

Just ASK Strategic Plan

Overview of collaboration

The Just ASK, Autonomy and Safety of Kansas, collaborative is comprised of three partner organizations. The Kansas Association of Centers for Independent Living (KACIL) is a statewide, membership based organization for centers for independent living (CILs). The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) is a statewide, membership based coalition of all the sexual assault and domestic violence (SA/DV) programs in Kansas. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is a state agency with a variety of programs addressing disability, health, safety and injury prevention. These organizations have a long history of working together to end violence against women with disabilities in Kansas. In 2006 the group was awarded an Education, Training and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities Grant from the Office on Violence Against Women. The grant includes both planning and implementation phases that are expected to result in sustainable and accessible services for survivors with disabilities through local collaborations and systems change. The planning phase, which included Just ASK receiving intensive technical assistance from the Vera Institute of Justice, involved four processes, each resulting in a document: a collaboration charter, a needs assessment plan, a needs assessment report, and a strategic plan for implementation with local programs.

Just ASK is charged with a mission to increase access points for women with disabilities who are survivors of sexual assault or domestic violence. To that end, each organization has a full time staff person serving as a Co-Director of the project. The supervisors of those staff also serve on the Just ASK Collaborative. Through the joint leadership of KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE, CILs and SA/DV programs will be connected around common definitions, common values and assumptions. Just ASK will support targeted, local collaborations and promote safety and autonomy for survivors with disabilities through systems change at both CILs and SA/DV programs.

Although a state-wide project, the focus was narrowed by choosing two local sites through a competitive process to participate in the grant. The focus was further narrowed through the needs assessment and strategic planning processes by identifying and targeting critical areas of service need in the local sites that are amenable to sustainability through systems change. During the implementation phase, Just ASK will provide proactive technical assistance to local sites to replicate the collaboration charter and strategic plan processes, and then assist local projects with activities that will result in improved systems for survivors with disabilities. The Just ASK collaboration also will be working on systems change within their organizations that will result in increased access for survivors with disabilities.

Overview of planning phase

Just ASK spent considerable time formalizing the structure of the collaborative. A collaboration charter was created to detail the group goals, methods of communication and mission. Central to this process was a common vision for a society where women with disabilities who are survivors of sexual assault and/or domestic violence are fully supported in their rights to safety and autonomy. The vision of Just ASK includes barrier-free access to SA/DV and CIL services, where SA/DV advocates and CIL staff are supported in their efforts to provide accessible and responsive services, and where policies and practices reflect a comprehensive understanding of sexual assault, domestic violence and disability issues.

All three partners of Just ASK are statewide organizations. In order to narrow the focus and select target communities, Just ASK issued a Request for Application (RFA.) All member programs of KACIL and KCSDV received the RFA. Target sites were asked to demonstrate their organizational commitment, submit a joint application including both the SA/DV program and the CIL and demonstrate their capacity to undertake the project. Salina and Wichita emerged as the strongest applicants.

The Salina collaborative includes the Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas (DVACK) and Independent Connection (IC/OCCK*). DVACK is a dual sexual assault/domestic violence program. Independent Connection is located within OCCK, a service provider for people with developmental disabilities. Both the CIL and the SA/DV program in Salina have an extensive rural area including satellite offices in Concordia to enhance services and do outreach into the rural areas.

The Wichita collaborative includes a domestic violence program Catholic Charities Harbor House (CCHH), Independent Living Resource Center, (ILRC) and the Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center (WASAC.) Wichita is Kansas' largest urban community. CCHH is part of a larger agency, Catholic Charities, a broad, faith-based social justice organization. ILRC has a large consumer base of people with physical disabilities, although as a CIL, they serve people with any disability. WASAC is one of the few organizations in Kansas whose sole focus is responding to sexual assault.

Just ASK also spent considerable time planning a community needs assessment process with very specific goals. The goals included:

- Identifying gaps and barriers to services experienced by survivors with disabilities when they seek advocacy services from local SA/DV or disability advocates.
- Identifying the current strengths and assets of local SA/DV programs and local CILs currently providing advocacy services to survivors with disabilities.
- Identifying barriers within SA/DV programs and CILs that discourage survivors with disabilities from disclosing violence or discussing a disability.
- Identifying the elements that contribute to effective co-advocacy between local SA/DV programs and local CILs.

* OCCK is the name of the organization, not an acronym.

- Identifying support or assistance that is needed by each target site to continue their collaborations and sustain change beyond this project.

Careful attention to guiding principles during planning and implementation were important to the success of the plan. The guiding principles for the development of the needs assessment were concerns for safety, respect, and accessibility. Thus, multiple strategies were enlisted to obtain honest responses while acknowledging that participants would be diverse in their immediate needs, comfort level, and experiences. Just ASK took into consideration the need to balance an individual's safety and their right to make personal choices that may involve risk. This consideration led to the creation of additional tools that enhanced the safety of a participant while also supporting her individual choice about participation. As a result of this careful planning and equally careful implementation, participants felt safer, there was a high rate of participation by survivors with disabilities and staff, and the information gained was extraordinarily rich.

The needs assessment was implemented in each target site community over two and a half months. Just ASK sought input from boards of directors of each partner agency, Executive Directors, staff and advocates and, most importantly, from people with disabilities and survivors. A variety of tools were used including surveys, personal interviews and focus groups. The findings were strikingly similar in both communities, despite the differences in populations, resources and service areas.

Summary of Needs Assessment Findings

Just ASK compiled the raw data from the needs assessment into major themes which include both supports and gaps in service provision and advocacy for survivors with disabilities.

The themes highlighting supports are:

Organizational capacity – CILs and SA/DV organizations have solid histories and experience with collaboration and partnership in their community.

Organizational commitment – A high level of organizational commitment was evident at every level of each organization.

Survivor-Centered, Person-Centered, empowerment based advocacy – SA/DV programs, CILs and staff/advocates at all organizations operate from a philosophical base that all people have the right to make choices about their own lives.

Trust and relationship building – the survivors with disabilities and staff/advocates all expressed the importance of trust and relationship in the interactions between survivors and advocates.

Site-specific supports—In Wichita, the unique support theme that emerged is the expertise available from the three separate agencies involved – the CIL, a sexual assault organization, and a domestic violence shelter/program. In Salina, the history of successful and on-going cooperation between the CIL and the SA/DV program emerged as a unique support for their collaboration.

The themes highlighting barriers are:

Attitudinal barriers and stigma persist against survivors with disabilities. Stigma and myths about both disability and violence greatly impact an individual’s experience with systems and their decisions about help seeking and disclosure.

Communication barriers exacerbate isolation, limit the efficacy of advocacy and can create safety risks. Access to language interpretation, particularly ASL, is extremely limited. Additional communication needs also exist such as a need for more accessible language. CILs and SA/DV programs also requested better language when communicating about disability (such as using person-first language) or trauma (ways to talk about violence.)

Both communities have inadequate infrastructure and resources. Larger systems within the community also need more information and improved policies to respond to violence against women with disabilities. The needs assessment identified a wide range of needs for community infrastructure that is safe, affordable and accessible such as increased housing stock, transportation, health and sexuality education, mental health services and addiction recovery services and other services for individuals with active addictions.

CILs and SA/DV programs have insufficient policies to respond to violence against women with disabilities. Organizations reported that a general overview of policies would help to ensure that safety and accessibility are present throughout. Examples of policy needs that were specifically identified include policies around mandatory reporting of adult abuse, affirmative offers of accommodations, and policies for staff who may have safety or accommodation needs.

Broader points of access are needed to CIL and SA/DV services. Points of access account for any mechanism to connect a survivor/person with a disability with a CIL or SA/DV programs. Isolation (due to a perpetrator, communication barriers or stigma) of survivors/people with disabilities was identified as a significant barrier to services and advocacy. Architectural barriers or structural issues exist such as badly designed entrance ramps or doors that are extremely heavy to push open. Points of access are also limited by organizational ideas that may narrow how “disability”, “sexual violence” or “domestic violence” are defined, resulting in fewer referrals between a CIL and SA/DV programs.

Policies and services must be examined for specific safety risks to survivors with disabilities. Clear identification of mandatory reporting protocols, as well as identification of which staff are/are not mandatory reporters, could enhance the safety of a survivor when disclosing violence to a CIL staff person. CILs also reported a need for policies to address victim safety when both an offender and a victim are receiving CIL services. SA/DV programs reported needing additional tools and resources for responding to survivors with an addiction or mental health disability. Survivors and people with disabilities reported being fearful of disclosing violence or

discussing their disability due to concerns about loss of their autonomy, the involvement of additional systems or the potential loss of parenting rights. Both CILs and SA/DV programs identified a need for protocols for language interpretation that account for victim safety and are responsive to the immediate needs of crisis intervention.

The criminal justice system presents safety risks and is often inaccessible when responding to survivors with disabilities. The need for additional work with the criminal justice system was identified by all levels (boards, leadership, staff/advocates and survivors with disabilities) during the needs assessment. A positive, disability-informed, victim-centered response from the CJS can greatly impact the community as a whole. Issues identified in the needs assessment include language access issues (both for the Deaf community and for people with cognitive disabilities), and the presence of stigma towards survivors with disabilities. Many needs assessment participants also reported that survivors with disabilities were perceived as less credible victims/witnesses.

Strategic Planning Process

Just ASK held a two day strategic planning retreat in late July. Planning for both statewide work and work with the target sites was established, and Just ASK selected broad initiatives for work with target sites. Just ASK's process examined the identified needs and possible initiatives, then grouped goals into short-term and long-term initiatives through a framework of guiding principles. Further, since the time frame for implementation will be limited, realistic timelines and expectations were a key factor in determining whether a goal was immediate or long-range. Specific action steps and priorities will be established cooperatively with the local collaboratives.

Two central questions shaped the selection of goals and action steps: "Is it respectful, safe and accessible?" and "Is it feasible, sustainable and practical?" Potential steps also had to reflect the values that Just ASK detailed in the collaboration charter. Additional guidelines are:

The voices of survivors and people with disabilities must be present throughout the process and must be reflected in the work. Just ASK greatly valued the presence of survivors and people with disabilities in the needs assessment. The same presence is also needed in the planning and implementation of solutions. The ultimate purpose of this process is to positively impact the experiences of individuals engaging with service providers and advocates. People with disabilities and survivors are in the best position to assess strategies and identify potential unintended consequences. This is only possible with true participation from individuals and care must be given to avoid tokenism.

Cultural competency is key to an inclusive process and to effective services. Individual survivors will bring a myriad of cultural experiences with them dependent on their age, race, disability status, sexual orientation, native language and many other factors. Marginalized groups often have distinct cultural landmarks, dynamics and references. Finally, each partner organization has its own history, culture and frame of reference. Cultural competency must be accounted for in this process. Just ASK will attend to cultural competency as a necessary component of respectful services and in the provision of technical assistance.

The process must be relevant and manageable for all organizations involved. Target sites must feel that the initiatives are feasible and useful to them. This will require a flexible process, one that is adaptable to change in staff, leadership or community dynamics. Just ASK will engage in conversation with target sites to ensure there is a balance of focus and expectations with the chosen initiatives.

Each of these principles requires a strategic plan that is well informed by the local communities. Just ASK is planning two meetings in January and February with each target site to establish a local action plan. These action plans will detail the specific steps chosen by each community to respond to the needs assessment report.

Goal # 1

Foster Collaboration and Co-Advocacy Strategies Among Target Sites

The needs assessment revealed a lack of formal and structured collaborations between CILs and SA/DV programs. Needs assessment participants at every level identified gaps between organizations. Boards and Executive Directors identified a need for partnerships in creating community responses to violence against women with disabilities. Staff and advocates reported a lack of connection between movements. This manifested in communication barriers, safety risks and lowered levels of accessibility for survivors with disabilities. Survivors and people with disabilities spoke of service providers with limited ability to respond to the complex and interlocking issues in their lives. Though many participants spoke of attempts to bridge these gaps at an individual level, sustainable changes in a system require a commitment from an organization as a whole. All of these reports speak to the need for closer organizational relationships; policies, protocols and services that reflect safety and accessibility; and formal collaboration agreements to institutionalize these changes.

Just ASK Initiatives

Just ASK will provide intensive technical assistance to assist target sites around fostering collaboration. The technical assistance will focus on the development of collaboration charters and action plans for each target site. Just ASK will facilitate monthly meetings with each site and provide a structure for the development of the documents.

The agendas for these meetings have been developed using the Fieldstone Alliance model of a collaboration charter. This process leads a collaboration through a thoughtful examination of roles, dynamics and potential conflicts between the partnering organizations. The end result of this process is a charter with written agreements on confidentiality, definitions, values, conflict resolution and decision-making. There is also a written history for the group documenting the original purpose and intent of the collaborative.

Just ASK's first step in the development of collaboration charters will be to host a joint leadership meeting for partners at both target sites. This will be a full-day meeting to orient target sites to collaboration and provide each site an opportunity to network with one another. Just ASK will facilitate a large group discussion on key definitions. "Developing Your Vision" worksheet and materials from *The Collaboration Handbook* (Winer & Ray, 2005.) will be used to provide guidance to each local site as they develop collaboration vision statements. Each site will also begin developing a mission statement for the collaborative using "Articulating Your Mission" from *Crafting Effective Vision and Mission Statements* (Angelica, 2004) as well as materials from *The Nimble Collaborative* (Ray, 2003.)

Following the joint leadership meeting, Just ASK will meet with each target site monthly in their community to complete the charter. Just ASK will facilitate each meeting using tools, activities and methods from a variety of sources including activities from the Vera Institute of Justice, Fieldstone Alliance materials and information from www.accessingsafety.org.

October's meeting will focus on development of the Values and Assumptions section as well as drafting an agreement on confidentiality for the group. Just ASK Co-Directors will use large group facilitation and brainstorming to move the group towards consensus. Just ASK will provide a history of statewide efforts and challenges as well.

The target site meetings in November will address roles and contributions. Just ASK will facilitate a discussion on how resources and information will be shared by the local partners. Just ASK will facilitate the development of local target site decision-making protocol and share decision making models as found from www.accessingsafety.org and share Just ASK's experience with gradient agreement.

Formalizing a communication plan and conflict resolution model will be the focus of December's target site meeting. Just ASK will support the process by using a "Levels of Communication" exercise from *Organizational Communication* (Vartabedian, 1985) as well as materials from *The Collaboration Handbook* (Winer and Ray, 1994.) Conversations around conflict resolution will also draw from the *Collaboration Handbook* and materials from the Accessing Safety website. Additionally, Just ASK will utilize the "Box Puzzle" exercise from *Communication Theory* (Williamson, 1984) and materials from Susan Rinehart on managing conflict creatively (Ohio State University.)

Local target sites have committed to meetings in January 2009 and February 2009 to develop individual collaboration action plans with technical assistance from Just ASK. The menu of initiatives as examined in Goals two through five was identified through the Needs Assessment process generally, in addition to those initiatives identified as site-specific.

Each monthly collaboration meeting will include time for cross training, information sharing and networking. Collaboration meetings are scheduled for three hours. Just ASK will offer one hour of training for any staff of the partnering agencies. The trainings will be facilitated by Just ASK staff or staff from one of the partnering agencies and will be offered twice: in the hour before the collaboration meeting and in the hour following. This will maximize the ability of staff to participate without jeopardizing staffing levels during the training. The purpose of these trainings is threefold. First, staff/advocates and agency leadership all requested additional information on violence against women with disabilities. This was a primary motivator for both sites in applying to be part of the Just ASK project. Secondly, trainings that are open to any staff will involve individuals beyond those working directly on the collaborative and will increase the capacity of the organization as a whole. This will provide a level of familiarity between organizations and provide context to staff for upcoming policy changes. It will also prevent the issues of violence and disability from being isolated to one or two knowledgeable staff. The third purpose of these trainings is to meet an immediate need of the target sites and ensure that the partners see a tangible benefit throughout the process. Collaboration development and systems change is lengthy work. Brief trainings, carefully

sequenced, can compliment the pace of collaboration development. Topics will be decided in discussion with target sites and will likely include planning for safe and accessible meetings, person first language and decision-making processes for survivors.

Local Target Site Initiatives

Target sites have committed to monthly meetings from September through December intended for the development of local collaboration charters. Each partnering agency has selected several staff to comprise a team for the collaborative. This core group, including agency leadership, has scheduled monthly meetings and agreed to the proposed agenda. Additionally, each group will work together to develop the collaboration charter that is responsive to local site dynamics.

Each target site partner agency will be asked to provide a brief history of their organization and the efforts thus far to address violence and disability in their communities. Formal vision and mission statements, as well as individual goals for working together as a collaborative, will be developed by each site.

Local sites will establish roles within the collaborative and participate in a discussion intended to address those roles and possible gaps once Just ASK's intensive technical assistance is reduced. Each site will establish a decision making protocol that is responsive to a broad range of possibilities, such as model policy review or applying jointly for grants.

Sites will develop a communication plan that will specifically address challenges and strategies for co-advocacy. Sites will be able to review Just ASK's Communication Plan, but will be expected to develop one that is unique to individual communities.

In order to allow adequate staff coverage at each organization and to increase cross-training opportunities, training provided during each monthly site meeting will be offered both before and after the core collaborative meeting. Target sites will be expected to encourage all staff of their organizations to attend trainings that are provided.

Target sites have committed to monthly meetings during January and February, 2009 to develop local action plans that draw from areas identified through the Needs Assessment process. Due to a large number of both generally and locally identified initiatives, sites will engage in a narrowing process as they develop action plans for local communities. Information and technical assistance provided during previous site meetings will be critical to local target sites as they engage in sequencing and prioritizing site-specific initiatives.

Action		Steps	Responsibility	Timeline												
1. Just ASK will provide TA to foster collaboration and co-advocacy among target sites																
				Sept 08	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	March 09	April 09	May 09	June 09	July 09	Aug 09	Sept 09
A. Provide technical assistance to each target site as they develop collaboration charter.	Develop core workgroup at each target site that includes staff and leadership from each partner organization	Just ASK Co-Directors	X													
	Hold day-long orientation meeting with both target sites. Meeting will include networking opportunities, information on safe and accessible meeting planning. Begin work on target site charters: definitions, vision & mission	Just ASK Full Collaborative will facilitate Target sites core group will participate	X													
	Facilitate meetings at each target site with	Just ASK Co-Directors will facilitate		X												

	core group to continue charter development: Values & Assumptions, Confidentiality															
	Facilitate meetings at each target site with core group to continue charter development: Roles, Contributions and Decision-Making Protocol	Just ASK Co-Directors will facilitate			X											
	Facilitate meetings at each target site with core group to continue charter development: Communication plan and Conflict Resolution Model	Just ASK Co-Directors will facilitate				X										
B. Support capacity building of target sites by facilitating information sharing and cross-training opportunities for all staff at partner organizations	Determine a schedule of topics & facilitators to lead one-hour long information sharing sessions. These will be held the hour prior to the core group meeting	Target sites select topics and facilitators and set a schedule with input from Just ASK Co-Directors	X													

	and repeated the hour following to maximize opportunities for staff to attend.														
	Facilitate and assist with information-sharing and cross-training.	Just ASK Co-Directors. Target sites will also present on topics, as appropriate		X	X	X									

Goal # 2

Improve access and create welcoming environments in SA/DV programs.

A multitude of needs identified in the report translate into access issues. Just ASK prioritized points of access because it is a first and necessary step for SA/DV programs in improving experiences for survivors with disabilities. Examining points of access and the organizational environment will strengthen capacity to provide accessible services. This must be done prior to any outreach efforts or public awareness campaigns. Stronger collaborations with CILs will enhance SA/DV programs’ ability to identify and articulate issues surrounding accessibility. Established collaborations with written confidentiality agreements will also provide a safe environment for SA/DV programs to candidly examine strengths and gaps.

Points of access account for all the ways an individual contacts and engages with an organization. Most SA/DV programs rely heavily on telephone hotlines for initial contact with survivors. Referrals from major systems such as hospital emergency rooms or law enforcement also make up a significant portion of access points. Telephone contact will not work for all individuals, particularly Deaf survivors or people with limited or slurred speech. A survivor with a disability may or may not engage hospital or CJS systems. Even if they do, they may be diverted away from mainstream advocacy services and towards disability-specific organizations.

Access issues also exist once a survivor with a disability does contact an advocacy organization. Attitudinal barriers within an organization impact the experience of a survivor with a disability, as do the ease and framework for securing accommodations. Points of access also encompasses architectural barriers that may prevent or limit an individual's engagement with an organization. Policies and protocols greatly impact the level of acceptance and trust an individual feels with an organization. The needs assessment report drew attention, in particular, to policies around survivors with mental health disabilities, addictions or developmental disabilities. Additional policies in need of review include language access policies and proactive offers of accommodations.

Just ASK Initiatives

Just ASK will provide intensive technical assistance to target sites around improving access and creating more welcoming environments through development of action plans. Target sites will create an action plan to identify the specific initiatives they wish to undertake. This action plan will be drafted in January and February, 2009. Each target site will review a range of possible action steps and select the initiatives and sequencing that will best fit their organizations, collaboration and community.

Once the initiatives have been selected and local plans have been developed, Just ASK will submit the action plans to OVW for approval. Based on the initiatives selected, Just ASK will work with the target sites to examine organizational policies, protocols, job descriptions, forms and documentation.

A wide range of potential action steps exist to broaden points of access and improve the environment. Just ASK will facilitate the narrowing process at each site as local collaboratives navigate the menu of initiatives that were a result of the Needs Assessment.

Any action steps would focus on system change to impact the organization as a whole. Training and education to target an individual advocate's level of knowledge would need to accompany many of these initiatives, however,

the primary goal is a shift in organizational policy, procedures and function. Just ASK will provide technical assistance concerning changes to policies, protocols or documentation that are highly sustainable, particularly when the new policy includes an explanation of intent detailing the attention to accessibility. Any subsequent changes to policies would also need to account for accessibility and, as such, would provide for sustainability within the organization. Each collaboration charter, coupled with the action plan, creates a narrative for the partner organizations. They establish a written history of attention to accessibility and safety and build support for continued efforts beyond the Just ASK project.

Target Site Initiatives

Target sites will create an action plan to identify the specific initiatives they wish to undertake. Each site will review a range of possible action steps and choose the initiatives and sequencing that will best fit their organizations, collaboration and community.

The collaboration charter, coupled with the action plan, creates a narrative for each local partner organization that is specific to their community. It establishes a written history of attention to accessibility and safety and builds support for continued efforts beyond the Just ASK project.

As action plans are developed, sites may wish to identify all the points of access and referral points to SA/DV and CIL services for comparison, overlap and gaps. Sites may examine their documentation, such as hotline sheets or intake forms, to assess the level of accessibility and respect in the process. Sites may study each service area, such as support group or individual advocacy, to see how safety and accessibility are or are not reflected. Policies and procedures must be thoroughly examined to meet safety, accessibility and cultural competency. Two examples may include policies dictating the approval process for support group or shelter or protocols for securing an interpreter. Local assistive technology resources and expertise should be identified and those resources written into an accessibility plan for the SA/DV programs.

Programs also may track an individual's process from victimization through service delivery to identify potential accommodations in areas such as language use, structure or extended time frames. These accommodations can then be embedded in materials, forms and procedures so they are available to every survivor whether they have disclosed a disability or not. Sites may develop policies and protocols when working with survivors who have a guardian. Such policies could greatly impact the level of autonomy and respect survivors feel when engaging with advocacy services. Policies that support the organization's survivor-centered philosophy should be documented and expanded. Advocate job descriptions may be reviewed to identify structures or supports to individual advocacy and lengthy work with an individual to establish a trusting relationship. Specific steps and sequencing will vary by target site and will be detailed in each site's action plan. Action plans will detail sustainability mechanisms for each initiative chosen.

Goal # 3

Increase trauma informed nature and welcoming environments in CILs.

CILs identified a need for improved policies, protocols and resources in responding to violence against women with disabilities. Though violence was recognized as a frequent issue for individuals, CILs felt ill-equipped for disclosures or assisting survivors in planning for safety. Trauma must be understood not only individually by staff but must impact organizational policies, structure, documentation and procedures.

Just ASK Initiatives

Just ASK identified this priority because disclosures and help-seeking behaviors present heightened risks for survivors with disabilities. They may be exposed to escalating violence from a perpetrator or become caught in unexpected risks from systems. The consequences of disclosing violence are often unclear to individuals. These hidden risks may be particularly devastating for a survivor who is isolated, due to accessibility needs or perpetrator

tactics, from other community services or connections. The established collaborations with SA/DV programs will create a safe environment for CILs to honestly examine and strategize around safety risks in their own systems. Just ASK will provide technical assistance to target sites as they select specific initiatives aimed at improving the trauma-informed nature and welcoming environments of CILs.

Just ASK will assist in the examination and review of organizational policies and protocols as they impact accessibility and safety concerns. The needs assessment identified a need for general policy and protocol review to examine the level of responsiveness to violence and trauma. Attitudes can certainly be impacted by training but organizational attitudinal barriers are best addressed through comprehensive policies accounting for victim safety. Just Ask will provide ongoing technical assistance and support as local target sites examine existing policies and protocols, and, as new policies and protocols are considered, Just ASK will make available any model policies that are relevant to target site proposals.

Target Site Initiatives

Target sites have committed to developing an action plan which will identify the specific areas to address. The target sites will chose from a range of possible initiatives that will directly impact the system and structure of the organizations. Each site's action plan will detail specific steps and sequencing as well as sustainability mechanisms for each initiative chosen.

CILs at each target site will have the opportunity to address safety gaps within organizational policy that will provide staff options and tools in addition to training and education on violence. Documentation from the collaboration charter, action plan and the needs assessment report provide ongoing support for this work.

In examining the issues of accessibility and safety as they relate to organizational policies and protocol, agencies might review language access policies to account for safety issues when utilizing interpreters. In addition,

organizations could look at protocols for staff when responding to disclosures that would not only include increased information for the staff, but improved mechanisms for addressing immediate safety and referrals.

CILs may examine and clarify responsibilities and protocols surrounding mandatory reporting to Adult Protective Services if they choose to respond to a risk highlighted in the needs assessment focus groups." Needs assessment participants identified additional safety risks such as conflicts when a CIL serves both a victim and the offender. Organizations will have the opportunity to explore, should they choose to do so, mechanisms to access for the primary aggressor, protocols for the survivor's immediate safety and formulation of a plan for the survivor's sustainable safety.

Target sites will be able to address victim-blaming myths as they impact systems that support an individual's autonomy, particularly a survivor's choice to remain in a relationship with an abuser.

Sites may also wish to address safety risks to staff. Policies supporting an employee who is battered or assaulted as well as protocols for a staff person working in the home of an individual who is experiencing violence were both identified as needs.

In addition, CIL policies that reflect person-centered advocacy may be identified and expanded to further support the strong advocacy present at both CILs. Structuring of staff and job descriptions may be examined for ways to increase one-on-one work with individuals.

Target sites may wish to look specifically at policies surrounding individuals with an active addiction or in addiction recovery for the complex safety and accessibility needs presented

Action	Steps	Responsibility	Timeline												
			Sept 08	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	March 09	April 09	May 09	June 09	July 09	Aug 09	Sept 09
2. Provide technical assistance to target sites to establish and implement action plans to meet Goal # 2 and Goal # 3															
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2: Improve access and create welcoming environments in SA/DV programs. 3: Increase trauma informed nature and welcoming environments in CILs. 															
A. Provide technical assistance to each target site as they develop action plans	Share needs assessment findings with target sites	Just ASK Co-Directors	X												
	Assist target sites in establishing a core workgroup to include leadership, staff and survivors/ people with disabilities	Just ASK Co-Directors				X									
	Facilitate meetings to select initiatives and determine appropriate sequence	Just ASK Co-Directors will facilitate					X	X							
	Submit action plans to OVW for approval	Just ASK Full Collaborative						X	X						
B. Provide technical assistance to	TA provision will be determined by the specific initiatives	Just ASK Co-Directors							X	X	X	X	X	X	X

each target site in implementing action plans	selected. TA is likely to include review of policy, protocol, documentation forms, job descriptions etc.														
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Goal # 4

Fully integrate the issue of violence against women with disabilities into existing projects within the Just ASK partner agencies.

Just ASK has also established goals for continued improvement within KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE. This work does not directly involve target sites but will certainly inform and improve the technical assistance provided to local communities. One of the first initiatives for Just ASK itself is a more thorough understanding of other projects at KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE. The collaborative’s work together thus far has been extremely focused on the Just ASK project without exploring the breadth of other projects at each agency. Just ASK will share information on existing projects within each organization and evaluate areas for increased coordination.

The needs assessment in Salina and Wichita identified multiple needs that fall outside the scope of the Just ASK project. Barriers within the criminal justice system, inadequate transportation systems and a lack of safe and accessible housing are common issues heard throughout the state. Though Just ASK cannot engage directly with these systems, KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE seek to fully integrate safety and accessibility throughout each agency. Coordinating with existing projects can increase the capacity of each organization when addressing allied systems with safety and accessibility issues.

Just ASK will begin addressing Goal # 4 at the October collaboration meeting, and continue through the December meeting. Just ASK Managers will bring lists of current projects and initiatives to examine for overlap and gaps.

The collaborative will develop a plan to coordinate with team leaders, project directors or other KACIL, KCSDV or KDHE staff more fully to integrate safety and accessibility issues. This may include expanded materials on each agency's website, reviewing tools in development by other teams for accessible language or ensuring that housing initiatives at each agency articulate the need for safe and accessible options.

Just ASK's greatest sphere of influence is within the partner agencies participating in the collaborative. Impacting all the various projects within KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE will ensure that safety and accessibility considerations do not exist solely within Just ASK. Increasing familiarity with the many other teams or projects within each agency is a necessary first step before policy review. The exploration of potential ventures will identify policies, tools and procedures in need of further review. This step will not only increase the capacity of each agency to work towards safety and accessibility, it will also enhance the capacity of Just ASK to make successful and well informed policy change.

Goal # 5

Review policies and protocols of Just ASK partner agencies for more comprehensive safety and accessibility procedures.

Just as target sites can be served by a broad policy review, KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE can all benefit from a collaborative examination of policies and procedures. Again, this goal does not directly impact the target sites but is a parallel initiative to the work being done with local communities. Just ASK will review policies such as language access policies, hiring and recruitment procedures, safe and accessible meeting planning, evacuation plans and safety mechanisms for employees experiencing violence. Just ASK will seek technical assistance from the Vera Institute of Justice in identifying model policies and exploring potential strategies. The initial steps for this policy review work will begin at a full collaborative meeting in January. Just ASK managers will provide an overview of each agency's protocol for policy recommendations such as expected timeframes or identification of

other key staff needed to create policy change. This work is expected to continue through the remainder of the grant.

Action	Steps	Responsibility	Timeline												
			Sept 08	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	March 09	April 09	May 09	June 09	July 09	Aug 09	Sept 09
3. Integrate violence against women with disabilities issues into existing projects, policies and protocols within Just ASK partner agencies to meet Goals # 4 and # 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4: Fully integrate the issue of violence against women with disabilities into existing projects within the Just ASK partner agencies. 5: Review policies and protocols of Just ASK partner agencies for more comprehensive safety and accessibility procedures. 															
A. Examine KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE projects for integration	Share existing projects and upcoming initiatives	Just ASK Managers	X												
	Share needs assessment findings with other projects at KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE	Just ASK Full Collaborative				X									
	Provide ongoing support, expertise and resources to allied projects in integrating safety and accessibility considerations	Just ASK Full Collaborative					X	X							
B. Review policies and protocols of KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE for increased integration	Share process for policy revision, other stakeholders/decision makers etc.	Just ASK Managers							X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Review current policies and protocols such as language access,	Just ASK Full Collaborative					X	X							

	evacuation procedures, hiring procedures, workplace response to violence etc.														
	Collect & review model policies and protocols	Just ASK Co-Directors							X	X	X				
	Recommend policy revisions	Just ASK Full Collaborative										X	X	X	X
C. Evaluate and ensure sustainability mechanisms for continued collaboration of Just ASK and at target sites	Evaluate progress on strategic plan for Just ASK and action plans for target sites. Identify and strengthen supports (including TA visit from Vera)	Just ASK Managers							X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Summary of Short Term Initiatives

This strategic plan lays out Just ASK’s initiatives on multiple levels in response to issues identified in the needs assessment. Short term initiatives with the target sites will include intensive technical assistance from Just ASK. There will be a heavy focus on developing and documenting collaboration between the partner organizations. The remainder of the implementation period will focus on internal systems change for target sites with particular emphasis on review of policies and protocols.

Short term initiatives for Just ASK will follow a similar track. In addition to the support for the target sites, Just ASK will undertake internal systems change. The Just ASK partners will survey their organizations and decide areas where greater integration is needed. The collaborative will also examine policies, protocols and practices at KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE that relate to safety and accessibility.

The focus on collaboration development and policy review create change at an organizational level. These efforts are not isolated to one individual. Therefore, the collaboration charter and completed policy revisions should require little technical assistance to be sustained. Partner agencies will also have increased capacity and tools to continue local systems change work. An identified action plan, including long term goals, coupled with a strong, productive collaboration will greatly enhance sustainability of the projects. Just ASK will request a site visit from the Vera Institute of Justice in August of 2009. The purpose of the visit will be to review progress on the initiatives and identify additional supports to sustainability for both target sites and for Just ASK.

Long Term Initiatives

Long term initiatives were selected to guide the work of Just ASK beyond Sept. 30, 2009. Each of these initiatives emerged in the needs assessment process as urgent issues and require efforts at the local and state level. These goals also speak directly to the collaboration between KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE. Any action to address these issues would require the involvement of all three partners. For those reasons, Just ASK has selected them as the on-going work of the collaborative.

Goal # 6

Increase capacity and efficacy of outreach at target sites.

Both target sites identified outreach services as a place for improvement. The implementation period will be heavily focused on increasing capacity to serve survivors with disabilities and enhancing each organization's comfort and cultural competency level. This work must occur before new outreach strategies are begun. Following implementation, Just ASK will encourage the local collaboratives to rely on each other's expertise in designing new outreach efforts.

Goal # 7

Foster and support target sites to become TA providers across the state

Target sites will have gone through an intensive and unique process in their collaborations. Just ASK will support them throughout implementation by encouraging documentation of their process, challenges and discoveries. Their experiences will reveal new insights to methods of increasing safety and accessibility but also to collaboration efforts in Kansas. Provision of technical assistance to their peers will not be a new role for either CIL or SA/DV programs. However joint TA, like co-advocacy, will introduce new dynamics for target sites. Just ASK has developed a list of TA principles to guide work with target sites. Each site may wish to document their assumptions, methods and values for TA provision to their peers across the state. Just ASK will support target sites as TA providers by engaging with them on TA requests received by KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE. Further support will be given by creating state level opportunities for target sites such as joint presentations at the statewide CIL conference hosted by KACIL, the annual Crime Victim's Rights Conference or KCSDV regional trainings.

It is difficult to predict the impact such TA could have on member programs across the state. There will be a profound impact on the target sites in working together to provide TA. Engaging in such a role jointly will build relationships and increase the momentum felt by the collaborative partners. Supporting target sites as TA providers also builds capacity within the state. Expertise in collaborations around safety and accessibility should be broader than KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE. Supporting local collaboratives as experts enhances the vision and mission of Just ASK and increases sustainability.

Goal # 8

Examine guardianship issues as they relate to safety and autonomy for survivors with disabilities

Examples of perpetrators abusing individuals through guardianship systems were cited by multiple staff and advocates during the needs assessment. Just ASK will review statutes and regulations surrounding guardianship systems across the state and their impact on safety and autonomy for a survivor with a disability. Specific issues cited in focus groups include victim blaming by guardians or paternalistic attitudes that may jeopardize victim safety. Other individual's reported guardianship systems limiting an individual's access to sexual assault services or health and sexuality information. A key ally in this review will be IC/OCCK in Salina with their considerable experience in providing person-centered advocacy to people with developmental disabilities. Just ASK will seek continuing opportunities to jointly address guardianship systems.

Goal # 9

Examine mandatory reporting statutes, policies and practices (to Adult Protection Services and Child Protection Services) as they relate to safety, accessibility and autonomy for survivors with disabilities.

Mandatory reporting practices vary widely across the state. Reporting practices can have a profound impact on a victim's safety and the level of comfort and trust a victim has with an organization. Misinformation about disability may fuel unnecessary reports due to paternalistic attitudes about safety or assumptions about an individual's capacity to parent. Systems and regulations surrounding mandatory reporting are complex. Just ASK will first assess the experiences of KACIL and KCSDV member programs. Drawing on experiences with target sites Just ASK will share best practice models that meet an organization's or individual professional's statutory obligation but also account for a survivor's safety, accessibility and autonomy.

Goal # 10

Work to impact mental health systems and improve the level of responsiveness to trauma and accessibility.

The needs assessment report identified mental health systems as a critical need for survivors with disabilities. Communities reported significant barriers in safety and accessibility when accessing mental health services. Examples include a lack of services for people with developmental disabilities, victim-blaming attitudes, language access issues and therapeutic practices (such as couples counseling between a batterer and a battered woman) that can endanger victims. Just ASK will look for opportunities to jointly engage with mental health providers to enhance accessibility and responsiveness to trauma.

Just ASK Long-range Timeline

Action	Responsibility	Oct-Dec 09	Jan-Aug 09	Sept-Dec 09	Jan 2010 & beyond
Goal # 6 Increase Capacity and efficacy of outreach at target sites	Just ASK Co-Directors and Target Sites	X	X		
Goal # 7 Foster and support target sites to become TA providers across the state	Just ASK Full Collaborative and Target Sites	X	X		
Goal # 8	Just ASK Full Collaborative		X	X	X

Examine guardianship issues as they relate to safety and autonomy for survivors with disabilities					
Goal # 9 Examine mandatory reporting statutes, policies & practices regarding APS & CPS as they relate to safety, accessibility and autonomy for survivors with disabilities	Just ASK Full Collaborative			X	X
Goal # 10 Work to impact mental health systems and improve the level of responsiveness to trauma and accessibility	Just ASK Full Collaborative		X	X	X

Conclusion

This strategic plan outlines concrete steps for Just ASK over the next five years. Through intensive technical assistance and formal collaboration agreements, Just ASK will assist target communities in responding to the needs assessment findings. Careful consideration has been given to the sequencing of events. The development of charters for target sites will enhance relationship development. It will also provide a measure of safety for

organizations when discussing gaps in their systems. Just ASK will also be engaging in systems change work within KACIL, KCSDV and KDHE. Efforts, at statewide and local levels, will focus on policy change, protocol development and relationship building between organizations. The resulting change will address safety and accessibility in more sustainable ways since the systems, not individuals, are the focus. Just ASK is confident that this type of collaborative systems change work will result in increased safety and accessibility for survivors with disabilities.