The Role of the Campus Victim Service Provider

The Campus Advocate

CAMPUS
Technical Assistance and Resource Project

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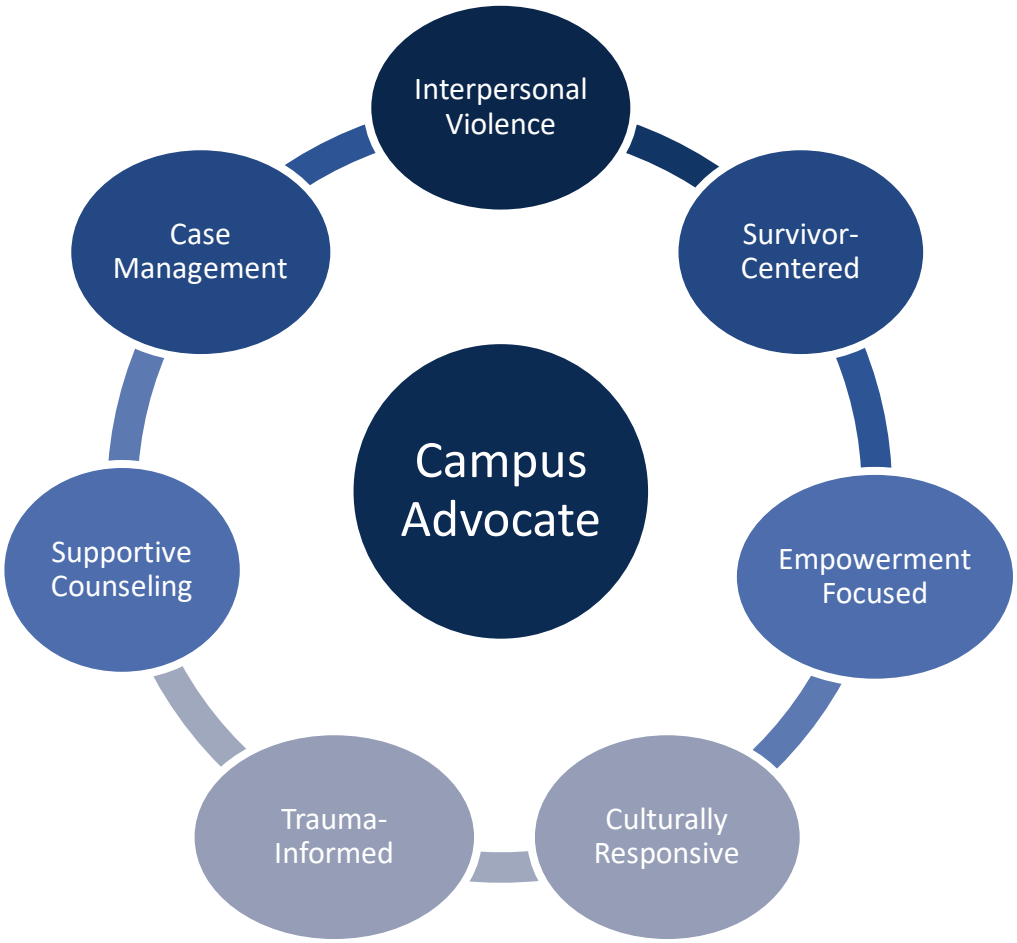
The responsibilities of the Campus Advocate in providing victim services on a College or University campus are multifaceted and comprehensive yet individualized in their approach. It requires strategic thinking, effective communication, relationship building, coordination, strong interpersonal skills, acute knowledge of federal, state, local, and campus policies, planning and program development skills, and intense crisis and trauma counseling and management responses. The Campus Advocate serves as a broker for on-and off-campus resources and referral sources. Campus Advocates are the voice for survivors, a source of information, a skilled support counselor and case manager, comfortable with program development, and systems engineering responsible for building a positive, safe, and violence-free campus culture. Therefore, the Campus Advocate must be able to develop and sustain relationships with campus partners, community partners, and students to prevent and effectively respond to interpersonal violence on campus.

The Core Proficiencies of a Campus Advocate

The role of the Campus Advocate centers on seven distinct areas: 1) interpersonal violence, 2) a survivor-centered approach, 3) empowerment-focused, 4) culturally responsive, 5) trauma-informed, 6) supportive counseling, and 7) case management.



Area	Explanation
Interpersonal Violence	The Campus Advocate needs to understand the different types of interpersonal violence (IPV), how they are different, how they are similar, and how they intersect. Areas of interpersonal violence include dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The Campus Advocate should be well versed in these different IPV areas – understanding the definitions, nuances, myths, and best practices associated with each.
Survivor Centered	The Campus Advocate centers action on the needs and aspirations of the survivor. In this role, the survivor's needs are prioritized and are the focal point for decision-making and action. Services are offered in a compassionate and judgment-free way to ensure that services are appropriate and accessible.
Empowerment Focused	The Campus Advocate builds on the strengths and resilience of the survivor and the community engaged. Being empowerment-focused means that there is an emphasis on providing value and encouragement. There is a focus on honoring the choices and decisions of the survivor while providing sufficient information and options for decision-making.
Culturally Responsive	The Campus Advocate demonstrates knowledge and awareness of their own identity, acknowledges, and addresses stereotypes and biases, and honors diversity with other groups of people that may be different. It is vital in this role not to take a culturally blind approach – thinking that interpersonal violence is the same for all communities. Instead, there is recognition of different types of diversity, culture, and a willingness to investigate various groups' customs, traditions, language, and values while also building skillsets to engage them.
Trauma Informed	The Campus Advocate is committed to a trauma-informed approach. As outlined by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA 2014), the Campus Advocate recognizes the widespread nature of trauma, can identify, and understand the signs and symptoms associated with trauma, knows how to respond appropriately, and engage someone experiencing trauma, and makes a conscious effort to build policies and practices that do not retraumatize the person.
Supportive Counseling	The Campus Advocate is comfortable with providing basic counseling. Through active listening and support, the advocate may be able to guide in resolving social and emotional challenges. Supportive counseling may also be provided through the facilitation of support groups.
Case Management	Case Management ensures that survivors receive a coordinated and efficient response. The Campus Advocate is resourceful and creative, conducts cross-systems work, manages care coordination, engages in case planning and crisis management, and is a broker between on-and off-campus systems.

Understanding Policy and the Campus Advocate

Campus Advocates must know different federal, state, local, and campus policies that impact survivors. They must understand how policy affects the provision of services and how it could even impose barriers to receiving services. The Campus Advocate must realize the following three procedures at the federal level: Title IX, Joanne Clery Act, and the VAWA Amendments.

Title IX

Title IX is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on sex. This means that there can be no exclusion from participation, denial of benefits, or being subjected to any interference academically, socially, or programmatically for a student based on the sex of the individual. Issues of interpersonal violence are included under this federal legislation. Every school is required to have a Title IX policy specific to their campus and in compliance with federal law. Campus Advocates must understand both the federal policy and the campus policy to ensure compliance with the federal law and adherence to the campus policies and procedures, including how to report, submit a formal complaint, and timely notifications within the Title process. For this reason, the Campus Advocate should work independently from the Title IX Office and be on equal footing with the Title IX Officer.

Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act or Clery Act is federally mandated legislation that aims to ensure that campuses count and publicly share crime statistics and provide timely warnings in crimes, such as sexual assaults occurring on campus. Under the Clery Act, Campus Advocates should understand their reporting options, judicial processes for filing a grievance, and who is and is not a Campus Security Authority (CSA).

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Amendments

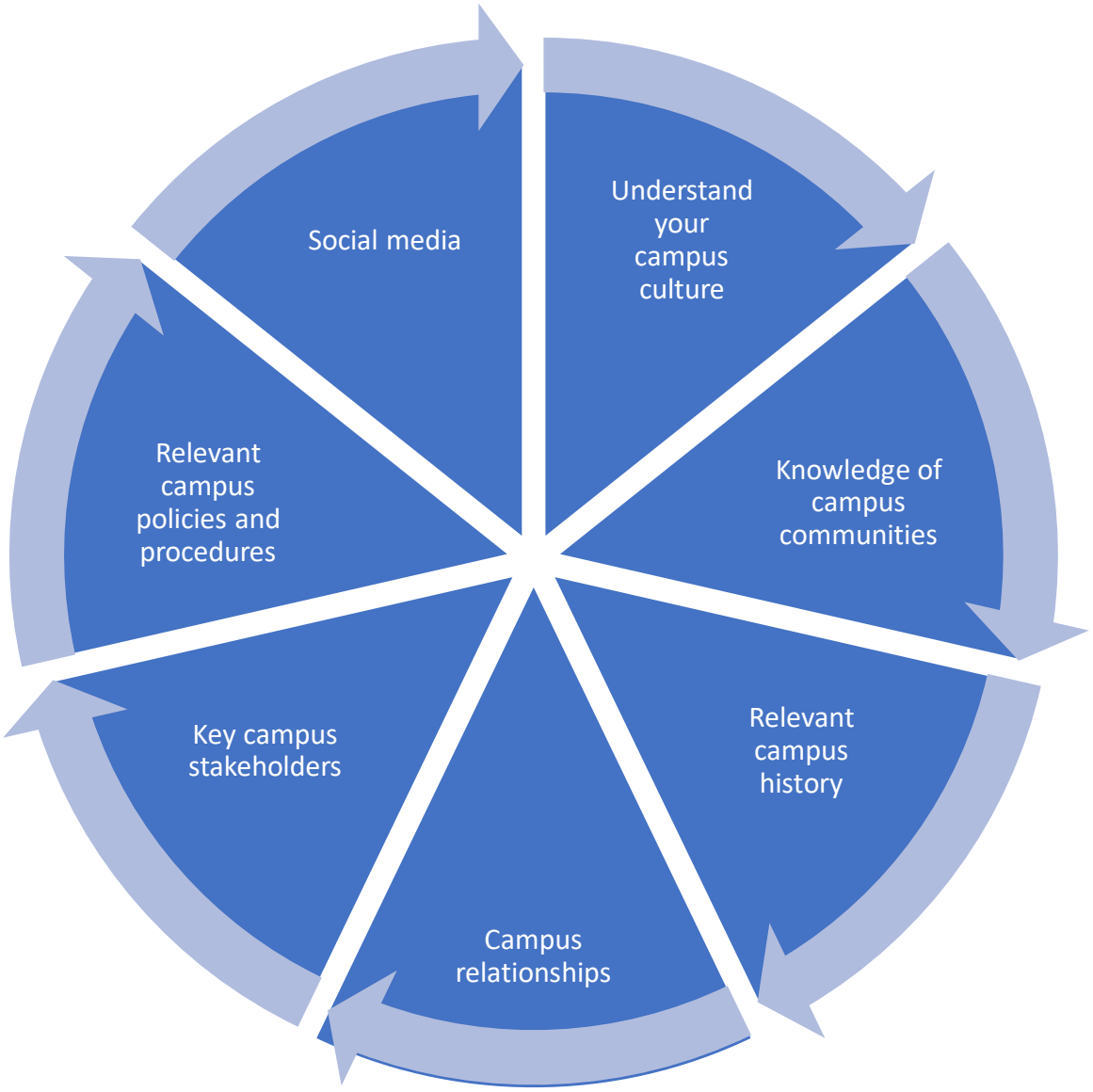
The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Amendments, sometimes also identified as the Campus Sexual Violence Act ("SaVE Act") provision, Section 304, further refines and amplifies expectations for educating campuses and responding to campus interpersonal violence. The VAWA Amendments emphasize, for example, requirements for risk reduction strategies and education, ongoing primary prevention and awareness, bystander education, definitions of consent, and all the other forms of interpersonal violence. Campus Advocates recognize their role in ensuring the implementation of these education and awareness efforts, including faculty and staff education and the development and strengthening of institutional policies that address reporting options and disciplinary procedures.

Campus Advocates should connect with State Coalitions and resources to understand state and local policies that impact campus work. Finally, examining and evaluating how campus policies meet federal, state, and local requirements while also connecting with the unique needs and circumstances of the specific campus community is vital policy work that Campus Advocates must engage in on the ground level.

A Reminder: Campus Advocates can use Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) Campus Training and Technical Assistance providers to understand better each of these policies and how they intersect. They may also be able to evaluate and support the enhancement of campus policies and procedures. Make use of the expertise of these Technical Assistance Providers to support the needs of your campus.

Advocacy is about helping a person be heard in the decisions that affect their lives. Advocacy aims to increase a person's control over goods, services, and quality of life, develop a sense of empowerment, and be valued as an individual. Advocacy focuses on the needs, wishes, and rights, including protection of confidentiality, of that person. The skill of advocacy is not something with which you are born. Instead, it is a vast skill set acquired through experience and training, which requires intentional effort and dedication that enables an individual to become an effective advocate. Whether an advocate is engaging in *individual advocacy* – fighting for the needs of an individual or specific case- or *institutional advocacy* – fighting for systems changes, shifts in practice, and impacting groups of people – the advocate must be comfortable with promoting the interest or cause of its constituents and have the ability and tenacity to argue for what is in the best interest of the individual and group. In providing advocacy, an influential advocate needs to be comfortable with several critical skillsets:

- Relationship building – understand how to build relationships with different groups of people and sustain them over time
- Strategic planning – understand how to use strategy to obtain their goals and pick their battles wisely
- Communication skills – understand how to use communication skills for different audiences
- Presentation skills – knowledge of how to relay information in practical ways that invite engagement and consciousness
- Solution orientation – understand how to find solutions to individual and institutional problems and engineer new and diverse responses
- Resource development – locate additional resources and grow support systems both with monetary and non-monetary sources
- Knowledge of key players – demonstrate astute knowledge of identifying and growing relationships with persons of influence



- Understand Campus Culture: In understanding Campus Culture, the Campus Advocate can integrate the changes that have and are taking place on campus that creates culture.
- Knowledge of Campus Communities: The Campus Advocate should be able to build strong relationships with the community and off-campus partners to strengthen support for students on campus.
- Relevant Campus History: In understanding the history of the campus, the Campus Advocate can conceptualize the influential factors that continue to shape and influence campus life.
- Campus Relationships: The Campus Advocate must be aware of the experiences and perspectives of different pockets of student groups on campus and how their cultural experiences may be different and thus require different approaches. There must be an appreciation of these diverse experiences in areas such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious backgrounds, international or immigration status, disability, and age.
- Key Campus Stakeholders: Campus Advocates must also know who the critical campus stakeholders are and must be able to build strong relationships with them, including faculty and staff.
- Relevant Campus Policies and Procedures: The Campus Advocate must become familiar with and understand relevant campus policies and procedures to practice and provide appropriate victim services.
- Social Media: Because social media is such an influential area in students' lives, Campus Advocates must also be comfortable with social media to communicate with students or even engage in programming. There must also be an awareness of the limitations and challenges associated with the help of social media on campus.

Finally, there must be an understanding of how to engage and respond to parents still honoring and recognizing the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements.

This overview provides some context to the knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective Campus Advocate. Campuses have a great resource in the Campus Technical Assistance (TA) Providers that are available to provide support, training, and informed recommendations to strengthen and improve the work you are doing to support survivors on your campus.

Technical Assistance Providers

TA Point of Contact:

- Alteristic
- Casa de Esperanza
- Clery Center
- East Central University
- MSCASA
- NOVA
- Ujima (HBCU)
- Victim's Rights Law Center

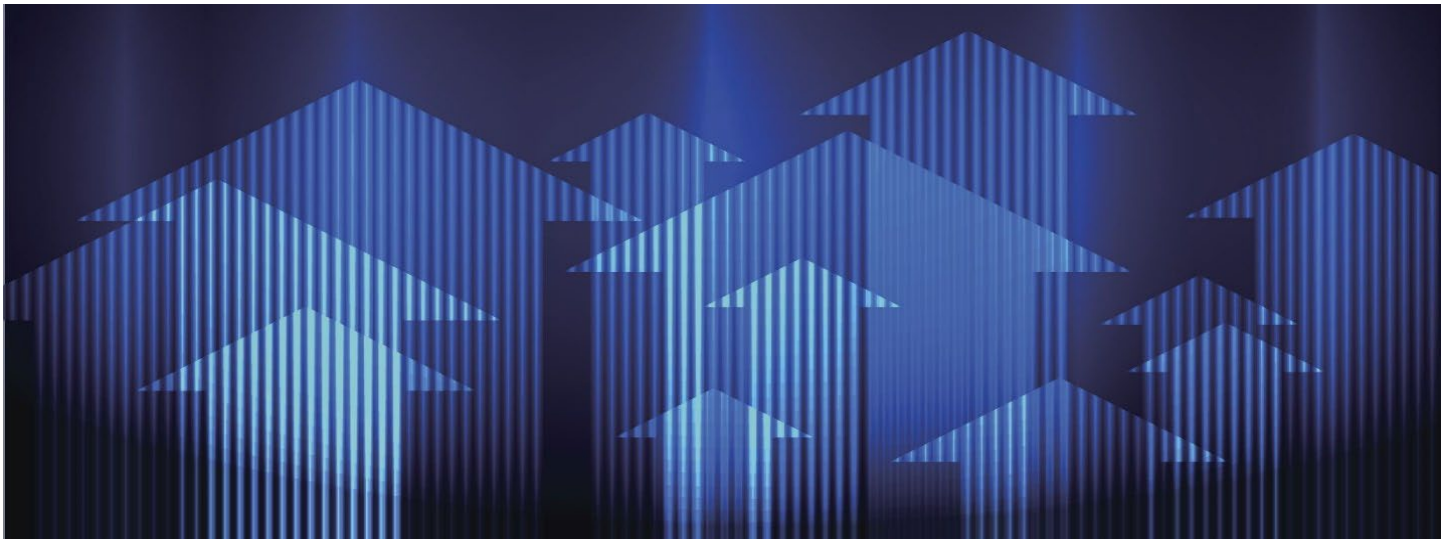
Frequently Asked Questions

Below is a list of questions and responses that some Campus Advocates have asked about the role and how to improve performance on campus. These responses offer a brief explanation but can be expanded upon during Technical Assistance meetings with your Campus TA Providers.

What are particular services required to be available on a 24-hour/7-day a week basis?
It is often unrealistic for Campus Advocates to provide 24/7 care; however, the idea is to make sure that students have access to advocacy services on a 24/7 basis. Campus Advocates should partner with community providers to ensure the availability of services. These services can be arranged with Memorandums of Understanding that outline how the community provider will support students when the Campus Advocate is unavailable. In addition, it is essential to promote these partnerships and hotline numbers that are available during education sessions with students and other campus partners. Campus Advocates should also be clear with students and others when they are unavailable. Finally, creating a plan for housing alternatives with community partners or campus housing and residence life offices is key to ensuring that such supports are available regardless of the Campus Advocate's availability.

How can you manage student confidentiality and being a safe space versus the requirements of Title IX reporting?
Campuses must provide students with options for confidential reporting. It should be clearly articulated what confidential reporting is and who is a confidential reporter. The differences in reporting options should also be clearly articulated. To this end, Title IX Offices can facilitate safety through transparency and consistently implementing the Title IX policy. Advocates can share numbers and cases they are working on with Title IX but not names or specific identifiers to preserve confidentiality and ensure that the campus is responsive to general needs. An important note to remember is that having separation and equality between the Campus Advocate and the Title IX officer is key to having healthy reporting and promoting safety on campus.

How do you respond to an emergency or unexpected situation?
The Campus Advocate should consistently facilitate meetings with a minor crisis management team to ensure planning and preparation around unexpected situations. During this time, the crisis management team can conduct case study reviews and tabletop drills on responding to emergencies to ensure readiness. The unit can also develop an emergency protocol that outlines the role of team members and critical protocols to respond. Such a document should clearly define what constitutes an emergency. Persons from University Communications should be a part of the crisis management team to ensure an appropriate media protocol in emergencies. All crisis management team members should have received training in domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault to provide basic knowledge to avoid stereotyping and victim-blaming.

How do you get key players to the table when they already have so much on their plate?
Getting key persons to the table can be challenging; however, some strategies can be used to engage them. Campus Advocates can have shorter and more impactful meetings to show that they respect these key individuals' time. They can begin or end sessions by emphasizing what was accomplished, thus offering participation benefits. Meetings should be conducted consistently but not so often that they are burdensome to make the meetings count. It is also essential to provide food/refreshments and ensure the location is conducive for participating (i.e., parking availability), demonstrating respect for their time.

How can a campus advocate demonstrate their value?
The Campus Advocate should be ready to share what makes their role important on campus. One way to do this is to strategically use campus climate check data to document trends, changes over time, best practices, and the current needs of students. In addition, it is essential to track student utilization numbers and event participation or consultations with faculty, staff, and students. Campus Advocates should document the training provided and how that translates to changed approaches. In addition, it is essential to note how the Campus Advocate's involvement in the larger local community helps the College/University. Campus Advocates can also solicit feedback from students and stakeholders on their contributions to collect qualitative data that supports their work. Finally, Campus Advocates should not be afraid to tell their own stories by documenting their contributions and activities in newsletters, videos, or other forms of information sharing.