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**Kansas BELIEVE Agreement
2014 -2017**

This document has been written so that all team members can easily read and understand it. We have used both accessible (plain) language and images.

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INTRODUCTION:

Kansas BELIEVE Partnership

(Building and Expanding Leaders and Individuals, Experience the Vision of Empowerment)

The Kansas BELIEVE Partnership membership is the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) and the Self-advocate Coalition of Kansas (SACK).

KCSDV is a group of 29 sexual assault and domestic violence advocacy programs across the state of Kansas. The main work of the KCSDV is to support this group of programs by increasing public awareness through education and advocacy, looking for new options for services and funding, and by working for social change.

SACK is a statewide advocacy group made up of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). SACK's mission is to promote empowerment and independence for adults with developmental disabilities. Its vision is that all Kansans with developmental disabilities will have the opportunity to share their opinions and make choices in order to create a life where they are treated with the same dignity and respect as persons without developmental disabilities.

The partnership between KCSDV and SACK began in 2012 when gaps in services for people with I/DD who are survivors of sexual violence were noticed. Sexual assault advocacy programs are not well informed about how to provide services in an accessible way to survivors with I/DD. The service providers for people with I/DD are not always aware of sexual assault advocacy program services and options available to survivors.

As a result of the wish to address the gaps in services, KCSDV and SACK sought funding from the Education, Training and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities Grant Program from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). In the fall of 2014, OVW funded our partnership. OVW has chosen the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) as the national technical assistance provider. Help from Vera and OVW offer the support needed for lasting systems change.

This document shows the Kansas BELIEVE vision, mission, values, process and philosophy. The Kansas BELIEVE Team is made up of staff members from both KCSDV and SACK.

The Kansas BELIEVE Team includes:

Hal Schultz, SACK Self-advocate

Contact information: 785-749-5588

Hal has worked for SACK (the Self-Advocate Coalition of Kansas) for 9 years. He is currently living with his wife of 7 years. Hal is a survivor of sexual violence and a strong advocate. He loves to help people as much as he can.

Jessica Nasternak, KCSDV Director of Legal and Policy

Contact information: jnasternak@kcsdv.org or 785-232-9784

Jessica previously served as the Staff Attorney for KCSDV. Jessica received her law degree from the University of Kansas School of Law and her Masters in Community Development from Kansas State University.

Jessica Slocum, SACK Support Staff

Contact information: Sackjess2015@gmail.com or 785-749-5588

Jessica began working for SACK (the Self-Advocate Coalition of Kansas) one month ago as a support staff for individuals with intellectual and developmental disability. Prior to this job, she worked with individuals with severe mental health difficulties and with individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Kathy Ray, KCSDV Director of Advocacy, Education & Rural Projects

Contact information: kray@kcsdv.org or 785-232-9784

Kathy has been with KCSDV since 2006. She leads multiple projects on issues impacting survivors of sexual and domestic violence and their children and facilitates training and technical assistance for advocates, child welfare professionals, attorneys, law enforcement, and others. Prior to joining KCSDV, Kathy provided direct services to survivors and their children at a domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy program.

Kelly Smith, SACK Self-advocate

Contact information: 785-749-5588

Kelly has worked for SACK (the Self-Advocate Coalition of Kansas) for 15 years. She is a survivor of sexual violence and a strong advocate. Kelly is also the plain language expert for SACK.

Sarah Terwelp Hussain, KCSDV Disability Project Coordinator

Contact information: sterwelp@kcsdv.org or 785-232-9784

Sarah has been with KCSDV since January 2015. Before coming to KCSDV, Sarah served 12 years as a local domestic violence program director. She also served 10 years in the child welfare field advocating for abused and neglected children.

Shirley Fessler, KCSDV Rural Sexual Assault Project Manager

Contact information: sfessler@kcsdv.org or 785-232-9784

Shirley has been with KCSDV since 2011. She manages the Rural project which works to improve capacity to respond to sexual assault in rural and western Kansas communities and includes the Rural Collaboration Coordinator and the Rural Outreach Advocacy Coordinator. Prior to joining KCSDV, Shirley worked in a prosecutor-based victim assistance unit for 20 years providing assistance to victims of sexual and domestic violence, persons crimes, and families of homicide victims.

Stephanie Sanford

Contact information: Sacksteph@gmail.com or 785-749-5588

Stephanie began working for SACK (the Self-Advocate Coalition of Kansas) one year as a support staff for individuals with intellectual and developmental disability. Prior to this job, she worked in independent living agencies helping people with disabilities.

VISION:

People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) who have experienced Sexual Violence will be believed and will be able to make their own decisions. Kansas service and support providers will offer unconditional and continuous support in a relaxed place with safety and respect.



MISSION:

The mission of Kansas BELIEVE is to improve services and support to people with I/DD who have experienced sexual violence. We will do this through our:

- Active teamwork
- Desire to understand, and
- Development of meaningful partnerships.

We will also build our ability to assist local programs/groups in creating communities of safety and trust that are based on listening, believing and providing unconditional support.



VALUES:

People are often labeled and defined by their disability or experience. People have feelings, ideas, beliefs and values that are not limited by disability or experience. People with various disabilities or those who experience sexual violence also have feelings, beliefs and values. Each person is the expert on their own thoughts, feelings and experiences and knows what is best for them. As the expert of their life, people have the ability to direct decisions about their life and we call this **self-determination**.

Self determination is the value by which all the work and decisions will be based for Kansas BELIEVE. The following ideas are basic parts of **self determination**.

- **Choice** (ability to try something and learn)
- **Independence** (decide how things are done)
- **Knowledge** (information)
- **Safety** (emotional, financial, physical, spiritual)
- **Self care** (taking care of one's own emotions and body)

Self determination includes:

Choice (ability to try something and learn) – Each person has the right to experience successes and failures based on their decisions and to decide if the result is what they want. This is how people build skills in understanding cause and effect for future decision making and choices.



Self-determination includes:

Independence (decide how things are done) – Each person has the ability to make choices in their life according to their needs, beliefs, values and desires. The level of independence and support varies based on the needs, abilities, skills and experience of each person.



Self determination includes:

Knowledge (information) – Each person has the right to have easily understood information about the options available and the possible outcomes of each option.



Self-determination includes:

Safety (emotional, financial, physical, spiritual) – Each person has the right to feel safe. Each person has the right to determine which safety plans they wish to use and which they do not. A person telling their own experience of violence or abuse should be met with support and options. Options are then chosen by the person so they can determine the next steps for their own safety.



Self determination includes:

- **Self care** (taking care of one's own emotions and body) – Each person has the right to heal in their own way. This involves taking care of their emotional, physical, and spiritual needs.



KANSAS BELIEVE KNOWS:

What We Do Know

Through our discussions about our values, we have learned more about risks and the lack of support and services for people with I/DD who are survivors of sexual violence.

1. Greater Risk

We know that people with I/DD are at greater risk of sexual violence because:

- a. Over 90% of people with developmental disabilities experience sexual abuse in their lives,
- b. 49% will experience 10 or more abusive instances in their lifetime (Note 1),
- c. The rate of rape or sexual assault is more than twice the rate for people without a disability. (Note 2)

2. Lack Of Community Inclusion

We know that people with I/DD lack inclusion in communities because:

- a. Isolation in institutional settings and group homes creates greater risk for sexual violence.
- b. Self-advocates and staff may be afraid of punishment for reporting the violence.
- c. Self-advocates often have a small group of people who they interact with and this places them at greater risk.
- d. Risk is decreased when self-advocates interact with a larger more varied group of people.

3. Lack Of Service Provider Training

We know that service providers are not well trained to assist people with I/DD when they experience sexual violence because:

- a. People with I/DD are sometimes seen as non-sexual beings.
- b. Self-advocates are treated as if they do not have the ability to make decisions about their own bodies.

Note 1: D. Valenti-Hein and L. Schwartz, James, 1995

Note 2: National Crime Victimization Survey Crime Against People with Disabilities in 2007.

- c. Not many service providers are prepared to assist self-advocates.
 - i. Sexual assault programs do not understand intellectual and developmental disabilities and how to help people with I/DD.
 - ii. Developmental disability providers do not understand sexual violence and the services available for survivors of sexual violence.

4. Lack Of Believing

We know that people with I/DD do not tell their experience of sexual violence because:

- a. They are often not believed.
- b. They are often told by service providers that:
 - i. Self-advocates did not understand what was going on,
 - ii. Self-advocates are lying,
 - iii. Self-advocates are just trying to get attention.

5. Lack Of Self Directed Safety

We know that people with I/DD may not be allowed to self-direct decisions related to their own safety because:

- a. Self-advocates have shared that their freedom is restricted or removed once a service provider or caregiver hears and believes they have experienced sexual violence.
- b. Providers and caregivers may tell self-advocates “it is for your own safety” that they can no longer make decisions.
- c. Self-advocates shared that providers and caregivers may make them tell about their experience of sexual violence and abuse when they do not want to.

6. Lack Of Accessibility

We know that people with I/DD do not have equal access to places like sidewalks, buildings, offices and other spaces because:

- a. Self-advocates have shared that the information they get is not in plain language.
- b. Places like sidewalks, buildings, offices and other spaces may still not be accessible to everyone.
- c. Service providers and community members still hold onto negative stereotypes about people with I/DD.
- d. Self-advocates are unable to meaningfully participate in the community.

7. Lack Of Information

We know that people with I/DD lack important information because:

- a. Self-advocates have shared that they did not receive much information about their bodies and sexuality.
 - i. Self-advocates are not taught about healthy lifestyles which includes sexuality.
 - ii. Self-advocates are not taught that they have a choice in what happens to their bodies.
 - iii. Self-advocates are not taught that they have a right to agree or disagree to a sex act (touching, kissing, sexual intercourse, oral sex, etc.).
 - iv. Self-advocates are not taught how to respond to a sex act if they don't want the sex act or feel uncomfortable or afraid.
- b. Families/guardians may lack information or withhold information about sexuality and healthy relationships.
 - i. Self-advocates are not seen as having the choice in what happens to their bodies.
 - ii. Self-advocates are not seen as having the ability to be in an intimate relationship.
 - iii. Self-advocates are not seen as having the ability to be sexually active (touching, kissing, sexual intercourse, oral sex, etc.).



WHAT WE PROMISE TO DO:

Kansas BELIEVE is made up of the

- Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) and
- Self-Advocate Coalition of Kansas (SACK).

Kansas BELIEVE is funded by a grant from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW).

KCSDV and SACK will work together to reach the vision and mission of Kansas BELIEVE by:

- Creating a state-level partnership,
- Bridging the gap between our movements,
- Increasing information about:
 - o Informed decisions,
 - o Respectful relationships,
 - o Healthy sexual relationships, and
 - o The cause and effect of sexual violence on people with I/DD.
- Improving the response to survivors of sexual violence with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

KCSDV promises to:

1. Manage the grant.
2. Provide expertise around:
 - a. Domestic violence and sexual violence,
 - b. The cause and effect of sexual violence, and
 - c. Trauma-informed services
3. Provide access to training for all Kansas domestic violence and sexual violence programs.
4. Make sure KCSDV resources, publications and policies meet the needs of people with I/DD.

SACK promises to:

1. Provide expertise around:
 - a. Plain language,
 - b. Intellectual and developmental disabilities, and
 - c. Available support services.

2. Provide access to training for all Kansas self-advocacy groups
3. Make sure SACK resources, publications and policies meet the needs of people who are survivors of sexual violence.

Both of us promise to:

1. Provide time for staff to work on the grant project,
2. Provide space, support and equipment in our offices for meetings and other activities.



DECISION MAKING:

Decision Making Power

Lead Agency:

Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV)

1. KCSDV is the main agency for the Kansas BELIEVE Team. KCSDV must provide information to the funder - Office on Violence Against Women (OVW).
2. KCSDV Executive Director has the final decision on policy changes.
3. KCSDV key staff members provide decisions on:
 - a. Project coordinator supervision,
 - b. Financial reports to OVW,
 - c. Grant progress reports to OVW, and
 - d. Policy change ideas created by Kansas BELIEVE.
4. KCSDV will consult with Team members in making decisions about how any extra money will be spent.
5. KCSDV will work with Team members in deciding if extra time should be asked for from OVW to complete any of the project work.

Partner Agency:

Self-advocate Coalition of Kansas (SACK)

1. SACK Self-advocate staff members inform the SACK membership of current projects and activities. Daily working decisions are made by the SACK staff.
2. Other items that need a response from SACK membership will be emailed to them or a special meeting will be called if the issue needs more conversation.
3. SACK key staff members provide decisions on:
 - a. Plain language approval of all team documents.
 - b. Items that need full SACK membership discussion.
 - c. How to present items for approval to full SACK membership.

ARC, SACK Financial Agency

1. The ARC, as the financial agency for SACK, must provide information to KCSDV for the funder - Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) – of the Kansas BELIEVE project.
2. The ARC executive director decides the financial information to provide to KCSDV.

Project Coordinator

1. The Project Coordinator makes decisions about daily issues to keep the project moving forward, such as:
 - a. Meeting location, schedule, and agenda
 - b. Providing information to the team
 - c. Checking with Vera and/or OVW about written materials for Kansas BELIEVE and other forms of support.
 - d. Submitting written materials to Vera after the agreement of the Team.
 - e. Seeking outside help from other Project Coordinators.

Kansas BELIEVE Team

1. The Kansas BELIEVE Team makes decisions about the work of the Team, such as:
 - a. Making the path and goals of the teamwork
 - b. Creating and approving the project materials
 - c. Reviewing and approving meeting minutes for correctness.
 - d. Approving/requesting changes to agenda.
 - e. Deciding which team members should attend webinars and in-person events offered by Vera and OVW
 - f. Changing Team membership, including changes in who is serving on behalf of each agency, adding or removing members, and adding or removing specific individuals.
 - g. Suggesting ideas for making changes at KCSDV and SACK
 - h. Presenting change ideas to the KCSDV Executive Director and the SACK membership.

Decision Making Process

The Kansas BELIEVE Team will use consensus (agreement) based decision making. The Team chose to use consensus as the way to make decisions to show that the Team is one voice. All decisions will keep the Vision (belief), Mission (teamwork) and Value (self-determination) as our main focus as we develop our project.

Consensus decision making is a process that involves all members of the team and creates a shared understanding. This builds trust and Team involvement in action since all members participate in decisions. Using this model, the Kansas BELIEVE Team's goal is to gain a mutual understanding and to reach agreements to support decisions for the benefit of the team and project overall. We know not all members

will agree on every decision for the project, but we commit to listening to all views and carefully finding an answer that reflects our shared values and goals.

The Project Coordinator will, at times, ask members to share how they feel about decisions that are being made. When a decision is being talked about, the Team will use a check-in process to come to a consensus on the decision being made. The check-in process will not only ensure all partners have all the needed information to form their own view on the decision, but to also determine if we are all in agreement and ready to move forward or if we need to discuss it the issue more. If a consensus is reached, the decision will be finalized and the work will move forward. If a consensus is not reached, team members will indicate how they feel about the topic based on the following:

1. The Project Coordinator asks each member of the Team to share their thoughts about the ideas being talked about.
2. Expressions on team member's faces will also be used as a tool to determine if an idea needs to be talked about some more. The goal for the Team is to have a shared voice. A voting scale of faces includes:



AGREE

Agree - shows the member is in full agreement and is ready to move forward.



? Face – shows that the person needs more information or does not understand and wants to continue talking about the issue.



DISAGREE

Frown – disagree shows the member needs more information to make their decision or does not agree and is not able to move forward. The group will work together on finding the disagreement and an answer.

3. In order for a decision to be made and completed, the check-in process must show that each member agrees to move forward.
4. Once a consensus is done, the Project Coordinator will conduct a final check-in before moving forward.
5. When a decision cannot be made, the Team will use the following to deal with disagreements to help guide them to an answer.

WAYS TO DEAL WITH DISAGREEMENTS:

SACK and KCSDV are committed to Kansas BELIEVE and to working together to strengthen the Team. It is expected that disagreement will happen as we continue to form Kansas BELIEVE. This Team sees disagreements as useful and through respect for each other, will work together to find answers to those disagreements.

Steps to work through disagreement between team members:

1. See the disagreement as an opportunity to learn from each other.
2. Find out why there is a disagreement – difference in opinion, policy or law, etc.
3. Each member of the Kansas BELIEVE Team who is involved in the disagreement will share their thoughts and/or feelings on the issue.
4. Team members will work together to find an answer to the disagreement, when possible.

For disagreements that the Kansas BELIEVE team members cannot answer:

1. The KCSDV Executive Director and the ARC Executive Director will be asked to talk together to find an answer.
2. If the Executive Directors cannot find an answer, the Vera Institute of Justice contact and/or Office on Violence Against Women will be asked to help.

PRIVACY:

Kansas BELIEVE Privacy Statement

Kansas BELIEVE understands and agrees that privacy is important for the trust and safety of:

- Kansas BELIEVE - KCSDV and SACK
- Team members
- people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who have experienced sexual violence (survivors)

Written and spoken information shared during the Kansas BELIEVE meetings must be kept private. Each group has the right to decide what happens with their information. Below are the rules Kansas BELIEVE will use for each group.

Kansas BELIEVE – KCSDV and SACK

Kansas BELIEVE understands and agrees that privacy is important for the trust and safety of Kansas BELIEVE – KCSDV and SACK. Written and spoken information about KCSDV, SACK or the membership of either organization shared during the Kansas BELIEVE meetings must be kept private.

KCSDV and SACK agree to keep rules about the storage of and safety of records and information. Any information made or recorded through the Kansas BELIEVE activities will follow the privacy rules of KCSDV. The law that states these rules make sure the information is protected in the most secure way.

Information can be shared from a meeting if:

- A Team member asks to talk about and make clear what information the Team agrees to share with others (KCSDV staff, SACK staff, membership, other agencies, etc.).
- The Team talked about the need to share the information with others (KCSDV staff, SACK staff, membership, other agencies, etc.) during our meeting.
- Agreement from KCSDV, SACK or the membership of either group has approved sharing their information.

Team Members

Kansas BELIEVE understands and agrees that privacy is important for the trust and safety of Team members. Written and spoken information shared during the Kansas BELIEVE meetings must be kept private.

Information can be shared from a meeting if:

- A Team member asks to talk about and make clear what information the Team agrees to share with others (KCSDV staff, SACK staff, membership, other agencies, etc.).
- The Team talked about the need to share the information with others (KCSDV staff, SACK staff, membership, other agencies, etc.) during our meeting.

Survivors

Kansas BELIEVE understands and agrees that privacy is important for the trust and safety of people with disabilities. Written and spoken information about people with I/DD who have experienced sexual violence must be kept private.

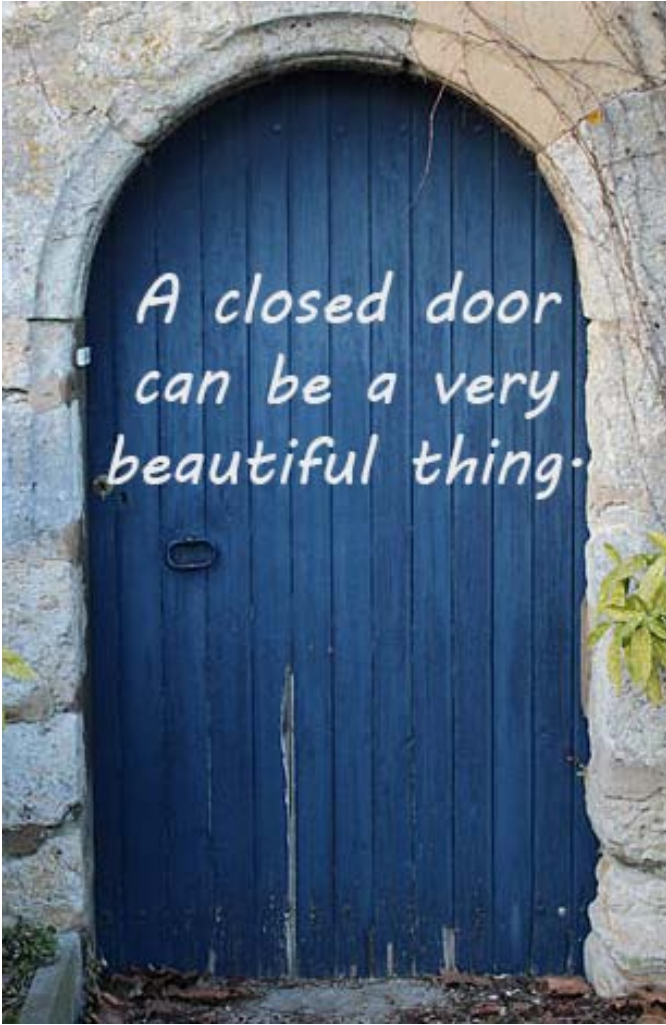
All personal information will be kept private and not be released.

If survivors want to release their information, Kansas BELIEVE will use these steps:

- Team members will talk with the person about what could happen if the information is released,
- The person signs a written release of the information,
- The release has a specific time frame, and
- The release has a specific purpose.

Mandatory Reporting

According to the Mandatory Reporting Laws in Kansas (K.S.A. § 39-1431), staff members at KCSDV and SACK are not mandatory (required) reporters of abused adults. However, both organizations share information about the good and bad of self-reporting the abuse with the person who was abused.



COMMUNICATION PLAN:

Communication Plan

Kansas BELIEVE Team members agree that communication is important to the success of our work. Our Team has built trust through respecting privacy and providing information in a way that all members can understand. Communication happens with members of the Kansas BELIEVE Team; it also happens with people outside of the Kansas BELIEVE Team.

Rules for communication are:

1. With Kansas BELIEVE Team members:

a. Kansas BELIEVE Team

Members receive ongoing communication about the work of the Team. All information is written in plain language with the help of SACK staff.

Team members

- i. Receive meeting notices
- ii. Receive agendas for each meeting
- iii. Receive notes of each meeting
- iv. Receive draft documents for review
- v. Receive information by email and on paper at the meetings
- vi. Meet weekly in person or by conference call

b. KCSDV

KCSDV will stay informed about the work of Kansas Believe.

- i. The Executive Director receives the emails that the Team receives to keep her informed. Any information which requires a response from the Executive Director will be addressed to the Executive Director.
- ii. KCSDV staff members will receive information about Kansas BELIEVE at monthly staff meetings. Staff members will be offered the chance to participate in meetings as the topic of the meeting fits with their work.
- iii. Member programs will receive information about Kansas BELIEVE as we begin to write down the needs of people with I/DD who have experienced sexual violence. Member programs will also learn about our work when we begin to provide chances for member

programs to learn more about serving survivors of sexual violence who have I/DD.

c. SACK

- i. SACK members are regularly updated on Kansas BELIEVE at the SACK quarterly meetings. Three meetings are conducted as conference calls with the Annual Meeting in person during the SACK Conference. Social media is another method of sharing information and members also receive information through Facebook postings.
- ii. As SACK staff members conduct self-advocacy training throughout the state to local chapters, Kansas BELIEVE updates are also provided. SACK also maintains an email contact list of self-advocates and advisers to local chapters that can be used to provide additional information.

d. ARC

- i. The Executive Director receives the emails that the Team receives to keep her informed. Any information which requires a specific response from the Executive Director will be addressed to the Executive Director.

2. Outside Kansas BELIEVE:

a. Vera Institute of Justice

The Vera Institute of Justice is the agency that offers help to the groups that are funded by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). Kansas BELIEVE talks with VERA staff often and participates in other VERA trainings.

b. Office on Violence Against Women

KCSDV will talk with OVW when a better understanding of the duties of the project is needed. KCSDV will also prepare and submit reports for OVW.

c. Allied agencies

Allied agencies are systems with an important role in responding to people with I/DD who are survivors of sexual violence. Examples of allied agencies include Community Developmental Disability Agency, Disability Rights Center of Kansas, and Interhab. Communication with such agencies will be on an as needed basis with the agreement of the Team. The information will be created by the Team for the allied agency.

d. Media

Any statement about Kansas BELIEVE to the media requires approval

and participation of the Kansas BELIEVE Team. Any media requests asking about the connections of people with I/DD and sexual violence will be responded to after the Team has agreed upon a statement. Key messages for any statement will include the following information:

- i. The partnership is between the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence and the Self-advocate Coalition of Kansas
- ii. The focus of the partnership is people with I/DD who are survivors of sexual violence and the understanding that these people:
 - Have thoughts and feelings that need to be believed.
 - Have the right to make decisions about their body.
 - Have the right to make decisions about their safety.
 - Services should be unconditional and supportive
 - For written, visual or sound, this statement must be included: “This project was support by Grant No. 2014-FW-AX-K007 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.”



Pictured from left to right: Kathy Ray, KCSDV, Hal Schultz, SACK, Jessica Slocum, SACK, Joyce Grover, KCSDV, Kelly Smith, SACK, Shirley Fessler, KCSDV, Stephanie Sanford, SACK, Sarah Terwelp Hussain, KCSDV.

KANSAS BELIEVE WORK PLAN:

Activity	Timeframe
OVW Grant Awarded	September 2014
Site Visit – Collaboration Building	May 2015
Collaboration building and Charter development	January–October 2015
Submit Collaboration Charter to OVW	November 2015
Develop Statement of Focus Memo	November 2015
Submit Memo to OVW	November 2015
Develop Needs Assessment Plan	December 2015 – February 2016
Submit Plan to OVW	February 2016
Conduct sessions with people served	February 2016 – April 2016
Compile Findings and Analyze Data	April 2016 – June 2016
Submit Needs Assessment Report to OVW	June 2016
Create Strategic Plan	June 2016 – September 2016
Submit Strategic Plan to OVW	September 2016
Implement Strategic Plan	September 2016 – September 2017

GLOSSARY OF MAIN TERMS:

Accessibility:

People with disabilities have the right to an equal chance to participate in the community. This includes employment, accessing government programs, public spaces, and transportation, and that both written and spoken information is provided in plain language. Accessibility means that disability is accounted for in all aspects of life. Structures, and that processes and locations are made accessible for people with disabilities to get the most out of the community.

Advocacy:

Advocacy is the act of providing a voice on behalf of someone else that may not be able to speak for themselves.

Inclusion:

Inclusion is the experience of being accepted as part of a larger group and be treated the same as everyone else.

Intellectual and Development Disabilities (I/DD):

According to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, “intellectual disability is one type of a larger universe of many types of developmental disabilities. Developmental disabilities are defined as severe chronic disabilities that can be cognitive or physical or both. Intellectual disability encompasses the ‘cognitive’ part of this definition that is a disability that is broadly related to thought processes. Because intellectual and other developmental disabilities often co-occur, intellectual disability professionals often work with people who have both types of disabilities.”

Plain language:

Any written or spoken information is created with the group that will read it in mind. The information does not have professional terms (jargon) or abbreviations. The information is easy to read and understand for the group that will use the information.

Safety:

Emotional, financial, physical and spiritual safety means that there is a lack of fear, danger or risk of harm. People are free to express thoughts and feelings without fear.

Self-advocate:

According to Wrights Law, “self-advocacy is learning how to speak up for yourself, making your own decisions about your own life, learning how to get information so that you can understand things that are of interest to you, finding out who will support you in your journey, knowing your rights and responsibilities, problem solving, listening and learning, reaching out to others when you need help or friendship, and learning about self-determination.”

Self-determination:

According to the National Gateway to Self-Determination, “...being self-determined means making things happen in a person’s own life, instead of having others do things to, or for them. People who are self-determined know what they want and how to get it. They choose and set goals, then work to reach them. They advocate on their own behalf, and are involved in solving problems and making decisions about their lives. They don’t have to do everything for themselves, but instead, they make or cause things to happen in their lives that improve the quality of their lives.”

Sexual violence:

Sexual violence is any type of sexual activity to which a person has not freely agreed. It is a form of violence that uses sex and sexuality to shame, bully, control or create fear in another person. Sexual violence can be committed by the use or threat of force or under circumstances where a person is incapable of agreeing. It ranges from bullying to touching that is wrong to intercourse. It also can be verbal, visual, audio, or any other form which forces a person to participate in unwanted sexual contact or attention. Sexual violence includes rape, attempted rape, child molestation, watching other people undress or have sex, showing of one’s genitals in public, incest, sexual harassment, and many other actions. Sexual violence can happen in different situations and by anyone, such as a personal assistant or domestic or intimate partner violence, or by a stranger.

Support Staff:

Support Staff provide unconditional and nonjudgmental support to self-advocates to empower their independence. Support Staff also help self-advocates to be involved in the community as a person.

Survivor:

A survivor is a person who continues to function and thrive in spite of harm, pain, difficulties, violence or abuse they have experienced.