

PROMOTING SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

A person's sexual and reproductive health are directly impacted by experiences of sexual and intimate partner violence.

Preventing sexual and intimate partner violence and healing from trauma both require that advocates push for broader access to comprehensive, accurate, and safe information about sexual health and reproductive healthcare.

IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON HEALTH

In addition to dealing with the direct physical and emotional impacts of violence, survivors have the burden of addressing the possibility of sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and/or infertility, and other sexual and reproductive health issues.

For this reason, access to sexual and reproductive health care is critical to recovering from the trauma of sexual and intimate partner violence—and that access must include options for all people regardless of income, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, or age.

A survivor of sexual violence who is pregnant must be able to make decisions about whether to end a pregnancy, choose adoption, or raise a child. As part of that process, they should have access to non-judgmental, safe, legal, affordable, and medically accurate information and care, without pressure or added burdens, including counseling and/or trauma-informed advocacy services.

OUR POSITION

The Action Alliance supports full access to non-judgmental, safe, legal, affordable, and medically accurate sexual and reproductive health care for all survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence.

We support full access to prevention education and services that promote sexual and reproductive health and wellness across the lifespan.

We support policies that promote a trauma-informed approach* to sexual and reproductive coercion and violence when it occurs and policies that seek to reestablish autonomy, safety, and empowerment for all survivors of violence as they make informed decisions about their health, families, and the services needed to heal and thrive.

POSITION STATEMENT

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EXAMPLES OF CARE

- Forensic nurse examination & physical evidence collection;
- Treatment for gynecological and physical injuries and symptoms;
- Preventive treatment (postexposure prophylaxis) for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and Hepatitis B;
- Contraceptive counseling and services to reduce risk of unintended pregnancy, including access to the birth control pill, IUDs, and emergency contraceptives;
- Family planning counseling and medical consultation, including adoption services and safe and legal abortion;
- Prescription medication and/or alternative treatments associated with trauma recovery;
- Gender affirming and culturally relevant support services, including counseling and/or trauma-informed advocacy services.

* Trauma-informed approaches promote healing environments that share a set of core principles: safety, trust, collaboration, choice, empowerment, and recognition of cultural and historical contexts.