

Coordinated Community Response:

A guide to creating and maintaining institution-wide responsibility for the prevention of, and response to, sexual and domestic violence.



COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE

A GUIDE TO CREATING AND MAINTAINING INSTITUTION-WIDE
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PREVENTION OF, AND RESPONSE TO,
SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

Developing a Coordinated Community Response Team (CCRT) is the first step to establishing campus-wide responsibility for the prevention of and the response to sexual and domestic violence. The CCRT will lead the charge in changing the campus culture on sexual and domestic violence. This document will provide steps for creating a CCRT and propose common challenges with examples of how to overcome them. Being thoughtful about the CCRT leadership, participants, and meeting logistics ensures successful implementation of the team. One of the many benefits of the CCRT is its adaptability. The information provided is broad enough to fit any institution of higher education, and readers should feel empowered to tailor these guidelines to be effective for their specific campus.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Hannah Artiles-Stravers is the Director of the Sexual Violence Outreach, Awareness and Response office (SOAR) at St. John's University in Queens, New York. She has worked in Wellness Promotion in Student Affairs for 8 years. Under Hannah's guidance, St. John's University opened an office dedicated to the prevention of and the response to sexual violence. Through strategic collaboration Hannah has engaged Athletic Teams, Fraternity and Sorority Life, ROTC, Faculty Members and New Student Orientation in joining the fight against sexual violence. With a masters degree in Non-

Profit Management from The New School, Hannah stays connected to the non-profit field through consulting work. Hannah is grateful for the opportunity to stay connected to the urgency of this work by accompanying survivors in the hospital as a bilingual, volunteer rape-crisis advocate.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

As a university administrator I am hesitant to add another piece to the growing body of literature about what institutions of higher education should be doing in regards to sexual and domestic violence prevention and response (often written by professionals with limited experience in higher ed. institutions). I know the challenge it creates to receive guidelines that are a one-size-fits-all approach that give senior administrators unrealistic expectations of programs or protocols that are challenging to implement. If there is one piece of advice that I would give any institution working towards improving their response to and prevention of sexual and domestic violence it would be to create a Coordinated Community Response Team. This first step will set a road map for the work to be done, and will also pull in support to help you, the administrator responsible for culture change around sexual and domestic violence, make a holistic prevention program. Reading this document in one sitting might make creating a CCRT seem complicated, but I assure you it's not. To put it simply, start creating shared responsibility for culture change at your institution by developing relationships with people across campus. I encourage you to take your time and build relationships strategically; in the end I believe you will find your work in creating a CCRT beneficial."

INTRODUCTION

Several high-profile incidents of sexual violence, President Obama's Task Force Against Sexual Assault, and even Lady Gaga's performance of "Till It Happens To You" at the 2016 Oscars have bolstered the national discourse about sexual violence on college campuses. Everywhere campus administrators look, there are new guidelines, legislation, and negative media stories about how campuses are handling violence prevention. Given the multiple authors and contradictions in these guidelines it is no wonder that colleges and universities feel paralyzed by confusion in implementing best practices for sexual and domestic violence prevention and response. In addition, the guidelines or requirements are often a one-size-fits-all approach. It takes only a little experience working in higher education to know that every institution requires unique approaches to these issues.

This document, written from a university administrator's perspective and experience, intends to provide practical tips for implementing a meaningful and productive Coordinated Community Response Team (CCRT). It is no secret that institutions of higher education are doing more with less. This publication will provide ideas that are flexible enough to implement in diverse institutions, including large well-funded programs and institutions with minimal resources. It is my hope that these ideas prove beneficial to institutions with sexual and domestic violence prevention and response offices in addition to organizations where the Dean of Students serve as the Title IX Coordinator, Prevention Specialist and/or Student Conduct official. Whether you are a one-person or a 30-person team, it is imperative that response and prevention initiatives are shared across campus and include administrators from many different disciplines. To ignite culture change on our campuses around this important problem, we must include and empower every community member to be part of the change.

HISTORY OF THE COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM

Understanding the history of the CCRT helps to understand the goals of this model. The model was created in Duluth, Minnesota, to address domestic violence in that community. It recognizes that victims of violence must interact with multiple sources of assistance to get the help required to escape and heal from violence and that only a macro shift in beliefs and behavior will stop the violence. The model asserts that these changes require consorted community action. The CCRT models generates these responses through 1) creating policies and procedures that solicits input from various agencies including law enforcement, domestic violence shelters, and the court system; 2) ensuring survivors' voices are central to decisions being made; 3) and engaging in environmental prevention by working with domestic violence offenders. The Domestic Abuse Intervention Program describes the model as social change to end violence against women (Duluth Model, 2011). To adapt this model for institutions of higher

education, the goal of providing the impetus for social change must not be forgotten. A university's CCRT mission is to create macro changes in attitude with regards to sexual violence on our campuses, including sexual assault, intimate partner violence and stalking.

COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM IN HIGHER ED

A CCRT is a formal collaboration between university faculty, administrators, staff and students, and local community partners to establish prevention of and response protocol to sexual and domestic violence. Creating a CCRT is beneficial for the institution in various ways. The collaboration should result in streamlined response protocols and prevention programs. In addition, the often-overlooked benefit of creating a CCRT is in the process itself. Identifying key stakeholders and empowering them in their roles as prevention and response professionals produces motivated community members who support culture change.

All too often campus administrators with full-time responsibilities are asked to pick up Title IX duties in addition to their regular portfolio. At best, institutions may have a small staff in a women's center or wellness office who work tirelessly to educate university students resulting in burnout and sometimes inaction as they try to navigate the requirements of Title IX and local legislation. The most essential mission of a CCRT is to establish campus-wide responsibility for, and investment in, the prevention of sexual and domestic violence. To reinforce culture change and effectively communicate resources for student survivors, various departments must share the same prevention messages.

According to The Office on Violence Against Women - U. S. Department of Justice (2017), Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory provides the motive behind including campus leaders from various disciplines on the CCRT. These leaders are asked to share the information and work of the CCRT widely, changing attitudes within their spheres of influence. Through the work of these leaders a critical mass of campus members will support the work of the CCRT and the desired campus culture change.

Through this publication, I will provide ideas that each institution can tailor to fit its needs. Whatever makes your campus unique should be what also sets your CCRT apart. For example, an institution with a religious mission might want to think about opening the CCRT meetings with prayer, and/or inviting a member of the religious organization or department to become a member. CCRTs are flexible by design without one prescribed model; however, the following will help the CCRT to be effective.

1. **Culture Change:** The CCRT mission must be centered around creating culture change on campus. A broad mission supports a large array of goals on which the CCRT can focus and ensures that the team discusses

- big picture solutions rather than becoming a compliance check box or spending too much time debating details.
2. **Student Membership and Participation:** The CCRT must work to create a safer place for students to attend college. For this reason, it is imperative to have student participation on the CCRT. Students and student survivors can give voice to their experiences and help guide the team on outreach and response initiatives that speak to the student population. Each CCRT should strive to provide space for students to express their reactions and thoughts by intentionally asking for their feedback and empowering them to share during meetings.
 3. **Community Partner Membership:** In keeping with the original purpose of CCRTs, local non-profit service provider representatives should be full-function members. Community providers can add to the support services for survivors and provide expert guidance. In addition, universities may think about the benefit of including local law enforcement as a community partner on the CCRT. Creating this formal relationship may provide training opportunities for local law enforcement and create a base relationship for discussing cases or problems that may arise.

It is also helpful to be thoughtful and carefully plan the work of the CCRT and clarify with all members what it is not. The CCRT is not a task force, or an action-oriented committee created with one specific purpose that will be responsible for boots-on-the-ground work. Rather a CCRT will serve as an advisory board and communication forum. Members of the CCRT are leaders in their specific areas and are not experts on the dynamics of sexual and domestic violence (though some representatives may be). The actual implementation and work will be done by those who are responding to and preventing sexual and domestic violence daily in their roles as administrators on campus.

The CCRT is not a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). It should not be discussing case specific information, which would be a breach of confidentiality. The CCRT should discuss and approve big picture response protocols while specific incident problem solving, and case review should be left to the Sexual Assault Response Team. The SART may include the Title IX Coordinator, Investigators, Student Conduct, and Campus Advocates.

A Campus Coordinated Response Team can be successful on a campus with minimal resources. Each institution should think carefully about what an ideal size for their CCRT would look like, and how much time they can realistically ask of its members. Two impactful resources are 1) an administrator who has time to build relationships with potential members and develop members' investment in the team's success 2) and a senior-level administrator to host CCRT meetings. However, if senior-level leadership is lacking, continue to host CCRT meetings and use its success as a conversation starter

to encourage future participation. Share with senior leadership meeting agendas and minutes.

HOW TO BEGIN

As an administrator who has been tasked with responsibility for the institution's work around sexual and domestic violence you already understand that developing a CCRT is your first step to building a successful campaign against sexual and domestic violence. But now what? Here are some questions you may want to ask yourself as you prepare for your first meeting.

I. Who will host the meeting?

A best practice for CCRT creation is to have a senior-level administrator "host" each CCRT meeting (for example, a Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, Provost, or University Title IX Coordinator). The higher the authority level, the higher the likelihood of drawing attention from various campus partners. Your CCRT host's role is to be present at the meetings and to encourage others to attend.

Administrators who are doing the majority of the groundwork for prevention and response should develop the agenda and lead the meetings. To keep the senior-level administrator on board and engaged in your meetings, be sure to schedule meetings to fit their schedule, provide a briefing about the meeting agenda, finish the meeting on time every time, and solicit their individual feedback after each meeting.

II. Who will lead the meeting?

The facilitator/leader should be someone involved in the response to and prevention of sexual and domestic violence daily and should be up to speed on current trends in the field. This is usually someone akin to a Title IX Coordinator, Director of a sexual and domestic violence prevention office, or an Executive Director of Health and Wellness.

III. Who are the members?

A Coordinated Community Response Team is only as strong as its membership. To begin this vital step, it is best practice to complete an asset map of your institution. There are two ways to do this. 1) List all the influential people on campus and review whether they are likely to support CCRT goals. Keep in mind that administrators may be influential due to their relationships on campus or the respect they garner, or they may be influential because of their connection to the campus mission or campus strategic priorities. 2) Create a map of all administrators who are involved in the prevention of sexual and domestic violence, including the appropriate handling of disclosures and incidents of sexual and domestic violence. It may help to put a typical student survivor and respondent at the middle of your map and think through all of the different stakeholders they come into contact with during the university's response.

Coordinated Community Response Team membership will be unique to each institution. To get you started, however, below is a list of potential members:

- Students, including student survivors (you may allow students to apply to participate or self-select through their leadership role in prevention programming)
- Senior Administrators (Provost, Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, etc.)
- Athletic Administrators
- Residence Life Administrators
- Fraternity and Sorority Life Administrators
- Public Safety
- Faculty
- Faculty in residence
- Community Partners (Local Rape Crisis Programs, Domestic Violence Service Providers, Local Law Enforcement, Assistant District Attorneys, Local Nightlife Establishments, etc.)
- Mission-Related Departments (Campus Ministry, Faith Leaders)
- ROTC Captains
- Student Conduct Administrators
- Title IX Coordinators and Investigators
- University Legal Counsel

Be strategic about how members are invited. A tailored invitation to each member specifically stating what their role will be, and what they will add to your CCRT, will make their participation more sustainable and productive. Doing so through a face-to-face interaction may ensure a more committed response.

I. What is our mission?

Provide each invited member with a mission when commencing the CCRT to avoid confusion about its role and the expectations of the team. Below you will find a sample mission for a CCRT but remember to tailor the language of your mission to fit your institution's mission and climate.

The Coordinated Community Response Team exists to improve communication and coordination among campus student service offices, public safety, campus and community victim service providers and representatives of our local police department. Meetings will strengthen partnerships among these organizations as well as build new relationships among parties, thereby ensuring responsiveness to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, as well as, designing prevention programs that engage students and work toward culture change. The CCRT will also enhance the university's written response protocol and continually evaluate and revise as necessary.

II. What are our goals?

Because the responsibility to change campus culture can seem daunting and broad to new members of the Coordinated Community Response team, it is important to

break down this desired outcome into smaller attainable goals. The Office on Violence Against Women - U. S. Department of Justice, Campus Grant program suggests the following goals for a CCRT (2017):

- Develop and implement effective policies and protocols
- Conduct ongoing campus-wide assessments/analyses and evaluation
- Ensure campus leadership is engaged, knowledgeable and supportive of culture change
- Ensure culturally relevant, survivor-centered approach with an understanding of university demographics
- Ensure all levels of the campus community receive ongoing training
- Lead strategic planning efforts around prevention programming

PRIORITIZE RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS

As mentioned previously, the main responsibility of a CCRT is to bring about campus-wide culture change around the issues of sexual and domestic violence. It is paramount that the CCRT does not get caught up in the many small details of response and prevention, but rather looks at the institution as a whole. The facilitator/leader of the CCRT will need to carefully plan the meeting agenda and guide discussion to be sure that all members are focusing on big picture change.

The following examples are suitable projects for a CCRT:

- Continuously build relationships across campus and update membership when necessary
- Provide ongoing education about new legislation
- Provide ongoing education about best practices for sexual and domestic violence prevention and response
- Create and sustain relationships with community partners
- Initiate and review data from Campus Climate Surveys
- Review federal and state legislation
- Provide campus-wide Title IX education (students, faculty, administration and staff)
- Faculty outreach
- Create and review response systems/protocols
- Confirm that prevention programs and messages reach the whole student body and are culturally relevant
- Focus specific attention on marginalized groups within the campus population that might need tailored response (students of color, undocumented students, LGBTQ students)
- Confirm that response protocols are survivor-centered and culturally relevant
- Assess prevention programs and response protocol

- Publish response and prevention education materials for social media and print materials
- Review grant opportunities
- Establish Bystander Intervention education
- Establish Affirmative Consent Education

LOGISTICS TO CONSIDER

Now that you've invited campus partners and community partners and defined your CCRT's mission and goals, it's time to discuss who will be in charge of implementing the necessary next steps. Depending on the task at hand various members will have different roles.

For example, if the task of the CCRT is to review and potentially rewrite the student code of conduct, it will be important for an administrator from student conduct to take the lead. In this example, a student conduct administrator might come to a CCRT meeting having benchmarked other schools' student codes of conduct. In addition, they may have already created a draft update to the code of conduct. The CCRT can then review the material, discuss what they like/dislike about the draft update and then the conduct administrator can make changes and ultimately be responsible for the updated policy. All CCRT members should then update each of their specific areas for inclusion in the document.

Remember, most of the time a CCRT functions as a relationship building think tank. Ensure that each task is led and/or achieved by administrators with the expertise needed for the task at hand. In my experience, it is arduous to write policy as a team. It is more productive to share updates and general outlines with the CCRT but to leave the writing and on-the-ground implementation work to the expert administrator.

For tasks that require substantial input from various departments the CCRT can be broken into subcommittees. Subcommittees can be derived for specific tasks or may focus on specific areas of prevention and response. Mandatory Education for Incoming Students, Bystander Prevention Campaigns, Faculty Outreach, and/or the Sexual Assault Response Team are all subjects for subcommittees to address. Subcommittees are a practical solution to producing results as the CCRT grows in membership and focus.

Thinking carefully about the logistics of the actual CCRT meetings may seem superfluous, but how often you meet, where, and for how long, can make or break your members' participation. A CCRT should meet often enough to keep members engaged in the work of culture change but should not be an intense time commitment. How many times you will meet each semester depends on the kind of work the CCRT is doing. If the CCRT is working on projects with strict timelines and needs to provide feedback on various steps of a project, it could meet more often. However, if the institution has staff

available to be doing that work, meeting once a semester to update members may be enough. Keep your meetings to a reasonable length of time and always end when you say you will. If you have not completed all of the agenda items, table them until the next meeting. Running meetings over time is guaranteed to inspire resentment among your members. It is also helpful to be intentional about location. In order that all departments feel belonging and ownership over the work of the CCRT, it is important to choose a neutral location for all meetings.

PREPARING FOR CHALLENGES

The main challenge a team may experience is disagreement or conflict about the work. The benefit of the multidisciplinary CCRT is to have many points of view. If the CCRT is functioning properly, it is likely that you will have moments of conflict on the team. This should be seen as a positive sign as it demonstrates that members feel invested in the process enough to react, and safe enough to share their thoughts. Conflict is a sign of real work being done. Therefore, give time and space for conflicts to be discussed; however, it will be important for the leader to anticipate these conflicts and prepare for them.

For example, say the agenda item is to review and potentially add an anonymous reporting option for students to the university response protocol. This is likely to be supported by your advocate-minded administrators (Dean of Students, Residence Life Staff, Counseling Center Staff) but it can raise problems for your reporting- and compliance-minded administrators (Public Safety and Title IX Coordinators). In this situation, it would be wise to inform each of them ahead of the meeting to make them aware of the agenda item. You can suggest they come with the pros and cons of the new confidential reporting option, and then give each person time to share their thoughts. Most often, in my experience, the CCRT can come to a compromise that suits all parties. Sometimes an action may need to be taken whether or not the CCRT can come to a consensus on the issue. It is still valuable for the CCRT to discuss honestly what the action will mean for each area. This will help implementation be smoother and help people to feel heard.

The lead of the CCRT should anticipate conflict and do their best to structure the meeting so that all ideas are heard and to encourage the team to come to a final decision after a brief period of deliberation.

Other challenges include members' apathy or low investment, resistance to participating, and/or simply very busy schedules that make it hard to attend meetings. CCRTs should never become just a report-out meeting with one person speaking for the whole of the meeting, but members may still feel hesitant to participate even if this is not the case. Subcommittees can be helpful in avoiding members' apathy or low investment. In a smaller setting they may feel more comfortable engaging and sharing their thoughts. Subcommittees also provide an experience that is more conducive to

building relationships with other departments. However, they are not the answer for CCRT members who are already feeling overburdened with their responsibilities. Do not add more meetings! For a member who is often absent it may be helpful to remind them of the importance of having them on the CCRT and ask if there are ways you could make it easier for them to attend. Maybe they need an invitation to the meeting a few months in advance, meetings scheduled at a different time of day, to call in, or meetings during calmer periods in higher education like summer and winter breaks.

Lastly, in order to stay abreast of these challenges, it is important to include some method of evaluation in the process of coordinating a CCRT. Discuss with the senior level host how best to receive feedback from the members of the CCRT. Below are some ideas for how to evaluate the work:

- Set aside one meeting solely for evaluating the CCRT through team discussion, strategic planning, and feedback.
- Anonymous survey/feedback completed by the membership.
- Evaluate the CCRT's work against the goals originally established by the team.
- The lead can implement a listening campaign by meeting one on one with each member to receive their thoughts and feedback. Although this is time consuming, it will likely produce the most honest opinions, in addition to developing relationships across the team.

However, once one decides to evaluate the CCRT, it will be important to share the feedback/results with the team and then provide solutions for the challenges that arise.

EXPECTATIONS AND TIMELINE

In closing, a note about expectations and timeline. Because this official collaboration is dependent on relationship building across different departments, it absolutely takes time to develop a fully functional team. Give yourself a generous timeline to establish membership, and in the meantime, begin to host CCRT meetings. Start with the most pressing tasks. As the CCRT has success responding to the most pressing concerns, its recognition across campus will grow leading to further influence for bigger, more challenging projects. Any change, large or small, toward creating an institution where sexual and domestic violence is not tolerated and where student survivors feel fully supported is paramount. When frustrated with the slow speed or bureaucracy of the institution remember that the CCRT must correct years of misinformation and challenging societal influences. Little by little, with passionate work, the conversation about sexual and domestic violence at universities will change from the negative messages we currently hear to one of gratitude that universities led the way in responding to and preventing sexual and domestic violence across our nation. Thank you for the work you do to keep the campus community safe.

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