

Community Mapping

Community mapping is a process that can be useful to jump start a CCR that has been stagnant, or for newly developed teams to begin defining how they will work together. The exercise aims to accomplish the following:

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of each agency and how they interact with victims and offenders
- Identify a continuum of services that is needed for people who have experienced sexual assault and/or domestic violence
- Clarify the process for how agencies make referrals to each other or identify gaps in this process if referrals are not being made from agency to agency
- Clearly identify the strengths, challenges and gaps that exist in community services for people who have experienced sexual assault and/or domestic violence

Participating in this exercise lends itself to the deepening of interagency relationships, and can foster a shared commitment for working together to address sexual assault and domestic violence. It also provides an opportunity to learn more about your collaborative partners' procedures, ask questions and together identify where you could better assist each other and enhance the community's response and services for victims.

In order for this exercise to have the most benefit, an atmosphere of respectful communication and trust is key. It is recommended that guidelines tailored to your group are identified and put forth prior to engaging in community mapping to promote a safe space for open dialogue.

What you will need:

- Ideally two facilitators – one to record the “map” of community services, and one to record the strengths, challenges, gaps and opportunities. It is helpful but not necessary for the facilitators to be external to the team. External facilitators are able to ask questions of team members that may be uncomfortable for people to ask of the community partners that they work with on an ongoing basis.
- Flip chart, markers, handouts for participants (scenario, ground rules, description of the mapping process, sample documents)
- Time! Don't rush! Set aside a few meetings to complete the activity (more or less depending on how large your team is – plan on 30-45 minutes per agency mapped)

The Community Mapping Process

The activity begins by the facilitator reading a scenario of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Each agency around the table takes turns describing, step-by-step, how they would process through the case. One agency is mapped at a time. The activity flows best if you start with where victims often first encounter the service system in your community (typically law enforcement, healthcare, advocacy services), and proceed with mapping the case chronologically. The facilitators listen for responses to the following questions, which leads to identification of the community's strengths, gaps, challenges and opportunities.

- How does a victim present for services? How do people typically get referred?
- Who would a victim initially talk to? What does the initial conversation look like? Then what happens?
- At what point and in what way are other community partners brought in when responding to a case? (i.e., when and how are referrals made?)
- When is a case closed or when does it move from one program/person to another program/person? What is the timeframe for a case moving through the system?
- What policies, procedures, laws, etc. guide your response and the action you take?
- How does one qualify for your services? What are your service parameters?
- What does your organization do really well? What is your organization's biggest challenge?

The following pages contain examples of community mapping documents:

- DV/SA scenario for mapping and ground rules
- Law enforcement "map"
- List of strengths, challenges, gaps and opportunities

Sample Scenario for Community Mapping Exercise

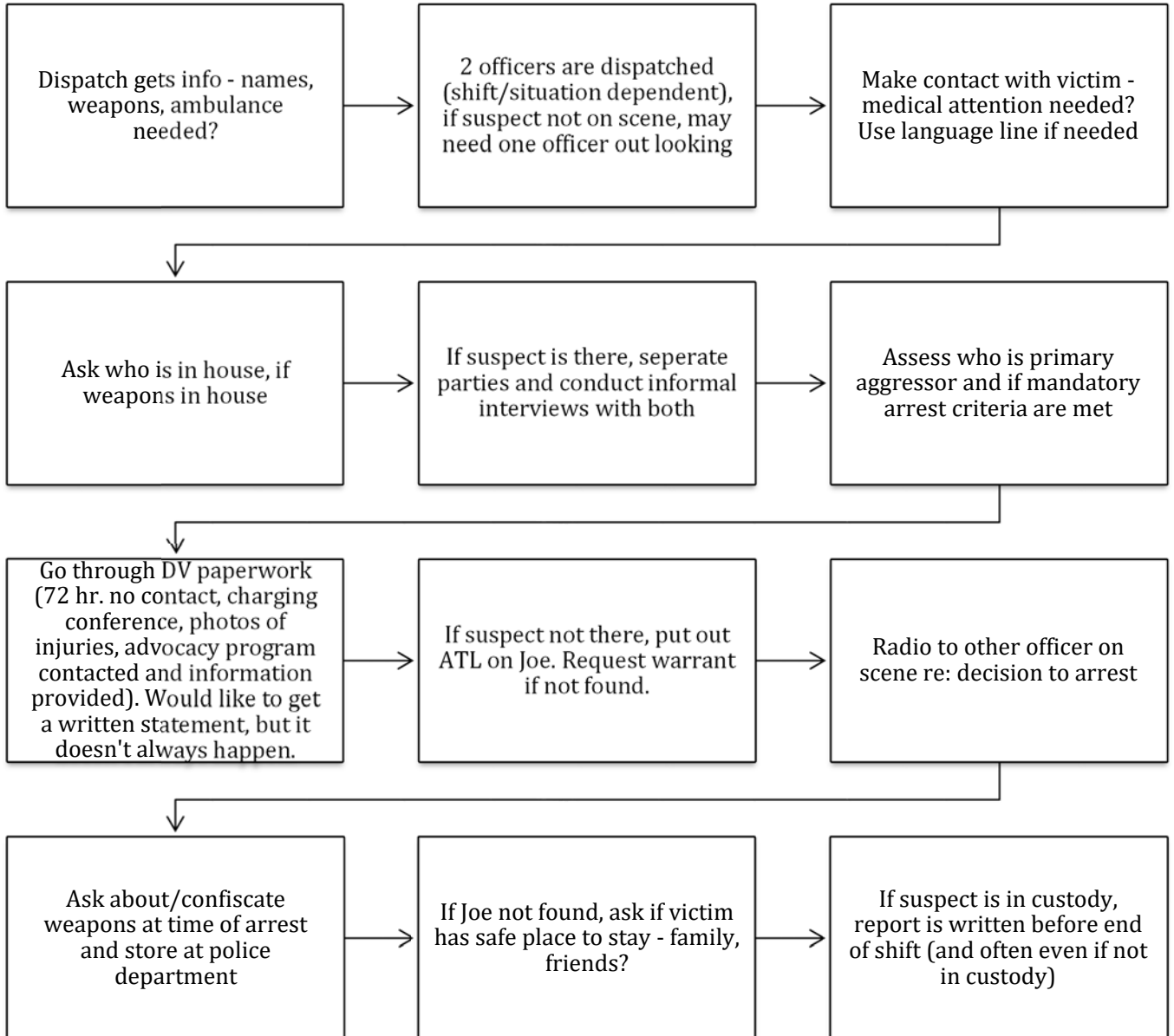
Tom and Sandy had been dating on and off for over 2 years, but Sandy had recently broken things off “for good”. There is a history of domestic violence in their relationship which led to Sandy filing for a restraining order. However, a short time after the temporary order was granted Sandy wrote a letter to the judge asking to stop the process because she no longer felt the need for this protection and really missed Tom as a friend. Tom and Sandy continued to remain friends and Tom would come over to Sandy’s house to help her out with work around the house and to be a male figure to her 10-year-old son. One night, Tom came over for dinner and after Sandy’s son had gone to bed he told Sandy he wanted to have sex with her one last time. Sandy said she did not want that type of relationship with him any longer, but Tom continued to pressure her and became more and more demanding each time she said no. As Tom became more agitated throughout the evening, Sandy started to become fearful of Tom and worried that her son would wake up and witness another incident of physical abuse. Eventually, Tom forced Sandy to have sex and she offered no physical resistance.

The next day at work Sandy was quiet and avoided contact with her co-workers. During the lunch hour, one of Sandy’s co-workers found her crying in the bathroom. When her co-worker asked her what was wrong, Sandy sobbed and said she felt so dirty inside. Eventually Sandy told her co-worker that she and Tom had “had sex” and she was feeling so humiliated from the experience.

Sample Ground Rules

1. Refrain from judging your community partners about their process(es)
2. No criticism of what another agency does and the procedures they use
3. Ask questions!
4. Be honest about your agency’s challenges when working with domestic violence victims
5. Any others?

Law Enforcement Map - EXAMPLE



Strengths, Challenges, Gaps and Opportunities – EXAMPLE

Strengths

This is working well. When responding to DV/SA victims this is viewed as a strength in Sample County.

- Good collaborations with other organizations and departments – specifically, court personnel
- Groups are offered in juvenile detention for boys and girls
- Thoughtful physical setup of space, meeting rooms, etc. for safety
- Extensive multi-level screening for safety issues in mediation
- Strong effort is made to connect people to advocacy center
- LE takes weapons for safe keeping until judge decides otherwise
- School police liaisons at middle and high school
- Consistent commissioner hears requests to modify/drop ROs
- Security measures taken when victim/perpetrator show up for hearing

Challenges

Exists but isn't working as well as it could be. When responding to victims, as a community we are faced with these challenges.

- Batterers ordered to anger management – impacts how they are able to present in court
- Conditions of bond are misinterpreted/confused with injunctions
- Child support office not informed of conditions of bond
- On-call supervisor rotates in CPS (can have varying levels of knowledge of CPS process & DV)
- Navigating confidentiality (between advocacy center and other community partners)
- Consistency of issuing warnings/citations
- Financial considerations/impact of citations on victims
- Criminal court does not share information with family court
- Victims are pressured by defense attorneys to agree to things they are not comfortable with especially if they are pro se

Gaps

Doesn't exist. A victim would experience this gap when attempting to seek help, or in seeking protection from our agencies.

- Expanding partnerships to other agencies, like culturally-specific or other smaller agencies
- Don't have access to other counties' information regarding restraining orders, etc. (Child Support)
- Lack of qualified translators/interpreters, including ASL
- LE manpower in smaller municipalities
- CPS only staffed during business hours – LE taking temporary custody of children, call ACS for help finding a place for kids to go, but kids might be hanging out at PD for hours before a family member could pick them up.
- Victims that are unrepresented – vulnerable to pressure from defense attorney
- Defendant in custody then not charged – released with no intervention from DA's office

Opportunities

Our running list of ideas. We could do these things to enhance our response to victims.

- Look for ways to speed up the mediation process.
- List of translation/interpretation services that are medical/court certified - send the list to other agencies on this committee.
- Potentially do more forensic interviewing with kids (check with DA on the implications of this on cases)
- School/Caregiver connections post-DV incident
- Social workers making consistent, warm referrals to Advocacy Center (making call with victim and explaining their services)
- CPS could use more training on DV

Summary

Community mapping takes time and patience on the part of all participating. It is important to keep in mind that the *process* of completing community mapping is equally as important as the *products* that come out of it. Often CCR teams do not take the time to get to know details of how others around the table respond to cases, which can create confusion and even tension surrounding roles and responsibilities. By completing community mapping, your team will come away with a comprehensive list of strengths, gaps, challenges and opportunities in your community's response to cases of sexual assault and/or domestic violence. With this information you can collectively identify and prioritize themes and ultimately develop goals and an action plan. Additionally, you will have a better sense of your collaborative partner's policies and procedures, as well as a visual "map" to refer back to in the future should you have questions about the actions taken in a case.