

Memo

To: Amy Loder
From: Sarah Terwelp
Date: December 29, 2015
Re: Statement of Focus
Grant No. 2014-FW-AX-K007

History of the Collaborative

Kansas BELIEVE (Building and Expanding Leaders and Individuals, Experience the Vision of Empowerment) is a partnership between Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) and the Self-Advocate Coalition of Kansas (SACK). It began in 2012 when gaps in services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who are survivors of sexual violence were noticed. Not all sexual assault advocacy programs are 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 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. KCSDV and SACK began to develop lasting organizational change through building our relationship as equal partners.

Collaborative Partners

The Kansas BELIEVE Partnership includes 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 through training and technical assistance, 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 intellectual and developmental disabilities. Its vision is that all Kansans with intellectual and 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 disabilities.

Our Work To Date

The Kansas BELIEVE team decided at the start of our partnership that all our written items would be in plain language with images to make sure that all team members understand them. We agreed on our meeting schedule, our communication plan, our decision making process, and ways to manage disagreements. We have created a joint vision for our partnership which is, "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." And we have crafted our mission, "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.”

Our Focus Population

The make-up of our partnership and vision and mission will define the focus of our work together. We have learned through our work to date that people with I/DD who are survivors of sexual violence are often not believed when they share their experience in the disability service system. We also know that people with I/DD are more likely to experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. For these reasons, Kansas BELIEVE has decided to focus its efforts on people with I/DD who are also survivors of sexual violence.

Capacity to Create Change

Both KCSDV and SACK have the shown the ability to fulfill the goals of this partnership and create change within their organizations and among members. Decision makers in both organizations remain involved through key team members from each organization. Both organizations are excited to make lasting changes in the response to and services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are survivors of sexual violence.