

PROVIDING A MULTI-AGENCY UNIFIED RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ASSAULT: IMPLEMENTATION OF A SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this project proposal is to develop and implement a **Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)** for Lawrence County, Indiana, providing victims of sexual assault with a victim-centered, coordinated and collaborative, interdisciplinary sexual assault response at first contact and throughout the response process.

- ❖ Currently, no collaborative effort to assist sexual assault victims in Lawrence County, Indiana
 - ❖ Sexual assault response provided through the autonomous actions of each responding agency
 - ❖ Individual agencies unaware of other agencies' sexual assault response process and plan
- A serious healthcare and criminal justice issue has been identified in Lawrence County. The development and implementation of a SART will address the issue.

OUTCOMES

NEED FOR CHANGE DETERMINED

Key Stakeholders Identified
Police-Forensic Examiner-Prosecutor-Advocate

- Formation of SART
- Protocols & Memorandums of Understanding
 - Organized Meetings
 - Team Activation Process
 - Proper Evidence Collection & Handling
 - Advocate Recruitment
 - Sustainability

Mission: *The purpose of the Lawrence County, Indiana Sexual Assault Response Team is to provide victims of sexual assault with a victim-centered, coordinated and collaborative, interdisciplinary response at first contact and throughout the response process.*

"A multidisciplinary sexual assault response team is greater than the sum of its parts on any given day"



BACKGROUND

- ❖ Key agencies in Lawrence County, IN respond to the crime of sexual assault-42 reported rapes between 1999 and 2008.
- ❖ The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) identifies sexual assault as a major health concern.
- ❖ Currently, the sexual assault response in Lawrence County involves multiple agencies that maintain autonomy, failing to collaborate or share information with other agencies.
- ❖ The current response process has been identified as failing to adequately assist victims.
- ❖ Jurisdictions have developed and implemented SARTs to address the identified problems.
- ❖ SARTs unite responders as a collaborative and coordinated single entity, creating positive responder relationships and improving the community response.
- ❖ SARTs are endorsed by the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) and the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN).

CONCLUSION

Lawrence County, Indiana has effected change.

A Sexual Assault Response Team has been implemented to provide a multi-agency unified response to sexual assault.

Victims of sexual assault in Lawrence County will receive victim-centered care via multi-agency collaboration with shared goals, clear roles and responsibilities, and measurable outcomes.

*It is important to note that a complete system change occurs in 4 phases: (1) assessing and identifying the need for change, (2) developing and implementing the change, (3) evaluating the change for desired results, and (4) sustaining the changes.

This project proposal's focus was developing and implementing change (SART formation). Continued team building and collaboration will be required beyond the scope of this project, to better serve victims of sexual assault in Lawrence County, Indiana.

METHODS

Partnering with the Lawrence County Prosecutor's Office:

- ❖ Identifying key sexual assault response stakeholders
- ❖ Bringing the stakeholders together at formal meetings to:
 1. Educate and train for SART implementation,
 2. Develop protocol
 3. Develop a team activation process
 4. Coordinate sexual assault kit collection and handling
 5. Plan for sustainability

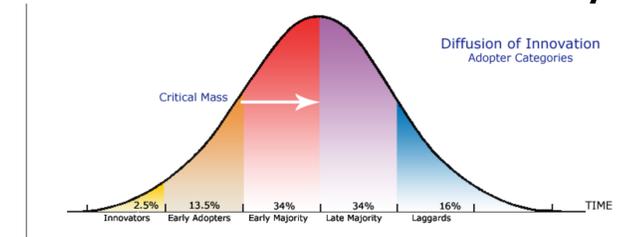


RELEVANCE TO NURSING

- ❖ **Most victims of sexual assault present to a hospital emergency department.**
In Lawrence County, all sexual assault exams are completed in the emergency department.
- ❖ **The SART provides for coordination between the criminal justice system and healthcare.**
- ❖ **A unified multiagency sexual assault response and growing community awareness can lead to increased victim reporting, affording an opportunity to enhance the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner availability.**

FRAMEWORK

Diffusion of Innovation Theory.



A Change in practice can often be difficult:
"It's the way we have always done it!"

Diffusion of innovation (DOI)-Identifies the process as individuals adopt or resist a new practice.

- Innovators
- Early Adopters
- Early Majority
- Late Majority
- Laggards

Peer Networking
Communication, Collaboration,
Coordination
↓
Effective Change

REFERENCES

Indiana Coalition to End Sexual Assault & Human Trafficking. (2020). *SART toolkit Indiana* (Sexual assault response teams).

Kaminski, J. (2011). Diffusion of innovation theory. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Informatics*, 6(2), 1–7.

<https://cjni.net/journal/?p=1444>

If you, or someone you know, are a victim of sexual assault: contact your local police department; report to your local emergency department; or call 911.

No victim should fear reporting sexual violence!



LAWRENCE COUNTY SART