

A Rural Perspective: Serving Survivors of DV/SA with Disabilities in Rural Communities

Kimberly Sparks, Healing Program Grant Manager
Mountain Comprehensive Care Center
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Learning Objectives

Following this webinar, participants will be able to:

- Describe the barriers that survivors with disabilities in rural communities face when seeking services;
- Identify at least one potential solution for each barrier;
- Discuss strategies for implementing solutions within their rural service agencies to better serve survivors with disabilities.

About Our Rural Service Area



Bridging Safe Access to Big Sandy is located in South Eastern Kentucky, in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains. We serve 5 counties with an estimated population of 141,738. (www.kentuckyheathfacts.org)

Our Service Users

- During the last quarter of reporting within our DV/SA work (January 1 – March 30, 2019):
- 167 unduplicated individuals received services
- 69 self identified as having disabilities
 - 41.31% of service users

What is “Rural”?

Question:

What does “rural” mean to you?

What does it mean to provide services in a rural community?



What is “Rural”?

Defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(26) as:

- any area or community, respectively, no part of which is within an area designated as a standard metropolitan statistical area by the Office of Management and Budget;
- (b) any area or community, respectively, that is
 - (i) within an area designated as a metropolitan statistical area or considered part of a metropolitan statistical area; and
 - (ii) located in a rural census tract; or
- (c) any federally recognized Indian tribe.

Bottom line: area that isn't part of an urban/ metropolitan area, located in a rural census tract, or tribal land

Rural Survivors with Disabilities

- People who live in rural areas are more likely to report having a disability and just as likely to experience sexual assault or domestic violence.
- 17.1% of rural Americans report having a disability compared with 11.7% of urban-dwelling Americans.

(RTC: Rural, Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities. (2017). Research that Leads to Solutions for Rural Americans with Disabilities, Executive Summary. http://rtc.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/www/wp-content/uploads/RTCRural_ResearchSummary_2017.pdf)

Barriers to Accessible Service Provision and Their Solutions

Question – Type in Chat Pod

What barriers to service provision are you facing in your rural community?

Barriers for Survivors with Disabilities in Rural Communities

In our work within our community, we have identified barriers for survivors with disabilities who live in rural areas, including:

- Lack of confidentiality;
- Communication/ language access challenges;
- Lack of assistive technology;
- Limited accessible transportation options;
- Cultural challenges;
- Limited resources.

Lack of Confidentiality

- The Problems:
- In a rural community, “everyone knows everyone” and their business.
- Perpetrators are less likely to be complete strangers.



Solutions: Lack of Confidentiality

- As a Community Mental Health Center:
 - We provide a diverse array of services
 - Individuals have access to basic health care services as well behavioral health, so it is impossible for people to identify *why* an individual is seeing us
 - We have multiple locations across our service area so people can go to the location they feel most comfortable with
- Emphasis on confidentiality amongst staff and service providers

Communication - Language Access

- Problems
- Lack of access to interpreters
- Small communities using “Home Signs” that interpreters weren’t familiar with



Solutions: Communication – Language Access

- Building and maintaining a long standing relationship with interpreting service.
- Securing funding for language access.
- Facilitating preparatory conversations with interpreters.
- Building relationships with community partners with a vision to increase access to service

Results: Communication – Language Access

- In one clinic, our service to Deaf/Hard of hearing individuals increased from 12 in 85 in a 3 year period.
- Increased access for Deaf survivors and better outcomes.

Technology – Assistive Devices

- Problem:
- Lack of assistive devices to assist in service provision and communication



Solutions: Technology

- Solutions:
 - Conduct safety and access reviews to determine gaps
 - Apply for funding in all grant applications



Accessible Transportation

- Problems:
 - The modes of transportation are extremely limited – no public transportation
- Accessible transportation is available but
 - Must have 72 hour notice
 - Not funded if someone in the home has a car,
 - There are income limits, copays

Solutions: Transportation

- Solutions:
 - Funding for accessible transportation in grant applications
 - Community Support Associates transport with 2 agency vans
 - VOCA requests



Culture

- Problems
- Lack of trauma-informed culture
- Lack of staff capacity to offer accommodations

Solutions: Culture

- Solutions:
 - We created a collaborative with the desire to shift the culture in our area
 - Cross training to build staff capacity
 - Weave person-centered focus into everything we do

Limited Resources

- Problem:
- Lack of resources available to fill the gaps we have identified

Solutions: Limited Resources

- Solutions:
 - Seeking new, creative funding avenues
 - Ensuring that all grant applications including funding for accessibility
 - Partnering with other organizations in community facing similar resources to share expertise and resources

Final Tips for Success

- Culture change is the most important factor in successfully serving survivors with disabilities in rural communities – be thinking about access and safety in everything your agency does
- Be creative! Think about how you can leverage your existing relationships and resources to provide accessible services.
- Explore beyond your community – there are likely state and national resources available to you.

Questions:

- What would you like to know more about?
- What other questions do you have?

Contact:

Kimberly Sparks

Kimberly.sparks@mtcomp.org

606-886-4416

Thank you!

Please take a moment to complete our [webinar survey](#).

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/65FK888>

The PowerPoint slides and Record of Attendance are now available for download. Please download them prior to leaving the webinar.