

Foundations *of* Advocacy

TRAINING MANUAL



Sexual Assault
DEMONSTRATION INITIATIVE
Enhancing Sexual Assault Services

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A publication of the Sexual Assault Demonstration Initiative

Co-created with the wisdom, insight, and experience from past and present project staff from the Resource Sharing Project, National Sexual Violence Resource Center, National Organization of Asians and Pacific Islanders Ending Sexual Violence, and the Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition: Elizabeth Barnhill, Kris Bein, Valerie Davis, Cat Fribley, Maria Jirau-Torres, Nina Jusuf, Sally Laskey, Guadalupe Lopez, Nicole Matthews, Eric Stiles, Taylor Teichman, Stephanie Townsend, Karla Vierthaler, Kelly Wilt, and Mira Yusef, with thanks to the Project Sites and OVW staff working on the project.

Editing assistance provided by Karen Litterer

Please note that this publication uses *they/them/theirs* in the singular to recognize there are more than two genders and affirm survivors who are transgender or who identify outside the gender binary.


This publication is supported by Grant No. 2009-TA-AX-K011 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author[s] and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. © Resource Sharing Project & National Sexual Violence Resource Center 2020. All rights reserved. The content of this publication may be reprinted with the following acknowledgment: This material was reprinted, with permission, from the Resource Sharing Project and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center's publication titled Foundations of Advocacy Training Manual.




FORWARD

Training for new advocates is an important undertaking in community advocacy programs. Since the beginning of the movement to end sexual violence, advocates have ensured time, space, and resources to create structured support to survivors. Advocates have made sure that survivors have space and time to tell their truths, to be heard with compassion, and to be supported as they regain control over their lives.

This manual offers tools to equip new advocates with core knowledge and skills for supporting survivors of sexual violence. We recognize that there is a wide breadth of information and learning that is critical to strong advocacy programs. Consider this just a start to your agency's training program. Seasoned advocates know that there is never an end to learning more about sexual violence, its impact on survivors, what it means to be a survivor-led agency, and engaging community partners. Our hope is that every program builds on the lessons in this manual by offering and requiring regular and ongoing training for all advocates in their program, consistent with state/territory/tribe and agency standards.



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Informed by the collective wisdom and experiences of our [consortium](#) and consultants from the field, this manual is just one option for mainstream organizations seeking to provide a robust training for new sexual assault advocates. Culturally specific programs and tribal programs will be best served by implementing training curricula developed specifically for and by their respective communities. The Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition (MIWSAC) and National Organization of Asians and Pacific Islanders Ending Sexual Violence (NAPIESV) are two partners who have helped to inform this project, and who also have developed community-specific training manuals for tribal and Asian and Pacific Islander communities, respectively. We recommend that culturally specific and tribal programs use training materials tailored to fit the needs of each community.

The audience for this specific training curriculum is new staff and volunteers who will work for the advocacy program. The information new advocates will learn from this curriculum is equally as important as the themes they will learn around their role, the perspective, and the philosophical orientation of what it means to be an advocate.

Training community professionals and systems partners is an important aspect of our work to support and assist survivors, but the information and curriculum needed for these audiences needs to be presented in separate ways, as the roles of our community and systems partners vary from that of advocates. We do not recommend using this curriculum for training for community and systems partners.

The lessons of this curriculum are organized around a core set of beliefs about survivors, survivors' needs, and advocacy:

- Survivors are whole, healthy, capable human beings. Effective advocacy is led by the survivor's self-defined needs.
- Survivors come to us with their own unique cultural, historical, societal, and community realities that shape their path in healing after sexual violence. Survivors deserve advocacy that is grounded in the cultural, historical, societal, and community realities of their life.
- Survivors have done nothing to warrant or deserve the harm they experienced. Survivors are never to blame for sexual violence.
- Survivors share with us what they choose, want, or can about their experiences. Advocates help to create a safe, unconditional, and nonjudgmental space to help make this possible.
- Advocates believe the survivor in what they tell us. It is not our job to decide the validity in their story of what happened to them.
- What each survivor is experiencing is a normal response to the harm and threat of sexual violence. Survivors do not need to be fixed by advocates. They can benefit from an advocate's help and support as they access their own strength and resilience.
- Survivors do not need advocates to provide solutions. They *do* need to have advocates meet them where they are, listen to them, and validate their experience.
- Every survivor's experience is different. Survivors are the experts in their lives and will know which paths are the best for them; advocates have important connections to resources to help survivors on those paths.



Survivors do not need advocates to provide solutions. They *do* need to have advocates meet them where they are, listen to them, and validate their experience.

Sometimes advocates might feel that listening and validating is simply not doing enough for someone in crisis... Actively listening, affirming the survivor's strength, and creating the environment in which the survivor can lead is exactly what survivor-centered and trauma-informed advocacy is.

- Survivors may be overwhelmed by the impact of trauma, a rush of coping mechanisms, and myriad reactions to sexual assault; advocates can normalize these experiences for survivors and remove the pressure to “get over it” or “move on.”
- Advocates continually grow and strengthen their advocacy skills by listening to and honoring each survivor they serve.
- Above all, advocates honor survivors' resilience, and provide their time, energy, and support to hear survivors' truths.

The role of an advocate is to be a safe person where all thoughts can be expressed and the survivor can be encouraged to find their right solutions. Sometimes advocates might feel that listening and validating is simply not doing enough for someone in crisis. However, we know there are few other places that this essential, nonjudgmental, supportive option exists in communities. Actively listening, affirming the survivor's strength, and creating the environment in which the survivor can lead is exactly what survivor-centered and trauma-informed advocacy is.




ABOUT THIS MANUAL

This foundational training is organized into a series of modules. Each module is divided into a series of lessons that include: an opening/introduction to the lesson, discussion and activities, and concluding with a wrap-up and evaluation for each lesson. These modules are largely designed to prompt discussion and to draw out experiences, knowledge, and skills that will prepare trainees to be thoughtful and competent new advocates. Through the guided discussions, you are giving learners the opportunity to try out new thoughts and ideas, seeing the extent to which they can relate their life experiences and apply what they learn during the training.

Given what we know about adult learners, there may be preconceived opinions and biases that trainees hold. In addition, trainees and new advocates may want to try to solve or fix a survivor's dilemma; they may attempt to guide survivors to decisions the advocate thinks are best, or to subtly place pressure on survivors to do XYZ based on our own biases. Trainers have the opportunity to coach trainees to instead embrace the true heart of advocacy: actively listening and supporting choices. As a trainer, you will help trainees to think differently. Be prepared to respectfully and kindly challenge trainees and, when needed, correct misinformation they have learned. A few ways to start are:

- "That is one way of looking at it. What are some other ways we might consider this?"
- "Can anyone else think of another kind of response to this...?"
- "You might want to consider..."





Be mindful of the goals for each section, but make space for the different ways trainees learn, share, and engage with new information.

The format of the manual is consistent, with each module composed of learning objectives, materials list, preparation plans, directions, “Notes to the Trainer,” points to integrate into discussion, and other resources to utilize.

Be open to the ways that trainees will offer important perspectives and knowledge to the training. Trainees may offer a new way to think about a topic or a life experience that perhaps you haven’t considered. Be mindful of the goals for each section, but make space for the different ways trainees learn, share, and engage with new information. This manner of teaching may feel less predictable to you than, for example, giving the participants all of the learning points in a lecture. If this is a new way for you to train, give yourself time to feel comfortable with this model, observe how the trainees are learning, and trust that the dialogue you support and guide will be a more useful and retrievable training for the advocates.

The modules include suggestions for introducing the topic. Often those introductions include a scenario or story to ground the trainee in a survivor’s experience. Be sure to acknowledge that whatever scenario sets the stage, it is only one story and does not represent the full array of survivor experiences. In each module, the italicized section under the prompt lists various thoughts to listen for so you’ll know what responses are consistent with the outcomes you want. You can encourage additional thinking about the prompts if you do not hear acknowledgment of critical points from the group. Try reframing a question in a life experience that may be familiar to trainees and see what comes out of that. “We have probably all had an experience where _____ happened and we had to _____. What did you have to consider while responding to that?” You can also transform some of the italicized points into lecture notes and present them yourself, if that is more comfortable or to aid in conversation when participants do not discover all the points in the discussion.

MANUAL FORMAT

The format of the manual is consistent, with each module composed of:

- Learning objectives that identify the intended outcome for each participant at the end of the lesson.
- Materials which are needed to complete the module. Most modules can be completed without a computer.


- Suggested preparation plans to ensure the trainer is ready to launch each learning module.
- Directions for facilitating the discussions and activities.
- “Notes to the Trainer” is a place to alert the trainer to particular issues to watch for, challenges with this topic and encouragement for returning always to the core philosophical goals of the training.
- Specific points to integrate into discussion with trainees
- Other resources and trainer materials such as internet links to supportive materials, materials for activities including role-play scenarios, handouts, etc.

OPENING & CLOSING

There is a recommended opening and closing, “Bringing It Together” and “Bringing It To a Close” that you can use at the **beginning and end of each daily training session**. How you open and close learning sessions each day is also critical to the tone in the room. Opening activities give an opportunity for trainees to build rapport and trust with each other through a consistent check in or sharing practice. These are also opportunities to see what is still percolating from previous lessons and what questions and concerns need additional attention. It gives you a chance to see if trainees are ready to move to the next lesson. You do not want to move forward if there are still significant unsettled questions, as trainees will likely be distracted by those.

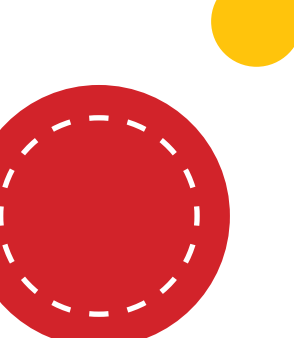
“Bringing It To a Close” is also a chance to debrief and make sure trainees are in a good place to move on. Consider doing some stretches, deep breathing, or affirmations if this has been a particularly difficult topic for the group. Remind trainees to take care of themselves, access their support systems, and engage the practices that nurture and renew them.

Evaluation is critical to the process of your training program. If you are not clear if your training is effective in preparing new advocates, you have done only part of the work. There is a sample evaluation tool in “Bringing It To a Close” that trainers



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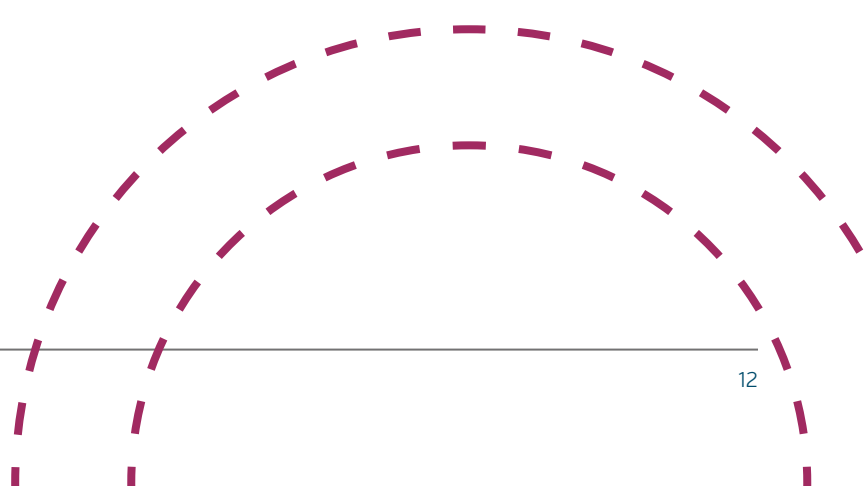


can use throughout the training schedule to determine if the group is gaining the knowledge and skills needed and is ready to move on to the next topic. It is recommended that you conduct an evaluation each day so that you have regular feedback and can make necessary adjustments prior to each new session. Use this tool or another evaluation tool of your choice. It is also recommended that a final evaluation be conducted at the end of the complete training program to receive overall feedback about trainees' experiences with the training. The goal of evaluation is to continuously improve your training program.

DISCUSSION & ACTIVITIES

Guided discussions and activities are included to offer opportunities for trainees to practice their new knowledge and skills. Activities include small group processing, small group role-plays, large group scenario discussions, and large group interactive activities. As you observe groups and lead debrief sessions, use this opportunity to reinforce the core set of beliefs regarding survivors that are highlighted above.

People need a chance to take care of themselves, use the restroom, stretch, and just be able to shift to idle for a few moments. It is best to try to break after every hour of focused learning.

- Several activities are included for you to choose from as ways to start a class, to infuse fun and group bonding, and to relieve the heaviness and anxiety of the topic. Use these frequently and/or devise simple ways to break the tension with stretching, movement, music, and laughter.
 - Breaks are also activities that are important to learning. People need a chance to take care of themselves, use the restroom, stretch, and just be able to shift to idle for a few moments. It is best to try to break after every hour of focused learning. Breaks should be sufficiently long, ideally 15–20 minutes.
- 

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR ADVOCACY TRAINING

Robust organizational support of high-quality foundational sexual assault training, ongoing development of advocacy skills, and careful attention to how the culture of the program supports its advocates will ensure that trained advocates stay committed to this work and the program.

Programs that provide both sexual assault and domestic violence services may wish to combine some portions of their sexual assault and domestic violence training, but it is important to provide separate time in training to each, rather than combining topics and shortening the overall training. There is significant value in reiterating overlapping skills and information in the context of the different types of survivors that your agency works with and there is significant value in providing distinct information on sexual violence and domestic violence.

Strong organizational policies and procedures support strong training, and strong training supports strong advocacy services. Infuse the training with trauma-informed practices that provide participants information and options, and that supports them in taking care of themselves. Some specific policies and practices to consider include:

- The program will have in place a clear and reliable process for inviting applications from potential trainees, interviewing, and following up on references before bringing trainees together.



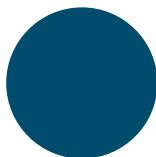
Potential trainees should understand that participating in the training is not a guarantee that all trainees will become advocates. The training offers both trainees and the program time and opportunity to determine if there is a good fit for the trainee to provide advocacy services.

- The program will have in place policies and practices that address:
 - advocacy ethics,
 - how to support trainees who are survivors of sexual assault,
 - methods of assessing trainees who are survivors' readiness to step into the advocacy role [considering more factors than simply length of time since assault or cessation of services at the program],
 - criminal history background checks and how they are used,
 - standards regarding placement of new advocates,
 - requirements for completing all training sessions and how to make up missed sessions,
 - requirements for ongoing professional development of paid and unpaid advocates,
 - supervision standards for paid and volunteer advocates, including a graduated supervision plan for new advocates allowing for time to ensure that a new advocate is adequately prepared to provide services.
- The program will address current standards for advocacy training in order to meet any legal or certification requirements.
- Potential trainees should understand that participating in the training is not a guarantee that all trainees will become advocates. The training offers both trainees and the program time and opportunity to determine if there is a good fit for the trainee to provide advocacy services.
- The program will support the trainers throughout the process and provide appropriate supervision and guidance.
- The program will make sufficient time and resources available to the trainers to enable them to prepare for, conduct, and debrief training sessions. Other job duties will be shifted accordingly to allow the trainers to focus on the training.



- The program will provide ongoing training opportunities for the trainers to ensure that their skills and knowledge remain current.
- The program will offer and hold regular debrief sessions for the trainers to address the process of the training and any concerns about individual trainees or other issues as may arise [e.g. guest speakers, training space concerns, etc.]
- The program will support the trainer regarding any decisions that could be challenging for the training group or any one member. Such situations may necessitate program support of the trainers' response and decision-making to the issue. Similarly, should a trainee indicate an unwillingness to serve a community of survivors or disbelief that they could be victims, the program must support the trainers' in managing such situation.
- The program leadership will also step in and respond to trainees if at any time the behavior or competence of the trainer should come into question or be identified as problematic by the trainees.





Be mindful that a great advocate is not guaranteed to be a great trainer. Trainers should be people who are comfortable leading a group, understand that they have a complex role (educator, facilitator, intervener, re-framer, cheerleader, evaluator, etc.), and are prepared to be either facilitative or directive when warranted.

The Trainer Team

Training for new sexual assault advocates — whether new paid staff or community volunteers — is a critical cornerstone for advocacy programs in communities across the country. A training team that is knowledgeable, skilled in training and group dynamics, prepared to lead the training, and well supported by the advocacy agency, in addition to a well-organized and up-to-date training curriculum, is central to a successful advocacy training program. The payoffs for a successful training program are many:

- Community volunteers learn skills and knowledge that they bring into other venues.
- The advocacy program is respected for the high standards it sets for its work.
- Survivors have access to high-quality support and services that are survivor-centered, informed by the latest practices that understand anti-oppression and intersectionality, the impact of trauma on a survivor, and support a survivor's self-agency, resilience, and healing.

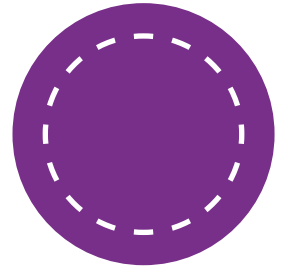
Advocacy trainers who lead foundational training for their program play a large role in sustaining the important work of the program in the community. The foundational sexual assault advocacy training is often a trainee's first exposure to trauma-informed practice. Trainers are encouraged to embed and model principles of trauma-informed practice by creating safety, maximizing opportunities for choice and control, fostering connections, and promoting self-reflection [Lieberman, 2011].

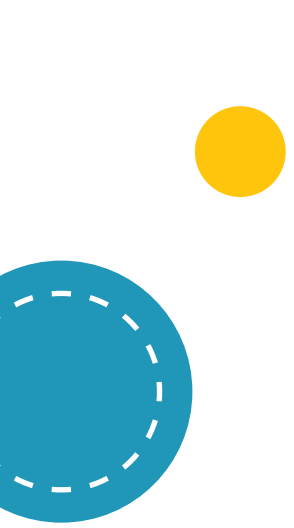
Trainers need to have successfully completed a foundational training themselves. They must be well grounded in the ethics and practice of providing advocacy for survivors of sexual violence and have experience in the various advocacy roles that trainees may serve in. Be mindful that a great advocate is not guaranteed to be a great trainer. Trainers should be people who are comfortable leading a group, understand that they have a complex role (educator, facilitator, intervener, re-framer, cheerleader, evaluator, etc.), and are prepared to be either facilitative or directive when warranted.

TRAINER TEAM LOGISTICS

Programs must consider how they will maintain continuity across sections of the training. Many programs use a team approach to training, where several or even all staff facilitate different training sessions. If this is true for you, think carefully about strategies to ensure continuity. You may want to have one staff member attend all training sessions, or have staff check in after training to debrief the session. Establish a backup training plan should a trainer have to miss sessions. Many programs have limited staff time available and training is a predictably large drain on staff hours. In spite of that, it is advisable to have at least two people serving as trainers for the advocacy training for these reasons:

- It is difficult for one person to both provide the training content and observe the group closely to ensure that the trainees are grasping the key learning points.
- For a typical training session, the demand on one person to manage all aspects of the training is significant. It is better for the trainers and the group to have two people sharing the responsibility. While one trainer is presenting and/or leading an activity the other can be observing trainees, chiming in at the request of the lead trainer of that section, and acting as timekeeper, among other things.
- Trainers can bring very different tones and perspectives to training sessions and can listen for themes that arise in large group discussions. The additional perspective is helpful in group discussions, debriefing, planning, and problem solving. Seek a training team that is diverse in identity, experience, and background.
- Due to the intensity of the training, it is advisable to have a second trainer who can step out of the room at any time with a trainee who is experiencing emotional distress. One trainer can attend to the trainee without disturbing the flow of the lessons.






It is important that trainers be mindful of the privilege they hold in this teaching role and use this authority with great awareness and intention. Trainers who hold additional privilege because of race or other forms of identity also have a responsibility to be aware of situations where their privilege can influence or interrupt dialogue, in particular when co-trainers or trainees who are from marginalized communities may experience harm by taking the same action. Training teams should discuss dynamics related to privilege, power, and preferences for navigating situations prior to beginning the advocacy training and should regularly check in to see how all members of the training team are doing and if approaches need to be shifted.

TRAINER SELF CARE

Maintaining a healthy emotional balance is central to being a grounded and effective trainer.



Observing new trainees struggle with what it means to finally understand the scope and harm of sexual violence can be unsettling to trainers. It can also take you back to the time when you first came to the same realizations. Training is hard work, on top of all the other hard work you do. You owe it to yourself, your co-trainer, and your group of trainees to be mindful of your own need for care during the training. If you are having trouble finding your emotional balance you should speak to your supervisor or co-trainers. Below are some simple practices to consider to help you stay healthy and grounded during this stressful time.

- Take good care of your physical needs (rest, food, movement, connection) in the ways that sustain you.
- Use your support systems to help you. Let them know you are undertaking a demanding role for the next several weeks and may need some additional support.
- Consider strategies that have been healthy, restful, and restoring for you in the past and use those.

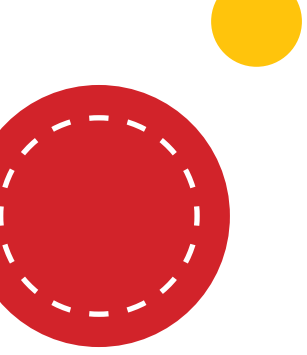
- Participate in physical activity at any level you desire. Physical activity releases endorphins, hormones that affect receptors in the brain, often reducing the sensation of pain or stress.
- Use grounding practices to center yourself in the present and to relax and nurture you.

Learn about your Trainees

It is important to be aware of who is in your training group. In addition to the first few modules which have an emphasis on learning more about trainees' motivations for joining the training, you will have completed pre-training interviews, have had the opportunity to review application information, and perhaps even followed up on references provided by the trainee. Early on in the training, you will have a good idea of what drives each individual with this topic, whether it be social activism, working from lived experience as a survivor or someone close to a survivor, a desire to help people who are challenged by life experiences, or a need to fulfill a college or job requirement.

Whatever the motivation, it is important that the trainer continue to be closely observant of trainees throughout the training to ensure they are managing their own emotional health as they: learn about the scope, prevalence, and harm of sexual violence; grasp the knowledge they need to be good beginning advocates; understand what it means to be trauma-informed and survivor-centered; and learn what it looks like to be an advocate who respects the survivor's capacity to lead the decision making and healing path. Most trainees bring experience or knowledge of some sort to this training commitment.

Early on in the training, you will have a good idea of what drives each individual with this topic, whether it be social activism, working from lived experience as a survivor or someone close to a survivor, a desire to help people who are challenged by life experiences, or a need to fulfill a college or job requirement.



Make sure that you are aware of and accommodate any accessibility needs that a trainee has. It can be beneficial to provide an opportunity for trainees to share needs related to accessibility during pre-training planning. A standard questionnaire or conversation with new trainees can elicit important information such as a trainee's preferred language and any physical and environmental accommodations needed so that trainees can fully participate.

Encouraging survivors' participation in advocacy training is an important part of your program's work. Because of the intensity of the training topics, it is likely that survivors in the group may feel prompted to talk about their experiences, even if they haven't before. The training content may also prompt some trainees to realize they have experienced sexual violence, but didn't have the words for it until now.

Encouraging survivors' participation in advocacy training is an important part of your program's work. Because of the intensity of the training topics, it is likely that survivors in the group may feel prompted to talk about their experiences, even if they haven't before. The training content may also prompt some trainees to realize they have experienced sexual violence, but didn't have the words for it until now. Trainers are encouraged to discuss this with all applicants during the interview process, on the first day of training, and as appropriate throughout the duration of the training to create a safe and trauma-informed space for learning. Self-disclosure can be healing and empowering and should not be discouraged; it should also not be required. Great care should be taken to support the entire group throughout the process. Invite participants to talk with trainers if they want to discuss disclosure with you before sharing with the group.

Participants in your training are likely all learners with varied educational experiences. It is important to keep in mind that the goals, motivating factors, and learning styles of trainees vary. However, some common characteristics shape their interaction with the learning process. As you choose methods and facilitate training, consider common traits of learners and how these will influence the structure and delivery of the training.

Learners:¹

- Learn best in a culturally appropriate and respectful climate. Learners like to determine their own learning experience. They enjoy small group interactions and learn from others' experiences as well as from their own. Their participation is valued. Diversity of life experience is honored.
- May be goal-oriented. They often look for relevance, information they can readily use, applications of theory to reality.
- Have previous learning experiences. They may bring preconceived ideas, even attitudes to this training based on those experiences. As a facilitator/trainer, realize that some reactions may not be a response to you or your ability.
- Have established habits. They may draw their knowledge and opinions from years of experience and be reluctant to change. They may feel threatened by new concepts and new ways of doing things. Recognize this and be prepared to help them embrace change.
- Have opinions about what's being taught. Let learners know that their opinions and ideas are significant and matter. Keep learners engaged in the learning process by asking for and valuing their insight.
- Tend to relate what they are learning to what they already know. Learners may like to sort new information into familiar categories. It helps to relate new information to familiar situations or procedures, giving them familiar ground while you are asking them to stretch into unfamiliar or uncomfortable territory.
- Need to be actively involved in the learning process. Learners want to do more than sit and receive information passively. Lectures should be short and present only the most relevant information. Have participants use the information by involving them actively in the learning process and giving them opportunity to apply what they learn.





Training Setting & Schedule

The tone you set in the training space itself is vital in establishing a comfortable, respectful learning environment. Many options are both affordable and powerful in helping to create this environment.

- Consider a setting that can be rearranged and renewed easily. Can chairs be in a circle, several small circles, pushed back to the walls, etc.? Changing the room arrangement can prompt new connections.
- Play background music as people enter the room, take breaks, or work in small groups.
- Make food available (within grant or funding guidelines). Many training groups manage this by having group members offer to contribute food for one of the training sessions. Some agencies are able to get donations from local grocery stores or co-ops to support the training program. The refreshments do not have to be fancy or abundant. Popcorn, nuts, fruit, and drinks can be sufficient.
- Consider ways you can make the training room your own during the training time. For example, consider posting the agency mission, photos, powerful quotes from survivors, activists, and advocates, or art work.

It is recommended that you follow the modules in the order laid out in this manual. Every agency will determine a training schedule that best meets their needs and the needs of trainees. Some find that several evenings of 4-hour sessions works well, while others may prefer to do a series of full days on weekends. Make sure that each schedule contains sufficient time for breaks and debriefing both at the beginning and end of the session. It is beneficial to schedule the training so that it can be completed in 4–6 weeks without interruption. Be aware of your state accreditation requirements and develop your program's training schedule to meet these guidelines.

Pre-Training Tasks

Prior to the training, participants should receive information on training requirements so that they are able to make an informed decision about their participation. It is best practice to require all employees — ranging from leadership to advocates to fiscal staff — to complete the full advocacy training. It is also highly recommended that all volunteers, regardless of role, also complete the training.

Follow your organization and state guidelines on training requirements to become a staff person or volunteer. It should be made clear that participation in the training does not guarantee acceptance into an advocacy position, but is rather an extended interview and orientation in which the program and potential advocate can determine if they are a good match. An information packet for prospective advocates might contain the following:

- Agency and program description
- Explanation of the kind of training your agency is offering and its focus or purpose
- A list of prerequisites for enrollment in the training course, including age requirements, relevant agency policies re. criminal background checks, etc.
- Training course overview and schedule
- Training expectations and requirements for participants, including how many sessions can be missed and made up later
- Requirements for advocates, including a basic job description, extent of commitment (e.g. shifts per week or month, attendance during in-service trainings or mandatory meetings)
- Information about services available and how to access to support

It is best practice to require all employees — ranging from leadership to advocates to fiscal staff — to complete the full advocacy training. It is also highly recommended that all volunteers, regardless of role, also complete the training.



During the Training

The training time together is a good opportunity for you to observe the trainees in a number of activities and to assess if each is a good candidate for your advocacy program. If you and the trainee decide direct services are not the best fit for them, consider if another type of work or volunteerism at your agency or a peer agency in the community might be better suited.

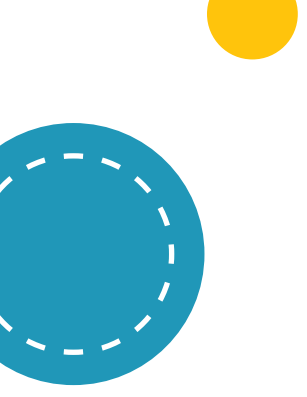
Some trainees may maintain a high level of anxiety about becoming an advocate for survivors of sexual violence. It is important for the trainers to maintain a strong positive and encouraging tone that by its nature can reassure the participants that you have faith in their ability to be advocates. Acknowledge that some anxiety is normal and healthy and a sign that the participants value the role they are stepping into, but that direct service might not be the best fit for all trainees. If, over the course of training, you and a trainee decide that direct service is not for them, consider if it is appropriate and possible for them to find another way to contribute to the agency. It is possible that in cases where it is truly not a good fit, trainers may need to advise trainees that they do not meet the requirements to fulfill the available role[s] at the agency. Such conversations should be thoughtful, supportive, and let trainees know the circumstances in which they be reconsidered for available roles.

If you hear from some trainees an indication that they may struggle with some aspects of the advocacy work, [e.g. wanting survivors to report all sexual assault so the “bad folks” will be caught; or blanket statements that all people who commit sexual violence “are monsters” and should “fry”] make a mental note to observe if these perspectives start to change throughout the training as participants learn more about the nuances of sexual violence. These are common attitudes and expressions heard in the public arena, but we know that they are too simplistic and are typically not consistent with what an individual survivor wants or needs. Watch for evidence that this potential advocate is learning to understand the complexity and nuances of the issue and reevaluating their earlier positions. Make space for these big questions and challenging topics for trainees in the Bringing It Together and Bringing it to a Close sections of each training day.

After the Foundational Training is Complete

- Hold a graduation ceremony at the last session and honor the hard work of the trainees.
- Conduct follow-up interviews with those who completed the training
 - The purpose of the interview is to assess the trainee's experience with the training and to determine their readiness to engage in advocacy. This is a time in which a trainee's interest, availability, and any remaining concerns from either the individual or the trainers should be discussed. These conversations will likely differ slightly between those held with volunteers and those held with newly hired staff members.
 - For some trainees, this meeting will be an opportunity to indicate that a trainee is not ready to step into an advocacy role. It is possible that the individual will already have determined that. If the trainee is a newly hired employee and it is determined that an advocacy role is not a good fit, consider if other more suitable positions at the organization are available. Alternatively, explore if additional opportunities for learning and shadowing may help the trainee be more prepared and capable of serving in an advocacy role. If the trainee is a volunteer, use this opportunity to offer other volunteer roles for involvement or invite the individual to stay connected and/or consider options for the future, if either is appropriate. Whatever the decision, thank them for their interest in your program and for completing the training.
 - If the trainee has successfully completed the training program and is prepared for a role as a staff member or volunteer, follow your own agency's steps for onboarding the trainee into your advocacy program.





- Conduct an organizational debriefing of the training for the purpose of:
 - Evaluating the training from the agency perspective,
 - Reviewing participant evaluations,
 - Identifying ways to place newly trained advocates,
 - Strategizing about future trainings, and
 - Assessing how the training demands and schedule affected other staff and whether organizational shifts are necessary to accommodate training.
- Plan and implement a program of professional development for all advocates:
 - Schedule and require attendance at ongoing advocate meetings with debrief and training opportunities,
 - Offer and require participation in other training opportunities including webinars or other remote learning possibilities,
 - Celebrate the contribution of your paid and volunteer advocates by holding an annual appreciation event.

ACTIVITY: BRINGING IT TOGETHER

An opening practice is critical to grounding the group in a learning environment that allows space for trainees to connect and set the foundation for the new learning that will take place. Trainers and trainees can co-create an opening practice reflective of the cohort that supports curiosity and inquisitiveness among trainees, making continual space for learning and growth.



OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity the trainer will be able to:

- Assess the energy and status of the group prior to each session
- Support rapport building in the training group
- Identify where additional learning or practicing is necessary
- Assess the group's readiness to move on



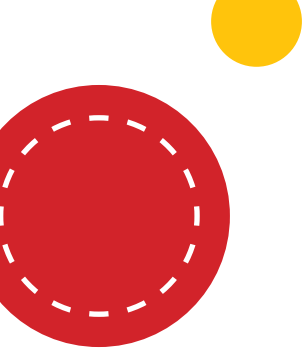
MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pens/pencils




CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE TRAINER

Learning continues after the session. When using *Bringing it Together* throughout the weeks of training, trainers might hear trainees talk about thoughts they had after the last session. Follow-up activities that result in new insights from group members are not a sign that a trainer is doing a bad job. You might think to yourself, “I should have caught that when we were talking about...” or “I missed a really important point in that lesson.” Instead, it is a sign that trainees



are connecting to the new information, are actively working on figuring it all out, and are learning. Trainers, similarly, might have “aha” moments between training sessions and should feel welcome to share those with the group.

BRINGING IT TOGETHER CHECK IN



Using an activity agreed upon by the group, take the first fifteen minutes of your session to reconnect as a cohort. This can be an opportunity for members of the group to learn about each other and build a sense of trust and community within the group. It can also be a chance to pair a more personal check in with a prompt to name a topic still on one's mind from a past session. Find a ritual or check in practice that works for the group. Examples include:

A personal check in:

- Ask participants to share a few words, thoughts, or feelings about how they're doing today.
- Offer a specific prompt which may range from light to more serious. Members of the group can take turns determining the prompt.

A training-specific check in:

- Pose an open-ended question to the group: What additional questions or reactions arose about the previous training session[s]? What are you most excited to learn more about?
- Ask participants to share a few words, thoughts, or feelings in response to the last training session module.
- Make notecards available for participants as trainees enter the room. Ask them to write down any additional comments to be read and posed to the larger group by the trainers.

After sharing and exploring any lingering questions or thoughts as a group, transition to the first session of training for the day and invite trainees to use the question wall for questions that come up throughout the day.

ACTIVITY: BRINGING IT TO A CLOSE

Evaluation is critical to the process of your training program. If you are not certain that your training is effective in preparing new advocates, you have done only part of the work. There are multiple evaluation opportunities and tools trainers can use throughout the training schedule to determine if the group is gaining the knowledge and skills needed and is ready to move on to the next topic.



OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this module the trainer will be able to:

- Assess how trainees feel about the training session and gather feedback
- Identify where additional learning or practicing is necessary
- Assess the group's readiness to move on



MATERIALS

- ☐ Flipchart
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Session evaluation forms
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pens/pencils



EVALUATION

At the end of each day, allot fifteen minutes to check in with trainees about the material covered and conduct an evaluation. Many of the sessions have a debrief activity built in to the end of the session. In these cases, it is possible that you will skip step one [below] unless there is a sense that an additional group check in is needed. Step two is to conduct a written evaluation. This should be a standard practice at the end of each day.

Step 1: Invite trainees into a discussion and take notes [on the flipchart or a notepad]. It is important to normalize for the group that having questions is expected and is an indication that the participant is eager to learn.

- What questions do you still have about what we just covered?
- Is what was presented clear to you?
- What do you think was the most useful information you heard in that discussion/presentation?
- What do you think was the most difficult or challenging information you heard in that discussion/presentation?
- What is one word you can use to describe how that lesson/session felt to you?
- Do you feel ready to move on to the next lesson?

Step 2: Distribute a written evaluation form at the end of each session that asks for feedback on the facilitators, presentation, activities, usefulness, etc. A sample follows.

Upon completion of foundational advocacy training: At the end of the final session, participants should be asked to respond to a more complete evaluation of the overall training experience.

TRAINING SESSION EVALUATION

TOPIC TITLE:

DATE:

CONTENT EVALUATION						
	N/A	POOR		AVERAGE		EXCELLENT
Material presented was informative and relevant to topic.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
Handouts offered additional useful information.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
There were opportunities to participate and ask questions.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
Material presented included a multicultural perspective, including issues of disability, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, etc.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
Lesson activities demonstrated important concepts and skills for advocates working with survivors of sexual violence.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
CONTENT EVALUATION						
	N/A	POOR		AVERAGE		EXCELLENT
The facilitator(s) effectively communicated concepts.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator(s) were prepared and organized.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator(s) encouraged participation.	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
OVERALL EVALUATION						
	N/A	POOR		AVERAGE		EXCELLENT
How would you rate this session overall?	n/a	1	2	3	4	5

TRAINING SESSION EVALUATION

COMMENTS:

What was the most important thing you learned or liked about this session?

How might this session be improved for future trainings?

