

Advocate Readiness Assessment

Once you have received training on serving incarcerated survivors of sexual abuse, you should assess your readiness for this work. This individualized assessment can help you identify your strengths in understanding the needs of incarcerated survivors —as well as areas where you may have room to grow, with the support of your agency. At the conclusion of the assessment, make note of your strengths and any areas where you feel challenged, and identify specific action steps you plan to take in order to be better prepared to serve currently and formerly incarcerated survivors.

Readiness Measures

- I have a general understanding of what incarcerated survivors' lives are like inside corrections facilities and after release.

- I have an awareness of the needs of incarcerated survivors from various backgrounds, including survivors of color, LGBTQI+ survivors, and survivors who have a disability.

- I feel comfortable providing support to men.

- I know what detention facilities are in my agency's service area or region.

- I have a firm understanding of what services my agency provides at the detention facilities in my area.

- I understand the level of confidentiality people at each of these facilities have. Are calls monitored and/or recorded? Is mail read? etc.

- I feel ready to answer a hotline call from an incarcerated survivor. I am aware of any call time limits imposed by the facility. I have relevant information and resources to share with callers, etc.



I feel ready to accompany an incarcerated survivor to a sexual assault medical forensic exam. I have had conversations with facility staff and my agency about policies around forensic exams. I have ideas for safety planning that would be helpful to review with an incarcerated survivor after the exam.



I understand that written communication is often the main way for incarcerated people to get support. I feel ready to respond to letters from incarcerated survivors and provide emotional support via written correspondence. I understand how the facility will process mail from my agency, etc.



I have a basic understanding of the rights of incarcerated survivors, including under PREA. For example, I understand incarcerated people have the right to: report sexual abuse and harassment through multiple methods, have their report meaningfully investigated; receive medical and mental health care, etc.



I understand my organization's policies regarding mandated reporting and confidentiality with regards to working with incarcerated survivors. For example, I understand how to secure a release of information from an incarcerated survivor.



I know the steps I need to follow if an incarcerated survivor discloses plans and has the means to hurt themselves or someone else.



I know how survivors who are incarcerated can report sexual abuse or sexual harassment (both inside the facility and to an outside entity), if they choose to.



I feel ready to help incarcerated survivors identify coping skills that are applicable to detention settings.



I can explain to incarcerated survivors how they can receive follow up support services from my agency; I can also provide them with referrals to other agencies.

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