
ADVOCACY SKILLS



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Healing from child sexual abuse takes a village. Advocates provide a powerful resource for adult survivors of child sexual abuse, but we can't do this work by ourselves. Adult survivors of child sexual abuse have a wide variety of needs and deserve trauma informed respectful resources to meet these needs. We can build that village. We can create a strong community of diverse community partners that help support, strengthen, and cultivate an environment for adult survivors of child sexual abuse to heal and ultimately thrive.

Our Advocacy Skills series includes discrete tools that you can use in your work with adult survivors of child sexual abuse to meet each individual's unique needs. This resource is not designed to be used by survivors, but instead to help advocates develop skills. As you develop this skill it will become an ingrained part of your advocacy practice and you will no longer need this resource to prompt your practice.

Sometimes, we fall into habits of working with just the obvious partners: criminal legal personnel and emergency medical care providers. Unfortunately, adult survivors of child sexual abuse rarely benefit from these connections. Instead, we need to use what we know about adult survivors of child sexual abuse to create new community partnerships and revitalize old community partnerships that have fallen by the wayside. When we become more creative and expansive in our community partnerships, we are better equipped to meet the unique needs of survivors with multiple victimizations and complicated needs.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Which community partnerships do you most frequently rely upon and why?

- Are there any community partnerships that need to be revitalized?

- How do these current connections strengthen services for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse?

- How much do your current partnerships understand about the needs of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse?

WHO CAN YOU TALK TO THIS MONTH TO FORGE NEW, CREATIVE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS THAT WILL BENEFIT ADULT SURVIVORS OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE?

- Community health clinics, doctors' offices, and dentists
- Social service providers
- Religious and spiritual centers
- Mental health services
- Substance abuse service providers
- Cultural centers
- Culturally specific programs
- Jails and prisons
- Disability services providers
- Retirement homes
- Food banks
- Adult education classes
- Holistic practitioners
- _____
- _____



COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

If we are to create new community partnership that will truly benefit adult survivors of child sexual abuse we need to be able to sustain those relationships over time. Researching the resources that are present within your rural community is a great first step but we need to go further than knowing they exist. Collaborating with our new community partnerships solidifies ties across agencies. Working together to achieve a goal builds rapport and trust, which leads to deeper relationships. Try collaborating with your new community partners with some of the following ideas:

- Co-host a support group
- Invite them to be on your Board of Directors
- Start an advisory council and ask them to serve on the council
- Share brochures and information to hang at your respective agencies
- Write a handout or worksheet together to use with survivors
- Provide cross-agency education
- Invite partners to participate in Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- Collaborate on a community presentation or event
- Write a grant proposal for co-funded work

EDUCATING COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Building new community partnerships to meet the needs of adult survivors of child sexual abuse often requires our agencies to provide education to our new partners. Part of our role within the community is to be experts in trauma and sexual violence. We can use this expertise to make sure our community partners are knowledgeable about serving adult survivors of child sexual abuse and understanding the long term impacts of trauma. Helping to create trauma informed services benefits the adult survivors of child sexual abuse we are working with and the community as a whole. In addition to giving information on sexual violence and trauma, consider providing the following:

- Education specific to child sexual abuse: prevalence, long term impacts, methods of healing
- Information connecting child sexual abuse to the work the community partner provides (healthcare, substance abuse treatment, etc)
- How racism and oppression shape survivors experiences in childhood and into adulthood
- The role of class and race in how we see coping mechanisms
- How experiences of child sexual abuse impact relationship building in adulthood

- Discuss how to create and respect boundaries with community members accessing services
- Help community partners create trauma informed waiting rooms and office spaces
- Train community partners on trauma informed ways to screen new and current community members for a history of child sexual abuse

“Advocacy Skills: Community Partnerships”

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