

DCCESV Minutes 7/28/21

I. Organizations Present

- Amara Legal Center
- Ayuda
- Children's National
- DC Rape Crisis Center
- Deaf Abused Women's Network
- Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse
- Men Can Stop Rape
- My Sister's Place
- Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants
- Safe Shores
- Washington Area Women's Foundation
- Wendt Center for Loss and Healing

II. What are the priorities emerging in your work (local or national)?

- Raising awareness among survivors about the changing shape of victims' rights in DC under SAVRA 2019
 - i. Advances are only as good or as helpful as the extent to which folks know about them
- Engaging youth survivors through the education system and social media
 - i. We're in a position to be serving more youth than we're currently connecting with

III. Criminal Code Reform Discussion with DC Criminal Code Reform Commission

- Advisory agency was set up in 2016 with a mandate to evaluate the criminal code as a whole and provide comprehensive recommendations
- Title 22 of the DC Code, which details what the crimes and penalties are, has been rewritten in its entirety
 - i. Sexual offenses are a piece of this, but Title 22 is interwoven with so many other changes to reflect the model penal code from the American Law Institute
- Why is this important?
 - i. DC criminal code is "ancient" and in need of serious reform
 - ii. Effort to be more transparent/clearer about what the law requires
 - iii. This is the perfect timing for us to become aware of these changes
- How will this move forward?
 - i. Recommendations will be made into a bill and introduced by CCRC
 - ii. CCRC hearings will begin after October 1, 2021
- The mandate does not specifically address victims' rights
- Consent is defined within the code for sexual offenses
- Do any of the recommendations impact the strangulation bill?

- i. When the CCRC looks at sexual assault, they want to be consistent with other non-sexual offenses

IV. Sexual Violence Definition – Final Review

- If it's going to be a collective statement it may be advantageous to take a couple of steps back before finalizing the definition
 - i. Important to consider different missions and client populations (e.g., "consent" does not resonate with trafficking)
 - ii. Does not fully capture the range of experience for child sexual abuse survivors
 - iii. Language around coercion and revoking consent should be included
- Is there another way to capture the values of the Coalition aside from a definition?
 - i. We should engage in cross-trainings to understand the work of other organizations in the Coalition – not just what they do, but a deeper understanding of how they do it (many members were in support of this idea)

V. Meeting In-Person vs. Virtually

- Our inability to impose mandatory vaccination (or disclosure about vaccination) across agencies makes it difficult to understand the risk
- We have to be mindful of young people in our lives who are not yet eligible for vaccination
- The Delta variant changes things – Practices should be informed by new CDC recommendations
- 2 ASL interpreters are extra bodies to consider for social distancing, and they need to be booked well in advance of in-person meetings
- Clarify what convening would look like prior to asking for a definitive answer from Coalition members
 - i. Where would we meet?
 - ii. When would we begin meeting?
 - iii. Will mask wearing and social distancing be enforced?
- Hybrid is likely the safest and most comfortable option