LAUNCHING YOUR SART

A Comprehensive Toolkit for Sexual Assault Response Teams

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2024 Revisions by Heather Blanton and Madeline Gonser

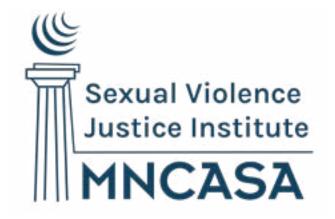Sexual Violence Justice Institute

MNCASA

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Acknowledgements

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This document is a product of the Sexual Violence Justice Institute (SVJI) at the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault. SVJI provides intensive support through trainings and technical assistance to multidisciplinary teams, communities, and state level leaders in Minnesota and other parts of the U.S.

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2024 Revisions

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

In 2024, SVJI at MNCASA recognized the need for the toolkit to include information about diversifying SART team membership and community engagement.

This toolkit was originally called The Sexual Assault Response Team Starter Kit: A Guide for New SART Teams but has been updated to reflect a name change and revisions. To provide SART teams with information that goes beyond the basics of starting a sexual assault response team, the toolkit now includes information about strategic planning, developing goals and objectives, succession planning, and onboarding processes for new team members.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to thank those who were involved in the 2024 revisions to this guidebook.

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Introduction

ABOUT THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE JUSTICE INSTITUTE AT THE MINNESOTA COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

This toolkit is a product of the Sexual Violence Justice Institute (SVJI) at the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA). SVJI uses a systems change approach to support communities in improving systems' responses and the outcomes for victims/survivors of sexual violence. Systems change in routine practices, protocols, and procedures is a key element to improving the response to sexual violence. The SVJI team works with communities to create a comprehensive, victim/survivor-centered response through multidisciplinary collaborations, leadership development, training, and technical assistance.

ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAMS

Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) play a powerful role in improving the collective response to sexual violence through increasing access to healing and justice. SART members typically include victim advocates, health care providers, law enforcement, prosecutors, and local human and social service organizations, and any other primary disclosure points. In the context of SART teams, "primary disclosure points" refer to the various places or contexts where victims/survivors might disclose their experiences. These primary disclosure points often represent the first step in a victim/survivor seeking help and accessing support.

Each of these team members represents the diversity of experience and expertise specific to their community. SARTs that engage in systems change promote victim/survivor-centered responses to sexual violence through increased collaboration, education, and lasting improvements across disciplines.

Communities may have several reasons for forming a SART, including:

• Meeting an identified need within the community.
• Fulfilling a funding requirement.
• Fulfilling a legislative mandate.
• Strengthening relationships between service providers.
• Formalizing processes and relationships that are already in place.

SARTs are one strategy that communities can use to respond to sexual violence. SVJI believes that, through the work of SARTs, meaningful change in the response to sexual violence is possible. SARTs, at all stages of development, focus their efforts to prioritize

victims'/survivors' needs, hold offenders accountable, and promote public safety.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

Forming a SART can seem like an overwhelming task, and the amount of information and resources available can be intimidating. SVJI has developed this toolkit to provide a clear, concise resource for new SARTs to begin their work and for established SARTs to continue a path to success.

The toolkit provides an overview of the processes involved in forming a SART. While it does not cover all issues and considerations related to SART work, it includes links and additional resources for further information on various topics. This toolkit serves as a general starting point for new SARTs, focusing on the preparation and formation of the team. It is designed to be adaptable to your community's unique resources, needs, and service area.

WHO SHOULD USE IT

This toolkit is intended for multidisciplinary teams at any stage of development, whether newly forming, revitalizing, or well-established. While it offers guidance for teams seeking to improve their collaborative response to sexual violence, veteran teams may also find this toolkit helpful for refining practices and integrating advanced topics beyond the foundational stages.

WHAT IS INCLUDED

This toolkit provides foundational knowledge and tools and is divided into five primary sections:

- Foundations
- Readiness
- Starting
- Beyond the Basics
- Looking Toward the Future

Each section offers an overview of essential concepts and key questions to help communities consider local implementation. Sections also contain a list of accompanying tools and resources in the appendices section to further advance the work of team formation and function.

Foundations

TYPES OF SARTS

A Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) is a multidisciplinary collaboration that brings together professionals addressing sexual violence to improve the local response to victims/survivors. Some communities use different names and acronyms for these teams, such as Sexual Assault Interagency Council (SAIC) or Sexual Assault Protocol Team (SAPT), but their fundamental purpose remains the same: to enhance coordination and response to sexual violence in a specific service area.

OVERVIEW

- TYPES OF SARTS
- DEFINING SYSTEMS CHANGE
  - What Makes SARTs Effective?
- COLLABORATION
- KEY QUESTIONS
- TOOLS AND RESOURCES

There are two primary types of multidisciplinary teams: acute response and systems focused. Acute response teams handle individual cases and often function as active case management units. Systems-focused response teams concentrate on identifying patterns across all individuals, agencies, and systems involved in the response. While acute response teams play a crucial role in many communities, this toolkit is designed with systems-focused response teams in mind.

A systems-focused SART is a long-term, comprehensive approach to addressing all aspects of the community's response to sexual violence. These teams focus on the big picture, reviewing existing protocols and procedures within and across disciplines to address service gaps or barriers. The ultimate goal is to enhance the overall response to sexual violence and improve outcomes for all victims/survivors.

If your team is currently organized and operating as an acute response team but would like to shift to a system-focused response team, more information is provided in the Looking Toward the Future section.

DEFINING SYSTEMS CHANGE

A system is a group of things working towards a common goal. For instance, the respiratory system consists of organs working together to facilitate breathing. Similarly, the community response to sexual violence can be viewed as a system, made up of individual disciplines and service providers, each playing a unique and

vital role. SARTs often operate within the criminal legal system, helping victims/survivors find justice and holding offenders accountable.

Systems change involves improving the response to sexual violence at individual, agency, and interagency levels. It includes enhancing individual practices, agency policies, system procedures, and interagency collaboration.

This means systems-focused SARTs concentrate on:

- Strengthening individual practices, agency policies, systems procedures, and interagency collaboration.
- Addressing shortcomings in individual practices, agency policies, systems procedures, and interagency collaboration.
- Ensuring support and engagement for victims/survivors throughout all processes.
- Continuously improving as resources, laws, and local realities evolve.

Systems change is cyclical, adapting to changes in resources, laws, promising practices, and local realities.

SVJI's continuous improvement process involves three phases:

ASSESS THE STATUS QUO: IDENTIFYING CURRENT PRACTICES AND GAPS

Examples

- Resource Mapping: Take inventory of existing service providers by evaluating the availability and accessibility of resources for victims/survivors.
- Victim/Survivor Feedback: Bring in the voices of victims/survivors through various methods such as feedback forms, surveys, interviews.
- Community Engagement: Conduct a Community Needs Assessment to gauge perceptions of sexual violence response in the community.

MAKE CHANGE: DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING CHANGES TO MEET IDENTIFIED NEEDS

Examples

- Improve Coordinated Response to Sexual Violence: Develop/revise interagency protocol.

- Training Needs Assessment: Identify training needs (knowledge/skills).
- Program Initiatives: Create programs/tools/resources.

MEASURE THE CHANGE: EVALUATING CHANGES TO ENSURE
THEY ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULTS

Examples

- Barrier Analysis: Identify and analyze barriers to the implementation of changes and use findings to make continuous improvements to protocols.
- Evaluation Procedures: Survey, Focus Groups, Case File Review.
- Continuous Improvement Model: Monitor implementation of change.

By planning for implementation and evaluation from the start, SARTs can ensure that changes are effective and long-lasting, maintaining focus and stability through inevitable changes and turnover. The process of system change is ongoing and cyclical, requiring continuous evaluation and adjustment to remain effective.

What Makes SARTs Effective?

This toolkit aims to help teams be effective and impactful from the onset. Through rigorous national research, SVJI identified ten common characteristics of effective systems-focused SARTs. The ten characteristics are divided into six internal characteristics, these are factors that SARTs can directly control, and four external characteristics, which are key factors SARTs need to be successful but are not always within the team's control.

The ten characteristics include:

Internal Factors

- Shared vision and model
- Multi-level leadership
- Culture of learning
- Continual improvement
- Diverse membership
- Value relationships and teamwork

External Factors

- Confident team members
- Supportive member agencies
- Access to resources and networking
- Community support and involvement

To learn more about the ten characteristics for effective SARTs, read A Ten Factor Framework for Sexual Assault Response Team Effectiveness.

COLLABORATION

For this toolkit, collaboration means bringing together people or organizations to work toward a common goal. Effective collaboration expands knowledge about how different disciplines respond to sexual violence. This knowledge is a catalyst for systems change and improving practice, policy, and procedures for a more supportive response for victims/survivors. Successful collaboration requires significant time and energy, and a strong commitment from all represented agencies. Effective SARTs improve interagency communication, reducing confusion and frustration for victims/survivors navigating the response system.

The term "collaboration" is often interchanged with cooperation and coordination. However, for the purposes of a SART, it is necessary to make these distinctions:

Term	Characteristics
COOPERATION	• No formal processes are created and followed. • Entities broadly understand each other's roles and may engage occasionally when necessary.
COORDINATION	• Team members have discussed how they should engage. • No sustainability system in place. • Formalized relationships may exist (i.e. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)).
COLLABORATION	• Team members work together to contribute to overall team goals. • MOUs are established and reviewed regularly. • Meetings are scheduled monthly. • Evaluation and impact are considered. • Feedback loop is open and active.

To achieve true collaboration, SART members and their agencies must build relationships of trust and respect. This involves honest feedback, commitment to changing ineffective practices, and redefining success. Skipping this process often hinders addressing underlying issues, barriers, and biases causing system breakdowns.

Barriers to successful collaboration include:

- Competing goals and values (personal, organizational, discipline-specific).
- Poor or unclear communication practices between individuals and agencies.
- Tension between individuals, agencies, or disciplines.
- Logistical challenges around time, location, and duration of meetings.

As a newly formed team, it is essential to work with your team members and their agencies to find solutions to these common barriers.

KEY QUESTIONS

Below are some key questions to get you and your team started in these discussions.

- Current Collaborations: How are agencies in your community already working together to address sexual violence or related forms of gender-based violence (e.g. sexual exploitation, domestic violence, child protection, etc.)?
- Identify Obstacles: What obstacles have multidisciplinary partners encountered due to the absence or ineffectiveness of a SART?
- Identify Benefits: How would victims/survivors benefit from a systems-change SART?
- Shared Understanding: Do key agencies and players share a common understanding of the SART's expectations and scope?

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Appendix A: Sexual Assault Response Teams and System Change

Readiness

DETERMINING READINESS

Before embarking on systems-focused SART work, consider the unique challenges and conditions of your community. Factors such as high tensions, remoteness, or other community-specific issues may affect the practicality of a typical SART. While success cannot be guaranteed, answering the following questions will help determine your community's readiness and next steps.

QUESTIONS TO
ASSESS READINESS:

Is your community committed to this work?

- Successful teams share an understanding of the need for a sexual violence response in the community. Stakeholders, including potential team members like law enforcement and advocacy programs, must be committed to the systems change process.
- Ensure key community players understand the team's goals and the resources required for success.
- Many communities formalize these commitments through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), discussed in the next section of this toolkit.

How knowledgeable are existing and/or proposed team members about sexual violence?

- While it's beneficial for SART members to have a strong knowledge base about sexual violence, it's more crucial to assess their current understanding and willingness to learn.
- It is also important to assess the knowledge base and attitudes of potential team members. This can help determine if this is the right time for a team to form or if

there are beliefs that exist within key agencies that would need to be addressed before starting a team.

- An example of this would be if a key agency, such as law enforcement, believed that sexual violence is always the fault of the victim/survivor. In this situation, focus on strengthening relationships and understanding sexual violence dynamics before forming a systems-focused SART.

What resources in your community can be used in this work?

- Consider factors such as time commitment, meeting space, community size, and distance between agencies. Identify any existing multidisciplinary collaborations that could support SART work.
- Determine if there are teams already engaged in the systems change work you're hoping to achieve.
- Consider if additional funding is needed to support this collaboration and explore potential funding sources.

SVJI's Team Readiness Assessment can assist in answering these questions and planning your next steps. More details are available in Appendix B.

CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Once confident in your community's readiness, start the planning process for forming a SART.

Building Team Membership

SART members have specific roles and responsibilities. SART members are liaisons between their home agencies and the SART team. SART members also play a significant role in communicating and implementing changes at their home agency based on SART team decisions. They serve as subject matter experts representing their agencies, and bridge communication between the SART and their agencies. Ideally, SARTs include membership from the following five key disciplines:

- Victim Advocates (Community-Based and System-Based)
- Law Enforcement
- Health Professionals
- Prosecution
- Corrections and Probation (for some communities)

Additional representatives from other primary disclosure points, such as mental health professionals, colleges/universities, other non-profits, culturally specific organizations, and faith communities, are also beneficial. Membership should reflect the community's makeup, ensuring engagement with culturally specific communities and agencies from the beginning. This inclusion ensures the community's response meets the needs of all victims/survivors.

Diversifying SART Team Membership

Intentional efforts are needed to ensure diverse representation within the SART team.

Strategies for Diversification:

- Assess Community Demographics: Understanding the demographic composition of the community, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and other relevant factors can be a great first step in the diversification process.
- Outreach Efforts: Actively recruit members from diverse backgrounds through targeted outreach efforts that reach demographic groups.
- Community Partnerships: Collaborate with local organizations and leaders representing diverse communities to identify and encourage potential candidates.
- Visibility and Representation: Emphasize the importance of diversity and highlight the diverse backgrounds of current members to attract a broader range of potential team members.
- Continuous Evaluation and Improvement: Regularly evaluate the diversity of the team and assess effectiveness of diversity initiatives, adjusting as needed to ensure ongoing progress towards reflective membership.

BUILDING TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN YOUR SART

Effective change requires teams to operate from a place of mutual trust and respect. Team members need to communicate openly and honestly to address key tensions and conflicts productively. While traditional team-building activities can help, relationship-building often begins with taking the time to get to know one another and building rapport. Formalizing relationships through structured processes, discussed in the Starting Section, can also help secure buy-in and set the stage for solid relationships.

Building trust within your SART is crucial for effective collaboration and support for victims/survivors. Here are some activities and strategies to help build trust within the team:

ADDRESS HISTORICAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION MISTRUST AND HARM:

- Begin by recognizing the historical mistrust and harm that may exist in the team. This includes understanding the roots of the mistrust, previous conflicts, or systemic issues that have affected team members.
- Create opportunities for safe spaces where team members can discuss past conflicts that may have affected their trust in the team.
- Develop and implement restorative practices aimed at healing and rebuilding trust within the team. This could involve team building exercises focused on reconciliation or ongoing efforts to rebuild trust through consistent actions.

REGULAR TRAINING AND EDUCATION:

- Conduct joint training sessions on trauma-informed response, legal procedures, and other relevant topics to ensure all team members have a shared understanding and knowledge base.
- Invite experts to provide insights and updates on promising practices in sexual violence response.

TEAM BUILDING EXERCISES:

- Organize team building activities such as retreats or social gatherings to strengthen interpersonal relationships and foster a sense of camaraderie.
- Engage in activities that require collaboration and problem solving to build trust and improve communication.

OPEN COMMUNICATION CHANNELS:

- Establish regular meetings (i.e. weekly or monthly) where team members can discuss concerns and provide updates.
- Create a space for open dialogue, where team members feel comfortable expressing their opinions and suggestions without fear of judgement.

ROLE CLARIFICATION AND MUTUAL RESPECT:

- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each team member to avoid misunderstandings and ensure everyone knows their contributions are valid.
- Foster an environment of mutual respect, where all members acknowledge and appreciate the expertise and perspectives each person brings to the team.

COLLABORATIVE DECISION-MAKING:

- Encourage a collaborative approach to decision-making, where team members work together to develop and implement strategies for supporting victims/survivors.
- Ensure that all voices are heard and considered in the decision-making process.

CELEBRATE TEAM SUCCESSES:

- Acknowledge and celebrate team milestones such as protocol launches, tough case reviews, or successful trainings.
- Use quick practices like shoutouts or impact quotes to highlight contributions.
- Recognize not just outcomes but also the trust, collaboration, and care it took to achieve them.

Building Trust and Relationships Within Your Community

Building trust and relationships within your community is as crucial as fostering them within your SART team. Addressing historic mistrust of the system, particularly in urban areas, requires a multifaceted approach that acknowledges past injustices and works towards building meaningful relationships and partnerships.

Here are a few strategies SARTs can utilize to address historic mistrust and build community relationships:

DEVELOP SART PROTOCOL OR COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS:

- Establish protocols or community outreach programs to bridge the gap between law enforcement and urban communities. This assists in fostering trust through transparent communication and consistent collaboration.
- Utilize SVJI's Sexual Assault Team Protocol Template to assist your team in developing a protocol to improve the experience of victims/survivors of sexual violence in your community.
- Regularly share updates, success stories, and areas of improvement with the community.

It is important to note that a SART is not necessarily the right fit for every community. Some communities may not have the capacity to convene a comprehensive multidisciplinary team. If a SART is not right for your community, you may consider other types of collaborations. There are many ways to create meaningful improvements in the response to sexual assault even if a traditional SART is not currently possible. Please reach out to SVJI if you want help thinking about what might work in your community!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION:

- Address mistrust of the criminal justice system head-on by highlighting efforts to improve responsiveness to immigrant, BIPOC, and LGBTQ populations.
- Host town hall meetings and informational sessions that educate the community about SART's efforts and resources available to them.

CREATE CONFIDENTIALITY PROTOCOLS:

- Emphasize confidentiality and safety for undocumented victims/survivors seeking sexual assault examinations.
- Ensure that all community members understand these protocols to reduce fear and encourage them to seek help without apprehension.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND TRAINING:

- Provide training for law enforcement, other agencies, and SART members on cultural humility. This training should cover the importance of understanding and respecting diverse cultural backgrounds and the impact of cultural humility on building trust.

TAILORED OUTREACH PROGRAMS:

- Develop programs that intentionally consider the unique cultural backgrounds of various communities. These programs should involve community leaders and influencers to enhance credibility and acceptance.

Some states provide advocate privilege. Please refer to your local jurisdiction's guidance on advocate privilege.

IMPLEMENTING BEST PRACTICES:

- Utilize SVJI's Ten Factor Framework for SART Effectiveness When Supporting LGBTQ Victims/Survivors to assist your team in increasing awareness of sexual violence impacting LGBTQ communities and addressing response inconsistencies.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIES:

- Engage with Community Leaders and Organizations:

  - Build partnerships with community leaders, religious organizations, non-profits, and advocacy groups. Collaborate on events and initiatives to address sexual violence and create a network of allies who support SART's mission.

- Host Listening Sessions:

  - Organize listening sessions where community members can voice their concerns, experiences, and suggestions. Use this feedback to adapt and improve SART protocols and outreach efforts.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT:

- Empower Community Advocates:

  - Train and empower community members to become advocates and liaisons between SART and the community. These advocates can help disseminate information, provide support to victims/survivors, and bridge gaps in communication.

- Support Community-Led Initiatives:

  - Back initiatives led by community members that aim to prevent sexual violence and support victims/survivors. Providing resources and support to these initiatives demonstrates SART's commitment to community-driven change.

Team Member and Agency Communication Feedback Loop

SART members, while bringing their individual expertise to the table, represent their agencies. This means participating agencies must grant the team member the authority to represent their agency's viewpoints and priorities. SARTs are most effective when there is a mix of frontline responders and administrators on the team. You will want to consider which representation makes the most sense for each agency involved. It is also important to identify how information is being relayed from the SART meetings back to team member agencies.

The Importance of Feedback Loops

- Improving Effectiveness: Feedback allows team members and their agencies to share insights and suggestions for improving processes, protocols, and strategies, leading to more effective response efforts.
- Enhancing Collaboration: Open communication fosters collaboration and strengthens partnerships between team members and agencies, enabling them to work together more efficiently toward shared goals.
- Identifying Challenges: Feedback helps identify challenges and barriers faced by team members and their agencies in their work, allowing for proactive problem-solving and resource allocation.
- Building Trust: A transparent feedback loop process builds trust and mutual respect among team members and their agencies, creating a supportive and collaborative work environment.

SART Team Member and Agency Communication Feedback Loop

Strategies for Effective Communication Feedback Loops

REGULAR REPORTING MECHANISMS:

- Structured Reports: Implement regular structured reporting mechanisms, such as monthly or quarterly reports, where SART members summarize key points, decisions, and actions from meetings. These reports should be disseminated to all relevant stakeholders within their agencies.
- Meeting Summaries: Provide concise meeting summaries or minutes that capture essential discussions, decisions, and action items. Ensure these summaries are easily accessible to all team members and their agencies.

DESIGNATED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS:

- Liaison Roles: Assign designated liaisons within each agency responsible for maintaining ongoing communication with the SART representative. This helps streamline the flow of information and ensures consistency.

FEEDBACK COLLECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- Surveys: Periodically distribute surveys or questionnaires to SART members and their agencies to gather feedback on the effectiveness of the team's activities, communication processes, and areas for improvement.
- Feedback Sessions: Hold regular feedback sessions after initiatives to reflect on what worked well and what could be improved. Encourage open and honest dialogue during these sessions.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING:

- Communication Skills Training: Offer training sessions focused on effective communication skills, including active listening, constructive feedback, and conflict resolution. This ensures that all team members are equipped to engage in meaningful dialogue.
- Joint Workshops: Conduct joint workshops or training sessions involving SART members and their respective agencies to build a shared understanding of goals, processes, and expectations.

SART Member and Community Partner Buy-In

Creating buy-in from SART team members and community partners is crucial for effective collaboration and response. Building community buy-in from diverse

partners requires a tailored approach that acknowledges and responds to the unique perspectives, needs, and concerns of each group.

Strategies to Achieve Buy-In from Diverse Partners and Community Members:

ESTABLISHING COMMON GOALS:

- Create Shared Vision:

  - Identify SART Benefits: Emphasize how participation in the SART benefits each partner, such as improving community safety, enhancing service delivery, and gaining access to additional resources.

FOSTERING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS:

- Develop Personal Connections:

  - Foster Trust: Build personal relationships with key stakeholders to foster trust and open lines of communication.

- Create Opportunities for Collaboration:

  - Aligning Interests: Develop joint initiatives or projects that align with the interests and strengths of different partners.

DEMONSTRATING VALUE AND IMPACT:

- Provide Data and Metrics:

  - Demonstrate System Impact: Share data and metrics that demonstrate the impact of the SART's work, such as improved outcomes for victims/survivors or increased reporting rates.

- Share Success Stories:

  - Positive Impacts: A great way to utilize the voices of victims/survivors and community partners is by having them share testimonials to illustrate the positive impact of their experience and collaboration.

Diversifying Community Engagement and Outreach

Diverse community engagement brings a variety of perspectives and experiences to the table, enriching discussions, and decision-making processes within the SART. This broader perspective must also include the voices of victims/survivors.

Strategies Your SART Can Utilize to Expand and Diversify Community Engagement:

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

- Create Informational Materials:

  - Highlight Benefits: Develop materials that emphasize the benefits of SART participation for potential community partners and members. This will help demonstrate the positive impact SART activities and their individual involvement have on the community and victims/survivors.
  - Success Stories: Highlight success stories where diverse community engagement has led to positive outcomes. These narratives can inspire and motivate new partners to join the effort.

- Tailored Messaging:

  - Connect with Specific Concerns: Develop messaging and materials that resonate with the specific concerns and priorities of diverse communities. Use language and imagery that are inclusive and reflective of the community's diversity.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS:

- Engage Community Leaders:

  - Identify Community Leaders: Identify and engage respected community leaders and influencers who can champion the cause of sexual violence response within their communities. Their endorsement of the SART can enhance credibility and trust.
  - Regular Consultations: Conduct regular consultations with these community leaders to understand their perspectives and involve them in the SART decision-making process.

DEMONSTRATING COMMITMENT AND TRANSPARENCY:

- Commitment to Inclusivity:

  - Diverse Representation: Ensure that the SART team itself is representative of the community's diversity. This demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and helps build trust.
  - Transparency: Maintain transparency in all SART operations and decision-making processes.

OFFERING TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING:

Offer training and capacity-building opportunities to community partners. This not only enhances their ability to contribute effectively but also demonstrates SART's investment in their growth and development.

CREATING FEEDBACK AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

Create regular feedback mechanisms, such as surveys, focus groups, and town hall meetings, to gather input from community partners and members. Use this feedback to improve SART strategies and operations.

RECOGNIZING AND VALUING CONTRIBUTIONS:

Establish recognition programs to acknowledge the contributions of community partners and members. This can include awards, public acknowledgments, and feature stories in newsletters or reports.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS:

- Long-Term Sustained Engagement:

  - Sustainable Partnerships: Focus on building long-term partnerships rather than one-time collaborations. Regularly check in with community partners and involve them in ongoing initiatives.

- Joint Projects:

  - Supportive Goals and Resources: Develop joint projects with community partners that address shared goals and support each other's strengths and resources.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING:

- Assess Impact:

  - Continuous Improvement: Regularly assess the impact of community engagement efforts. Use metrics and feedback to evaluate what is working and where improvements are needed.

- Adjust Strategies:

  - Evaluation Results and Feedback: Be willing to adjust strategies based on evaluation results and feedback from community partners.
  For additional information on evaluation, see: Are We Making A Difference? Sexual Assault Response Teams Assessing Systems Change

Role of the Coordinator

An effective SART often hinges on the presence of a dedicated team coordinator. This individual, typically selected from one of the member agencies, plays a critical role in guiding and supporting the team. It is essential for the SART coordinator to act as a neutral party during team meetings, rather than as a representative of their agency, to ensure unbiased facilitation and direction of the team's efforts.

Responsibilities of the SART Coordinator

- Facilitation and Leadership: The coordinator leads and facilitates team meetings, ensuring that discussions remain focused and productive. They maintain a collaborative and respectful environment where all team members feel heard and valued.
- Communication: Serving as the primary point of contact, the coordinator addresses questions and disseminates information about the team's work. This includes updating team members on progress, upcoming meetings, and relevant resources.
- Task Management: The coordinator tracks the team's tasks and progress, ensuring that action items are completed, and deadlines are met. This involves coordinating with various agencies and members to keep the team on track.

Determining the SART Coordinator

The selection of a team coordinator is often influenced by the team's funding source and the agency receiving the funding for SART leadership. However, without

dedicated funding, teams must identify an agency willing to support the additional workload of coordination. Key factors in this decision include:

- Funding and Resources: Availability of funding for coordination activities.
- Staff Capacity: Availability of staff within the agency to take on the coordinator role.
- Interagency Relationships: Existing relationships and collaboration with other agencies.
- Meeting Logistics: Availability of suitable meeting space and logistical support.

Role of the Facilitator

In addition to having a designated coordinator, SARTs benefit from having an effective facilitator. The facilitator ensures meetings are structured and focused, helps mediate conflicts, and promotes open communication among team members. While the SART coordinator often fulfills this role, alternative arrangements can include:

- Rotating Facilitator: In some communities, the facilitation role rotates among team members to encourage broader participation and buy-in.
- Standing Facilitator or Co-Facilitators: Some teams appoint a permanent facilitator or use a co-facilitator model to leverage the strengths of different team members.
- Community Dynamics: Choosing facilitators based on community respect and influence, especially if the coordinator is new to the community, to enhance credibility and effectiveness.

Regardless of the chosen coordination and facilitation structure, it is crucial to regularly assess and adjust based on the team's evolving needs.

KEY QUESTIONS

To ensure effective coordination and facilitation, consider the following questions:

- Sustainability: Is your community able to sustain a SART and what people/ resources are needed for such activities?
- Inclusivity: Are there any key people or organizations missing from the team? Who else needs to be involved to build a culturally responsive system that meets the needs of all victims/survivors in your community?
- Coordination: What agency is best positioned to take on the coordination of your community's SART work?

- Role Understanding: How will team members learn about one another's roles and obligations?
- Resource Availability: What resources are available to support this work?

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Appendix B: Team Readiness Assessment
Appendix C: Considerations for Team Formation

Starting

SETTING THE STAGE BEFORE YOUR FIRST MEETING

After assessing readiness and completing initial planning, it's time to transition into the concrete work of forming a SART. Start by bringing together the identified key players at the time and place that accommodates most members for the first meeting. When planning the agenda, it's tempting to dive into systems change, protocol creation, or case review. However, it's crucial to first establish a strong foundation for collaboration and communication.

INITIAL PREPARATIONS

The early stages are critical, and every little detail is key. Establish agreements on how the team will operate. While it's helpful to consider what has worked in other communities, tailor these agreements to suit your team's unique needs.

Key considerations include:

- Meeting Logistics: Determine dates, location, frequency, and duration of meetings.
- Information Sharing: Decide how information will be shared among team members and participating agencies.
- Decision-Making Process: Establish how decisions will be made. To ensure effective and productive meetings, identify which tasks require the entire team's involvement and which can be handled by individuals or subcommittees.
- Roles and Responsibilities: Define the roles, responsibilities, and expectations

of individual team members and agencies, including the expected time commitment outside of meetings. These are often formalized through memorandums of understanding (MOUs).

INITIAL MEETINGS

The first meeting marks the beginning of your team's collaborative journey. This is a critical point to set the tone, establish team norms and values, and develop a shared understanding of the team's work. Some team members may be unsure of the SART's value or their role in it. Use the first meeting to create buy-in and clarify the team's purpose. Have a concrete plan for the meeting and share the agenda in advance.

Key agenda items for the first meeting should include:

• Detailed Introductions: Each team member should provide an overview of their role in the system's response to sexual violence. This is important even if team members are familiar with each other, as it highlights the unique role of each discipline and the connections between systems.
• Contact Information: Compile and share a list of team members and their contact information.
• Meeting Logistics: Establish processes and logistics, ideally setting a standing date, time, and location for future meetings.
• Next Steps and Action Items: Plan for next steps and assign action items from the meeting.

Depending on your team's dynamics, you may need to adjust the agenda. Allow yourself and your team some grace and understanding that it may take multiple meetings to address some of these initial key agenda items.

SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS

In the first few meetings, cover essential tasks such as:

• Rules of Conduct: Gain agreement on rules of conduct, decision-making processes, shared norms, values, and a conflict resolution protocol.
• Utilize SVJI's Building Bridges: Conflict Resolution Protocols for Sexual Assault Response Teams to assist your team in developing a strategy to address conflict and tension within your team.
• Scope and Mission: Reach an initial agreement on the team's overall scope and mission.
• Knowledge Assessment: Determine the knowledge base of team members regarding sexual violence issues and the response.

- Community Assessment: Explore current realities of sexual violence in your community.
- System Mapping: Map the current system response.

Be prepared with additional topics or discussions to build momentum, establish a routine, and lay a strong foundation for ongoing work.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS DURING TEAM FORMATION

While many aspects are critical in the early stages, focus on formalizing commitments and developing your team's mission and vision statements.

Formalizing Commitments

Systemic changes in response to sexual violence require multi-level leadership and agency buy-in. Formal agreements help hold member agencies accountable to the team process and outcomes. These agreements should include commitments to:

- Allocate resources and staff time to support their agency's role on the team.
- Grant individual representatives the authority to fully participate in the team process as an agency representative.
- Take steps to fully implement and evaluate changes adopted by the team.

Formal commitments can take various forms, such as Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or Interagency Agreements. Alternatively, some teams may prefer a less formal approach, creating agreed-upon standards for group members. The important thing is to develop a consistent set of expectations for each member. A sample MOU is available in Appendix E.

When creating an MOU, the core elements to include are:

- History
- Purpose
- Role of Agencies
- Team Member Roles and Responsibilities
- Resources/Obligations
- Signatures of Decision Makers

Developing Your Team's Mission and Vision Statement

One of the initial tasks is to develop a mission statement and an accompanying vision statement. These statements serve as the anchor for the team, defining and guiding its work, providing accountability parameters, and communicating the team's direction and focus.

MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement answers the following questions:

1. Who are you?

• Core Identity: Identify the group or team and describe the service area. (e.g., "[County Name] County Sexual Assault Response Team").

2. What do you do?

• Purpose and Values: Articulate the team's end goal (e.g., "Increase access to specialized services and support, and improve the multidisciplinary response").

3. Who benefits?

• Audience: Focus on the main population served (e.g., "victims/survivors of sexual violence").

CRAFTING YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

To create a compelling mission statement, consider the following elements:

• Inspirational: Consider the positive impact your SART team wants to make in the community.
• Clear and Concise: Aim for a statement that is easy to remember and repeat, that centers on your team's work and purpose.
• Present-Based: Think about the current impact of your team's work and why your team exists.

EXAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT:

Putting the previous examples together, a mission statement might read like this:

> "The [County Name] County Sexual Assault Response Team increases access to specialized services and support and improve the multidisciplinary response for victims/survivors of sexual violence."

A mission statement typically changes very little over time. While mission statements should be revisited occasionally to ensure relevance, their overarching purpose remains to improve the system's response to sexual violence. It is worthwhile to revisit the mission on occasion to ensure it is still relevant and meaningful.

VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement answers the following questions:

1. What is the long-term change that will be realized because of your SART?

- Purpose: A vision statement expresses the long-term change your SART aims to achieve. It reflects your SART's aspirations and describes what success will look like.
- Focus: Envision the ideal outcome of your SART team's efforts. What significant impacts and improvements do you aim for in the community's response to sexual violence?

2. Where is this SART going?

- Future Goals: Describe the ultimate goals and accomplishments of your SART. Contemplate where your SART will be in 5-10 years.
- Direction: The vision statement should provide a clear direction, outlining the progress and specific improvements your SART will make in addressing and responding to sexual violence cases.
- Alignment: Ensure your vision statement aligns with the core values and principles the team has established. This alignment will guide your SART toward a cohesive and focused future.

CRAFTING YOUR VISION STATEMENT

To create a compelling vision statement, consider the following elements:

- Aspirational: Aim high and reflect the ambitious goals of your SART.
- Clear and Concise: Keep the statement straightforward and easy to understand, ensuring it communicates the future success of the team.
- Future-Oriented: Think about the long-term impact of your team's work.

EXAMPLE VISION STATEMENT:

"In five years, the [County Name] County Sexual Assault Response Team will be recognized for its comprehensive and compassionate response to sexual violence, ensuring all survivors receive the support and justice they deserve. Our community will see a significant reduction in sexual violence incidents and an increase in trauma-informed services and coordinated response efforts."

Scope of the Initial Work

This is the time for teams to clearly define their purpose and scope. Some teams may need to consider how they define community – whether it encompasses a town, county, or multiple jurisdictions. Team formation and mission/vision development is a time to ensure everyone is aligned on the same page about the team's work.

Key considerations include whether the team will focus on adults (as recommended by SVJI) or have a dual or multi-purpose focus. Guiding questions will help teams determine their plan of action: Is your SART focused solely on protocol revision? Does your SART include education and outreach in its mission? Answering these questions now will guide your team's trajectory. A mission and vision worksheet is available in Appendix G to help get you started.

Establish Group Norms and Values

For multidisciplinary teams, setting ground rules is essential for effective communication and collaboration. Establishing norms or agreements will help maintain productivity, respect, and team unity.

Operational agreements can include:

- Arrive at meetings prepared and on time.
- One person talks at a time.
- Stick to the agenda.
- Develop common definitions for terms.

Team agreements can also be more philosophical, designed to foster a collaborative environment:

- Assume positive intent.
- Be courageous.
- Ask questions.

During systems change work, discussions can become intense with multiple viewpoints. Setting and posting these group norms in the meeting room helps refocus the team on serving victims/survivors.

Your team's mission statement also acts as a guiding principle, ensuring all members work towards the same goal. In moments of disagreement or tension, refer to the mission statement to reinforce a shared sense of purpose and direction.

Member Roles and Expectations

Clear expectations for each team member should be understood and agreed upon by individuals and their agencies. SART members should function as liaisons between their agency and the team, soliciting input and sharing feedback. If a member cannot make decisions, they should know how to convey information to decision-makers. These details should be included in a formal commitment, such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed during team formation or protocol creation.

Creating Shared Leadership

Shared leadership distributes responsibilities and decision-making among team members, fostering ownership, responsibility, and accountability.

Key aspects of shared leadership include:

- Distributed Responsibilities: Rotate leadership roles periodically to ensure all team members can lead and contribute different perspectives. (e.g. Create a rotation for meeting minutes. Each month, a different person is assigned to take meeting minutes. This creates buy-in and refocuses individual purpose.)
- Collaborative and Inclusive Decision-Making: Consensus-based decision-making builds trust and purpose within the team by actively including diverse voices, valuing all contributions equally, and fostering a sense of belonging.
- Specialized Committees: Subcommittees can have designated leads who coordinate with the main team.
- Mentorship and Peer Support: Implement a mentorship or "buddy" program where experienced members support and guide newer members.

Integrating shared leadership harnesses the strengths of individual members, creating better team cohesion and higher role satisfaction.

Documentation

Documenting processes and decisions are crucial for creating a functional and sustainable team. This ensures that agency leadership and new team members are fully informed of key activities, including the "how," "what," and "why" of decisions and actions. Minutes should be taken during each meeting and distributed to team members. Teams should agree on a method for documenting their work and orienting new members. A sample agenda is available in Appendix F.

KEY QUESTIONS

To ensure a strategic collaboration, consider the following questions:

- Formalize Commitments/Partnerships: What is your team's plan to formalize commitment? If signing an MOU, how often will the MOU be revisited?
- Mission and Vision Statements: Does your mission and vision statement succinctly communicate the team's intent and impact?
- Creating Shared Leadership:
  - How can your SART ensure all members feel empowered to take initiative and share leadership roles?
  - What processes are in place for collaborative and inclusive decision-making?
  - Are there barriers preventing certain members from taking on leadership roles, and how can these be addressed?
- Identify Team Process:
  - What is your team process?
  - How will the work be structured?
  - When will your team meet?
  - Where will your team meet?
  - How often will your team meet (monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly)?
  - How long will your team meetings last (1 hours, 2 hours, etc.)

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Appendix D: Meeting Facilitation Tips for SARTs
Appendix E: Sample MOU
Appendix F: Sample Agenda
Appendix G: Mission and Vision Builder Handout

Beyond the Basics

As your team moves from formation to action, there are a few different things to consider that can help your SART maintain momentum and effectiveness.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is a process for defining and aligning your SARTs mission and vision with its goals and objectives. This process helps the SART understand its future direction. See this resource for more in-depth information on strategic planning.

SARTs with a strategic plan incorporate each task or project into a larger plan. They regularly check in with their team to ensure there is capacity for large, time-intensive projects, and consider intended outcomes of these projects. By thinking long term, SARTs can plan more effectively for each project. This includes follow-up, monitoring, evaluating efforts, and maintaining momentum after projects are completed or during periods without crises.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

A strategic planning framework for SARTs typically includes several key components:

- Mission Statements
- Vision Statements
- Goals and Objectives
    Action Planning
- Succession Planning
- Onboarding New Team Members

Mission Statements

Mission statements define the SART's purpose, outlining what it does and whom it serves. They guide decision-making and actions.

Vision Statements

Vision statements capture the SART team's aspirations and goals, describing where the SART wants to be in the future and what outcomes it aims to achieve.

For more information on mission and vision statements, please see the previous section on Developing Your Team's Mission and Vision Statement.

A Mission and Vision Builder Tool is available in Appendix G.

Goals and Objectives

People often use "goal" and "objective" interchangeably, but they have distinct meanings.

Goals: Goals are broad statements describing the overarching aims or desired outcomes of the SART. They are long-term, primary goals that provide direction and purpose for the SART and should align with the mission/vision statements.

Examples

- Goal 1: Improve the efficiency and consistency of information sharing among all first responders and community agencies.
- Goal 2: Reduce barriers to reporting and seeking assistance.
- Goal 3: Enhance the effectiveness of investigations and prosecutions.

Objectives: Objectives are specific, measurable steps or outcomes contributing to achieving a goal. They are the short-term, smaller, more concrete steps that outline the journey to reach the overall goals.

Examples

- Objective 1: Develop and implement a standardized communication protocol for responding to sexual violence cases within six months to ensure timely and effective information sharing among community partners.
- Objective 2: Partner with at least three local community organizations to promote trust and encourage reporting and conduct biannual feedback sessions to identify and address additional barriers.

- Objective 3: Provide advanced investigative training to 100% of law enforcement officers and prosecutors involved in relevant sexual assault cases within the next 12 months.

The time it takes to identify goals and objectives can vary significantly depending on several factors, including the complexity of the project, the level of stakeholder involvement, and the availability of relevant data.

Using the SMART Method to Develop Goals and Objectives

Creating goals and objectives that are strategic, measurable, ambitious, realistic, and time-bound can assist teams in achieving results while staying centered on the mission and vision of the SART team.

STRATEGIC

Strategic goals and objectives focus on the long-term vision and direction of your SART to ensure that the team's efforts align with the broader systems change. These items should align with your SART mission and vision statements.

Example: Implementing policies that enhance collaboration between law enforcement, healthcare providers, and culturally specific organizations, ensuring that all agencies work together to support victims/survivors and provide comprehensive services.

MEASURABLE

Measurable goals and objectives should include specific metrics (numbers, data points or pre-determined criteria) that allow for tracking progress and success over time allowing your SART to adjust strategies as needed.

Example: Increase the number of community outreach programs from four to eight per year, with 70% positive feedback from victims/survivors.

AMBITIOUS

Ambitious goals and objectives push the boundaries of what your SART can achieve, aiming to create a lasting positive impact on your community.

Example: Within three years, our SART will establish a zero-tolerance culture towards sexual violence in our community by ensuring that every victim/survivor receives an immediate, comprehensive, trauma-informed response.

REALISTIC

Realistic goals and objectives acknowledge the current resources, capacities, and other factors to ensure that your SART sets achievable targets.

Example: An unrealistic goal for a SART team would be to have the capacity, resources, and ability to eliminate sexual violence completely within 5 years. A more realistic goal might be to within five years significantly reduce the number of incidents of sexual violence in the community by decreasing reports of sexual violence by 50%, increasing the reporting rate of sexual violence by 30% and ensuring that 90% of victims/survivors receive timely and trauma-informed response.

TIME-BOUND

Time-bound goals and objectives specify a clear timeframe for completion and provide a sense of urgency and framework for accountability.

Example: By January 2026, develop and implement a streamlined 24/7 response protocol that ensures all victims/survivors are connected to necessary services within 12 hours of reporting the incident.

Although having thoughtful and systems-focused goals and objectives is critical to staying focused on your SART team mission and vision, it is also important to stay attuned to day-to-day shifts in team dynamics, communication patterns, and interpersonal relationships, and adjust your longer-term goals accordingly.

If your team needs a refresher on the difference between goals and objectives, please refer to the Goals and Objectives: Sorting and Matching Activity in Appendix H.

Many teams also struggle with identifying key areas to focus on or how to determine their priorities. If your team is struggling to identify where to go next with your SART work or needs help determining goals/objectives, please see the Collaborative Goal-Setting Activity in Appendix I.

Once you have established your SMART goals and objectives, the next step is creating an action plan to provide a structured direction for your SART that outlines the specific steps, resources, timelines, required to turn your team goals and objectives into reality.

Action Planning

A well-crafted action plan provides a structured roadmap, ensuring clarity, focus, organization, coordination, and prioritization. An action plan aligns team members with common goals, streamlines processes, enhances communications, and facilitates effective resource allocation. An action plan also allows a team to identify key milestones, anticipate potential challenges, and foster accountability and transparency throughout the project.

Action Plan Template

Action Plan Step	Action Plan Step Description	Examples
DEFINED GOAL AND OBJECTIVE	Develop goals that align with the SART's mission. Determine measurable indicators for each objective to assess progress by using the strategic, measurable, ambitious, realistic, and time-bound method (SMART).	• Goal: Provide comprehensive support to sexual violence victims/survivors. • Objective: Establish a coordinated system response within six months.
TASK BREAKDOWN	Identify specific actions or tasks needed to achieve the goal or objective.	• Conduct a needs assessment of the community. • Establish partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, and victim/survivor advocacy organizations. • Develop protocols for responding to sexual violence cases, including evidence collection and victim/survivor support. • Train SART team members on trauma-informed response and cultural humility.

Action Plan Step	Action Plan Step Description	Examples
PRIORITIZE TASKS	Determine which tasks are most critical and prioritize them accordingly.	• Conducting a needs assessment is a priority to understand the specific challenges, needs, and gaps in services. • Establishing partnerships with key stakeholders is crucial for a coordinated response.
TASK DELEGATION	Assign individual team members or subcommittees to each task. Develop regular check-ins and progress meetings.	• Assign the needs assessment task to an outreach team/ subcommittee. • Assign protocol development to a subcommittee comprised of representatives from relevant agencies. • If one goal is to reduce response times, the team reviews data on response times collected over the past month and identifies any barriers to a faster response.
SET DEADLINES	Establish realistic deadlines for each task.	• Complete the needs assessment within three months. • Establish partnerships and develop protocols within four months. • Conduct training sessions before the official launch of the SART.

Action Plan Step	Action Plan Step Description	Examples
REQUIRED RESOURCES	Determine which resources are needed for each task.	• Allocate funding for conducting needs assessment and developing protocols. • Allocate time for SART team members to attend training sessions and participate in protocol development.
EVALUATE PROGRESS	Regularly track the progress of each task and adjust when needed.	• Regularly review the progress of protocol development and training sessions. • Evaluate community/victim/survivor feedback and adjust the response plan accordingly.

Additional Action Plan Considerations

Evaluate Effectiveness: Building evaluation processes into your team's work from the beginning can set you up for success and evaluate the effectiveness of the action steps throughout the duration of your action plan.

Ways to build evaluation in throughout the action plan process:

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE ACTION PLAN TIMELINE:

- Develop opportunities for real-time feedback from victims/survivors. Create regular check-ins and regular victim/survivor feedback collection. Teams can use this feedback to make immediate adjustments.

  Example: If victims/survivors indicate that certain procedures are confusing or unhelpful, the team can revise these procedures promptly rather than waiting until the end of the action plan.

- Encourage team members to provide ongoing feedback on the action plan's implementation.

  Example: Establish a regular check-in process, such as weekly meetings or an online feedback platform, where team members can share their input on the action plan's implementation. This feedback can then be promptly reviewed, and adjustments made in real-time to ensure continuous improvement.

AT THE HALFWAY POINT OF THE ACTION PLAN TIMELINE:

- Conduct a formal review. Analyze collected data and feedback to identify trends and areas of improvement.

  Example: If the mid-point check shows that community outreach initiatives are not reaching diverse populations, the team can adapt their outreach strategies.

AT THE END OF THE ACTION PLAN TIMELINE:

- Conduct a thorough review of all collected data and feedback. Compare final outcomes to initial objectives and baseline statistics.

  Example: Assess whether response times have improved, victim/survivor satisfaction has increased, and community responsiveness has grown.

For more information about methods of evaluation, see: [Are We Making a Difference? Sexual Assault Response Teams Assessing Systems Change](#).

- Acknowledge and Celebrate Achievements: Acknowledge and celebrate achievements along the way to maintain motivation. The small wins are still wins!

  Examples:

  - Celebrate the successful completion of the needs assessment.
  - Celebrate the establishment of key partnerships.
  - Acknowledge team members' efforts in developing protocols.

Succession Planning

Succession planning is a strategic process in which SARTs identify and develop potential future leaders and team members to ensure continuity and sustainability. This process outlines steps for transitioning roles and includes emergency succession for unexpected vacancies. Implementing a succession plan can help avoid uncertainty, maintain momentum, and facilitate seamless transitions when new team members join.

For more information about succession planning, refer to: [Succession Planning: Promising Practices for Sexual Assault Response Team Coordinators](#).

Onboarding New Team Members

Sustainability of SARTs depends on effective turnover management and thorough onboarding procedures for new members. A well-structured onboarding process creates a welcoming and informative environment for newcomers, ensuring they understand their roles, responsibilities, and the nature of the SART's work. Effective onboarding enables new members to contribute meaningfully to the team's mission and vision, prioritizing victim/survivor-centered response and support. A streamlined and organized onboarding process is essential for integrating new team members smoothly.

For more information about onboarding new team members, refer to: [Developing an Effective Onboarding Process: Promising Practices for Onboarding New Sexual Assault Response Team Members](#).

STAYING ON TRACK FOR SUCCESS

Stay focused on your SART's mission as your guiding star. When conflicts arise, new ideas distract from the current work, or hard decisions need to be made, refer to the mission to navigate through the challenges.

Remember, you are not alone. There are SARTs across the country facing similar triumphs and challenges. Build connections with other team leaders, state/territory experts, and national experts in team dynamics or discipline-specific work. Celebrate forward momentum and victories, no matter how small. This boosts morale, recognizes achievements, and reinforces the importance of the SART's work in creating a safer, more supportive community for victims/survivors of sexual violence. By being intentional in the way you start and maintain your SART, you set it up for future success.

KEY QUESTIONS

To ensure continuous and effective system response, consider the following questions:

- Long-Term Goals: What are your team's long-term goals? How are they aligned with your SART's mission and vision statements?
- Identify Needs: What specific objectives are needed to achieve these goals?
- Measuring Progress: Are the goals and objectives measurable and achievable?
- Creating Continuity: How can your team ensure continuity and smooth transitions in SART team member positions?
- Identify Gaps: Are there potential gaps or risks in your team's succession planning strategy? How can they be addressed?
- Refine and Improve: How can the strategic and succession planning processes be continuously refined and improved?

Looking Toward the Future

The evolution of your SART from an acute response team to a system-focused response team represents a significant transformation in how your team addresses sexual violence. While acute response teams are essential for immediate crisis intervention, a system-focused response allows for a more comprehensive, proactive, and sustainable response. This shift involves rethinking the team's objectives and strategies to prioritize long-term solutions and systemic change.

As your team transitions, it is crucial to understand the benefits of adopting a system-focused approach and the key steps involved in making this transition successful. By embracing this shift, your team can strengthen its impact. This ensures your team's efforts address the immediate needs but also contributes to lasting improvements in the system.

OVERVIEW

- TRANSITIONING FROM AN ACUTE RESPONSE TEAM TO A SYSTEM-FOCUSED RESPONSE TEAM
- BENEFITS OF TEAM COLLABORATION
- MOVING FORWARD WITH YOUR SART
  - Project Ideas for Established SARTs
- TOOLS AND RESOURCES

TRANSITIONING FROM AN ACUTE RESPONSE TEAM TO A SYSTEM-FOCUSED RESPONSE TEAM

Transitioning to a system-focused response requires a fundamental shift in how your team operates and thinks about the team's work. It involves a move from a reactive to a proactive approach, with a focus on long-term solutions and systemic change.

Why transition to a system-focused approach?

Teams may want to transition from an acute response approach to a system-focused response approach for many reasons:

Long Term Impact

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

- Long-Term Policy Changes: By working on system-wide changes, teams can help shape institutional practices and public policy, leading to more permanent and widespread improvements in sexual violence response.
- Comprehensive Framework: A system-focused approach addresses the root causes of the issues rather than the symptoms. This helps in creating solutions that are sustainable over time.

Efficiency and Effectiveness

DEVELOPMENT OF PROTOCOLS/PROCEDURES

- Standardized Practices: System focused teams can develop standardized protocols and procedures that ensure consistency and quality in sexual violence response.
- Improved Outcomes: By focusing on early intervention, the overall effectiveness of the system-focused response improves, leading to better outcomes for victims/survivors.

Proactive and Forward Focused

ADAPTING TO EVER-EVOLVING, COMPLEX FACTORS

- Multidisciplinary Collaboration: Contemporary issues such as mental health/behavioral health, domestic and sexual violence, homelessness and housing instability, and racial and social justice are complex challenges that require a multidisciplinary and coordinated approach to address both immediate and long-term needs.
- Community Engagement: Engaging with the community and stakeholders ensures systems focused change is culturally relevant and addresses the unique needs of the community.
- Holistic Intervention: System-focused response allows teams to develop interventions that consider the intersectional nature of these issues, which leads to more comprehensive and effective solutions.

Transitioning from an acute response team, which typically addresses immediate crisis or emergencies, to a system-focused response team, which typically takes a more comprehensive approach, involves several key steps.

Key Steps in Transitioning from an Acute SART to a Systems-Focused SART

1. ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

- Assess current practices and identify areas of improvement.
- Develop a clear plan that outlines vision and goals, strategies, and timeline for the transition from an acute SART to a system-focused SART.

2. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Involve key stakeholders, including team members, community partners, policy makers, culturally relevant organizations, and victims/survivors in the planning and implementation process.
- Ensure buy-in and support from all relevant stakeholders.

3. TRAINING AND PROTOCOL DEVELOPMENT

- Provide training opportunities to equip your team members with the skills and knowledge needed for a system-focused approach.

4. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Implement the new protocols and procedures gradually, allowing for adjustments based on feedback.
- Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and measure the impact of the changes.

5. CONTINUOUS EVALUATION

- Regularly review and refine the system-focused approach to ensure it remains effective and responsive to emerging challenges.
- Encourage adaptability within the team.

By following the above steps, acute response teams can transform into systems-focused response teams that are better equipped to address complex issues and contribute to more sustainable, long-term outcomes that effectively serve the community and victims/survivors.

BENEFITS OF TEAM COLLABORATION

IMMEDIATE BENEFITS

- Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities: Collaborating as a team helps understand and define the roles and responsibilities of each agency involved in responding to sexual violence.

LONG-TERM BENEFITS

- Building Trust: Over time, team members and agencies develop the trust necessary to openly discuss and address their strengths and weaknesses, leading to more effective responses.

MOVING FORWARD WITH YOUR SART

The process of systems change is continuous and interactive, requiring ongoing commitment and collaboration. Each cycle of assessment, implementation, and evaluation builds on the previous one, fostering sustainable improvements and innovation. By engaging all team members and stakeholders in this process, you ensure that diverse perspectives are considered, which leads to more effective and inclusive services.

This section provides a range of project ideas designed to help your SART advance its goals. From conducting needs assessments to developing standardized protocols, these activities offer opportunities for teams to enhance collaboration, improve service delivery, and drive positive change within your community. By implementing these activities, your team can continue to build on its successes and ensure that your team's efforts remain aligned with best practices and the needs of victims/survivors.

Project Ideas for Established SARTs

NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Example Activities:

- Survey victims/survivors, community members, and stakeholders.
- Collect and analyze data to identify trends and areas needing improvement.
- Develop a comprehensive report with recommendations for change.

TRAINING PROGRAMS

Example Activities:

- Organize workshops on trauma-informed response for all team members.
- Develop and deliver specialized training on cultural humility and diversity.
- Conduct practice exercises to practice SART protocols in real-world scenarios.

STANDARDIZED PROTOCOLS

Example Activities:

- Review and update existing protocols to ensure they align with promising practices.
- Facilitate interdisciplinary meetings to create consistent and standardized response procedures.
- Develop a protocol manual that outlines step-by-step procedures for all team members. Share this manual with necessary stakeholders.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH INITIATIVES

Example Activities:

- Host informational sessions for community members to learn about SART services.
- Create educational materials about sexual violence and available resources.
- Partner with local organizations to hold community events that promote outreach about SART services.

COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL AGENCIES

Example Activities:

- Establish regular meetings with local healthcare providers, law enforcement, advocacy groups, etc.
- Create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize partnerships and roles.
- Jointly develop resource sharing strategies to streamline and enhance service delivery to the community.

CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Example Activities:

- Identify and monitor legislation across jurisdictions that impacts sexual violence response and victim/survivor rights, including local, state, tribal, and federal levels.

- Engage with policymakers from multiple jurisdictions to communicate survivor-centered needs and advocate for aligned policy improvements.
- Collaboratively draft and propose policy recommendations that promote consistent, trauma-informed, and equitable system responses across regions.

For more information on cross-jurisdictional collaboration, please see SVJI's Bridging the Divide: Promising Practices for Transforming Sexual Assault Response Team Collaboration Across Jurisdictions.

IN DEPTH LOOK AT THE SYSTEM - INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

Example Activities:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the current system response to identify gaps and barriers.
- Interview key stakeholders to gather qualitative data on system response in depth.
- Develop and implement a strategic plan for system-wide improvements based on review findings.

Each of these activities contributes to the overall strength of your SART and deepens the collective community commitment to supporting victims/survivors. As you move forward, remember that continuous improvement is a journey, and the collaborative efforts of your team will drive lasting change.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Appendix G: Mission and Vision Builder Tool
Appendix H: Goals and Objectives: Sorting and Matching Activity
Appendix I: Collaborative Goal-Setting Activity

For more information or questions about this toolkit, please email svji@mncasa.org.

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Appendix A:

SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAMS AND SYSTEM CHANGE

Appendix B:

TEAM READINESS ASSESSMENT

Date: _____

Community: _____

The following survey can be used to assess a multi-disciplinary team's readiness to collaborate. There is no expectation that any team would be fully "ready" in each of these areas, so responses should reflect the current reality. This survey can be used to assess where agencies may need more information, overall interest and understanding of the process, communication gaps, information gaps, and the current state of collaboration.

Team Composition

To what extent does the composition of your team reflect community and project need?

OUR EXISTING OR PROPOSED TEAM HAS:	VERY TRUE	SOMEWHAT TRUE	DON'T KNOW	SOMEWHAT UNTRUE	NOT TRUE
Active membership from each of the core agencies (law enforcement, medical, prosecution, victim advocacy, corrections)					
The representation needed from both criminal justice and community-based agencies that will help to improve services for all victims in our communities					
Members who are knowledgeable about their agency's current response to sexual violence					
Members who are respected professionals in their agency and discipline					

OUR EXISTING OR PROPOSED TEAM HAS:	VERY TRUE	SOMEWHAT TRUE	DON'T KNOW	SOMEWHAT UNTRUE	NOT TRUE
Participating agencies whose leadership is fully informed of the project's goals and requirements					
Members who have the ability to make decisions and commitments on behalf of their agency					

Commitment of Participating Agencies/Team Members

Please rate the extent to which proposed and/or existing participating agencies have demonstrated their commitment to the project in the following areas:

EACH PARTICIPATING AGENCY WILL:	VERY TRUE	SOMEWHAT TRUE	DON'T KNOW	SOMEWHAT UNTRUE	NOT TRUE
Commit to enable consistent representation on the team (e.g. have the same people attend as much as possible)					
Support their team representative's regular attendance at monthly team meetings					
Support their team representative's use of time to be actively involved in the team's projects					
Support the design, review, training, monitoring and evaluation of protocol for responding to sexual violence and commit to having all staff use it					
Invest in-kind resources such as meeting space, mileage reimbursements, and additional staff time for team activities					

EACH PARTICIPATING AGENCY WILL:	VERY TRUE	SOMEWHAT TRUE	DON'T KNOW	SOMEWHAT UNTRUE	NOT TRUE
Look for additional ways to make the project successful in improving the response to sexual violence victims/survivors					

Current Understanding of Sexual Violence

How knowledgeable are existing and/or proposed team members about sexual violence?

OUR TEAM MEMBERS ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT:	VERY TRUE	SOMEWHAT TRUE	DON'T KNOW	SOMEWHAT UNTRUE	NOT TRUE
Common reactions victims/survivors of sexual violence experience					
Criminal justice response to sexual violence					
Who the victims and perpetrators of sexual violence are					
How to professionally, respectfully, and comfortably interact with victims/survivors					
How a victim-centered response differs from a system-centered response					
The common misconceptions surrounding sexual violence					
The "promising practices" for their own field/discipline/agency for responding to sexual violence					
The roles of other team members and their agencies in the response to sexual violence					

Project Fit with Existing Efforts and Community Goals

To what extent will participation in this project fit into and/or further existing goals of the team and its participating agencies.

PROJECT PARTICIPATION IS A GOOD FIT WITH OUR TEAM BECAUSE:	VERY TRUE	SOMEWHAT TRUE	DON'T KNOW	SOMEWHAT UNTRUE	NOT TRUE
Each participating agency knows how it furthers their agency goals					
Each participating agency has the resources it needs to actively participate					
The time is right for this collaborative project					

General Team Preparation

To what extent is the team ready to begin this project?

OUR TEAM HAS:	VERY TRUE	SOMEWHAT TRUE	DON'T KNOW	SOMEWHAT UNTRUE	NOT TRUE
Can identify a team coordinator/agency that will have the time and skills required to lead the project					
Members who recognize a need for an improved, more coordinated response to sexual violence cases					
Members who are generally flexible and open to exploring different ways to achieve team goals					

OUR TEAM HAS:	VERY TRUE	SOMEWHAT TRUE	DON'T KNOW	SOMEWHAT UNTRUE	NOT TRUE
Participating agencies encourage communication among staff in both formal meetings and informal ways					
Willing to sign memorandums of understanding or other signed agreements between the core agencies that support the team's mission					
Members who are generally flexible and open to exploring different ways to achieve team goals					
Members are willing to engage in in-depth discussions and make compromises in an effort to better serve victims/ survivors of sexual violence					
Members who are dedicated to the idea that we can make this project happen					
Members who believe that what the team will accomplish would be difficult for any one agency to do by themselves					

Appendix C:

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEAM FORMATION

Establishing a multidisciplinary team like a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) can significantly enhance and strengthen the community response to sexual violence. While every community is unique, several key decisions must be made early in the team formation process. Below are key points to discuss as you assemble a collaborative team to address sexual violence cases.

TEAM PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES

Clarify why you are developing a team and what you aim to accomplish. Understanding the short-term and long-term goals of individuals and agencies helps orient the team and shapes the scope of collaborative efforts. By engaging in continuous improvement processes, your team can achieve its purpose and drive meaningful change.

EXISTING OR SIMILAR TEAMS

Identify if your community already has a pre-existing team or similar groups that meet regularly. Determine how you might cooperate with these teams and differentiate your focus on sexual violence. Discuss ways to support agencies involved in multiple teams, ensuring efforts are not duplicated.

SIZE OF SERVICE AREA FOR TEAM

Define the geographical limits of your service area, whether it's city, county or multi-county regions. This decision depends on the community makeup and where services are provided to victims/survivors. Consider jurisdictional boundaries, including multiple counties, tribal lands, federal lands, or state lines, to determine who should be involved in the team.

TEAM MEMBERSHIP

Select team members from community agencies that respond to sexual violence and have the capacity to influence current practices, policies, and protocols. Core agencies typically include community advocacy, law enforcement, medical providers, prosecution, and corrections/probation. Representatives should attend meetings on behalf of their agencies. Include agencies that reflect the community, such as military installations, colleges/universities, or adult protection services.

COORDINATING AND/OR FACILITATING THE TEAM

Designate one agency to lead and support the team's work, often housing the team coordinator and possibly serving as the fiscal agent. Establish who will oversee logistical support and how participating agencies will contribute to coordination, facilitation, and completion of activities. Team success is a collective responsibility shared by all agencies and members.

FORMALIZING AGENCY COMMITMENTS

Teams benefit from having an interagency agreement, memorandums of understanding (MOUs), or a joint letter of commitment. These agreements describe the work of the team including purpose, participation expectations, in-kind contributions, and limitations.

Formalized commitments also ensure that despite turnover, agencies still understand their roles and responsibilities in the success of the team. These agreements should be signed by the head of each agency and/or the governing body. Many funding entities require agreements as a condition of funding a project.

TEAM MEETINGS

Decide how often and where to meet as a team. In the early stages, monthly meetings are recommended to ensure effective functioning. The frequency can be adjusted over time based on the team's projects. Choose either a static location or rotate meeting venues based on travel distances and meeting space availability.

INCLUDING VICTIMS/SURVIVORS

Incorporate the voices and experiences of victims/survivors in your work. Each team must decide how they will do so. Some teams choose an advisory council, a review committee, or a data/information collection project. Choose an approach that benefits both victims/survivors and services providers, ensuring their insights inform the team's efforts.

IS A SART A GOOD FIT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?

Not all communities will benefit from a traditional SART. Explore your resources and options for different collaborative formations. Choose a structure that will lead to meaningful improvements to the sexual violence response in your community. SVJI is available to assist with any of these topics and more.

Appendix D:

MEETING FACILITATION TIPS FOR SARTS

Effective meeting facilitation is critical for the success of a SART. Many coordinators and facilitators may lack formal training in this area, leading to frustration for both facilitators and team members. The following tips and ideas aim to enhance your facilitation skills, ensuring productive and engaging meetings.

RUNNING THE MEETING (FACILITATING)

Strong facilitation is essential to advancing the team's work. While individual facilitation styles may differ, these tips can help ensure effective SART meetings.

- Establish Ground Rules: Teams benefit from having established ground rules for meeting interactions and decision making. This should be established early in the team formation, shared with new team members, and revisited as needed.
- Accommodate Different Learning Styles: To accommodate various learning styles and boost engagement, the meeting format should include small group discussions, activities, trainings, and large group discussions.
- Clarify Meeting Purpose: Clearly state the meeting's purpose at the beginning of the meeting. This will help keep everyone focused and aligned.
- Prepare New and Absent Members: Ensure new members and those who have missed meetings receive relevant information beforehand. This will help avoid repetitive conversations and keep discussions productive.
- Meeting Focus: Refer to the agenda and keep the discussion focused on the meeting objectives.

    Strategies to Keep Meetings Focused:

    - If conversation gets off-topic or starts to introduce new topics that would be better discussed at a future meeting, re-focus the conversation back to the agenda.
    - Some teams set time limits for each section of their agenda to help ensure that all items of business are given adequate time for consideration and discussion.
    - Having the team mission on the agenda or otherwise posted in the room can serve as a reference point for the team.

- Provide Information, Not Opinions: Facilitate discussions by sharing information and being open about uncertainties.
- Allow Processing Time: Give participants time to think and process information. Providing necessary materials before the meeting can help with this.
- Encourage Participation: Foster an inclusive environment by valuing input from all members. If certain individuals are not participating, check in with them to see how they can be more involved, even outside of meeting times.
- Gather Feedback: Use anonymous surveys to gather information from team members to assess the meeting process and team satisfaction.
- Manage Participants: Address situations where certain members dominate discussions. This can involve refocusing the conversation, ensuring others have a chance to speak, or addressing issues privately.
- Synthesize Comments: Tie together various comments, questions, and concerns raised during discussions.
- Observe Body Language: Pay attention to non-verbal cues and respond appropriately, either during the meeting or afterward.
- Review Next Steps: Conclude meetings by reviewing the next steps and clarifying decisions made.
- Consider Facilitation Support: If the coordinator or current facilitator struggles with productivity or negativity in meetings, explore having co-facilitators or appointing a new facilitator. Engaging an influential team member can help build relationships and refocus the team's efforts.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Principles of Facilitation: Keeping Your SART on Track](#)
- [Facilitation for Online Meetings](#)

Appendix E:

2024 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The mission of _____ County Sexual Assault Response Team (CSART) is to coordinate and implement an interagency response to sexual violence victims/survivors which promotes consistency, respect, and cultural responsiveness. The participating entities herein share certain community goals and purposes when providing victim/survivor-centered care through medical, advocacy, law enforcement, prosecution, corrections, institutions of higher education, county and community human services, and other agencies. The team has been meeting regularly since [YEAR] and has created and updated its interagency response protocol [X] times since its inception.

For the CSART to fulfill this mission, participating agencies and organizations that respond to sexual violence victims/survivors must be active and engaged team members and must make every effort to comply with the procedures set forth in the protocol as their resources allow. Participating agencies signing this Memorandum of Understanding agree to fulfill the roles and responsibilities outlined here to the best of their abilities and as their resources allow.

ROLE OF PARTICIPATING AGENCIES & ORGANIZATIONS

- Be committed to the victim/survivor-centered and offender-focused CSART protocol.
- Maintain leadership support for the development and implementation of the
- interagency protocol and other goals of the team.
- Ensure that the team meetings are a priority for their agency or institution and their representative.
- Provide regular updates to agency leadership about the work of the team.
- Actively support training and other information-sharing within the agency to ensure implementation of protocol throughout the agency.
- Actively support the use of case consultation or case reviews to identify strengths and weaknesses of protocol or of implementation within the agency.

TEAM MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be committed to the victim/survivor-centered and offender-focused CSART protocol.
- Revise and implement written protocol.
- Be versed in their agency's role in sexual violence cases.
- Be able to speak about the ability of their agency to fulfill obligations related to the multidisciplinary process.

- Commit to ten of the twelve regularly attend meetings and actively participate in discussions and subcommittees.
- Identify and address relevant trends and gaps in services, with an emphasis on constructive problem-solving.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

Authorized person for: County Sexual Assault Response Team (CSART)

_____

Name, Title

_____

Date

Authorized person for:

_____

(Agency/Organization)

_____

Signature

_____

Date

_____

Print Name

_____

Title

Appendix F:

SAMPLE AGENDA

TEAM LOGO (IF APPLICABLE)

LOCATION/AGENCY NAME
Meeting Location Address
Parking Instructions Here

Agenda for DATE

1:45-2:00PM	Professional Networking Time
2:00-2:15PM	Welcome Team/Agency Updates Events
2:15-2:45PM	Transitions and Revised Work Plan Review
2:45-3:15PM	Legal Protocol Draft Finalization Bring final comments and changes to meeting
3:15-3:45PM	Renewal of MOUs and Training Ideas
4:00PM	Closing

Next Meeting: DATE
Held at: AGENCY TITLE
LOCATION ADDRESS

• Team Mission: Have mission on every agenda to have people reference.

SAMPLE Ground Rules for Meetings to Ensure Team Engagement

GROUND RULES FOR SART TEAM

1. Show up on time and be prepared.

a. Be prompt in arriving.
b. Be prepared to contribute.
c. Attend all meetings.

2. Contribute to meeting goals.

a. Participate by sharing ideas and asking questions.
b. Share your unique perspective on the discussion.
c. Offer a solution when disagreeing with a proposal.

3. Respect

a. Share time so that all can participate.
b. Be patient when listening to others and do not interrupt.
c. Respect each other's thinking and value everyone's contributions.

4. Record outcomes and follow up.

a. Record issues discussed, decisions made, and tasks assigned.
b. Share meeting notes with other stakeholders that should be kept in the loop.

> You can have as many or as few ground rules for the respective team as you think are necessary.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES AND LOCATIONS

- June 19, 2024- LOCATION NAME
- July 17, 2024- LOCATION NAME
- August 21, 2024- LOCATION NAME
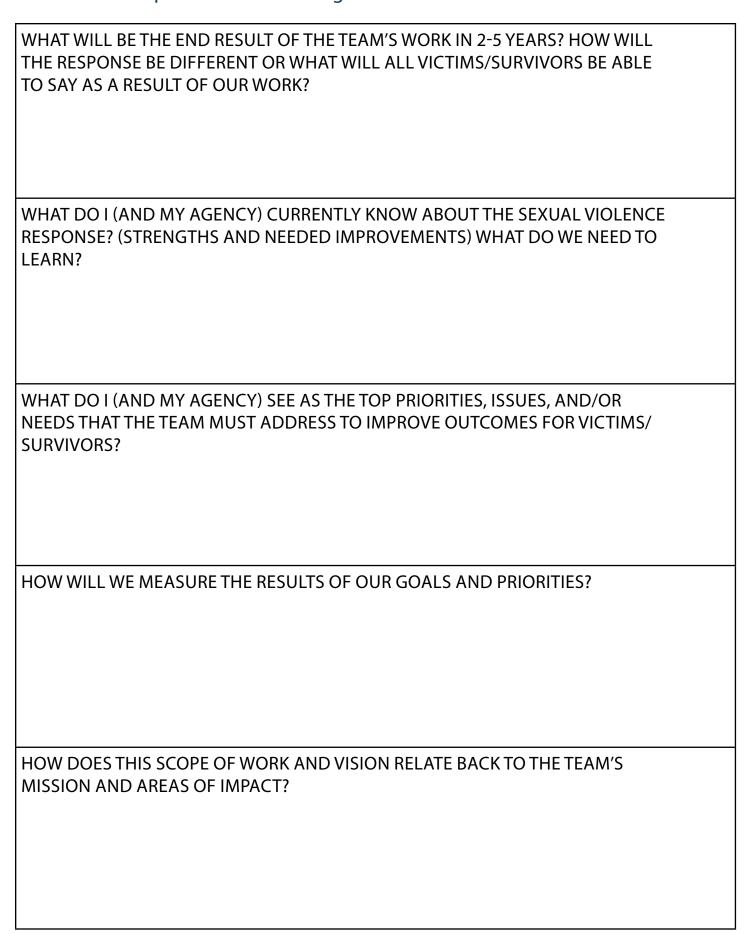
Appendix G:

MISSION AND VISION BUILDER TOOL

Mission Builder

WHO ARE YOU?

WHAT DO YOU DO?

WHO BENEFITS?

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER IN A SINGLE, REVISED STATEMENT:

Vision and Scope of Work Planning

WHAT WILL BE THE END RESULT OF THE TEAM'S WORK IN 2-5 YEARS? HOW WILL THE RESPONSE BE DIFFERENT OR WHAT WILL ALL VICTIMS/SURVIVORS BE ABLE TO SAY AS A RESULT OF OUR WORK?

WHAT DO I (AND MY AGENCY) CURRENTLY KNOW ABOUT THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESPONSE? (STRENGTHS AND NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS) WHAT DO WE NEED TO LEARN?

WHAT DO I (AND MY AGENCY) SEE AS THE TOP PRIORITIES, ISSUES, AND/OR NEEDS THAT THE TEAM MUST ADDRESS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR VICTIMS/ SURVIVORS?

HOW WILL WE MEASURE THE RESULTS OF OUR GOALS AND PRIORITIES?

HOW DOES THIS SCOPE OF WORK AND VISION RELATE BACK TO THE TEAM'S MISSION AND AREAS OF IMPACT?

In order to enhance the experience of victims/survivors and improve outcomes...

	WHAT CAN I DO TO IMPACT...?	WHAT CAN MY AGENCY DO TO IMPACT...?	WHAT CAN THE TEAM DO TO IMPACT...?
INDIVIDUAL PRACTICES			
AGENCY POLICIES			
SYSTEM PROCEDURES			
INTERAGENCY RELATIONSHIPS			

Team Planning Tool for Next Steps on Vision Building

BIG, BOLD GOAL WHAT, WHO, WHEN, WHY	RESOURCES NEEDED	EXPECTED TIME TO COMPLETE

SUB-GOALS	STEPS TO ACCOMPLISH	TEAM COORDINATOR TASKS	TEAM MEMBER TASKS

Appendix H:

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: SORTING AND MATCHING ACTIVITY

Objective: To help team members distinguish between broad goals and strategic, measurable objectives. Learning the difference between goals and objectives can help your team better plan your projects and activities and keep you on track for success.
Who is Involved: This activity involves your SART Team members. To make this a truly collaborative activity, do your best to have representation present from the following: law enforcement, healthcare providers, victim advocates, prosecutors, mental health professionals, culturally specific community partners, and other relevant community partners.
Materials Needed: • Index cards or slips of paper • Markers or pen • Pre-written example statements (a mix of goals and objectives) • A whiteboard or flip chart (optional for discussion)
Duration: 30-45 minutes

Preparation

Before the activity, prepare a set of index cards with pre-written statements. These should include a mix of goals and objectives relevant to SARTs. You can include as many pre-written example statements as you would like. To get the team involved in this, you could ask for them to provide examples of goals and objectives prior to this activity.

EXAMPLES:

Goals:

• Goal 1: Enhance the community's response to sexual violence in the community.
• Goal 2: Ensure that every community member, regardless of language, cultural background, or ability, has equitable access to immediate, compassionate, and culturally appropriate support.
• Goal 3: Expand community-wide understanding of SART services with culturally relevant, accessible, and representative outreach.

Objectives:

- Objective 1: Provide comprehensive, culturally relevant, and trauma-informed training to 100 first responders within the next six months.
- Objective 2: Establish a 24/7 multilingual and culturally responsive hotline accessible to all victims/survivors by the end of the year.
- Objective 3: Distribute accessible and culturally relevant informational brochures to 5,000 community members, prioritizing outreach to underserved and marginalized groups by December.

Activity:

1. INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

Welcome and Overview: Briefly explain that the activity's purpose is to clarify the difference between goals and objectives.

- Define goals as broad, general plans that describe the desired outcome, and objectives as specific, measurable actions that help achieve these goals.

2. GROUP WORK (15 MINUTES)

Divide and Distribute:

- Divide the SART team into small groups.
- Distribute the pre-written cards randomly to each group.
- Instruct the groups to sort the cards into two categories: Goals and Objectives
- Encourage them to discuss their reasoning within their group.

3. DISCUSSION AND MATCHING (15 MINUTES)

Sort and Discuss:

- After sorting, ask each group to share one or two examples from each category and explain why they categorized them that way.
- As a group, discuss and refine the understanding of the differences between goals and objectives. You can write down the definitions and examples on a whiteboard or flip chart for a visual.

4. REFLECTION AND WRAP UP (10 MINUTES)

Clarify, Refine, and Reflect:

- Reflect on the activity by discussing how clearly defined objectives can help in achieving broader goals.
- Ask participants to share any insights or new understandings they gained from the activity.
- Clarify and refine any questions that the SART team might have.
- Emphasize the importance of setting both clear goals and objectives in their work with the SART.

> Once your team has a firm understanding of the difference between goals and objectives, consider doing the Collaborative Goal-Setting Activity which can be found in Appendix I, which can assist your team in identifying clear goals and actionable objectives to keep your SART moving forward.

Appendix I:

COLLABORATIVE GOAL-SETTING ACTIVITY

Objective: To collaboratively identify and establish clear goals and actionable objectives for the SART, ensuring a comprehensive and coordinated response to sexual violence response.
Who is Involved: This activity involves your SART Team members. To make this a truly collaborative activity, do your best to have representation from the following: law enforcement, healthcare providers, victim advocates, prosecutors, mental health professionals, culturally specific community partners, and other relevant community partners.
Materials Needed: • Flip charts • Markers • Sticky notes • Pens • Paper • Handouts of relevant data/statistics/previous challenges
Duration: 2-3 hours

Activity:

1. INTRODUCTION (15 MINUTES)

Welcome and Overview: Welcome your SART team members and explain the purpose of the activity: to create shared goals and objectives for your SART.

• Review the SART's Mission/Vision Statements: Briefly discuss the SART's mission and vision statements, recent accomplishments, and current challenges. This sets the context for the goal setting. It may be helpful to post the SART's mission and vision statements for the team to refer to throughout this activity.

> If your team does not yet have a mission and vision statement, please refer to the section above titled Developing the Team's Mission and Vision Statement.

2. BRAINSTORMING SESSION (30 MINUTES)

Divide into Groups:

• Depending on the number of team members present, create small groups, ensuring a mix of roles and perspectives in each group.

Assign Key Areas:

• Assign each group a key area such as victim/survivor support, investigation, medical response, or training.

Facilitate Mind Mapping:

• Encourage groups to identify challenges and brainstorm potential goals related to their assigned area. If teams need a visual, it can be helpful to take a piece of paper and create multiple "bubbles" with potential goals inside each bubble. This visual can be helpful when teams are sharing and discussing the potential goals with the entire team in the next step.

3. GROUP DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS (30 MINUTES)

Share and Discuss:

• Have each group present their proposed goals to the entire team. As a whole team, discuss and refine these ideas, consolidating them into 3-5 primary goals. Prioritize the goals based on importance and feasibility.

4. DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES (30 MINUTES)

Small Group Work:

• Return to small groups and assign each group one of the primary goals. Like above, teams can create a mind map with the assigned primary goal in the "bubble". Branches stemming from the "bubble" will represent potential objectives.
• Instruct them to develop strategic, measurable, ambitious, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) objectives for their goal.

Guidance and Examples:

- Provide examples of SMART objectives if necessary. Offer support and clarification throughout the process.

> For more information on SMART goals and objectives, please refer to the Using the SMART Method for Developing Goals and Objectives section of this toolkit.

5. PRESENTATION AND FEEDBACK (30 MINUTES)

Present Objectives:

- Each group presents their proposed objectives to the entire team. Encourage constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Refinement:

- Refine the objectives based on team feedback, ensuring clarity and alignment with the overall goals.

6. ACTION PLANNING (30 MINUTES)

Assign Responsibilities/Tasks:

- Assign specific team members or subcommittees to each objective, clarifying their roles and responsibilities.

Set Timeline:

- Establish timelines and milestones for each objective. Discuss how progress will be tracked and reported.

> Consider using the Action Plan Template included in this toolkit to guide your team through the action planning process.

7. WRAP UP AND CONCLUSION (15 MINUTES)

Recap:

- Summarize the agreed upon goals and objectives. Highlight the next steps and any follow-up actions.

Documentation:

- Inform the team that the summary document will be prepared and distributed, including the goals, objectives, and action plan.