

**AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY
INTERAGENCY SEXUAL ASSAULT TEAM
February 2019**

Update:
***OBTAINING VICTIM FEEDBACK TO MEASURE
IMPACT, SUCCESS AND NEW DIRECTIONS:***
*A Best Practice Review and Recommendations for Travis County Agencies
Responding to Reported Adult Sexual Assaults*

In the Spring of 2018, the ISAT Team launched a project to examine best practices for obtaining and utilizing victim feedback as part of their initiative of looking at where and why reported sexual assault cases fall off in the system. The Team acknowledged the need for hearing directly from victims to help inform our work not only on this project but future projects. Key activities and timeline of the project were:

Key Activities:	Timeline:
Identify current local efforts in collecting victim feedback	Feb-March 2018
Complete a literature review on best practices	March-May 2018
Review and discuss key findings from best practice review	May 2018
Make recommendations to Exec Committee	June 2018/Jan 2019
Identify next steps	Jan-March 2019
Draft formal report	Jan-April 2019

Highlights of the some of the key findings to date include:

- **Local Efforts:** Two local entities who systemically respond to reported sexual assaults collect victim feedback regularly and both are “point in time” surveys (at the end of the visit) but there are opportunities for engagement with other current victim engagement initiatives.

- **Best Practice Review:**
 1. Prioritize sexual assault victim needs by integrating sexual assault victim feedback into criminal justice agency work to develop sustainable, evidence-based, victim-centered jurisdictional responses and agency practices.
 2. Identify relevant and pertinent information so agencies can evaluate jurisdictional, agency, and department responses to sexual assault with in the community.
 3. Develop a mixed-method framework to incorporate sexual assault victims’ personal views, experiences, successes, criticisms, and suggestions for improvement of the criminal justice system. The minimum requirements of any such framework will include:
 4. Enlist the aid of an independent evaluator to obtain technical assistance to create jurisdictionally appropriate, culturally relevant, and victim/survivor accessible methods for obtaining sexual assault victim feedback.
 5. Protect the identity and privacy of sexual assault victims by developing participant confidentiality protocols, procedures, and notifications.

6. Provide participants with participation incentives.
7. Utilize expert outside research agencies/agent(s) to conduct interviews and/or focus groups and to distribute, collect, analyze, and report on findings pertaining to victims' experiences.
8. Document and distribute the results of victim feedback (i.e. implementation process, successes, and failures) regarding their criminal justice experiences to victims, partner agencies, and the community.
9. Produce sustainable, evidence-based, victim-centered practices by developing and updating written protocols and procedures based on findings.

Recommendations Made by the ISAT Team to the Executive Committee:

- Victim feedback should be solicited:
 - By individual agencies for point in time assessments; and
 - For a system-wide assessment.
- Utilize multi-medium strategies:
 - Focus groups;
 - Web, telephone, and/or mail surveys;
 - In person interviews;
 - Self-administered questionnaires; and
 - Public forums
- Apply multi-faceted evaluation strategies that includes:
 - Quantitative and qualitative questions/measurements and
 - Measures short-and long-term outcomes
- Utilize outside research agencies where/when possible
- Exercise opt-in /opt-out option for surveys and participant consent

Actions Taken/Next Steps:

- Launched conversations to link next steps with current local victim feedback/engagement projects:
 - A/TC Family Violence Task Force victim focus groups and surveys regarding the Batterers Intervention and Prevention Program assessment;
 - APD's Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) grant project in the development of a comprehensive victim notification plan around results from kit testing; and
 - APD's agency community survey tool they are developing and how it may be helpful in getting victim feedback in general.
- Met with Institute of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (IDVSA) at UT Austin School of Social Work to discuss project to date and ways that they may be able to help with next steps;
- Reaching out to national technical assistance providers for additional guidance; and
- Finalizing a full report to be released in March/April 2019.

For additional information about ISAT or this project, contact:

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*A Best Practice Review and Recommendations for Travis County Agencies
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(As of February 2019)

BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). (2000). What Do Victims Want? Effective Strategies to Achieve Justice for Victims of Crime. IACP Summit on Victims of Crime, 1999.
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SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

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