

# Multi-agency models for Elder Abuse: **MARAC & CCR**



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# MARVOW

Multi-Agency Responses to  
Violence against Older Women

# 6

partners

- AÖF, Austria
- UWAH, Greece
- WSIC, Estonia
- UT, Estonia
- WWP EN, Germany
- WAVE, Austria

# 3

years project

Sept 2019 – Feb 2022



supported by REC  
program of the EU



to develop & implement a  
comprehensive **multiagency  
cooperation model** for working  
with elderly victims of abuse



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# Multi-agency models

## MARACs

Multi-Agency Risk  
Assessment Conferences

## CCR

Coordinated  
Community Response



# MARAC definition

- Provides for **multi-institutional cooperation between different institutions in case-related conferences**
- For victims in **high risk situations**
- developed in Cardiff - UK, where MARACS are available in 70 cities in the UK
- Slogan "Save life - save money"

important: good and comprehensive infrastructure of specific victim protection facilities



# History of the development in Vienna

- **Started in Vienna in 2011**, existed until early 2018. Also existed in Tyrol & Lower Austria, should have been expanded throughout Austria
- The name MARAC was retained because it had already become "naturalized". However, it does not stand for the English approach, but is a model developed in Vienna based on the experiences of the European project PROTECT II.
- It **was dissolved** by the ultra-right government in 2018
- New law since 2020: case conferences may **only be convened by the police**, but no multi-institutional cooperation



# PROTECT II- Manual-Guideline

- A European model of multi-institutional cooperation has been developed in the framework of **two transnational Daphne projects** funded by the European Union in the years 2009 to 2011.
- This was published as a **PROTECT II manual** (WAVE 2012).
- The PROTECT II project took into account the criticism of the MARAC model in England.
- The PROTECT II project had a strong focus on **the protection and rights of victims** and pursues a "victim-centered approach".
- This approach is also central to the Istanbul Convention and the EU Victim Protection Directive (valid since 2015)



# Victims in high-risk situation

- Distinction between high-risk victims and others can lead to a **dangerous polarisation**, based on false assumptions.
- **Risk is not a static phenomenon**, but a dynamic one and can change.
- Therefore risk is not a characteristic of a victim, but of a specific situation with a specific offender.
- Situations can change and a victim can quickly get into a "high risk" situation, for example when he or she tries to separate.
- EU-PROTECT II has therefore moved away from the term "high-risk victim", which was common in England. Instead, the term "**high-risk situation**" is used.



# Requirements for successful MARACs

- **Effective intervention system** and adequate specialized facilities to support victims
- Involvement of MARAC case conferences in **multi-institutional partnerships**
- Cooperation requires organizations that have "**connectors**" and **clear guidelines** for dealing with violence against women
- **Data sharing and protection is established**
- Involvement in **political measures** such as national action plans against violence against women



# Effective intervention system

- Professionals recognise domestic abuse, assess risk and identify high-risk cases based on the **clear MARAC referral criteria**
- **Suitable and specialized facilities for victims of violence against women and domestic violence** (women's shelters, women's emergency calls and women's advice centers, intervention agencies / violence protection centers), which can be operated quickly and free of charge. This is the core of violence prevention and multi-institutional cooperation. Victims need experts at their side to advise, accompany and protect their interests.
- **Victims in MARAC case conferences must be represented by a victim protection organization.** Victim protection facilities must play a central role in case conferences, because this is the only way to protect the rights and interests of victims.



# Multi-institutional partnerships

MARAC case conferences must be **involved in multi-institutional partnerships (MIP)** in order to be effective. Effective MIPs have partners that:

- Recognize and appreciate different organizational cultures,
- Are willing to get to know others and understand their respective "logics"
- Respect differences, but seek to establish common technical standards, for example in the assessment of dangerousness
- Identify practices that negatively affect victims and/or lead to secondary victimization
- Seek to identify frequently occurring problems at the case level that require systematic change
- Are willing to deal with conflicts respectfully



# “Connectors” and Clear Guidelines

- **Organizations can only work together effectively and coordinate their activities if they create "connectors" for cooperation.** This is because an organization cannot implement policies or practices in other orgs.
- Organizations should have **binding agreements on how to work with other organizations.**
- Each organization should also designate staff whose responsibilities include close cooperation with partner organizations.
- Networking and cooperation also requires **each participating institution to have clear guidelines and professional standards** regarding how it deals with violence against women and domestic violence



# Data sharing and protection

- **Mechanisms for the sharing of data between organizations must be established.** Victims should consent to this, unless there are situations of acute danger
- **The protection of victims' data** must also be taken into account when conducting MARAC case conferences.
- Institutions must first establish a basis of trust for the victim. **The victim must be sure that they are well represented in a MARAC case conference by a competent victim protection facility.** If the victim has no trust in the institutions, there is a risk that the victim will withdraw.



# Involvement in political measures

- An important task of multi-institutional partnerships is to contribute to the **evaluation of existing measures through ongoing reflection on practice and to convey concrete suggestions for improvement** to those responsible for politics.
- Multi-institutional partnerships such as MARACs should therefore be included in activities such as the **evaluation and implementation of national action plans**.



# Example of MARAC in Vienna

The following structure has developed & proven itself in Vienna:

- **MARAC steering group** meets about **quarterly**
- **MARAC teams** - case conferences in high-risk situations: currently two teams: Vienna West (comprises three police districts) and Vienna 10th district. Each team holds **monthly case conferences**.
- Moderation: The MARAC Team West had 20 members and is too large to be managed by the participants themselves.
- An external moderation was therefore engaged.
- Coordination: The activities of the MARAC alliance are coordinated by the **Vienna intervention agency against violence in the family**.
- Resources: The MARAC project in Vienna is made possible through the human resources of the individual participating institutions.



# Potential MARAC Steering Group members

- Police is the central facility
- Public prosecutor's office (plays an important role in preventing repeated and serious violence, attempted murder or murder)
- Criminal judges
- Family courts / district courts
- Victim protection facilities (intervention agencies / violence protection centers, women's facilities) - women's shelters, women's emergency calls and women's advice centers, intervention agencies / violence protection centers)
- Offices for youth and family
- Child protection devices
- Educational institutions
- Counseling centers for migrants
- Hospitals / victim protection groups / doctors Health care facilities
- Psychiatric institutions
- Addiction support facilities
- Probation and perpetrator programs
- Housing offices & facilities for homeless people



# Tasks of the MARAC steering group

- **Addressing gaps and problems** in the intervention system and working out possible solutions.
- **Implementation of developed problem solutions**, insofar as this is the competence of the members of the MARAC alliance.
- **Involvement of other experts** and members in order to be able to solve problems (e.g. experts from federal ministries).
- Bringing problems and proposed solutions **to politics** when legal or government measures are required.
- It is also the task of the steering group to **ensure that the MARAC teams** that conduct the case conferences **can work satisfactorily** and have the necessary resources.



# Typical MARAC Meeting Structure

Based upon a study of 232 MARACs\*:

- Most MARACs meet monthly (63%) or every two weeks (31.4%)
- MARAC meetings typically last between 2 and 5 hours depending on the number of cases that must be reviewed
- MARAC meetings discuss between 6 and 20 cases (70%)
- 90% have written protocols regarding MARAC meetings
- Participants spend 1 to 3 days preparing for a MARAC meeting
- MARACs typically have a coordinator who oversees scheduling and sharing of information and has chair designated for running the meetings (either the same chair for all meetings, or rotated between participants)

\*[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/116538/horr55-technical-annex.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/116538/horr55-technical-annex.pdf)



# Case selection for MARAC Case Conferences

- **Any institution** that is a member of the MARAC Alliance **can bring a case** into the MARAC case conference that is considered a high-risk situation according to the common criteria.
- Take MARAC Vienna as an example: an **allocation sheet** was developed for this in the MARAC Alliance Vienna.
- **A case is brought in by informing the coordination office.** This first clarifies whether the criteria for allocation to the MARAC case conference exist.
- If this is not the case, the referring body is consulted to come to a joint decision. It is then clarified whether a victim protection facility supports the victim.
- If this is the case (e.g. the woman lives in the women's shelter), the facility will be consulted to determine whether treatment of the case in the MARAC team currently makes sense. If yes, **the facility is asked to inform the victim about the MARAC case conference and to obtain consent.**
- If the person affected by violence does not yet have a victim protection facility that supports them, **help must be offered to them through a specialized victim protection facility.**



# Victims Rights in MARAC Case Conferences

## Victims must be represented by a victim protection facility in all MARAC case conferences

- The victim protection facility should play a central role in the case conference and brings in the rights and concerns of the victim.
- MARAC should not happen "over the victim's head", but in cooperation with the victim. This is the only way to achieve the goal that victims feel empowered and do not feel “run over”.
- If the victim protection facility’s role is weak or is not taken seriously, there is a risk that MARAC case conferences will not effectively contribute to protection.
- Whenever possible, victims should also be informed that their situation may be discussed within a MARAC case conference



# Informing victims about MARAC

Victims should be informed about the following:

- **Which institutions** are represented in the MARAC team?
- **How can the MARAC team help protect and support the victim?** Note that only information about danger factors is exchanged (no other personal data, no "assessments" or "ratings" of the victim)
- **Date** of the MARAC team meeting.
- **Time at which the victim receives feedback** about the relief and protection measures taken.

It is also important to clarify with the victim what they expect from MARAC and what help they want. The victim's rights are the basis for MARAC's work. The victim can be informed about MARAC in written or oral way.



# MARAC case conferences without the victim's consent

If a MARAC team decides a case in which the risk is high without discussing the victim's consent, it is important that there are clear criteria for this. The following criteria should be present:

- ▶ **Attempts have been made to reach the victim** and to obtain their consent
- ▶ **There is a high and ongoing risk to the life, health and freedom** of the victim, the victim's children or other members of the family
- ▶ **There is a high and ongoing risk for people in the area or for the general public**
- ▶ The existence of these criteria and the risk factors **is documented** in the documents of the institutions involved, and it is technically understandable why the case is dealt with without the victim's consent (defendable decision).



# Coordinated Community Response

- A structured way of bringing together key players in community systems to develop strategies and procedures for responding to abuse
- A CCR **identifies strategies for improving the community's ability to intervene** in a way that ends abuse.
- CCR focuses on the **systems responses and practices** not necessarily on individual cases
- CCR's do so in *Steering Groups* and smaller group meetings
- **CCR Steering Groups are larger, including service providers as well as other professionals, community members, and stakeholders**



# Activities of CCR

- Discover the problems in a system's response to domestic assault that diminish safety and fail to hold offenders accountable.
- Organize with agencies to solve those problems using victim experience as the starting point.
- Track the impact of the interventions to see if the results match the desired intent of the changes.



# Making the Violence Visible

One of the main outcomes of coordinated community response work is making the violence visible at each point of a criminal justice intervention:

- Building administrative tools that direct workers to document context that includes the current incident, risk and relationship history.
- Build a way to analyze and distribute the risk information to all points of cases processing.
- Done effectively, this can reduce judgment and increase the ability of a CCR to identify systemic problems and high-risk individual offenders.



# Core Principles of CCR Approach

1. Create a philosophical approach that centralizes victim safety;
2. Develop policies and protocols that enhance victim safety
3. Enhance networking among service providers;
4. Build monitoring and tracking systems that strengthen system accountability;
5. Advocate for high-quality supportive infrastructure for victims;
6. Provide sanctions and rehabilitation opportunities for abusers;
7. Undo the harm violence to women does to children;
8. Evaluate the CCR for victim safety and offender accountability



# 1. Common underlying philosophy

Agencies should seek to **change how the community thinks about violence** by building an underlying philosophical framework by:

- Reducing conflicting theories about battering and about how to protect victims and hold offenders accountable
- Addressing tensions caused by conflicting philosophies through ongoing discussions among practitioners.
- Examining the assumptions and philosophical foundation underlying current practice;
- Working towards an understanding of the complex dynamics of an abusive relationship and a commitment to handle cases in a manner that doesn't blame or revictimize the victim;
- Staying current on research and educational materials on battering;



## 2. Implementing & standardizing policies & protocols

Policies, procedures, and protocols must be (put) in place, **which coordinate and standardize the work of practitioners**. These should:

- Take into account how their practices affect victims;
- Chart out the roles, possible intervention actions, and procedures of each intervening agent in the system, e.g., 112, police officer, jailer;
- Ensure that agencies' policies complement each other;
- Outline the exchange of information, collection of data, and a process to notify administrators when practitioners fail to comply with agreed-upon policies;
- **Be reviewed and updated to include new practices which can maximize victim safety.**



## 3. Networking Among Service Providers

**A system/process should be in place for coordinating the exchange of information**, interagency communication and decision-making (MARAC) on individual cases. The system should:

- Route all available info on a case to those practitioners involved with it;
- Distribute information and reports generated through data collection which summarize data, trends, etc.;
- Coordinate interagency meetings to resolve problems with individual cases and discuss related issues faced by practitioners;
- Hold smaller meetings as needed to address issues as they arise;
- Facilitate input by all people/agencies affected by policy change or development;
- Provide for the exchange of information between agencies so there is a common understanding of how their policies complement one another's efforts.



## 4. Monitoring and Tracking Systems

A **data collection system** should be put in place for **monitoring and tracking cases** from initial contact through case closure to ensure practitioner and offender accountability. This should include:

- Maintaining a database and statistical information on the system's response;
- Reviewing practitioner behavior for compliance with established policies, protocols and procedures;
- Determination of what information is important and where and how to get it;
- Tracking cases for breakdowns in the system;
- Utilizing data to determine if agency objectives are being realized;
- Developing policies with each agency for the collection of data and a process to notify administrators when practitioners fail to comply.



## 5. High Quality Supportive Systems

**Resources and services for victims** and other at-risk family members are available to protect them from further abuse. This includes:

- Emergency safe housing, legal advocacy, access to resources, and support services are available for all victims;
- Information and referral to battered women's programming are made available by all agencies in the CCR.



## 6. Sanctions & rehabilitation for abusers

**Hold offenders accountable to the victim** and the goals of the community. Includes sanctions, restrictions, and rehabilitation services including:

- A law enforcement arrest policy;
- Prosecution/judicial policies to discourage automatic “screening out” of cases
- Requiring pre-sentence investigations and extended probation periods;
- Judicial policy which ensures that repeated acts of violence or violations of orders for protection result in stricter penalties, including jail, counseling, no-contact provisions, restitution, community service, and other restrictions;
- Monitoring attendance at nonviolence classes to hold offenders accountable, resulting in consequences for failure to attend.
- All while respecting the offender’s right to due process.



## 8. Training and Evaluation of the CCR

Done from the standpoint of victim safety and the goals of the intervening agencies by:

- Providing training for all participants on the goals of the CCR, new policies and developments in the field;
- Participating in research to determine the effectiveness of policies and procedures in protecting women from further violence;
- Evaluating the level of change of court-mandated offenders by analyzing reductions in abusive behaviors and the extent to which women are free to act without control or restraints from the offender



# Goals of a CCR Steering Group

- **Maximize community awareness and safety, protection, and response** for victims **without the use of (real) case reviews.**
- Ensure a **victim-centered response** to violence and access to community resources
- **Increase accountability of professionals** and especially perpetrators
- Increase or more efficiently make use of **resources**
- Include/represent underserved populations affected by abuse:
  - ethnic minorities
  - LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered)
  - people with disabilities



# What does a CCR Steering Group do?

- **CCR SGs can assist service providers and system members in:**
  - communication, networking, and collaboration
  - bringing to light gaps in protocols or other services needed to support victims.
- **CCR SGs are ALSO a place where members of the community:**
  - work together with system/service providers to discuss abuse and its effect on the community
  - collectively participate in developing services, planning events, and prevention strategies needed to boost community awareness and decrease violence.



# The Duluth Model

- **Victims and their experience** provide the framework for designing and advising the work of the CCR.
- Interventions need to enhance and **be linked to the work of the next agency** processing the case.
- **The focus is never on the individual worker.** It's on the policies, protocols and practices that inform the workers actions.
- Each intervention needs to **balance prioritizing victim safety and offender accountability** with improving the work experience of the practitioner.
- Risk and contextual information must be **collected, analyzed and distributed** at the outset of a case so that all agencies are making decisions based on consistent data to manage the offender.
- **Practitioners work together in a strategic manner to resolve problems.** Most work is done in small groups or individual meetings rather than large monthly meetings.

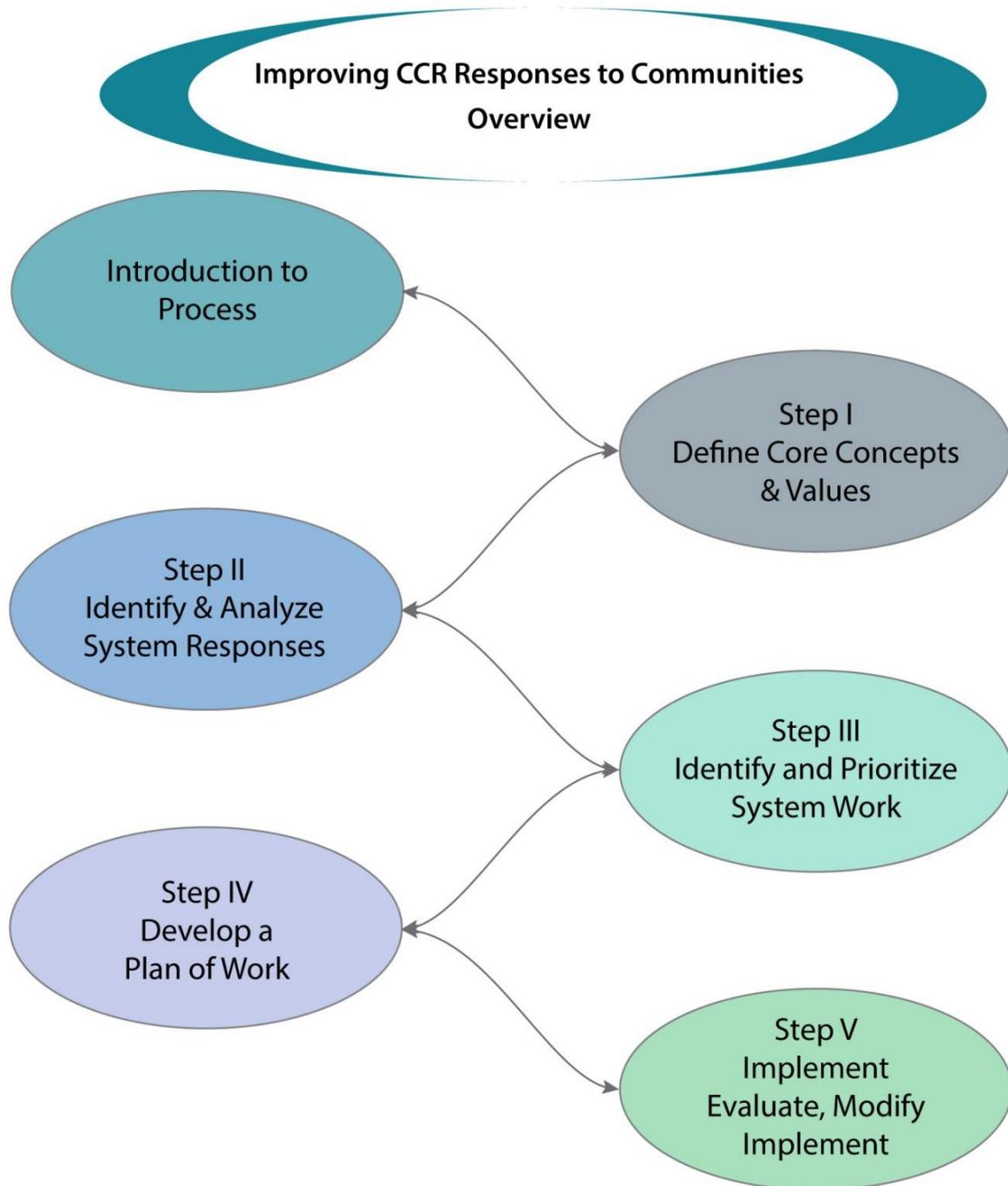


# The Importance of Advocacy & Victim Input

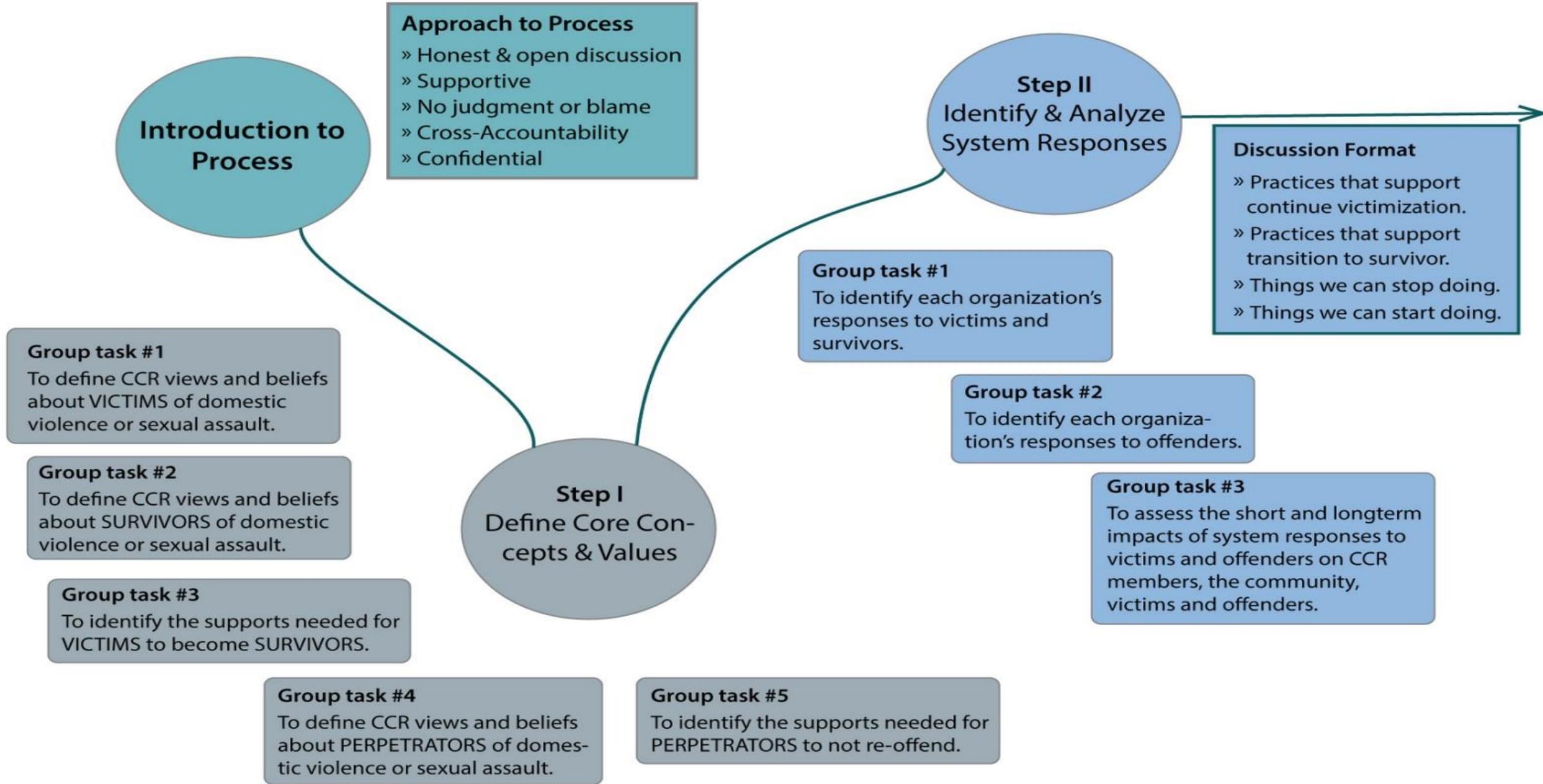
- Interventions are aligned with the needs and experiences of victims.
- Interventions are generally predictable due to interlocking policies, protocols and procedures for each intervening agency.
- **The primary question asked in each step of case processing is: how does this make the victim safer?**

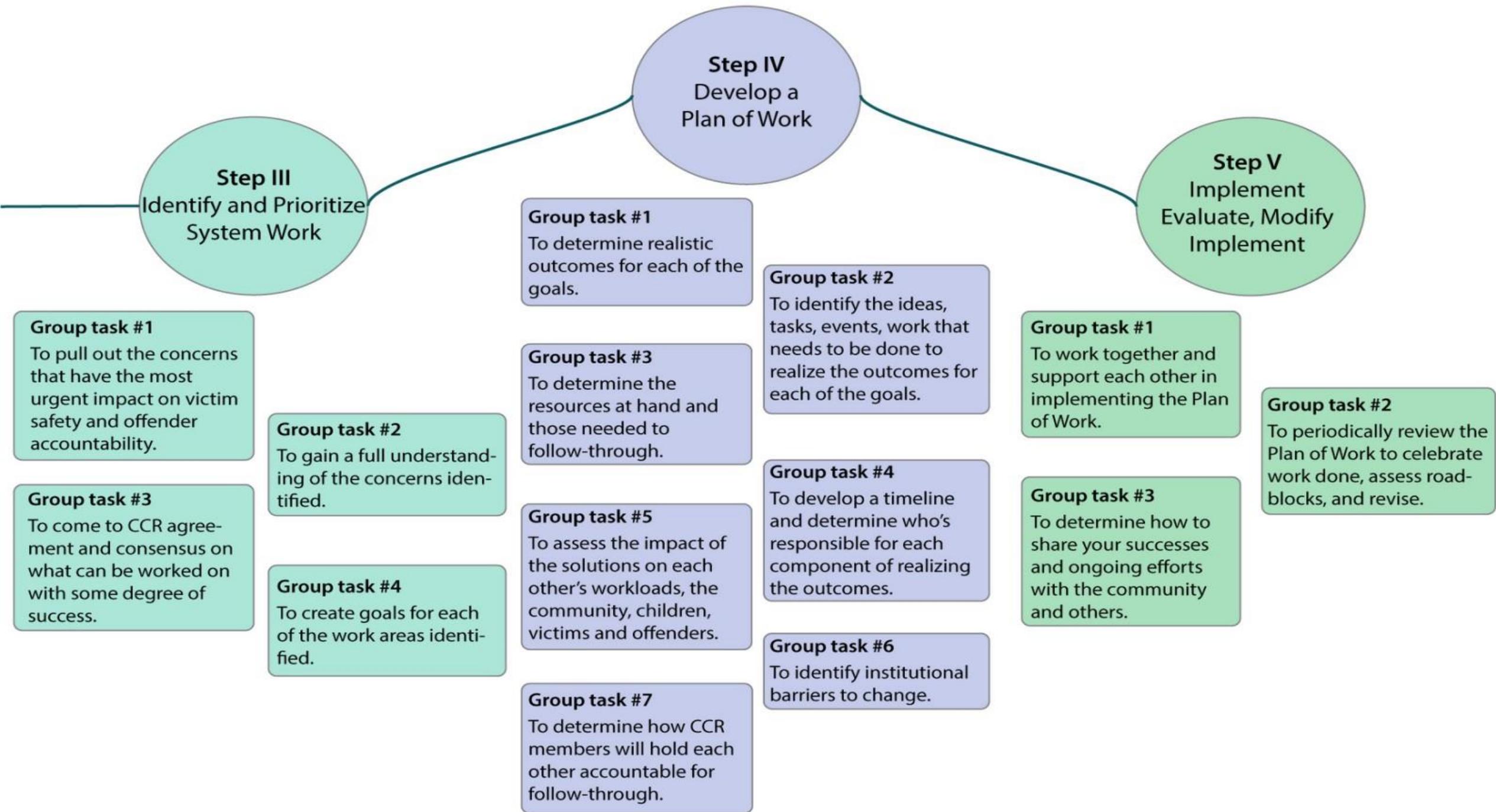


# CCR Process Overview

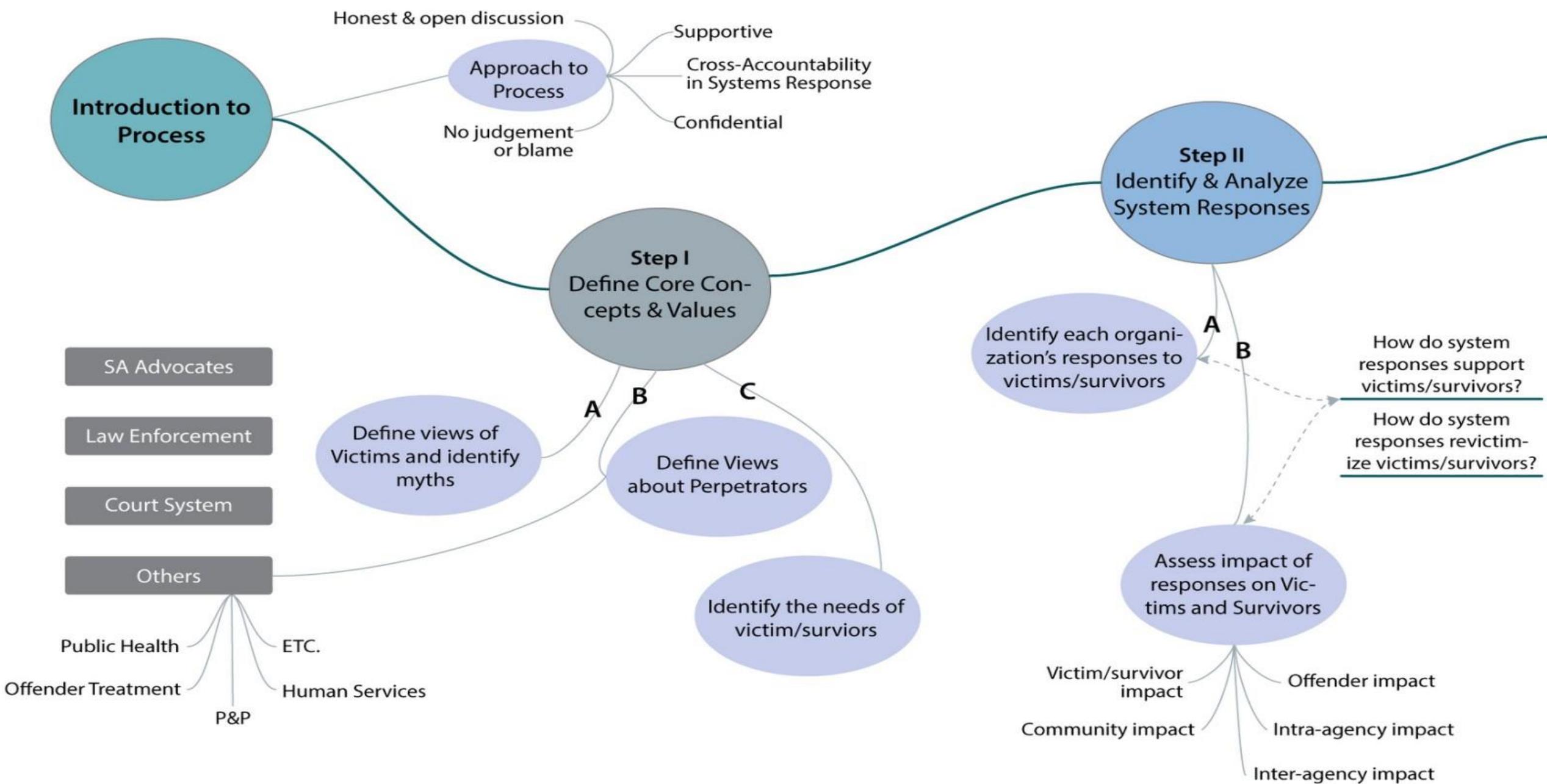


# Improving CCR Responses to Communities





# Improving CCR Responses to Victims/Survivors



# CCR Interagency Meetings / Interviews

## Large CCR meetings:

- Get input on systemic changes.
- Announcements like trainings, job shifts, successes, launches and event planning.

## Small CCR meetings (Subcommittees):

- Organize policy, practice or protocol changes
- Review data tracking results
- Strategize institutional change approaches
- Case review

## Interviews\*

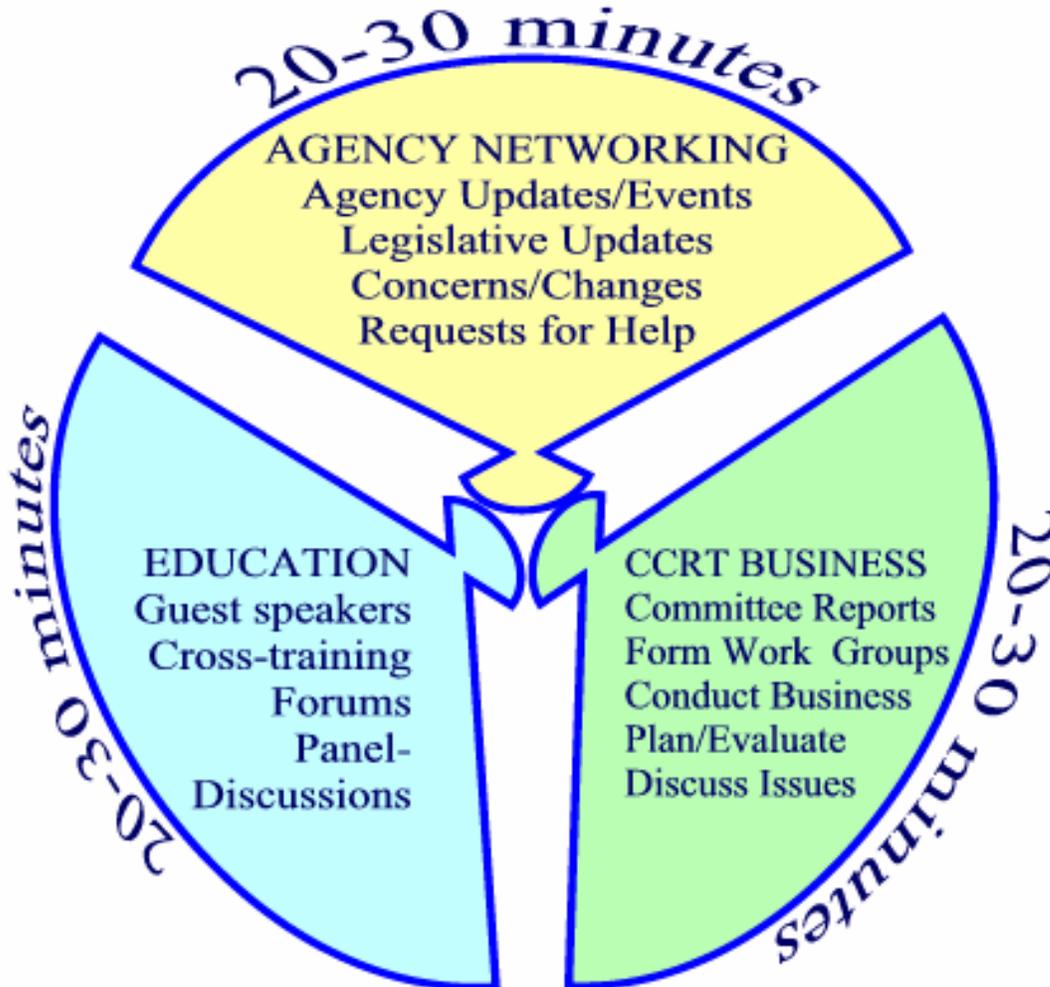
- Get input into the gaps or barriers encountered



# CCR Team Meetings

- Many CCR teams meet monthly. Some meet quarterly.
- Some teams are divided into a planning committee of fewer members that meets every 2-3 weeks to create the agenda and discuss long-term planning.
- Subcommittees that are working on task-specific issues may meet in between CCR meetings. If the group is broken down into these groups, then the full CCR team may decide to meet monthly for a shorter meeting.
- also an option as long as subcommittees are meeting more frequently in-between.
- Consider what your group wants to accomplish and how much time and preparation are needed to achieve your goals each month.
- **Meeting too infrequently can lead to loss of motivation to achieve your goals as a team.**





# Suggested CCR Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Agency Updates/Announcements 20-30 minutes
3. Legislative Updates
4. Committee Reports
5. Old Business 20-30 minutes
6. New Business
7. Program ----- 20-30 minutes
8. Next Meeting Date & Program



# CCR Team Meetings Possible Topics

- How to identify more elderly victims
- Victim Services/Survivor Input
- How are we serving underserved populations?
- Data Collection and Sharing Systems
- Perpetrator Issues



# SAMPLE TOPIC: DATA COLLECTION

## Invite to the meeting:

- Agencies from whom you want data (ex. Law Enforcement, Human Services, [Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence] Service Provider, Hospital/SANE, DA's office, etc.)
- All team members

## Possible Resources:

- Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence staff are available to assist teams through the process of where and how to collect data. WCASA (608) 257-1516, WCADV (608) 255-0539.
- Office of Justice Assistance website [www.oja.wi.gov](http://www.oja.wi.gov) has data available by county.
- [Wisconsin Court System website](#): for public records regarding court cases by name and date of birth of the defendant.
- Also see "Questions to Ask of SA Data" also in the Planning/Activities [Data Collection] section of the CCR Toolkit

## Consider including on the agenda:

- What questions do we want the data to answer? (i.e. "How many reported sexual assaults/domestic violence incidents were there last year?
- What is the break down between women, men, and children? How many were prosecuted?") ALSO....What questions can we ask of the data? (i.e. "Do these numbers accurately reflect the number of actual domestic violence incidents in our community?
- How long does it take for a domestic violence case to make its way through the court system? What are the patterns in the data? Where are the gaps?)
- Who has the data we need? Is it available in public records?
- Are there obstacles to receiving the data? Can the data be shared with the team?



# CCR Examples/Impacts

- CCRs have been implemented in communities around the world, especially the US and UK

Impacts of CCRs have been mixed, various studies have found that:

- Victims in CCR areas generally receive more services (4 or more different types from different agencies at a time)
- CCRs are effective in increasing the likelihoods that victims receive needs assessments and safety planning
- CCRs have a positive effect on the conviction of perpetrators
- CCRs do not improve perceptions of the fairness of judges or the criminal justice system in general
- CCRs have a modest impact on effecting citizen attitudes towards IPV (i.e. its prevalence, severity and acceptableness)
- Service provider collaboration tends to increase when a CCR is implemented



# Comparative analysis of the models: **MARAC & CCR**



	<b>MARAC</b>	<b>CCR</b>
<b>Definition</b>	multi-institutional cooperation between different institutions in <b>case-related</b> conferences	a structured way of bringing together key players in <b>community systems</b> to develop strategies and procedures for responding to abuse
<b>Focus</b>	individual <b>high-risk</b> cases	<b>systems responses &amp; practices</b>
<b>Steering group</b>	police, judges, victim protection facility, offices for youth & family, child protection, educational institutions, counselling centers, hospitals, probation & perpetrator programs, housing offices etc.	<b>+ service providers, community members</b>



**Thank you!**  
**Feel free to ask any**  
**questions.**



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