



Bridge to Safety Strategic Plan

able
SOUTH CAROLINA
independent
living for all



eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
Upper Lowlands

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Table of Contents

Introduction and Overview	4
Overview of the Collaboration	4
Collaboration Member Organizations	4
Vision, Mission, and Focus Statement	5
Overview of Planning Phase	6
Brief Summary of Needs Assessment	6
Purpose & Use of Information	6
Needs Assessment Goals	7
Audience	7
Methods Summary	8
Key Findings	8
Strategic Planning Process	9
In-Depth Overview of Each Short-Term Initiative	9
Initiative #1: All collaboration partners will increase safety & accessibility to survivors.	9
Activity #1: Conduct Safety and Access Reviews.	11
Activity #2: Create a guide for intake.	12
Activity #3: Develop accessibility guideline for materials and website to reach people with disabilities.	12
Activity #4: Revise/create accommodation policy.....	12
Initiative #2: Collaboration partner agencies will increase comfort and capacity to effectively provide safe, confidential, accessible, and equitable services. .	13
Activity #1: Create a policy for serving survivors and perpetrators.	14
Activity #2: Review and revise confidentiality policies at all partner agencies.	14

Initiative #3: Partners will create seamless coordination of services that promote informed decision making and consumer autonomy.	14
Activity #1: Create a webinar/training on how to best help people with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence.	15
Activity #2: Review and revise mandated reporting policies at each organization.....	16
Overview of Long-Term Plans	16
Sustainability.....	17
Conclusion	17
Appendix A.....	1

Introduction and Overview

Overview of the Collaboration

The Bridge to Safety collaboration includes three agencies: Able South Carolina (Able SC), Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands (STSM), and the Young Women's Christian Association of the Upper Lowlands (YWCA). Able SC serves as the lead agency on this grant project, providing expertise and insight into issues affecting people with disabilities. Able SC empowers South Carolinians with disabilities to live fully-engaged and self-directed lives. Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands brings their expertise to the collaboration as a comprehensive sexual assault services agency. STSM directly supports survivors through their healing journey and educates the community at-large. YWCA provides expertise to the collaboration on domestic violence. They serve survivors from all walks of life at all stages of the healing process.

Collaboration Member Organizations

Able SC is a change agent committed to fostering an inclusive society that empowers South Carolinians with disabilities to live fully-engaged and self-directed lives. Able SC challenges stereotypes, protects disability rights, and champions social reform. Able SC is a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability nonprofit that provides an array of independent living services and values empowerment, inclusion, independence, and disability pride. Able SC empowers people with disabilities through advocacy, service, and support to live active, self-determined lives.

STSM is a comprehensive sexual assault services agency that ensures survivors are respected, valued, and heard. They boldly lead efforts to end sexual violence in South Carolina. STSM is diligent in meeting the two critical components of the mission: directly supporting survivors through their healing and educating the community-at-large. They also operate collaboratively with other organizations.

YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. YWCA serves survivors of domestic violence from all walks of life at all stages of the healing process. The YWCA is a nonprofit, inclusive agency serving adults, children, the LGBTQ+ community, and seniors who have experienced domestic violence and/or human trafficking. Male clients are also provided counseling and referrals, and if shelter is needed, hotel rooms are obtained.

Vision, Mission, and Focus Statement

Vision: Bridge to Safety envisions a future where people with disabilities impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence have equitable access to trauma informed care, support, and services. These services will be consumer-driven, inclusive, accessible, personalized, and confidential and will foster a sense of empowerment, independence, acceptance, safety, and support.

Mission: The collaboration's mission is to create long-term, sustainable systemic change within and between our organizations by making services accessible and safe for people with disabilities impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence.

The collaboration will do this by:

1. Understanding the needs of the people Able SC, STSM, and YWCA serve.
2. Identifying and addressing barriers within and between our agencies.
3. Fostering the development of knowledge and expertise about the intersection of violence and disability for all staff at each organization.
4. Developing a partnership plan so that Able SC, STSM, and YWCA have a seamless interagency collaboration to provide services to people with disabilities impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence.
5. Changing policies and/or procedures within our organizations that currently create barriers to serving people with disabilities who have been impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence.

Focus Statement: Able SC, STSM, and YWCA will each focus on increasing the internal capacity of their organizations and staff to serve people with disabilities impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence. The Executive Directors in this collaboration are dedicated to implementing organizational change that will improve our capacity to create safe and accessible services for people with disabilities. As a result of focusing on increasing our internal capacities, our organizations will be able to better provide safe and accessible services to people with disabilities who have been impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence in the Midlands.

Overview of Planning Phase

Bridge to Safety submitted our Collaboration Charter in May 2018 and received approval from OVW in June 2018. The collaboration submitted their Focus Memo in June 2018 and began working on the Needs Assessment Plan. The Needs Assessment Plan was submitted in October 2018 and approved in January 2019, and the collaboration began planning focus groups and interviews. Focus groups and interviews concluded in February 2019. The data was analyzed in May and the Needs Assessment Report was submitted in September 2019 and approved in October 2019. The collaboration identified four key findings based on the information gathered in the Needs Assessment, which informed the collaboration while formulating this strategic plan to support people with disabilities who have been impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence. The collaboration took part in a two-day strategic planning retreat facilitated by the technical assistance provider, Vera Institute of Justice. The collaboration reviewed key findings from the needs assessment and identified three initiatives for implementation. These initiatives will be discussed further below.

Brief Summary of Needs Assessment

Purpose & Use of Information

The overarching purpose of the Needs Assessment, as described by OVW, was to:

- Provide practical information on services for people with disabilities who have been impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence and how to improve them
- Inform our selection of planned implementation activities
- Increase buy-in and support for our collaboration's work

Needs Assessment Goals

Goal 1: Identify current organizational structures, barriers, and gaps with regard to policies, procedures, and practices at Able SC, STSM, and YWCA that address how to respond to, serve, and support people with disabilities who have been impacted by sexual and/or domestic violence.

Goal 2: Identify what supports and limits exist in each organization's culture to respond to and address staff's ability to provide a safe, accessible, and responsive service delivery system for people with disabilities who have been impacted by sexual and/or domestic violence.

Goal 3: Identify the strengths and barriers that exist in each organization to ensure accessibility, safety, and responsiveness from the perspective of people with disabilities and people who have been impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence.

Goal 4: Identify STSM and YWCA staff's comfort level in providing services to people with disabilities. Identify Able SC staff's comfort level in providing services to consumers who have been impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence.

Audience

The collaboration engaged the following groups:

- People impacted by sexual violence
- People impacted by domestic violence
- People with disabilities

- People with disabilities who have been impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence
- Staff at Able SC
- Staff at STSM
- Staff at YWCA
- Executive staff at Able SC
- Executive staff at STSM
- Executive staff at YWCA

Methods Summary

Bridge to Safety primarily collected data through focus groups and interviews, but also provided surveys to staff, survivors, and executive staff to give an option for those who could not participate in focus groups. Using inductive analysis, the group compiled a list of themes that stood out in the responses, and identified the Key Findings. Then, the group further analyzed the data to find the prevalence of each of the Key Findings in responses from each group.

Key Findings

Key Finding #1: All three organizations need to increase safety and accessibility to effectively serve survivors with disabilities.

Key Finding #2: Staff at all three organizations need education and professional development on how to provide inclusive, safe, confidential, and accessible services.

Key Finding #3: Staff and service users expressed a need for interagency collaboration to better serve people with disabilities who have been impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence.

Key Finding #4: There is a need for more policies and procedures written within each organization to support people with disabilities who have been impacted by sexual and/or domestic violence.

Strategic Planning Process

Bridge to Safety met regularly prior to the Strategic Planning Retreat to discuss next steps, review examples of strategic plans, and identify potential solutions for each key finding. Bridge to Safety participated in the two-day strategic planning retreat facilitated by Vera, and together the group identified three Initiatives based on the Key Findings from the Needs Assessment Report. The Initiatives are as follows:

- ❖ Initiative #1: All collaboration partners will increase safety & accessibility to survivors.
- ❖ Initiative #2: Collaboration partner agencies will increase comfort and capacity to effectively provide safe, confidential, accessible, and equitable services.
- ❖ Initiative #3: Partners will create seamless coordination of services that promote informed decision making and consumer autonomy.

Please see Appendix A for the work plan which includes a detailed timeline for each initiative, subsequent activities, tasks associated with each activity, and the parties responsible for and involved with each task.

In-Depth Overview of Each Short-Term Initiative

Initiative #1: All collaboration partners will increase safety & accessibility to survivors.

This initiative addressed our first and fourth key findings. Key Finding #1 identified that each organization in the collaboration must increase safety and accessibility to effectively serve victims/survivors with disabilities. To address this, the collaboration will first conduct safety and access reviews. A Safety and Access Team will be assembled by the collaboration team. The Safety and Access Team will consist of Able SC's Director of Advocacy and Community Access, Able SC's Community Access Specialist, and select staff from STSM and YWCA. This team will assist with reviewing, choosing, and/or developing the safety and access tool

for use at all three organizations. Once a safety and access tool is chosen, the Safety and Access Team will conduct safety and access reviews at each collaboration partner's main facility. Upon completion of the reviews, a draft of the Barrier Removal Plan and Safety Plan will be created. The draft will be sent to Vera for reviews. Utilizing the recommendations from Vera, edits will be made to the Barrier Removal Plan and Safety Plan for submission to OVW. Implementation of the Barrier Removal Plan and Safety Plan will occur with final approval from OVW.

Second, we will create a guide for use at intake, and as needed after intake. The intake guide will provide guidance to increase staff utilization of best practices when conducting intake with survivors with disabilities, as well as best practices for interacting with survivors with disabilities at other stages in the service provision process. During our needs assessment, we heard that staff at all three agencies did not feel they had the tools to serve survivors with disabilities independently. A work group consisting of information & referral and intake staff will be assembled to assist with creating or identifying the tool, as well as the scope and use of the tool. The collaboration and work group will draft the language and key components of the tool, and identify instances when the tool will be utilized. The collaboration and work group will create scenarios to help staff understand what situations would prompt the use of the tool, besides general use during all intakes. The collaboration will compile resources that would be useful for referral, if referral is necessary and desired by the survivor. At this time, a draft will be sent to Vera for review, then the collaboration will make edits as needed and send the final draft to Vera. Once approved, the final version will be submitted to OVW.

Third, the collaboration will create a guide for use at all three organizations to ensure all materials are accessible to people with disabilities, and welcoming to survivors. This will include website, outreach, and marketing materials. During the needs assessment, we heard about situations where STSM and YWCA did not have accessible documents, forms, or websites. Issues with communication can occur with a lack of accessibility, so making sure outreach materials and websites

are accessible is paramount. The collaboration will assemble a work group consisting of staff from all three organizations. The group members will provide expertise in accessible documents and online accessibility as well as outreach and marketing. The collaboration and the work group will determine the scope of the guideline and review existing 508 guidelines. The group will then adapt existing guidelines, or draft a new guideline for document and online accessibility. The draft will be sent to Vera for edits and comments. The collaboration will then review the guide with EDs from all three organizations and incorporate edits and suggestions. The guide will be submitted to the Board of Directors at the YWCA for approval, then submitted to Vera for final review. Finally, the collaboration will submit the guide to OVW for approval.

Key Finding #4 identified the need to revise and create policies so that survivors with disabilities are provided accommodations to ensure accessible services. For our fourth activity under Initiative #1, the collaboration will revise or create accommodation policies at STSM and YWCA. The collaboration will begin by reviewing existing accommodation policies, then YWCA and STSM will draft accommodation policies for their organizations. The collaboration will review the policies and provide feedback, then submit to Vera for review. The collaboration will make edits and changes based on Vera recommendations, then submit to the Boards of Directors at YWCA and STSM for review. Finally, the collaboration will submit the policies to OVW for approval.

Activity #1: Conduct Safety and Access Reviews.

- Task #1: Assemble a Safety and Access Team (Month 1)
- Task #2: Review existing tools (Month 1)
- Task #3: Decide tools to use (Month 2)
- Task #4: Conduct the reviews (Month 3)
- Task #5: Draft Barrier Removal Plan (Month 4)
- Task #6: Draft Safety Plan (Month 4)
- Task #7: Send draft to Vera for review (Month 5)
- Task #8: Make recommended edits (Month 6)
- Task #9: Submit to OVW for approval (Month 7)

→ Task #10: Implement changes at all 3 organizations (Month 8-10)

Activity #2: Create a guide for intake.

- Task #1: Assemble a workgroup (Month 4)
- Task #2: Establish content/outline for tool (Month 4)
- Task #3: Draft language and key components including alerts and red flags (Month 5)
- Task #4: Create scenarios to help staff understand when to use the tool (Month 6)
- Task #5: Compile resources to include for referral (Month 6)
- Task #6: Send draft to Vera for review (Month 7)
- Task #7: Make recommended edits (Month 8)
- Task #8: Review with collaboration (Month 9)
- Task #9: Obtain collaboration approval (Month 9)
- Task #10: Submit to OVW for approval (Month 9)

Activity #3: Develop accessibility guideline for materials and website to reach people with disabilities.

- Task #1: Assemble work group (include marketing and web) (Month 1)
- Task #2: Determine scope of guide (Month 1)
- Task #3: Review existing 508 guidelines (Month 2)
- Task #4: Draft new/adapt existing access guide (Month 3)
- Task #5: Send draft to Vera for review (Month 4)
- Task #6: Make recommended edits (Month 5)
- Task #7: Review with collaboration (Month 6)
- Task #8: Obtain collaboration approval (Month 6)
- Task #9: Present to YWCA and STSM Boards for approval (Month 7)
- Task #10: Send to Vera for final review (Month 8)
- Task #11: Submit to OVW for approval (Month 8)

Activity #4: Revise/create accommodation policy.

- Task #1: Review samples of accommodation policies (Month 1)
- Task #2: Draft new/adapt existing accommodation policies (Month 2)
- Task #3: Send draft to Vera for review (Month 3)

- Task #4: Make recommended edits (Month 4)
- Task #5: Review with collaboration (Month 4)
- Task #6: Obtain collaboration approval (Month 4)
- Task #7: Send final draft to Vera for review (Month 5)
- Task #8: Present to YWCA & STSM Boards for approval (Month 6)
- Task #9: Submit to OVW for approval (Month 6)

Initiative #2: Collaboration partner agencies will increase comfort and capacity to effectively provide safe, confidential, accessible, and equitable services.

Key Finding #3 identified a need for interagency collaboration to better serve people who have been impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence, which informed Initiative #2. All collaboration partners agreed that better interagency collaboration can be achieved through increased staff comfort and capacity to provide safe and inclusive services for survivors with disabilities. Increased staff comfort can be achieved by expanding knowledge, and increased staff capacity can be achieved by providing resources that are readily available for staff use. Each agency within the collaboration will review their policies and edit or develop policies to ensure safe, confidential, accessible, and equitable services are provided.

Both activities will involve reviewing and/or creating policies for serving survivors and perpetrators and reviewing each agency's confidentiality policies to ensure that individuals feel safe and that their information is protected. The collaboration will review existing examples of these policies, then draft and/or edit these policies at each organization. Once the collaboration has approved the policies, they will be submitted to Vera for review. The collaboration will implement changes and recommendations from Vera. Once the policies are approved internally, they will be returned to Vera for final review. The collaboration will present all new policies to the Boards of Directors at all 3 organizations for approval. The finalized and approved policies will then be submitted to OVW for approval.

Activity #1: Create a policy for serving survivors and perpetrators.

- Task 1: Review existing policies from other organizations on serving survivors and perpetrators (Month 1)
- Task 2: Draft new policies on serving survivors and perpetrators (Month 2)
- Task 3: Send draft to Vera for review (Month 3)
- Task 4: Make recommended edits (Month 4)
- Task 5: Review with collaboration (Month 4)
- Task 6: Obtain collaboration approval (Month 4)
- Task 7: Send final draft to Vera (Month 5)
- Task 8: Present to Boards of Directors for approval (Month 6)
- Task 9: Submit to OVW for approval (Month 6)

Activity #2: Review and revise confidentiality policies at all partner agencies.

- Task 1: Review of sample policies on confidentiality (Month 1)
- Task 2: Draft new confidentiality policies (Month 2)
- Task 3: Send draft to Vera for review (Month 3)
- Task 4: Make recommended edits (Month 4)
- Task 5: Review with collaboration (Month 4)
- Task 6: Obtain collaboration approval (Month 4)
- Task 7: Send final draft to Vera (Month 5)
- Task 8: Present to Boards of Directors for approval (Month 6)
- Task 9: Submit to OVW for approval (Month 6)

Initiative #3: Partners will create seamless coordination of services that promote informed decision making and consumer autonomy.

Key finding #3 indicated a need for information to be up to date, trusted, and proven effective in order to form a seamless coordination of services between partner organizations. It is important that for consumers to have autonomy, tools, and supports to make the best decision for themselves. This can only be done by equipping staff with the appropriate resources and training on how to best serve their consumers, and understand policies surrounding mandated reporting and

informed decision making. Using these steps, the consumer will feel empowered to make an informed decision with trusted information given to them by confident, trained staff at each organization.

The first activity will be to create a workgroup to include people with disabilities to help guide our collaboration in creating a thoughtful training that will help create a staff that is confident about understanding the needs of survivors who have a disability. After approval, we will produce the webinar along with a test and a certificate of completion to prove participation and completion of the training. When completed, the final products will be sent to OVW for approval.

The third activity is to thoughtfully review our existing mandated reporting policies with an attorney to make sure that all organizations are in agreement with the definition of a vulnerable adult, and to make sure we know how each organization is mandated to handle situations that include a vulnerable adult. We will then review samples from other organizations and draft an updated policy for each organization. We will review the updated policies together as a collaboration and then send to Vera for feedback. After the policies are reviewed by the collaboration, we will send them to the Board of Directors and EDs at each organization for approval. The final drafts will then be sent to OVW for approval.

Activity #1: Create a webinar/training on how to best help people with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence.

- Task 1: Assemble work group (Month 2)
- Task 2: Determine context of training (Month 2)
- Task 3: Draft training guide (Month 3)
- Task 4: Draft PowerPoint (Month 3)
- Task 5: Identify a captioner and ASL interpreter (Month 4)
- Task 6: Identify webinar presenter (Month 4)
- Task 7: Send to draft to Vera for review (Month 4)
- Task 8: Make recommended edits to training guide and PowerPoint (Month 5)

- Task 9: Review with collaboration (Month 6)
- Task 10: Obtain collaboration approval, including Human Resources staff (Month 6)
- Task 11: Produce the webinar (Month 7)
- Task 12: Do post-production captioning and ASL interpreting (Month 7)
- Task 13: Create test for end of webinar to show participation (Month 8)
- Task 14: Create certificate of completion (Month 8)
- Task 15: Send final draft to Vera (Month 8)
- Task 16: Present to Boards of Directors and Executive Directors for approval (Month 9)
- Task 17: Submit to OVW for approval (Month 9)

Activity #2: Review and revise mandated reporting policies at each organization.

- Task 1: Review mandated reporting laws and vulnerable adult definition with attorney (Month 1)
- Task 2: Review sample policies on mandated reporting (Month 1)
- Task 3: Draft a new policy (Month 2)
- Task 4: Send draft to Vera for review (Month 3)
- Task 5: Make recommended edits (Month 4)
- Task 6: Review with collaboration (Month 4)
- Task 7: Obtain collaboration approval (Month 4)
- Task 8: Send final draft to Vera (Month 5)
- Task 9: Present to Boards of Directors for approval (Month 6)
- Task 10: Submit to OVW for approval (Month 6)

Overview of Long-Term Plans

While we are in the implementation stage, we will focus on completing as many initiatives as possible. We are compelled by the importance of each initiative and would like to continue this process. Short term initiatives will be completed and in hopes for continuation, we will continue to make sure that our services grow and

change to support the consumers we serve so they feel supported and empowered.

Sustainability

We are encouraged by relationships we have built at each organization through the OVW Disability Grant, and look forward to continuing to work together in the future. Each thoughtful initiative will create sustainable trainings and platforms to be expanded for future use. All three collaboration member organizations are dedicated to continuing this work, and to breaking down barriers to service for survivors with disabilities.

Conclusion

We are confident that the outlined initiatives in this strategic plan will result in fundamental improvement of services for survivors with disabilities who have been impacted by domestic and/or sexual violence. By following the strategic plan, we hope each initiative will lead us to lasting change within and between each partner organization. We are hopeful this change will bring forth our vision of people with disabilities having equitable access to services where they feel empowered, safe, and supported

Appendix A

Bridge to Safety Work Plan

	Who is Responsible?		Timeline (months)									
Initiative 1: All collaboration partners will increase safety and accessibility to survivors.												
Key Activities	Lead	Participating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Conduct Safety and Access Reviews												
<i>Assemble a S&A team</i>	Collaboration	S&A Team	x									
<i>Review existing tools</i>	Collaboration	S&A Team	x									
<i>Decide tools to use</i>	Collaboration	S&A Team		x								
<i>Conduct the reviews</i>	S&A Team	Collaboration			x							
<i>Draft Barrier Removal Plan</i>	Collaboration					x						
<i>Draft Safety Plan</i>	Collaboration					x						
<i>Send draft to Vera for review</i>	Project Director						x					
<i>Make recommended edits</i>	Collaboration							x				
<i>Submit to OVW for approval</i>	Project Director								x			
<i>Implement changes at all 3 organizations</i>	Collaboration									x	x	x
Create a guide for intake												
<i>Assemble work group</i>	Collaboration					x						
<i>Establish content/outline for tool</i>	Collaboration	Work Group				x						
<i>Draft language and key components including alerts and red flags</i>	Collaboration	Work Group					x					
<i>Create scenarios to help employees understand when to use the tool</i>	Collaboration	Work Group						x				
<i>Compile resources to include for referral</i>	Collaboration	Work Group						x				
<i>Send draft to Vera for review</i>	Project Director								x			
<i>Make recommended edits</i>	Collaboration									x		
<i>Review with collaboration</i>	Collaboration	Executive Directors									x	
<i>Obtain collaboration approval</i>	Project Director	Executive Directors									x	
<i>Submit to OVW for approval</i>	Project Director										x	
Develop accessibility guidelines for materials and website												
<i>Assemble work group (include marketing and web)</i>	Collaboration		x									
<i>Determine scope of the guide</i>	Collaboration	Work Group	x									
<i>Review existing 508 guideline</i>	Collaboration	Work Group		x								
<i>Draft new/adapt existing access guide</i>	Collaboration	Work Group			x							
<i>Send draft to Vera for review</i>	Project Director					x						
<i>Make recommended edits</i>	Collaboration	Executive Directors					x					

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<i>Review with collaboration</i>	Collaboration	-	-	-	-	-	-	✖	-	-	-	-
<i>Obtain collaboration approval</i>	Project Director	-	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-	-
<i>Present to YWCA and STSM Boards for approval</i>	Project Director	YWCA & STSM Boards of Directors							x			
<i>Send to Vera for final review</i>	Project Director									x		
<i>Submit to OVW for approval</i>	Project Director									x		

Revise/create accommodation policy.

<i>Review samples of accommodation policies</i>	Collaboration		x									
<i>Draft new/adapt existing accommodation policies</i>	YWCA & STSM	Collaboration		x								
<i>Send draft to Vera for review</i>	Project Director				x							
<i>Make recommended edits</i>	Collaboration					x						
<i>Review with collaboration</i>	Collaboration	Executive Directors					x					
<i>Obtain collaboration approval</i>	Project Director	Executive Directors					x					
<i>Send final draft to Vera for review</i>	Project Director							x				
<i>Present to YWCA & STSM boards for approval</i>	Collaboration	STSM & YWCA Boards of Directors							x			
<i>Submit to OVW for approval</i>	Project Director								x			

Initiative 2: Collaboration partner agencies will increase comfort and capacity to effectively provide confidential and equitable services.

Key Activities	Lead	Participating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Create policy for serving survivors and perpetrators

<i>Review sample policies on serving survivors and perpetrators</i>	Collaboration		x									
<i>Draft new/adapt existing policy</i>	Collaboration			x								
<i>Send draft to Vera for review</i>	Project Director				x							
<i>Make recommended edits</i>	Collaboration					x						
<i>Review with collaboration</i>	Collaboration	Executive Directors					x					
<i>Obtain collaboration approval</i>	Project Director	Executive Directors					x					
<i>Send final draft to Vera for review</i>	Project Director							x				
<i>Present to Able SC, STSM, and YWCA boards for approval</i>	Collaboration	Boards of Directors at all 3 organizations							x			
<i>Submit to OVW for approval</i>	Project Director								x			

<i>Review sample policies on mandated reporting</i>	Collaboration		x															
<i>Draft new/adapt existing policy</i>	Collaboration			x														
<i>Send draft to Vera for review</i>	Project Director				x													
<i>Make recommended edits</i>	Collaboration					x												
<i>Review with collaboration</i>	Collaboration	Executive Directors					x											
<i>Obtain collaboration approval</i>	Project Director						x											
<i>Send final draft to Vera for review</i>	Project Director							x										
<i>Present to Able SC, STSM, and YWCA boards for approval if necessary</i>	Collaboration	Boards of Directors at all 3 organizations								x								
<i>Submit to OVW for approval</i>	Project Director										x							