

Points to Ponder When Considering New Partnerships

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Not being able to connect a sexual assault survivor with the resources they need to heal feels terrible. Few people like having to make multiple phone calls or getting bounced from provider to provider. This run-around is discouraging. And, it can make survivors feel even more alone. It can lead survivors to give up and never connect with the resources that are available to support them.

So, when new programmatic or legislative partnership opportunities arise that aim to make the process of connecting survivors with resources smoother, it is tempting to say yes without pause. It is even more enticing when the project is led or developed by a survivor, for survivors. Partnerships are essential to supporting survivors' many needs. Yet, it is important for coalitions to research and assess if the partnership is in the best interest of survivors as whole, what collateral consequences might arise, and how viable the partnership is long-term to minimize potential harm to survivors and sexual assault service delivery.

To help sexual assault coalitions assess new partnership opportunities, the Resource Sharing Project (RSP) spoke with coalitions across the country to learn what they look for when thinking about new partnerships, particularly with national groups. RSP distilled their wisdom into key themes and questions listed at the end of this handout. They are offered as a starting place for assessment. RSP recognizes that each coalition and local program will have unique considerations for their states or territories.

It is tempting to think that if the process of connecting survivors with resources could just go faster, survivors could move on from the memory of their assault and suffer less. Sadly, there's no way to take away the pain that survivors experience. Learning to manage uncomfortable feelings when they arise, again and again, is in fact, a large part of the healing journey. Thoroughly assessing new partnership opportunities is an important way that coalitions can ensure they are connecting survivors with effective allies in that pursuit.



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