

National Coordination Committee on the AI/AN SANE-SART Initiative Issue Paper

Preparation for Committee Recommendations: The National Coordination Committee on the American Indian/Alaska Native Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner-Sexual Assault Response Team (AI/AN SANE-SART) Initiative will convene on December 4–5, with the goal of developing recommendations for the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) on how to increase the commitment of all key stakeholders to end sexual violence in AI/AN communities through collaboration. In addition to this issue paper on collaboration, this packet includes three sub issue papers—Sub Issue #1 Protocol, #2 Culturally Relevant Response, and #3 Prioritization—that directly impact collaboration. Each paper provides background information and questions to help in preparation for the meeting. Committee members are encouraged to discuss these questions with their respective organizations and/or tribal communities prior to the meeting.

Central Question for Committee To Address: *How can OVC and its partners increase the commitment by all key stakeholders to end sexual violence in AI/AN communities through collaboration?*

Definition: *Collaboration occurs when key stakeholders (law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, health care providers, victim advocates, forensic interviewers, community leaders, and other allied professionals) bridge boundaries and develop integrated, victim-centered, legally sound response systems.*

Elements of Effective Collaboration: *Coordinated community responses to sexual violence yield favorable returns for all involved. Research¹ shows that when responders work collaboratively to provide a coordinated response, they work better and smarter; encourage victims to access services, are more effective in holding offenders accountable; and ultimately protect victims, families, and communities.*

Challenges Surrounding Collaboration: *AI/AN victims of sexual violence do not receive a victim-centered coordinated community response when there is a lack of written protocols, a lack of culturally relevant elements in the sexual violence response, and a lack of prioritization of sexual violence resources.*

Background

The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime—in collaboration with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Indian Health Service (IHS), and other federal partners—is coordinating the AI/AN SANE-SART Initiative (Initiative). The Initiative is aimed at improving victim-centered coordinated community sexual assault responses to adult and child victims in AI/AN communities. In addition to funding three demonstration sites and a tribal training and technical assistance provider, OVC and its federal partners developed a Federal Advisory Committee, the *National Coordination Committee on the AI/AN SANE-SART Initiative* (Committee), to ensure that this Initiative is responsive to victims and survivors, families, and individuals in tribal communities.

The Initiative received feedback from federal and tribal partners through forums and consultations;² secured

¹ SART Toolkit section on Resources: <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/sartkit/develop/plan-resources.html>

² Since 2010, OVC and its partners consulted with tribal leaders at the 2010 Indian Nations Conference, 2011 and 2012 Violence Against Women (VAW) consultations, the Attorney General’s Tribal Nations Leadership Council, VAW 904 Taskforce, and National Congress of American Indians’ VAW Taskforce.

input from a broad range of practitioners, experts, allied professionals, and other stakeholders at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels; and ensured the voices of victims, survivors, and subject matter experts inform the Committee.

In addition, OVC and its partners gathered input from three demonstration sites and convened three federal working groups—Child Sexual Abuse, Alaska Native Issues, and First Responders. The members of the working groups included tribal representatives, law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, health care providers, victim advocates, forensic interviewers, and other individuals with experience addressing sexual violence in AI/AN communities. The federal working groups were convened in the summer and fall of 2012 to assess current resources, funding and service gaps, challenges, and best practices regarding the provision of victim-centered coordinated community sexual violence responses.

Discussion

By listening to diverse perspectives, OVC and its partners learned that the central issue to improving sexual violence responses to AI/AN victims is to increase collaboration among key stakeholders—federal, state, tribal, and local agencies. Three key sub issues emerged relevant to increased collaboration among sexual violence responders. These included: written sexual assault response protocol(s); commitment to culturally relevant sexual violence responses; and prioritization of sexual violence resources. If not addressed, these three issues can potentially undermine the establishment of effective interventions; however, if addressed, these issues can strengthen the establishment and implementation of effective interventions. OVC and its partners look to the Committee at this upcoming meeting, and in subsequent meetings and discussions, to provide specific recommendations on ways to increase collaboration; ensure the availability, development, and implementation of written protocols and culturally relevant responses; and elevate the priority of sexual violence response in an effort to end sexual violence in AI/AN communities.

Proposed General Questions on Collaboration

- What does collaboration among organizations responding to sexual violence look like for your organization or the tribal communities with which you work? Please explain.
- How has collaboration around sexual violence response impacted your organization or the tribal communities with which you work? Please provide any specific examples or data/information you have that would help clarify collaboration and its impact.
- Are there any examples of how your organization, or tribal communities with which you work, has successfully addressed collaboration around sexual violence response?
- What are/have been the barriers to successful collaboration for your organization or the tribal communities with which you work?
- What initial recommendations do you have to improve collaboration on sexual violence response across the federal, tribal, state, and local levels?
- What additional resources would be helpful to you and the Committee in considering the impact of collaboration and developing recommendations to improve collaboration at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels? Do you have any suggestions on how to best access that information?

Research/Resources on Sexual Violence Response

- *Adolescent Sexual Assault Victims' Experiences With SANE-SARTs and the Criminal Justice System* (www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/234466.pdf).
- *Rape Survivors' Experiences With the Legal and Medical Systems: Do Rape Victim Advocates Make a Difference?* Violence Against Women, Volume 12 (1): 30 SAGE – Jan. 1, 2006.
- SART Toolkit (<http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/sartkit/index.html>), Tribal Law and Policy Institute (www.tribal-institute.org/lists/assault.htm).
- Quiet Crisis: Federal Funding and Unmet Needs in Indian Country, 61 (2003).