

# Training framework

Whitehorse Sexualized Assault Response Team (SART)

December 2022

## SART training framework

Whitehorse SART agencies have committed to identifying and participating in ongoing training in order to develop specialized knowledge, skills and approaches to working with victims of sexualized assault. Agencies will develop internal training to guide their work, will participate in inter-agency training, and will provide training to other Whitehorse SART agencies and community partners on their work.

The training framework sets out the principles for SART training:

- identifying, in general terms, the subject areas and competencies to be addressed through training, in order to effectively deliver services in the Yukon context;
- providing a mechanism for receiving, considering and responding to recommended training for Whitehorse SART agencies;
- reflecting those needs in the ongoing training plan; and
- providing a structure to support the setting of training priorities.

The purpose of the training framework is:

- to support the development of the specialized and general knowledge and skills necessary for effective service delivery for Whitehorse SART agencies;
- to provide a foundation for Whitehorse SART agencies to assess new and emerging training programs; and
- to inform the development of the annual training planning.

These are the training objectives for Whitehorse SART agencies:

- learn to treat victims with dignity, respect and empathy;
- learn about the neurobiology of the brain and the impact of trauma;
- learn about the roles of each of the disciplines that make up Whitehorse SART, and how to work effectively within that team;
- learn about Gender-Inclusive Diversity Analysis (GIDA), and how marginalized populations in the Yukon may experience barriers to service;
- learn more about specific known contexts of sexualized assault that may affect various populations in the Yukon, such as children and youth, male victims, victims who identify as LGBTQ2S+, people with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, those involved in sex work/trade, and those struggling with substance use;
- learn more about the history of Indigenous people in the Yukon;
- learn about sexualized assault response options and processes, including third-party reporting, sexualized assault evidence kits and Kits on Ice, criminal justice processes and the resources that are available for support and healing in the Yukon;
- learn discipline-related skills for responding to a SART-related call and/or disclosure;
- learn more about partners and stakeholder organizations in the community that are working with victims of sexualized assault and how SART can support the people they work with;
- learn about legislation that relates to sexualized violence, such as the Yukon *Child and Family Services Act*, the Yukon *Victims of Crime Act*, and the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*, and participate in reviews of such legislation when appropriate; and
- learn about the relevant practices and commitments in child welfare between First Nations and the Government of Yukon and the RCMP.

## Training principles

The proposed areas of training reflect the Whitehorse SART core principles and commitments to develop a specialized approach and understanding of how best to respond to victims of sexualized assault:

### Gender-Inclusive Diversity Analysis (GIDA)

This analysis reflects the fact that there is no “typical” response to sexualized violence. Responders need to be aware that sexualized violence occurs within the context of gender-based violence. Understanding the dynamics of sexualized and gender-based violence can influence the responses to victims. Many factors inform a person’s understanding and experience of sexualized violence.

### Culturally responsive

This training will help responders and service providers respond in culturally safe ways to maintain the dignity and needs of diverse victims of sexualized violence. Training is developed with an appreciation of the specific and diverse social realities, cultures and barriers within the Yukon. Training will reflect the Whitehorse SART’s work with Yukon First Nations and Indigenous organizations to ensure that training in history and culture reflects cultural competencies established or acknowledged by Yukon First Nation governments, and is delivered by and with Yukon Indigenous people.

### Victim-centred

The impact and experience of sexualized violence is complex and specific to the individual, which requires a specialized approach and response. Victims of sexualized violence have the right to be informed of all the options and resources available to them and the opportunity to choose the services that best meet their needs. Information will be provided to victims at every step of the process so that they can make informed decisions.

This training will assist service providers in responding with respect for individual dignity and choice, and in recognizing that the type and quality of response can have significant impact on a person’s healing journey and trust in services. The options available to children and youth differ from those available to adults.

### Trauma-informed

Training will emphasize the need for service providers to respond in a way that avoids retraumatizing and revictimizing people who access services. It will also highlight that victims’ experiences and their response to sexualized violence are unique to their social history.

### Response-based

A service provider’s response to disclosure and the language used to describe sexualized violence affect the victim’s experience when seeking services. Disclosures are the first point of contact for victims, and a positive and supportive response is critical to their well-being:

- The way language is used affects victims’ experience of the services they are seeking. Service providers need to use appropriate and accurate language. Victim blaming, and using language that minimizes what happened, can hurt a victim’s dignity and add to the experience of violation and distrust of the system.

## Reducing harm

In order for agencies to provide low-barrier services they need to better understand sexualized violence, substance use and mental wellness. Training will provide frontline workers with the skills to work with the victim along a continuum of substance use. It will reduce and address harms related directly or indirectly to ongoing substance use.

## Emerging, collaborative and up-to-date practices

Training will reflect the need for all Whitehorse SART agencies to learn with and from colleagues and to continue to coordinate service delivery. Coordinating ongoing exchange of knowledge and training for Whitehorse SART agencies will be critical in sustaining a consistent response to victims of sexualized violence.

Whitehorse SART agencies recognize the importance of paying continuous attention to collaboration among governments, non-governmental organizations and communities in order to continue to effectively and consistently meet the needs of clients, while being respectful of each agency's distinct mandate.

## Types of training

The SART training framework focuses on four specific areas: internal agency-specific training; cross-sector training for all SART agencies; inter-agency training; and outreach.

### Internal agency-specific training

This is consistent with the core principles of the Whitehorse SART and includes topics such as specialized training for taking crisis calls; training to be a sexualized assault examiner for physicians and nurse practitioners; and legal analysis on the amendments to the *Criminal Code* that protect victims from inappropriate questioning about their prior sexual history, and keep third-party records confidential.

### Cross-sector training for all Whitehorse SART agencies

Cross-sector training includes on-line courses, workshops and conferences. It also includes having people from relevant organizations and with lived experience instruct Whitehorse SART agencies. Training is consistent with the commitments and core principles of the Whitehorse SART Protocol, and includes culturally responsive training; trauma-informed practice; and duty to report.

### Inter-agency training

Members of the SART Implementation Committee and the Protocol and Training Management Committee, as well as other people, train SART agency frontline service providers in SART procedures. It also includes knowledge exchanges on the Whitehorse SART Protocol and on referral processes..

### Outreach

SART representatives provide training to partner community organizations and stakeholders, including issues such as responding to disclosures of sexualized assault, and trauma-informed practice.