**Advocate Training Core Competencies**

**Developed 2019 by MECASA member center work group**

**Reflective of the skills & knowledge needed to meet QAS standards and train volunteer and staff advocates.**

**After the training, staff and volunteer advocates will be prepared to offer survivor support on the helpline and go with a survivor for a forensic exam at the emergency department and go with a survivor to make a police report.**

**MECASA QAS**

* 1. The center will conduct a minimum 40 hours of sexual assault crisis intervention training for all direct service volunteers. The training:
		1. Shall use the current edition of *Help in Healing: A Training Guide for Advocates* as the primary resource, and shall address each section therein;
		2. Shall include opportunities, such as role plays, for trainees to practice and/or demonstrate advocacy skills; and
		3. May include lecture, discussion, audio/visual aids, written material and guest speakers from the community.
	2. Advocates will complete training to the agency’s satisfaction, which includes:
		1. Demonstrated ability to understand content knowledge regarding sexual violence and its context and root causes; types of sexual violence and their impact; and the multi-disciplinary response to sexual violence;
		2. Demonstrated understanding of the role of an advocate, the mechanics of accompaniment, and the philosophy of advocacy and survivor healing; and
		3. Ability to meet appropriate professional standards and competently provide advocacy and accompaniment services that align with MECASA’s values and philosophy.

***The parenthetical titles are from the NJ Coalition.***

1. **Advocates understand root causes and dynamics of sexual violence**

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| **Learning objectives for this competency after the training, advocates will be able to…** |
| Describe the ways oppression and inequality cause sexual violence. |
| Describe the ways oppression and inequality impact survivors and communities. |
| Describe the role of sexual assault support centers in the context of anti-sexual violence movements.  |
| Identify personal attitudes, beliefs, and experiences about survivors or sexual violence.  |

1. **Advocate can describe types of sexual violence and their impact. *(Advocates can describe effects of trauma on survivors)***

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| **Learning objectives for this competency after the training, advocates will be able to…** |
| Define types of sexual violence. |
| Describe differing definitions of sexual violence, including legal, personal, and cultural. |
| Describe how and why trauma impacts each survivor differently.  |
| Describe how trauma may affect an individual in crisis, including an individual’s physical body, memory, and/or cognitive abilities*.* |
| Identify and communicate these impacts to survivors and community partners. |
| Outline stages and goals of crisis intervention. |
| Outline steps and goals of healing from trauma caused by sexual violence.  |

1. **Advocate understand the multidisciplinary response to sexual violence*. (Advocates support and empower survivors interacting with various systems)***

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| **Learning objectives for this competency after the training, advocates will be able to…** |
| Define the roles of members of Sexual Assault Response Teams and Child Advocacy Center MDTs. |
| Explain forensic exam and medical system to a survivor, including all medical options.  |
| Explain the process involved in making a police report and support the survivor in making an informed decision.  |
| Understand the criminal legal process, from first responder to prosecution. |
| Understand civil remedies and resources available to a survivor. |
| Identify ways to create a more supportive environment for survivors involved in the medical or law enforcement process, both physically and emotionally.  |
| Know how to access additional support if presented with barriers within a system. |

1. **Advocates understand agency Practices and Protocols*. (Advocates engage in ethical practice) (Advocates connect survivors with resources)***

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| **Learning objectives for this competency after the training, advocates will be able to…** |
| Define advocate, personal, and agency boundaries. |
| Outline confidentiality, privilege, and mandated reporting responsibilities.  |
| Demonstrate how to explain a release for to a survivor.  |
| Demonstrate how the agency documents time and survivor information.  |
| Describe how and when to access support from other advocates around decision making and getting support.  |
| Describe what constitutes legal advice and identify ways to ensure they are not giving legal advice. |

1. **Philosophy and Role of Advocacy and Survivor Healing *(Advocates treat themselves and others with care and respect) (Advocates practice cultural humility) (Advocates implement survivor-centered communication styles)***

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| **Learning objectives for this competency after the training, advocates will be able to…** |
| Describe elements of survivor-led support. |
| Identify personal barriers to listening and understanding. |
| Describe the cultural context in which advocacy was created  |
| Display effective communication skills, including active listening empathy. |
| Demonstrate the ability to ask questions and listen for the purposes of validation and support. |
| Demonstrate the ability to ask questions and listen for the purposes of needs assessment and informed decision making. |
| Describe how to respond to various communication needs. (for example, accessing an interpreter) |
| Describe various responses among advocates working with survivors of trauma.  |
| Identify and engage in activities to mitigate impacts of working with the survivors of trauma.  |
| Describe the process of providing a referral to a local resource. |
| Describe the process of providing a referral back to the local support center  |
| Demonstrate the ability to effectively problem solve |

1. **Advocates know how to offer support to survivors while getting a forensic medical exam or making a police report.**

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| **Learning objectives for this competency after the training, advocates will be able to…** |
| Demonstrate how to prepare for an accompaniment (including logistics and what to bring and what to expect)  |
| Describe the role of the medical provider performing the forensic exam (including evidence collection). |
| Describe the role of the advocate while at the hospital. |
| Identify the unique needs of the survivor in a medical or police setting.  |