A SANE APPROACH TO SEXUAL ASSAULT: DEVELOPING PROGRAMS AND COLLABORATIONS IN COMMUNITIES

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Objectives

- Recognize the resources and tools available to communities to develop sexual assault nurse examiners in their communities
- Understand the value that a trained sexual assault can have in promoting healing for victims of sexual assault
- Realize the importance of using the team approach to have the most effective response to victims in communities

Guiding Questions

- How do we encourage a strong, effective response to sexual assault against Native people?
- How do we provide timely access to health care for Native victims?
- How can we impact the access to resources within the community for Native victims?
- How can we create meaningful, positive change for victims and communities?
Definition of Sexual Assault

Any act of sexual contact or intimacy performed upon one person by another and without mutual consent or with inability of the survivor to give consent due to age or mental/physical incapacity.
Pre-colonization/Traditional Beliefs

- Women were held as sacred
- Sexuality was natural, no shame
- Relationships were egalitarian
- Interdependency
- Clan and other social systems created order
- Tribal justice response to acts of violence was quick & appropriate
- No word for rape

Overlapping Issues

- Sexual Assault
- Intimate Partner Violence
- Child Abuse & Neglect
- Mental Illness
- Alcohol & Drug Abuse
Consequences of the Problem

- Impact both the individual
- And the community as a whole

Consequences of the Problem

- Significant under reporting
- Minimal criminal justice consequences for perpetrators
- Serial offenders
- Profound long term health consequences
Long Term Health Consequences of Sexual Violence

Life altering effects which can be:
- Physical
- Psychological
- Psychosocial

What are some of the current challenges in your community for victims?
Current challenges in many Tribal Communities

- Limited access to a medical forensic examination by trained providers
- Staff turnover in health care facilities
- Policies that may limit or prohibit ability to respond to subpoenas
- Privacy issues
- Mistrust of local systems
- Accessing SANE services off reservation

Addressing Sexual Assault

The ideal response to sexual assault would be

To have a community response team available to all Native victims

Within that response team are:

- Trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners, advocates, law enforcement, prosecutors and judges

Resulting in:

- Victims feeling safe to come forward
- Increased tribal and federal prosecution.
- Improved patient outcomes
Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)

- Tribal Prosecutors Office
- US Attorneys Office
- Medical
- Advocacy
- FBI
- Tribal Law enforcement
- Other Community Partners?

Tools for SART Development
More resources

- Clan Star, Inc.  www.clanstar.org
- Sacred Circle  www.sacred-circle.org
- Mending the Sacred Hoop  www.msh-ta.org
- Red Wind Consulting, Inc.  www.red-wind.net
- Southwest Center for Law and Policy  www.swclap.org
- Tribal Law and Policy Institute  www.tlpi.org

SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINERS

Why a nurse responder to sexual assault?
What is a SANE

- Registered Nurse
- Cares for victims of sexual assault
- Specialized Education and training

The Medical Forensic Response

- Police are the “normal” investigative responders to crime
- In this case, a person is the ‘crime scene’
- Sexual assault requires a healthcare response
The Medical Forensic Exam

- Assessment, documentation and collection of forensic evidence
- Provision of STI and pregnancy prophylaxis
- Emotional support and crisis intervention
- Access to resources
- Examiners testify in court

Common Misperceptions about the Medical Forensic Exam

- Anybody can perform the exam
- It's all about DNA
- It proves a rape occurred
- It's only for women
Considerations for the exam

- Tailored for the individual
- Informed consent—what that means
- Tradition in the exam room
- Where would people in your community feel most comfortable having the exam take place?

Time Sensitivity

72-120 hours is the general timeframe
- Evidence
- HIV treatment
- STI treatment
- Pregnancy prevention

Challenges:
- Most victims do not immediately report
- Long term and sometimes unaddressed health consequences for these victims
Guiding Questions

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- How can we create meaningful, positive change for victims and communities?

Meaningful Change

- Empower victims and communities
- Bring issue of sexual assault into the light and out of the darkness
- Bring healing to families and communities
- Reinforce traditional ways
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Bibliography

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