



Capital Area Sexual Assault Response Team (CASART)

Quarterly Report: July to September 2023

Mission Statement

CASART is a collaborative group of organizations and individuals in the Greater Lansing area who are committed to providing services, support, and advocacy related to sexual assault and survivors. CASART contributes to identifying barriers and coordinating services that address barriers for survivors of sexual assault. We promote evidence-based, trauma-informed, and survivor-centered care within all agencies and individuals we collaborate with.

Introduction

This team has been through many rough transitions, especially in the past three years throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. After a review of past materials, it appeared that not only had attendance dropped significantly, but little progress was being made toward this team's goals. This lack of progress was not the fault of any CASART member – it was a structural and organizational issue.

Through structural changes and by creating a 'fresh start' for the team, attendance has already increased, and progress slowly appears to be made. In the meeting held in March of 2023, only seven (7) individuals attended. Since then, the team has grown to include twelve (12) active agencies with fourteen (14) members present at the October 2023 meeting. The current team reports we are excited to see what CASART can accomplish in the next three years as we continue to collaborate with one another and other community members. In the spirit of maintaining accountability and creating transparency for the communities we serve, CASART will be releasing quarterly reports summarizing our activities and how these activities serve our goals and our community.

CASART Goals

To better understand the work CASART is doing, it is best to first understand what the team's goals and objectives are. These goals can be broken down into four (4) categories, listed below. The goals and objectives will be included in every quarterly report as a reminder of what CASART strives for.

1. Coordinated Response: Develop a coordinated response amongst multidisciplinary partners to sexual assault within the Greater Lansing area.

Objectives:

- Build relationships between member organizations to provide holistic support to survivors and to create ease of system navigation for survivors and service providers. • Develop and implement systems mapping of the response to sexual assault to aid in role identification and collaboration amongst member organizations.
- Strengthen the group's foundation through developing and implementing updated policies, procedures, and response protocols.

2. Community Outreach: Collaborate with community members and organizations within the Greater Lansing area to inform and engage the community on sexual assault response and available resources.

Objectives:

- Create a survivor-centered website with a self-guided, interactive, resource identification tool for use by survivors and their support systems.
- Develop and disseminate informational outreach materials on services and topics pertaining to survivors of sexual assault and their support systems.
- Develop and effectively utilize social media platforms to expand community awareness of member organizations and the services that are available to survivors.
- Act as a liaison between community members and organizations and trauma-informed, survivor-centered practices and resources by inviting new partners who respond to survivors of sexual assault to join CASART.

3. Community Care: Establish a space for community care where service providers feel supported by their multidisciplinary partners in the field to mitigate the impacts of working with trauma.

Objectives:

- Develop and implement various networking events and community care opportunities for members of the group to engage in, to strengthen relationships of the team and to care for member well-being.
- Share information and resources pertaining to service providers in their work with trauma to provide community care to members. (I.e., compassion fatigue, secondary post-traumatic stress, burnout, vicarious trauma, trauma stewardship.)

4. Professional Development: Support the professional development of group members by identifying and implementing internal and external opportunities to expand on knowledge of sexual assault response. (Professional Development)

Objectives:

- Share knowledge of trainings and events related to best practices in sexual assault response with group members.
- Provide internal opportunities for professional development through the coordination of guest speakers with expertise in matters of service delivery to vulnerable populations and best practices for sexual assault response.
- Coordinate member presentations of organizational services and practices to aid in the group's shared understanding of team roles and represented systems.
- Improve the capacity of organizations that support survivors to provide affirming, equitable, and appropriate care for members of marginalized communities and identities, as well as unique intersectionalities.
- Identify and address barriers to care and gaps in services through the use of case reviews conducted quarterly.

Summary of Activities

This quarter the team has taken the time to truly begin anew while focusing on two goals: coordinated response and professional development. CASART strengthened its collaborative capacity through renewed commitments to the team, relationship-building activities, and group discussions on systems change to recenter its team focus. This team has used a scenario case review to refresh and enhance each member's knowledge of evidence-based, survivor-centered, and trauma-informed services. Finally, this team has developed strong professional relationships by presenting on one's agency and the services they provide. This practice increases each CASART members' knowledge of services outside of their own alignment with our goal of professional development.

Bullet-Point List of Activities

- Policies and procedures for the team were re-written
- A general plan for the next year was created
- The team was re-structured to include sub-committees, which will begin meeting in October
 - These sub-committees include:
 - Community Outreach Committee
 - Community Care Committee
 - Professional Development Committee
 - Policy Review Committee
- The team signed new agreements as a re-commitment to CASART
- Systems change was discussed to re-focus CASART's mission
- The team reviewed a survivor scenario and discussed appropriate steps to assisting the survivor in the scenario
- The team learned more about each other's agencies and services
- Small group discussions have been utilized as relationship-building activities

- A Spanish translation option was added to the CASART website

Conclusion

This quarter, CASART focused on rebuilding relationships with one another through small and large group discussions and re-committing to the team. This next quarter, CASART will broaden its focus to include activities that will serve each of its goals.