

WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM, INC. / VICTIMS ASSISTANCE SERVICES

WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

WESTCHESTER COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE DISABLED

WESTCHESTER INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER

WESTCHESTER COUNTY OFFICE FOR WOMEN

W E S T C H E S T E R S A F E



Empowerment through accessibility.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN PROPOSAL

THE WESTCHESTER SAFE ACCESS COLLABORATION IS SUPPORTED BY GRANT NO. 2012-FW-AX-K001 "EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ENHANCED SERVICES TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST AND ABUSE OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES GRANT PROGRAM" AWARDED BY THE OFFICE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

Needs Assessment Proposal

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The Westchester Safe Access Collaboration includes five Partners



Victims Assistance Services (“VAS”), a component of Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc. (“WestCOP”) is a not-for-profit comprehensive crime victim’s services program, with extensive experience in serving and advocating for victim-survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence. VAS has more than 30 years experience in providing a full range of free, compassionate and confidential services to crime victims in Westchester County, NY. WestCOP/VAS is Lead Partner and Fiscal conduit for the Westchester Safe Access Project, and serves as expert on issues involving rape and other forms of sexual violence.

Board of Directors

WESTCOP, INC Interim Chief Executive Officer: John S. Savage

VAS Director: May Krukiel, MA, MEd

***Project Manager:** Rebecka Palmer, BSW



The Westchester Independent Living Center, Inc. (“WILC”): WILC was established in 1981 and is a well-respected not-for-profit, community-based, consumer-directed advocacy and resource center agency that services people of all ages with all types of disabilities and advocates for the rights of individuals with disabilities. WILC’s mission and philosophy is to assist individuals with disabilities to become as independent as they can be and to work with our local and state-wide community to provide education, disability awareness, and advocacy for the removal of barriers.

Board of Directors

Executive Director: Joe Bravo, MBA

Coordinator of Minority Services: Tamaris Princi, LMSW



The Westchester County Office For Women (“OFW”) is dedicated to promoting the physical, emotional and financial well-being of all women. The OFW provides direct non-residential services to victims/survivors of domestic violence and oversees and administers county funding of other domestic violence and sexual assault victims service providers.

Westchester County Executive

Director: Robi Schlaff, Esq

Program Administrator Domestic Violence Systems: Thea DuBow, MS



Westchester County Office For the Disabled (“OFD”). The mission of the Office for the Disabled is to act as a clearinghouse of information for persons with disabilities in Westchester County, their families and advocates, and to advise County departments on compliance with State and Federal laws which prohibit discrimination based on disability in activities of local government. OFD is the County’s American Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator, and works to enhance community awareness of and response to the Americans with Disabilities Act and to ensure the availability of transportation services for the disabled in compliance with the ADA.

Westchester County Executive

Director: Evan Latainer, MA

Mobility Specialist/ Disability Awareness Ed Coord/Community Work Assist: Anna Masopust



Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health (“DCMH”) is responsible for the oversight, management and coordination of comprehensive services to individuals with mental illness, chemical dependencies and developmental disabilities. DCMH provides access to a wide array of person-centered, recovery-oriented services.

Westchester County Executive

Acting Commissioner: Dr. Sherlita Amler, MD

Program Director, Community Support Services: Annette Peters-Ruvolo, LCSW

Program Administrator (MH Courts): Michelle Hart, MA

Introduction:

Project Westchester Safe Access (WSA) is made possible by the Educational and Technical Assistance Grant to End Violence against Women with Disabilities. The Westchester Safe Access Project is funded by the Office on Violence against Women (OVW) while our Technical Assistance is provided by the Vera Institute of Justice. OVW and Vera are working in conjunction with Westchester Safe Access to make our services accessible for persons with disabilities and d/Deaf persons who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence. In order for our collaboration to get a clearer understanding of current practices and finding out best practices from survivors and people with disabilities, WSA will conduct a Needs Assessment, which will include survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence and people with disabilities as well as front line staff/volunteers/SAFE personnel and leadership from each partner organization. The Needs Assessment will generate the information needed to improve Westchester Safe Access' outcomes and the data will guide our work when developing our Strategic Plan.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Westchester Safe Access Needs Assessment is to gather information on WestCOP/Victims Assistance Services, Westchester Independent Living Center, and Office for Women, Office for the Disabled, and Department of Community Mental Health policies and procedures, as well as information from persons with disabilities and D/deaf people who experience sexual and/or domestic violence. Westchester Safe Access will identify opportunities for change at each partner agency with the assistance of our Needs Assessment and from that information gathered we will develop our distinctive strategic plan and implement it.

Needs Assessment Goals:

The Westchester Safe Access Needs Assessment goals are to:

- Evaluate skills, awareness, and comfort levels of staff at every level of all organizations to respond appropriately and effectively to people with disabilities who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence.
- Identify current policies, procedures and gaps at all organizations that address how to identify, respond to and support people with disabilities who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence.
- Identify what works and what can be improved in our organizations to ensure accessible, safe, culturally appropriate and welcoming environments as described by survivors with disabilities.
- Identify opportunities for improvement at all agencies, as well as barriers which may prevent or restrict change.
- Identify what current relationships exist between partners (both formal and informal), which would support development of services – and what barriers exist.

Vision:

“We envision a Westchester County where community members with disabilities are free from all violence; until that happens; we seek to create a safe, accessible, culturally competent and compassionate response to sexual and/or domestic violence.”

Mission:

To make the systemic changes necessary so that persons with disabilities who survive sexual and/or domestic violence have access to the services they need. We will accomplish that system change through:

- Building an effective collaboration
- Engaging in cross trainings, so that partnering agencies fully share their knowledge and experiences
- Increasing staff and volunteer skills, confidence and comfort engaging persons at the intersection of sexual and/or domestic violence and disability
- Identifying barriers, needs, strengths and resources in the community
- Changing our agencies’ internal policies & procedures in response to the needs assessment
- Creating environments where the right to self determination is honored

Methodology Overview

Westchester Safe Access will collect information from our individual agencies’ Executives, middle management, direct staff, survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence and people with disabilities through focus groups and interviews. Our objective is to understand people’s values, judgments, opinions, and observations based on personal perceptions and experiences interacting and receiving services with the collaboration’s agencies.

The Collaboration believes that focus groups are the most suitable options to collect information; however, will offer individual interviews for those persons who cannot or do not wish to participate in a focus group. Furthermore, we will develop a survey for the SAFE nurses and WILC Board of Directors as it may be challenging to get those participants to one meeting. A breakdown of how many groups we anticipate and how many members we are looking for to recruit for our needs assessment can be found in Appendix I.

Target Population

Westchester Safe Access plans to conduct focus groups of survivors of sexual assault/domestic violence, persons with disabilities, and members of partner agencies Volunteers/Front Line Staff/Middle Management/Executives/Board Members/SAFEs according to the breakdown described in Appendix I.

The most effective approach for our participants to engage in our focus groups is to limit the possibility of causing changes to schedules. It is our belief that in order for us to provide them with an environment that is safe; we will utilize groups that are already occurring. Therefore, WestCOP/Victims Assistance Services (WestCOP/VAS), Westchester Independent Living Center (WILC), and Office for Women (OFW) are planning to utilize already existing support groups within their respective agencies;

WestCOP/VAS – Adult Survivor of Sexual Abuse

OFW – Latina Domestic Violence Support Group

WILC – Persons with Disabilities Support Group

Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH) does not currently have a support group and therefore will recruit for individual participants and form a focus group depending on the outcome of the outreach and recruitment. DCMH is mandated to report disclosure of abuse at a facility under NYS Protection of People with Special Needs Act and in order to minimize the possibility of reporting, partners that do *not* fall under this mandate will conduct their focus group. Due to the makeup of Office for the Disabled and the challenges of recruiting participants, we have decided not to include consumers from this partner. The Collaboration feels that their population intersects with our other disability organizations and therefore the information will be captured there.

Staff Focus Groups and Executive interviews will be conducted by partners not from that particular organization. The Collaboration believes that by doing it this way, we will foster a greater chance of truthful feedback from employees. In addition, the Program Manager will not participate in the Focus Groups at Victims Assistance Services as we believe that it may create a less candid environment for staff to be honest and open.

Volunteers at WestCOP/VAS will be recruited at an already scheduled volunteer and SAFE nurses meetings.

Focus Groups

Numbers

Westchester Safe Access anticipates conducting approximately 19 focus groups during our needs assessment with varying numbers in each group, depending on the intended audience. The collaboration is aiming to have a minimum of 6 people in each focus group with the understanding that there may be unforeseen barriers that can prevent the collaboration from meeting this goal.

Scheduling

Westchester Safe Access will schedule dates and times for focus groups at convenient locations for each target audience. Focus groups for agency staff will be held during normal working hours and during department/staff meetings as practicable. Westchester Safe Access will utilize existing groups for the organizations who already have groups with survivors and/or persons with disabilities. The Collaboration believes that is safer for the participants to utilize existing groups as it won't cause possible stress or alter their schedules in order to participate. The focus groups will be approximately one and a half hours long. WSA's goal is to schedule 2-3 focus groups a week, which will result in the collaboration needing 7-9 weeks to conduct the assessment.

Roles & Responsibilities

Facilitation

Westchester Safe Access partner agencies will host their individual focus groups. The Collaboration will work together to support each other in terms of providing accessible facilities and/or transportation, if the need arises. Focus groups will be approximately an hour and a half in duration. Each client/consumer focus group will include a facilitator, a support person and a note taker when possible. Staff focus groups will include a facilitator and recorder at minimum.

Facilitator

Westchester Safe Access believes that due to confidentiality and familiarity for client/consumers, that the facilitator for those groups ought to be a member of that organization that has the capacity to facilitate. Westchester Safe Access will be mindful of having leadership present at focus groups, as it may hinder information being shared freely among staff and partners. The ultimate goal of Westchester Safe Access is to provide an environment where participants feel free to share the information we are seeking.

Recorder

The recorder for our focus groups will write down brief notes of key points; such as phrases, memorable quotes, etc. that result from the focus group questions and prompts; ask for clarification immediately if a response has not been fully understood for recording purposes; maintain an accurate record of the discussions at each group; maintain the confidentiality of all written notes; contribute to

the provision of a safe and comfortable group atmosphere; and deliver the written record of each focus group to the facilitator immediately after each group.

Support Person

Westchester Safe Access will provide a support person at each client/consumer focus group session. The support person will be an advocate/therapist/counselor from the agency hosting that particular focus group. The support person's main role is to provide emotional support for participants that may need to step out of the room, need additional resources or additional services.

Recruitment

Client/Consumers

Westchester Safe Access partners will coordinate recruitment of participants for our focus groups by working with each agency's direct staff. If direct service staff is participating in the actual recruitment, they will be trained by the collaboration regarding the project and the needs assessment. The training of staff may take place in a staff meeting or in a separate meeting depending on the agency. All survivors will be recruited during individual and/or group sessions or service appointments. Safety will be considered by the recruiters to ensure that potential participants are not placed in an unsafe situation. Westchester Safe Access will offer individual interviews as an alternative to participating in a focus group.

All potential participants will complete a recruitment form (Appendix VII); the form will only be completed if a participant is interested. If a participant requires assistance with filling out the form, the recruiter will provide or arrange it. The registration form will include accommodation requests. The registration form will be forwarded to the Program Manager once completed. Focus group participants will be given options as to how they want to be contacted regarding the focus group. Westchester Safe Access will inform the participants that a 25 dollar gift card will be given as a token of appreciation for their time and participation on the day of the focus group. Recruiters will have a list of available dates and times for individual interviews. A Westchester Safe Access information sheet (Appendix III) will be available for reference during recruitment efforts.

Front Line Staff/Middle Management/ Executive Staff

Westchester Safe Access Agencies will recruit relevant departments and staff to participate in a focus group. The collaboration will recruit participants for these focus groups at their respective agencies. Potential participants will be assured that their participation is supported by the agency and that there will be no reprisals for participation or non-participation. Focus groups will be structured to ensure that no participant's direct supervisor is also participating in the group. A WSA fact sheet will be available for reference during recruitment efforts. Focus groups will be scheduled during work hours with some ideally held during a regularly scheduled meeting. Individual interviews will be offered for those who cannot or do not wish to participate in a focus group. Recruiters will have a list of available dates for individual interviews.

Volunteers/SAFE Nurses

Westchester Safe Access partners will coordinate recruitment of participants for our focus groups by working with WestCOP/VAS sexual assault Program Managers for the Volunteer/SAFE programs. The Program Managers will be trained by the collaboration which will include an overview of the Project and the Needs Assessment. We will offer individual interviews as an alternative to participating in a focus group. All potential participants will complete a registration form; the form will only be completed if a participant is interested. If a participant requires assistance with filling out the form, the recruiter will provide or arrange it. The registration form will include accommodation

requests. Focus group participants will be given options as to how they want to be contacted regarding the focus group.

Board of Directors

Westchester Independent Living Center will include their Board of Directors in our Needs Assessment. Due to limited availability the collaboration will develop an online survey that will be distributed by Executive Director at WILC. Westchester Safe Access believes that an online survey will increase the likelihood of responses and interaction between the Board of Directors and the collaboration.

Optional Interview

If during the recruitment process an agency staff, survivor, or person with disabilities requests an individual interview over participating in a focus group, Westchester Safe Access will conduct interviews utilizing the same set of questions developed for the focus groups. Though we will offer the option of an interview, the collaboration may not be able to accommodate all requests due to time lines and facilitator availability.

Interviews Requested		
WestCOP/VAS	Survivors of SA	Unknown
	Front Line Staff	Unknown
	Middle Management	Unknown
	Volunteer/SAFE	Unknown
	Director	1
OFW	Survivors of DA	Unknown
	Front Line Staff	Unknown
	Leadership	2
WILC	Persons w Disability	Unknown
	Front Line Staff	Unknown
	Middle Management	
	Executive Director/WSA Partner	2
OFD	Board of Directors	Unknown
	Persons with Disability	Unknown
	Front Line Staff	Unknown
	Director	1
DCMH	Persons w Serious MI	Unknown
	Front Line Staff	Unknown
	Middle Management	Unknown
	Executive	2

Consent

Consent refers to focus group and interview participants who allow us to utilize any and all information gained from them during this process. Westchester Safe Access will utilize passive consent during our Needs Assessment Process. Passive consent refers to participants being informed of our project, and agreeing to participate unless they specifically decline to be included in our focus group. Passive consent does not include a written consent form; rather, it assumes consent by virtue of participation in the focus group. All participants will be made aware of how information will be used in our Needs Assessment Report and how it will assist us in the development of our Strategic Plan.

Confidentiality

Westchester Safe Access understands that confidentiality is crucial in terms of working with survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence. In addition to this we recognize that the disability community is a smaller community, where a survivor can be easily identified by a service provider. Westchester Safe Access will inform all participants of their confidentiality rights prior to participating in any activities relating to WSA.

To further safeguard confidentiality, no names and/or personal identifying information will be exchanged in the recruitment process, either by way of the registration form or any verbal face-to-face discussions. This holds true for any participation in any focus groups or interviews. No personal identifying information will be revealed and no information will be specifically linked back to any particular participant.

Mandated Reporting

In New York State, mandated reports are required in the event of suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment to report the disclosure to Child Protective Services. In NYS, disclosures of child abuse, suicidal intent, and homicidal intent to a professional and/or organization in the field of mental health and social work are reportable incidents. WestCOP/Victims Assistance Services and Department of Community Mental Health are mandated reporters and have to follow the NYS mandate. Office for the Disabled, Office for Women and Westchester Independent Living Center do not fall under this mandated and therefore do not identify themselves as mandated reporters. Nevertheless, WSA recognizes that there may be partners from those agencies who hold professional licensing that requires following NYS mandated reporting law. All partners are required to break confidentiality in incidents of suicidal ideation and/or homicidal ideation.

Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH) falls under the NYS Protection of People with Special Needs Act and as such, is required to report suspected abuse or neglect of a vulnerable person receiving residential services to the NYS Justice Center. If a disclosure occurs in a DCMH focus group, DCMH will follow their internal procedures regarding reporting and the Project Manager will be notified after such report has been made.

Data Storage

Westchester Safe Access will make every effort to keep all documents and written notes containing participant information secure through the duration of this grant period. Westchester Safe Access partners will ensure that all registration forms, written documentation and any other documentation related to the Focus Groups are given to the Project Manager and secured. Only project members who are bound to our confidentiality guidelines will have access to focus group documents.

All other written documents including our collaboration charter, needs assessment plan, needs assessment report, and strategic plan will be shared with individuals and entities outside of Westchester Safe Access.

Safety Considerations

Westchester Safe Access will be mindful of the well-being of all participants in this project and is committed to not compromising anyone's safety. Contacting potential clients, confidentiality and outreach will be done face-to-face on participant's regularly scheduled counseling, advocacy and/or service appointments. No materials will be mailed or distributed to participants, which could endanger their safety. Confidentiality of all participants is crucial to Westchester Safe Access and therefore names and other identifying information will not be utilized during the Needs Assessment process. Collaboration partners (excluding WILC, OFD, and OFW) are mandated reporters and therefore have a legal obligation to report incidents of child abuse. All partners are required to break confidentiality in incidents of suicidal ideation and/or homicidal ideation. Mandatory reporting and confidentiality concerns will be emphasized on multiple levels to all participants throughout the recruitment process and on the day of the actual needs assessment to ensure that participants thoroughly understand this process. Persons not directly involved in the needs assessment process will not be allowed to participate and/or be present during the focus groups and/or interviews. Personal care aids may accompany participants to focus groups and/or interviews, but will be asked to wait in an adjacent room until needed. Personal care assistance, including interpreters, will be made available as requested during the recruitment process. Participants are free to withdraw without question at any time. Participants that withdraw will be entitled to a monetary gift regardless of whether or not they completed the needs assessment activity. If participants determine that the monetary gift will jeopardize their safety, Westchester Safe Access will work with participants to make other reasonable arrangements with the individual.

Access Considerations

Westchester Safe Access will be mindful of accessibility for all participants in this project. We will ensure that all facilities, arrangements, materials, communication, and dietary concerns are accommodated and accessible to all participants' needs. Westchester Safe Access will ensure that our meeting space is set up so that anyone can access and maneuver with ease and to have an accessible restroom within close proximity. The Westchester Safe Access recruitment form will include questions regarding needs for accommodations, including physical requirements, communication

requirements, need for a personal care aide, and dietary requirements. In addition, WSA will provide all written material in accordance with ADA guidelines. Personal care aides are welcome to accompany any participant to the site of the needs assessment, however, they will not be allowed to participate in or sit in on focus groups or interviews. WSA will arrange personal care aides to be available on site for those participants that require them. All participants will be asked to use people first language.

Appendix I

Agency	Audience	Participants
	Clients/Consumers/Participants	
WestCOP/VAS	Survivors of Sexual Assault	6-8
OFW	Survivors of Domestic Violence	6-8
WILC	Persons with Disabilities	8-10
DCMH	Persons Diagnosed with Severe Mental Illness	8-10
	Approximate Total	28-36
	Volunteers	
WestCOP/VAS	Helpline/Hospital Advocates	6-8
	SAFE Nurses	6-8
	Approximate Total	12-16
	Front Line Staff	
WestCOP/VAS	Direct Staff #1	8
WestCOP/VAS	Direct Staff #2	8
OFW	Direct Staff	6
WILC	Direct Staff	6-8
OFD	Direct Staff	6
DCMH	Direct Staff	8-9
	Approximate Total	42-45
	Middle Management/ Executive	
WestCOP/VAS	Middle Management/ Leadership	6-8
OFW	Middle Management/Leadership	1-2
WILC	Middle Management/Leadership	6-8
OFD	Leadership	1
DCMH	Leadership	3
	Approximate Total	17-22
	Board Members	
WILC	Board Members	6
	Approximate Total	6
	Est. Total Number of Focus Group Participants	130 - 141
	Estimated Total Focus Groups	19

Appendix II

PARTICIPANT SCRIPT

Welcome and thank you for agreeing to participate in our discussion! My name is _____ and I will be leading the discussion today. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experiences, knowledge, and opinions with us. We are meeting with you and with others to learn what our organizations do well and what changes they need to make to be accessible, welcoming, and safe for individuals impacted by sexual and/or domestic violence. In addition, we want to learn what you believe to be quality services and suggestions you may have for how our organizations can work together.

Please help yourself to the beverages and snacks that have been provided. We want you to be as comfortable as possible. If there is something that you need, please ask. Restrooms are located _____. We do not have a break scheduled, but feel free to take a break if you need to do so. If you have a cell phone with you, please turn it off or set it to the “silent” mode to limit distractions during the session.

Your participation in today’s group is appreciated; you will find a gift card in front of you. If you cannot take the gift card home with you today, please let us know and we will make other arrangements. You are not obligated to participate in today’s Focus Group; if you choose to stay it’s important that all of us honor the statements and opinions of other group members.

I will be asking a variety of questions to guide our discussion. _____ is here to take notes on his/her computer or on paper for us. She will only take notes about the comments that are shared; she will not identify who made the comment.

You may remember that we will *only* be discussing your experiences with community agencies and with our organizations and your suggestions for how we can improve. You are the expert in knowing your interaction with our organizations and what you need from them. We are asking you to share that information with us; you do not have to answer any questions if you don’t want to. We have a support person named _____ in another room that is available to speak with you privately, if you should need someone to talk to.

Consent/confidentiality/mandatory reporting statement will be distributed and read aloud to the participants. *Ask if there are any questions regarding consent, confidentiality, or mandatory reporting related to participation in the discussion.*

Collect the statement from the participants when all questions, if any, have been answered.

STAFF SCRIPT

Welcome and thank you for agreeing to participate in our discussion! My name is _____ and I will be leading the discussion today. We appreciate you taking the time to share your experiences, knowledge, and opinions with us. We are meeting with you and with others to learn what our organizations do well and what changes they need to make to be accessible, welcoming, and safe for individuals impacted by sexual and/or domestic violence. In addition, we want to learn what you believe to be quality services and suggestions you may have for how our organizations can work together.

Confidentiality:

Your participation in this focus group will not affect your status as an employee. Your personal identity will be kept confidential, the opinions and perspectives you share may be used in a needs assessment report that will be reviewed by the Collaboration. We highly encourage that you respect others' confidentiality, but Westchester Safe Access is not responsible for the actions of others, either inside or outside of the focus group process. Because Westchester Safe Access is not able to fully guarantee confidentiality, we encourage you not to reveal personal information that you don't wish to share with others.

We would like to ask you to refrain from using names in this process. For example: if you relate an experience that involves a colleague, survivor or consumer, please do not say that person's name when describing it.

What is shared in this focus group will stay in this focus group; please do not speak about anyone's involvement in the group as that would break their confidentiality.

Housekeeping:

Please refrain from interrupting or speaking over others. No one will be pressured to comment on every question but your participation is encouraged and appreciated. The focus group will last for approximately one hour. If you need to take a break please feel free to do so. We ask that you refrain from using your cell phones during this time. Please ensure that your phone settings are set appropriately.

I will be asking a variety of questions to guide our discussion. _____ is here to take notes on his/her computer or on paper for us. She will only take notes about the comments that are shared; she will not identify who made the comment.

Appendix III

Westchester Safe Access Information Sheet

Westchester Safe Access (WSA) is a Collaboration comprised of five different organizations in Westchester County, NY. The organizations participating in the project are:

- WestCOP.Inc/Victims Assistance Services (WestCOP/VAS) (Lead Agency)
- Westchester Independent Living Center (WILC)
- Office for Women (OFW)
- Office for the Disabled (OFD)
- Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH)

Needs Assessment Outline

Westchester Safe Access is hoping to gain insight from survivors and people with disabilities into what creates a welcoming, responsive, safe, and accessible service atmosphere based on their experiences and perspectives. Westchester Safe Access is also hoping to gain insight from employees and leadership at each partner organization on their knowledge and perspective regarding current service delivery systems at their respective agencies regarding persons with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence. Our goal is to produce a Need Assessment Report which will assist Westchester Safe Access in developing an informed strategic plan to meet the Collaboration's vision and mission. Westchester Safe Access will use the information gained from our Needs Assessment to develop our informed strategic plan to meet the Collaboration's vision and mission.

Needs Assessment Goals:

- Evaluate skills, awareness, and comfort levels of staff at every level of all organizations to respond appropriately and effectively to people with disabilities who have experienced domestic or sexual violence.
- Identify current policies, procedures and gaps at all organizations that address how to identify, respond to and support people with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence.
- Identify what works and what can be improved in our organizations to ensure accessible, safe, culturally appropriate and welcoming environments as described by survivors with disabilities.
- Identify opportunities for improvement at all agencies, as well as barriers which may prevent or restrict change.
- Identify what current relationships exist between partners (both formal and informal), which would support development of services – and what barriers exist.

Confidentiality

Participation in Westchester Safe Access Focus Groups is strictly voluntary and can end at any point. Westchester Safe Access will not use names or personal identifying information during the Needs Assessment process and as a result, we will utilize passive consent. Passive consent assumes consent by virtue of participation in the focus group.

Mandatory Reporting

Westchester Safe Access partners are mandated to report disclosure of child abuse, suicidal or homicidal intent or abuse of vulnerable persons, and will report such disclosures to appropriate state agencies.

Additional Questions: Rebecka Palmer, Westchester Safe Access Project Manager at 914-372-7380 or via email: rpalmer@westcop.org.

APPENDIX IV

Westchester Safe Access Information Sheet Westchester County Office for Women

Westchester Safe Access (WSA) is a Collaboration comprised of five different organizations in Westchester County, NY. The organizations participating in the project are:

- WestCOP.Inc/Victims Assistance Services (WestCOP/VAS) (Lead Agency)
- Westchester Independent Living Center (WILC)
- Office for Women (OFW)
- Office for the Disabled (OFD)
- Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH)

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- Identify opportunities for improvement at all agencies, as well as barriers which may prevent or restrict change.
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Mandatory Reporting

Westchester Safe Access partners are required by law to report suicidal or homicidal intent.

Additional Questions: Rebecka Palmer, Westchester Safe Access Project Manager at 914-372-7380 or via email: rpalmer@westcop.org.

APPENDIX V

INSTRUCTION SHEET

Westchester Safe Access requires all focus group team members to sign the Partner Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix V).

Facilitator/Interviewer:

Ask questions conversationally

Go slowly

Provide structure but allow participants plenty of time to answer each question

Feel free to ask follow up or clarifying questions/answers

Please have our resource list available for participants

Recorder:

Record group proceedings on the sheet provided

Remember to record which focus group you are documenting

Summarize responses to each question

Lengthy narratives are not necessary; phrases and lists are satisfactory

Support Person:

Provide support for participants

Provide referrals as needed

Crisis management

Appendix VI

Westchester Safe Access Partner Confidentiality Agreement

WESTCHESTER SAFE ACCESS

Partner Confidentiality Agreement

It is the shared policy of Westchester Safe Access to keep confidential: all communications, observations and information concerning both our collaboration and our participants.

This confidentiality agreement applies to:

- 1) All Information Shared within the Collaborative Work Group Process
- 2) Internal Partner Agency Information
- 3) Personal information shared within the Collaborative process
- 4) Information shared about identifiable Project participants, including in negotiating cross referrals and in the Needs Assessment Process

For the purposes of this Agreement, confidentiality is defined as the assurance that information shall be strictly shared, and that violations will be a breach of faith. Information shared will not be used for purposes that were not intended when the information was provided. This pertains to project communications, written or spoken information related to participants, and all Westchester Safe Access records.

Reading and signing this Agreement is required of every Westchester Safe Access Partner representative, (including any Partner agency staff participating in Westchester Safe Access work). By signing this agreement, the signer acknowledges that he/she has completely read and understands Westchester Safe Access Confidentiality policy.

Westchester Safe Access Partner

Date

Westchester Safe Access Agency Staff/Intern member Date

Westchester Safe Access Project Manager

Date

Appendix VII

Agency Recruitment form

The focus group will be held at _____ time: _____

The group will be about one and half (1.5) hours long. Focus groups will start promptly at the scheduled time, there will not be a break during this time however if you need to step outside, please feel free to do so. Your participation is supported by the agency and there will be no negative consequences to you as a result. No personal identifying information will be requested or should be shared with the group. Westchester Safe Access will make every effort to provide a safe and accommodating group environment.

Please fill out the appropriate sections below that pertain to you:

☐ Yes, I wish to participate in the Westchester Safe Access focus group

☐ Yes, I wish to participate Westchester Safe Access individual interview
please speak to your recruiter about arranging the interview

Please fill out the form in its entirety if you are participating in our focus group/interview

Please indicate the date, time and location of focus group chosen:

Accommodations request (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/>	large print	<input type="checkbox"/>	wheelchair accessible
<input type="checkbox"/>	enhance listening devices	<input type="checkbox"/>	open captioning
<input type="checkbox"/>	transportation coordination	<input type="checkbox"/>	food allergies
<input type="checkbox"/>	personal care assistance**	<input type="checkbox"/>	

* Please list food items allergic to: _____

** Personal care aid can be arranged since your own aide will not be allowed to be present in the focus group/interview

Gift Card Selection

Circle One

25\$ Target 25\$ Stop & Shop I decline

~~ We look forward to meeting with you ~~

Appendix VIII/ Debriefing (Computer) Form

Group/Individual:	
Date:	
Time:	
Location:	
Facilitator:	
Recorder:	
Support person:	
Number of participants:	

- Make Brief Notes of Key Points (phrases, sentences fragments, any memorable quotes)

memorable quotes:

Key Themes Identified:

Sense of Conflict and/or Tension:

Record Your Impressions & Reactions to the Group Discussion: (unexpected/expected)

What was new information for you? (Gap in Services/Insightful Comments)

What were the two or three most valuable things you've learned in this focus group?

Identify what went well/not so well/what can be changed to make future groups more successful:

This meeting will also be used to debrief and provide insight into what is working and what is not working, so that changes can be made if needed. Recorder will type complete notes and submit to Program Manager. Westchester Safe Access will meet to put together a final report on the focus groups, which will later be incorporated into the needs assessment report, and the strategic plan.

Form Completed By:

Date Submitted to Program Manager:

NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Appendix i

Questions for Domestic & Sexual Assault Survivors

Westcop/Victims Assistance Services

Westchester County Office for Women

1. Do you have any ideas of good places to share information about our services?

prompts

locations? visibility? content?

2. What is a good way to get information to people about our services?

Prompts

Churches, bulletins, websites, social media?

3. Think about a time when you were trying to find services; was there anything that helped make it a good experience?

Prompts

Did they make you feel welcome?

Staff, environment, knowledge, competency, atmosphere?

what was your initial/first contact like?

i.e. Phone, walk-in, internet, hotline

what was the building like?

i.e. were you able to get around the building?

were you able to get the accommodations you needed?

i.e signs, people there to assist you

Did they show you that they understood your needs? If yes/no how?

Did they ask you what went well and things that weren't going well? If yes/no?

Materials/Resources offered?

Information Readily Available or not?

Did they respect that you didn't need help in a particular area?

4. What things do agencies do that may make it difficult for survivors to get the information that they need about services that are available?

Prompts

Location? Availability for appointment? Long intakes? etc.

5. What are some things that other agencies may need to know about working with survivors of abuse?

Prompts

What types of accommodations may survivors need?

What do we need to know about how to treat survivors?

What might we need to know about meeting areas?

What do we need to know to refer survivors to other service providers?

Confidentiality?

6. Have you ever been given referrals to other agencies?

Prompts

If so, did you follow up with those referrals?

Know what happens when you get there?

Did they set it up or did you have to call?

Confidentiality?

If not, why not?

If yes, what was helpful about them?

What wasn't helpful?

Have you been referred to OFD/DCMH/WILC

7. What would you like community services providers to know about how to best support a survivor?

8. Are there questions you think I should have asked you that I didn't or final comments you would like to make?

Appendix ii

Questions for Persons with a Disability

Westchester Independent Living Center
Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health

1. Do you have any ideas of good places to share information about our services?

Prompts

locations? visibility? content?

2. What is a good way to get our information to people about our services?

Prompts

Churches, bulletins, websites, social media etc

3. Think about a time when you were trying to find services; was there anything that helped make it a good experience?

Prompts

Did they make you feel welcome?

Staff, environment, knowledge, competency, atmosphere?

what was your initial/first contact like?

i.e. Phone, walk-in, internet, hotline

what was the building like?

i.e. were you able to get around the building?

were you able to get the accommodations you needed?

i.e signs, people there to assist you

Did they show you that they understood your needs? If yes/no how?

Did they ask you what went well and things that weren't going well? If yes/no?

Materials/Resources offered?

Information Readily Available or not?

Did they respect that you didn't need help in a particular area?

4. What things do agencies do that may make it difficult for people with disabilities to get the information that they need about services that are available?

Prompts

What might make it hard for a person with a disability to get the information or get the services that they need?

What about accommodations? Accessibility? Materials in different formats?

What would help a person with a disability get the information that they need?

5. What are some things that other agencies may need to know about working with people with disabilities?

Prompts

What types of accommodations may people with disabilities need?

How can we make sure accommodations are available?

What do we need to know about how to treat people with disabilities?

What might we need to know about specific types of disabilities?

What do we need to know to refer people with disabilities to other service providers?

6. Have you ever been given referrals to other agencies?

Prompts

If so, did you follow up with those referrals?

Know what happens when you get there?

Did they set it up or did you have to call?

Confidentiality?

If not, why not?

If yes, what was helpful about them?

What wasn't helpful?

7. What would you like community services providers to know about how to best support a person with a disability?

8. Are there questions you think I should have asked you that I didn't or final comments you would like to make?

Appendix iii

Questions for Frontline Staff & VAS Volunteers

Westcop/Victims Assistance Services

Westchester County Office for Women

1. Let's talk about your experience in responding to the needs of survivors with a disability and/or mental illness?

Prompts

How did you know the person had a disability? Did you ask? Did they tell you?

What went well?

What didn't go so well?

How comfortable/uncomfortable were you?

Is your screening process adequate?

What process does VAS/OFW have to create an opportunity for a person with a disability to request accommodations?

What are the barriers, if any, this agency faces when working with women with disabilities?

Have those barriers prevented services from being delivered?

2. How do you identify whether a survivor who contacts you requires an accessibility accommodation?

Prompts

Unprompted Disclosure

Intake Process

How do you identify whether a survivor who contacts you has needs related to a disability or mental health issue?

Do you ask on the hotline at VAS/OFW or intake whether a new client requires accommodations because of either of these disabilities?

3. What would you need to feel comfortable and competent in the situations we just talked about?

Prompts

Training, support, guidance, policies?

4. Does your agency have policies and procedures around serving people with disabilities and/or mental illness?

Prompts

If not, why?

If yes, please share an example of a policy which makes it easier/more difficult to serve persons with disabilities?

If yes, how are these policies enforced?

Are they written or unwritten?

Do you have proper support around implementing these policies and procedures?

How do you learn about policies and procedures?

Do you receive training in following these policies and procedures?

How could this be improved?

5. Does your agency offer training or professional development opportunities?

Prompts

Can you give an example of these? What could be offered? Are you able to take advantage of these trainings?

Does your agency offer professional development regarding working with survivors with disabilities and/or with mental illness? [if yes you can ask about the training]

Is this included at orientation or ongoing staff training?

6. Do you have relationships with disability or mental health organizations?

Prompts

If yes, what types of disability service providers are represented i.e. advocacy organizations, community mental health organizations? Are these formal or informal?

Describe your relationships and any joint activities including training, community outreach, referrals and formal linkage agreements.

If no – would that be helpful to you? Any agencies in particular?

7. In thinking about this project, is there anything else we should be thinking about that we haven't asked you?

Prompts

What do you think will be challenging about fostering changes within your organization?

How can we overcome these challenges?

Is there anything else we should know?

8. Any other feedback?

Appendix iv

Questions for Sexual Assault Forensic Nurse Examiners

WestCOP/Victims Assistance Services

- 1. How do you know you're working with a survivor who has a disability and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Referral Information?

Unprompted disclosure?

Intake Process?

Process for clients to request accommodations?

Figured it out through interaction?

Have been trained to identify?

Other:

- 2. Let's talk about your experiences in responding to the needs of a survivor who have disability and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

What went well?

What didn't go so well?

- 3. How comfortable are you when working with a survivor who has disability and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

In knowing when and how to report a new disclosure to authorities?

In communicating with them?

In creating a safety plan?

In providing accommodations?

With your clinical skills?

Creating an environment that is safe and respectful?

What would make you more comfortable?

- 4. How do you determine if a survivor with disability is able to consent to a forensic exam?**

Prompts

Hospital Intake Process?

VAS intake Process?

VAS Tools/procedure?
Personal Judgment?

- 5. Does the program offer resources to SAFEs in terms of supporting your work with survivors with disabilities and/or mental illness?**

Prompts

Offer Trainings/Professional Development?
Provided Literature/Articles?
Policies & Procedures?
Other:

- 6. What trainings do you need to best meet the needs of survivors with disabilities and/or mental illness?**
- 7. What are the challenges that you have faces in assisting patients who have disability or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Trainings? Knowledge about disabilities?
Providing any needed accommodations?
Organizational culture that creates barriers to people with disability or serious mental illness?
(Believability, certain assumptions/stigma?)
SAFE Protocols?
SAFE Policies and procedures?
Community resources and referrals?

- 8. Have you ever partnered or coordinated with another organization to support a patient who has a disability and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

If so, how did it go?
What were the strengths of the partnership?
What could be improved?

- 9. What do you want disability service providers to know about the SAFE program and SAFE exam?**

Prompts

What can staff do to prepare the individual with disability and/or serious mental illness to have the exam?

What can staff do to maintain the integrity of evidence?

Trauma-informed techniques for working with someone with a disability?

- 10. In thinking about this project, is there anything else we should be thinking about that we haven't asked you?**

Appendix v

Questions for Frontline Staff

Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health

1. Let's talk about your experience in responding to the needs of sexual and/or domestic violence survivors?

Prompts

What went well?

What didn't go well?

Unprompted Disclosure?

How comfortable/uncomfortable were you?

Is your screening process adequate?

What process does DCMH have to create an opportunity for a client to disclose abuse?

What are the barriers, if any, this agency faces when working with survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence?

i.e have those barriers prevented services from being delivered?

2. What do you think are the challenges that your agency has in assisting clients who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence?

Prompts

Staff Capacity?

Policies and procedures?

Other resources and training?

Are there any challenges within the agency's culture that may impact clients who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence?

Stigma?

Attitudes and assumptions regarding people with disabilities experiences?

What trainings, if any, have you received or would like to receive to better support clients who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence?

Training? What type of training?

Resources? What types of resources?

Community relationships?

3. What are some factors you believe make it possible for clients to freely disclose their experience of sexual and/or domestic violence? (i.e sexuality, ethnicity, ableism, etc.)?

Prompts

What are some factors that you believe might prevent a consumer from disclosing sexual and/or domestic violence?

Do you think that people make assumptions about people with serious mental illness?

For example, their believability?

4. When change happens at your agency and how do you find out about it?

Prompts

How are the changes implemented?

What is helpful about that process?

What could be improved?

What is the decision-making process?

How does staff influence change?

5. Have you ever partnered with OFW in the past to support a survivor who is a victim of domestic violence?

Prompts

If so, how did it go?

What were the strengths of the partnership?

What could be improved?

6. Have you ever partnered with VAS in the past to support a survivor who is a victim of sexual assault?

Prompts

If so, how did it go?

What were the strengths of the partnership?

What could be improved?

7. What do you want sexual and/or domestic violence providers to know about how to best serve persons with serious mental illness?

Prompts

Communication considerations?

Behavioral considerations?

Techniques for working with someone with a disability?

Appendix vi

Questions for Frontline Staff

Westchester Independent Living Center
Westchester County Office for the Disabled

1. Think about a time when you were working with someone who has experienced sexual and/or domestic violence?

Prompts

What went well?

What didn't go well?

Unprompted Disclosure?

How comfortable/uncomfortable were you?

Is your screening process adequate?

What process does DCMH have to create an opportunity for a client to disclose abuse?

What are the barriers, if any, this agency faces when working with survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence?

i.e have those barriers prevented services from being delivered?

2. What do you think are the challenges your agency has in assisting clients who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence?

Prompts

Staff Capacity?

Policies and procedures?

Other resources and training?

Are there any challenges within the agency's culture that may impact clients who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence?

Stigma?

Attitudes and assumptions regarding people with disabilities experiences?

What trainings, if any, have you received or would like to receive to better support clients who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence?

Training? What type of training

Resources? What types of resources?

Community relationships?

3. What are some factors you believe make it possible for clients to freely disclose their experience of sexual and/or domestic violence? (i.e sexuality, ethnicity, ableism, etc.)?

Prompts

What are some factors that you believe might prevent a consumer from disclosing sexual and/or domestic violence?

Do you think that people make assumptions about people with disability?
For example, their believability?

4. When change happens at your agency, how do you find out about it?

Prompts

How are the changes implemented?
What is helpful about that process?
What could be improved?
What is the decision-making process?
How does staff influence change?

5. Have you ever partnered with OFW in the past to support a survivor who is a victim of domestic violence?

Prompts

If so, how did it go?
What were the strengths of the partnership?
What could be improved?

6. Have you ever partnered with VAS in the past to support a survivor who is a victim of sexual assault?

Prompts

If so, how did it go?
What were the strengths of the partnership?
What could be improved?

7. What do you want sexual and/or domestic violence providers to know about how to best serve people with disabilities?

Prompts

Communication considerations?
Behavior considerations?
Techniques for working with someone with a disability?

Appendix vii

Questions for Managers & Supervisors

WestCOP/Victims Assistance Services

1. **Let's talk about your experiences individually and working with your staff, in responding to the needs of survivors that have disabilities and/or mental illness?**

Prompts

What went well?

What didn't go so well?

2. **What do you think are the challenges your organization has in serving clients who have disabilities?**

Prompts

Staff capacity?

Budget and financial resources?

Policies and Procedures?

Other resources and trainings?

3. **What do you think are the challenges within your organizations are in serving consumers who have disabilities and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Stigma? Past experiences?

Attitudes and assumptions regarding people with disabilities or victims?

4. **Is there anything you wish your organization had to better support consumers with disabilities and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Trainings? What type of trainings?

Resources? What types of resources?

Community relationships?

5. **What is in place at your organization to let you know when you or one of your staff is working with clients who have a disability and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Forms? Supervision? Notification System? Procedure?

- 6. How comfortable are you with assisting staff when they are working with clients who have a disability and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Are there things in place that help you assist staff? Funds? Other?

- 7. Do you think people make assumptions about working with survivors of Sexual Assault?**

Prompts

Believability?

- 8. Have you ever partnered or coordinated with another organization to support a patient who has a disability and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

If so, how did it go?

What were the strengths of the partnership?

What could be improved?

WILC? OFD? DCMH?

- 9. How does change happen at your agency?**

Prompts

What is the decision-making process?

How do policies and procedures get created or changed?

How are decisions made regarding hiring personnel?

How are decisions made about resource allocations made?

How do supervisors directly influence change?

What could be improved?

- Do you have additional comments or feedback to share for Project Westchester Safe Access?**

Appendix viii

Questions for Manager of Sexual Assault Services

WestCOP/Victims Assistance Services

- 1. What experiences are you aware of your nurses responding to the forensic and medical needs of survivors that have disabilities and/or mental illness?**

Prompts

What went well?

What didn't go so well?

- 2. How comfortable are you with assisting your nurses when they are working with a patient with disability and/or serious mental illness?**

- 3. What do you think are the challenges your program has in serving clients who have disabilities and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Staff Knowledge?

Budget and financial resources?

Consent?

Policies and Procedures?

Other resources and trainings?

- 4. Are there any challenges within the culture of your organization that may impact survivors with disabilities and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

DOH/VAS/WestCOP

Stigma? Past experiences?

Attitudes and assumptions regarding people with disabilities or victims?

- 5. Is there anything that would strengthen your ability to help the nurses support clients who have disabilities and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Trainings? What type of trainings?

Polices / Procedures?

Resources? What types of resources?

Community relationships?

6. How does your current curriculum address the needs of survivors with disabilities and/or serious mental illness?

Prompts

Accommodations

Accessibility

What about the curriculum needs to be changed?

7. How hard/easy is it to change the curriculum?

8. How does change happen at the SAFE program?

Prompts

WestCOP/VAS/DOH

What is the decision-making process?

How do policies and procedures get created or changed?

How are decisions made regarding hiring SAFE's?

How are decisions made about resource allocations made?

How do supervisors directly influence change?

9. Have you ever partnered or coordinated with another organization to support a patient who has a disability and/or serious mental illness?

Prompts

If so, how did it go?

What were the strengths of the partnership?

What could be improved?

WILC? OFD? DCMH?

10. Do you have additional comments or feedback to share for Project Westchester safe Access?

Appendix ix

Questions for Rape Crisis Program Coordinator

WestCOP/Victims Assistance Services

1. **Let's talk about your experiences individually and working with the Volunteers, in responding to the needs of survivors that have disabilities and/or mental illness?**

Prompts

What went well?

What didn't go so well?

2. **How comfortable are you with assisting the volunteers when they are working with survivors that have disabilities and/or mental illness?**

3. **What do you think are the challenges your program has in serving survivors who have disabilities and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Staff capacity?

Budget and financial resources?

Policies and Procedures?

Other resources and trainings?

4. **Are there any challenges within the culture of your organization that may impact survivors with disabilities and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

DOH/VAS/WestCOP

Stigma? Past experiences?

Attitudes and assumptions regarding people with disabilities or victims?

5. **Is there anything that would strengthen your ability to help the volunteers support survivors who have disabilities and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Trainings? What type of trainings?

Polices / Procedures?

Resources? What types of resources?

Community relationships?

6. **How does your current curriculum address the needs of survivors with disabilities and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Accommodations?

Accessibility?

What about the curriculum needs to be changed?

7. How hard/easy is it to change the curriculum?

8. How does change happen at your program?

Prompts

WestCOP/VAS/DOH?

What is the decision-making process?

How do policies and procedures get created or changed?

How are decisions made regarding hiring volunteers?

How are decisions made about resource allocations made?

How do supervisors directly influence change?

9. Do you have additional comments or feedback to share for Project Westchester safe Access?

Appendix x

Questions for Managers & Supervisors

Westchester County Office for Women

- 1. Let's talk about your experiences individually and working with your staff, in responding to the needs of survivors that have disabilities and/or mental illness?**

Prompts

What went well?

What didn't go so well?

- 2. What do you think are the challenges your organization has in serving survivors that have disabilities and/or mental illness?**

Prompts

Staff capacity?

Budget and financial resources?

Policies and Procedures?

Other resources and trainings?

- 3. What do you think are the challenges within your organizations are in serving survivors that have disabilities and/or mental illness?**

Prompts

Stigma? Past experiences?

Attitudes and assumptions regarding people with disabilities or victims?

- 4. Is there anything you wish your organization had to better support survivors that have disabilities and/or mental illness?**

Prompts

Trainings? What type of trainings?

Resources? What types of resources?

Community relationships?

- 5. What is in place at your organization to let you know when you or one of your staff is working with survivors that have disabilities and/or mental illness?**

Prompts

Forms? Supervision? Notification System? Procedure?

6. How comfortable are you with assisting staff when they are working with survivors that have disabilities and/or mental illness?

Prompts

Are there things in place that help you assist staff? Funds? Other?

7. Do you think people make assumptions about working with survivors of Sexual Assault?

Prompts

Believability?

8. Have you ever partnered or coordinated with another organization to support survivors that have disabilities and/or mental illness?

Prompts

If so, how did it go?

What were the strengths of the partnership?

What could be improved?

WILC? OFD? DCMH?

9. How does change happen at your agency?

Prompts

What is the decision-making process?

How do policies and procedures get created or changed?

How are decisions made regarding hiring personnel?

How are decisions made about resource allocations made?

How do supervisors directly influence change?

What could be improved?

• Do you have additional comments or feedback to share for Project Westchester Safe Access?

Appendix xi

Questions for Managers & Supervisors

Westchester Independent Living Center

- 1. Let's talk about your experiences, individually and working with your staff, in responding to the needs consumers who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence**

Prompts

What went well?

What didn't go so well?

- 2. What do you think are the challenges within your organizations are in serving consumers who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

Staff capacity?

Budget and financial resources?

Policies and Procedures?

Other resources and trainings?

- 3. Are there any challenges within the culture of your organization that may impact survivors with disabilities?**

Prompts

Stigma?

Attitudes and assumptions regarding people with disabilities or victims of sexual and/or domestic violence?

- 4. Is there anything you wish that your organization had to better support consumers who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

Trainings? What type of trainings?

Resources? What types of resources?

Community relationships?

- 5. What is in place at your organization to let you know when you or one of your staff is working with a client who is a survivor or sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

Forms? Supervision? Notification System? Procedure?

- 6. How comfortable are you with assisting staff when they are working with a consumer who has experienced sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

Are there things in place that help you assist staff when they are working with a client who has experienced sexual and/or domestic violence?

- 7. What are some factors you believe make it possible for a consumer to freely disclose their experience of sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

What are some factors that you believe might prevent a consumer from disclosing sexual and/or domestic violence?

- 8. Do you think people make assumptions about people with disabilities?**

Prompts

Believability?

- 9. Have you ever partnered with VAS in the past to support a client who is a victim of sexual violence?**

Prompts

If so, how did it go?

What were the strengths of the partnership?

What could be improved?

- 10. Have you ever partnered with OFW in the past to support a client who is a victim of domestic violence?**

Prompts

If so, how did it go?

What were the strengths of the partnership?

What could be improved?

- 11. How does change happen at your agency?**

Prompts

What is the decision-making process?

How do policies and procedures get created or changed?

How are decisions made regarding hiring personnel?

How are decisions made about resource allocations made?

How do supervisors directly influence change?

What could be improved?

12. Do you have additional comments or feedback to share for Project Westchester Safe Access?

Appendix xii

Questions for Managers & Supervisors

Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health

1. **Let's talk about your experiences, individually and working with your staff, in responding to the needs consumers who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence**

Prompts

What went well?

What didn't go so well?

2. **What do you think are the challenges within your organizations are in serving consumers who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

Staff capacity?

Budget and financial resources?

Policies and Procedures?

Other resources and trainings?

3. **Are there any challenges within the culture of your organization that may impact survivors with serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Stigma?

Attitudes and assumptions regarding people with disabilities or victims of sexual and/or domestic violence?

4. **Is there anything you wish that your organization had to better support consumers who are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

Trainings? What type of trainings?

Resources? What types of resources?

Community relationships?

5. **What is in place at your organization to let you know when you or one of your staff is working with a client who is a survivor of sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

Forms? Supervision? Notification System? Procedure?

- 6. How comfortable are you with assisting staff when they are working with a consumer who has experienced sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

Are there things in place that help you assist staff when they are working with a client who has experienced sexual and/or domestic violence?

- 7. What are some factors you believe make it possible for a consumer to freely disclose their experience of sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

What are some factors that you believe might prevent a consumer from disclosing sexual and/or domestic violence?

- 8. Do you think people make assumptions about people with serious mental illness? For example, their believability?**

Prompts

How does change happen at your organization?

What is the decision-making process?

How do policies and procedures get created or changed?

How are new or exciting policies and procedures implemented?

How are decisions made regarding hiring personnel?

How are decisions about resource allocations made?

How do supervisors directly influence change?

- 9. Have you ever partnered with VAS in the past to support a client who is a victim of sexual violence?**

Prompts

If so, how did it go?

What were the strengths of the partnership?

What could be improved?

- 10. Have you ever partnered with OFW in the past to support a client who is a victim of domestic violence?**

Prompts

If so, how did it go?

What were the strengths of the partnership?

What could be improved?

11. Do you have additional comments or feedback to share for Project Westchester Safe Access?

Appendix xii

Interview Questions for Executives

WestCOP/Victims Assistance Services

Westchester County Office for Women

1. **Where does providing services to people with disabilities and/or serious mental illness fit into your organization's priorities?**
2. **Are your services accessible for people with disabilities?**

Prompts

How does your agency priorities accessible services?

Does your agency have budget line items to support people with disabilities?

Are there policies in place to ensure that these line items are included in the budget?

3. **How does change happen at your agency?**

Prompts

What is the decision making process?

How are policies and procedures created/changed? Implemented?

How do you engage employees?

How are decisions about resources allocated made?

4. **Which changes do you believe would have the greatest impact in your organization serving survivors with a disability and/or serious mental illness?**
5. **How does your agency proactively recruit, hire, and evaluate staff, board members, volunteers, and interns in terms of their ability to effectively serve individuals affected by disability and/or serious mental illness?**
6. **In a time of limited resources, in what ways do you think your agency is able to support systems change to better serve people with disabilities and/or serious mental illness?**

Prompts

Funding or other resources?

Policies and procedures?

Accommodations?

How can we help? Who else can help?

7. **What does your agency do well in responding to and meeting the needs of people with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

What challenges does [*agency*] face in serving people with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence?

Are there any policies and procedures that impact [*agency*] ability to serve this population?

Are there any challenges to meeting clients' accommodation requests?

8. Where do see opportunities for enhancing services?

Prompts

In your policies? In practice? In training staff and volunteers? In hiring?

9. What additional comments or feedback do you have for our collaboration?

Appendix xiii

Interview Questions for Executives

Westchester Independent Living Center
Westchester County Office for the Disabled
Westchester County Office of Community Mental Health

1. **Where does providing services to people who have experienced violence fit into your organization's priorities?**
2. **What challenges does [agency] face in serving people with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

Policies and procedures?
Budget and financial resources?
Trainings?
Other resources?

3. **How does change happen at your agency?**

Prompts

What is the decision making process?
How are policies and procedures created/changed? Implemented?
How do you engage employees?
How are decisions about resources allocated made?

4. **Which changes do you believe would have the greatest impact in your organization serving survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence?**
5. **How does your agency proactively recruit, hire, and evaluate staff, board members, volunteers, and interns in terms of their ability to effectively serve individuals affected by sexual and/or domestic violence?**
6. **In a time of limited resources, in what ways do you think your agency is able to support systems change to better serve people with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence?**

Prompts

Funding or other resources?
Policies and procedures?

Accommodations?

How can we help? Who else can help?

7. What does your agency do well in responding to and meeting the needs of people with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence?

Prompts

What challenges does [*agency*] face in serving people with disabilities who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence?

Are there any policies and procedures that impact [*agency*] ability to serve this population?

Are there any challenges to meeting clients' accommodation requests?

8. Where do see opportunities for enhancing services?

Prompts

In your policies? In practice? In training staff and volunteers? In hiring?

9. What additional comments or feedback do you have for our collaboration?

Appendix xiv



WESTCHESTER SAFE



Empowerment through accessibility.



Dear Board of Director

In order for our collaboration to get a clearer understanding of current practices and finding out best practices from survivors and persons with disabilities, WSA is conducting a needs assessment, which will include survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence and people with disabilities as well as front line staff/volunteers/SAFE personnel and leadership from each partner organization. The Needs Assessment will generate the information needed to improve Westchester Safe Access' outcomes and the data will guide our work when developing our Strategic Plan.

People with disabilities experience domestic or sexual violence at a higher rate than people without disabilities. 83% of women with disabilities will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime (Stimpson & Best, 1991). Only 3% of sexual abuse cases involving people with developmental disabilities are ever reported (Valenti-Hein and Schwartz, 1995).

Westchester Safe Access will identify opportunities for change at each partner agency with the assistance of our Needs Assessment, analyze the information and develop a strategic plan to address the areas that can benefit from improvement. Project Westchester Safe Access (WSA) is made possible by the Educational and Technical Assistance Grant to End Violence against Women with Disabilities. The Westchester Safe Access Project is funded by the Office on Violence against Women (OVW) while our Technical Assistance is provided by the Vera Institute of Justice. OVW and Vera are working in conjunction with Westchester Safe Access to make our services accessible for persons with disabilities and d/Deaf persons who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence.

Please take 10 minutes or so to complete this survey. Your input on this subject is very important for our success. All information collected and analyzed will be used by this collaboration to better plan for services for survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence with a disability. No personally identifiable information (name, email address) from this survey will be used by this collaboration in the needs assessment report, the findings, or the implementation of the project.

Respectfully;

Joe Bravo, Executive Director, WILC

May Krukiel, Director, WestCOP/VAS

Dr. Sherlita Amler, Acting Commissioner, DCMH

Evan Latainer, Director, Office for the Disabled

Robi Schlaaf, Director, Office for Women

Appendix xv

Survey Questions Board of Directors Westchester Independent Living Center

1. As a Board Member, what level of support would you be most likely to offer in implementing the changes needed to enhance service provision to persons with disabilities that experience sexual and/or domestic violence at WILC in each of the following areas?

A.)Decision-making?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Moderately likely
- ☐ Slightly likely
- ☐ Not at all likely

B.)Personnel changes?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Moderately likely
- ☐ Slightly likely
- ☐ Not at all likely

C.)Policy and Procedure changes?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Moderately likely
- ☐ Slightly likely
- ☐ Not at all likely

D.)Resources Allocation?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Moderately likely
- ☐ Slightly likely
- ☐ Not at all likely

2. How well do you think this aligns into WILC overall mission, vision and goals?

- ☐ Completely aligns
- ☐ Somewhat aligns
- ☐ Does not align at all
- ☐ Need more information

3. Out of the following roles of the Board, which are fundamentally important in fulfilling your agency's mission?

A.) Decision making processes?

- ☐ Very Important
- ☐ Mildly Important
- ☐ Not at all important

B.) Agency planning, strategic planning, short-term planning?

- ☐ Very Important
- ☐ Mildly Important
- ☐ Not at all important

C.) Personnel decisions/hiring/expansion?

- ☐ Very Important
- ☐ Mildly Important
- ☐ Not at all important

D.) Process of creating, changing policies and practices?

- ☐ Very Important
- ☐ Mildly Important
- ☐ Not at all important

4. **How challenging do you anticipate it will be for WILC to support the collaboration and its efforts to better serve Survivors of Sexual and/or Domestic Violence with a disability? (Very challenging) 1-----5-----10 (not at all challenging)**

BOX with open ended answer: _____

5. **What is the level of priority for change in your agency to improve services for women with disabilities who are survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence?**

(Very Important) 1-----5-----10 (not at all Important)

BOX with open ended answer: _____

6. **What else needs to be considered if changes are going to be made?**

BOX with open ended answer: _____

THANK YOU!

Westchester Safe Access Contact Information

Westchester Safe Access Program Manager

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Westchester County Office for the Disabled

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Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health

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