

Module 1: Introductions and Overview

Purpose

This module includes introductions of the instructor and participants, an overview of what you can expect during the training, and a discussion of terms that will be used during the training.

Lessons

1. Introductions and Expectations
2. Overview of the Training
3. Creating a Common Language

Learning Objective

By the end of this module, you will be able to determine when to use the terms *rape*, *sexual assault*, *sexual abuse*, *victim*, and *survivor* during the training.

Participant Worksheets

No worksheets are required for this module.

1. Introductions and Expectations

You will be asked to introduce yourself by answering the following questions:

- What is your name?
- What, if any, experience do you have working with sexual assault victims/survivors?
- What is your motivation for doing this work?
- One thing you really want to learn in this training is _____.

2. Overview of the Training

The goal of this training is to provide sexual assault advocates/counselors with the skills necessary to provide competent, effective crisis intervention services to sexual assault victims/survivors.

The skills taught in this training are techniques that can be used to support recovery from sexual assault. The training focuses heavily on skills for first responders, and will not deal with advanced counseling techniques. Specific techniques such as eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) or hypnosis will be referenced, but not explored in depth. Such techniques require more advanced training and experience, and are beyond the scope of this basic program.

This training will draw on the experience and viewpoints of the participants. It will be dynamic and interactive and result in skills that participants will use as sexual assault advocates/counselors.

The information in this training is based on a complete review of the scientific literature on sexual assault; the advice, recommendations, and vast experience of experts in the area of sexual assault counseling; and information provided by more than 30 rape crisis centers across the United States that shared the information they rely upon for local advocate training.

3. Creating a Common Language

Rape crisis centers deal with both male and female sexual assault and abuse victims. In most cases, gender neutral plural pronouns such as “they” and “them” are used throughout this training to refer to victims.

However, because most victims of sexual assault are female, female pronouns are occasionally used. Similarly, most advocates/counselors are women, so female pronouns are sometimes used to refer to the advocate role.

The legal definitions of rape, sexual assault, and sexual abuse vary from state to state. In this training, *rape* and *sexual assault* will be used interchangeably to refer to any contact between two or more people without consent, involving the sexual organs of one person or more, regardless of sex or marital status, with or without penetration, and with or without resulting physical injury. It may involve vaginal, oral, and/or anal contact.

Sexual abuse will be used when the victim is a child and the perpetrator is a relative, caretaker, or person with authority over the child (e.g., a teacher, coach, babysitter).

It is difficult for anyone other than individuals themselves to determine when the shift from *victim* to *survivor* occurs. Some people feel they are survivors from the moment they escape from the assailant(s). They may prefer the term *survivor* even in the emergency department.

Other individuals use *survivors* to mean people who have made significant progress toward regaining control of their lives and recovering from the experience. These individuals may resent being called survivors too soon, preferring instead that advocates recognize that they were victimized because, in the early stages, they feel like victims, not survivors.

At the request of individuals who do not feel they immediately move to survivor status, the term *victim* of rape rather than *survivor* will be used when discussing the emergency department response and early impact. When discussing the later periods of recovery, *survivor* will be used to recognize that, even if the shift has not yet been made from feelings of victim status to feelings of having survived, this is indeed the goal for individuals with whom advocates will work.

