

Philadelphia Center Against Sexual Violence



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Field Site: WOAR Philadelphia Center Against Sexual Violence

Learning Objectives Pre COVID-19

- Connect theory of social change to practice in the sexual violence nonprofit sphere
- Gain understanding of how volunteer contributions can have in bringing about change
- Learn skills that will aid in my career path (i.e. trauma informed care)
- Gain better understanding of the responses to sexual harm in the city of Philadelphia.

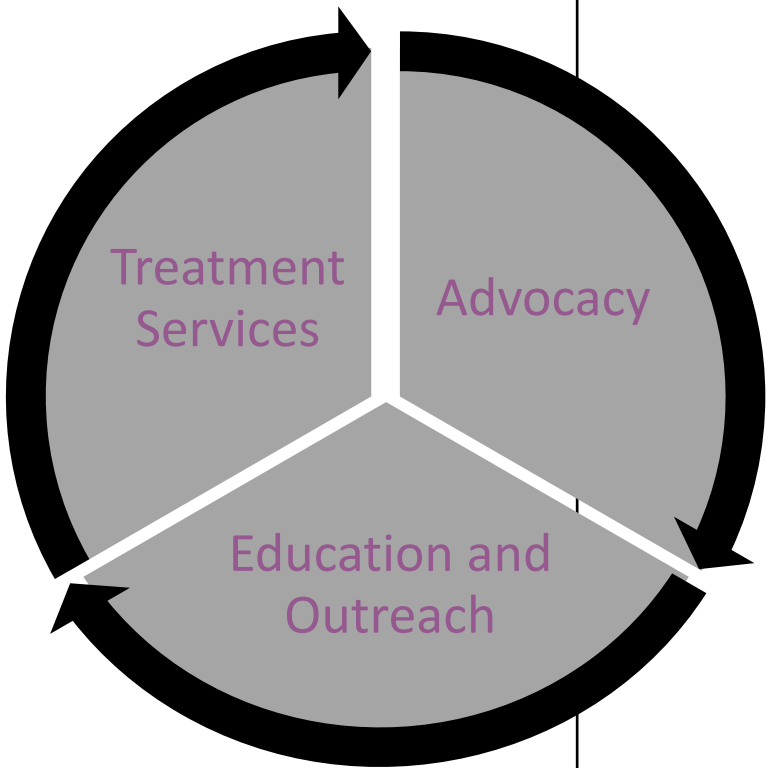
WOAR’s Mission

Eliminate all forms of sexual harm through:
Treatment services

- Trauma Therapy
- Group Therapy

Prevention Education Programs and Outreach
Advocacy

- Medical Advocacy
- Legal Advocacy



Learning Objectives COVID-19

- Understand how nonprofits are affected by global pandemics or stresses to the normal work day
- How does WOAR respond to COVID-19 in order to keep supporting clients
- Learn how staff members support each other during stressful and uncertain periods

Roles:

Pre COVID-19:

- Crisis counseling, resources and referrals to callers on 24 hour hotline.
- Respond to crisis walk-ins
- Scheduling intakes and following up with clients
- Provide medical accompaniment at the Philadelphia Sexual Assault Response Center (PSARC)

COVID-19:

- Scheduling intakes, following up with clients, and working Text/Chat services
- Communicating online changes with clients during follow-ups
- Weekly check-ins with staff

Challenges Amidst the Pandemic

- Isolation: Not doing the work in an office setting with staff
- Navigating changes to procedures and communicating with clients accordingly
- Constant uncertainty & changing policies
- Heavy reliance on technologies puts some clients at a disadvantage

Takeaways

What a supportive environment looks like:

During the crisis, staff checked in with clients and one another to ensure optimal support/care

Skills to be a supportive person:

Trauma-informed care, meeting people where they are, practicing supportive and validating language, and believing people’s stories

How to evoke change:

Funders hold power, but those doing this work evoke change through their expertise and experience

