

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

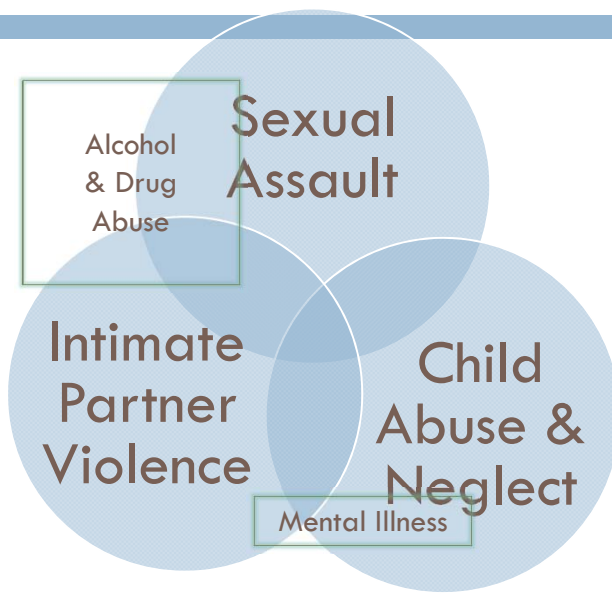
Any act of sexual contact or intimacy performed upon one person by another and *without mutual consent* or with inability of the survivor to give consent due to age or mental/physical incapacity.

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



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

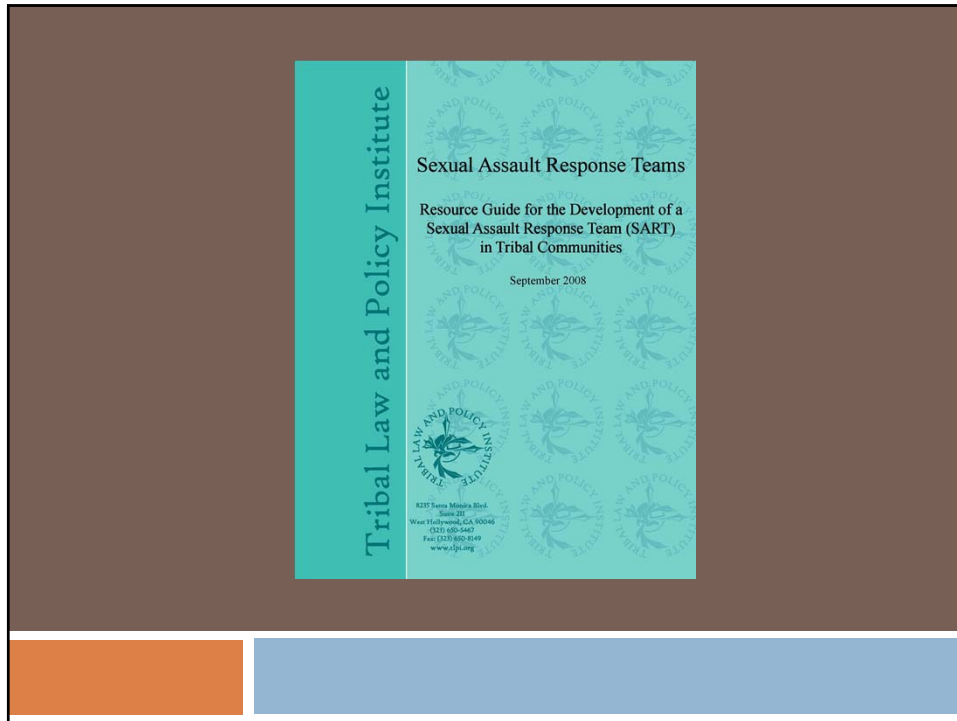
Resulting in:

- Victims feeling safe to come forward
- Increased tribal and federal prosecution.
- Improved patient outcomes

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)



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
- Its all about DNA
- It *proves* a rape occurred
- Its 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

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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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