

A Trusted Process for Improving Responses to Gender-Based Violence

The Battered Women’s Justice Project ([BWJP](#)) is the national legal resource for gender-based violence. As a collective of 7 national policy and practice centers at the intersection of gender-based violence and legal systems our projects provide some of the nation’s leading specialized policy and practice initiatives on improving survivor safety.

BWJP’s National Center on Reimagining Coordinated Community Response (NCRCCR) establishes approaches and support for centering survivor and culturally specific realities, for advocates and allied professionals to positively shift systems’ interactions with survivors, and their partners and communities.

- The Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence (CCR) model has been the most widely replicated approach to addressing domestic violence throughout the world.
- CCRs coordinate advocates, community representatives, system practitioners (law enforcement, prosecution, judiciary, probation, child welfare, immigration, health, education, etc.), civil and defense attorneys, to take responsibility for domestic violence occurring in the community so the onus is not placed on survivors alone.
- Since the development of the CCR model in the 1980s, BWJP has provided training and technical assistance to jurisdictions implementing CCR around the country.

BWJP’s NCRCCR training and technical assistance to CCRs offers:

- An approach that centers survivor’s lived experiences and prioritizes the needs of marginalized communities.
- A structured assessment process for CCR teams to problem solve and enhance responses.
- Strategies for CCRs to break down silos, foster trust between communities and systems, and improve coordination and information sharing.
- Access to specialized information, referrals, resources, consultations, and site visits.
- Customized virtual and in-person training.
- Policy development, review and implementation for individual agencies, coordination across systems, and promoting culturally responsive systemic interventions.

The assessment process, also known as Institutional Analysis, is a well-utilized methodology many CCRs around the country have engaged in to:

- Strategically understand how agencies are structured and organize their practitioners to respond to domestic violence.
- Identify gaps and challenges in systems’ responses that produce disproportionate or problematic outcomes for survivors and their families.
- Reconcile the differences in survivors’ priorities and needs with the priorities and goals of systems.
- Problem solve and develop recommendations.

The assessment process entails:

- Learning from survivors, advocates, and community leaders about survivors' nuanced experiences of abuse, how they define safety and accountability, their needs, and how community and systemic interventions impact their safety and wellbeing.
- Comparing existing domestic violence policies and protocols to best practices in responding to domestic violence incidents.
- Collecting, reviewing, and analyzing baseline and ongoing data for domestic violence incidents.
- Information gathering activities: mapping points of intervention, interviewing practitioners and observing them at work, and analyzing reports, files, forms, and other methods of documenting case information.

The assessment process does not focus on the performance of individual practitioners and is not used to critique or undermine participating agencies. Rather, the process is based on these beliefs:

- Agencies and practitioners want to effectively respond to domestic violence, achieving safety and accountability.
- It is a courageous act for an agency to invite others in to look at its response.
- Focus is on the structure of the job, not the practitioner, as the place for change.
- All information and findings are confidential and not to be shared publicly.
- Assumptions about current responses are suspended and all participating agencies, practitioners, advocates, and community representatives are co-learners in the process.

The following commitments are needed from system agencies for CCRs to engage in a meaningful and successful assessment process:

- Actively participate in planning and coordination meetings.
- Assign one or more consistent agency representatives to actively participate in the assessment process.
- Follow-through on commitments made to community and meaningfully include community representatives in all aspects of the CCR.
- Provide access to agency data, records, case files, forms, policies, and protocols.
- Allow the CCR access to interview practitioners and observe them at work.
- Agree to implement recommendations for improvements to response, policies and practices as identified by the CCR.
- Commit to an ongoing process of continually monitoring the effectiveness of the CCR and make modifications as needed.