

Using A *Ten-Factor Framework for Sexual Assault Response Team Effectiveness* When Supporting LGBTQIA+ Victims/Survivors

Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) can play an important role in supporting victims/survivors and their communities in many different ways.

The Sexual Violence Justice Institute at the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (SVJI @ MNCASA) worked with several SARTs across the country to create [*A Ten-Factor Framework for Sexual Assault Response Team Effectiveness*](#), a report identifying 6 internal characteristics and 4 external characteristics important to SART effectiveness and to support SARTs. Before using this resource, it may be helpful to review that report. This resource supplements the *Ten-Factor Framework Report* and can help provide SARTs guidance for implementing best practices when increasing awareness of the prevalence of sexual assault in the LGBTQIA+ community and to address inconsistencies in response to LGBTQIA+ victims/survivors.

Using the Ten-Factor Framework for Supporting the LGBTQIA+ Community

The Ten-Factor Framework is broken down into 6 internal factors that SARTs can directly control and 4 external factors that SARTs have less control over. There are many creative ways SARTs can use the Ten-Factor Framework to enhance their teams. Below are some best practice suggestions and steps SARTs can take to incorporate inclusion into their work.

Internal Factors

1

SHARED VISION AND MODEL

All SART members agree on the appropriate model for the team including structure, leadership, and decision-making processes. This should also include the SART's purpose, scope of work, future vision, the intended impact on the community, and how the SART plans to be victim centered.



ACTION STEPS FOR SARTS

1. SARTs can evaluate their team values.

- For example, what are your team's values on inclusion of LGBTQIA+ matters? Do you have your values identified and built into your mission and vision statements? Does your mission and vision statement include safety and equality, and challenge intolerance?

2. SARTs can also work to build transparency and inclusivity, not only for victims and survivors but also for team members.

3. Prioritize the use of language that is inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ community and most importantly follow the victim/survivor's lead on how they would like to be addressed.

- For example, practice purposeful information collection. Do your forms only have two check boxes available for gender identification? How relevant is gender to the data you need to collect?

4. Be open and upfront about the limitations of services available.

- Transparency builds trust. For those in the LGBTQIA+ community, coming in contact with system professionals that are not accepting of them is a very real risk and concern.
- Understanding the unique challenges, risks, and issues that LGBTQIA+ members face is critical to providing effective care and support.

2

MULTI- LEVEL LEADERSHIP

Responsibility and power needs to be equitably distributed amongst SART member agencies. Leadership should come from multiple disciplines and interdisciplinary power imbalances should be addressed.

ACTION STEPS FOR SARTS

1. Prioritize a shared leadership approach to the work.

- Create a shared leadership environment by distributing team roles so everyone has a vital part in the system change process (i.e. notetaker, facilitator, co-facilitator etc.).
- Consider bringing in subject matter experts to ensure that your team's efforts to strengthen your approach towards LGBTQIA+ victims/survivors are culturally appropriate and accessible.
- Involve Member Agency Leadership in this process. Having the buy-in and support of local leaders in the LGBTQIA+ community is pivotal in developing and sustaining a successful SART.

3

CULTURE OF LEARNING

SARTs should maintain a culture of learning that emphasizes the importance of seeking to understand the unique context of every situation, documenting, and examining successes and setbacks, identifying emerging strategies, and applying new information to continually improve.

ACTION STEPS FOR SARTS

1. Assess the status quo in your community.

- Utilize MNCASA's [LGBTQIA+ Cultural Humility Readiness Assessment](#) to address inconsistencies in response to LGBTQIA+ victims/survivors (i.e. Does your SART as a whole currently receive regular specialized training on LGBTQIA+ inclusive service delivery and response? Does your SART have established group norms and/or accountability agreements to support the LGBTQIA+ community?)

- Learn about the existing resources available for LGBTQIA+ victims/survivors in your community. Your team can use the MNCASA [Community Resource Mapping](#) tool as a guide.

2. Practice cultural humility on an individual level.

3. Acknowledge systemic trauma and the intersectionality of systemic oppression and prioritize a plan that breaks down the systemic barriers to accessing services.

4

CONTINUAL EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The ongoing cycle of assessing the status quo, making changes based on the assessment, and evaluating the success of those changes is the foundation of the systems change model of SART work. SARTs can evaluate themselves by monitoring the implementation of changes made, assessing gaps and barriers, and conducting surveys, focus groups and case file reviews.

ACTION STEPS FOR SARTS

1. Conduct a community needs assessment or focus group to address the specific needs of the LGBTQIA+ community.

2. Be aware of the economic costs for victims/survivors and your community.

- The victim/survivor may experience loss of employment, have a need for therapy or mental health services, face health care costs and other expenses related to seeking services, but not have the financial means to do so.
- Some states evaluate the cost of sexual assault in their state which allows for them to take a deeper dive into the systemic estimate of the cost of sexual violence in their communities ([The Cost of Rape](#) | National Sexual Violence Resource Center).

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DIVERSE MEMBERSHIP

SARTs that include many disciplines and community members typically thrive, because this encourages members to think beyond the boundaries of their own institutions and disciplines, expands the unique network and points of leverage for collaboration for the team, and may better represent the makeup of the community.

ACTION STEPS FOR SARTS

1. Strive to have team members whose identities reflect the full spectrum of the LGBTQIA+ community being served by the team.

- Advocate for diverse community representation without representatives speaking on behalf of entire populations to avoid tokenization.

2. Cultivate relationships with culturally relevant organizations in your area.

- Who might be missing from the table? How might your team bring forward the voices of survivors from marginalized communities?

3. Collaboration and specialized training with LGBTQIA+ anti-violence programs, local community service programs, local leaders and medical care can strengthen service delivery and ensure the services are culturally relevant and appropriate.

6

EMPHASIS ON RELATIONSHIP AND TEAMWORK

Collaboration is the ultimate vehicle for change in SART work and strong individual and interagency relationships are what make effective collaboration possible.

ACTION STEPS FOR SARTS

1. Prioritize the development of collaborative relationships with LGBTQIA+ Anti-Violence Organizations and invite them to be members of the SART.

2. Another way SARTs can focus on relationships and teamwork as it pertains to the LGBTQIA+ community is to include LGBTQIA+ voices on the SART especially during protocol development and agency policies updates.

3. Consider the development of programs that address gaps in responding to the LGBTQIA+ community.

External Factors

7

CONFIDENT TEAM MEMBERS

SART members need a high level of confidence in their work and to believe they are capable of successfully advocating for systems change within the SART.



ACTION STEPS FOR SARTS

1. Together

- Practice accountability within the team. Encourage each other through mistakes.
- Provide chances for team members to learn from each other.

2. Individually

- Intentionally engage in self-critique and reflexivity to recognize and accept biases and assumptions.
- Take accountability for our individual mistakes.
- Engage in mindful active listening where team members ask genuine open-ended questions of the people they encounter to better understand.

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SUPPORTIVE MEMBER AGENCIES

Support from member agencies is essential for the SART to maintain team cohesion, achieve its goals, and create meaningful systems change. Member agencies should support the team by allocating time and resources to SART goals and activities by signing a Memoranda of Understanding to formalize the partnership.

ACTION STEPS FOR SARTS

- 1. Consider ways to compensate community members for their time as unlike other members of the team, community members may not have the benefit of being in a position that pays for their time and travel.**
- 2. Encourage team members to maintain a strong feedback loop with discipline leadership and the SART's projects and activities.**

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ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND NETWORKING

SARTs often attend or facilitate trainings and conferences to pinpoint current challenges, address new opportunities to create system change, and learn from other teams doing similar work.

ACTION STEPS FOR SARTS

- 1. Seek out the most up-to-date information from technical assistance providers to ensure your team is implementing best practices around trauma informed services and culturally appropriate LGBTQIA+ victim/survivor support.**
- 2. Be aware of the jurisdiction that your team serves and the potential gaps in service particularly in rural areas.**
- 3. Reach out to agencies who specifically provide services for victim/survivors that identify as LGBTQIA+.**

SARTs must have support and involvement from their communities, not just the disciplines involved in sexual violence response. Community engagement should regularly involve the community for input and team membership and can include victims/survivors, community leaders, culturally specific communities, faith leaders, and more.

ACTION STEPS FOR SARTS

- 1. Work with LGBTQIA+ members to help inform local and state leaders about the importance of supporting LGBTQIA+ victims/survivors addressing barriers etc.**
- 2. Work to increase community engagement and integration in a variety of different ways such as increasing local awareness about how different forms of historical trauma experienced by those in the LGBTQIA+ community contribute to sexual assault.**
- 3. Provide community wide engagement opportunities include social activities and discussion groups or focus groups, presentations by various speakers, workshops via Zoom in an effort to boost involvement from the community on culturally relevant issues.**

ABOUT MINNESOTA COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

The Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA) is a statewide coalition driving transformative culture change to address sexual violence through advocacy, prevention, racial justice, and systems change and policy.

ABOUT THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE JUSTICE INSTITUTE

The Sexual Violence Justice Institute at MNCASA provides expertise in the criminal justice and community response to sexual violence. System change—in protocol, procedures, and routine practice—is a key element to improving the response to sexual violence. We work with communities to create a comprehensive, victim-centered response through multidisciplinary collaborations, leadership development, training, and technical assistance.

We envision a world free of sexual violence in which all human beings are treated with dignity and respect and communities are transformed through safety, healing, and partnerships.

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