"Building Partnerships"
Working Together to Protect Persons with Disabilities
Collaborating and Training Across the Spectrum: *To effectively respond to crimes committed against persons with disabilities*

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AGENDA

• APS Team Assignment
• Creation and Implementation of the Building Partnerships Initiative (BPI)
• BPI Training Across the Spectrum
• Developing Your Own Collaborations
Who did it?

APS Team Assignment
Your Assignment

- You are a member of an Adult Protective Services (APS) Team
- A recent sexual assault has led to this meeting of the team
- The initial investigation has yielded a list of possible suspects
- As there is considerable physical evidence, the team is discussing the possibility of obtaining a search warrant
- Your assignment is to determine which suspect should be the subject of a search warrant
Lessons Learned

• No one person or agency possesses all of the skill, knowledge and resources necessary to respond to the complex problems of mistreatment and abuse;

• Each agency brings a different perspective and different information to the table; and

• In working together, crimes committed against persons with disabilities are being recognized, reported, investigated and prosecuted.
Abuse of persons with disabilities is a serious and complex problem
Creation of Massachusetts Building Partnerships Initiative (BPI)

To effectively address abuse, neglect and crimes committed against persons with disabilities using a multidisciplinary approach
Creation of the Building Partnerships Initiative

- Created a Steering Committee to facilitate implementation of Panel’s recommendations
- Steering Committee directs activities of Building Partnerships for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities Initiative (BPI)
Implementation of the Building Partnerships Initiative

- Developed Memorandums of Understanding
- Developed Annual Plans and Annual Reports
- Secured funding and developed annual budgets
- Drafted and secured passage of new legislation
- Developed training curricula and implemented training recommendations
BPI Training Curricula

Includes:

- Law Enforcement
  - State & Municipal Police Recruits
  - Veteran Officers
- Service Providers
- Persons with Disabilities
  - Learning Tool
  - Awareness & Action
Other Trainings /Materials

• Adult Protective Service (APS) Investigators
  – Forty-hour basic investigation certification
  – Forty-hour sexual assault certification
  – In-Service Training

• Emergency Room Nurses and Physicians in collaboration with SANE

• Judiciary/Court Personnel Training
  – Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinators training

• Northwestern District Attorney Crisis Intervention Program Officer Reference Book

• BPI Replication Guide
Developing Your Own Collaborations
Developing a Multidisciplinary Collaboration

• Identify what individuals, organizations and agencies work with or interact with persons with disabilities;

• Determine the roles, responsibilities and jurisdiction of those involved in working with persons with disabilities;

• Identify those already collaborating, as well as those working independently; and

• Target and meet with potential partners to understand respective efforts, determine levels of interest, establish an environment that fosters trust and open communication, and provide sufficient opportunity to gain understanding of similarities and differences.
Developing a Multidisciplinary Collaboration

• Once a determination of interest is satisfied, the next step is to bring together a core group to form a steering committee.

• It is important to note that this concept can be accomplished at the local, regional or statewide level.

• While the inclination might be to “cast a wide net”, at this stage, it is far more productive to begin with a smaller, core committee.
Developing a Multidisciplinary Collaboration

• Questions should be asked that can assist in identifying steering committee members, such as:
  – Who are the major stakeholders?
  – Who has statutory or regulatory jurisdiction?
  – Who can influence change in an agency, court system or legislative process?
  – Who is likely to “think outside the box”?
Developing a Multidisciplinary Collaboration

• Once the core group is identified, steps should be taken to formalize the group into a steering committee. A steering committee can, of course, be used for different purposes. Among the earliest decisions to be made by a steering committee is to establish its role in the collaboration.
Developing a Multidisciplinary Collaboration

- Steering Committee members should:
  - Identify leadership positions and define the role and responsibility of the committee;
  - Distinguish core and ad hoc members;
  - Formalize the partnership through a written agreement;
  - Establish the mission statement, goals and plan; and
  - Set a calendar and conduct regular and routine meetings with agendas and meeting minutes that are shared with all committee members.
Developing a Multidisciplinary Collaboration

• Develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) which include:
  – A Statement of Purpose, outlining the roles and responsibilities of each signatory agency;
  – Names of participating agencies, with designated contacts;
  – Goals of the MOU;
  – Protocols for the report, investigation and prosecution of crimes against persons with disabilities; and
  – A Review and Evaluation, to assess the effectiveness of the MOU.
Developing a Multidisciplinary Collaboration

• Provide training (including cross training) to professionals who work to protect persons with disabilities and to those whose responsibility it is to respond to allegations of abuse of a person with a disability

• Trainings should be held on an on-going basis, updated, if necessary, to address new issues that arise
Developing a Multidisciplinary Collaboration

• Finally, a major component to a successful partnership is an on-going evaluation of that partnership. Issues and concerns should be addressed and resolved. The input of all Team members is critical. Team members should:
  – Meet on a regular basis to review roles, responsibilities and protocols;
  – Be flexible in thought and action;
  – Evaluate, through qualitative and quantitative measures, successes and non-successes;
  – Address and resolve all conflict; and
  – Be willing to make changes that are necessary to sustain the partnership.
Benefits of the Building Partnerships Collaboration
Benefits to Building Partnerships

- Improved communication and coordination
- Increased reporting, criminal investigations and prosecutions
- Improved civil and criminal investigations
- Improved data collection and documentation
- Institutionalized systemic improvements
- Less trauma for victims and families
- Enhanced access to the criminal justice system for victims with disabilities
Building Partnerships…

• the concept is simple;
• the work is difficult; but
• the benefits are worth it!
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