**CORE**

Culture Of Respect and Empowerment



 Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, Inc.



A Rensselaer County Collaboration

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**Introduction**

CORE is a Rensselaer County collaboration between Unity House of Troy, Inc., the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, Inc. and the Sexual Assault & Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital. Over the last several months our collaboration has engaged in discussions about how each partner agency intersects. Our focus for this project will be cross-disability, specifically to people with disabilities who have been affected by domestic violence and/or sexual assault in Rensselaer County.

Unity House Domestic Violence Services (UHDVS) will bring their expertise around domestic violence to the project. Unity House was founded in 1971 and serves victims of domestic violence in Rensselaer County. They have a 33 bed shelter to offer clients as well as other critical services in an effort to maximize client’s safety.

The Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, Inc. (ILCHV) will bring their expertise around disability and their specific cross disability focus to the project. The ILCHV has been in existence since 1987. They are a non-residential, consumer run organization working to remove physical and attitudinal barriers to independence for people with disabilities.

Sexual Assault & Crime Victims Assistance Program (SACVAP) at Samaritan Hospital will bring their expertise around sexual assault to the project. SACVAP is dedicated to creating a supportive, caring environment for victims/survivors and their families to enhance the healing process. They work to reduce the impact of trauma of sexual assault, crime and violence as well as providing education for its prevention.

CORE is driven by our value of inclusion. We recognize that people with all types of disabilities are at risk for both sexual assault and domestic violence. Therefore, people with any disability can participate and inform our work together.

**Vision Statement**

All people with disabilities in Rensselaer County who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault will be aware of and have equal access to a seamless, comprehensive network of care that is responsive, compassionate, trauma-informed, empowering and person-centered.

**Mission Statement**

The Mission of CORE is to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to a comprehensive and seamless network of care created by partner agencies. This will be accomplished by:

* Nurturing the collaborative relationship through shared understanding, mutual trust and authentic communication.
* Utilizing and honoring both individual and organizational expertise.
* Strengthening the agencies response through policy and procedures, staff training, education, and removing attitudinal and physical barriers.
* Building each organizations capacity to serve.
* Utilizing the voices of people with disabilities, including those who have experienced abuse, to inform the process.
* Creating organizational change to develop a barrier-free, seamless and sustainable network of care within our organizations.

**Project Progress**

Our collaboration has created a Collaboration Charter and our Statement of Focus Memo. Through the process of developing these documents, we had the opportunity to learn about each other, as individuals and as agencies, discuss the goals of the project and to start the development of the collaboration relationship.

The next step is to develop this Needs Assessment Plan which outlines how we will collect information from participants from each of our agencies. The purpose of the Needs Assessment Plan is to learn what the strengths and gaps are within each of the partner organizations. We will conduct focus groups and interviews with service users and staff. We will gather this information in a way that ensures participant confidentiality in a safe and accessible environment. We will use the information gained from the Performance Indicators and from the audiences we engage during the Needs Assessment to identify common themes which will inform our Strategic Planning process.

**Needs Assessment Purpose**

The overarching purpose of the Needs Assessment, as described by the Office on Violence on Women is to:

* Provide practical information on services for survivors with disabilities and how to improve them.
* Inform your selection of implementation activities.
* Increase buy-in and support for your collaboration’s work.

**Needs Assessment Goals**

The focus groups CORE will be conducting gives us a great opportunity to hear the perspectives and experiences of participants that have utilized services at each partner agency. Throughout the Needs Assessment we will:

* Identify current organizational structures, barriers and gaps with regard to policies, procedures and practices at each agency that address how to respond to, serve and support participants with disabilities.
* Identify what supports and limits exist in each organization’s culture to respond to and address staff’s ability to provide a safe, accessible, person-centered and responsive service delivery system for participants with disabilities.
* Identify what works and what barriers exist in each organization to ensure accessibility, safety and responsiveness to participants with disabilities who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence.
* Identify what strengths and gaps exist within each partner agency that has an impact on how we work together as a team.

**Methods and Information Sources**

***Existing Data:***

CORE has completed performance indicators in April 2015, October 2015 and April 2016. Below you will see that these indicators have identified a number of gaps within the partner agencies.

May 2016 Performance Indicators for the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, Inc. are as follows:

|  |
| --- |
| **Disability Organization Information Collection Guide-Scores at a Glance** |
| **COMPONENT A: COMMITMENT: Agency demonstrates willingness and determination to address domestic and sexual violence of people with disabilities and Deaf people.** |
| **BASKET 1: Responsibility— Agency recognizes its duty to address domestic and sexual violence in the lives of people disabilities.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| 1.1 Recognizes Violence Against People with Disabilities as a Priority | 25.00% |
| 1.2 Assesses for Safety and Responsiveness | 0.00% |
| 1.3 Raises Funds  | 25.00% |
| 1.4 Includes in Budget | 25.00% |
| 1.5 Collects Data | 0.00% |
| 1.6 Uses Data | 0.00% |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | 12.500% |
| **BASKET 2: Partnerships— Agency works closely with relevant organizations to enhance its ability to address domestic and sexual violence in the lives of the people it serves.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| 2.1 Partners with Domestic Violence Agency  | 75.00% |
| 2.2 Partners with Rape Crisis Center | 75.00% |
| 2.3 Partners with Law Enforcement  | 0.00% |
| 2.4 Engages Enforcement Agencies | 0.00% |
| 2.5 Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities | 25.00% |
| 2.6 Participates in Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration | 0.00% |
| 100.00% |
| 100.00% |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | 45.833% |
| **BASKET 3: Policies— Agency's written policies establish expectations for how the organization addresses domestic and sexual victimization among the people it serves** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| 3.1 Mandatory Reporting  | 0.00% |
| 3.2 Confidentiality  | 0.00% |
| 3.3 Abuse by Employees and Volunteers | 0.00% |
| 3.4 Service to Victims and Perpetrators | 0.00% |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | 0.000% |
| **COMPONENT B: CAPACITY: Agency has procedures, knowledge, skills, and resources to respond to domestic and sexual violence in the lives of the people it serves.** |
| **BASKET 4: Material Resources— Agency’s physical infrastructure prioritizes safety and supports service users to disclose domestic and sexual violence.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| 4.1 Communicates Safe Space | 25.00% |
| 4.2 Appropriate Disclosure Space | 75.00% |
| 4.3 Victimization-Oriented Communication Boards | 0.00% |
| 4.4 Safe & Flexible Transportation | 0.00% |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | 25.000% |
| **BASKET 5: Human Resources—Agency’s employment and staff development practices build capacity to address domestic and sexual victimization among the people it serves** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| 5.1 Inclusive Hiring Practices | 0.00% |
| 5.2 Workplace Domestic Violence and Sexual Harassment Policies | 25.00% |
| 5.3 Direct Service Staff Training | 0.00% |
| 5.4 Practical Learning Opportunities | 0.00% |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | 6.250% |
| **BASKET 6: Procedures— Agency has written protocols that guides how its staff members address domestic and sexual violence.**  |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| 6.1 Mandatory Reporting Procedures | 0.00% |
| 6.2 Screening for Domestic and Sexual Violence | 0.00% |
| 6.3 Immediate Safety Planning | 0.00% |
| 6.4 Informed Referrals | 0.00% |
| 6.5 Addressing Abuse by Employees | 0.00% |
| 6.6 Serving Victims and Perpetrators | 0.00% |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | 0.000% |

May 2016 Performance Indicators for the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital are as follows:

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| --- |
| **RAPE CRISIS CENTER INFORMATION COLLECTION GUIDE-Scores at a Glance** |
| **COMPONENT A: COMMITMENT: Agency demonstrates willingness and determination to address sexual violence of people with disabilities and Deaf people.** |
| **BASKET 1: Responsibility—Agency recognizes duty to serve survivors of sexual violence with disabilities and Deaf survivors.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| **1.1 Recognizes Violence Against People with Disabilities as a Priority** | **50%** |
| **1.2 Promotes Accessibility** | **0%** |
| **1.3 Raises Funds** | **25%** |
| **1.4 Includes in Budget** | **25%** |
| **1.5 Collects Data** | **75%** |
| **1.6 Uses Data** | **75%** |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | **41.667%** |
| **BASKET 2: Partnerships— Agency works closely with relevant organizations to enhance its ability to meet the needs of survivors of sexual violence who have disabilities and Deaf survivors.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| **2.1 Partners with Disability Organization** | **50%** |
| **2.2 Builds Relationships with Deaf Community** | **0%** |
| **2.3 Collaborates with Interpreter Agency** | **0%** |
| **2.4 Includes People with Disabilities** | **50%** |
| **2.5 Participates in Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration** | **100%** |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | **40.000%** |
| **BASKET 3: Policies— Agency’s written policies ensure accessible and inclusive services are provided to sexual violence survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| **3.1 Eligibility** | **0%** |
| **3.2 Accommodations** | **100%** |
| **3.3 Full Participation** | **100%** |
| **3.4 Service Animals** | **50%** |
| **3.5 Guardianship** | **0%** |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | **50.000%** |
| **COMPONENT B: CAPACITY: Agency has knowledge, skills, resources, and programmatic ability necessary to provide rape crisis services to survivors who have disabilities or are Deaf.** |
|
| **BASKET 4: Material Resources— Agency's physical infrastructure is accessible to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| **4.1 Accessible Modes of Communication** | **0%** |
| **4.2 Accessible Location** | **50%** |
| **4.3 Alternate Formats** | **50%** |
| **4.4 Inclusive Materials** | **25%** |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | **31.250%** |
| **BASKET 5: Human Resources— Agency’s employment and staff development practices build staff capacity to address sexual violence against people with disabilities and Deaf individuals.**  |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| **5.1 Inclusive Hiring Practices** | **25%** |
| **5.2 Direct Service Staff Training** | **100%** |
| **5.3 Practical Learning Opportunities** | **0%** |
| **5.4 Volunteer Training** | **25%** |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | **37.500%** |
| **BASKET 6: Programmatic Resources and Activities— Agency’s programmatic resources and activities account for the unique needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| **6.1 Community Outreach & Education** | **100%** |
| **6.2 Consent for Services** | **25%** |
| **6.3 Counseling Services** | **75%** |
| **6.4 Medical Advocacy** | **0%** |
| **6.5 Legal Advocacy** | **0%** |
| **6.6 Crisis Intervention** | **25%** |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | **37.500%** |

May 2016 Performance Indicators for Unity House Domestic Violence Services are as follows:

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| **Residential Domestic Violence Agency Indicator Scores at a Glance** |
| **COMPONENT A: COMMITMENT: Agency demonstrates willingness and determination to address sexual violence of people with disabilities and Deaf**  |
| **BASKET 1: Responsibility—Agency recognizes duty to serve survivors of sexual violence with disabilities and Deaf survivors.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| 1.1 Recognizes Violence Against People with Disabilities as a Priority | 25.00% |
| 1.2 Promotes Accessibility | 0.00% |
| 1.3 Raises Funds  | 25.00% |
| 1.4 Includes in Budget | 0.00% |
| 1.5 Collects Data | 0.00% |
| 1.6 Uses Data | 50.00% |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | 16.667% |
| **BASKET 3: Policies— Agency’s written policies ensure accessible and inclusive services are provided to sexual violence survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| 2.1 Partners with Disability Organization | 75.00% |
| 2.2 Builds Relationships with Deaf Community | 0.00% |
| 2.3 Collaborates with Interpreter Agency | 0.00% |
| 2.4 Includes People with Disabilities | 75.00% |
| 2.5 Participates in Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration | 0.00% |
| 0.00% |
| 100.00% |
| 100.00% |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | 50.000% |
| **BASKET 3: Policies— Agency’s written policies ensure accessible and inclusive services are provided to sexual violence survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| 3.1 Eligibility | 0.00% |
| 3.2 Accommodations | 0.00% |
| 3.3 Full Participation | 75.00% |
| 3.4 Service Animals | 25.00% |
| 3.5 Resident Handbook  | 0.00% |
| 3.6 Medication  | 25.00% |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | 20.833% |
| **COMPONENT B: CAPACITY: Agency has knowledge, skills, resources, and programmatic ability necessary to provide rape crisis services to survivors who have disabilities or are Deaf.** |
| **BASKET 4: Material Resources— Agency's physical infrastructure is accessible to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| 4.1 Accessible Modes of Communication | 0.00% |
| 4.2 Accessible Location | 50.00% |
| 4.3 Alternate Formats | 0.00% |
| 4.4 Inclusive Materials | 0.00% |
| 4.5 Accessible Transportation | 25.00% |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | 15.000% |
| **BASKET 5: Human Resources— Agency’s employment and staff development practices build staff capacity to address sexual violence against people with disabilities and Deaf individuals.**  |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| 5.1 Inclusive Hiring Practices | 50.00% |
| 5.2 Direct Service Staff Training | 25.00% |
| 5.3 Practical Learning Opportunities | 50.00% |
| 5.4 Volunteer Training | 0.00% |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | 31.250% |
| **BASKET 6: Programmatic Resources and Activities— Agency’s programmatic resources and activities account for the unique needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people.** |
| **Indicator Name** | **Percent Achieved** |
| 6.1 Community Outreach & Education | 25.00% |
| 6.2 Case Management | 0.00% |
| 6.3 Legal Advocacy | 25.00% |
| 6.4 Child Advocacy | 50.00% |
| 6.5 Crisis Intervention | 0.00% |
| **Total Percent Achieved** | 20.000% |

***New Data:***

**Focus Groups and Optional Interviews**

CORE will primarily use focus groups for gathering information from people with disabilities and people who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence. We believe that this is the most efficient way to effectively engage larger groups of individuals in a short period of time. We also believe that a focus group setting will help to generate a diverse range of ideas and perspectives.

We recognize that speaking in a group setting may be uncomfortable for some people for reasons such as lack of privacy or discomfort in a group setting. Therefore, CORE will offer individual interviews to anyone recruited for focus groups. Interviews will be held for survivors with disabilities due to confidentiality reasons. This will be clearly explained during the recruitment process (Recruitment Scripts: Appendix D).

***Sexual Assault Participants***

We will be engaging sexual violence participants who are clients of the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital. We believe that sexual violence participants are the experts of their own experience and have the power to represent their own needs and expectations. As a result, it is imperative to ask them directly what their own personal experiences are when receiving services so that we may make our organizations safer and more trauma-informed. Because the Strategic Plan will ultimately influence the way services and supports are provided, it is critical that we ask the individuals who will be most impacted by our systems changes.

By engaging participants that experienced sexual violence we hope to gain information about the following (for questions, see Appendix E):

* What makes a service provider approachable, safe, comfortable and any barriers to services;
* The best methods of outreach to alert participants of services;
* The importance and value of confidentiality as a safety tool;
* The best practices for serving survivors (including staff behavior, knowledge and skills); and
* The impact trauma has on someone’s approach to seeking services.
* What service providers need to know about informed consent and what the best practices for obtaining informed consent and what the best practices for obtaining informed consent from people who have experienced sexual assault.

***Domestic Violence Participants***

We will be engaging participants who have experienced domestic violence who are clients of Unity House Domestic Violence Services. We believe that participants who experienced domestic violence are the experts of their own experience and have the power to represent their own needs and expectations, and will be able to tell us how to make the responses and services they get from staff in our collaborating organizations more welcoming, comfortable and safe for participants who have experienced domestic violence. Because the Strategic Plan will ultimately influence the way services and supports are provided, it is critical that we ask the individuals who will be most impacted by our systems changes.

By engaging participants who have experienced domestic violence we hope to gain information about the following (for questions, see Appendix E):

* How organizations can communicate that they are a welcoming and safe place for participants to disclose or report their experiences of domestic violence;
* Best practices for serving participants and responding to disclosures of domestic violence;
* The best methods of outreach to alert participants of services; and
* How to make services more comfortable, safe and user-friendly for participants.
* What service providers need to know about informed consent and what the best practices for obtaining informed consent and what the best practices for obtaining informed consent from people who have experienced domestic violence.

***People with Disabilities***

We will be engaging people with disabilities who are consumers of the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, Inc.

People with disabilities are vital to the needs assessment process. We believe that people with disabilities are the experts of their own experience and have the power to represent their own needs and expectations. As a result, it is imperative to ask them directly what their personal experiences are when receiving services so that we may make our organizations more comfortable, accessible and disability-aware. Because the Strategic Plan will ultimately influence the way services and supports are provided, it is imperative that we ask the individuals who will be most impacted by our systems changes.

Be engaging people with disabilities, we hope to gain information about the following (for questions, see Appendix E):

* What makes a service provider accessible and comfortable for people with disabilities;
* The best methods of outreach to alert people with disabilities about accessible and disability-informed services;
* The best practices for serving people with disabilities (including staff behavior, knowledge and skills); and
* What service providers need to know about informed consent and what the best practices for obtaining informed consent and what the best practices for obtaining informed consent from people with disabilities.

***Survivors with Disabilities***

We will be engaging sexual violence participants who have disabilities and are clients of the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital. We believe that sexual violence participants are the experts of their own experience and have the power to represent their own needs and expectations. We also believe that information we receive from survivors who have disabilities is critical since making services better for this specific audience is the goal of the project. As a result, it is imperative to ask them directly what their own personal experiences are when receiving services so that we may make our organizations safer and more trauma-informed. Because the Strategic Plan will ultimately influence the way services and supports are provided, it is critical that we ask the individuals who will be most impacted by our systems changes.

By engaging participants with disabilities that experienced sexual violence we hope to gain information about the following (for questions, see Appendix E):

* What makes a service provider approachable, safe, comfortable and any barriers to services;
* The best methods of outreach to alert participants of services;
* The importance and value of confidentiality as a safety tool;
* The best practices for serving survivors (including staff behavior, knowledge and skills);
* The impact trauma has on someone’s approach to seeking services; and
* What service providers need to know about informed consent and what the best practices for obtaining informed consent and what the best practices for obtaining informed consent from people with disabilities who have experienced sexual assault and/or domestic violence.

***Direct Service Staff From Partner Agencies***

CORE will be conducting focus groups with direct service staff from each partner agency.  By engaging direct service staff we hope to gain information regarding the following:

* The strengths and challenges with collaborative processes and relationships; and
* Successes and challenges with serving survivors with disabilities; and
* Any ideas for future collaboration, enhancements, and needs when staff are providing direct services.

**Focus Group and Interview Plan**

|  |
| --- |
| **Focus Groups** |
| Audience Type | Number of Potential Participants | From What Organization? |
| Domestic Violence Participants |  5-10 Participants per group/ 2 Groups | Unity House of Troy, Inc. |
| Sexual Assault Participants | 5-10 Participants per group/ 2 Groups | Sexual Assault & Crime Victims Assistance Program |
| People with Disabilities | 5-10 Participants per group/ 2 Groups | Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, Inc. |
| Staff | 5-10 staff per group1 group | Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley |
| Staff | 5-10 staff per group1 group | Sexual Assault & Crime Victims Assistance Program |
| Staff | 5-10 staff per group1 group | Unity House Domestic Violence Services  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Interviews** |
| Audience Type | Number of Potential Participants | From What Organization? |
| Domestic Violence Participants |  1 | Unity House of Troy, Inc. |
| Sexual Assault Participants | 1 | Sexual Assault & Crime Victims Assistance Program |
| People with Disabilities | 1 | Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, Inc. |
| Survivors with Disabilities | 5 | Sexual Assault & Crime Victims Assistance Program |

**Overview of Structure and Key Roles**

**Focus Group and Optional Interview Procedure**

Focus groups and interviews will involve a moderated discussion using open-ended questions that are unique for each audience and based on the goals of that particular group (see Appendix E for all questions).

The focus groups and interviews will be conducted by an independent facilitator. Since participants will be answering questions regarding the services they receive at each agency, CORE has decided to hire an outside facilitator in an effort to help the participants feel more comfortable answering the questions openly. Each focus group and interview will have the facilitator and a note taker present in the room (see below for additional information on roles). Outside of the room will be a trained advocate to provide support if needed (see below for a description of the advocate role). Additionally, a list of local community resources will be available at all focus groups and interviews, should someone need information on where to obtain support. Each group will have between 5 and 10 participants in attendance and we will hold 2 groups per agency.

**Key Roles**

The following is a list of those conducting focus groups and interviews and a description of each role. All participants filling these roles will attend a brief training that includes:

* An overview of the grant and the Needs Assessment process
* An overview of the role and expectations
* Training on the specific requirements of the role
* How to manage special circumstances: safety, confidentiality, reporting requirements and accommodations.
* Our collaboration’s values around confidentiality as a priority.

**Facilitator**

The facilitator will be a hired consultant. The facilitator will:

* Welcome participants and introduce the other people conducting the meeting.
* Make sure everyone is comfortable.
* Review general housekeeping details and will address safety and confidentiality issues using the script created by the collaboration prior to getting into the pre-created questions and prompts (See Appendix E for all facilitation scripts).
* Keep the discussion in line with the questions and will intervene quickly in cases of possible arguments or personal disclosures (See Appendix E for all questions).
* Be responsible for ensuring that people feel the environment is comfortable and safe, and understand that they can leave at any time. For all focus groups and interviews, the facilitator will be responsible for keeping track of the time.

**Note Taker**

The Project Coordinator will be the Note Taker for the focus groups at SACVAP and the ILCHV and Barbara Devore will be the Note Taker for the focus group at UHDVS. The Note Taker will:

* Objectively take notes of the discussion.
* Not participate in the discussion and will sit in a part of the room that will be the least distracting for participants when possible.
* Document what each person says without paraphrasing and will document when emotions such as frustration, anger or happiness are expressed. The Note Taker may ask that something said be repeated by raising her hand.
* Not be linking any information shared to specific participants and will exclude any identifying information other than which organization and type of group they are from (for example, “Staff from XXX said…”).
* Be responsible for ensuring that all written information and notes are kept in a safe and confidential place (See Confidentiality Considerations, p.34).
* At the end of each focus group/interview, the Note Taker will facilitate a debriefing session with the facilitator to jointly identify themes, significant comments and new information related to the goals of the Needs Assessment.
* Be responsible for translating all notes into “note summaries,” which will be provided to collaboration team members.

**Counselor/Advocate**

A counselor will be available at focus groups and interviews to provide emotional support either during or just following the session. The counselor will:

* Be in a separate, private, accessible space to ensure confidentiality and safety.
* Have training in crisis intervention and has experience working with people with disabilities who have experienced sexual assault.
* Have cards that list local resources.

**Floater** (For focus groups only)

The primary responsibilities of the floater are to assist with ensuring the Facilitator and Note Taker have what they need to conduct the meeting and to attend to any comfort and safety requests of participants. The Floater will:

* Assist with food (if applicable) and room set-up and ensure that focus group participants feel safe and comfortable.
* If anyone wants access to the counselor or their own personal care attendant, the floater will escort them out of the room.
* Assist with keeping track of time when not assisting individual participants.

**Recruitment Plan**

**Recruitment Methods**

The following is an explanation for the methods that we will use to recruit each group we will be engaging. Given the potential safety risks involved when recruiting participants, the preferred method of recruitment will be in-person recruitment. This recruitment will be done by the participant’s current advocate/worker or support group facilitator who may or may not be directly part of this collaboration.

Flyers and Frequently Asked Questions have been created for use in recruiting participants. Recruiters will be trained in a one hour session to explain the purpose and goals of the collaboration and more particularly the focus groups we will be conducting. The training session will also cover safety for our participants and accommodations that might be needed during these groups.

A more detailed description of the recruitment process for our groups is as follows:

**Domestic Violence Participants**

Participants will be people who have used services from UHDVS. Participants will be recruited by contact at support groups, flyers posted at these agencies and by their counselor/advocate directly.

We will have flyers available for participants to take with them. We will assure participants that no one is required to take the flyer if they feel unsafe to do so.

Each agency will have a Participation Form for invitees to fill out if they agree to attend and to indicate if any accommodations are needed. We chose not to include RSVP cards for safety concerns.

All participants will be assured that participation in the focus groups is optional and the decision whether or not to participate will not impact their service provision in any way.

**Sexual Assault Participants**

Participants will be people who have used services from SACVAP at Samaritan Hospital. Participants will be recruited by contact at support groups, flyers posted at these agencies and by their counselor/advocate directly.

We will have flyers available for participants to take with them. We will assure participants that no one is required to take the flyer if they feel unsafe to do so.

Each agency will have a Participation Form for invitees to fill out if they agree to attend and to indicate if any accommodations are needed. We chose not to include RSVP cards for safety concerns.

All participants will be assured that participation in the focus groups is optional and the decision whether or not to participate will not impact their service provision in any way.

**Survivors of Sexual Assault with Disabilities**

Participants will be people who have used services at SACVAP at Samaritan Hospital that also have disabilities. Participants will be recruited by support groups that they attend. The recruiting for this will be done by the counselor that facilitates this group. Due the probability of these participants receiving common services as other participants, these clients will be recruited for individual interviews instead of a group setting to ensure their safety and confidentiality. Individual interviews will also allow us to provide individualized accommodations such as ensuring the participant fully understands the questions, repeating questions if necessary and adjusting the pace of the interview if needed.

All participants will be assured that participation in these interviews is optional and the decision whether or not to participate will not impact their service provision in any way.

Each agency will have a Participation Form for invitees to fill out if they agree to participate and to indicate if any accommodations are needed. We chose not to include RSVP cards for safety concerns.

 **Participants with Disabilities**

Participants will be people with disabilities who have used services at the ILCHV. Participants will be recruited by contact at support groups, flyers posted at the agency and individual face-to-face conversations.

We will have flyers available for participants to take with them. We will assure participants that no one is required to take the flyer if they feel unsafe to do so.

Each agency will have a participation form that we will list who has agreed to attend and to indicate if any accommodations are needed. We chose not to include RSVP cards for safety concerns.

All participants will be assured that participation in the focus groups is optional and the decision whether or not to participate will not impact their service provision in any way.

**Direct Service Staff**

CORE has decided to conduct focus groups with direct service staff from each agency in an effort to gather information on what may or may not currently exist in each agency to help respond to and meet the needs of people with disabilities who have been affected by sexual and/or domestic violence.

**Recruitment Process**

The recruiter will follow the recruitment scripts that have been specifically designed for the intended audience (See Appendix D). The recruiter will:

* Explain the purpose of the focus group/interview and the overall goal of the collaboration.
* Alert the invitee of any mandatory reporting requirements.
* Review the recruitment materials, including the Participation Form and Frequently Asked Questions. (See Appendix C)
* Discuss what compensation they will receive. (See Compensation, p. 33)
* Review the date, time, and location of the interview or focus group.
* Review accommodation options. (See Participation Form for a complete list: Appendix G.)
* Confirm whether or not the individual is willing to participate.
* Offer an individual interview for those that do not want to participate in a focus group. If the invitee prefers an individual interview, the recruiter will have a list of pre-selected dates/times and ask that the invitee select the date/time that works best for them. The recruiter will ensure that this date/time is listed on the Participation Form.
* Answer any additional questions.

All recruiters are to submit the Participation Forms to the collaboration member at their agency within 48 hours of contact with the participant. The Project Coordinator will go to each agency to collect the completed Participation Forms on a weekly basis.

Based on the information provided on the Participation Forms, the collaboration members at each agency will work with their recruiters, participants and other staff as necessary to ensure that accessibility and safety requests are met.

**Recruitment Tools**

Recruiters will utilize the following tools during the recruitment. Participants will not be asked or required to bring any information/flyers home regarding the focus group. For anyone needing assistance, the recruiter will read aloud all documents.

***Participation Form***

All participants will receive a Participation Form (Appendix G). The Participation Form will ask for the participants first name and the first letter of their last name, if they wish to participate in the Needs Assessment process, how they’d like to participate (focus group/individual interview), and what accommodations they may need. These forms will be completed while the recruiter is present to ensure the participant fully understands what they are consenting to.

The collaboration members at each agency will collect these forms from the recruiters at their agency and then the Project Coordinator will collect the forms from each agency on a weekly basis. The Project Coordinator will keep track of all responses and accommodation requests for all focus groups and interviews. These forms will be kept in a secure and confidential location until the end of the grant period at which point they will be destroyed.

***Frequently Asked Questions***

The FAQ sheet will answer general questions about what the focus group/interviews entail (Appendix C). This sheet will be provided to all participants during the recruitment process. Due to safety concerns we will take all forms back at the end of the recruitment process. If a participant chooses to take the FAQ sheet home, recruiters will ensure that it is safe for the participant to do so.

***Meeting Reminder Calls***

Because we recognize that participants may want a meeting reminder, we will provide a meeting reminder telephone call only if requested and indicated on the Participation Form. The recruiter will have a discussion with the participant to ensure that it is safe to receive a reminder phone call. The Project Coordinator will be responsible for making the reminder phone calls and will do so approximately 24 to 48 hours prior to the meeting day. A reminder call will only be attempted once and a message will only be left if indicated that it is safe to do so. If a message is to be left, the message will only state it is a reminder for their appointment on that day; it will not include any specifics about the meeting, i.e. location or purpose of the meeting.

**Recruitment Training**

All individuals who will act as recruiters will be required to participate in recruitment training. Recruitment training will last approximately 2 hours and will be conducted by the collaboration member of that agency. Recruiters may be counselors, advocates or any staff member from each agency.

Training will include:

* An overview of the grant and needs assessment process
* Important considerations around safety, confidentiality, reporting requirements, and accessibility
* Recruitment tools
* How to recruit the minimum/maximum number of participants for listening sessions and keep track of the limited number of each group

**Compensation**

CORE will be providing light refreshments during participant focus groups and interviews. We will make accommodations for any food/drink restrictions and requirements as needed.

CORE will also be providing participants $20 gift cards for participants who attend our focus group/interview. Gift cards will be distributed when participants check in at the meeting location. Participants will be told at recruitment and at the beginning of each focus group/interview that they will not lose their gift card if they choose not to continue with the focus group/interview for any reason. When the participant signs in for the focus group, they will be asked only to initial as a sign in. This will also serve as an acknowledgment that they have received their gift card for potential auditing requirements.

If a participant does not feel safe taking the gift card home with them, they will be able to leave it with the recruiter or their contact person at that agency. This staff member will hold the gift card until the participant is able to pick it up and use it safely.

**Consent Process**

We will be using a passive consent process for each interview and focus group for staff, victims of domestic violence, survivors of sexual assault, people with disabilities and survivors with disabilities. We chose this process because it provides for more confidentiality of participants, it prevents a paper trail and it eliminates time spent on administrative matters in the session itself.

The recruiter will explain consent in the recruitment process so the participant can be fully informed when making the decision to attend the focus group/interview. Further, the facilitator will explain at the beginning of each session that participants may leave at any time for any reason or choose not to answer any particular question.

The recruiter will also inform the participants that any information that has been documented, including the list of participants attending and the responses to questions during the session, will be held in a secure location. Such documentation will be destroyed after the grant has ended.

Once this has been explained, it will be assumed that participants who attend are giving their consent and agree to the following:

* Participating in the focus group
* Have their comments anonymously documented in writing
* Have their comments anonymously used in CORE’s Needs Assessment Report
* Have their comments anonymously used for developing Core’s Strategic Plan and Implementation activities.

**Confidentiality**

The following information outlines the specific considerations we have made to preserve confidentiality.

* Personally identifying information will only be collected at recruitment if the participant chooses to attend the focus group/interview. Individuals will only be asked their first name and initial of last name for the purpose of linking individuals with their accommodations at check-in, and contact information to provide optional meeting reminders. This information will be documented on the Participation Form only which will be kept in a secure location and will be destroyed at the end of the grant. The Project Coordinator will provide the completed Participation Forms to the floater at the time of the focus group as a mechanism for the check-in process and to ensure that accommodations requested are met and gift cards are received.
* The number of participants who attend focus groups and interviews will be aggregated for the Needs Assessment Report. No other information derived from the Participation Forms will be aggregated or shared.
* In focus groups and interviews, participants will be asked not to provide any identifying information about themselves, specific staff, or program participants. (See Appendices D-E for Recruitment and Facilitation scripts)
* The recruiters who have any completed Participation Forms will keep these forms in a secure location. The Project Coordinator will periodically collect these forms from each agency and return them to the host agency prior to the date of the focus group/interview. After the focus groups/interviews are conducted, the Project Coordinator will maintain the Participation Forms in a confidential and secure location for the duration of the grant.
* There will be no adverse ramifications for services due to any information shared.
* Focus groups participants will be asked to keep confidential any information discussed or shared during the focus group with anyone who did not participate in their specific focus group. Additionally, participants will be asked to not discuss what is said in the group with other group participants once the group is over. However, because we cannot ensure that participants preserve confidentiality, participants will also be encouraged to be mindful of what they share.
* The note taker will not link personal identifying information to comments made during any focus group or interview.
* The final Needs Assessment Report will identify trends, barriers, and strengths, linked to what each organization and group as a whole stated during the Needs Assessment process in summary form. In order to make systemic changes at collaborative organizations, it is imperative to identify strengths and needs to enrich the development of our Strategic Plan.
* Any information gathered through the Needs Assessment process will be kept by the Project Coordinator in a locked cabinet.
* The Service Director from UHDVS may have access to data that is stored in the event that there is an emergency preventing the Project Coordinator from accessing these documents.
* The note taker (if not the Project Coordinator) will give the Project Coordinator all notes from the focus groups and interviews to create the summary.
* The note taker and the Project Coordinator (if not also the note taker) will provide collaboration team members with summaries of the listening sessions and interviews. The note taker will be identifying themes, patterns, and issues that emerge.
* Draft copies of the Needs Assessment report will be kept in a locked cabinet that only the Project Coordinator has access to.
* The report will not be shared with anyone outside of the collaboration until it has been reviewed and approved by the collaboration, the Vera Institute of Justice, and the Office on Violence Against Women.
* All notes, records, and anything else in writing that is related to the Needs Assessment will be destroyed at the end of the grant.

**Mandatory Reporting**

Partners of CORE are bound by New York State Mandated Reporting Laws. However, not all partner agencies are mandated reporters within the same regulations. Partners will abide by their respective agency guidelines with regards to mandated reporting.

In 2012 NYS passed the Protection of People with Special Needs Act. This Act established The Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs (The Justice Center), which opened its doors in 2013.

Certain staff from UHDVS and the ILCHV may be required to report to the Justice Center if they have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of a vulnerable person residing in a residential facility or from a provider.

SACVAP are not mandated reporters to the Justice Center, even if the person is in a residential facility.  SAVCAP is exempt pursuant to their Confidentiality Privilege established by N.Y.C.P.L.R. 4510.

CORE is bound by the Child Protective Services (CPS) mandate as stated in N.Y. Social Services Law §§ 413, 416.

In accordance with these mandatory reporting requirements, CORE will:

* Inform all potential participants during the recruitment process of the above mandatory reporting requirements in clear terms.
* Inform all participants attending the focus group/interview during the introduction of the above mandatory reporting requirements in clear terms.
* Give participants the option of leaving at any point if they feel uncomfortable for any reason.
* Encourage participants to be mindful of what information they choose to share in the focus group.

**Accessibility Considerations**

CORE is committed to providing fully accessible focus groups and interviews for all participants throughout the needs assessment process. To the best of our ability, accessibility will be ensured through the following:

* Accessible space will be used for all focus groups and interviews. Focus groups and interviews will take place in a space that is commonly used by the participants, so that they are already familiar with the space.
* Reasonable accommodation will be provided to those participating provided sufficient notice (two weeks prior to the event) is given. The Participation Form for focus groups and interviews will include information on accessibility accommodations. The Project Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing requested accommodations.
* If a person requires an accommodation not identified on the Participation Form, the recruiter will contact the Project Coordinator. A reasonable effort will be made to meet these requests.
* Requests for accommodations can be made via the Participation Form at recruitment or by phone, in person, or email to a member of CORE.
* Focus groups and interviews will be scheduled at times and locations that are convenient to participants when transportation is available.
* All focus group/interview questions have been reviewed by the entire CORE team for accessibility and trauma-informed, person first language.

**Safety Considerations**

Safety is a primary consideration of CORE. We understand that safety is defined differently for each individual. Every effort will be made to protect the safety of individuals participating in the Needs Assessment process. The collaboration will also make every effort to develop tools and processes to maximize the safety of all involved.

During recruitment and at the beginning of each focus group and interview, it will be made clear to participants that:

* Questions are intended to elicit information about Unity House Domestic Violence Services, the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital and the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley and the services they provide. Questions are not intended to gather personal experiences related to violence, abuse, or neglect.
* *For people served*: If the discussion of services or service access brings up memories or intense feelings and/or if a participant appears likely to disclose, a counselor will be available at each listening session for survivors and people with disabilities to provide emotional support for anyone needing it either during or just following the session. A private, accessible space will be made available to insure confidentiality and safety. Participants will be told that the counselor is available and where the counselor will be located, or they can request an escort to the counselor.
* A list of local resources will be made available to anyone requesting one.
* Anyone can discontinue their participation at any point if they are feeling uncomfortable.
* No one has to answer any question that makes him or her uncomfortable.
* There will be no consequence to employment/services for anyone who chooses to participate or not participate in the Needs Assessment process.
* No personally identifying information will be linked to those participating in the group, other than to provide them with their requested accommodations.
* We will be offering optional individual interviews to anyone who would prefer to participate outside of a group setting.
* We will not recruit anyone who we know to currently be in a potentially vulnerable or dangerous situation.

Additionally, the following steps will be taken to help ensure safety for all participants:

* We will be asking for the first name of all participants on the Participation Form for the purpose of connecting individuals with their requested accommodations and will not be linked to any individually identifying information.
* We will be asking for contact information from those who request a meeting reminder. This information will be destroyed as soon as the reminder is made, prior to the focus group/interview.
* Trauma-informed support staff will be on site during all focus groups and interviews in the event that an emergency occurs and additional support is needed.
* Outside observers who are not directly involved with CORE will not be allowed to participate and/or be present during focus groups or interviews. Personal care aides may accompany participants to focus groups/interviews, but will be asked to wait in an adjacent room.
* No guardians will be allowed in a focus group or interview. They will remain on site where they can be available if needed.

**Work Plan**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Timeframe** |
| OVW Grant Awarded | October 2014 |
| Attend New Grantee Orientation  | February 2015 |
| Conduct Baseline Indicators | April – May 2015 |
| Collaboration Building and Charter Development | January–September 2015 |
| Submit Collaboration Charter to OVW | October 2015 |
| Develop Narrowing the Focus Memo | October 2015 |
| Submit Memo to OVW | October 2015 |
| Conduct Indicators | October 2015 |
| Develop Needs Assessment Plan | November 2015 – May 2016 |
| Submit Needs Assessment Plan to OVW | May 2016 |
| Conduct Focus Groups with people served | June 2016 |
| Compile Findings and Analyze Data | July 2016 |
| Conduct Indicators | April 2016 |
| Submit Needs Assessment Report to OVW | August 2016 |
| Create Strategic Plan | August – September 2016 |
| Submit Strategic Plan to OVW | September 2016 |
| Implement Strategic Plan | October 2016– September 2017 |
| Conduct Indicators  | October 2016 |
| Conduct Indicators  | April 2017 |
| Conduct Final Indicators | September 2017 |

**APPENDIX**

**Recruitment Materials**

1. **Recruitment Flyer for Victims of Domestic Violence**

YOU HAVE A VOICE!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Unity House is looking for people who have experienced domestic violence within the past 2 years to participate in an anonymous and confidential focus group. We will not be asking about or discussing your own personal experiences. We would like to get your thoughts on receiving domestic violence services so that we can create a greater system of services that is welcoming, safe, empowering and responsive.

If you are interested in participating, please see or call Dave Warren at:

Unity House – 272-5917

dwarren@unityhouseny.org

All participants will receive a $20 gift card for your time

YOU HAVE A VOICE!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

SACVAP is looking for people who have experienced sexual assault within the past 2 years to participate in an anonymous and confidential focus group. We will not be asking about or discussing your own personal experiences. We would like to get your thoughts on receiving sexual assault services so that we can create a greater system of services that is welcoming, safe, empowering and responsive.

If you are interested in participating, please see or call Sandy Stopera at:

SACVAP –270-3006

Sandra.stopera@sphp.com

Participants will receive a $20 gift card for your time

YOU HAVE A VOICE!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, Inc. is looking for people with disabilities to participate in an anonymous and confidential focus group about receiving disability services in the community. We will not be asking about or discussing your own personal experiences. We would like to get your thoughts on receiving disability services so that we can create a greater system of services that is welcoming, safe, empowering and responsive.

If you are interested in participating, please see or call Barbara Devore at:

Independent Living Center –274-0701

Bdevore@ilchv.org

Participants will receive a $20 gift card for your time

1. **Recruiting Email for Sexual Assault Direct Services Staff**

Hello:

Through an Office on Violence against Women (OVW) grant, a collaboration between Unity House Domestic Violence Services, the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, and the Sexual Assault and Crime Victim Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital, our collaboration will be conducting focus groups for direct service staff in an effort to obtain information on how to most effectively serve people with disabilities at the intersection of domestic violence and sexual assault.  If you participate, all answers will be documented confidentially and anonymously.  The focus group will last for one hour, and will be held on xxxxx from x PM- x PM.  Your input would greatly inform our project, and we are hopeful that you’ll participate.

If you’d like to participate, please contact Sandy at sandra.stopera@sphp.com

 **Recruiting Email for Domestic Violence Direct Services Staff**

Hello:

Through an Office on Violence against Women (OVW) grant, a collaboration between Unity House Domestic Violence Services, the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, and the Sexual Assault and Crime Victim Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital, our collaboration will be conducting focus groups for direct service staff in an effort to obtain information on how to most effectively serve people with disabilities at the intersection of domestic violence and sexual assault.  If you participate, all answers will be documented confidentially and anonymously.  The focus group will last for one hour, and will be held on xxxxx from x PM- x PM.  Your input would greatly inform our project, and we are hopeful that you’ll participate.

If you’d like to participate, please contact Dave at

dwarren@unityhouseny.org

**Recruiting Email for Disabilities Direct Services Staff**

Hello:

Through an Office on Violence against Women (OVW) grant, a collaboration between Unity House Domestic Violence Services, the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, and the Sexual Assault and Crime Victim Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital, our collaboration will be conducting focus groups for direct service staff in an effort to obtain information on how to most effectively serve people with disabilities at the intersection of domestic violence and sexual assault.  If you participate, all answers will be documented confidentially and anonymously.  The focus group will last for one hour, and will be held on xxxxx from x PM- x PM.  Your input would greatly inform our project, and we are hopeful that you’ll participate.

If you’d like to participate, please contact Barbara at bdevore@ilchv.org

1. **Frequently Asked Questions for Focus Group Participants**

**What does CORE stand for and what is its purpose?**

CORE stands for Culture Of Respect and Empowerment. It is a Rensselaer County collaboration between Unity House Domestic Violence Services (UHDVS), the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital (SACVAP) and the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley (ILCHV).

The purpose of the project is to strengthen the relationship between UHDVS, SACVAP and ILCHV to create a compassionate, accessible, person-centered network of care for people with disabilities who have been affected by domestic and/or sexual violence. We will work to create systemic changes within our organizations to break down barriers people with disabilities face when accessing services.

**Why are you conducting these focus groups?**

We are currently working on our Needs Assessment Plan which outlines our strategy on collecting information on what strengths and weaknesses exist in providing services at this time. We feel that the best way to accomplish this is to talk to people who have received services in our community.

**What sort of information will you be looking for?**

We are looking for information on safety, accessibility, confidentiality and any areas of our agencies that might need improvement in providing services for participants.

**What will you do with the information you collect?**

The information we collect will be extremely helpful in showing us what changes need to be made in services for participants. We will then create a Needs Assessment Report and a Strategic Plan which will outline what positive changes need to be made in order to better serve participants.

**Are the focus groups safe and confidential?**

We are making every effort to make the focus groups safe, confidential and comfortable for everyone participating. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you may leave or choose not to respond to any question. We will also have a support advocate immediately available to you if needed.

You will not be asked to share stories about your own personal experience of violence or violence involving specific individuals you may know. The questions will only be regarding your experiences with receiving services in the community.

No identifying information on who is participating will be exchanged with partner agencies.

During the focus groups there will be a facilitator asking the questions and a note taker writing down responses to the questions. No identifying information will be used or linked to any of the information shared.

Each agency will use confidential Participation forms to compile a list of who will be attending. These forms will only be kept at the agency you sign up with. Once the needs assessment has been completed these forms will be destroyed.

**C1. Frequently Asked Questions for People Attending Focus Group – Plain Language**

**What is CORE and what is it about?**

Unity House Domestic Violence Services (UHDVS), the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital (SACVAP) and the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley (ILCHV) are working together as a group called CORE, which stands for Culture Of Respect and Empowerment. We are a group that works out of Rensselaer County.

The goal of our project is to make a better relationship between UHDVS, SACVAP and ILCHV to make a warm, accessible, person-centered system of care for people with disabilities who have been troubled by domestic and/or sexual violence. We will work to make changes in our agencies to make things easier for people with disabilities to get services.

**Why are you having these focus groups?**

Right now we are working on our Needs Assessment Plan which shows how we will get information on what the good things are when getting services and also what needs to be better when getting services. We feel that the best way to do this is to talk to people who have used services in our community.

**What kind of information will you be looking for?**

We are looking for information on feeling safe, getting services, privacy and any other things about our agencies that might need changes in services for people.

**What will you do with the information you get?**

The answers we get will be very helpful in showing us what changes need to be made in services for participants. We will then create a report and a plan which will show what changes need to be made in order to give people better services.

**Are the focus groups safe and private?**

We are making every effort to make the focus groups safe, private and comfortable for everyone there. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you may leave or choose not to answer any question. We will also have someone for you to talk to outside the room if needed.

You will not be asked to talk about your own stories of violence or violence with people you may know. The questions will only be about your experiences with getting services in the area.

No details on who is going will be given to partner agencies.

During the focus groups there will be a person asking the questions and another person writing down answers to the questions. No information of who you are will be used or linked to any of the information shared.

Each agency will use a form to gather a list of who will be going to the group. These forms are private and will only be kept at the agency you sign up with. These forms will be destroyed when the project it done.

1. **Recruitment Scripts** (Domestic Violence Services)

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to ask if you would like to participate in a focus group that we are conducting. Unity House Domestic Violence Services is working in collaboration with the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley and the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital. As you know, Unity House provides services to people who have experienced domestic violence, while the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program provides services to people who have experienced sexual assault. The Independent Living Center is an organization that provides services and resources for people with disabilities.

The goal of the project they are working on is to make services more welcoming and accessible for people with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence. I understand you might not fit that specific criteria but we would like your feedback on your perspective and experiences with domestic violence services. We will not be asking you about your own personal domestic violence experiences, just about receiving services due to the domestic violence.

Here are some details:

* Participating in the focus group is completely voluntary. You are not required to participate. You deciding not to participate will not affect your ability to receive services here at Unity House in any way. If you decide to participate, you can change your mind at any time for any reason. You may skip any question you don’t want to answer.
* The focus group will take place here at Unity House Domestic Violence Services and it should last about an hour and a half.
* No identifying information will be used during this process. Your first name and last initial will be used only to keep track of the number of participants attending as well as any accommodations that might be needed during the group.
* Staff will keep anything you say confidential. There will be someone in the room writing down statements that are being made but will not be indicating who said what.
* We will make it clear to everyone in the focus group that it is important to respect other participants’ comments and privacy. We will let them know the importance of keeping what everyone says confidential.
* You will receive a $20 gift card for participating.

I have more information you can look over before making your decision to participate or not. Would you like to review more information on this group?

**Recruitment Scripts** (Sexual Assault Services)

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to ask if you would like to participate in a focus group that we are conducting. SACVAP is working in collaboration with the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley and Unity House Domestic Violence Services. As you know, SACVAP provides services to people who have experienced sexual assault while Unity House provides services to people who have experienced domestic violence. The Independent Living Center is an organization that provides services and resources for people with disabilities.

The goal of the project they are working on is to make services more welcoming and accessible for people with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence. I understand you might not fit that specific criteria but we would like your feedback on your perspective and experiences with sexual assault services. We will not be asking you about your own personal sexual assault experiences, just about receiving services due to the sexual assault.

Here are some details:

* Participating in the focus group is completely voluntary. You are not required to participate. You deciding not to participate will not affect your ability to receive services here at SACVAP in any way. If you decide to participate, you can change your mind at any time for any reason. You may skip any question you don’t want to answer.
* The focus group will take place here at SACVAP and it should last about an hour and a half.
* No identifying information will be used during this process. Your first name and last initial will be used only to keep track of the number of participants attending as well as any accommodations that might be needed during the group.
* Staff will keep anything you say confidential. There will be someone in the room writing down statements that are being made but will not be indicating who said what.
* We will make it clear to everyone in the focus group that it is important to respect other participants’ comments and privacy. We will let them know the importance of keeping what everyone says confidential.
* You will receive a $20 gift card for participating.

I have more information you can look over before making your decision to participate or not. Would you like to review more information on this group?

**Recruitment Scripts** (Survivors with Disabilities)

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to ask if you would like to participate in a needs assessment interview that we are conducting. SACVAP is working in collaboration with the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley and Unity House Domestic Violence Services. As you know, SACVAP provides services to people who have experienced sexual assault while Unity House provides services to people who have experienced domestic violence. The Independent Living Center is an organization that provides services and resources for people with disabilities.

The goal of the project they are working on is to make services more welcoming and accessible for people with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence. We would like your feedback on your perspective and experiences with sexual assault services for people with disabilities. We will not be asking you about your own personal sexual assault experiences, just about receiving services due to the sexual assault when having a disability.

Here are some details:

* Participating in the interview is completely voluntary. You are not required to participate. You deciding not to participate will not affect your ability to receive services here at SACVAP in any way. If you decide to participate, you can change your mind at any time for any reason. You may skip any question you don’t want to answer.
* The interview will take place here at SACVAP and it should last about an hour.
* No identifying information will be used during this process. Your first name and last initial will be used only to keep track of the number of people participating as well as any accommodations that might be needed during the interview.
* Staff will keep anything you say confidential. There will be someone in the room writing down statements that are being made but will not be indicating who said what.
* You will receive a $20 gift card for participating.

I have more information you can look over before making your decision to participate or not. Would you like to review more information on this interview?

**Recruitment Scripts** (Disability Services)

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to ask if you would like to participate in a focus group that we are conducting. The Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley is working in collaboration with Unity House Domestic Violence Services and Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital. As you know, the Independent Living Center is an organization that provides services and resources for people with disabilities. SACVAP provides services to people who have experienced sexual assault while Unity House provides services to people who have experienced domestic violence.

The project they are working on is to make services more welcoming and accessible for people with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence. I understand you might not fit that specific criteria but we would like your feedback on your perspective and experiences with disability services. We will not be asking you about your own personal experiences, just about receiving disability services.

Here are some details:

* Participating in the focus group is completely voluntary. You are not required to participate. You deciding not to participate will not affect your ability to receive services here at the Independent Living Center in any way. If you decide to participate, you can change your mind at any time for any reason. You may skip any question you don’t want to answer.
* The focus group will take place here at the Independent Living Center and it should last about an hour and a half.
* No identifying information will be used during this process. Your first name and last initial will be used only to keep track of the number of participants attending as well as any accommodations that might be needed during the group.
* Staff will keep anything you say confidential. There will be someone in the room writing down statements that are being made but will not be indicating who said what.
* We will make it clear to everyone in the focus group that it is important to respect other participants’ comments and privacy. We will let them know the importance of keeping what everyone says confidential.
* You will receive a $20 gift card for participating.

I have more information you can look over before making your decision to participate or not. Would you like to review more information on this group?

1. **Facilitator Script for Survivors of Sexual Assault**

Upon participants’ arrival, the support advocate will greet each participant, ask for their name in order to check the list of accommodations needed. The advocate will then give participant their gift card, invite them to help themselves to refreshments and have a seat.

Hello and welcome. Thank you so much for coming. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I will be running the group and asking you some questions today.

This focus group is being held for a collaboration named CORE which stands for Culture Of Respect and Empowerment. This group is made up of three agencies: Unity House Domestic Violence Services, the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital and the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley. These agencies are working together to create a network of care that is safe and accessible for people with disabilities who have been affected by domestic and/or sexual violence.

This is not an agency specific evaluation and your participation in this focus group will not affect you receiving services now or in the future.

We know everyone’s experiences are their own and can be very different from other people’s experiences. What we would like you to focus on today during our limited time together is just your receiving services for the sexual assault you experienced.

Please be aware that we are mandated reporters in instances of child abuse and neglect or abuse of people who live in state licensed facilities except nursing homes. Therefore I will not be asking you about details of the violence you have personally experienced.

We are here today to learn from you what you think about services you have received in your community. We want to know what is helpful and what is not helpful when receiving services. We are asking you these questions so we can learn what we can do better to help people we serve.

The information we obtain from you will be used to create a plan to make changes in order to enhance our services.

I would like to introduce you to the other person in the room with us. Her name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and she will be taking notes on what is being said. She will not be writing down anyone’s name or who said what, she will only be focusing on writing down your responses to the questions.

If you feel the need to leave at any time for any reason please feel free to do so.

If you feel upset or uncomfortable and wish to take a break, we have a support advocate outside the door that is available for you. Her name is Sandy.

We want you to feel safe and comfortable here today so please let me know if you need anything like to leave the room, talk to our support advocate or something to drink.

We also have information on other resources in the area that are available to you if you need it as well.

I want to let you know of some guidelines while in the group today:

* Respect each other
* Do not judge one another
* Please do not comment on other participants statements
* Keep everything that is discussed confidential
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* Having your comments anonymously used in CORE’s Needs Assessment Report
* Having your comments anonymously used for developing Core’s Strategic Plan and Implementation activities.

Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

**Focus Group Questions for Survivors of Sexual Assault**

1. How did you learn about sexual assault/abuse services that are available to you?
	1. What are good ways to distribute or provide information about this agency or other agencies services?
	2. What may keep you from getting the services you need?
	3. In your opinion, what is the best way to reach other survivors?

I would like to talk to you about asking for help. Think about a time when you had to ask for help. For example, asking for help getting somewhere, getting services or assistance with reading papers.

1. What made it easy for you to ask for the help you needed?
	1. Did that person ask if you needed help?
	2. Is there anything that people do that makes it easy to ask for help if you want it?
2. Think about a time when you sought services in the community. What did the agency or service provider do that helped make your experience positive?
	1. Consider physical space/location
	2. Staff behavior, competency, knowledge, greeting, style, etc.
	3. Confidentiality/Privacy
	4. Coordination with other agencies involved
	5. Overall atmosphere
	6. Materials/resources
3. On the other hand, what has service providers done that contributed to making any part of your experience with them a negative one?
	1. Physical space/location
	2. Staff behavior, competency and knowledge
	3. Confidentiality/Privacy
	4. Coordination with other agencies involved
	5. Overall atmosphere, comfort level and approachability
	6. Materials/resources
4. An important consideration for many people who have experienced sexual assault/abuse is safety. What does safety mean to you?
	1. When you sought services, what have service providers done that helped you feel safe?
	2. What did they do that helped you feel more comfortable disclosing or talking about your experience of violence?
	3. Does the management of your confidential information impact how safe you feel?
	4. What did they (or other service providers) do that might have made you feel unsafe?
	5. What did they do that prevented you from trusting them or having confidence in them?

Now I’d like to talk to you a little bit about confidentiality, what confidentiality means to you and how organizations can consider their practices of confidentiality when serving survivors of sexual violence.

1. To begin, what does confidentiality mean to you?
	1. How important is confidentiality when you’re seeking or receiving services?
	2. In what instances would it be okay to share identifying information and the details of your experience of sexual violence with other organizations?
		* After signing a one-time release of information as part of an intake process, allowing the organization to release your information to anyone they deem necessary?
		* Or do you prefer to be asked prior to each time your information is going to be released, providing you with a choice as to whom you want the information released to?
		* Or, are you fine with an organization sharing your information any time?
2. What can programs or organizations that you work with in the community (not related to your sexual assault) do to make you feel safer?
	1. Some examples might be how you consider: hours of operation, transportation needs, location of services, type of service provider, skills of service provider, need to disclose your assault when accessing services.
3. What would you like community service providers (such as doctors, nurses, advocates, therapists or community agencies) to know about how to best support survivors of sexual assault/abuse?
	1. What is the one thing you consider most important, that needs to be addressed regarding services to survivors of sexual assault?
4. Do you have any other feedback or comments for us?
5. Do you have any questions for us?

**Facilitator Script for Victims of Domestic Violence**

Upon participants’ arrival, the support advocate will greet each participant, ask for their name in order to check the list of accommodations needed. The advocate will then give participant their gift card, invite them to help themselves to refreshments and have a seat.

Hello and welcome. Thank you so much for coming. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I will be running the group and asking you some questions today.

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We know everyone’s experiences are their own and can be very different from other people’s experiences. What we would like you to focus on today during our limited time together is just your receiving services for the domestic violence you experienced.

Please be aware we are mandated reporters in instances of child abuse and neglect or abuse of people who live in state licensed facilities except nursing homes. Therefore I will not be asking you about details of the violence you have personally experienced.

We are here today to learn from you what you think about services you have received in your community. We want to know what is helpful and what is not helpful when receiving services. We are asking you these questions so we can learn what we can do better to help people we serve.

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* Having your comments anonymously used for developing Core’s Strategic Plan and Implementation activities.

Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

**Focus Group Questions for Victims of Domestic Violence**

1. How did you learn about domestic violence services that are available to you?
	1. What are good ways to distribute or provide information about this agency or other agencies services?
	2. What may keep you from getting the services you need?
	3. In your opinion, what is the best way to reach other victims?

I would like to talk to you about asking for help. Think about a time when you had to ask for help. For example, asking for help getting somewhere, getting services or assistance with reading papers.

1. What made it easy for you to ask for the help you needed?
	1. Did that person ask if you needed help?
	2. Is there anything that people do that makes it easy to ask for help if you want it?
2. Think about a time when you sought domestic violence services in the community, either through UHDVS or elsewhere. What did the agency or service provider do that helped make your experience positive?
	1. Consider physical space/location
	2. Staff behavior, competency, knowledge, greeting, style, etc.
	3. Confidentiality/Privacy
	4. Coordination with other agencies involved
	5. Overall atmosphere
	6. Materials/resources
3. On the other hand, what has UHDVS or other service provider done that contributed to making any part of your experience with them a negative one?
	1. Physical space/location
	2. Staff behavior, competency and knowledge
	3. Confidentiality/Privacy
	4. Coordination with other agencies involved
	5. Overall atmosphere, comfort level and approachability
	6. Materials/resources
4. An important consideration for many people who have been affected by domestic violence is safety. What does safety mean to you?
	1. When you sought services, what have service providers done that helped you feel safe?
	2. What did they do that helped you feel more comfortable disclosing or talking about your experience of violence?
	3. Does the management of your confidential information impact how safe you feel?
	4. What did they (or other service providers) do that might have made you feel unsafe?
	5. What did they do that prevented you from trusting them or having confidence in them?

Now I’d like to talk to you a little bit about confidentiality, what confidentiality means to you and how organizations can consider their practices of confidentiality when serving victims of domestic violence.

1. To begin, what does confidentiality mean to you?
	1. How important is confidentiality when you’re seeking or receiving services?
	2. In what instances would it be okay to share identifying information and the details of your experience of domestic violence with other organizations?
		* After signing a one-time release of information as part of an intake process, allowing the organization to release your information to anyone they deem necessary?
		* Or do you prefer to be asked prior to each time your information is going to be released, providing you with a choice as to whom you want the information released to?
		* Or, are you fine with an organization sharing your information any time?
2. What can programs or organizations that you work with in the community (not related to your domestic violence) do to make you feel safer?
	1. Some examples might be how you consider: hours of operation, transportation needs, location of services, type of service provider, skills of service provider, need to disclose your domestic violence experiences when accessing services.
3. What would you like community service providers (such as doctors, nurses, advocates, therapists or community agencies) to know about how to best support victims of domestic violence?
	1. What is the one thing you consider most important, that needs to be addressed regarding services to victims of domestic violence?
4. Do you have any other feedback or comments for us?
5. Do you have any questions for us?

**Facilitator Script for People with Disabilities**

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Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

**Focus Group Questions for People with Disabilities**

1. How did you learn about services available for people with disabilities?
	1. Who helps you find services?
	2. What are some other non-physical barriers you face? Such as transportation difficulties, assistance with form completion or transfer assistance.
	3. What can agencies and the people who work there do to help you get the services you need?
	4. Where are some places that you think it would be good to share information on services available for people with disabilities? For example, Church bulletin? Library? Stores? Internet?

I would like to talk to you about asking for help. Think about a time when you had to ask for help. For example, asking for help getting somewhere, getting services or assistance with reading papers.

1. What made it easy for you to ask for the help you needed?
	1. Did that person ask if you needed help?
	2. Do you like it when people ask if you need help?
	3. Is there anything that people do that makes it easy to ask for help if you want it?
2. Sometimes receiving services can be difficult for various reasons. What are some of the problems you have experienced accessing services?
	1. What are the building and office barriers you face? For example, having only stairs available when you use a wheelchair.
	2. What about other non-physical barriers such as transportation, getting assistance with form completion or transfer assistance?
		* What would make it easier for you?
	3. Is there anything about the building that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable?
		* What would help you to feel more safe and comfortable?
3. What are some communication problems you experience when you receive services? For example, when you have difficulty understanding someone or they have difficulty understanding you.
	1. What would make it easier for you? For example, using pictures, an interpreter, simple language or being provided examples.
4. What does staff at these agencies do that make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable?
	1. Do they understand your disability? How do you know?
	2. Do they understand you? How do you know?
5. Think of a place where you get services where you feel safe and comfortable.
	1. What does staff at these agencies do that make your experience a positive one?
	2. What about the people makes you feel safe and that you can trust them?
	3. What about the place and environment make you feel safe?
	4. What about the people makes you feel safe and that you can trust them?

Now I’d like to talk to you a little bit about confidentiality, what confidentiality means to you and how organizations can consider their practices of confidentiality when serving people with disabilities.

1. To begin, what does confidentiality mean to you?
	1. How important is confidentiality when you’re seeking or receiving services?
	2. In what instances would it be okay to share identifying information and the details of your disability with other organizations?
		* After signing a one-time release of information as part of an intake process, allowing the organization to release your information to anyone they deem necessary?
		* Or do you prefer to be asked prior to each time your information is going to be released, providing you with a choice as to whom you want the information released to?
		* Or, are you fine with an organization sharing your information any time?
2. Going back to the place you get services from where you feel safe and comfortable, do you feel that your privacy and confidentiality are protected at this agency?
	1. What did the agency and staff do to help protect your privacy and confidentiality?
3. When you go somewhere in the community for services and someone really doesn’t understand you or your disability, what is that like?
4. When you go somewhere in the community for services and someone really understands you and your disability, what is that like?
5. What would you like people in the community to know about how to best support people with disabilities?
	1. Is there anything you can think of that people or agencies should absolutely avoid doing?
6. Do you have any other feedback for us on how to make things better for people with disabilities?
7. Do you have any questions for me?

**Facilitator Script for Survivors with Disabilities**

Upon participants’ arrival, the support advocate will greet the participant, ask for their name in order to check the list of accommodations needed. The advocate will then give participant their gift card, invite them to help themselves to refreshments and have a seat.

Hello and welcome. Thank you so much for coming. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I will be interviewing you today and asking you some questions.

This interview is being held for a collaboration named CORE which stands for Culture Of Respect and Empowerment. This group is made up of three agencies: Unity House Domestic Violence Services, the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital and the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley. These agencies are working together to create a network of care that is safe and accessible for people with disabilities who have been affected by domestic and/or sexual violence.

What we would like you to focus on today during our limited time together is just your experiences relating to accessing services in your community.

We are here today to learn from you what you think about services you have received in your community. We want to know what is helpful and what is not helpful when receiving services. We are asking you these questions so we can learn what we can do better to help people we serve.

The information we get from you will be used to create a plan to make changes in order to make our services better.

I would like to introduce you to the other person in the room with us. Her name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and she will be taking notes on what is being said. She will not be writing down any identifying information, she will only be focusing on your responses to the questions.

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If you feel the need to leave at any time for any reason please feel free to do so.

We want you to feel safe and comfortable here today so please let me know if you need anything like to leave the room, talk to our support advocate or something to drink.

We also have information on other resources in the area that are available to you if you need it as well.

We will be using a passive consent process for our interview today, which means that we will not be asking you to sign a consent form to participate. We feel that in order to protect your confidentiality having no paper trail is very important. In a passive consent process, your consent is assumed by you staying and participating. By your staying and participating you are agreeing to the following:

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* Having your comments anonymously used in CORE’s Needs Assessment Report
* Having your comments anonymously used for developing Core’s Strategic Plan and Implementation activities.

Does you have any questions before we begin?

**Focus Group Questions for Survivors with Disabilities**

1. How did you learn about services available for people with disabilities?
	1. Who helps you find services?
	2. What may keep you from getting the services you need?
	3. What can agencies and the people who work there do to help you get the services you need?
	4. Where are some places that you think it would be good to share information on services available for people with disabilities? For example, church bulletin? Library? Stores? Internet?

I would like to talk to you about asking for help. Think about a time when you had to ask for help. For example, asking for help getting somewhere, getting services or assistance with reading papers.

1. What made it easy for you to ask for the help you needed?
	1. Did that person ask if you needed help?
	2. Do you like it when people ask if you need help?
	3. Is there anything that people do that makes it easy to ask for help if you want it?
2. Sometimes receiving services can be difficult for various reasons. What are some of the problems you have experienced accessing services?
	1. What are the building and office barriers you face? For example, having only stairs available when you use a wheelchair.
	2. What about other non-physical barriers such as transportation, getting assistance with form completion or transfer assistance?
		1. What would make it easier for you?
	3. Is there anything about the building that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable?
		1. What would help you feel more safe and comfortable?
3. What are some communication problems you experience when you receive services? For example, when you have difficulty understanding someone or they have difficulty understanding you.
	1. What would make it easier for you? For example, using pictures, an interpreter, simple language or being provided examples.
4. What does staff at these agencies do that make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable?
	1. Do they understand your disability? How do you know?
	2. Do they understand you? How do you know?
5. Think of a place where you get services where you feel safe and comfortable.
	1. What does staff at these agencies do that make your experience a positive one?
	2. What about the people makes you feel safe and that you can trust them?
	3. What about the place and environment make you feel safe?
	4. What about the people makes you feel safe and that you can trust them?

Now I’d like to talk to you a little bit about confidentiality, what confidentiality means to you and how organizations can consider their practices of confidentiality when serving people with disabilities who have been affected by sexual assault.

1. To begin, what does confidentiality mean to you?
	1. How important is confidentiality when you’re seeking or receiving services?
	2. In what instances would it be okay to share identifying information and the details of your disability and/or sexual assault experience with other organizations?
		* After signing a one-time release of information as part of an intake process, allowing the organization to release your information to anyone they deem necessary?
		* Or do you prefer to be asked prior to each time your information is going to be released, providing you with a choice as to whom you want the information released to?
		* Or, are you fine with an organization sharing your information any time?
2. Going back to the place where you feel safe and comfortable receiving services, do you feel that your privacy and confidentiality are protected at this agency?
	1. What did the agency and staff do to help protect your privacy and confidentiality?
3. What would you like community service providers (such as doctors, nurses, advocates, therapists or community agencies) to know about how to best support survivors of sexual assault/abuse?
	1. What is the one thing you consider most important that needs to be addressed regarding services to survivors of sexual assault?
4. When you go somewhere in the community for services and someone really doesn’t understand you or your disability, what is that like?
5. When you go somewhere in the community for services and someone really understands you and your disability, what is that like?
6. What would you like people in the community to know about how to best support people with disabilities?
	1. Is there anything you can think of that people or agencies should absolutely avoid doing?
7. Do you have any other feedback for us on how to make things better for people with disabilities who have experienced sexual assault or domestic violence?
8. Do you have any questions for me?

**Facilitator Script for Sexual Assault Direct Service Staff (Volunteers and Interns)**

Hello and welcome. Thank you so much for coming. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I will be running the group and asking you some questions today.

This focus group is being held for a collaboration named CORE which stands for Culture Of Respect and Empowerment. This group is made up of three agencies: Unity House Domestic Violence Services, the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital and the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley. These agencies are working together to create a network of care that is safe and accessible for people with disabilities who have been affected by domestic and/or sexual violence.

The information we obtain from you will be used to create a plan to make changes in order to enhance our services.

I would like to introduce you to the other person in the room with us. Her name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and she will be taking notes on what is being said. She will not be writing down anyone’s name or who said what, she will only be focusing on writing down your responses to the questions.

We ask that when responding to these questions, please think about your own job and responsibility within your organization. Speak to any experience where you may have worked with someone you thought had a disability. If you haven’t yet, think about any hypothetical situations where you may work with someone who has a disability or where you may be the first point of contact for that person at your organization.

We will not be asking you to share the details of cases themselves but rather about it in relation to what exists within your organization’s structure and/or culture to help guide you in responding to, and meeting their individual needs. Some examples are policies and procedures, intake, case review, training, resources, attitudes and stigma.

1. Have you served individuals with disabilities?
	1. If so, tell us about the circumstances that brought them to you and what happened.
	2. How were they referred to your agency?
2. What went well?
	1. Were you able to provide necessary services?
	2. Did you know of existing resources that could help?
	3. Did the survivor face barriers that you did not anticipate? If so, what did you do?
	4. Was there a guardian present during your interactions? What was that dynamic like? Did they create barriers in serving the survivor?
3. What did not go well in the interactions?
	1. Were you able to provide necessary services?
	2. Did you know of existing resources that could help?
	3. Did the survivor face barriers that you did not anticipate? If so, what did you do?
	4. Was there a guardian present during your interactions? What was that dynamic like? Did they create barriers in serving the survivor?
4. What types of things within your organization impacted your ability to best respond to and meet the needs of a survivor with a disability?
	1. Do you feel you have adequate training?
	2. Do you have access to and knowledge of resources in the area?
	3. Were there any issues with accessibility of services?
	4. Are you aware of community partnerships?
	5. Did the type of disability impact your ability to deliver services? If so, how?
5. What can agencies in this community do to increase the quality of services for people with disabilities who are survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault?
6. Have you ever worked with the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley or Unity House Domestic Violence Services in the past to support a survivor of domestic and/or sexual violence with a disability?
	1. If so, how did it go?
	2. What were the strengths of the relationship?
	3. What could be improved?
7. Do you have anything else to add?

**Facilitator Scripts for Domestic Violence Direct Service Staff (Volunteers and Interns)**

Hello and welcome. Thank you so much for coming. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I will be running the group and asking you some questions today.

This focus group is being held for a collaboration named CORE which stands for Culture Of Respect and Empowerment. This group is made up of three agencies: Unity House Domestic Violence Services, the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital and the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley. These agencies are working together to create a network of care that is safe and accessible for people with disabilities who have been affected by domestic and/or sexual violence.

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We will not be asking you to share the details of cases themselves but rather about it in relation to what exists within your organization’s structure and/or culture to help guide you in responding to, and meeting their individual needs. Some examples are policies and procedures, intake, case review, training, resources, attitudes and stigma.

1. Have you served individuals with disabilities?
	1. If so, tell us about the circumstances that brought them to you and what happened.
	2. How were they referred to your agency?
2. What went well?
	1. Were you able to provide necessary services?
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	4. Was there a guardian present during your interactions? What was that dynamic like? Did they create barriers in serving the survivor?
3. What did not go well in the interactions?
	1. Were you able to provide necessary services?
	2. Did you know of existing resources that could help?
	3. Did the survivor face barriers that you did not anticipate? If so, what did you do?
	4. Was there a guardian present during your interactions? What was that dynamic like? Did they create barriers in serving the survivor?
4. What types of things within your organization impacted your ability to best respond to and meet the needs of a survivor with a disability?
	1. Do you feel you have adequate training?
	2. Do you have access to and knowledge of resources in the area?
	3. Were there any issues with accessibility of services?
	4. Are you aware of community partnerships?
	5. Did the type of disability impact your ability to deliver services? If so, how?
5. What can agencies in this community do to increase the quality of services for people with disabilities who are survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault?
6. Have you ever worked with the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley or the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital in the past to support a survivor of domestic and/or sexual violence with a disability?
	1. If so, how did it go?
	2. What were the strengths of the relationship?
	3. What could be improved?
7. Do you have anything else to add?

**Facilitator Script for Direct Service Staff for Disability Organizations (Volunteers and Interns)**

Hello and welcome. Thank you so much for coming. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I will be running the group and asking you some questions today.

This focus group is being held for a collaboration named CORE which stands for Culture Of Respect and Empowerment. This group is made up of three agencies: Unity House Domestic Violence Services, the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program at Samaritan Hospital and the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley. These agencies are working together to create a network of care that is safe and accessible for people with disabilities who have been affected by domestic and/or sexual violence.

The information we obtain from you will be used to create a plan to make changes in order to enhance our services.

I would like to introduce you to the other person in the room with us. Her name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and she will be taking notes on what is being said. She will not be writing down anyone’s name or who said what, she will only be focusing on writing down your responses to the questions.

We ask that when responding to these questions, please think about your own job and responsibility within your organization. Speak to any experience where you may have worked with someone you thought has experienced domestic violence or sexual assault. If you haven’t yet, think about any hypothetical situations where you may work with someone who has experienced domestic violence or sexual assault or you may be the first point of contact for that person at your organization.

We will not be asking you to share the details of cases themselves but rather about it in relation to what exists within your organization’s structure and/or culture to help guide you in responding to, and meeting their individual needs. Some examples are policies and procedures, intake, case review, training, resources, attitudes and stigma.

1. Have you served individuals with disabilities who are survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault?
	1. If so, tell us about the circumstances that brought them to you and what happened.
	2. How were they referred to your agency?
2. What went well?
	1. Were you able to provide necessary services?
	2. Did you know of existing resources that could help?
	3. Was there a guardian, personal care worker or friend present during your interactions? If so, how did this affect your providing services for the client?
3. What did not go well in the interactions?
	1. Were you able to provide necessary services?
	2. Did you know of existing resources that could help?
	3. Did the survivor face barriers that you did not anticipate? If so, what did you do?
	4. Was there a guardian present during your interactions? What was that dynamic like? Did they create barriers in serving the survivor?
4. What types of things within your organization impacted your ability to best respond to and meet the needs of a survivor with a disability?
	1. Do you feel you have adequate training?
	2. Do you have access to and knowledge of resources in the area?
	3. Were there any issues with accessibility of services?
	4. Are you aware of community partnerships?
	5. Did the type of disability impact your ability to deliver services? If so, how?
5. What can agencies in this community do to increase the quality of services for people with disabilities who are survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault?
6. Have you ever worked with the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program or Unity House Domestic Violence Services in the past to support a survivor of domestic and/or sexual violence with a disability?
	1. If so, how did it go?
	2. What were the strengths of the relationship?
	3. What could be improved?
7. Do you have anything else to add?
8. **Community Resource List**

Unity House- The Front Door 274-2607

Unity House Domestic Violence 24 Hour Hotline 272-2370

Equinox – Albany Domestic Violence Services 434-6135

Sexual Assault 24 Hour Hotline 271-3257

Samaritan Mental Health 271-3374

Samaritan Mental Health Hotline 274-4345

Samaritan Suicide Hotline 689-4673

Independent Living Center 274-0701

Hudson Mohawk Recovery Center 272-3918

Planned Parenthood 434-5678

Legal Aid of Northeastern New York 462-6765

Rensselaer County Sheriff’s Office 270-5252

Joseph’s House and Shelter 272-2544

Mental Health Empowerment Project 434-1393

Unified Services – Troy 283-2800

New York State Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline 1-800-342-3720

New York State Mandated Reports Hotline 1-800-635-1522

CEO 272-6012

Rensselaer County Dept. of Social Services 266-7800

NYS Commission for the Blind 212-825-5710

Justice Center 549-0200

Center for Disability Rights 320-7100

1. **CORE Participation Form**

The purpose of this form is to ensure that our focus groups are accessible for you. This form will be destroyed by the Project Coordinator at the completion of the grant to protect your confidentiality.

Name (first and last initial): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to participate in a focus group, please check the best time:

DATE/TIME 1 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DATE/TIME 2 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If you wish to participate in an individual interview only, please check the best time:

DATE/TIME 1 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DATE/TIME 2 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

We are able to reach out to you and confirm the date and time of the focus group one day prior to the focus group. Please consider whether it is safe for us to contact you.

If you would like us to confirm the focus group, how would you like us to contact you? Please check one:

􀆑 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Is it safe to leave a message? (circle) Yes No

􀆑 Text Message: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

􀆑 Email:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

􀆑 Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What is the best time to contact you? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you require any of the following accommodations?

􀆑 Alternative written materials (please circle) large print / Braille / plain language

􀆑 Audio or help with reading

􀆑 Note taker

􀆑 Enhanced listening device

􀆑 Alternative communication method:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

􀆑 Open captioning

􀆑 Orientation to facility

􀆑 Transportation coordination

􀆑 Interpreter (Type:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

 Food/Dietary allergies or restrictions \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

􀆑 Direct Service Staff (Because of confidentiality, your regular staff will not be allowed in the focus group room.)

􀆑 Other requests:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Thank you. We appreciate your participation.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

CORE Project Coordinator

504 Broadway Troy, NY 12180

Phone: (518) 272-5917