



Austin/Travis County
Sexual Assault Response and Resource
Team Community Needs Assessment

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Sexual Assault Response and Resource Team Community Needs Assessment

Overview

- Background
- Methodology
- Limitations
- Key Findings
- Recommendations

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Background

- The assessment is intended to help identify
 - How SARRT members are responding to sexual assault reports;
 - Assist the response community to identify service gaps and strengths;
 - Gain a better understanding for why some victims do or do not report sexual assault;
 - Explore the needs of culturally specific communities that may not be receiving services.

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Methodology

Data Collection

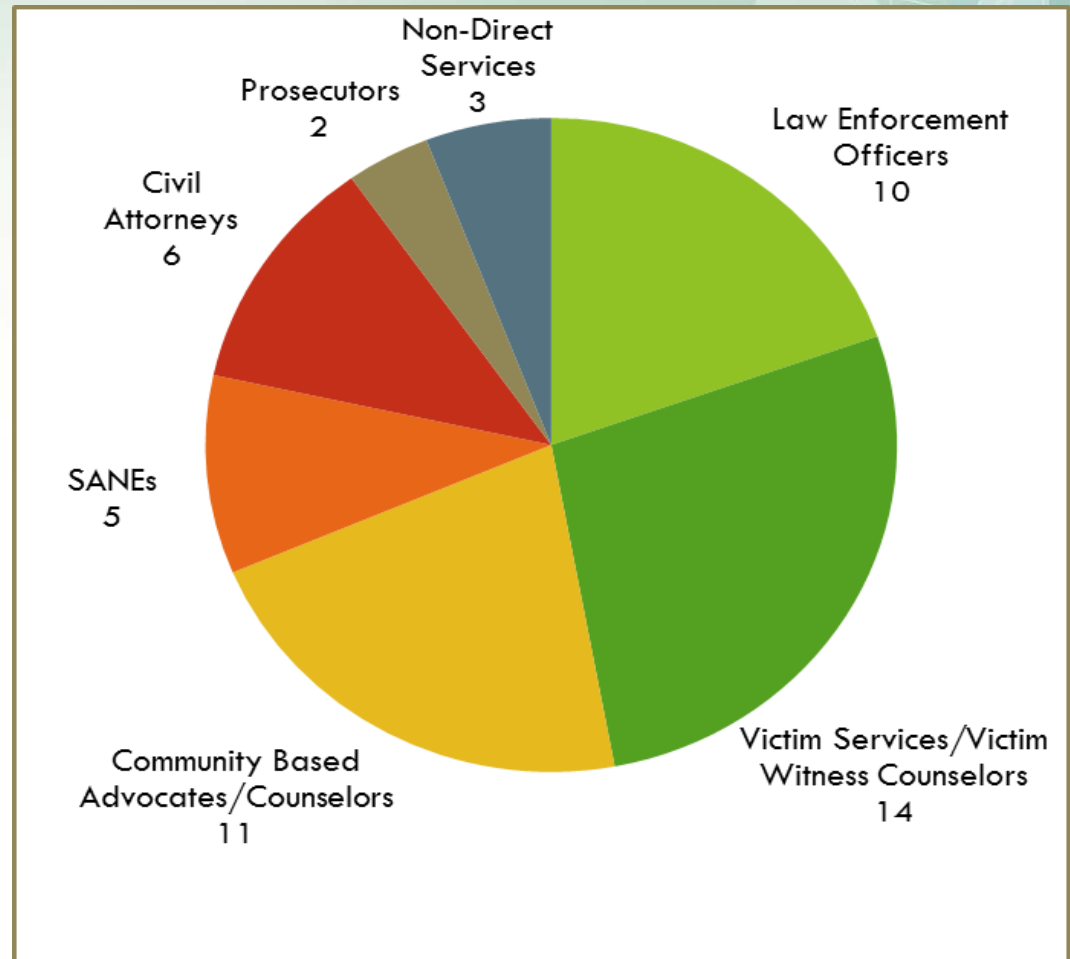
- **Phase 1** was a look at the demographics and size of Austin/Travis County, including the breakdown by age, ethnic group, and language
- **Phase 2** was to conduct in-depth, in-person interviews with individuals from all SARRT member agencies, as well as other agencies that actively participate in SARRT
- **Phase 3** was to conduct phone interviews with survivors of sexual assault about their experiences with the response provided to them

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Interviews

- 51 Professionals completed in person interviews
- 24 survivors completed phone interviews
- Analysis of responses and coding was completed by a small multidisciplinary team



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Some Limitations

- Interviews were voluntary, and there is a range of participation from different disciplines
- Interviews with survivors only included those that had made a report to police, so future work should include those that have not reported to LE to gain a greater perspective. Approximately 500 survivors were considered eligible, 46 initially expressed interest, and 24 completed interviews.
- Resources and access limited our ability to explore questions related to university systems and long term outcomes for survivors

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Key Findings

2/3 of professionals reported that they did not have time to adequately address their workload

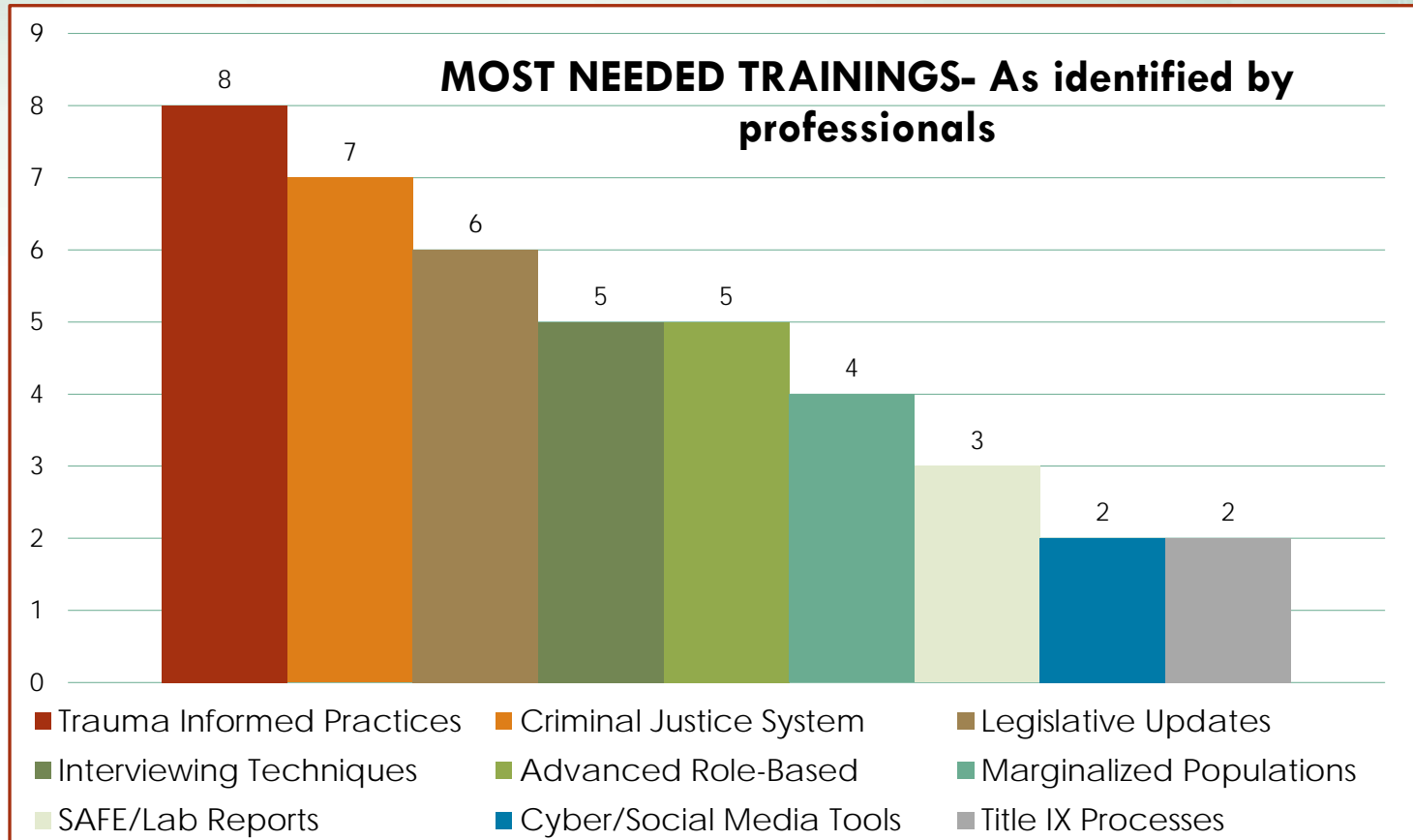
Training on trauma-informed practices was both the **most requested training** by professionals and the **most recommended** training for the community

94 percent of professionals do not believe that the law adequately addresses the crime of sexual assault

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Training



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Gaps/Challenges in the Sexual Assault Statute

- Lack of clarity on Intoxication, Incapacitation & Coercion
- Short Statute of Limitations
- Not uniformly Applied
- Judicial Apathy
- No Code for Groping
- Lack of clarity & limited definition of Consent

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Findings, cont.

Unless initiated by a victim, the **majority** of community-based and system based advocates are unable to maintain ongoing contact with victims due to capacity constraints

Immigrants and undocumented survivors were most frequently identified by participants as an underserved group by the Austin/Travis county community

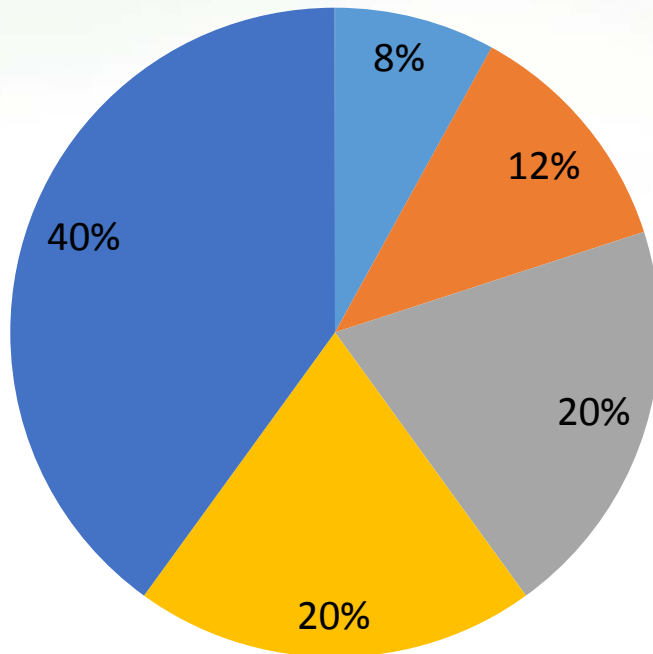
Issues with the system, including the length of the criminal justice process, was cited by professionals as the most common reason for victim attrition

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Underserved populations

% of professionals identifying this as the most underserved population(s)



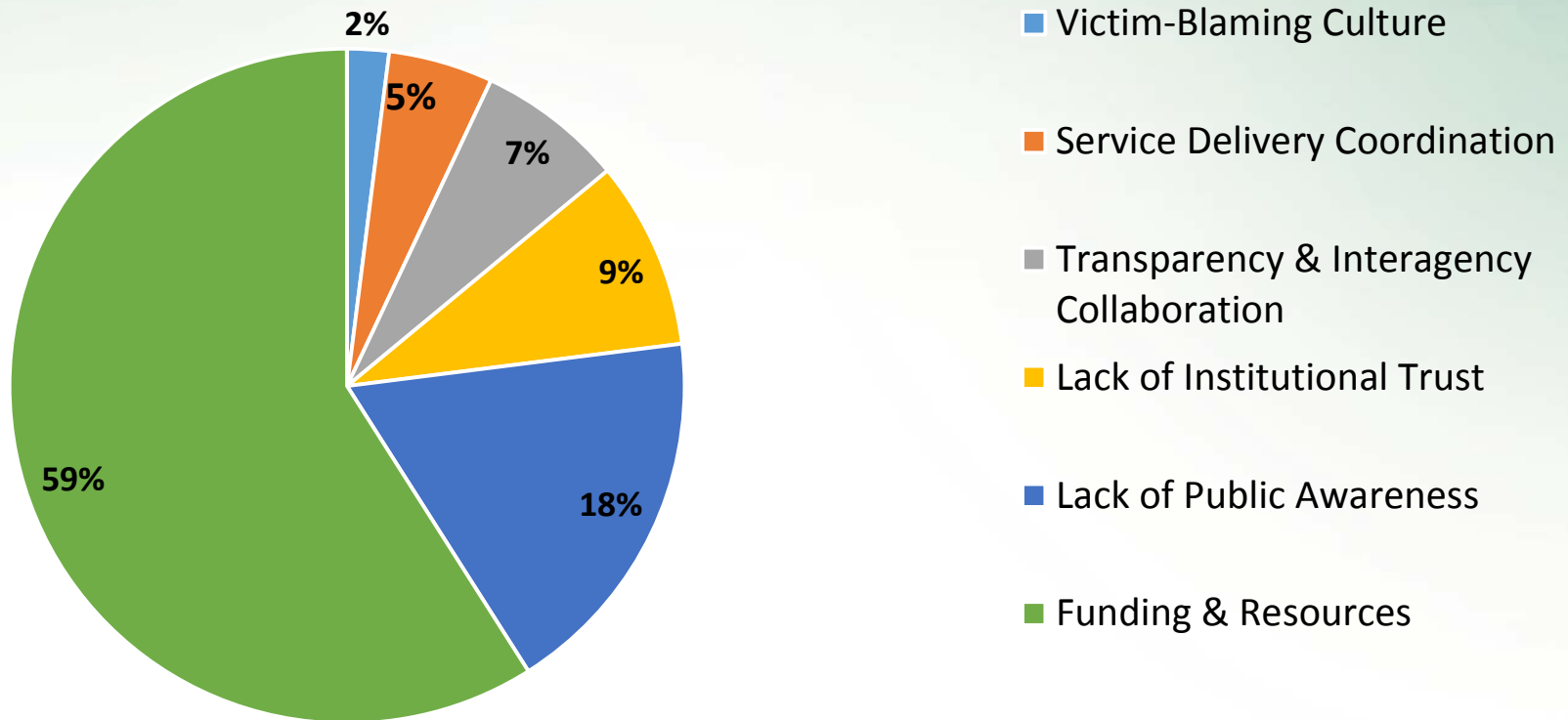
- Teens/College Age
- Mental Health/Substance Abuse
- People of Color
- LGBTQ+
- Immigrants/Undocumented

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Challenges to Service Provision

% of Professionals identifying this as the primary challenge

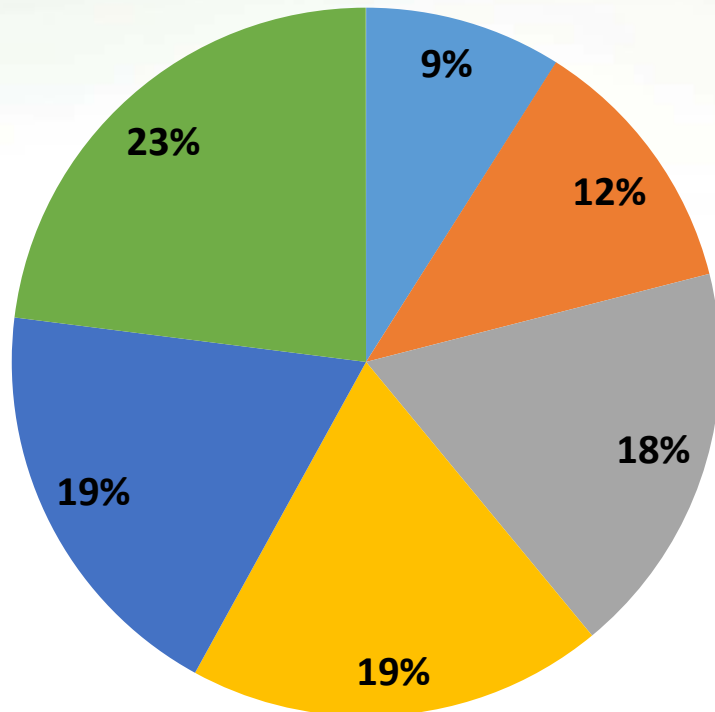


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Challenges to Investigation & Prosecution

% of Professionals identifying this as the primary challenge



- Lack of Community Awareness
- Barriers to Victim Engagement
- Criminal Justice Process
- Evidentiary Barriers
- Victim Blaming Culture
- Prosecution

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Findings continued

75 percent of survivors felt believed by the people investigating their case

Survivors most frequently cited the **protection of others** as the reason that they reported the sexual assault to police

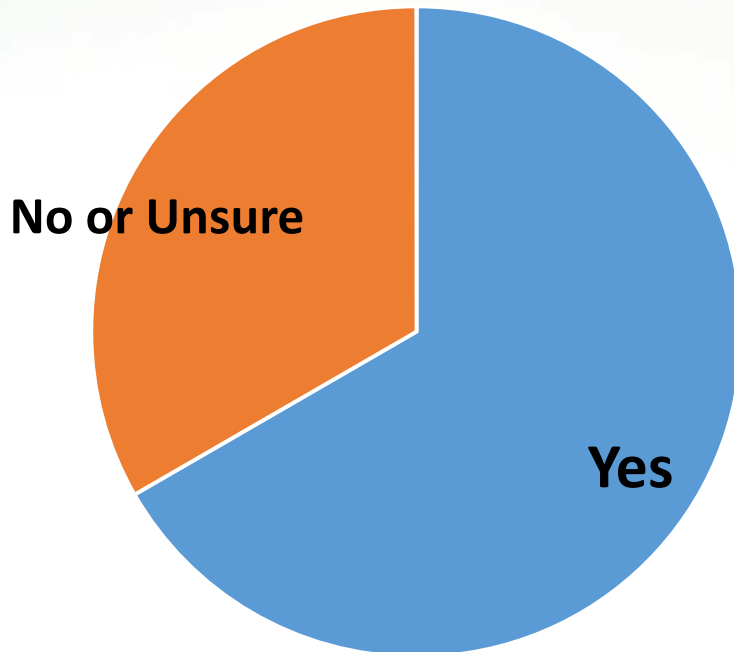
Access to **counseling** was the biggest unmet need identified by survivors

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Survivor feedback

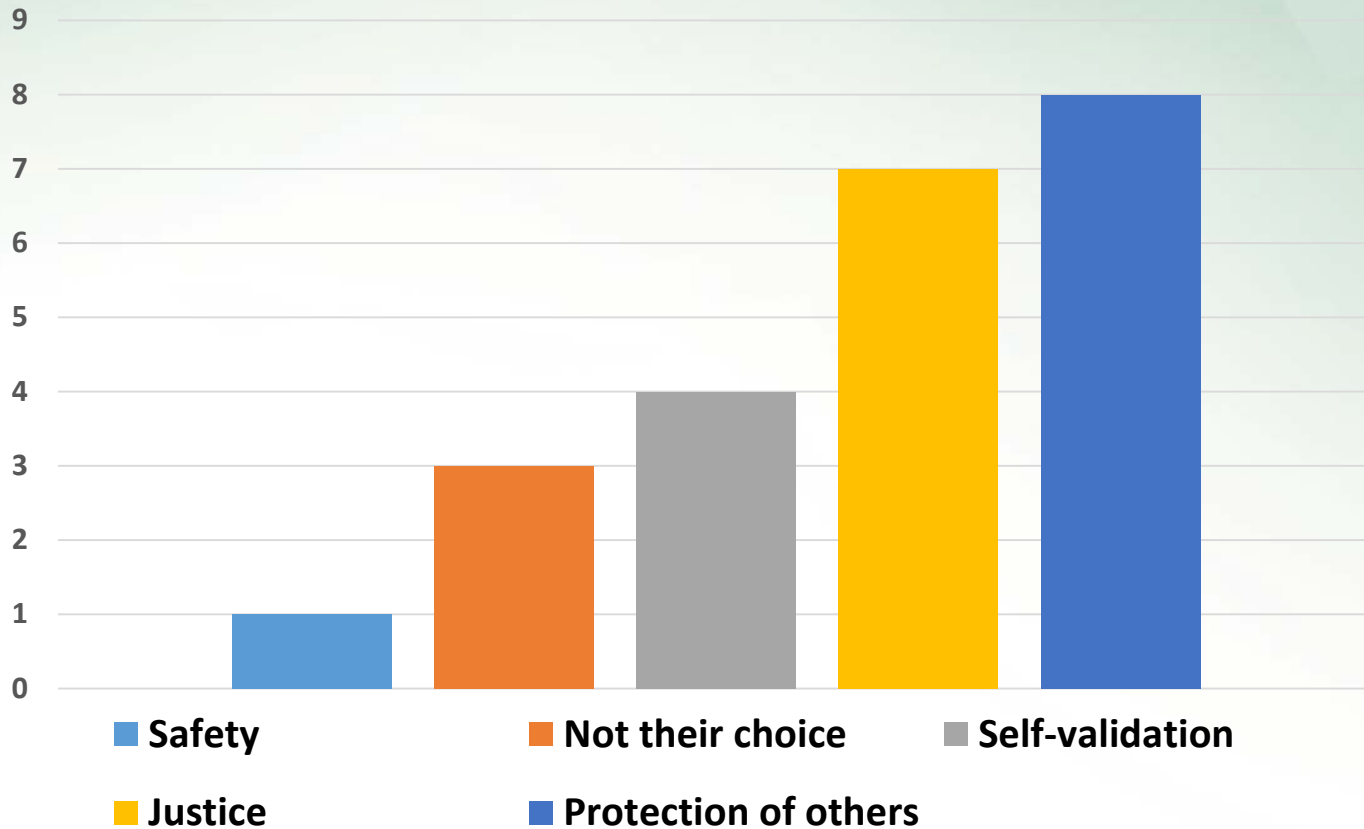
Do you know what the current status of your case is?



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Reasons for Reporting



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Some Recommendations

- Increase staffing across all parts of the legal and service based response system
- Explore the implementation of ongoing cross-training for criminal justice personnel and community based agencies
- Develop protocols to increase efficiency and ensure that systemic timeframes are as short as possible
- Ensure that criminal case outcomes are clearly documented and communicated to community stakeholders
- Ensure that pseudonyms are utilized when requested.
- Extend additional outreach to underserved communities and investment in translation services

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For more information

- Please contact Kristen Lenau,
klenau@safeaustin.org
- For clients or those in need of services, you can also utilize the 24/7 confidential and free **SAFEline**: Call: 512.267.SAFE (7233); Text: 737.888.SAFE (7233); www.safeaustin.org/chat