



Succession Planning: Promising Practices for Sexual Assault Response Team Coordinators

Have you ever come into a new job role or maybe brought on in the middle of a project, only to discover there is no historical context or direction as to how to do the job or finish the project? Unfortunately this happens for many Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SART Coordinators) who are new to their role. This is where succession planning comes into play!

What Is Succession Planning and Why Is It Important?

Succession planning is the process of developing a strategy or plan for when people leave their positions so that the next person to come into that role will have all the information necessary to pick up where that individual left off. In the case of a SART Coordinator, having a process like this in place can help avoid uncertainty and help the team keep forward momentum with minimal interruptions as a new SART Coordinator transitions in.

Succession planning supports the departing SART Coordinator, the incoming new SART Coordinator, and the Sexual Assault Response Team as a whole. Thoughtful succession planning: ¹

- Eases the next person's learning curve
- Ensures the focus of the team stays on continuous improvement while also being victim/survivor centered
- Ensures smooth transition for the departing SART Coordinator
- Sets priorities and communicates vision of the team and the team member's roles
- Shares information and retains historical knowledge across team members
- Provides consistency/transparency of goal setting
- Ensures stability of the SART's goals, mission, and vision

¹ Succession planning (2019) NNEDV. Available at: <https://nnedv.org/resources-library/succession-planning/> (Accessed: 30 May 2023).

What Can We Do To Prepare?

Making time for succession planning is important to the efficiency and effectiveness of your whole sexual assault response team.

To begin your planning process for succession planning, the following checklist can help you identify key items to include in your succession plan:

Your Sexual Assault Response Team's mission and vision statement and historical context of the team, such as when the team was established, etc.

SART Coordinator job description with key responsibilities. If this position is funded, include goals, objectives, and deliverables

Information regarding the makeup of the team including contact information with working hours for all team members, information on sub-committees if applicable, and organizational leadership contact for team members

Information regarding any project partners, Memorandum of Understanding partners, or technical assistance providers

Meeting logistics including if the meetings are virtual, hybrid, in-person, days/times, etc.

Access to previous meeting agendas and minutes

Access to shared applications such as Google Docs or SharePoint or any other needed passwords

Any documents such as system mapping or community asset mapping the team has completed

Any policies and procedures the team has implemented including any internal conflict management strategies

If you have a team leadership structure in place, include information on how they might support the transition as well

It can be helpful to think of succession planning as a living document. The document may change over time as policies and practices are updated, new information needs to be added, etc. When done effectively, succession planning can strengthen the culture of your team. With thoughtful succession planning, the leaders of the sexual assault response team or SART Coordinator can continue the embodiment of your team's core values, mission, and vision.

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