened. Ask yourselves whether the work you are doing could as easily be done by the local domestic violence/sexual assault agency with a group of volunteers, or if the work requires and draws upon the various areas of expertise that are represented on the team.

Not relevant: "To develop a resource guide about the services offered by the local rape crisis center by December 2015." *This objective is not relevant, because it is an activity only relevant to one team member agency, not by the entire team collectively.*

Relevant: "To develop a resource guide detailing services available, victim options, and general procedures following a sexual assault by December 2015."

Not relevant: "To plan and conduct a human trafficking awareness event by December 2015." *Unless human trafficking is specifically addressed in your team's mission statement, this objective is not relevant because it is not directly addressing your mission. Although human trafficking may be a related issue, your team's objectives should directly focus on the specific issues that your team has been convened to address.*

Relevant: "To plan and conduct an awareness event about domestic violence and CCR services by December 2015."

Time-Bound

Each objective should include a time frame. Setting a time frame prompts your team to think realistically about how and when you want to accomplish the areas for action you've prioritized, and it also adds a sense of urgency to get the work done. When objectives are grounded within a time frame, teams are more likely to set that work into motion in a timely manner. Getting work done and accomplishing objectives provides motivation for team members to remain engaged with the team as you move forward toward your next steps.

Not time-bound: "To host a training on law enforcement, advocacy, and prosecution best practices."

Time-bound: "To host a training on law enforcement, advocacy, and prosecution best practices by June 2016."

Action planning

After developing a set of SMART objectives, creating action plans can help teams begin to make tangible progress toward achieving them. Action planning requires that you break down each objective into manageable steps, assigning people to each task and determining a timeline. Action plans help to create a clear plan, keep your progress on track, and hold the team and individual members accountable for the agreed-upon tasks and timeline. Action plans should be completed with the team (or consider using subcommittees to complete them- see *Developing CCR/SART Subcommittees* in the next section for more information).

Action plan worksheet

The following information should be considered as you create your action plans, and each of these sections are in the included action plan worksheet. Your team should create a separate action plan for each of your objectives.

Objective: What is your objective? This is the space where you can indicate which of your team's objectives will be achieved by the steps included in this action plan. Remember, a SMART objective will make creating an action plan easier by already incorporating specificity and a timeline. All of the steps included in your action plan should clearly help your team make progress toward achieving this objective.

Action Steps: What will be done? Break down your objective into tangible steps that you will take in order to achieve your objective. The more specific you make these steps, the easier it will be to monitor your progress and adjust your plan as necessary.

Responsibilities: Who will do it? Be clear about who will be responsible for each step. Is it the team as a whole? A subcommittee? Or is it the coordinator, the chair, or someone else on the team? Responsibility for tasks is often based on who has the knowledge, experience, resources, or time to accomplish the task most efficiently. Teams should make sure that responsibility for the majority of steps is not assigned to the team coordinator or other team leadership. Teams will be most effective in reaching their objectives if responsibility for progress is shared among team members.

Timeline: By when? Make sure to specify the date by which you plan to accomplish each step. "Next month" or "in a year" is not specific enough. Your team may be inclined to rush the process and not give yourselves enough time for each step. This is why setting a deadline for each step (rather than for the overall objective) can be so helpful. Be practical about how much time you need, and let the team as a whole dictate the speed at which tasks are accomplished. It is better to accomplish your objective more quickly than expected than to have to continually push back your timeline.

Evidence of Success: How will you know that you are making progress? How will you determine that your objective has been reached? What are your measures? Take time to monitor and evaluate your progress. As you are evaluating your success, your team should consider not only what you want to accomplish, but *how* you want to accomplish it. For example, if your objective is to develop a protocol, one measure of success is simply in publishing the protocol. However, other potential measures of success could be: "All four core disciplines will be represented in the protocol" or "five out of ten best practices identified will be included in the protocol and adopted by individual agencies". For a community education objective, the number of people attending an event or the number of resource guides distributed could be potential measurements. Another indicator of success is your team's approach to the process. Are all agency representatives invested in the process? Is your team accomplishing tasks according to the agreed-upon timeline? As your team asks these questions, you can ask yourselves "why" or why not" as a means of addressing broader issues.

Serving Traditionally Underserved Communities: How will you ensure that you are addressing traditionally underserved communities in your action plan? As your team seeks to improve response to domestic and sexual violence, it is imperative that you incorporate the needs of *all* the victims in your community. Your team should take time to consider whether the work being done to meet this objective is relevant and accessible to traditionally underserved communities and whether you need further resources and/or training to accomplish this task. Asking representatives from agencies working with specific communities to review your products or processes can help your team ensure that your work is accessible and relevant as well as building relationships with those agencies (if they are not already included on your team). Your team should make every effort to ensure that all work that you do is accessible and relevant to *all* members of your community.

Activity: Instructions and resources for the **Action Plan Worksheet** and the **Example Action Plan Worksheet** activity can be found at the end of this section on page 78.

Developing CCR/SART subcommittees

Developing and using subcommittees is a great way to keep your team engaged and working toward its objectives. Subcommittees are especially helpful for larger teams (those with more than 15 people).

Here are some reasons why having subcommittees can be beneficial for your teams.

- They help with sharing responsibilities.
- Groups can work on multiple projects simultaneously.
- People who can't regularly attend the team meetings may be able to participate in subcommittees.

<u>Subcommittee structure</u>

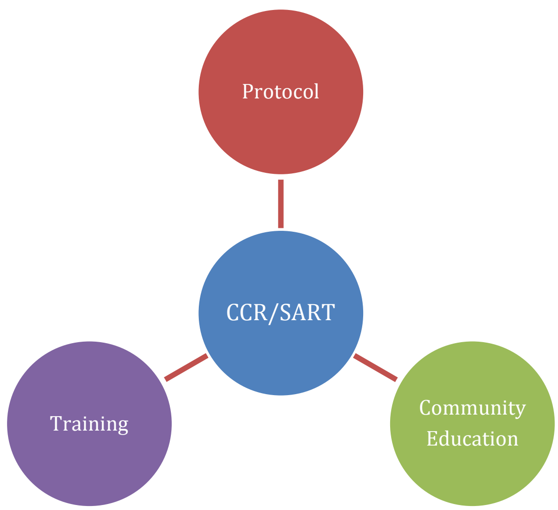
The number of subcommittees that your team needs depends on the size of your team and the number of objectives that you are working on. Your team may want to consider having a separate subcommittee for each objective. For many teams, this will mean having two-four subcommittees, depending on your overall team size, your particular objectives, and the timeframe it will take to accomplish each one. The subcommittee structure will vary among teams, since they are a reflection of the unique objectives created to meet specific community needs.

Below is an example of a subcommittee model, based on the following three SMART objectives:

Objective 1: "To develop SART response protocol by December 2015."

Objective 2: "To develop a resource guide detailing services available, victim options, and general procedures following a sexual assault by December 2015."

Objective 3: "To host a training on law enforcement, advocacy, and prosecution best practices by June 2016."



The protocol subcommittee will be tasked with guiding the team through the lengthy and vital task of developing community-wide policies. The community education subcommittee will take the lead on creating the resource guide, while acquiring feedback from the team along the way. The training subcommittee will focus on the internal work of the team. In addition to meeting the stated objective of hosting a best practices training, it can continue to set up trainings and continuing education for all team members, including coordinating logistics, contacting speakers, identifying training topics, maintain a training calendar, etc.

In addition to the general structure and focus, your team may want to consider the following details as you establish subcommittees:

- Committees may meet on a regular basis or as the need arises. Some teams alternate monthly between subcommittee meetings and larger team meetings. Other teams have subcommittees that meet outside of team meeting time. Either of these models can work—your team can consider the options and decide which model works best for them.

- As with larger team meetings, it's important to establish leadership within each subcommittee. It will make keeping on task easier and facilitate the process of reporting back to the larger team.
- The number of potential subcommittee members completely depends on the size of your community and team. Larger teams have the possibility of having multiple subcommittees with numerous members. Smaller teams will most likely have fewer subcommittees. The size of teams and subcommittees does not positively or negatively affect the level of efficiency, enthusiasm, and productivity of teams.
- Determine how often your subcommittee will meet and how far in advance of the objective deadline it will start meeting. The timeframe can differ depending on numerous factors, including the experience of team members relevant to the specific objective, the scope of the objective, the difficulty of accomplishing it, etc.
- Provide time during larger team meetings for subcommittees to provide updates on their progress. As needed, subcommittees can use this time to ask team members for input on specific issues, potential resources, or assistance on particular tasks.
- Determine whether each subcommittee will be a standing committee or a temporary working committee:
    - Standing committees: Standing committees are permanent committees that have a general focus, such as CCR/SART member training or CCR/SART response protocols. Over time, they will work on various projects that fit within that focus. For example, a CCR/SART Response Protocols committee may begin by focusing on protocol development, and then they may transition to setting up and maintaining a regular protocol review. Standing committees meet on a regular or irregular basis dependent upon the need.
    - Working committees: Working committees are established to accomplish a particular task. Many are research or coordination committees in type or purpose, and generally are temporary. An example would be a subcommittee to oversee the development of a resource guide. Sometimes working committees transition to standing committees if there are additional tasks and priorities identified during the course of their work.

Step Three: Developing a Plan of Work

Resources and Activities

- Action Plan Worksheet
- Example Action Plan Worksheet

Action Plan Worksheet

Action Steps *What Will Be Done?*	**Responsibilities** *Who Will Do It?*	**Timeline** *By When? (Day/Month)*
Objective:		
Step 1:		
Step 2:		
Step 3:		
Step 4:		

Evidence of Success: *How will you know that you are making progress? How will you determine that your objective has been reached? What are your measures?*

Serving Traditionally Underserved Communities: *How will you ensure that you are addressing traditionally underserved communities in your action plan?*

Example Action Plan Worksheet

Action Steps *What Will Be Done?*	**Responsibilities** *Who Will Do It?*	**Timeline** *By When? (Day/Month)*
Objective: To develop interagency referral and service protocol on domestic violence in ______ County by August 2016.		
Step 1: Identify agencies that serve domestic violence victims and request copies of any current protocol at agencies.	Protocol Subcommittee Members	January and February 2015
Step 2: Seek out research about best practices in domestic violence response.	Protocol Subcommittee Members	March and April 2015
Step 3: Each agency will complete a flowchart outlining how they would like to provide domestic violence services.	Representatives from each agency on the team	May and June 2015
Step 4: Discuss flowcharts and edit as necessary to include best practice and ensure cohesion between flowcharts.	Protocol Subcommittee Members	July and August 2015
Step 5: Write protocol.	Protocol Subcommittee Members	September, October and November 2015
Step 6: Team review of protocol. Make edits as necessary.	Entire CCR/SART team	January and February 2016
Step 7: Give protocol to agency leaders.	Representatives from each agency on the team	March 2015
Step 8: Write revised protocol, incorporating agency feedback.	Protocol Subcommittee Members	April and May 2016
Step 9: Obtain approval from agency leaders.	Representatives from each agency on the team	June and July 2016
Step 10: Distribute protocol to all agencies.	Representatives from each agency on the team	August 2016

Evidence of Success: *How will you know that you are making progress? How will you determine that your objective has been reached? What are your measures?*

- All four core disciplines will be represented in the protocol
- Five out of ten best practices identified will be included in the protocol and adopted by individual agencies

Serving Traditionally Underserved Communities*: How will you ensure that you are addressing traditionally underserved communities in your action plan?*

- Review steps and procedures included in protocol, and ensure that they include instructions for accessing translation services whenever necessary and appropriate
- Ask local Latin@ support service agency to review protocol and provide feedback on whether any additional steps or considerations are needed to effectively serve victims who are Latin@
- Ask local LGBTQ center to review protocol and provide feedback on whether any additional steps or considerations are needed to effectively serve victims who are LGBTQ-identified

Step Four: Developing CCR/SART Response Protocols

What are CCR/SART response protocols?

CCR/SART response protocols are a set of agreed upon procedures for various agencies responding to domestic violence or sexual assault in your community. The protocols that your team will develop will outline an effective approach for meeting victims' needs and holding offenders accountable. Moreover, they will address the most efficient manner for agencies to collaborate with one another. In the process of writing protocols, teams will not only evaluate current procedures, but will also identify and incorporate best practices.

Developing response protocols is one of the most essential tasks of a CCR/SART. Protocols can help teams create multiple access points for victims and reduce gaps in services. Protocols can also enhance a victim-centered response, which can reduce trauma for victims, increase reporting, yield better evidence collection, and improve victim cooperation in cases. In a national study of SARTs, the development and review of policies and protocols was one of the key SART activities that led to higher functionality and improved criminal justice outcomes.[19]

> *"It is very helpful to have protocols to ensure agencies know and understand their roles with survivors. It has helped our community better respond to assaults and other needs of survivors, and given the medical professionals and law enforcement agencies a clear understanding of what our role as advocate is and how it can be beneficial to them."*
>
> *-Watauga County DART/SART*

CCR/SART response protocols are not the same as MOUs. Protocols are not simply a declaration of partnership between agencies, and they are not agreements between the DV/SA agency and each individual partner. Rather, protocols are collaboratively developed by all core responders on the team, and they establish the procedures that each agency agrees to follow when a case of sexual assault or domestic violence is reported.

The development of protocols is a collaborative process that is unique to every community. The time-consuming, multi-layered process serves as the foundation for your collaborative response to domestic and/or sexual violence. Even after it is created, it will be a document that you return to as a means of evaluating your overall response system. It will provide the team with a quality control mechanism for service delivery, and thus contribute to the sustainability of your team and the achievement of your objectives.

What might CCR/SART response protocols include?

CCR/SART response protocols vary drastically from team to team. They differ in length and scope. The main purpose of having a protocol is to address the overall system that responds to sexual assault or domestic violence. Establishing a shared understanding of individual agency roles, their collaborative work, and the overall functionality of the system is fundamental. Elements that are often included in CCR/SART response protocols include:

- CCR/SART mission statement
- Response and referral procedures
- Disclaimer about flexibility
- Guidelines for confidentiality and maintaining privilege

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[19] Campbell, R, Greeson, M, Bybee, B, & Watling Neal, J. (2013). Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Implementation and Collaborative Process: What Works Best for the Criminal Justice System?

- Training recommendations for new staff
- Relevant information and resources

CCR/SART mission statement

It is suggested that the CCR/SART mission statement be included towards the beginning of the document, as a way to set the tone for the team's specific purpose and desired outcomes.

Response and referral procedures

The most important part of your team's protocol is the response and referral procedures. Whether outlined through flowcharts, narrative, or both, this is the section of the protocol that details what steps each responder will take in response to a report of sexual assault or domestic violence. These procedures should include both the steps individual agencies will take (questions asked, information given, evidence collected, services provided) as well as how agencies will interact with and refer to one another.

Having these procedures written out can have a great impact on offender accountability. Coordinating efforts, especially among advocates, law enforcement, and prosecutors, can lead to improved evidence collection and stronger cases. Protocols also serve as a prompt for responders to incorporate agreed-upon best practices as they respond to reports of domestic violence or sexual assault.

Moreover, greater coordination helps agencies make consistent referrals and accurately explain to victims what to expect. Making sure victims know what services and resources are available is a basic component of addressing domestic violence and sexual assault. However, there is more to it than just handing victims the number for the crisis line. A comprehensive and effective effort to provide support services for victims can only be accomplished when it involves multiple community agencies. An effective coordinated response to sexual assault and domestic violence includes a *consistent* referral process from law enforcement, prosecutors, and social service agencies. Detailing in the protocol how and when referrals will take place can have a huge impact on the number of victims reached and the quality of services they receive. Protocols should be used as a guideline for referring victims by outlining when and to whom referrals should be made as well as a clear and consistent message to be communicated to victims by all responders.

Studies have shown that providing advocacy services early and often increases the participation of victims in the prosecution process. One such study on CCRs also asserted that women who received increased outreach reported "greater readiness to leave the abuser."[20] If possible, law enforcement and hospital staff should contact local domestic violence and/or sexual assault agencies on behalf of the victim, either for an advocate to respond in person or at least to talk with the victim over the phone. Facilitating contact as soon as possible (rather than just providing a crisis line number) increases the likelihood that the victim will follow-up and receive services. It is highly recommended that victims have an advocate present with them while they are in the hospital.

Providing these improved victim services can lead to greater victim participation in prosecution and sends the message to both the victim and the offender that the community will not stand for domestic violence and sexual assault crimes.

Disclaimer re: flexibility

Some team members may express apprehension about developing a shared protocol, because they cannot predict the particulars of every future case and have concerns about liability or being questioned in court about how their actions differed from the protocol. Teams should recognize that it is not always possible to follow the protocol during every phase of a case and that the protocol is a mutually agreed upon set of standards, not a set of demands.

[20] Hirschel, David. *The Benefits of More "Victim-Focused" Coordinated Community Responses to Intimate Partner Violence: A Critique of "The Impact of Victim-Focused Outreach on Criminal Legal System Outcomes Following Police-Reported Intimate Partner Abuse,"* by Anne P. DePrince, Joanne Belknap, Jennifer S. Labus, Susan E. Buckingham, and Angela R. Gover. *Violence Against Women, Aug 2012; vol. 18: pp. 897-905.*

These concerns about developing protocols can be addressed through the inclusion of a disclaimer statement that recognizes the need for flexibility. You may want to consider adding a variation of the following statement:

"This protocol is intended to be a guideline to help ensure standardized response and investigation of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Due to the varying circumstances of each case, not all agencies will be able to adhere completely to protocol in every instance."

Teams may also choose to refer to their protocols as "guidelines", which implies less of a need for formal, rigid adherence than the terms "protocols" or "policies".

<u>Guidelines for confidentiality and maintaining privilege</u>

Early in CCR/SART development, teams should create guidelines to address confidentiality and maintain privilege during team member discussions. This confidentiality agreement should be a stand-alone document, but it is important to incorporate the agreed-upon guidelines into the protocol as well. The team should consider discussing pertinent confidentiality concerns throughout the protocol, as well as including the team's confidentiality agreement as a separate section or appendix.

<u>Training recommendations for agency staff</u>

Some teams include training recommendations for agency staff as a part of their protocols. These training recommendations may include suggestions for all team member agencies as well as specialized training recommendations specific to particular agencies on the team. Possible training topics may include:

- sexual assault or domestic violence statutes and the criminal/civil legal process
- confidentiality and privilege as it applies to each team member
- investigation by law enforcement
- evidence collection
- victim advocacy
- the medical-forensic exam and use of the Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit
- suspect exams
- forensic interviewing
- Forensic Experiential Trauma Interviews
- impact of trauma
- diversity and cultural awareness
- people with disabilities
- domestic violence and sexual assault among people who are elderly
- people who identify as LGBTQ
- substance abuse
- mental health
- sexually transmitted infections
- sexual assault and pregnancy

<u>Relevant information and resources</u>

Protocols also often include practical information such as basic definitions of terms, local resources, state statutes, and commonly-used forms. Some of this can be incorporated into the body of the text, while other information can be placed in an appendix section.

In addition to specific elements that should be included in CCR/SART response protocols, there are also important themes that teams may want to consider addressing and including throughout their protocols, including victim centeredness and a commitment to "start by believing."

Principles of the most effective approach to sexual assault and domestic violence cases

The following principles are paramount to the most effective approach to domestic violence and sexual assault cases. When responders are guided by these principles, investigations tend to yield more evidence and are more likely to keep the victim engaged throughout the court process. Domestic violence and sexual assault cases are strengthened when responders' approach is:

Trauma-informed

Victims of sexual assault and domestic violence experience significant trauma, which can impact their memory, emotions, and behaviors following an assault. Trauma often causes victims to remember (and disclose) the assault in pieces and over time. Sometimes their account of the event may change after their initial disclosure, as the acute impact of trauma wears off and their memory becomes clearer. Trauma also can lead to seemingly strange emotional swings and counter-intuitive victim behaviors (e.g., laughter during disclosure, flat affect, denial or minimizing, etc.). Responders must be aware of the possible neurobiological, emotional, and physical impacts of trauma in order to more accurately interpret victims' behaviors and the merits of each case. A trauma-informed approach recognizes the potential impacts of trauma and prioritizes the facilitation of trust and communication between responders and the victim. Building this support can help minimize the short- and long-term effects that trauma can have on the victim (and on the possibility of prosecuting the case). Receiving training on the impacts of trauma and taking a trauma-informed approach better equips responders to understand the complex nature of these crimes and thus respond accordingly.

Offender-focused

Responders need to convey to victims and offenders through their attitude, language, and behavior that domestic violence and sexual assault are crimes that will be pursued through the criminal justice system. This can be accomplished through respectful and understanding interactions with victims and firm consequences and directives towards offenders. Offender accountability is the responsibility of the interagency system, not the victim. Investigations should be focused on gathering information from and about suspects, rather than focusing on proving credibility of victims before pursuing leads. The comprehensive, consistent, and timely actions of the criminal justice system establishes the structure necessary to hold offenders accountable. Coordinated response systems facilitate this process by creating boundaries for abusers, building trust with victims, and promoting safety within the community.

Victim-centered

A victim-centered response means recognizing and prioritizing the needs and rights of victims whenever possible. It considers not only victim safety, but also victim self-agency. By creating an environment where victims can make choices for themselves, responders are respecting their rights as well as recognizing that victims' varied decisions are often directly linked to their particular circumstances. Domestic and sexual violence affects individuals differently. There are many reasons why victims react the way they do, including fears about their safety. In the case of domestic violence victims, it has been shown that the time when a victim leaves the relationship may pose the highest threat to their safety and that victims themselves are often best equipped to measure the degree of danger. Essential to the concept of victim-centeredness is the understanding that victims are not to blame. Under no circumstances does anyone deserve to be abused or sexually assaulted. In addition to better treatment of victims, a victim-centered approach also has implications for criminal justice outcomes. This approach makes it more likely that victims will remain engaged throughout the criminal justice process (including a trial if necessary), making successful prosecution significantly more likely. Incorporating victim-centeredness into team protocols serves as a reminder of the value of these beliefs, while also ensuring that all responders adhere to its principles.

Commitment to "Start by believing"

When victims of crime come forward, there should be no shame or suggestion that they have "brought the crime on themselves." Although most victims of crime are not met with this response, all too often, victims of sexual assault and/or domestic violence experience immediate suspicion as to the validity of their report and how they may have contributed to their own victimization. The most effective way to ensure that our criminal justice system is holding offenders accountable is to start from a position of belief. For criminal justice professionals, "start by believing" does not mean to ignore the facts. After a thorough investigation has occurred, case determinations can be made according to the evidence. However, in a domestic violence or sexual assault case, often the only way for investigators to get all of the facts is to establish rapport and trust with the victim. Victims of both domestic violence and sexual assault are often repeatedly told by offenders that if they come forward, no one will believe them. If a victim feels that they are being interrogated and will not be believed, it is likely that they will not disclose all of the relevant information out of fear for their own safety and security.

Learn more about the "Start By Believing" campaign, launched by Ending Violence Against Women International, at www.startbybelieving.org.

> *"As interveners, every action we take and every statement we make can and should be aimed at an efficient, consistent, coherent, clear message that strips the abuser of his most powerful weapon: his message that 'they can't and won't help you."*
>
> *-The Blueprint for Safety: An Interagency Response to Domestic Violence Crimes, 2010, p. 9.*

<u>Response protocols for dual teams</u>

Dual teams (teams addressing both domestic violence and sexual assault) should choose which set of protocols they want to develop first. Although many of the responders addressing sexual assault and domestic violence are similar, the procedures, evidence, and court processes are very different. Even the needs of victims can vary significantly between a domestic violence case and a sexual assault case.

When determining which set of protocols they will develop first, teams can assess which players they have involved and who is most engaged. For example, if a team has SANEs involved and extremely engaged, they may want to consider beginning with the sexual assault protocol, as they will be more relevant for those agency partners. On the other hand, if a team has a very strong representation from the Domestic Violence Unit of the local law enforcement agency, perhaps they should start with the domestic violence protocol. Your team may naturally lean toward discussion of one of these issues more than the other, and that also may help direct your choice as to which protocols to develop first.

Protocol development is a lot of work and can be extremely time-consuming. After protocol development, teams should go through a process of protocol acceptance by the relevant member agencies, as well as establishing a review process that allows the team to assess the adherence to and effectiveness of protocols (see *Obtaining formal agency acceptance of CCR/SART response protocols* and *Monitoring and reviewing your protocols* below). After completing this process for their first protocol, it will be important for teams to honestly assess whether they have the capacity to develop the second set. They should either set a timeline to do so or transition their team to a single focus team so that other stakeholders in the community can develop a separate team to adequately address the other issue.

<u>Assessing your team's readiness to develop protocols</u>

The benefits to the team as well as to individual agencies of establishing CCR/SART response protocols are significant. But when is your team ready to start the process? As is the case for the entire CCR/SART process, it is critical that you do what works best for your team and community. Prior to beginning the protocol development process, teams should ensure that there is a foundation of shared purpose for the team (buy-in to your mission), shared understanding of the local response system (can be developed through cross-training), strong interagency relationships, and shared commitment to the protocol development process. Teams should also have explicitly discussed and addressed how to maintain confidentiality, as the protocol development process will most likely lead to discussion of particular cases and situations.

Finally, it is important for team members to be establishing buy-in from their individual agencies from the beginning of the protocol development process. Protocols will not be effective if only your individual team members are in agreement. Agencies as a whole must be willing to sign off on the protocol for them to have the full impact that is possible. In order to avoid unnecessary obstacles later in the protocol acceptance process, it is important for team members to begin building buy-in for protocols at each of their individual agencies as early in the process as possible.

Although it is ideal for all core responding agencies to be represented prior to beginning protocol development, there may be some agencies that are resistant to participation. In many communities, it is particularly challenging to get the District Attorney's office or a particular jurisdiction of law enforcement to join the team and regularly attend meetings. It is possible to move forward with protocol development without these stakeholders' participation. Your team should honestly assess whether it is possible to move forward with the participants you do have on board. For example, if you are missing one jurisdiction of law enforcement that is particularly resistant, it may be advisable to begin protocol development in spite of that. However, if you have been unable to recruit any law enforcement's steady participation and buy-in, it may be beneficial to wait on protocol development and focus more on your recruitment. Over time, as your team grows in stability and impact, additional stakeholders can be recruited and added to the protocol as necessary.

Activity: Instructions and resources for **Protocol Readiness Assessment** can be found at the end of this section on page 91.

Protocol development process

The process of developing CCR/SART response protocols often includes the following steps:

- Review other CCR/SART response protocols
- Determine the scope of your protocols
- Establish a timeline
- Review current local policies
- Review best practices
- Discuss collaborative response procedures
- Adapt or develop protocols
- Obtain team member approval

Review other CCR/SART response protocols

A helpful first step for teams entering into the protocol development process is to take time to review other protocols to get a sense of the various structures, scopes, and other options available. Take some time to discuss what you like about different protocols, what you do not like, and what you think might work in your community.

Activity: Instructions and resources for **CCR/SART Response Protocols: Reviewing Model Protocols** can be found at the end of this section on page 92.

Determine the scope of your protocols

Once you have established that your team is ready to proceed with the development of CCR/SART protocols, you will need to determine the scope of your protocols. Will you focus on just the key players or will you include other agencies on your team? Many protocols include only the core response agencies (law enforcement, District Attorney's office, DV/SA agency, hospital (SA), court system (DV)). Other teams decide to include other CCR/SART agencies, such as mental health agencies, probation, Adult Protective Services, the Health Department, etc. Some of these agencies may not be actively involved in the criminal justice process, but they are essential referrals and/or sources of referrals. These sections of the protocol will most likely be less detailed than the core responding agencies' sections and will focus primarily on appropriate referrals.

<u>Establish a timeline</u>

Your team should have already created an action plan to meet your goal of developing CCR/SART response protocols. The average time to complete the process is 12-24 months. Your action plan should leave time for multiple drafts, review times, and the process of gaining agency acceptance (see *Step Three: Developing a Plan of Work: Resources and Activities* for an example of a completed action plan for protocol development).

<u>Review current local policies</u>

Start by reviewing each individual agency's current policies, procedures, and forms. Some agencies may have extensive policies and procedures, while others may have none at all. If you already have completed a service mapping activity, you may want to refer back to the flowchart that you created. If you have not already completed that activity, you may want to consider going through that process at this point in your process (see *Step Two: Identifying and Prioritizing: Resources and Activities).* Once you've reviewed the written policies/procedures, the typical process, and any forms, think about the following questions:

- Where is there room for change?
- Where could agencies collaborate more?
- Where and how should referrals be made?

<u>Review best practices</u>

As you review your current response system, if you find particular challenges or practices in question, seek out information about best practices that have proven to be effective in various other communities. Make a note of any practices or solutions that may be relevant in your community. Consider what you may be able to incorporate in your local CCR/SART response protocols. *"Best Practices in the Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault: Guidance for CCR/SART Response Protocols"* is an accompanying resource to this toolkit, and it can be used as a guide for teams as they review best practices during the protocol development process. Additional sources of best practice information include:

- North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, www.nccadv.org
- North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault, www.nccasa.org
- Ending Violence Against Women International, www.evawintl.org
- Battered Women's Justice Project, www.bwjp.org
- National Network to End Domestic Violence, www.nnedv.org
- Praxis International, www.praxisinternational.org
- AEquitas, www.aequitasresource.org

<u>Discuss collaborative response procedures</u>

Now that you've discussed your current system and reviewed best practices that you may want to incorporate into your protocol, the next step is to discuss your collaborative response procedures. Consider what you would like your response system to look like when a case is reported, and discuss the following questions:

- Which agencies should be involved at each point?
- What is the role/responsibility of each discipline?

- What are possible expectations that responders may have for each agency/discipline?
- What obstacles might you expect and how can they be handled or avoided?

Developing flowcharts to help your team outline these procedures can be a very helpful exercise. Flowcharting your response is very similar to service mapping, but instead of focusing on the current system, your team would focus on how you would like your system to function.

Activity: Instructions and resources for **Flowchart Activity: How can we work together to improve the response system?** can be found at the end of this section on page 97.

This process could lead to some uncomfortable conversations. Remember to keep in mind the specific needs of your team and community. Part of facilitating your team through this process is about knowing when you are ready to have difficult conversations. Allow your team to direct your process. Forcing issues before the team is able to manage them is counter-productive to the team's objectives. This may be a good time to call upon the facilitation activities discussed in *Step One* (see *Setting the Stage for Success: Foundations for an Effective Team*).

Adapt or develop protocols

The final step in the initial protocol development process is to actually adapt or develop your protocols. Rather than starting with a blank page, we recommend beginning with either a model CCR/SART protocol that your team found particularly helpful (see the activity below *CCR/SART Response Protocols: Reviewing Model Protocols)* or existing local policies. You can use either of those as a base and then adapt them for your team's purposes. Your team's adaptation should include incorporating best practices and any procedures that you identified during your flowcharting activity, as well as modifying any model policies to be relevant for your community.

If you choose to adapt either a model protocol or existing policies, it is essential that your team fully engage and discuss throughout the adaptation process. The process of developing protocols must be structured in such a way to gain buy-in from the various team members. If your team simply chooses a model protocol and changes the names on it, it is unlikely that team members will even remember what is included in the protocol, much less follow it. Make sure that you are having open, honest discussion about what will work in your community and that you are adapting any model protocol accordingly.

Your team could also choose to begin with the flowcharts developed during your flowcharting activity and to write your protocol using those as an outline. This process is more labor-intensive and requires that you are extremely careful to choose processes that are in line with best practice, but the extensive process may make it easier to gain team buy-in of the final product.

Obtain team member approval

Once the first draft of the protocol is complete, ask team members to review the entire document but to focus specifically on the section that would directly affect their agency most. Your team will then discuss and edit it until all members of the team are willing to adopt the protocol. At this point, it will be ready for agency leaders to review.

Obtaining formal agency acceptance of CCR/SART response protocols

Make certain to incorporate plenty of time in your action plan for acquiring the signatures of agency leadership. This is not just a formality. Leadership needs to be willing to adopt the CCR/SART response protocols into their respective agencies. This may lead to policy changes at individual agencies that will affect current and future staff members.

Once the first draft of the protocol is complete, ask team members to review the entire document but to focus specifically on the section that would directly affect their agency most. Your team will then discuss and edit it until all members of the team are willing to adopt the protocol. At this point, it will be ready for agency leaders to review.

Once your team has approved the protocol, it will then go through another similar editing process until all agencies are willing to adopt the protocol. Once the protocol is complete and all agencies have agreed to accept it, you may want to consider having a ceremony or press event to sign the protocol into effect. This provides a celebration of your team's hard work and also is an opportunity to communicate to your community your team's commitment to domestic and sexual violence.

<u>Establishing protocol-based training</u>

Training current and future staff members at individual agencies is integral to the community-wide incorporation of the protocols. Your team needs to start by evaluating which staff in each agency needs training and how that training will be obtained. Training should include internal agency-specific procedures according to the protocols, and it may also include broader issues that incorporate best practices and themes such as victim-centeredness and "starting by believing". These trainings should be developed in such a way that they can be conducted regularly, as needed depending on how often an agency hires new staff, trains new volunteers, or simply needs a refresher training. Leadership at these agencies needs to be committed to the incorporation of the protocols on a long term basis in order for the success of the team's overall objectives.

<u>Monitoring and reviewing your protocols</u>

The team is responsible for continuously monitoring the adherence to and effectiveness of the CCR/SART response protocols across agencies. Regular protocol or case review is a useful way to monitor the implementation of your protocols in your community. These review systems can help you determine whether some or all agencies are deviating from the protocol, which parts of the protocol are not being followed, and why this is the case. Lack of adherence to the protocol may indicate a need for more training or greater accountability, but it may also indicate the need to amend the protocol to increase effectiveness or feasibility or to adapt to changing conditions. There may be issues not previously considered or emerging challenges that make it difficult or unrealistic for agencies to follow the protocol (for example, statutory changes or technological and scientific advances in evidence collection).

<u>Protocol review vs. case review</u>

There are a variety of review options for teams to consider in order to monitor and review their protocols: protocol review, closed case review, and open case review.

Protocol Review	Closed Case Review	Open Case Review
Focus on patterns of successes and gaps to ensure implementation and effectiveness of protocols	Focus on individual cases to ensure implementation and effectiveness of protocols	Focus on individual cases to ensure effectiveness of response to that particular case
Can involve all team members	May only include immediate responders	Only includes immediate responders
Strengths: Not as time-consuming; avoids problematic issues concerning victim confidentiality, privilege, and discovery	Strengths: Allows for more specific discussion grounded in a particular case; avoids problematic issues concerning privilege and discovery (because case is already closed)	Strengths: Allows for more specific discussion grounded in a particular case; allows for information-sharing and a tailored repsonse to individual cases

Each of these review systems has pros and cons. The needs and priorities of responders in each community are different, and the "ideal" review system will vary by community. When communities are considering establishing an open case review system, it is essential that they have a clear, detailed confidentiality agreement and that they clearly and systematically address potential issues concerning privilege and discovery. An open case review system should not be put into place without buy-in and participation from the District Attorney's office, and a representative from that office can help CCR/SARTs determine what precautions need to be put into place to ensure that the information-sharing that occurs during an open case review helps rather than harms each case.

Regardless of which review system a CCR/SART chooses to establish, this process can lead to uncomfortable or challenging conversations. It is important to maintain victim confidentiality as necessary and to maintain a focus on problem-solving rather than defensiveness and blaming. The following steps/strategies can help keep a review on track:

- Establish clear process and ensure that all team members are aware of and agree to ground rules and confidentiality agreements.
- Focus on the process, not blaming individual agencies or individuals. Ask questions like, "What is missing from the protocol?" or "Why was the protocol not followed in this instance?"
- Establish a process for recording the discussion, the proposed solution, and next steps. (Be aware of confidentiality concerns in how you record the details of the discussion. No identifying case information should be recorded in a protocol or closed case review.)
- Make sure that the discussion continues to move toward problem-solving and next steps. Ask questions like, "Have we heard all we need to hear in order to move on to problem solving?"

Step Four: Addressing interagency referral and response system

Resources and Activities

- CCR/SART Protocol Readiness Assessment
- CCR/SART Response Protocols: Reviewing Model Protocols (Instructions)
    - CCR Response Protocols: Reviewing Model Protocols
    - SART Response Protocols: Reviewing Model Protocols
- Flowchart activity: How can we work together to improve the response system?

CCR/SART Protocol Readiness Assessment

Use the following questions to assess if your team is ready to begin a successful protocol development process. As you answer these questions, think about what might need to happen before your team will be prepared to enter into this process successfully.

Do you have all key responders represented at your meetings?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- If not, who is missing? What can you do to get them to the table? How can you help them see the benefits? How can you make this issue hit home for them?
- When do you know to move forward without one of these key responders?
- If an agency is not represented and they are not able to attend, how can you incorporate them into the protocol?
- Are participants engaged? Do they understand the importance of their attendance and input?

Does your team share a vision?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- How do you know if a member is on board with the vision? How can you get them on board?

Is your team having open, honest conversations about important issues?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- Do all of your members participate in these conversations?

Do your members have the knowledge to move forward?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- What core knowledge should your team members have?
- How do you know if team members have this knowledge?

Have you addressed confidentiality?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- How should confidentiality be addressed?
- Do you have a written confidentiality statement that members have agreed to?

Have members started to get buy-in from the decision-makers at their agencies?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- Who do they need to talk with?
- How can they increase buy-in from decision-makers throughout the process?

What concrete next steps can your team take to increase readiness for protocol development?

CCR/SART Response Protocols: Reviewing Model Protocols
Instructions

CCR/SART Response Protocols can be structured in many different ways. This activity will allow your team to get a sense of what different protocols look like and what you all may want to consider for your own protocols. We have provided the exercise both for teams planning to develop domestic violence protocols and for teams planning to develop sexual assault protocols. For each, we have suggested three model protocols that we have found to be helpful. Each of the referenced protocols can be accessed via the links below. However, your team can choose any three model CCR/SART protocols that will be helpful to further your discussion. For longer protocols (longer than 20 pages), we suggest using only a table of contents and one section of the protocol so that team members can get an idea of the protocol structure during this activity without becoming overwhelmed by the length.

Model CCR/SART response protocols:

City of Dayton Domestic Violence Task Force Protocol
http://www.daytonmunicipalcourt.com/pdf/Protocol-Rev%205-3-05.pdf

Peterborough Domestic Violence Response Protocol
http://www.pdan.ca/pdf/DVRP_final07.pdf

Pima County Domestic Violence Task Force Protocol
http://www.pcao.pima.gov/documents/pcao_dv_protocol.pdf

SART Guidelines for Community Response to Sexual Assault
http://www.nccasa.org/sart-guidelines-community-response-sexual-assault

Winona County Adult Sexual Assault Response Protocol
http://www.winonacountysaic.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/saic-protocol.pdf

Pitt County Sexual Assault Protocol
http://realcrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/PROTOCOL-PCSART-2009.pdf

CCR Response Protocols: Reviewing Model Protocols

CCR Response Protocols can be structured in many different ways. Around the room, we have placed three different protocols that vary in length, detail, and structure. You will have five minutes at each station to look at each protocol and answer the following questions. We will have a few minutes of large group discussion after you have had the opportunity to look at all three protocols.

City of Dayton Domestic Violence Task Force Protocol

What about this protocol structure do you like?

What do you not like?

What do you think might work well for your team?

What might work better?

Peterborough Domestic Violence Response Protocol

What about this protocol structure do you like?

What do you not like?

What do you think might work well for your team?

What might work better?

Pima County Domestic Violence Task Force Protocol

What about this protocol structure do you like?

What do you not like?

What do you think might work well for your team?

What might work better?

SART Response Protocols: Reviewing Model Protocols

SART Response Protocols can be structured in many different ways. Around the room, we have placed three different protocols that vary in length, detail, and structure. You will have five minutes at each station to look at each protocol and answer the following questions. We will have a few minutes of large group discussion after you have had the opportunity to look at all three protocols.

SART Guidelines for Community Response to Sexual Assault

What about this protocol structure do you like?

What do you not like?

What do you think might work well for your team?

What might work better?

Winona County Adult Sexual Assault Response Protocol

What about this protocol structure do you like?

What do you not like?

What do you think might work well for your team?

What might work better?

Pitt County Sexual Assault Response Protocol

What about this protocol structure do you like?

What do you not like?

What do you think might work well for your team?

What might work better?

Flowchart activity: How can we work together to improve the response system?

Directions and set-up (5 min)

Team members can create the flowcharts all together as a team or in small groups. If you decide to conduct the activity by small groups, split the team into three to four groups with mixed disciplines. Each group will be focused on a different part of the immediate response system:

- When the victim calls 911
- When the victim calls the domestic violence/sexual assault agency hotline
- At the hospital *(for teams focusing on sexual assault protocols)*
- When the victim is referred by a service provider (for example, DSS, mental health services, etc.)

Each group has one agency for which the process is particularly relevant (Emergency Communications, DV/SA agency, hospital). Make sure at least one person from that agency is a part of the group to which the agency corresponds. It is best to split disciplines as much as possible when assigning groups.

Creating multi-disciplinary flowcharts (40 min)

Each group will be directed to a large piece of butcher paper on the wall. They will be given markers and tape and will collaboratively develop multidisciplinary flowcharts for their assigned process.

- Highlight when referrals should be made to other agencies and how.
- Disclaimer: This is not an agreement that groups are entering into; it is simply a brainstorm to get an idea of what developing a collaborative response might look like and to give them a starting point for discussion.
- Disclaimer: No two situations are alike, and it might be impossible to come up with a process that fits for every case. This is not only a difficulty with this exercise, but a difficulty with the process of coming up with protocols. Your team will have to strike the balance between specificity and flexibility, focused on coming up with a general process that would work for *most* cases. However, it is essential to have solid communication between groups for when those exceptional cases arise.

Sharing flowcharts in the large group (45 min)

- Each group can choose one or more representatives to share their flowchart(s) with the large group. They will walk the group through their process, explaining the steps, referrals, and any outstanding comments or questions they may have.
- Time allowing, the group can ask any follow-up questions. (Each group should have about 15 minutes.)
- Any changes or outstanding questions/comments can be made to the flowchart during the discussion.

Step Five: Continuing progress

Building sustainability

Maintaining momentum and making progress over a long period of time is vital to the overall success of a CCR/SART. Too often, teams are reactive and responsive, and they don't take the time to build their CCR/SART with a five- or ten-year goal in mind. If your team is going to exert the time and energy it takes to build a CCR/SART, it is worth the extra effort to be strategic about developing your team in a way that will last. Sustainability is achieved by planning for the long-term from the very beginning. Team leaders need to motivate members to achieve immediate goals, while continuously looking forward to future objectives. Having a long-term vision for your team will allow you to not merely exist and react, but rather to thrive and progress.

Teams may take on many short-term projects over time, but research shows that the outcomes achieved by CCR/SARTs (specifically criminal justice outcomes) will grow exponentially the longer they are in existence. Therefore, it is important to maintain these teams over a long period of time, rather than functioning with a lot of starts and stops. Significant changes can begin to occur early on, but we can expect that they will only increase with time, if that time is used strategically and effectively.

In a national study[21] of 172 SARTs, teams reached their highest effectiveness after being in operation for an average of 17.74-19.99 years. Those that had been in operation for a longer period of time were perceived as more effective in achieving the following outcomes:

Improvements in:

- Victims' help-seeking experiences
- Victims' participation in the criminal justice system
- Police processing of sexual assault cases
- Prosecution of sexual assault cases

Building your CCR/SART with a focus on the following values can help you build a sustainable team from the beginning:

- Focus on outcomes
- Strong and continued relationship building
- Consistent focus on formalized team structures and procedures
- Shared leadership

Focus on outcomes

When team members can see tangible progress and successes, they are significantly more likely to remain engaged over time. Make sure that your team is steadily making progress and change in your community to remain relevant.

Monitor progress toward your goals

An important element of sustainability is to have a clear picture of what needs to be sustained, which starts with clearly articulating what the team wants to achieve through its work and then clearly identifying the strategies and activities that will get it there. This is done through a thoughtful, strategic team development process of creating a mission statement, goals, and action plans. It is easy for teams to drift over time, as they either lose sight of their goals, or as their priorities shift in accordance with changes in agencies, policies, and/or their communities.

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[21] *Campbell, R., Greeson, M., Bybee, D., & Neal, J.W. (2013). Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Implementation and Collaborative Process: What works Best for the Criminal Justice System?*

Use your action plans to consistently review your progress and keep on track toward achieving your goals. Revise action plans as necessary as you review, according to delays in schedule, effectiveness (or lack thereof) of particular strategies, new knowledge, changes in your community, and/or changes in your team priorities. Your action plans are not meant to be rigid maps that you must follow at all costs, but flexible documents that will help your team continue to be strategic and focused about how you spend your efforts. However, make sure that you are not constantly pushing deadlines back and not making any progress toward your goals. If it seems that no progress is being made over time, it is important to discuss with your team why that is the case and what adjustments need to be made.

Make sure to periodically review not only your action plans but also your team's mission and goals to ensure that they match up with your team's activities. A good time to do this may be when you've accomplished one or more of your initial goals. Your team should consider whether you want to take on new goals to work toward as a next step, or if you should spend some time maintaining the changes that you have already made. If you choose to develop new goals and action plans, sometimes you can draw from the information you already have in order to do that, or you may want to consider conducting updated community or service provider assessments.

Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of your protocols

Teams may take on a number of different projects over the course of their existence, but protocols will always be a core function of what the CCR/SART contributes to the community. Monitoring and evaluating whether your protocols are actually being implemented as well as whether they are achieving what you've intended will help you gauge early warning signs of potential issues that could affect your team. You can monitor adherence to protocols and their effectiveness through regular protocol review or case review (see *Section Four: Developing CCR/SART protocols: Monitoring and reviewing your protocols: Protocol review vs. case review*). Be responsive and adjust your protocols or strategies as necessary.

Celebrate your team's achievements and successes

Know what "success" will look like, so that you are able to assess and celebrate your achievements. When you have attained a goal or made a significant step towards it, make sure to pause in order to acknowledge and celebrate that. Remind yourselves of where you started, so that you can draw encouragement from how far you've come. Consider how you can share your successes with your broader community, so that your community as a whole can recognize and benefit from the shifts in how domestic and/or sexual violence are treated in your community.

Strong and continued relationship building

Communication and support among team members

An important aspect of a sustainable CCR/SART is the presence of strong relationships among team members. In most cases, these relationships need to be intentionally developed and fostered. Open communication and consistent support for one another is key. The following are a few tips for how to develop positive relationships among team members:

- Give each other encouraging feedback whenever possible.
- Make each other feel valued and heard.
- Consider one another as resources, and seek out the expertise of your partners.
- Find ways to collaborate outside of meetings.
- Support one another's efforts within the team and as part of individual agencies.

> *"[The victim advocacy agency] just sent me a message and asked me if I would do an exam on two kids next week, and I said, that's no problem, we scheduled a time, and then I get a follow-up email message saying, "We really appreciate all that you do for us. Thank you so much." And they're always so good about doing that. And that's just what people need."*
>
> *–Emergency Room MD*

<u>Persistence in developing future team members</u>

The early phase of team member recruitment is pivotal, but recruitment often continues even after the initial stage. In some cases, there may be particular stakeholders who are challenging to recruit, and you can continue to reach out to those stakeholders even as the team moves forward. Other times, teams find that as they define who they are and what they want to accomplish, their ideas about potential members expand. Keep sending potential or sporadic members information about your meetings, and make time to interact with them outside of the CCR/SART.

<u>Broad-based community support and key champions</u>

In addition to getting all of the right team members on board, it is important to consider whose support is needed from community leaders and the broader community and to develop appropriate outreach efforts. Rally leaders from businesses, faith-based institutions, government agencies, and other parts of the community to request support and to persuade them to use their power and influence to generate resources for your initiative. This proactive outreach and relationship building among community leaders and members will help your team continue to thrive during changing political and policy environments, funding shortages, and other potential obstacles.

<u>**Continued focus on formalized team structures and procedures**</u>

Over time, teams experience turnover, agency dynamics shift, and priorities are adjusted. Often, CCR/SARTs make the mistake of depending entirely on the involvement of one individual or one agency to keep the team in place. Having a structure that is not dependent on the individual players, team dynamics, or political atmosphere provides stability for the team to move forward through the inevitable changes and obstacles that arise.

As you develop your team, you will hopefully have spent the time to build strong formalized systems, such as formal leadership, procedures for minute-taking/distribution, and protocol/case review. The presence and adherence to formalized team structure and procedures has been shown to be one of the primary factors that set apart highly functioning teams from less effective teams.[22] Ensure over time that you continue to adhere to your agreed-upon internal procedures as a team, or that you adjust them as necessary to reflect your team's evolution over time.

<u>**Shared Leadership**</u>

As discussed in *Setting the Stage for Success: Foundations for an Effective Team*, a commitment to shared leadership is one of the most important elements that sets apart high-functioning, effective CCR/SARTs. Members are more like to attend meetings, be engaged, and work together on goals when they are a part of a team where they have leadership and ownership of the process. Moreover, shared leadership enriches the team in that it adds the diverse expertise and viewpoints of all members. Appreciating and harnessing the level of expertise of a group of

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[22] *Campbell, R., Greeson, M., Bybee, D., & Neal, J.W. (2013). Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Implementation and Collaborative Process: What works Best for the Criminal Justice System?*

professionals with countless years of experience is ultimately more productive and motivating than relying on a few. Team members will notice the difference, and a team built on shared leadership is more likely to draw their long-term commitment and engagement.

Conclusion

Setting the foundation for a response team can be hard work, but strategically laying the ground work as outlined in this toolkit can lead to improved outcomes, an atmosphere of collaboration, and a sustainable team that will continue to grow and have long-term impacts on your community. Sexual assault and domestic violence cases present multiple, unique challenges, in terms of collecting evidence, finding the resources needed, and offering compassion and support, often in complex and difficult situations. In spite of these very real challenges, we must continue to improve the systems that respond to these cases.

> *"Our level of kindness to people courageous enough to seek justice is a matter of fundamental decency. We need to raise our standards for the skill levels, dedication and effectiveness of all sex crimes' responders . . . from the first 911 operator to the post-conviction appeals bureau prosecutor. We owe victims more than systems that are nice to them. We owe them systems that work. Victims should not have to trade compassion for competence."*
>
> *-Alice Vachss, Special Prosecutor for Sex Crimes in the Lincoln County, Oregon District Attorney's Office*

We owe systems that work not only to victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence, but also to the broader communities that we serve. In order to keep our communities safe and healthy, we must hold offenders accountable and work toward ending sexual assault and domestic violence. This is no small task, and we can only benefit from combining our resources and expertise and working together.

As you enter into the difficult but exciting process of developing greater collaboration through the development of a CCR/SART, your teams can seek assistance and support from both the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV) and the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA). Please contact us for further resources, technical assistance, and training.

For more information:

North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV)
919-956-9124
www.nccadv.org

North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA)
919-871-1015
www.nccasa.org

> *"We've got to work together. Without a doubt. Because we're here for the same common purpose and goal, but we've got to work together."*
>
> *-NC Sheriff's Department Detective*