

DETERMINING THE BEST AVENUE FOR COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY ORGANIZING WORK

PURPOSES & BENEFITS

The purpose of this tool is to understand the differences between a Coordinated Community Response Team (CCR) and a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), which may already be established in the local community, to determine the best avenue for community organizing efforts, whether that is through a new or existing collaborative or the establishment of a sub-group of an existing collaborative.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

Use this tool as background information on the two most common types of collaborative groups working to address sexual and domestic violence issues in the local community. This tool provides information on what a CCR and SART are, including their primary purposes, and the partners that are usually involved. The collaborative group can use this information, as well as gather information from any existing collaborative group, especially in terms of their purposes and who is involved, in order to then discuss and determine the best way to collaborate to do community-organizing work.

Sometimes it might make sense to work with an existing collaborative group. In this case:

- The purposes of both groups align wholly, with a focus on doing community-organizing work.
- The existing collaborative group is already doing ongoing community organizing to end sexual and domestic violence work.
- The collaborative partners are the same for both collaborative groups.
- Not working with the existing collaborative group creates a risk of duplicating efforts, as well as people and time resources in the local community.
- The existing group is committed to true collaboration, going beyond simple partnerships or advisory functions.

In other cases, developing a sub-group of an existing collaborative group might be the best way to do community organizing work. In this situation:

- The purposes of both groups overlap with a focus on community organizing but the larger, existing collaborative group has other purposes that keep that group's time, energy and attention focused on other sexual and domestic violence related issues and work.
- The collaborative partners in both groups are not necessarily all of the same people.

Finally, it might be that a new community organizing collaborative group is necessary because no other collaborative group already exists that is doing ongoing collaborative community organizing work to end sexual and domestic violence. If a group currently exists but does not seem like a good fit for the planned community organizing efforts, it may be beneficial to discuss the formation of the new group with existing group(s) and ensure the existing group(s) is supportive. In the case of CCRs and SARTs specifically, the focus of these groups is the coordination of systems and often involves cross-communication rather than try collaboration and thus, will often not be appropriate in their current state to address community-organizing efforts.



COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAMS (CCRs)

What Is a CCR and What Are the Primary Purposes?

A Coordinated Community Response Team (CCR) is made up of representatives of key systems involved in addressing issues of domestic violence within the community. Partners in the collaborative seek to improve the ability of the systems to respond to domestic violence by examining the intersections and gaps of the systems to maximize victim safety and offender accountability. Some CCRs have also expanded their purposes to include coordinating primary prevention initiatives intended to prevent the initial perpetration of domestic violence.

While every CCR (and community it serves) is different, most CCRs have historically attempted to address victim safety and offender accountability through some combination of the following approaches:

1. **Protocol Development** – Domestic violence victims/survivors and offenders often come in contact with multiple systems, such as the criminal justice system, law enforcement, child welfare and others. Since each system has different goals and philosophies regarding domestic violence, victim/survivors may experience fragmentation in services and competing demands. For offenders, these system differences can create gaps that allow offenders to avoid accountability. CCRs frequently review protocols regarding the handling of victims/survivors and offenders, seeking to streamline processes and ensure vital connections are made across systems.
2. **System Review** – Even when thoughtful and thorough policies and protocols are in place within and across systems, a gap may still develop between the policy or protocol and its implementation. These gaps may become evident through informal means, such as patterns in victim/survivor reports or observations made by members of a system. In other cases, a CCR may undertake a more formal review process to identify gaps, such as system mapping, evaluation or best practice reviews. CCRs provide an ongoing collaborative to address such gaps and improve victim/survivor safety and offender accountability.
3. **Other** – As noted previously, CCRs operate differently in each community and may take on additional functions. One example of this may be coordinating primary prevention initiatives. CCRs are not, however, intended to review or “staff” specific domestic violence cases. CCRs are focused on system-level work rather than individual advocacy. All aspects of CCR work should always respect and maintain the confidentiality constraints of participants, their organizations and their roles.

Who Is Typically Involved in a CCR?

The membership of CCRs will vary based on the services available in a given community. Ideally, a CCR includes representatives of all agencies or systems who have contact with victim/survivors and/or perpetrators. Frequently, membership includes representatives of law enforcement, criminal justice, advocacy organizations, health care, government, mental health, child welfare, social services, and batterer intervention providers. In some communities, the CCR may also include representatives of schools, universities, daycare, disability rights organizations or faith communities. Some CCRs also include victim/survivors and/or general community members. CCRs should seek to be representative of the community they serve, including individuals from a variety of the communities within a community (for example, Latino communities, African American communities, LGBT communities, etc.).



SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAMS (SARTS)

What Is a SART and What Are the Primary Purposes?

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) partners collaborate to ensure each victim of sexual assault receives a comprehensive, timely, and victim-centered response. A SART provides a comprehensive and collaborative response that focuses on improving the response of systems to increase victim access to services, provide for a positive interaction with these services, and increases community support of victims.

The primary purposes of a SART include:

1. **Policy & Procedure Development** – SARTs develop community specific policies and procedures to respond to victims of sexual violence. Part of this involves developing a mission statement that showcases the reason for the SART. The SART should also develop goals and objectives in order to carry out its mission statement. The policies and procedures then detail how the SART's goals and objectives will be met in a standardized manner. For example, the policies and procedures should address who is contacted when a victim of sexual violence presents themselves to one of the SART members, the roles and responsibilities of each SART member, confidentiality, informed consent, mandatory reporting, and actions to be taken if the policies or procedures are not followed. These policies and procedures allow for each SART member to understand what their role in the community response is. Thus, SART members are clear about what is expected of them when responding and understand how others are expected to respond as well.
2. **Review** – SARTs may engage in systems review. This review addresses the way in which members followed policies and procedures. This should be done with a focus on addressing issues such as the availability of SART members when needed, how protocol was followed (were core members contacted, did each person fulfill their roles and responsibilities, etc.), and a general overview of what went well and what did not. This allows for policy and procedure to be altered if the team finds that more detail is needed to ensure proper member response. It does not include specific details of a case that are not needed to establish system response review, management of a victim (such as getting them to police interviews, court, etc.), or sharing of personal beliefs about the victim.
3. **Cross Training** – SARTs should schedule each member to provide an informational training session. These training sessions should include information about what services the agency or organization provides, availability of services (service hours, etc.), and a basic overview of the policies and procedures they follow. These trainings enhance each member's knowledge about what services are available in the community, as well as providing an opportunity to understand each members agency/organization obligations. This allows for a dialogue about how these policies and procedures may influence their role in the SART. As SART members grow in their understanding of each other they are able to establish better policies and procedures; as well as provide a more collaborative and comprehensive response to sexual violence victims.
4. **Community Education** – SARTs provide education to their community regarding sexual violence prevention, sexual violence myths, and to encourage community support of all victims of sexual violence. SARTs can provide this information in a variety of settings: community fairs, schools, county development meetings, town hall meetings, college campuses, meetings of other community organizations, and even through the media.
5. **Other** – Although SARTs serve as a great community response to sexual violence, they do not provide case management, violate group confidentiality, or engage in victim blaming. Therefore, a SART should not utilize meetings to voice complaints or concerns about a particular victim or to share confidential victim information. Meetings should also focus only on the SART; problems with individuals in the SART should be addressed at a different time.

Who Is Typically Involved in a SART?

Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) consist of a variety of community organizations, agencies, and service providers. Although a variety of community members may participate in the SART, the four core members are advocacy, law enforcement, health care, and prosecution. In addition, a SART may include mental health professionals, child advocacy centers, faith based members, school officials, private attorneys, centers for independent living, community corrections, probation and/or parole officers, military officials, university officials, and other community members. The actual composition of a SART varies widely depending on the community.