



DeafRISE

Making safety accessible

Collaboration Charter

Tulsa, Oklahoma



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INTRODUCTION

Deaf RISE is the result of a collaboration effort created by Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS) and TSHA, Inc. (TSHA). The two agencies share the same values and vision to create sustainable organizational change for Deaf survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.

This charter provides a foundation for the work of the collaboration by detailing our commitment, framework and direction of the Deaf RISE project.

Statement of Problem

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, four in 10 women have experienced some form of intimate partner violence in Oklahoma.¹ In 2016, Tulsa County had the highest rate of domestic violence homicides in the state with 26 cases resulting in 27 deaths.²

In 2014, the population in Oklahoma was estimated to be around 2,281,244 and around 71,442 individuals aged 18-65 were diagnosed with some type of hearing loss.³ In addition to facing obstacles with hearing loss, the prevalence of violence against Deaf individuals is much greater than in the general population. One out of two Deaf women are victims of domestic violence and compared to hearing women, Deaf women experience sexual assault at twice the rate.⁴

The most troubling fact is the Deaf community is largely invisible to victim service providers. With the support of the Department of Justice, the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) Disability Grant Program, DVIS and TSHA are partnering in order to enhance existing agency policies, organizational culture and practices to better address the intersection of Deafness and violence.

DVIS and TSHA each provide a unique perspective and expertise to the Deaf RISE collaboration. DVIS provides insight into the epidemic of sexual and domestic violence in Tulsa and Creek Counties, Oklahoma. TSHA brings knowledge in the area of hearing loss and Deaf culture. Through the integration of best practices and knowledge into the core of each member agency and system, we are committed to

¹ www.ncadv.org/statistics

² Blood, L. (2018). "Everybody's Face." *The Tulsa Voice*.

³ Harrington, T. (2014). Deaf Population of the U.S. *Gallaudet University Library: Deaf Statistics*.

⁴ www.norcalcenter.org/deafsafe/

gaining a greater understanding about the barriers that Deaf survivors encounter and building on our existing strengths to address these gaps and improve our response and services.

The ultimate aim is to increase the service provision as well as accessibility to the targeted population in a trauma-informed and culturally-responsive service mechanism that ensures equality and equity to all.

VISION STATEMENT

Deaf RISE envisions a community with full access to quality, culturally-responsive and trauma-informed services without barriers for Deaf⁵ survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence in the Deaf RISE service area.

MISSION STATEMENT

Deaf RISE will create sustainable organizational change for Deaf survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence in the greater Tulsa, Oklahoma service area. We will provide full access to quality services that are culturally-responsive and trauma-informed.

Member agencies will strive for full access by:

- Providing barrier-free services for Deaf survivors;
- Meeting each individual's needs; and
- Growing best practices as communicated to us by the Deaf community.

Member agencies are committed to providing quality and culturally-responsive services by:

- Engaging in ongoing education;
- Being proactive and responsive to the communities we serve; and
- Building mutual trust between agencies and Deaf survivors by actively listening to individual and community needs.

Member agencies will provide trauma-informed care by:

- Supporting the whole individual, including the mental, emotional, behavioral and social person;
- Responding to each individual with transparency and acceptance while practicing ethical communication; and
- Empowering all survivors with self-determination that leads to healing.

⁵ Deaf is an umbrella term that includes all identities with hearing loss, including but not limited to D/deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, Deaf Disabled, late deafened.

Deaf RISE is committed to bridging gaps and improving lives by inspiring hope, eliminating oppression and isolation, and creating safety through ongoing collaboration.

VALUES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The collaboration's values and core beliefs will guide our decision-making and effort to create an empathetic and empowering environment for Deaf survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.

Values

Accessibility: We believe that Deaf survivors should not face physical, attitudinal, communication or cultural barriers when seeking services. We strive to eliminate all oppression including audism.

Acknowledge historic oppression: We recognize and acknowledge how institutional systems are marginalizing and oppressing and seek to understand the construction and impact of these systems on Deaf survivors.

Collaboration: We believe that working in collaboration will result in more creative, effective and sustainable change. We are committed to actively working together, reflecting a shared understanding of our work, authority, responsibility and resources.

Confidentiality: We support an individual's right to manage and disclose personal information while informing clients that any disclosure of harm to self or harm to others will be reported in accordance with the state law. We also support the privacy of any information shared from collaboration team members, such as personal information, agency policies, etc.

Consent: We value an individual's right to informed consent and support each survivor in understanding their choices and their potential impacts as part of their decision-making process.

Culturally humble & responsive: We value diversity and are committed to providing services with cultural humility. We also strive to be culturally responsive to the actual and unique need(s) of each Deaf survivor.

Empowering choices & options: We stand for an environment where individuals can make decisions and move forward with their lives free from bias, coercion and fear. We strive to empower survivors to make informed decisions that they believe best meet their needs.

Ethical communication: The practice of ethical communication maximizes opportunities for open and direct interaction while minimizing the potential for conflict. Through ethical interactions that impart respect and empathy, we create a positive, well-functioning environment built on strong relationships and an openness to different perspectives.

Inclusion: We believe that through including the voices of those we serve, there will be active engagement and participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of services to Deaf survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.

Intersectionality: We recognize and acknowledge the overlapping and intersecting social identities, including identities related to systems of oppression. We strive to support the whole individual, including the mental, emotional, behavioral and social person.

Ongoing education: We value skilled staff throughout each partner agency who can provide quality trauma-informed and culturally-responsive services to Deaf survivors. We believe it is vital for staff to obtain ongoing training and continuing education to remain current with best practices that are unique to the needs of Deaf survivors.

Safety: All individuals have the right to be free from emotional and physical harm and enjoy relationships based on equality and trust. We promote the empowerment of individuals to identify, assess and respond to any risk in their relationships.

Seek to accommodate any language modality: We believe that individuals have the right to choose the mode of communication that best meets their needs. We believe that open, honest and non-judgmental communication is a vital component of our work.

Social Justice: We believe in the dignity of all human beings and the principles of human rights and equity. We are committed to working toward social justice through this collaboration by creating systems that will deliver fully accessible, culturally-responsive, appropriate and safe services for Deaf survivors.

Survivor equals expert: We believe in a survivor-centered approach meaning that the survivor's rights and needs are first and foremost. This approach helps to

promote recovery and the ability to identify and express needs and wishes, as well as to reinforce their capacity to make decisions.

Sustainable change: We are committed to recommending and implementing changes that will be maintained long-term. Long-lasting and sustainable transformation of organizational practice is critical to the achievement of our vision and mission statements.

Trauma-informed care: We promote the principles of trauma-informed care centered on the understanding of trauma and its impact on individuals when providing services in order to minimize the possibility of re-victimization.

Acknowledgements

These acknowledgements will guide our decision-making and efforts to create sustainable organizational change that maximizes accessibility and safety for Deaf survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.

1. We acknowledge that survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence represent all backgrounds and may be of any age, race, ethnicity, communication difference, socioeconomic status, sexual identity, gender identity, or ability.
2. We acknowledge that there are various identities with hearing loss from those with minimal hearing loss to profoundly culturally deaf. We also acknowledge that hearing loss may be caused as a result of abuse.
3. We acknowledge that the Deaf community has generally been underrepresented in Oklahoma historically in services provided by sexual assault/domestic violence agencies.
4. We acknowledge that the Deaf community has historically not had an equal voice to most hearing counterparts.
5. We acknowledge that the Deaf community is three times more likely to be victimized by an intimate partner.⁶

⁶ Deaf Hope. (2019). Retrieved from www.deaf-hope.org.

6. We acknowledge that the power and control dynamics shift and change with Deaf survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence. Abusers will:
 - Hide or damage devices used for communication
 - Refuse to use sign language and/or interpret falsely or inaccurately
 - Deny abuse tactics by saying the tactics are culturally appropriate behaviors within the Deaf community
7. We acknowledge that Deaf survivors are more likely to go to a Deaf-established organization for services than a mainstream domestic violence program.
8. We acknowledge that Deaf survivors may feel or perceive that sexual assault/domestic violence agencies and social service agencies in general may create barriers for survivors while seeking services.
9. We acknowledge the fact that certain sexual assault/domestic violence agencies may not be prepared or trained to address issues involving Deaf survivors, such as:
 - Lack of awareness and understanding of Deaf culture
 - Limited knowledge of communication needs of Deaf individuals
 - Lack of funding and community resources
 - Not fully accessible
 - Negative perceptions that may result in discrimination, exclusion and further isolation for Deaf individuals

We also acknowledge that certain Deaf-established organizations are may not be prepared or trained to address issues involving sexual and/or domestic violence.

10. We acknowledge that sexual and domestic violence is never the fault of the survivor and is a pervasive issue against human rights.
11. We acknowledge that due to communication barriers, isolation and limited access to information, the Deaf community may not know how to identify

sexual and domestic violence and may accept abusive behaviors, unaware that there are services and options available.

12. We acknowledge that success looks different for everyone.

MEMBER AGENCIES

Lead Agency: Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS)



DVIS was founded in 1976 and is the only non-profit agency in Tulsa and Creek counties providing comprehensive intervention, prevention and education service to families, children and youth, and adults affected by sexual, domestic and dating violence, stalking and adult human sex trafficking.

Their mission is to rebuild lives affected by domestic violence and sexual assault through advocacy, shelter, counseling and education. Their vision is to promote a safer community by fostering social change, ending domestic and sexual violence healing survivors, and saving lives. Their services include outpatient counseling to adults and children; an emergency shelter with 80 beds; transitional housing with 20 apartments; a crisis hotline and crisis intervention; hospital advocacy for victims of rape; legal and court advocacy; and education and training for both adults and teens. They are also certified to provide services to adult victims of sex trafficking.

Partner Agency: TSHA, Inc. (TSHA)



TSHA was founded in 1953 as the Oklahoma Hearing Society and changed its name to TSHA to reduce any limits the name created. TSHA is

the only agency in Oklahoma providing comprehensive services to those with hearing loss. TSHA's population includes those with minimal hearing loss to profoundly culturally deaf. Their mission is to bridge gaps to improve the quality of life of those affected by hearing loss. TSHA provides educational and social programs, outreach, and interpretation through its three programs: Deaf Services, Interpreter Services and Community Resources.

COMMITMENT & CONTRIBUTIONS

Deaf RISE is dedicated to promoting sustainable improvements within each respective agency for our Deaf survivors. Each member agency in this collaboration will contribute their knowledge and expertise for this work. Our intentions as a collaboration is highlighted to ensure a clear understanding of our commitments within our collaboration team and our organizations. The shared passion and commitment of working collaboratively will greatly enhance the project.

As a Collaboration, we commit to:

- Uphold the vision, values, communication plans and other operations of the collaboration as outlined in the collaboration charter
- Engage in organizational capacity through cross-training, sharing organizational resources and regular meetings
- Review, provide feedback and approve deliverables in a timely manner as communicated by the project coordinator
- On an ongoing basis, examine our own privileges and biases regarding any form of oppression, including audism, ableism, sexism, racism, heterosexism, etc., which impact Deaf survivors.
- Act as agents of change within our organizations
- Keep a collaborative and engaged spirit alive by:
 - Being willing to engage in and trust the process
 - Actively sharing ideas and suggestions, and providing input
 - Being open-minded, encouraging and supporting each other in the process and work
 - Taking risks to be honest and open with each other
 - Communicating in a timely manner as conveyed by the project coordinator.

Each member agency commits to:

- Follow the guidelines of the MOU
- Provide at least two representatives from each organization to serve on the collaboration team at all times
- Attend OVW/Vera trainings, conferences, site visits, webinars and any required activity as advised by OVW
- Engage in regular technical assistance, as required by OVW, as a collaboration or individually when needed

- Attend collaboration meetings regularly throughout the grant period, as scheduled by the project coordinator
- Participate in all phases of the project including collaboration building and charter development; planning and participation in the needs assessment; development of the needs assessment report; development of a strategic plan; and the resulting implementation activities
- Be responsive to feedback requests from the collaboration and/or the project coordinator in a timely fashion as communicated by the project coordinator
- Meet due dates for internal work plan and scheduling as provided by the project coordinator
- Develop and implement new policies and procedures resulting in sustainable change and maximizing accessibility and safety for Deaf survivors of sexual violence and/or domestic violence.

DVIS commits to:

- Act as the lead agency for the OVW Disability grant and provide overall project management
- Serve as the fiscal agent for the project
- Employ and supervise, and if necessary, terminate, the Project Coordinator
- Complete semi-annual progress reports via the project coordinator
- Identify and engage survivors of sexual and domestic violence, professionals, staff, leadership and board of DVIS to participate in the Needs Assessment
- Provide knowledge, expertise and services regarding sexual and domestic violence to inform the project on an ongoing basis.

TSHA commits to:

- Act as a partner agency and assist in the overall project management as communicated by the Project Coordinator
- Provide input into the employment and/or termination of the Project Coordinator
- Employ an Advocate/Educator to work with Deaf survivors
- Identify and engage Deaf individuals, professionals, staff, leadership and board of TSHA to participate in the Needs Assessment
- Provide knowledge, expertise and services regarding Deaf individuals and Deaf Culture to inform the project on an ongoing basis.

The Project Coordinator commits to:

- Act as the primary contact for OVW and Vera Institute of Justice, OVW's technical assistance provider on the Disability Grant Program
- Plan and facilitate meetings including but not limited to creating agendas, reserving meeting locations, and booking interpreters
- Create a work plan and due dates for project activities
- Draft deliverables, incorporate input and feedback from collaboration team members and propose changes to deliverables
- Provide timely communication via minutes, e-mail and other modes of communication identified by the collaboration
- Create a safe space conducive to honest, open and equitable communication
- Maintain relationships with and between each member agency and build a strong collaborative environment
- Engage in ongoing, regular technical assistance meeting with Vera, as required by OVW
- Attend the project director monthly calls, as scheduled by Vera
- Engage with the project director listserv
- Conduct the bi-annual Performance Indicators, as required by OVW
- Draft the semi-annual grant reports, as required by OVW.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Deaf RISE recognizes that effective communication is absolutely critical to building and maintaining the collaboration. Communication must be consistent in promoting the vision, mission and values in order to maximize credibility and community support. We will create an atmosphere that encourages ethical communication and results in authentic feedback, inclusiveness and respect for all perspectives.

Ethical communication⁷ is a practice for everyday encounters that is direct and kind, increases accountability among the collaboration team members, and brings more integrity to the collaboration. It also provides a professional standard by which to measure interactions with others. The principles for ethical communication include:

- Looking at your own “agenda” within the group or interaction
- Considering the consequences of being unethical
- Being honest about your own individual responsibility
- Acknowledging the various levels of power and that the group itself carries responsibility
- Being part of the solution
- Being proactive

A checklist to ensure ethical communication is being practiced can be found in Appendix A.

Clear guidelines for practicing ethical communication with one another, our agencies, outside parties, and the media is key to building and maintaining a successful collaboration. Deaf RISE has agreed to the following communication setup:

Internal Communication

Deaf RISE agrees that internal communication will include the entire scope of programming and staff within each agency including the collaboration.

⁷ SPAN (2019). “Code of Ethics.” Retrieved from www.safehousealliance.org.

Meetings – Deaf RISE agrees to meet face-to-face on a weekly basis for at least two (2) hours each meeting. Meeting times and frequency will be adjusted as needed. The project coordinator will create an agenda for each meeting with input from everyone. The agenda will be sent out 24 hours prior to the meeting, along with any materials the collaboration team members are expected to review. Minutes from each meeting will be distributed within two (2) business days.

The project coordinator and at least two representatives from each organization must be present at each scheduled meeting. If a majority of members cannot attend, the meeting will be rescheduled within the same week, if possible.

Use of interpreters – The project coordinator is responsible for securing interpretation services for each meeting. The collaboration team members will be expected not to cross-talk during the meetings to allow the interpreters the opportunity to receive and relay accurate information. Each member is encouraged to raise their hand when they are wanting to speak for visual purposes.

Primary form of communication – Communication between meetings will be conducted by email or OneDrive. This method of communication should not be used to make significant decisions, but instead be used to share updates, such as meeting times and locations, or make edits to documents. All members are expected to communicate in a timely manner as conveyed by the project coordinator.

OneDrive – OneDrive, a document sharing tool available online through Microsoft, will be utilized for the purpose of sharing and storing all of our documents where collaboration team members can edit and provide quick questions and comments. Additionally, a calendar will be maintained with dates of scheduled meetings, including collaboration meetings, trainings, webinars, site visits, and conferences. OneDrive also includes a messaging feature allowing for a more efficient and quicker method of communication when necessary.

Organizational communication – Each member agency is responsible for updating their respective organization on the progress of the collaboration activities. Additionally, each member agency is also responsible for updating the collaboration on any matter or subject that could impact the collaboration work.

Each organization agrees to communicate updates to their staff, executive team and board members on a regular basis to ensure continued buy-in.

The project coordinator will write monthly progress reports of project activities and status of deliverables that can be shared internally with staff, the executive team and the Board of Directors at both DVIS and TSHA.

Confidentiality – Collaboration team members are likely to share personal experiences or detailed agency information such as policies, procedures, budget information and specific organizational concerns. Such information is expected to remain confidential. No personal information shared will be included in the meeting minutes. Collaboration team members will follow the guidelines outlined in "Confidentiality Agreements."⁸

External Communication

All external communication regarding Deaf RISE that takes place outside the collaboration or its member agencies will be considered external communication, such as individuals, stakeholders and organizations outside of DVIS and TSHA who may be impacted by or who can influence the project's work. In addition, requests from the media may occur regarding collaboration activities.

Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) – Vera is the designated technical assistance provider for the Disability Grant Program awarded through the Department of Justice, the Office on Violence Against Women. The Deaf RISE project coordinator is the appointed contact person for both incoming and outgoing communication with Vera. The project coordinator will meet with the Vera Technical Assistance Provider at least twice a month via Zoom to review project activities and receive feedback and guidance. The project coordinator will also participate in conference calls with Vera and other project coordinators and is responsible for disseminating any information regarding the grant to the collaboration team members.

Communication with Vera will include regularly scheduled Zoom meetings, submitting deliverables for review and feedback, and requests for technical assistance, conflict resolution, and site visits.

⁸ Confidentiality Agreements, Collaboration Charter, page 28.

Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) – OVW is a program under the Department of Justice that provides funding for the Disability Grant Program. Communication with OVW from the Deaf RISE project coordinator will include copies to the DVIS CEO and the Chief DEI Officer, unless otherwise designated, for both incoming and outgoing communication with OVW. DVIS is the fiscal agent and therefore the Chief Financial Officer and Grants Manager will communicate with OVW directly regarding budgetary and other fiscal matters.

Communication with OVW will include sending documents and products for final approval, budget modifications and updates, Grant Adjustment Notifications (GAN), quarterly and semi-annual progress reports, and programmatic changes to the collaboration (staffing, partnership, direction, etc.).

Community Stakeholders – Community members and other relevant organizations outside the Deaf RISE collaboration may express interest in the activities of the project but will remain outside the scope of the grant activities. They will be referred to as community stakeholders. A communication plan that allows for flexibility and ensures coordinated, consistent and accurate information will be used when communicating with community stakeholders regarding project activities.

- Any collaboration team member can talk about Deaf RISE with community stakeholders but must use the formal or informal Talking Points (Appendix B) developed by the collaboration accordingly.
- If information is requested that is outside the scope of the Talking Points, the question/request should be referred to Deaf RISE's project coordinator. The project coordinator, with input from the collaboration team members, may then determine the most appropriate person to address specific questions or requests regarding project activities as they occur.

Media - All requests from the media regarding Deaf RISE will be communicated to all member agencies, and specifically the executive director and communications director of each agency. Coordination between DVIS, TSHA and their communications directors will take place to determine the most appropriate person to address specific questions or requests as they occur and prepare for and complete the interview(s).

DECISION-MAKING PROTOCOL

Deaf RISE values the knowledge and opinions of the individuals and organizations within the collaboration and recognizes that decision-making authority and process will vary depending on the nature of the discussed matter. Therefore, the collaboration team members have agreed on a consensus plus one⁹ decision-making protocol when making decisions.

The use of the consensus plus one decision-making model embraces and respects the fact that each collaboration team member brings unique and valuable experiences, knowledge and opinions to all discussions, but also does not allow for any one member to block a decision because of their disagreement. The goal would be to reach full consensus; however, if a decision is taking too long to be made, the consensus plus one model will be applied.

A gradient scale will be utilized to gauge the level of consensus:

- 1 – I fully support this decision
- 2 – I have some reservations but I am okay with this decision
- 3 – I disagree with this decision but I do not choose to block it
- 4 – I fully disagree with this decision

If all responses from the collaboration team members are 1, 2, or 3, a consensus has been reached. If one member is a 4, consensus still has been reached because of the consensus plus one model. If two or more members are a 4, then the decision will be re-visited for further discussion.

Decision-making Authority

Decision-making authority will depend on the scope of the project. This section will be a working section and will be revised as the project progresses.

Currently, while in the planning stage, decision-making authority will be shared by the project coordinator, the Lead Agency, the Partner Agency, collaboration team members, and the Executive team and Board of Directors of each organization.

⁹ Seeds for Change (2019). "Consensus Decision Making." Retrieved from <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/>.

The **Project Coordinator** is given authority to:

Manage the day-to-day operations of the project and is in charge of organizing and coordinating all activities associated with the collaboration, such as planning and facilitating collaboration meetings, initiating contact with Vera and OVW with copies to the DVIS CEO and Chief DEI Officer, drafting deliverables and submitting deliverables to Vera and OVW after approval by collaboration team members.

Additionally, the project coordinator will secure interpreters for meetings, set the deadlines and due dates for the collaboration work, and decide when to involve Vera and/or OVW in collaboration meetings.

The **Lead Agency**, DVIS, has the authority to:

Manage the budget and request budget modifications if needed and employ, supervise, and terminate if necessary, the project coordinator with input from collaboration team members on performance evaluations, concerns and decisions on hiring.

Additionally, DVIS has authority to seek policy changes internally, control communications with their Board of Directors as necessary, provide input towards deliverables and approve final deliverables before submission to OVW.

The **Partner Agency**, TSHA, has the authority to:

Seek policy changes internally, control communications with their Board of Directors, provide input towards the employment and termination of the project coordinator, provide input towards deliverables and approve final deliverables before submission to OVW.

The **Collaboration team members** collectively have the authority to:

Assist in the drafting of all deliverables, as well as provide input on needs that should be addressed by the collaboration. Each member of the team is

able to provide their professional expertise on the topic or issue being considered.

Executive Team & Board of Directors – The collaboration recognizes that some decisions or ideas will need to be presented to each individual agency’s leadership for review. Any decisions regarding policies, procedures, public statements, or the utilization of agency resources must be reviewed by respective organization’s process.

Additionally, the executive team and Board of Directors at each agency have their customary authority to approve budgets, affect policy changes, and weigh-in during strategic planning initiatives.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PLAN

Conflict Resolution Philosophy

Deaf RISE recognizes that we each bring our own unique perspectives, opinions and voices to the table as strengths for our collaboration, agencies and community. These diverse perspectives may sometimes lead to differences of opinion and conflict within the collaboration or between collaboration team members. We believe that when conflict is acknowledged and handled in a respectful and positive way, it can generate opportunities for growth of the collaboration.

Our collaboration agrees to approach conflict resolution with an attitude of trusting in the positive intent and goodwill of everyone in the collaboration. When working towards the resolution of conflict, our collaboration agrees to follow these guidelines:

- Respect the individuals involved
- Practice ethical communication by being direct and kind¹⁰
- Directly acknowledge and address the conflict with the involved parties
- Listen and learn about the other party's perspective and the context of their thoughts and decisions
- Focus on the facts and impacts

Furthermore, Deaf RISE also recognizes that it is okay to disagree, and that agreement is not always required in order to reach a resolution. If the collaboration is not able to come to an agreement on an issue, they will work to find common ground to help move the collaboration team towards resolution. If common ground is not achievable, DVIS will consult grant guidelines and Vera for direction and will commit to a resolution consistent with such guidelines and/or direction.

Framework for Addressing Conflict

Conflicts that Deaf RISE may encounter include personal conflict and/or organizational conflict, such as personality differences, lack of understanding, uncompleted tasks by collaboration team members or member agencies, and/or

¹⁰ Communication Plan, Collaboration Charter, page 17.

disagreement in philosophical strategy or approach. Therefore, Deaf RISE has agreed on the following mechanism to resolve any conflict or dispute within the course of the project.

This 3-Step strengths-based process is designed to facilitate challenging conversations. It is adaptable and can be used in virtually any situation, translating the core principles of healthy and ethical communication into interactions threatened by escalating conflict. Steps One and Two will be done internally through self-reflection. Step Three will be done face-to-face with the person(s) whom one has conflict with.

3-Step Process

Step One: Self, other, context

- Self – How am I impacted by the behavior? What ways will I be safest both physically and emotionally? Am I avoiding intervening because it's uncomfortable?
- Other – Are they likely to be receptive? Where are they coming from? What are their identities in relation to this comment? Who are they? What is their power? What is my relationship to them?
- Context – What is my goal? Do I have power in this space? What access do I have to this person after today?

Step Two: Approach

- Specifically decide – Is the best response in the moment or as follow up? Is the response in front of people or one-on-one? What is the goal of your response – to educate, change behavior, etc.?
- Options – Say something in the moment, talk to the individual at a later time, bring it up to the group at a later time, or bring it up to someone who has more of a relationship with that person. This should be for gaining guidance and not for gossip or derailing a process or disrupting relationships.

Step Three: Tactics

VCR Model¹¹ for giving Feedback

- VALIDATE the person's feelings and experiences
- CHALLENGE the statement in kindness, share how it impacted you personally or what is problematic about the statement
- REQUEST change with specific details

CLA(I)M Model¹² for receiving Feedback

- C – CENTER yourself
- L – Actively LISTEN from their perspective
- A – ACKNOWLEDGE and APOLOGIZE
- (I) – INQUIRE how to repair; be prepared to accept that the person might not be ready to allow you to repair
- M – MOVE forward

If there are conflicts between individual team members, the collaboration team members agree to make an effort to reach out and resolve the conflict with whom they are experiencing the conflict before the next meeting.

If there are conflicts within the collaboration between DVIS and TSHA, collaboration team members agree to include resolution on the next agenda and address the conflict(s) at the next collaboration meeting. If necessary, the DVIS CEO will be invited to moderate the meeting since she is a neutral party and not involved in the day-to-day operations of the collaboration.

If a conflict cannot be managed by following this process, the collaboration may consult with Vera for technical assistance, additional input and/or mediation. If further support is needed, then OVW will be sought for guidance.

The collaboration has agreed that any matters involving conflict will not be addressed through email, over the phone, or other forms of communication other than face-to-face. Safer and accountable spaces are high priority in the work of this

¹¹ Hardy, K. (2017). Tips and Tools for Talking about Race: The VCR and PAST Models. *Wayside Youth & Family Supper Network's Training Institute*.

¹² Lukayo (2018). "Workshop Wednesday: Calling out and Calling in." Retrieved from www.lukayo.com.

collaboration. Difficult conversations allow for building trust and cohesiveness on our team.

In order to retain the integrity of the collaboration, Deaf RISE commits to resolve any conflict as quickly as possible and move forward with the project.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS

In order to identify, create and implement needed, sustainable organizational change, the work of the collaboration is dependent on the sharing of sensitive information. In sharing such information, Deaf RISE values the safety and dignity of clients and respects the confidentiality policies of all member agencies. However, there may be limitations to confidentiality due to State laws regarding mandatory reporting.

Regarding the people we serve

Deaf RISE does not currently provide direct services to Deaf survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence. However, collaboration team members may periodically share information pertaining to experiences with Deaf survivors in general. Information directly related to any individual will be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the purpose for which it is shared and will not be sufficient to identify the person. The names of individuals or any identifying information will not be shared during meetings.

Regarding our organizations

Collaboration team members of Deaf RISE understand that to create sustainable organizational change within and between all member agencies, honest dialogue about our organizations and the work we do is necessary. This includes acknowledging both the strengths and challenges that both DVIS and TSHA have regarding responding to and providing services to Deaf survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence. Such information will be held in the strictest of confidence and will not be shared outside of the collaboration. Additionally, any information disclosed about each agency's policies and procedures will be kept confidential and not shared outside of the collaboration.

Regarding personal information shared by the collaboration team

The collaboration team of Deaf RISE understands we are likely to share personal experiences during collaboration meetings. Such information is expected to remain confidential and no personal information shared will be included in the meeting minutes.

Needs assessment and data protection

Each participant in the needs assessment will be fully informed of confidentiality and mandatory reporting requirements. Furthermore, each participant will also be informed of how data will be collected, retained and used by Deaf RISE. Data collected from needs assessment interviews, focus groups or surveys will contain no personal identifying information, nor will data be linked in any way back to the participant.

MANDATORY REPORTING

Under the “Protective Services for Vulnerable Adults Act” (OK Stat § 43A-10-104), any person having reasonable cause to believe that a vulnerable adult is suffering from abuse, neglect or exploitation shall make a report as soon as the person is aware of the situation to: (1) the Department of Human Services; or (2) the municipal police department or sheriff’s office in the county in which the suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation occurred.

OK Stat § 43A-10-103 defines “vulnerable adult” as an individual who is incapacitated or who, because of physical or mental disability, including persons with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias, incapacity, or other disability, is substantially impaired in the ability to provide adequately for the care or custody of self, or is unable to manage their property and financial affairs effectively, or to meet essential requirements for mental or physical health or safety, or to protect self from abuse, verbal abuse, neglect or exploitation without assistance from others.

Furthermore, an “incapacitated person” as defined by OK Stat § 43A-10-103 is:

- A. Any person eighteen (18) years of age or older:
 - (1) who is impaired by reason of mental or physical illness or disability, dementia or related disease, mental retardation, developmental disability or other cause, and
 - (2) whose ability to receive and evaluate information effectively or to make and to communicate responsible decisions is impaired to such an extent that such person lacks the capacity to manage their financial resources or to meet essential requirements for their mental or physical health or safety without assistance from others, or
- B. A person for whom a guardian, limited guardian, or conservator has been appointed pursuant to the Oklahoma Guardianship and Conservatorship Act

After reviewing the Oklahoma statutes, it is apparent that individuals that are Deaf with no additional disabilities are not covered under the “Protective Services for Vulnerable Adults Act.” The collaboration team members of Deaf RISE understand that being Deaf alone does not make someone susceptible to any mandatory reporting laws in the state of Oklahoma. Therefore, we will only make a report if

the individual meets the Oklahoma statute. It is also recommended that Deaf RISE collaboration team members brainstorm with others within their own organization before making a report.

Mandated Reporters

Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a vulnerable adult is suffering from abuse, neglect or exploitation shall make a report as soon as the person is aware of the situation.

Additionally, OK Stat § 43A-10-104 constitutes that persons required to make reports shall include, but not be limited to: (1) Physicians; (2) Operators of emergency response vehicles and other medical professionals; (3) Social workers and mental health professionals; (4) Law enforcement officials; (5) Staff of domestic violence programs; and (6) Long-term care facility personnel.

The collaboration team members of Deaf RISE acknowledge that all team members are mandated reporters under Oklahoma law, “Protective Services for Vulnerable Adults Act.” We will be mindful of stereotypes regarding the Deaf community such as the assumption that if an individual is Deaf they are intellectually delayed or are incapable of making responsible and informed decisions on their own. Only if someone meets the definition of a vulnerable adult, otherwise unforeseen at this point, will a mandatory report ever be contemplated.

It will be posted in public spaces and counselor and advocate offices that Deaf RISE are mandatory reporters under state law.

Duty to Warn

OK Stat § 59-1376.3 constitutes that licensed psychologists shall disclose information if: a) the client presents a clear and present danger to self; b) the client has communicated to the psychologist an explicit threat to kill or inflict serious harm upon a reasonably identified person.

OK Stat § 59-1910.A constitutes that licensed professional counselors are compelled to disclose information if: (1) the client is under the age of eighteen (18)

years and was the victim or subject of a crime; (2) when failure to disclose such information presents a danger to the health of any person.

OK Stat § 59-1261.6 constitutes that the confidential relations and communications between a licensed social worker and the client are placed on the same basis as provided by law for those between an attorney and client.

Oklahoma Rules of Professional Conduct for Attorneys, Rule 1.6 states a lawyer [licensed social worker] may reveal information.....to prevent reasonably certain death or substantial bodily harm; or to prevent the client from committing a crime.

All other professions are permissive reporters. Deaf RISE currently has two Licensed Master Social Workers on the collaboration team and does not have a licensed psychologist or a licensed professional counselor. According to the Oklahoma statutes, none of the collaboration team members are required to disclose threat to self or others. However, each of us will comply with our respective agency policy when it comes to a duty to warn.

Because Deaf RISE values the privacy of clients, the collaboration has agreed to keep all information confidential, unless an individual falls under the “Protective Services for Vulnerable Act,” then we will report accordingly.

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

Every citizen of Oklahoma is a mandated reporter of child abuse and neglect. Each collaboration team member will follow their agency’s policy and procedure for reporting child abuse and neglect.

Informed Consent

Prior to discussing sexual and domestic violence with an individual, the collaboration team members will inform the guest, outsider, or survivor of any mandatory reporting requirements and potential implications for reports made on vulnerable adults and children. This communication will be done according to each individual’s own language with the proper tools and mechanisms in order to facilitate optimum communication. Proper communication will assist the individual in understanding the law and deciding whether they are comfortable with

disclosing the abuse. The same protocol will be followed during focus groups and in-person surveys.

WORK PLAN

The work plan is a guide for the activities of the collaboration team and will be revised as needed. The time frame for the grant is October 2018 – September 2021.

Complete Performance Indicators	April 2019 (while working on charter)
Collaboration Charter	April and May 2019
Approval by OVW	June 2019
Statement of Focus & Approval by OVW	June 2019
Develop Needs Assessment Plan	July & August 2019
Approval by OVW	September 2019
Complete Performance Indicators	Sept 2019 (while conducting NA)
Conduct Needs Assessment	Sept & October 2019
Develop Findings Report	November & December 2019
Approval by OVW	January 2020
Develop Strategic Plan	February & March 2020
Approval by OVW	April 2020
Implementation	May 2020-October 2021

SIGNIFICANT TERMS

Because words have different meanings to different people, our collaboration has discussed the key words we will use throughout the Deaf RISE project and have developed a shared understanding of the following words.

Accessibility: The level to which an individual has the ability to communicate, understand, and fully participate in the services of an organization.

Accommodation: Actions taken to ensure that services are responsive to a person's need(s) and allows individuals with disabilities and Deaf individuals to fully participate in activities, services, employment and education.

Agency/Organization: Refers to any of the participating collaboration entities.

Audism: Describes the mentality that to be able to hear and to speak is necessarily better and leads to a higher quality of life.

Barriers: An obstacle that prevents equal and equitable access to information and/or services, including communication or physical barriers

Collaboration: Fieldstone Alliance defines collaboration as “a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve results they are more likely to achieve together than alone.”

Collaboration team members: Representatives from DVIS and TSHA that assist in the drafting of all deliverables as well as the implementation; Also provide input on needs that should be addressed by the collaboration; Each member is able to provide their professional expertise on the topic or issue being considered.

Confidentiality: The ethical principle that the collaboration will keep client information, agency protocol and practices, and any other information shared, private unless the disclosure is required by law.

Consensus: General agreement among the members of a group or community, each party of which has an equal right and responsibility to decision-making and follow-up action.

Cultural humility: The ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is open to others in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person.

Culturally responsive: The ability to learn from and relate respectfully with people of your own culture as well as those from other cultures.

Deaf: Umbrella term that includes all identities with hearing loss, including but not limited to Deaf, deaf, hard-of-hearing, DeafBlind, Deaf Disabled, late deafened.

Deaf Culture: A set of social beliefs, behaviors, art, literary traditions, history, values and shared institutions by deafness and which use sign languages as the main means of communication.

Deaf RISE: A collaboration team comprised of DVIS and TSHA.

Deliverables: A series of documents that provides direction to the planning, development and implementation phases including a collaboration charter, focus memo, needs assessments, findings report and strategic plan.

Domestic Violence: Pattern of behavior(s) used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner that can include physical and sexual violence, emotional or psychological abuse and economic deprivation.

Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS): Agency located in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that serves survivors of sexual, domestic and dating violence, stalking and adult human trafficking.

Empowerment: The process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.

Ethical communication: Standard principles that encourage challenging conversations while being direct and kind.

Inclusion: Involvement and empowerment, where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized.

Intersectionality: The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Language modality: Different ways, other than speech, that are used to send a message from one person to another, such as American Sign Language (ASL).

Member agencies: Agencies that are represented in Deaf RISE under a cooperative agreement with OVW.

Office on Violence Against Women (OVW): Provides federal leadership in developing the national capacity to reduce violence against women and administer justice for and strengthen services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Project Coordinator: Serves as a neutral facilitator for Deaf RISE and coordinates the day-to-day operations as well as works to identify best practices within the collaboration's area of interest.

Safety: The condition of being protected from physical, emotional, sexual, financial and psychological harm.

Self-determination: To be able to empower one's self; To be able to advocate for your own needs.

Sexual Violence: A wide spectrum of sexual acts that are non-consensual, forced or coerced, including but not limited to rape, unwanted sexual touching, verbal sexual harassment and forcing someone to watch sexual acts.

Survivor: Person who has continued to live, prosper or remain functional after a traumatic event such as sexual and/or domestic violence.

Sustainable organizational change: A shift in the culture of a system or organization and the way they make and act on decisions about priorities, policies, allocation of resources and service delivery in order to maintain an ecological balance.

Technical assistance: Provides advice, assistance and resources to systems, agencies and individuals in order to build capacity for services to survivors with disabilities or Deaf survivors.

Trauma-informed care: A set of principles and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing and responding to the effects of all types of trauma while treating the whole individual, including the mental, emotional, behavioral and social person.

TSHA: Statewide agency in Oklahoma that serves those with minimal hearing loss to profoundly culturally Deaf through educational and social programs, outreach, and interpretation.

Vera Institute of Justice (Vera): Technical assistance provider that addresses the needs of people with disabilities and Deaf people who have become victims of crime(s), specializing in sexual violence, disability, domestic violence, non-profit management and research.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	Agency	Role	Reason for Contact
Molly Bryant, LMSW mbryant@dvis.org 918.508.2744	DVIS	Underserved Outreach Advocate	Collaboration team member
Diana Emerson demerson@tsha.cc 918.832.8742	TSHA	Program Director	Collaboration team member
Joey Mechelle Farqué jfarque@tsha.cc 918.832.8742	TSHA	Executive Director	Primary contact person for Partner Agency
Katelyn Journey, LMSW kjourney@dvis.org 918.212.4074	DVIS	Project Coordinator	Primary contact person for Deaf RISE
Taryn Norman, PhD tnorman@dvis.org 98.508.2713	DVIS	Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer	Primary contact person for Lead Agency
Reneé Sites rsites@tsha.cc 918.932.2022	TSHA	Deaf Services Manager	Collaboration team member

Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS)

3124 E Apache St
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74110
918.508.2711
www.dvis.org

TSHA, Inc. (TSHA)

8740 E 11th St
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74112
918.832.8742 v/tty
www.tsha.cc

CHARTER AUTHORS

The charter may be revised by future collaboration team members to meet the evolving needs of the collaboration. The following collaboration team members are the original authors of this charter and worked diligently to build a strong relationship among the member agencies:

Molly Bryant, LMSW – DVIS Underserved Outreach Coordinator

Molly Bryant is the Underserved Outreach Advocate at DVIS focusing on survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence of the LGBTQ population, the Deaf community, immigrants, and rural residents. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from William Jewell College and a Master of Social Work from the University of Oklahoma. Molly speaks Spanish fluently and is currently learning American Sign Language. She is a proud member of the Cherokee Nation, and enjoys spending time with her partner Ryan and their two anxious dogs.

Diana Emerson – TSHA Program Director

Diana Emerson taught grade school for 6 years after earning her B.S. in Deaf Education/Elementary Education from the University of Tulsa. She then took up her position as Community Resources Manager of TSHA until recently being promoted as Program Director. Since 1988, she has educated thousands of people about hearing loss, resources, sign language and more. She obtained her Masters of Human Relations from OU Tulsa and is also a nationally certified sign language interpreter with 30 years of experience. Diana understands the importance of reaching out to those who are feeling isolated and alone and has been a leading advocate in bridging gaps in the Deaf community of Tulsa. In her spare time, she loves gardening, ballroom dancing, and old musicals.

Joey Mechelle Farqué – TSHA Executive Director

Joey Mechelle Farqué's professional background involves 25 years of leadership, marketing, communications, development and publishing experience in the nonprofit and B2B media space. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Joey currently serves as the Executive Director of TSHA. As a result of an acoustic neuroma in 2011, she became profoundly, unilaterally hard of hearing, and knows first-hand many of the challenges faced by those who have experienced single-sided deafness (SSD). Joey is a Leadership Tulsa Class 28 graduate, and a leading

member of ASAE, AFP, AWC, and AMA. She also serves on two nonprofit Boards in Tulsa. Joey is recently married with a teenager at home and an adult child who is a school counselor and social justice activist. In her spare time, Joey enjoys traveling the world, winetasting, championing for reproductive and social justice, reading and creative writing.

Katelyn Journey, LMSW – DVIS Project Coordinator

Katelyn Journey holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Gallaudet University and a Master of Social Work from Texas State University. In addition, she is a licensed social worker. Prior to her joining DVIS as the Project Coordinator, she worked as a Family Advocate at Happy Hands Education Center, an early education center for children with hearing loss and communication disorders. Deaf herself, she brings a wealth of expertise on the intersectionality of deafness and other identities. Katelyn enjoys reading all kinds of books and taking long baths.

Taryn Norman, PhD – DVIS Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer

Taryn Norman is the Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer at DVIS. She also serves as the co-chair for The Tulsa Chamber's Mosaic Nonprofit group. Originally from England, Norman came to the U.S. for graduate school, teaching to pay her way through a masters and PhD in literature and feminist theory. Taryn's passion for inclusion work is motivated by her desire to ensure all survivors have equitable access to services that treat the whole person. In her spare time, she loves spending time with her family, learning American Sign Language and listening to true crime podcasts.

Reneé Sites – TSHA Deaf Services Manager

Reneé Sites is a 2015 graduate of East Central University. She has her Bachelor of Science in Counseling/Services to the Deaf. During her internship, she was hired at TSHA and is now their Deaf Services manager. In 2017, she was nominated and selected as 2018 Tulsa Woman of the Year through the YWCA and the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women. Reneé was born hard of hearing and later lost her full hearing in early adulthood. She brings her experiences and perspective as a Deaf woman to this collaboration. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, chilling in front of the TV and is also an avid OKC Thunder fan.

Additional Contributors

Carissa Hon, Chief Communications Officer
DVIS

Jeff Snodgrass, Logo Designer
DVIS Board Member

Special thanks to partner agency staff and to the community members who contributed their knowledge, creativity and insight to the Deaf RISE project.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Ethical Communication Checklist¹³

- Go inward and take responsibility for your own reactions and personal growth.
- Make a commitment to yourself, the other person and the group that you will reach resolution to the conflict. This is different than wanting to prove that you're right. You might want to discuss what "resolution" would look like for each of you.
- Go directly to the source of your concerns. This eliminates gossip, group fragmentation and putting people in the middle of a situation that has nothing to do with them.
- Use "I" statements, clear language and as many specific examples as possible. This might require taking some time to first determine what the key issues are.
- Be prepared to take the time to work through it. If resolution is not attained in the first meeting, then make a commitment to ongoing discussion.
- Allow yourself to be challenged by new ideas. Constructive criticism is ethical. Debate and disagreement can be healthy. It might not always feel comfortable, but as long as it's done in the spirit of respect, it's an opportunity for you to grow.
- Keep the goal of ethical communication in mind: resolvable conflict and unity. Reaching resolution creates power and cohesion in a group committed to social change.
- Practice! Practice! Practice!

¹³ SPAN (2019). "Code of Ethics." Retrieved from www.safehousealliance.org.

Appendix B

Formal Talking Points

1. There are two agencies involved in the collaboration: DVIS and TSHA. We have a strong commitment to working together to create sustainable change within both agencies and improve services for D/deaf and hard-of-hearing survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence. The project coordinator is Katelyn Journey. She is Deaf and is a Licensed Master Social Worker.
2. Sexual and domestic violence is a pervasive problem and the rate of violence against D/deaf and hard-of-hearing people is especially high. According to DeafHope, the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community is three times more likely to be victimized compared to the general population.
3. Deaf RISE started in October 2018. The mission of the collaboration is to create sustainable organizational change for D/deaf and hard-of-hearing survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence by providing full access to quality services that are culturally-responsive and trauma-informed.
4. There are two primary phases of the project: planning and development, and implementation. The planning and development phase lasts around one year and includes collaboration building, needs assessment and a strategic plan. The implementation phase will take about two years. The project is funded through a Disability grant from the Department of Justice, the Office on Violence Against Women.
5. We hope to bridge gaps and improve lives by inspiring hope, eliminating oppression and isolation, and creating safety through ongoing collaboration. We understand that each individual served has diverse strengths and needs, and we commit to empower and advocate for D/deaf and hard-of-hearing survivors while taking into consideration their trauma.
6. We envision a community with full access to quality, culturally-responsive and trauma-informed services without barriers for D/deaf and hard-of-hearing survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence in the Deaf RISE service area.
7. For further information regarding the collaboration, contact the project coordinator.

8. If you are D/deaf or hard-of-hearing and are in need of help, contact the crisis line and request for a sign language interpreter (if needed) for access to services.

Informal Talking Points

Collaboration partners (member agencies)

Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS) and TSHA

Vision & Mission

Deaf RISE envisions a community with full access to quality, culturally-responsive and trauma-informed services without barriers for D/deaf and hard-of-hearing survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.

The mission of the collaboration is to create and implement sustainable organizational change that maximizes accessibility and safety for D/deaf and hard-of-hearing survivors.

Project Information

Three-year initiative beginning in October 2018

Divided into two phases:

- Planning & Development Phase – lasts about a year and includes collaboration building, needs assessment and a strategic plan
- Implementation Phase – Follows the strategic plan to make needed organizational change

Funded through a Disability grant from the Department of Justice, the Office on Violence Against Women

Reasons for Deaf RISE

Sexual and domestic violence is a pervasive problem and the rate of violence against Deaf people is especially high. According to DeafHope, the Deaf community is three times more likely to be victimized compared to the general population.

Certain service providers are not prepared or trained to address issues involving D/deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, therefore member agencies must make needed changes that result in more accessible, safe and effective services.

For further information, contact the project coordinator

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