

DCCESV Meeting Minutes
FY21 – Q1
10/28/20

I. Organizations present

- Amara Legal Center
- Children's Law Center
- CAPC at Children's National
- DAWN
- DCFNE
- DC Health
- DC Rape Crisis Center
- DC SAFE
- FAIR Girls
- JCADA
- Men Can Stop Rape
- MPD Victim Services Branch
- My Sister's Place
- NVRDC
- Rights4Girls
- Safe Shores
- Elisabeth Olds, independent consultant

II. Coalition Updates

- DCCESV is now officially the state recognized sexual assault coalition by the federal government for the District of Columbia.
 - i. Connects us to other federally funded coalitions
 - ii. Technical assistance from RSP as well as other resources, including federal funding for coalition work
 - iii. We are so grateful for all that DCRCC has done for holding coalition designation for so many years and all that Indira positioned DCCESV to be
- We began the hiring process for an executive director; many of you have seen the job posting circulating
 - i. We received about 70 applications; with hiring committee (Najma Johnson [DAWN], Elisabeth Olds [SAVRAA Independent Consultant], Indira Henard and Chandra Dawson [DCRCC], Rachel Friedman and Neil Irvin [MCSR])
 - ii. Interviewed 4 candidates last week
 - iii. How are people feeling about the hiring process? Do you know what's going on? Do you have questions?
 1. Hiring committee is committed to finding the right person for this job, and recognize this means it may take a bit longer than maybe anticipated
 2. We are committed to transparency and continued communication around this process; please continue to share your feedback

III. Priorities for FY21

- As a coalition and as a field, we need to be doing a better job of making sure that our meetings, communications, and priorities (programmatic and financial) are inclusive of the Deaf community

- i. Specifically for DC, there is a large community--between being the nation's capital, a big city, and Gallaudet and other institutions
- ii. We would like to take this on and make it a coalition priority, and invest in what it would look like to be strategic and intentional around ensuring the Deaf community has access to representation and services
- iii. It's important to address the audism and phonocentrism in services
- iv. Najma of DAWN shared the following comments: sometimes we move forward with what we think is best for survivors; the Deaf community is very small, and so we do know each other. We want to make sure that the experience is trauma informed, and almost all of our Deaf victims, their abusers/rapists/folks that cause harm are somehow connected to them or in the community in some way
 - 1. Sometimes it's an interpreter that showed up, or interpreter that showed up is friend who perpetrated harm
- v. One of the ways we can empower our survivors is letting go of the concept of financial expense behind interpreting--we need to look at it differently. Maybe we can work on how to collaborate and build relationships with interpreters that we work with, so we can see and detect these issues as they come up
 - 1. Survivors should be empowered to stop a meeting or conversation that is not trauma informed and say "this can't happen." They may be afraid of making a decision in a situation that seems tenuous
 - 2. Najma encourages people to use Deaf interpreter--teams of hearing and Deaf interpreters
 - a. If a Deaf person has no way to verify that they are interpreting as intended--details may be difficult to acquire
 - b. Having a Deaf interpreter may help verify those details
 - c. Capitalistic approach of trying to gain some kind of quality with as few resources as possible doesn't serve Deaf clients in the best way
 - 3. DAWN values interpreters that will admit if they've made a mistake and be transparent about it
- vi. OVSJG provides funding for the language bank, which can be used for translation and interpretation services for victim services
 - 1. a shift OVSJG made was that they wouldn't be able to fund translation or interpretation services for allied professionals (for example, not able to access language bank for covering the fee associated with interpretation services for a coalition meeting)
 - 2. Funding is tight for the entire city, esp. for victim services
 - 3. What would it look like for us to advocate around funding being allowable or directed towards this?
- vii. Availability of Deaf interpreters and ASL interpreters in the city is a challenge experienced by DCFNE, given their 24/7 operation status
 - 1. The sexual assault community needs to reframe how certification implies something about an interpreter. Deaf interpreters, and Deaf interpreters of color, are many times not found on that list because they lack certification. We may have Deaf interpreters who have gone through some training, but the problem that you mention about availability doesn't always get solved by certification. It would expand the list, but coverage would be an issue
 - a. Needing to guarantee certification makes our numbers much smaller, and does not guarantee it will be the best fit for the client

- b. Many Deaf people are victims of language deprivation; the certification tests themselves struggle with accessibility because they're written in English for hearing people
 - c. The written part of the test is still a huge difficulty for many qualified interpreters
 - 2. There's a possibility that funding set aside to get interpreters of color certified could be helpful, but there are systemic issues that funding alone cannot resolve
 - viii. Perhaps there are opportunities to shift staffing models/contracting models to ensure availability of interpreters, as this is often an issue in victim service work
- IV. Organizations have been indicating interest in joining the sexual assault coalition; a priority will be outlining a process for joining the membership
- Perhaps a process might look as follows:
 - i. ask organization to submit a short letter about their organization, what they do, and how sexual assault is a key part of their work.
 - ii. Have them introduce themselves in a meeting
 - iii. members vote
- V. Updates from partner organizations? Events, hiring, challenges, successes?
- DC SAFE will be hiring a response line advocate in the next few weeks
 - Every year DAWN hosts a pet parade for pets that have been instrumental for survivors; it will be virtual! You can dress up your pet, take pictures of them, and DAWN will post to the website
 - My Sister's Place is hiring 3-4 new positions, which can be found on Indeed
 - i. For a new program developed through HUD
 - NVRDC is doing a partnership with DCFNE to understand the landscape of trauma informed OBGYN, abortion and medical care for survivors; aiming to get a sense of how survivors feel in interacting with medical practitioners. [Survey can be found here.](#)
 - Another survey by NVRDC will be aimed at assessing awareness of sexual assault survivors in the area about where they can access HIV prevention medication; meant more for survivors than practitioners. [Survey can be found here.](#)
 - i. Survey responders can be entered into a raffle for a \$25 gift card; please share with your networks!
 - In FY20, we featured over 125 events representing 32 organizations. Please continue sharing your events and the work you're doing.
- VI. Reminders
- Please complete DCCESV surveys! They help us know how these meetings are going and if there are suggestions or comments
 - There's a link to the survey in the agenda. It's anonymous, please be honest!
- VII. Members-only business