



Module 2: What Is Sexual Assault Advocacy/Counseling?

Purpose

This module is intended to help you understand your roles and responsibilities as an advocate and the roles of others with whom you will work. It will also help you to determine if the advocate role is appropriate for you.





Module 2 Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to

- Describe the composition of a SART.
- Identify the major roles of an advocate.
- Make appropriate decisions based on state confidentiality laws.
- Describe personal issues that might impede your ability to be an effective advocate.





Basic Tenets of Advocacy

- Provide victims with information about options so they can make informed choices.
- Advocacy is trauma specific.
- Listen and believe the victim.
- Neither investigate nor judge.



SART and SANE Discussion

What do you know about SARTs
and SANEs?





Sexual Assault Response Teams

- Group of individuals from different agencies who work with rape victims.
- Effective model.



SART Membership Varies

- At a minimum, SARTs include a rape crisis advocate, sexual assault nurse examiner, law enforcement official, prosecutor, and crime laboratory specialist.
- May also include domestic violence victim advocates, clergy, and other social service agency personnel.



SANEs

- Medical professionals who participate in a SART.
- Specially trained nurses.
- Trained to complete a medical-legal exam of rape victims.
- Better evidence collection and more sensitive initial medical response.



Need for SANEs

- Victims waited as long as 4 to 12 hours for medical care.
- Victims were not allowed to eat, drink, or urinate while they waited.
- Doctors and nurses were insufficiently trained.
- Improper evidence collection occurred.
- Proper exams are time consuming.
- Medical professionals fear subpoenas.



Teamwork

- Rape crisis centers, advocacy, specialized training, and teamwork have greatly improved the quality of care for rape victims.
- Be clear about roles.
- Be respectful of roles.





Roles of the Advocate

- Crisis telephone line.
- Medical-evidentiary exam response.
- Law enforcement statement accompaniment.
- Courtroom accompaniment.
- Walk-in crisis intervention.
- Individual, ongoing supportive counseling.
- Support group facilitation.
- Family/significant other supportive counseling.





Confidentiality

- It is her right.
- It gives her control.
- It makes disclosure safe.
- Issues differ for advocates and SANEs:
 - Rape crisis centers in many states have lobbied for legislation so advocates cannot be subpoenaed; advocates must know limits of confidentiality.
 - SANEs expect that everything the victim says can be admitted into evidence.
- Ensure the victim knows limits to confidentiality.





Activity: Law Review Related to Confidentiality

Participant's materials,
pages II-10 through II-11





Maintaining Confidentiality Means . . .

- Not talking to the media.
- Not using the victim's name when discussing with coworkers.
- Not discussing cases with your family.
- Not talking about cases on an elevator or public place.
- Not using any details of cases for training purposes.
- Only showing injury pictures that do not show faces or identifying marks.





Is Advocacy the Right Choice for You?

- Important decision with important rewards.
- Some may be too affected by exposure to violence and trauma.



Survivors as Advocates

- Often become particularly sensitive to fears and concerns of victims and the magnitude of their needs.
- May have had a positive or disappointing experience with the system.
- May seek to continue healing.
- May or may not have greater empathy.
- Wounds may reopen.



Survivors as Advocates: Survivors Are More Likely to Experience Difficulties . . .

- Around the anniversary of their own assault.
- When they encounter a rape experience similar to their own.
- When they encounter a rape experience similar to the rape of someone close to them.
- When they work with a victim who is similar to themselves.





Survivors as Advocates Can . . .

- Wait and try again later.
- Start slowly.
- Ask for assistance or refer out as necessary:
 - Assault circumstances too similar to their own.
 - Personality clash with the victim or her family.
 - Victim's needs that are beyond their ability level.
 - Difficulty maintaining healthy boundaries.
- Make a difference in another way.





Other Program Support Roles

- Legislative advocacy.
- Education in the community or schools.
- Court watch.
- Program evaluation.
- Working with the media.
- Fundraising and grant writing.
- Bookkeeping or secretarial support.

For more information, see pages II-14 through II-17 in the participant's materials.





Reflection Activity

Participant's materials,
page II-17





Module 2

Questions or comments?

