The Power of Volunteers: Creating Community and Peer Supports

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Be gentle with yourself

Take care of yourself!
We are here to talk about...

1. How we train volunteers
2. How we support volunteers
3. How we ensure a connection between volunteers and our agency
4. Creating an action plan for your team
What do you hope to improve?
Who are we?
BARCC’s Mission

To end sexual violence through healing and social change
Service Area

29 cities & towns in Greater Boston

With the help of our professional staff and more than 100 dedicated volunteers, BARCC serves 29 cities from our offices in Cambridge and Boston and community sites in Chelsea and Dorchester.

Data Sources:
Mass GIS (www.mass.gov/mgis/); and Tufts GIS Center (gis.tufts.edu).
Who We Serve

➢ Survivors who have experienced any form of sexual violence regardless of when the violence occurred
➢ Survivors 12 years and older
➢ Survivors of all genders, abilities, and backgrounds
➢ Significant others, family, and friends of survivors
Our Services

- Hotline (phone/webchat) 24/7
- Medical Advocacy 24/7
- Counseling
- Legal Advocacy
- Case Management
- Community Awareness & Prevention
- Survivor Speakers Bureau
- AFI
- Access to Forensic Information Project
- PREA
- Prison Rape Elimination Act Project
- YLC
- Youth Leadership Corps

Our bread & butter!
Services provided in 2018

- Hotline Calls: 4,000
- Med Ad Cases: 500
- Trainings & Workshops: 200
- Individual Counseling Sessions: 2,100
- Group Counseling Sessions: 290
- People reached in Training: 1,600
- Legal Advocacy Sessions: 1,200
- Case Management Sessions: 1,000
- PREA Calls: 165
Today we’ll be focusing most on...

Medical Advocacy 24/7

Hotline (phone/webchat) 24/7
Direct Service Volunteers at BARCC

- Application
- Information and Interview Session
- 40 hour training
- Buddy Case
- 1 year Commitment
- 1 Shift a week
- 2 Meetings a month

We ask a lot from our volunteers!
Direct Service Volunteers at BARCC - Hotline

- **Hotline:**
  - Phone: 24 hour program
    - 42 Shifts a week
    - Volunteers:
      - 58 On Calls,
      - 26 Back ups
  - Chat: 9am-11pm, 7 days a week
    - 21 Shifts a week
    - Volunteers:
      - 24 On Calls
Direct Service Volunteers at BARCC - Medical Advocacy

- Medical Advocacy
  - 44 Shifts a week
  - Volunteers
    - 50 On calls
    - 10 Peer Supervisors
Designing a Volunteer Training
Rape Crisis Counselor Training Revamp!
What are the “musts”?

- Federal/State requirements?
- Agency requirements?
- Ethical requirements?
- Plain old best practices?
Consultant?

- Who has a bird’s eye view?
- Internal v. External
- But...don’t forget to listen to your own instincts!
Overarching Skills

Ensuring each volunteer was able to:

- Understand and talk about BARCC Services
- Respond appropriately to disclosures
- Empower survivors to make their own decisions
- Anti-oppression lens and how that affects survivors and the work we do
Anti- Oppression Framework

Oppression:

The pervasive and active, inequitable use of power by one group to prevent other groups from being free or equal. 

Napikoski and Lewis, 2017

What does this mean to BARCC?

Why this is important throughout our work?
Anti- Oppression Framework

Where we started:
● Basic “culture” training that I ran
● Didn’t reach all of our goals

Process:
● Team of BARCC staff and a reflection on our clients and their needs
● Feedback from many volunteer trainings, and our current volunteers

Where we ended/ where we are going:
● Starts on day one, with a two hour section in our training
● Continued to weave in throughout training
● After training ends
Anti- Oppression Framework

Final Goals of the training is for volunteers to be able to:

1. Define and understand oppression, sexual violence, and BARCC’s commitment to anti-oppression work
2. Reflect on:
   a. Ourselves and barriers we face as providers
   b. Barriers clients/survivors face when accessing services
3. Discuss and identify what volunteers could do going forward to push back against oppression
Hands on Learning

- Survivor speaker--listening, asking questions
- See the evidence collection kit and touching it
  - SANE nurse
- Role plays
- Lots of scenarios
- Practicing what being on call is like
- Current volunteers coming in to share knowledge
Skill Building for Each Type of Volunteer

Fears/Concerns from each volunteer group. Where our time was most spent:

- **Hotline:** Mandated reporting, containment/boundaries
- **Medical Advocacy:** Starting and ending a case

Adding so many role plays!
Time to Build Connections & Self Care

- Check ins & check outs
- Fidgets & snacks
- Establishing a small group from the beginning and working in that group throughout the week.

**Breaks**
- Time to process
- Time to connect with fellow volunteers
Evaluations/ Feedback

- In-person feedback session (plus/delta)
- Written (daily v. comprehensive)
- Question/comment box
- Outside resources?
“Life changing and motivating.”
— a new volunteer on BARCC’s rape crisis counselor training

“BARCC’s training should be mandatory for all citizens of the world.”
— a new volunteer on BARCC’s rape crisis counselor training
Supporting Volunteers
Keeping Volunteers Involved- After Training

What to consider

- What resources do you have available to you?
- What is free?
- Where do you need to spend money on? And what is your budget?
- What do volunteers actually want?
Keeping Volunteers Involved - after training ends

● **Resources:**
  ○ BARCC Staff
  ○ Community Partners

● **Free:**
  ○ Including volunteers in decision making and feedback of the program

● **Costs:**
  ○ Ensuring a clear budget
  ○ Snacks!
  ○ Travel costs
Connecting Volunteers with Staff

- Staff assist with training
- Staff attend volunteer meetings
- Staff at graduation
Engaging and Retaining - Issues

- Ghosting/Disappearing
- Not fulfilling requirements
  - Stuck in a tough spot of needing help while holding folks accountable
- Sudden changes in one’s schedule
Celebrating and Building community- Small Picture

- Highlighting successes
  - For new volunteers, for volunteers going above and beyond (this can be done in person or email)
- Celebrating anniversaries and/or milestones
- Engaging one on one
- Asking what people’s favorite snacks are
- Creating “buddy groups” to hold people accountable
Celebrating and Building community - Big Picture

- Group meetings twice a month.
- Lead/Supervisor Volunteers:
  - Having levels to support you and your volunteers.
  - Getting feedback from them
  - Specialized training.
- Involve them in picking new volunteers and training them
  - Being a representation of their team
- Thanking volunteers
- Staff were volunteers before being hired
Next Steps
What do you want to improve?

Using Action Planning tool to take notes, consider some strategies you can bring back to your agencies!
Questions?