

Sustaining Relationships with Survivors Across the Lifespan of an Organization



(not just the lifespan of their case)

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Asian Women's Shelter

San Francisco, CA

*30 years of ending violence by
promoting the social, political, and
economic self-determination of
women and all survivors of violence
and oppression.*

Agenda

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Video



2

In Your Words



3

Real Examples



4

Peer Sharing



5

Moving Forward



Learning Objectives

1. Name your values behind sustaining relationships with program participants;
 2. Learn strategies for affordable organizational relationship-building with program participants;
 3. Share peer examples of post-case survivor engagement
 4. Identify and break down barriers to organizational engagement by former participants
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1.

Engaging in Storytelling



Background to the video

- AWS 30th Anniversary Celebration
 - Traditionally have a former resident speaker
 - Decided in 2018 to create a video with a family from the first decade, one from the second decade, and a group of teens who shared the house in the third decade.
 - Audio format made sharing more accessible.
 - Project was possible because of an ongoing commitment to relationship maintenance/development with former clients at AWS.
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2

In your words

Get in groups of 4-5



**SMALL
GROUPS**

Guiding Questions

- In your own words, why do you think engaging clients/participants beyond the timeframe of their case is important?
 - How does it connect to the values underlying your and/or your organization's work?
 - What becomes possible if we try to sustain these relationships?
 - What gets in the way?
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3

Real Examples to Sustain Relationships



Starting with the Basics

- Exit evaluations and dependable follow-through and follow-up (per however you transition cases)
- Maintaining database for participant contact information
- Ensuring confidentiality (e.g. participant agreement to receive mail, etc.)
- Ensuring interpretation and translation for invitations, phone calls, event programs, etc.

Annual Holidays

Lunar New Year Party

- For all current and former clients since 1988
- Children's Program
- Gifts for all
- Program input questions



Annual Fundraisers

Annual Gala

- All current and former clients come free
- Children's Program included
- Interpretation provided
- Former client event speaker supported by staff



Annual Outtings

AWS Teenager Camping Trip

- All current and former teens are invited
- 2 days 2 nights
- Interpretation provided
- Former client event speaker supported by staff



Eating Together

AWS Thanksgiving

- All current and former clients invited. Free.
- Volunteers and language advocates/interpreters invited.
- Interpretation provided



Systems Advocacy & Change

Policy Advocacy

- Former participant engaged and supported
- Interpretation provided



Funded Opportunities

Multilingual Digital Storytelling

- Specific former participants recruited
- Interpretation provided
- Creativity, empowerment infused throughout
- Survivor storyteller decides who they want the story to reach or not reach



Volunteer & Paid Opportunities

Volunteer and MLAM Training + Board Membership

- Semi-annual training
- “Mixed” group expected (survivors, former clients, children of DV, etc.)
- No discrimination re: someone’s identity as a survivor and former client



Leadership in Community Action Teams

CSSP Funded

Thai Gate Opener Project

- Staff Lead (Jee)
- Survivor-led empowerment for other survivors (e.g. financial literacy training)



4

Peer Sharing

Share in small groups!



Guiding Questions

- What are examples from your organization of relationship-building over time with former clients/survivors?
 - What factors have led to more success?
 - Has your organization created barriers to engagement for former clients that sound like “you’re not ready until...”? How can you lower those and other barriers?
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Moving Forward



Report-back of highlights

Next Steps & Closing

- Write down one thing you want to share when you go home to your organization.
 - Share one thing you want to your organization to communicate to former clients through its relationship-building efforts.
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