

Accreditation Core Services & Standards

Purpose

Accreditation is a system by which the delivery and efficacy of sexual assault and domestic violence core services are assessed and monitored to ensure the best possible outcomes for survivors/victims/clients and communities in Kansas.

Process

While the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence has accredited the domestic and sexual violence programs, in some capacity, for decades, nearly ten years ago, a group of Program Directors and domestic and sexual violence advocates began defining what core services should be provided to victims in Kansas. As a result of the work completed by this group, the Domestic Violence Core Services, Sexual Violence Core Services, Core Service Standards and Guiding Principles were developed.

The Accreditation program is designed as a five-year cycle. In April of each year, advocacy programs submit a self-study to the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV). Once during the five-year period, every advocacy program will also undergo a site visit as part of the Accreditation process. The self-study and the site visit together provide the site review team a full picture of the scope, efficacy and consistency of the services provided. The site review team consists of one member of the Accreditation Committee (a five-person committee comprised of program Executive Directors) and the KCSDV Accreditation Coordinator. The site review team completes the site review and then submits a full report to the advocacy program. The advocacy program then has an opportunity to respond to any findings in the report. That report and response (if there is one) are sent to the Accreditation Committee to make the final decision regarding the advocacy program's Accreditation status.

There are 12 Sexual Violence Core Services and 13 Domestic Violence Core Services assessed in the Accreditation process.

I. Sexual Violence Core Services

a. 24-Hour Hotline

This core service is focused on immediate safety and involves assisting the caller with planning and evaluating what is needed in that moment. The hotline should provide information on the resources available, information about the effects of sexual violence/possible responses, and medical and legal issues (as requested). Active listening is an important piece of this core service.

b. Crisis Intervention

This core service validates the survivor's experience while assessing safety and providing assistance for immediate safety planning. Referrals are made when appropriate and involve accessing temporary safe shelter as needed. Active listening is an important piece of this core service.

c. Personal Advocacy

This core service is a survivor-driven plan that provides both individual and system-based advocacy for survivors (including mental health, welfare, and employment systems). This service provides personal support and on-going contact while affirming the autonomy and dignity of survivors through their own individualized goals.

d. Medical Advocacy

This core service ensures the interests and rights of the survivor are represented as assistance is provided for making informed decisions about medical care (including the forensic exam). Referrals are made as appropriate and information on options is provided. Medical advocacy includes accompanying the survivor through medical contacts and appointments and/or acting as a liaison with medical systems with the survivor's permission, participation, and knowledge.

e. Court Advocacy

This core service ensures the interests and rights of survivors are represented and that survivors are making informed decisions about the criminal/civil process. Referrals are made as appropriate and transportation is provided as needed. Court advocacy includes serving as a liaison between court personnel and the survivor, with the survivor's permission, participation, and knowledge.

f. Law Enforcement/Police Response Advocacy

This core service ensures the interests and rights of survivors are represented as assistance is provided for making informed decisions about the law enforcement process. Crisis intervention services are often a part of this service, referrals are made as appropriate, and information about options is provided. Law Enforcement advocacy includes serving as a liaison between law enforcement personnel and the survivor, with the survivor's permission, participation, and knowledge.

g. Emergency Accommodations

This core service provides safety for families fleeing sexual violence with an environment that is physically safe. Information, resources, safety planning, and referrals are made based on the survivor's self-identified needs. Shelter, food, and other basic needs are provided and the autonomy and dignity of survivors is affirmed.

h. Shelter

This core service provides safety for individuals or families fleeing sexual violence with an environment that is physically safe from people outside and within the shelter. Attempts at reducing isolation are made while providing shelter, food, and other basic needs with dignity. Information, resources, referrals are provided in a supportive and nurturing environment as they are needed. The shelter should be a place where persons are free to expand their choices, find support, and establish future plans and goals. Appropriate relationships and behaviors should be modeled by staff.

i. Supportive Counseling

This core service assists the survivor by building coping skills, identifying support systems, developing safety plans based on the individual's needs, and providing survivor-specific and survivor-informed information about sexual violence. Supportive counseling should affirm the autonomy and dignity of survivors while supporting and validating the survivor's experience.

j. Support Groups

This core service facilitates meetings for survivors of sexual violence through the development of a support system for participants. Support groups should promote healthy and appropriate boundaries, provide information about the dynamics of sexual violence, create and maintain a safe/confidential environment, as well as be a space that promotes acceptance and understanding.

k. Child/Youth Advocacy

This core service provides age-appropriate group and individual activities and advocacy concerning sexual violence. Child/Youth advocacy should assist in developing a response to the violence based on individual need, build coping skills, identify support systems, and support and validate the experience of each child.

l. Community Awareness and Education

This core service provides educational presentations to community groups and individuals about the dynamics of sexual violence, the impact of sexual violence on the community, the survivor, and the survivor's family, as well as the services that are available for survivors, opportunities for volunteering, ways the community might hold the offender accountable, and distribution of the organization's materials.

II. Domestic Violence Core Services

a. 24-Hour Hotline

This core service is focused on immediate safety and involves assisting the caller with immediate safety planning and evaluating what is needed in that moment. The hotline should provide information on the resources available, information about the effects of domestic violence/possible responses, and medical and legal issues (as requested). Active listening is an important piece of this core service.

b. Crisis Intervention

This core service validates the survivor's experience while assessing safety and providing assistance for immediate safety planning. Referrals are made when appropriate and involve accessing temporary safe shelter as needed. Active listening is an important piece of this core service.

c. Personal Advocacy

This core service is a survivor-driven plan that provides both individual and system-based advocacy for survivors (including mental health, welfare, and employment systems). This service provides personal support, outreach calls, and visits while affirming the autonomy and dignity of survivors through their own individualized goals.

d. Medical Advocacy

This core service ensures the interests and rights of the survivor are represented as assistance is provided for making informed decisions about medical care. Referrals are made as appropriate and information on options is provided. Medical advocacy includes accompanying the survivor at medical contacts and appointments and serving as a liaison between medical personnel and the survivor, with the survivor's permission, participation, and knowledge.

e. Court Advocacy

This core service ensures the interests and rights of survivors are represented and that survivors are making informed decisions about the criminal/civil process. Referrals are made as appropriate and transportation is provided as needed. Court advocacy includes serving as a liaison between court personnel and the survivor, with the survivor's permission, participation, and knowledge.

f. Law Enforcement/Police Response Advocacy

This core service ensures the interests and rights of survivors are represented as assistance is provided for making informed decisions about the law enforcement process. Crisis intervention services are often a part of this service, referrals are made as appropriate, and information about options is provided. Law

Enforcement advocacy includes serving as a liaison between law enforcement personnel and the survivor, with the survivor's permission, participation, and knowledge.

g. Emergency Accommodations

This core service provides safety for individuals and families feeling domestic violence with an environment that is physically safe. Information, resources, safety planning, and referrals are made based on the survivor's self-identified needs. Shelter, food, and other basic needs are provided and the autonomy and dignity of survivors is affirmed.

h. Shelter

This core service provides safety for families fleeing domestic violence with an environment that is physically safe from people outside and within the shelter. Attempts at reducing isolation are made while providing shelter, food, and other basic needs with dignity. Information, resources, referrals are provided in a supportive and nurturing environment as they are needed. The shelter should be a place where persons are free to expand their choices, find support, and establish future plans and goals. Appropriate relationships and behaviors should be modeled by staff.

i. Supportive Counseling

This core service assists the survivor by building coping skills, identifying support systems, developing safety plans based on the individual's needs, and providing survivor-specific and survivor-informed information about domestic violence. Supportive counseling should affirm the autonomy and dignity of survivors while supporting and validating the survivor's experience.

j. Support Groups

This core service facilitates meetings for survivors of domestic violence through the development of a support system for participants. Support groups should promote healthy and appropriate boundaries, provide information about the dynamics of domestic violence, create and maintain a safe/confidential environment, as well as be a space that promotes acceptance and understanding.

k. Parent and Child Advocacy

This core service assesses the parent-child relationship needs with the survivor while providing education regarding the impact of battering tactics on the protective parent and child, resiliency factors, protective factors, and provides both formal and informal opportunities to strengthen the protective parent-child relationships. Parent/Child advocacy should validate and encourage existing and newly learned parenting skills.

l. Child/Youth Advocacy

This core service provides age-appropriate group and individual activities and advocacy concerning domestic violence. Child/Youth advocacy should assist in developing safety plans based on individual need, build coping skills, identify support systems, and support and validate the experience of each child.

m. Community Awareness and Education

This core service provides educational presentations to community groups and individuals about the dynamics of domestic violence, the impact of domestic violence on the community, the survivor, and the survivor's family, as well as the services that are available for survivors, opportunities for volunteering, ways the community might hold the offender accountable, and distribution of the organization's materials.

III. Standards

a. Governance

This standard is often evidenced in the board meeting minutes and reveals the board meets on a regular basis, develops and implements fundraising strategies for the organization, recruits new board members, provides general oversight to the fiscal activities of the organization, provides ongoing supervision and annual evaluations for the director, makes decisions about retention and salary/benefits for the director, provides guidance to the director for ongoing administration practices, develops and conducts an outcome-based evaluation, contracts an annual outside audit, and hires a new director as needed.

b. Administration

This standard is often evidenced in the annual budget documents, accounting documents, audit paperwork, policy and procedure manual, and the personnel handbook. The administrative standard is met when budgets are developed and maintained, accounting services are provided, grant records and budgets are found consistent with grant requirements, personnel services are provided, work is conducted with other community agencies to further the program's mission and goals, and board initiatives are carried out for policy and planning initiatives.

The core services and standards should be delivered in accordance with the following Guiding Principles:

Guiding Principles

These guiding principles are intended to inform the implementation of the Sexual and Domestic Violence Accreditation Core Services and Standards. They are not a separate consideration but are intended for full inclusion in each standard and core service.

a. Competent

All survivors must have access to competent sexual and domestic violence services.

b. Safe and Confidential

All survivors must have access to safe and confidential sexual and domestic violence services.

c. Respect, Dignity and Compassion

All survivors must be treated with the utmost respect, dignity and compassion.

d. Trauma-Informed and Survivor-Centered

All services must be provided in a trauma-informed and survivor-centered manner. Individual survivor experiences, including the impact(s) of trauma and any barriers faced by that survivor, must be taken into account.

e. Informed by Survivors

All services must be informed by the needs of survivors. Survivors can inform the work in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to: survey responses, focus groups, evaluation of a particular service, roundtable discussions, among others.

f. Culturally Relevant

All services must be provided in a culturally relevant manner, meaning that they are informed by the traditions, customs and beliefs of the survivor and the community/communities being served.

g. Free and Voluntary

All services must be free and voluntary (not a condition of service).

h. Universally Accessible

All services must be available without regard to physical or mental ability, language proficiency, literacy, or other individual characteristics. Additionally, all interpreter services must be provided by a trained interpreter.

i. Available to All

All services must be available to all persons regardless of ethnicity, race, education level, gender, gender identity, age, economic status, sexual orientation, immigration status, geographic location, marital status, spiritual beliefs, ability/disability, or criminal status.

