Sexual Assault Advocate/Counselor Training Overview

Training Goal

Sexual Assault Advocate/Counselor Training (SAACT) helps sexual assault advocates/counselors build the basic skills necessary to provide competent, effective crisis intervention services to sexual assault victims/survivors. Participants will learn information and skills related to

- The realities of sexual violence.
- The impact of sexual assault.
- The needs of specific populations.
- Advocacy roles and requirements.
- Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs).
- Responses to victims/survivors during a crisis.
- Prevention of "compassion fatigue."

The training focuses heavily on crisis intervention rather than long-term counseling. The training does not include instruction in group counseling techniques; such techniques require advanced training and experience and are beyond the scope of this basic program.

Target Audience

This training is aimed at first responders and designed primarily for sexual assault advocates/counselors who are volunteers or staff at rape crisis centers. However, the emphasis on understanding the realities, impact, and effects of sexual assault may also make the training useful for nurses (including Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners), physicians, law enforcement officers, and professional counselors who do not have specific sexual assault training. For example, most university-based counselor training programs include little information specific to the needs of sexual assault survivors. This training can augment those programs.

To be most effective and to best use the participatory techniques in the training, limit enrollment to 25 participants.

Trainer Requirements

Trainers for this course should have

- In-depth knowledge of sexual assault advocacy/counseling.
- Practical experience as a sexual assault advocate/counselor.
- Experience conducting training, particularly interactive (instead of lecture-based) programs.

If you are a subject matter expert but a novice trainer, it is highly recommended that you practice each module before the training and refer to a resource such as *The Instant Trainer: Quick Tips on How to Teach Others What You Know* (Charles and Clarke-Epstein, 1997) for tips on successful training.

Length of the Training

Over the course of 2 days, this training will provide a comprehensive introduction to sexual assault advocacy. You may wish to customize the training, choosing a selection of modules to conduct as ½-day, 1-day, or 1½-day training, or to augment a training program you already conduct. Any or all of the modules can be used as part of more extensive training programs, generally consisting of up to 40 hours of instruction, that most organizations require for new sexual assault advocates/counselors.

Customizing the Training

The training modules provide a template to follow. Because laws, procedures, and roles vary from state to state and from organization to organization, you must augment the template with specific local information such as lists of referrals, nearby resources, and a review of state laws and specific policies and procedures for your center or community. The outlines at the beginning of the modules include notes about preparing local information.

The curriculum is designed so that each module stands alone, allowing flexibility to meet the needs of different participants and

environments. Here are some ways you can combine modules to explore specific information and skills in half-days or single days.

- **Understanding Sexual Assault.** To provide a general overview of the realities and impact of sexual assault, you might combine modules 1, 3, 4, and 8. This type of overview might be used for new staff or board members at rape crisis centers, or by medical or legal professionals who are not part of a Sexual Assault Response Team but still interact with victims of sexual assault.
- **Advocacy Roles and Procedures.** To focus specifically on who an advocate is, what she does in specific situations, and how she works as part of a SART, you might combine modules 1, 2, 5, and 8.
- **Preventing Burnout.** To discuss and help prevent burnout, you might combine modules 1, 7, and 8.

Ideally, the first module, *Introductions and Overview*, and the last module, *Wrap-Up and Evaluation*, should be included in all training programs. These modules include participant and trainer introductions, a discussion of participant expectations and outcomes, a review of the training agenda, and an opportunity for participants to evaluate the training. They provide some structure at the beginning and ending of each training.

If you are conducting a shorter version of the training, prepare a customized agenda to reflect the modules you have chosen and the time required to complete them.

Using the Training Materials

This trainer's manual is a template to help trainers prepare for instruction and to guide the delivery of the training. It details the information to be discussed and how to introduce, conduct, and process group activities. It also contains a copy of all visuals, or PowerPoint slides (see the "*Using the Visuals*" section).

Each trainer should draw on her or his own knowledge and expertise to enrich the training and provide relevant examples and illustrations, while maintaining the integrity of the training design. To successfully conduct this training, you should become very familiar with all of the concepts and processing notes in the trainer's and participant's materials. Each time pages in the

participant's materials are referenced in the trainer's materials, turn to the pages that have been referenced and familiarize yourself with the information they contain.

The training consists of eight modules:

Module 1: Introductions and Overview

Module 2: What Is Sexual Assault Advocacy/Counseling?

Module 3: Realities of Sexual Assault

Module 4: Impact of Sexual Assault

Module 5: Procedures in Common Advocacy Situations

Module 6: Recovery Education and Skills Training

Module 7: Compassion Fatigue and Self-Care

Module 8: Wrap-Up and Evaluation

An outline at the beginning of each module includes specific learning objectives, a list of required equipment and materials, preparation instructions, and notification of the time required to complete the module. All information and activities within the modules are presented in a timed sequence and have been chosen to help participants achieve the learning objectives for each module.

This manual is designed with a wide margin on each page, which can be used for your personal notes. The following cues, which appear throughout the manual, are intended to help you determine what to say, when to show slides or vignettes, and when and how to conduct activities:

- The group activity icon in the margin and the ***bold italic type*** indicate directions for you to follow when leading activities.
- The directives "tell participants . . ." or "explain . . ." are used to indicate that the information following the directives should be verbalized to participants. Paraphrase this information as you present comments or brief lectures. You can use the visuals to guide these brief lectures.

- The overhead projector icon and the directive "show visual," followed by a number, means that you should show a specific PowerPoint slide; the text immediately following that directive explains the information contained on the slide.

- The movie camera icon and the directive "show vignette," followed by a number, means that you should show a specific vignette.

Using the Visuals

Use the visuals for this trainng as an outline to guide your activities in each module. The visuals include talking points for use during lectures, as well as cues to conduct an activity, ask for questions from participants, or transition to the next module. The directive "show visual," followed by a number, appears throughout the trainer's manual. Within each module, the visuals are numbered sequentially, starting with visual 1. For clarity, the module number appears on the bottom left corner of each visual and the visual number appears at the bottom center. This allows you to determine, at a glance, both the module number and the number of the particular visual within that module.

If you do not have access to a computer during training, work from the copies of the visuals found in the trainer's and participant manuals.

Using the Vignettes

You may use the vignettes, found in the Presenter's Toolbox section and on relevant training module pages of the SAACT Web site, which is available at www.ovcttac.org, to reinforce instruction and focus your participants' attention during certain group activities and discussion periods. The vignettes are provided as a visual enhancement; if you do not have access to a computer to play the vignettes, the scenarios and activities that the vignettes are based on are still found in written form in the manuals and can be discussed during the training.

The directive "show vignette," followed by a number, is found where applicable throughout the trainer's manual. You can start, stop, rewind, and otherwise control the vignette's animation.

Training Approach

The training design is based on the principles of adult learning and active training. Adults learn best when

- Training focuses on building skills rather than just transferring information.
- They are involved in meaningful activities to practice new skills.
- They can draw on and apply their own knowledge and experience to the training.
- They see the relevance of what they are learning to their jobs and their lives.

The training also incorporates a variety of methods and activities to appeal to visual learners (those who learn best by seeing), auditory learners (those who learn best by hearing), and kinesthetic learners (those who learn best by moving and doing).

Equipment and Materials

Each module includes a list of required equipment and materials. In addition to each module-specific list, the following equipment and materials are used consistently throughout the training:

- Trainer's manual.
- Participant's manuals.
- PowerPoint visuals, copies of which are found in the trainer's manual and which also are available in the Presenter's Toolbox section and on relevant training module pages of the SAACT Web site, which is available at www.ovcttac.org.
- Laptop PC (with PowerPoint) and LCD projector and screen (or blank wall space for projection).
- Flip chart and easel.
- Multicolored, thick markers for use with flip chart; dark colors should be used so participants can see the writing on the flip chart.

- Name tags (for participant and trainer).
- Pens (one per participant).

Room Layout

If at all possible, try to avoid a traditional classroom-style layout (a series of rows, one behind the other) in the training room. This type of layout makes it more difficult for participants to see and hear the trainer and the audiovisual equipment, and to interact with each other. Instead, try to organize the room so participants are seated in a series of small groups. This type of arrangement encourages discussion and participation among participants. Remember that you will need a small table at the front of the room for your training supplies, as well as a larger table for supplementary materials for participants.

Preparation for Training Delivery

In addition to studying this overview and making the preparations described for each module, be sure you visit the training room before the training. Picture the layout of the training room, including location of furniture and audiovisual equipment, and determine if you need any additional tables or chairs. Make sure all electrical outlets are functioning, and check to see if there are shades on the windows (to control any glare on the audiovisual equipment). Test all the equipment to be sure it is functioning properly.