

Serving Survivors in Culturally Specific Programs

Sexual assault affects every race, ethnicity and culture. Response to sexual assault, however, varies widely in each community. The Department of Justice estimates that the average annual rate of rape and sexual assault among American Indian women is 3.5 times higher than for all other races. There is also wide variation in how each culture interacts with various systems on the issue of sexual violence.

These issues were examined recently in OAESV's monthly audio conference "Serving Survivors in Culturally Specific Programs." The audio conference included panelists Sandy Davidson of Praxis International and Mona Hassan, a Ph.D. candidate at Case Western Reserve University. Each panelist spoke about her own experience within her culture and area of expertise. Recommendations from the panelists included:

Do not make assumptions: It is important for individual providers to examine their own cultural lens, examine bias and privilege. It is unwise to make assumptions about an individual's race or ethnicity and equally unwise to assume that a survivor feels a relationship to their race or ethnicity. Let the individual be the guide in handling these questions and "meet the survivor where they are."

When dealing with systems, history is important: The way that a particular culture has been treated by the criminal justice and/or medical system either in the U.S. or their country of origin for an immigrant can have a significant impact in a survivor's interaction with these systems. Service providers must be aware that concerns may surface around dealing with these systems.

Barriers may need to be overcome: Survivors from different cultures may be working to overcome barriers to access services. Barriers can be as simple as transportation to and from a service provider, or there may be more long-term needs, such as translation services. Service providers must think creatively to ensure that survivors from different cultures have equal access to services.

It can be challenging to provide culturally competent, accessible services to survivors from many different cultures. Here are some resources that can help:

[Praxis International](#)

[Immigrant Women and Sexual Violence](#)

[Women of Color Network SV Factsheet](#)

[Existe Ayuda \(Help Exists\) Toolkit](#)

[Suggestions for Upgrading the Cultural Competency](#)

[Skills of Sexual Assault Response Teams](#)

Check out one of these books from our resource library:

[Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide](#)

[Shout Out: Women of Color Respond to Violence](#)

[Color of Violence: The INCITE Anthology](#)

Join us for the next audio conference on **Friday, January 20,** 12:00pm-1:30 pm. The call will focus on *Serving LGBTQ Survivors in Ohio.* RSVP to info@oesv.org.

Prevention Success Story: Teen PEP Leaders Make Good Citizens - Danielle Cisterno

Teen PEP is a primary abuse and sexual violence prevention program sponsored by the Toledo Children's Hospital and the Ohio Department of Health. Each year teens are chosen by their peers in 12 different junior and senior high schools in Lucas County to be Teen PEP leaders for their school. Leaders meet weekly with trained staff to talk about issues such as rape, gender stereotyping, sexual harassment, bullying and cyberbullying, teen dating violence and healthy relationships, as well as sexual abuse, emotional and physical abuse. Students help design role plays that specifically relate to the unique culture of each of their schools. All role plays are followed by in depth, interactive discussion led by the teen leaders. The effectiveness of the program lies in the fact that it is by teens, for teens. Success story:

Our Teen PEP assistant Alex has been a wonderful addition to the leadership of our program. Alex is a 21 year old college student at the University of Toledo and a former Bowsler High School Teen PEP leader who was hired into the Assistant role nearly two years ago. He is truly a pleasure to work with and within the short time he has been here he has helped implement and lead facilitation of our first ever MOST Club at the Alternate Learning Center, which is also one of our participating Teen PEP schools.

This past year we added Rogers High School to our program with his help. As is customary, our staff set up a series of meetings with the school's administration to do "meet and greets" with their staff, plan implementation and begin

recruiting activities for the new team. As Alex and I walked in to one such meeting, Vice Principal Mrs. Smith gave Alex a smile and playfully commented "What are YOU doing here Mr.?" Alex had been one of Mrs. Smith's students as an adolescent at a middle school she worked at years earlier, and she remembered him quite well. As it turns out, Alex has not always been the upstanding, thoughtful and pleasant young man he is today and I was surprised to hear that he was actually a bully at one time! As we talked back and forth about how much we all evolve during our journey through youth, Alex added:

"It's true, I was a bit obnoxious, a bully, some not-so-good things when you knew me back then. But that was before this program. It changed me for the better, and helped me realize the impact my actions have on others".

Often times the truest testament to the change we make and the remarkable success we achieve with our youth is the adults who come out of this program. I know this is true of me and a score of other professionals in our community. It seems that measuring long term outcomes may not be so hard after all; staying close to the program participants as they move through life after the program has taught me this time and again. We do more than raise awareness; we teach lifelong skills that change negative behaviors and produce more respectful, tolerant, healthier citizens. True leaders are real life human success stories indeed.

**OAESV wants to feature local programs in its monthly newsletter!
Picture your story here; submit a piece to kporter@oaesv.org.**

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2012 OAESV Membership: Renew or Join Today!

By signing up as an OAESV member in January 2012, you will be entered into a drawing and could win a copy of the DVD *Boys and Men Healing*.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Access to Resources
- Newsletters
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month packet and materials
- Notification of special events
- Legislative Alerts
- Reduced fees for the statewide prevention conference
- Voice in the state on public policy

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS (CONT.)

- Participation in membership committee meetings and working groups of the coalition*
- Leadership opportunities to run for Regional Representative, voted in by the membership

COALITION COMMITTEES*

Training & Education
Standards
Public Policy
Membership

[DOWNLOAD OUR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION HERE.](#)

Your Voice at the State Level



Public Policy Updates & OAESV in the News!

Sexual Assault Kit Testing Commission

On December 5, 2011 Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine announced the unanimous approval of the Attorney General's Recommended Policy on Submission of Sexual Assault Kits, by the 11 member Sexual Assault Kit Commission. DeWine remarked that "many [kits] sit today on evidence shelves across Ohio" and have not been tested.

DeWine announced that four additional staff members will be hired at BCI to test any old kits. These staff members will represent a separate unit, so that current kits are not impacted. In the first year, 1,500 kits will be tested and in the following year, an additional 3,000 kits will be processed.

[Click here for more information.](#)

House Bill 125

On December 13, 2011, OAESV and SARNCO testified in opposition of H.B. 125, commonly known as "The Heartbeat Bill." If a heartbeat is found, the doctor would be required to play the audio to the patient, require the patient to sign a statement that she had heard the audio, and the abortion would be outlawed except to protect the woman's life.

H.B. 125 has no exceptions for pregnancies resulting from rape or incest.

Hearings on the proposed legislation in the Ohio Senate have been suspended.

[Download our fact sheet here.](#)

New National Prevalence Data About Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence Released December 14, 2011 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) conducted by the CDC is the first attempt in over 10 years to systematically study a national representative sample of victims of sexual and intimate partner violence.

- 1.3 million women were raped during the year preceding the survey.
- Nearly 1 in 5 women have been raped in their lifetime while 1 in 71 men have been raped in their lifetime.

OAESV and ODVN issued a joint press release that can be found [here](#).

Download CDC Fact Sheet [here](#).

OAESV & CRCC Collaboration

The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence and the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center recently finalized and signed its Support and Services Agreement. This process involved collaborative leadership and discussion between both the CRCC and OAESV Boards of Directors. While both organizations still maintain separate 501(c)(3) status, separate boards, staff and missions, this collaboration is about leveraging organizational support and enhancing services of the coalition.

Julie Harris, Board President of OAESV, commented that, "The OAESV is thrilled to have formalized the Support and Services Agreement with the CRCC. This strategic partnership will strengthen the OAESV and enhance its ability to fulfill its statewide mission of ensuring that Ohioans have the benefit of a state wide coalition devoted to assisting survivors of sexual assault."

"The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence greatly appreciates this rich collaboration with Cleveland Rape Crisis Center and extends thanks to both the CRCC and OAESV Boards of Directors for this creative approach to addressing the needs of survivors and rape crisis centers across Ohio," stated OAESV Statewide Director Katie Hanna."

Reauthorize VAWA!

On November 30, 2011, the reauthorization of The Violence Against Women Act was introduced as a bipartisan bill by Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Mike Crapo (R-ID). The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women has worked closely with them on the bill to ensure that it will not only continue proven effective programs, but that it will make key changes to streamline VAWA and make sure that even more people have access to safety, stability and justice. This is an important step forward for VAWA and we hope to get even more improvements as the bill moves forward!

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), enacted in 1994, recognizes the insidious and pervasive nature of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and supports comprehensive, effective and cost saving responses to these crimes. VAWA programs, administered by the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, give law enforcement, prosecutors and judges the tools they need to hold offenders accountable and keep communities safe while supporting victims. VAWA must be swiftly reauthorized to ensure the continuation of these vital, lifesaving programs and laws.

The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women has released a [Reauthorize VAWA Tool Kit](#). To mobilize support in your local community, take action by downloading this tool kit. Kara Porter, OAESV Statewide Outreach Manager, recommends this as an excellent resource to learn about VAWA and about systems advocacy.

