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Mobile Advocacy in Tribal Communities

June 9, 2020

Presented by:

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Tribal Law and Policy Institute



Webinar Information



This webinar was produced by the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College under cooperative agreement number 2018-MU-GX-K064, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this webinar are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



What is a Tribal Community of Practice?

Opportunity to network with other individuals
in the field.

Interaction helps build rapport and
foster communication.

Be present and focus on the group.
Avoid distractions.

Technical Overview

Expand/Collapse the control panel



Your audio will remain on MUTE during the entire webinar



Handouts (if available) found here



Raise hand function available for this webinar



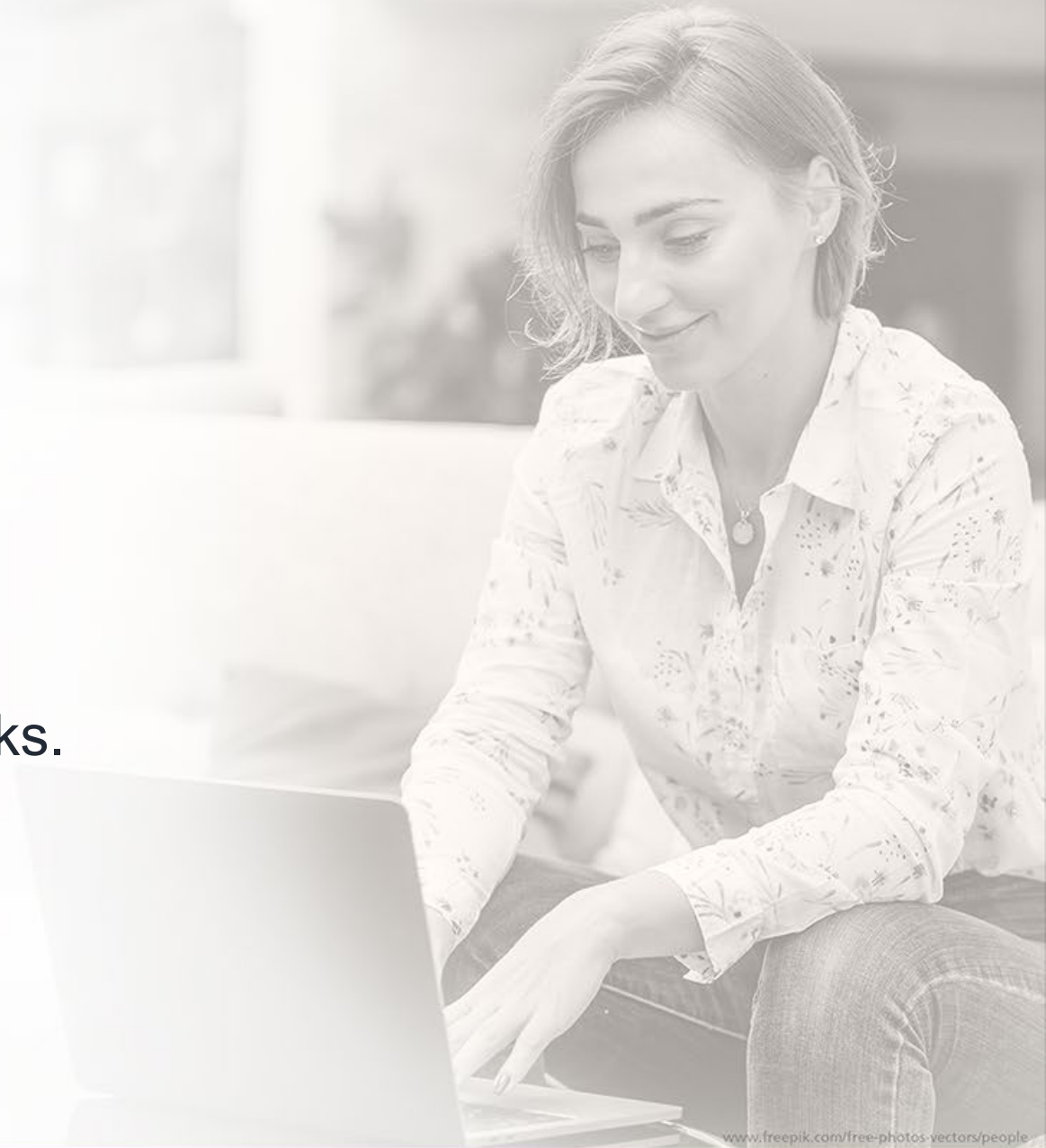
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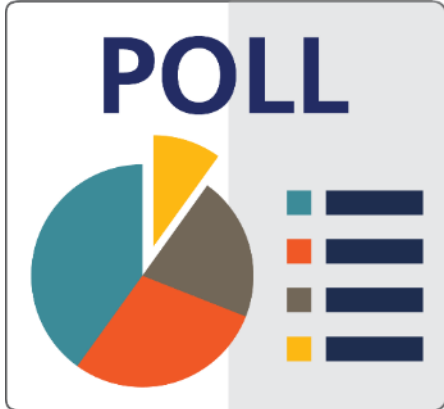
- Live Webinar = **YES**
- Recorded Webinar = **NO**
- What do I need to do?
 - **Attend the entire live webinar**
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- Attending as a group?
Email names to ncjtc@fvtc.edu.



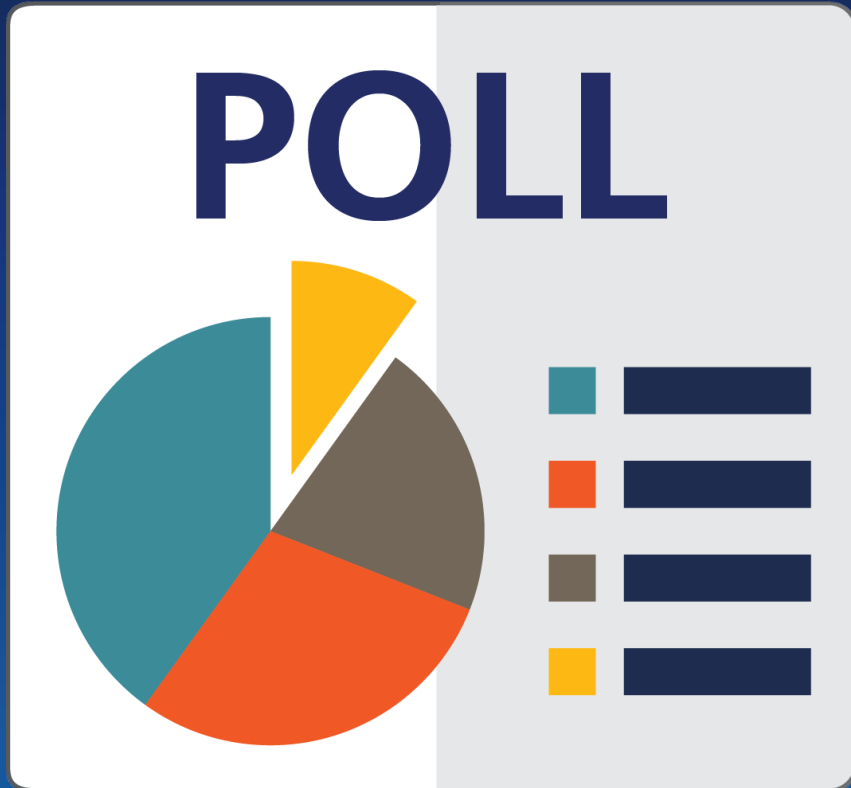
Poll Questions

Poll questions may be asked during the webinar.

This is your time to weigh in with your thoughts.



Please respond promptly; polls are open for a short period of time.



Which of the following best describes your role?

- Victim services provider
- Judge or attorney
- Law enforcement
- Social worker, mental health practitioner
- Other

Presenters



Bonnie Clairmont

Victim Advocacy Specialist
Tribal Law and Policy Institute



Kelly Stoner

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Learning Objectives



Discuss the basics of mobile advocacy in responding to crime victims.



Identify benefits of deploying mobile advocacy for crime victims.



Review logistical planning needed to implement mobile advocacy services.



Understand the importance of protecting victim rights to confidentiality and privacy within mobile advocacy services.

What is Mobile Advocacy?

Mobile advocacy is where advocates provide advocacy to victims in safe locations in the community and convenient to the victim.

Examples may include meeting victim at a coffee shop, at a community program office, or at the victim's home.





Role of Advocacy from a Tribal Perspective

Ending violence against women, and all other forms of violence, lies in our ability to reclaim our roles and responsibilities as relatives.

Advocates ideally role model this sacred connection.



Historical Perspectives of Advocacy

- Matrilineal social structures
- 1960's – 1970's: Era of self-determination
- Change in attitudes about gender equality
- Policy and legislative changes
- Violence Against Women Act
- Tribal coalitions, more programming in tribal communities

Role of the Advocate

To act as the ***biased*** supporter of women; advocating for the ***expressed*** interests and safety of women (and their children) including safe space and other resources to regain control over their lives. To provide leadership and expertise based on women's experiences within justice, law enforcement, social service and medical systems. To ***prioritize women's safety*** and ***offender accountability*** in all aspects of the work including ***maintaining confidentiality***.

From: Mending the Sacred Hoop, S.T.O.P. Violence Against Indian Women Technical Assistance, Feb. 1996

Needs of Victims

Safety

Medical Attention

Support

Legal Advocacy

Basic Needs

Follow-up Advocacy



A black and white photograph showing the silhouettes of an adult and a child standing on a beach, looking out at the ocean. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow and reflecting on the water. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds.

Needs of Victims

Many victims need advocacy:

- After leaving a shelter
- If they choose not to be in a shelter
- While in transitional housing
- If they do not have a vehicle
- If they do not have a support system

Many victims want to escape abuse and seek safety, but lack resources.

Types of Advocates & How They Are Different

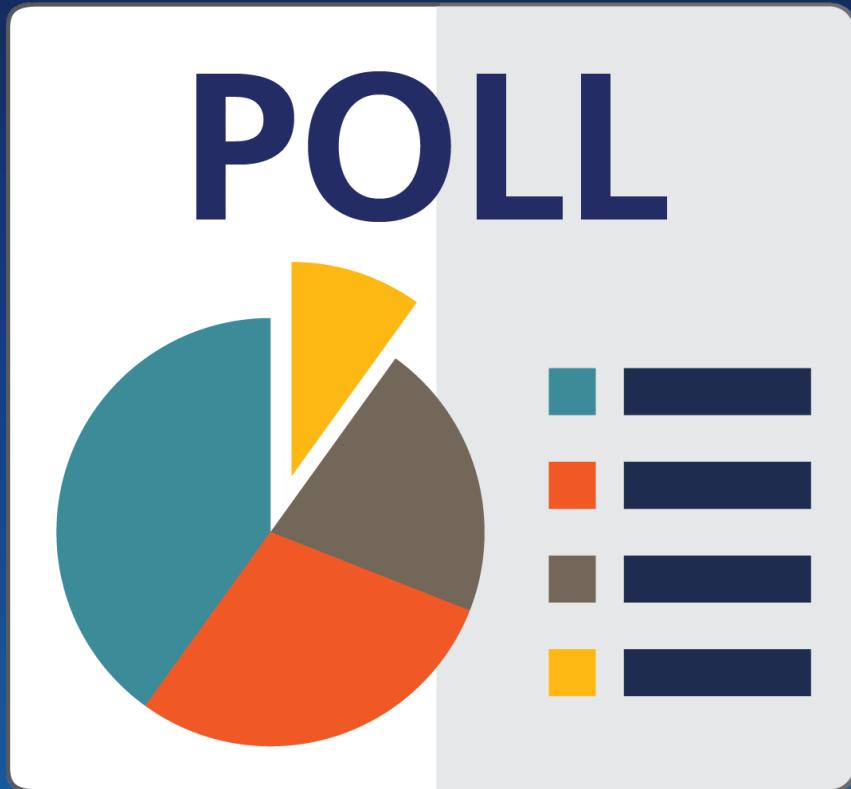
Community-based

Work for tribal, non-profit, or independent organization

System-based

Work for criminal justice agency





Do the advocates in your community provide mobile advocacy or outreach advocacy?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- I am unaware of a Tribal advocacy program in my community

Intimate Partner Violence during COVID-19



- Batterers want power and control
- Victims confined to home with batterer
- Stress brought on by COVID-19 could escalate violence
- Violence increased during a time of financial strain
- Victims cut off from family, isolated
- Threat of violence more volatile when victim leaves or threatens to leave

Services of Mobile Advocacy

- Enhancement of shelter services
- Advocates meet the victim where they are
- Support for emotional well-being of victim and children
- Accompaniment/transportation for victims
- Legal, civil and criminal advocacy
- Food and other basic needs

Factors for Consideration

Challenges:

- Community resistance
- Funding for advocates
- Feeling of isolation
- Sustainability
- Safety, privacy, confidentiality, anonymity





Factors for Consideration

Benefits:

- Enhanced, accessible shelter services
- Needs of victims are assessed
- Community awareness and buy-in
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Specialized training for advocates
- Increased reporting rates, victims utilizing services
- Improved perceptions of service providers

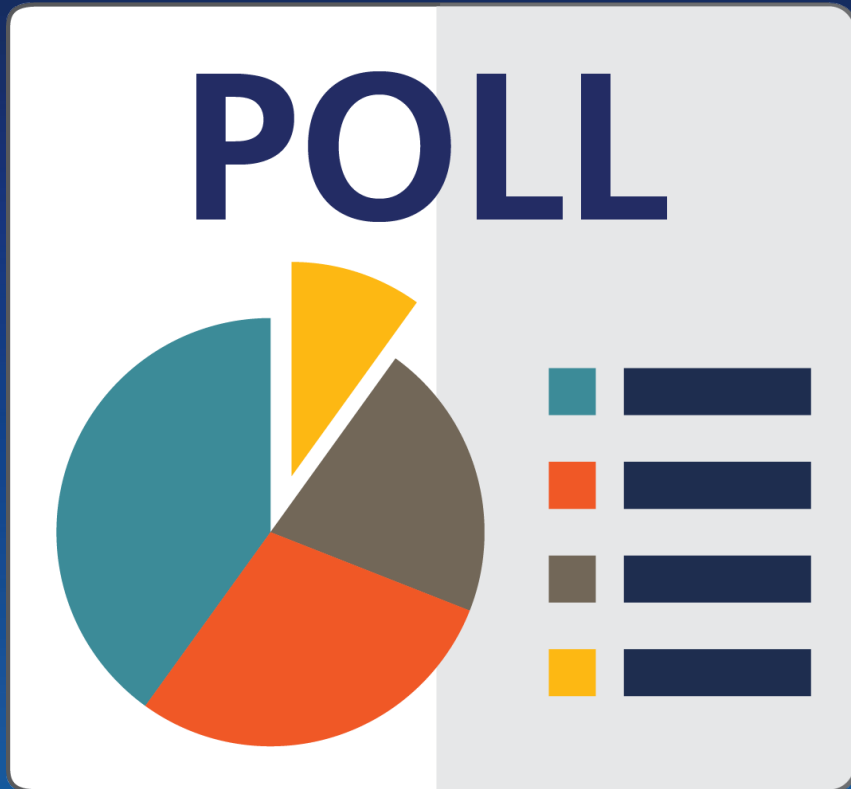
Scenario

Rachel lives on a reservation in a small remote community with her abusive spouse. She has left her abusive partner several times in the past and has sought safety at the local battered women's shelter along with her children. Rachel recently escaped with her children and is staying with a relative. Rachel needs help obtaining a protection order, retrieving her belongings from home, seeking some medical attention for some injuries and needs medication for a chronic condition she has and just needs emotional support as she lacks a good support system. Rachel contacts the shelter for help. Rachel doesn't want to be in the shelter.

**Would Rachel benefit from mobile advocacy?
How so?**

**What would be some safety concerns you would
have for the victim? For the advocate?**





Do you feel mobile advocacy is needed by victims in your community?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Seeking Buy-in from Stakeholders

- Education and buy-in are important
- Survey the community, ask about their needs, make changes
- Prepare staff for expansion of mobile advocacy
- Support from leadership, co-workers, funders
- Transitional housing and mobile advocacy
- Communication is critical

Collaboration with Agencies

Police departments

Community centers

Tribal programs

Churches/Faith community

Child support/Welfare programs

Hospitals/Clinics

Colleges



Logistics and Other Planning Considerations

Safety issues must be carefully addressed:

- Vehicles
- Insurance
- Confidentiality/Privacy
- Staff qualifications
- Collaboration



Additional Considerations

- Advocates are often seen as homewreckers, encouraging victims to leave abusers
- Negative victim-blaming attitudes still exist around domestic violence
- There is still much resistance to change
- Expect skepticism



Logistics and Safety Considerations

- Community education and readiness
- Rural roads, areas can be challenging
- Information vs. anonymity
- Push back from the community
- Negative attitudes exist about advocates





Preparedness for Mobile Advocates

Mobile advocacy work is challenging

- A lot of travel
- Isolation
- Cell phones
- Advocates must be physically capable, have adequate rest
- Document work and debrief
- Dress down
- Prepare for working with children



COVID-19 Virus-Related Concerns

- Practice social distancing
- Advocate should have disinfectant wipes
- Masks and gloves for advocate, extra for victim and children
- Constant wipe downs of the vehicle
- Advocate should log all measures taken
- Safety protocols for victims practiced by partnering organizations/departments

Safety Measures

- Two mobile advocates to share work
- Change meeting location before the first meeting so stalking is not as easy
- Advocates report in about:
 - data
 - challenges experienced
 - batterer threats
 - plans for next day
 - first name of person being served
 - where they are going

Safety Measures

- GPS tracking device on vehicles
- Agency phones, not personal phone
- Have props available to throw off the batterer
- Maintain and use agency vehicles





Protecting Victim Information

Privacy

Privacy is the expectation that when a victim shares information with another individual (the individual does not have to be a professional), the information will go no further without the victim's consent.



Confidentiality

Protecting the ***confidentiality*** of communications is an ethical duty to keep the victim's information private. Victim statements are meant only for the service provider and the information may only be disclosed with client consent. If the service provider discloses the victim's information without the victim's consent, the service provider may be liable for an ethical breach of duty and lose any of their licensure or certifications.



Confidentiality

Types of confidential information include:

- Name/address of client requesting services
- Name/address of client receiving services
- Other private, identifying information about client (phone number, birthdate, health issues, etc.)
- Location of victim
- Domestic violence shelter location

Confidentiality



The victim's permission to disclose certain victim information should be executed in a written release of information form that:

- Lists what specific information you can disclose and to whom
- Is signed by the client
- Includes an expiration date
- Provides notice that the client can rescind their permission at any time if they choose

Privilege

A ***privilege*** is an evidentiary rule that prevents the disclosure of information, even if relevant, in court. Particularly, privilege can come into play when the information was originally communicated in a professional or confidential relationship that is covered by law.

Privilege

Privileges that protect victim information from disclosure are usually set out in statutes or case law in the applicable jurisdiction.

A disclosure of the privileged information may have legal and/or criminal consequences. Note it is a best practice to have a tribal code that directly sets forth that communications between the victim and the advocate providing services are privileged and not subject to disclosure absent court orders or statutory mandate.



Protecting Victim Information

Safety concerns should be of paramount importance and safety measures and protocols should be put in place before this type of advocacy is set in motion, safety for the victim and safety for the mobile advocacy staff.





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Upcoming Webinars

July 28, 2020 | 3 PM CT

- ✓ Educating Tribal Leadership

September 8, 2020 | 3 PM CT

- ✓ Coordinated Community Response (CCR)

August 25, 2020 | 3 PM CT

- ✓ Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART)

September 22, 2020 | 3 PM CT

- ✓ Child Protection Teams (CPT)

Dates are subject to change. Please watch your email for updates and registration links.

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