

Supporting Incarcerated Survivors: Practice Scenarios

An effective way to build your confidence in working with incarcerated survivors is through fact-based scenarios. Using the scenarios below can help you to prepare how to respond to situations that may come up. You should consider what kinds of safety planning or coping skills might be applicable, as well as what kinds of information might be helpful to share with the survivor regarding their rights and the resources available to them, including at your agency.

Hotline Scenario One



You receive a call to your center's hotline. The caller says, "I saw your info on a PREA poster. I didn't have anyone else to talk to about this so I thought I'd try calling you." You explain what your agency does and your agency's limits to confidentiality. You ask about what they are experiencing and they share that "a month ago something happened with one of the other guys here. He is gone now but I feel so violated and dirty. I just feel like somehow this is my fault. I have been having nightmares and I haven't slept well since it happened. I just want to feel normal again."

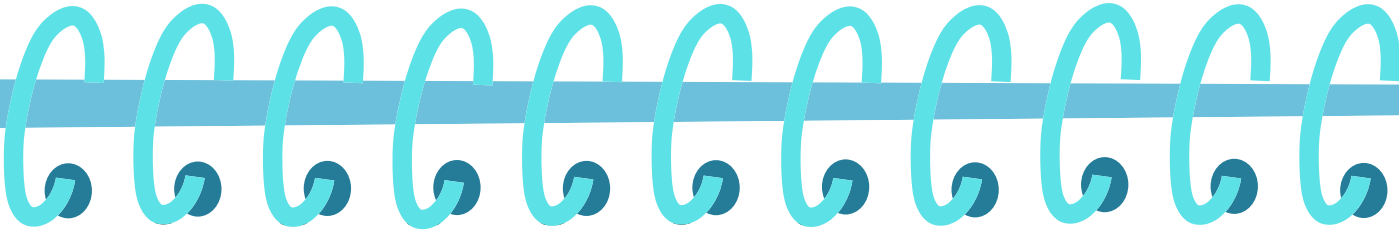


Hotline Scenario Two

You answer your hotline and the caller says, "I filed a PREA report after I was sexually harassed last month but nothing has happened and no investigation has been opened. The officer that said those things to me last month still works in the unit that I am stuck in. I have to see her every day. Do you think you could talk to someone so I am not in this housing unit? Do you think you can help me find out what is going on with the report?"

Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Exam Scenario

You receive a call from the staff at a detention facility asking you to provide forensic accompaniment at a hospital for an incarcerated person who has been sexually assaulted. When you arrive at the hospital, you see the survivor is wearing only waist-chains and a paper gown and appears to be shivering in the air-conditioned room. The forensic nurse is preparing to begin the exam. Two armed officers are present in the room; one says to the survivor, "be respectful and cooperate, inmate. This advocate drove from the other side of the county for you."



A blanket is brought in for the survivor. One of the officers agrees to wait in the hallway, with the other remaining in the room, a few feet back from the survivor. You give your name, pronouns, and the name of your agency to the survivor.

"Thanks for the blanket. You can call me Jay. I use he/him pronouns," the survivor says. The officer in the room snorts, and says, "He's already lying to you. This is the famous inmate Josh Marcus. You probably read about his crimes in the paper."

The officer agrees to allow you to have an uninterrupted conversation, and the forensic nurse begins the exam as you sit at Jay's shoulder. Jay tells you that two days ago he was forced to eat food that was spiked with a sedative. While drugged, he was sexually assaulted by two incarcerated people, one of whom, had previously threatened him.

Following the assault, one of the perpetrators forced him to shower. He does not feel safe giving the names of the people who assaulted him, but states that both are gang members.

Jay tells you, "This isn't my first assault. I've spent most of my adult life in prisons. Seems I have a mark on my back. I'm likely to be shipped out again, after this." As the exam comes to a close, Jay lets you know he really would like to stay in contact with your agency.