Joining Forces:
A Multidisciplinary Approach to Working with Immigrant Victims of Crime

Presented by:
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Session Goals

• Define TCRP’s multi-disciplinary approach
• Identify benefits of collaboration
• Examine best integration strategies
• Review stories of challenges and success
Texas Civil Rights Project

The mission of the Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP) is to promote racial, social, and economic justice through litigation, education, and social services for low/moderate-income persons least able to defend themselves. TCRP strives to foster equality, secure justice, ensure diversity, and strengthen low/moderate-income communities in Texas.
History of Multi-disciplinary Approach

• History of VAWA PROGRAM at TCRP
  – VAWA legal services began in 2003
  – Legal advocates developed strong relationships with clients
  – Found their role with the client was unclear

• History of SW program at TCRP
  – Prior collaborations with legal arena
  – Incorporated 2009 at TCRP
VAWA Legal Process

- Investigation
- Application
- Declarations
- Length of processing time
- Perceived impact on client from legal advocate’s perspective
- Legal advocate’s approach v. therapeutic approach
Integrating Social Work

- Counseling
- Case-management
- Crisis intervention
- Bridging relationships
- Promotoras
- Individual case consultation
Benefits of Collaborations

• Evidence-based Practice
• Multi-disciplinary perspective
• More effective information gathering
• Symbiotic relationship: Immediate access to symptom management and legal information
• Pre-existing trust
Defining Roles

• LEGAL ADVOCATES
• SOCIAL WORK
• CLIENTS
• OTHERS INVOLVED

• CLEAR AND REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS WITH ALL PARTIES
Confidentiality

- Ability to share information openly
- Define confidentiality parameters for client to ensure trust
- Mutual respect among legal staff and social work regarding confidentiality
Building the Relationship

- Cross training
- Communication
- Respect for each discipline and expertise
- Case consultations as needed
Challenges

- Confidentiality
- Reporting requirements
- Blurring of roles (by professionals and by clients)
- Integration
- Differences in information gathering approach
- Ethical differences
Application and Practice

- REFERRALS
- INTERNAL COMMUNICATION
- CASE REVIEWS
STORIES
FUTURE

• Streamlining
• Improved communication
• Collaborative video conferencing clinics, trainings, groups
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