

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING OUTREACH MATERIALS FOR INCARCERATED SURVIVORS

An important part of ensuring that incarcerated survivors know about the services your rape crisis center provides, is creating outreach materials that are accessible and welcoming. Your informational posters may be posted in common areas and near prisoner phones, but you may also have brochures that are included in the PREA Prisoner Education Handbook and utilized by intake staff and mental health staff to provide referrals to your services. Whether this is your first-time developing outreach materials for incarcerated survivors or not, here are some tips for a meaningful and collaborative process with your rape crisis center staff and correctional partners.

BE ACCESSIBLE

Accessibility is an important piece of making sure that outreach materials are comprehensible to survivors behind bars. Language barriers, learning and cognitive disabilities, access to education, gender, and culture impact how everyone reads outreach materials.

We want to make sure that our materials are welcoming to people with a wide range of reading abilities. Best practice is to write content at a 6th grade reading level – utilizing common language, in place of jargon that only someone in the field would understand.

BE GENDER INCLUSIVE

Gender inclusivity plays an important role in signaling to all survivors that your services are for them. The color, font, images, and language you choose matters. Avoid using color, images, and language that would indicate that these services are for women and girls only.

Male and non-binary survivors should be able to resonate with the information and design. Whenever possible, have a group of gender diverse staff review outreach materials.

BE CLEAR ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY

- Include whether calls to your hotline are set up to be non-recorded, non-monitored, confidential, and free
- Include whether incoming and outgoing letters are being treated as confidential by facility staff in the mailroom
- Track for inconsistencies in confidentiality during hotline calls and letter correspondence and provide corrective training as needed

STAY CONSISTENT

As you develop more outreach materials, stay consistent in your message and branding, including, color schemes, language, and images or art.

STAY UPDATED

Make sure that materials are updated whenever your agency's address or phone number changes. If your RCC has expanded the types of services being provided to survivors behind bars, make sure your outreach materials are reflective of this change.

Materials with outdated agency contact information and services create additional barriers for incarcerated survivors who are trying to find support.

BE COLLABORATIVE

Meet with the inmate advisory council and correctional jail staff to receive feedback and approval to ensure that you have buy-in from the facility and that multiple voices have vetted the materials. You can also reach out to JDI/ValorUS for feedback on your materials.

LAST, BUT NOT LEAST, MAKE SURE THAT YOUR MATERIALS ARE BEING UTILIZED

- Check-in with staff regularly to ensure that posters are up in all common areas
- Set up a referral system with mental health and intake staff to ensure staff are articulating your services clearly when providing referrals to survivors
- Track how often staff provide a survivor with a referral and how often survivors do or do not reach out
- Ask your clients how they heard about your agency's services to understand which outreach materials are reaching them

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

Tip Sheet Series!

- [Designing accessible resources for people with disabilities and Deaf People](#)