


Project EMERGE:

Building Deaf Allied Services: Vera House and the Syracuse Deaf Community


2011 National Training Conference on
Responding to Crime Victims with Disabilities

December 2011




Who Are We?

- o Jennifer
- o Lindsay
- o Vera House
- o Project EMERGE




Overview of Vera House, Inc.

- o Vera House is a comprehensive domestic and sexual violence service agency providing shelter, advocacy, and counseling services for women, children and men, education and prevention programs and coordination of community services



What Does Vera House Provide?

- o Emergency Sheltering Services
- o Rape Crisis & Sexual Assault Response Services
- o Outreach & Advocacy Services
- o Domestic & Sexual Violence Awareness & Prevention Education
- o Syracuse Area Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition
- o Youth Counseling Services
- o Envisioning Change & Healthy Options for Families (ECHO)
- o Alternatives Program
- o Volunteer Program




GAPS IN SERVICES: LACK OF ACCESSIBLE SERVICE DELIVERY

Programmatic:

- o inability to access printed materials,
- o lack of ASL interpreters,
- o lack of knowledge about interacting with ASL interpreters

Attitudinal:

- o lack of understanding of the Deaf community by service providers



Project EMERGE Mission:

to build a community movement through increased collaboration, program policy review and education, which will work to improve access by building a comprehensive and inclusive coordinated community response for women with disabilities and Deaf women who have experienced domestic and sexual violence






Project EMERGE: Vision

- o To create a comprehensive and inclusive community prevention and response system, guided by, and in service to, people with disabilities and Deaf people who are survivors of domestic and sexual violence
- o To ensure access, equality, empowerment, and safety for all through accountable and knowledgeable providers



Vera House and the Syracuse Deaf Community: How We Grew...



2006 Grant from Office of Violence against Women (OVW):

Listening Circles
Web based survey for service providers



Needs and Assets Assessment



Strategic Plan



Needs and Assets: Key Findings from the Deaf Listening Circle

- o Deaf women in the community are unaware of the services available when they experience domestic and/or sexual violence
- o Trust is extremely important to establish with Deaf women. As the Deaf community is small and most individuals are familiar with each other, there is fear of gossip and loss of confidentiality
- o Deaf women reported numerous issues surrounding ASL interpreters



Project EMERGE Strategic Plan

- o Build the capacity to respond to Deaf women and women with disabilities who disclose domestic and/or sexual violence
- o Move towards increased access for all survivors with disabilities (including mental health) and Deaf survivors
- o Develop policies, procedures and practices that enable us to provide best practice services to survivors with disabilities (including mental health) and Deaf survivors
- o **Begin to build trust in the Deaf community to enable Deaf women to feel comfortable reaching out for help and recommending Vera House services to one another**



Vera House and the Deaf Community:

Tools for Building Relationships



Project EMERGE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Project EMERGE Advisory Group

- o Project EMERGE Brochure
- o Accessibility Trauma Informed Review Tool (ATIRT)
- o Project EMERGE Employee Training Curriculum
- o **Taught Basic ASL to staff**
- o **Regular, ongoing interaction with Deaf individuals**
- o **Involvement in Deaf Awareness Week**
- o **Policies and Procedures: Interpreter Policy**
- o **Deaf Dialogue Series**
- o **American Sign Language (ASL) Videos**

Interpreter Policy:

Policies should include language that:

- o **Establishes that the agency is responsible for providing interpreters, including the financial responsibility**
- o **Provides confidentiality for the Deaf individual**
- o **Asks for the preferred method of communication**
- o **Asks for the names of three preferred interpreters**
- o **Reminds staff and volunteers that they are not to act as interpreters,**
- o **Provides information on agencies that provide interpreting services**

Deaf Dialogue Series

- o Included people identified in the community as Deaf leaders, both hearing and Deaf individuals
- o Education on the dynamics of domestic and sexual violence
- o Open discussion on trust, within, among and between Deaf community and service providers
- o Previewed the ASL videos
- o Utilized their knowledge in other areas

ASL Videos

- o Creation of six Informational Videos
- o Utilization of the expertise and guidance of the Project EMERGE Advisory Group
- o Working with Deaf Actors, Deaf Directors, Interpreters, Hearing Production Crew

<http://www.verahouse.org/are-you-safe>

Project EMERGE Continuation Grant: Growing



Project EMERGE Continuation Funding: COLLABORATING WITH MORE PROJECT PARTNERS



2010 Goals

Disability Service Providers will:

- Understand the value of creating accessible, trauma-informed services and will commit to organizational change
- Participate in the development of policy/protocol and training curricula.
- Have staff trained in the intersections of disability, Deaf Culture, and domestic/sexual violence



2010 Goals Continued

Law Enforcement Agencies will:

- Develop protocols for responding to survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors
- Have trained leadership and specialized units who understand the intersection of disability, Deaf Culture and domestic/sexual violence
- Participate in the development and implementation of various training sessions



2010 Goals Continued

Train Deaf Advocates and ASL Interpreters to respond to the hospitals, court, law enforcement interviews, shelter.



Recommendations:

- Partner with Deaf Advocacy Groups to enhance learning and tools developed
- Define Concepts and Terms (use of pictures)
- Meeting Guidelines
- Policy/Protocol Development
- Deaf Culture & DEAFHOOD workshops
- ASL classes
- Interpreters at Events
- Videophones at shelters & main offices
- Deaf Advocates
- Specially trained ASL Interpreters



**QUESTIONS
&
COMMENTS**



Thank you!!!

Contact Information:
Lindsay Ryan Anthony
ARISE, Inc.
VP: 866-957-1206
lryan@ariseinc.org

Jennifer Shaw
Vera House, Inc.
 315-425-0818
jshaw@verahouse.org

