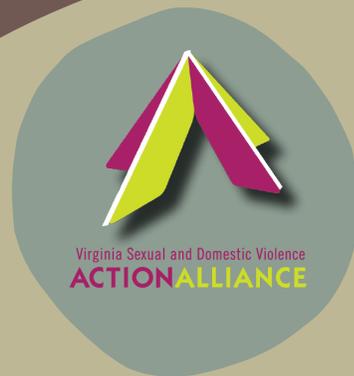




# How Can We Foster Reproductive Justice Within Sexual & Domestic Violence Agencies?

Part 3 in a 3-part series





# REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

means living in a world where we can make decisions about our bodies, and that we have the resources we need to take care of our bodies.



It means being able to take pleasure in our bodies.



It means having what we need to take care of our children, partners, and family members so they are healthy and safe.



It means having communities of love and support so we all can thrive.



# What can I do as someone \* working in a Sexual & Domestic Violence Agency?

## As a staff or board member...

### Start here:

- **Provide learning opportunities about reproductive health** within your agency. This can include intersections with racial justice and the impact on survivors. The Action Alliance Training Institute can help ([vsdvalliance.org/build-skills/request-a-training](https://vsdvalliance.org/build-skills/request-a-training)).
- **Include information about reproductive justice in your onboarding and continuing education** for staff, volunteers, and board. Emphasize that reproductive justice is an essential part of survivor advocacy and prevention.
- **Ensure board meetings offer flexible meeting times.** Offer remote access for board members with children at home.
- **Hold staff/Board discussions about these infographics:**
  - How Oppressive Systems Connect
  - How Justice Movements ConnectInclude them in your staff, board, and volunteer orientation materials.
- **Establish policies and practices that are family-friendly** and affirm families of all configurations. Some examples include:
  - gender-neutral family leave
  - flexible work schedules
  - paid parental and family leave
  - quiet rooms for lactating parents or feeding babies (or the option to take a break to pump at home).



# As a staff or board member...

## Consider trying:

- **Hold staff/volunteer/Board conversations about reproductive justice** and abortion access.<sup>1</sup>
- **Incorporate reproductive coercion screening** into your intake policies.<sup>2</sup>
- **Assess your personnel policies for family-friendliness**, including:
  - paid gender-neutral parental leave that affirms families of all configurations
  - flexible time off
  - options for working remotely
  - adopting policies to move toward living wage for all employees
  - allowing children to come to the office
  - subsidies for childcare
  - educational benefits (stipends and time off for further education);
  - fertility benefits
  - adoption benefits
  - health insurance coverage for gender-affirming care for nonbinary and transgender staff.
- **Engage in legislative advocacy** at the local, state, and federal levels with the goal of fostering reproductive justice. See Part 2 of this series for policy ideas.

[1] The National Network of Abortion Funds offers these conversation cards, tailored to varying levels of comfort: <https://abortionfunds.org/cms/assets/uploads/2018/02/heart-to-heart-cards-blackandboldFINAL.pdf>

[2] See the Action Alliance's **Reproductive and Sexual Coercion Toolkit** for Advocates for screening tips and sample forms: <https://www.communitysolutionsva.org/index.php/resources/item/reproductive-and-sexual-coercion-a-toolkit-for-sexual-domestic-violence-adv>



# As a preventionist or an advocate working with youth

## Start here:

- **Challenge beliefs in rigid, stereotyped gender roles.** Expand notions of gender to be flexible and fluid. Consider how this relates to clothing, hobbies, strengths, childrearing responsibilities, and so on.
  - **Provide prevention education that promotes sexual and reproductive health** and wellness across the lifespan, from ages 1-100.
  - **Work with community partners, including schools, to create gender-inclusive, affirming environments** that foster the humanity of trans and gender non-confirming students.<sup>3</sup>
  - **Promote healthy communication skills, boundary setting, and affirmative consent** in all aspects of your prevention programming.
  - **Cultivate trauma-informed spaces** that respond to and prevent violence, bullying, harassment.
  - **Teach children that they have autonomy over their bodies.** Model asking children for consent (e.g., asking for hugs, asking before taking photos, etc.).<sup>4</sup>
  - **Recognize that children have a right to honest, age- and developmentally-appropriate information** about their bodies, health, sexuality, and relationships.<sup>5</sup>
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[3] Gender Spectrum offers some great resources: <https://www.genderspectrum.org/articles/easy-steps-to-a-gender-inclusive-classroom>

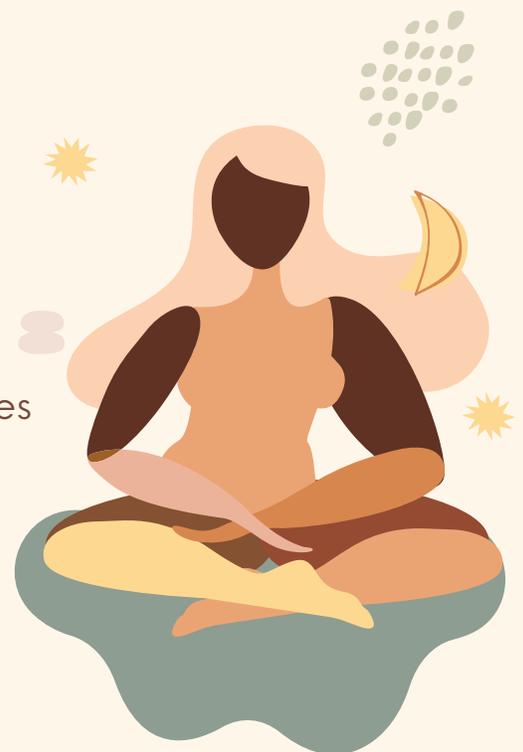
[4] The Action Alliance's **Teach Consent Campaign** is a great resource for this and includes a parent discussion guide and facilitator discussion guide: <http://www.teachconsent.org/>.

[5] The **Our Whole Lives Curriculum** from the Unitarian Universalist Association is a gold standard in accurate, inclusive, and comprehensive healthy sexuality education across the lifespan: <https://www.uua.org/re/owl>

# As a preventionist or an advocate working with youth

## Consider trying:

- **Work with your local school board to review the current sexual health education happening in schools.** Strive for comprehensive education on healthy sexuality that is:
  - age- and developmentally-appropriate
  - medically accurate
  - pleasure-centered
  - anti-oppressive
  - identity- and body-affirming.
- **Advocate for changing Family Life Education standards** that reflect the values above.
- **Advocate for policies that affirm** the humanity of trans and gender non-confirming people.
- **Invest in and advocate for access to community services** that support expecting and new parents, such as in-home visiting.
- **Consider adopting a curriculum like Our Whole Lives or Care for Kids.** These are two nationally-recognized healthy sexuality curricula.
- **Engage in legislative advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels** to foster reproductive justice. See Part 2 in this series for policy ideas.



# As an advocate working with adults (for example in shelter, hospital accompaniment, hotline)

## Start here:

- **Regularly screen for sexual and reproductive coercion** when working with survivors;
- **Connect survivors with forensic nurse examinations** and physical evidence collection/recovery where appropriate;
- **Refer survivors to medical professionals for treatment** of gynecological and physical injuries and symptoms;
- **Connect survivors with preventive treatment** (postexposure prophylaxis) for STIs, including HIV and Hepatitis B;
- **Ensure access to contraceptive counseling and services** to reduce risk of unintended pregnancy. This includes access to the birth control pill, intrauterine devices (IUDs), and emergency contraceptives;
- **Offer resources for family planning counseling and medical consultation.** These options include adoption services and safe and legal abortion;
- **Refer survivors to medical professionals and healing experts** for prescription medication and/or alternative treatments associated with trauma recovery;
- **Ensure gender-affirming and culturally relevant support services**, including counseling and/or trauma-informed advocacy services. Ideally services provided by individuals at the intersection of marginalized identities and experiences.

# As an advocate working with adults (for example in shelter, hospital accompaniment, hotline)

## Consider trying:

- Make available to survivors over-the-counter (OTC) medications, pregnancy tests, and emergency contraception.<sup>6</sup>
- Establish referral protocols for community health partners, including reproductive health partners.<sup>7</sup>
- Engage in legislative advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels that will foster reproductive justice. See Part 2 of this series for policy ideas.



[6] Domestic violence programs and sexual assault crisis centers are neither prohibited from nor directed to make OTC medications available to program participants. See Virginia Code § 54.1-2519 for “dispensing” and other related definitions.

[7] See the Action Alliance’s **Reproductive and Sexual Coercion: A Toolkit for Sexual and Domestic Violence Victim Advocates** for sample forms and policies:

<https://www.communitysolutionsva.org/index.php/resources/item/reproductive-and-sexual-coercion-a-toolkit-for-sexual-domestic-violence-adv>

# As an advocate working with pregnant and parenting people (in shelters, hospital accompaniment, hotline, and other settings)

## Start here:

- Promote parenting programs that start pre-birth. Offer non-stigmatizing, non-judgmental programming specifically for teen parents.<sup>8</sup> Offer programming on how to cultivate healthy relationships with one's child, as well as how to cultivate communication with one's partner.
- Offer trauma-informed services for pregnant and parenting survivors;<sup>9</sup>
- Provide resources on how to talk to children about consent and personal bodily autonomy (giving consent for hugs, etc.).<sup>10</sup>

## Consider trying:

- Engage in legislative advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels that will foster reproductive justice. See Part 2 of this series for ideas.

[8 ] One example of a non-stigmatizing, non-judgmental resource for teen parents: <https://powertodecide.org/>  
[9] The Washington State Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs and Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence offer this fantastic resource for developing trauma-informed advocacy for pregnant and parenting survivors: <https://pregnantsurvivors.org/>  
[10] The Action Alliance's Teach Consent Campaign is a great resource for this and includes a parent discussion guide and facilitator discussion guide: <http://www.teachconsent.org/>.

# As an advocate working with community partners

## Start here:

- **Establish relationships with reproductive healthcare providers** to ensure timely referrals for survivors who have experienced or are experiencing sexual and reproductive coercion.<sup>11</sup>
- **Build relationships with local midwives and doulas** to support pregnant and parenting survivors.
- **Educate your community partners** on the intersections of reproductive health and survivor justice.

## Consider trying:

- **Encourage your community partners to implement policies and procedures that support screening** for sexual and reproductive coercion;
- **Integrate these conversations and issues into your SART**, prevention coalition, and other coordinated community response spaces:
  - Work to recognize and eliminate disparities in maternal mortality rates among Black mothers;
  - Reduce gun violence and promote community-wide safety;
  - Ensure access to safe water and/or eliminate food deserts.
- **Create an educational campaign** that connects affordable, nonjudgmental, and safe healthcare access with improved health outcomes for survivors.
- **Work with community partners to host trainings or community forums** on the intersections between reproductive health and survivor justice.
- **Engage in legislative advocacy** at the local, state, and federal levels that will foster reproductive justice. See Part 2 for ideas.

[11] Futures Without Violence offers a toolkit to cultivate partnerships between healthcare providers and domestic violence advocates to promote survivor's health and safety: <https://ipvhealth.org/>

[12] Reproductive and Sexual Coercion: A Toolkit for Sexual and Domestic Violence Victim Advocates: <https://www.communitysolutionsva.org/index.php/resources/item/reproductive-and-sexual-coercion-a-toolkit-for-sexual-domestic-violence-adv>

# Resources



## **SisterSong: What is Reproductive Justice?**

<https://www.sistersong.net/reproductive-justice/>

## **Loretta Ross: Reproductive Justice 101**

(1:58 min video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQHolmVzN1c>

## **Loretta Ross & Dr. Kimberly Scott: Reproductive Justice**

(11:49 min video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPzqlmullgU>

## **In Our Own Voice: The History of Reproductive Justice**

(2:08 min video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihwvHHInrIU>

## **Abortion Funds' Multimedia Reproductive Justice Syllabus**

<https://abortionfunds.org/syllabus>

**Sexual and Reproductive Justice Resources**, compiled by the NYC Health Department and Sexual and Reproductive Justice Community Engagement Group:  
<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/ms/srj-resource-list.pdf>

## **VAWnet Reproductive Justice & Violence Against Women: Understanding the Intersections**

<https://vawnet.org/sc/reproductive-justice-violence-against-women-understanding-intersections>

## **VAWnet Reproductive Justice and Domestic and Sexual Violence**

<https://vawnet.org/sc/paradigm-intersectionality-holistic-framework-ensure-complete-well-being>

## **Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs**

### **Connections: Reproductive Justice issue Summer 2013**

[http://www.ncdsv.org/images/WCSAP\\_Connections-Reproductive-Justice\\_Summer2013.pdf](http://www.ncdsv.org/images/WCSAP_Connections-Reproductive-Justice_Summer2013.pdf)

## **Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance**

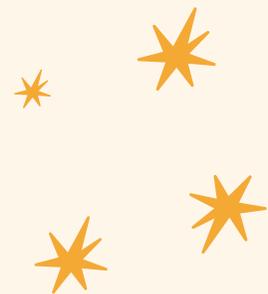
**Reproductive Freedom & Choice for Survivors: Resources for Advocates**  
[bit.ly/rjforadvocates](http://bit.ly/rjforadvocates)





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## Our Reproductive Justice Series

**Part 1** What is Reproductive Justice?

**Part 2** How Does Reproductive Justice Intersect with Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence?

**Part 3** How Can We Build and Foster Reproductive Justice within Sexual and Domestic Violence Agencies?