



a program of  
Alliance for HOPE  
International

# VOICES

Survivor Advocacy Network

# TOOLKIT

Prepared by Survivor for Survivors

VOICES

## "Love's Fool"

By Mar - Mar

Do you see the mask I wear?

Can you see the pain behind my stare?

Have you heard my soul cry out...

"Someone somewhere please, help me out"

My body is my temple just look at me and see

How interestingly decorative the colors make my skin appear to be

The bruised purples and blues oh what lovely hues

The deep red striped scars how lovely to view

The suffering stirring about in my heart won't let me get a moment's rest

God, my God how did I get myself into this mess

Starting today and from here on out

I am reclaiming my life, my pain will speak out

So please take heed to this tale from love's fool

Tell someone now or this too will be you





## Our Mission

The mission of Alliance for HOPE International is to create pathways to hope for women, children, and men who are victims of domestic violence and related sexual assault through collaborative, integrated multi-disciplinary centers, teams, and initiatives in order to break the generational cycle of violence and abuse in families across the United States and around the world.

## Our Vision

Our vision is a future where all the needs of victims are met, children are protected, batterers are held accountable, violence fades, economic justice increases, families heal and thrive, hope is realized, and we ALL work together.

LAFAYETTE  
PARISH  
COURTHOUSE



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Voices United



Voices United



# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of This Toolkit

**T**his toolkit is designed to assist Family Justice and Multi-Agency Centers (Centers) with starting, implementing, and sustaining a VOICES Committee. This document contains procedures, sample forms, and questions that may be used to facilitate the process. The toolkit is organized into four important components:

What is VOICES?  
Why start a VOICES Committee?  
How to start a VOICES Committee  
How to keep it going

Descriptions of each component are included herein. Each Center is unique, so the contents of this toolkit should be adapted and tailored to fit the needs of your community. **However, there are two things that NEED to be a priority in establishing a VOICES Committee: 1) Safety and 2) Ensuring that your VOICES Committee is survivor-focused and survivor-led** ([See Facilitation, p.16](#)). Once you have established a core group for your committee, let them take it on! Give them the authority to govern themselves in a way that works for them and brainstorm/vote on issues/activities they want to work on.

## Intended Audience

It is our hope that both staff and survivors find this toolkit helpful in the planning and implementation of your Center's VOICES Committee.

## Suggestions/Feedback Are Welcome

This toolkit is a set of guidelines based on the experiences of Centers who have established a VOICES Committee. It is a continuous work in progress and, as such, we encourage your feedback about your successes, challenges, and new ideas so that we may incorporate them as we continue to build on to this toolkit.

If you are interested in forming a VOICES Committee or have suggestions, please contact Alliance for HOPE International (Alliance) at [info@allianceforhope.com](mailto:info@allianceforhope.com).

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# I. WHAT IS A VOICES NETWORK?

## A group of survivors who...

- Volunteer their time to celebrate their strength and survival.
- Use their voices to help others through advocacy, education, and empowerment.
- Support each other as well as incoming FJC clients.
- Offer a unique perspective on your Center's established programming and/or identify gaps in services.
- Advocate on behalf of the local Family Justice Center, not just in the early stages but for long-term sustainability.

## A VOICES Committee is NOT:

- A support group.
- A mascot for the movement.

## VOICES History

The first VOICES committee was launched at the San Diego Family Justice Center in 2003 under the leadership of Assistant City Attorney Gael Strack, who was appointed as the Director of the San Diego Family Justice Center by then City Attorney Casey Gwinn. At the time, members of VOICES were recruited to serve as advisory committee members for the San Diego Family Justice Center, assist with trainings, provide feedback on services, and speak at various public events to bring awareness to services provided at the Family Justice Center.

A national movement to start VOICES Committees around the country was later supported by a Steering Committee, Chaired by Yolanda Matos (Executive Director of Valley Crisis Center, Nampa, ID) and Co-Chaired by Dr. Diane Lass (Integrated Mental Health Services, San Diego FJC) and the Family Justice Center Alliance.

In 2008, Blue Shield of California Foundation partnered with Alliance for HOPE International to create and support the VOICES Survivor Advocacy Network throughout California. The goal of this effort was to mobilize a network of survivors to advocate for victims who are in crisis.

## VOICES Nationally

Today, VOICES is developing an outreach effort to create a nationwide group of survivors to educate the public about family violence, as well as support new and existing Centers. It is the vision of active chapters to connect and engage with other VOICES chapters nationally in order to collaborate on ideas, share news, and celebrate successes. It is the role of the Alliance to support chapters, help them network, and provide Technical Assistance to Centers wishing to establish a VOICES Committee in their community.

## II. WHY VOICES IS IMPORTANT AND BENEFICIAL

### Why Start a VOICES Committee?

- To listen to what survivors are saying.
- To learn what services and types of support are needed.
- To Incorporate what survivors are saying and make adjustments to services at Centers.
- To learn what is going on in your community from the survivors' perspective.
- To garner quotes, stories, and facts that can help support the Family Justice Center in your community.
- To empower survivors to get involved with the operations inside the Center and to support those who are coming to the Center for services.

### Guiding Principles



*Ultimately, the role of VOICES is to hold Centers accountable to the people they serve as defined by the FJC Guiding Principles. You can find the complete [Guiding Principles in our Resource Library](https://www.familyjusticecenter.org/about-us/guiding-principles/) ( <https://www.familyjusticecenter.org/about-us/guiding-principles/>)*

## VOICES Offers a Unique Opportunity to Give Back

Giving back is often a final step in the healing process, and survivors frequently contact agencies and ask to volunteer with an organization that helped them. A VOICES Committee offers a unique volunteer opportunity that thrives on the firsthand experience of being a survivor. It offers considerable benefits to the members, survivors in the process of receiving services at Centers, and the Centers themselves.

### Benefits for the VOICES Members

- Members experience growth and empowerment as they carry out projects that will aid and support others who are going through similar trauma.
- VOICES offers a unique experience for a group of people who were once isolated to connect and form a bond over a common experience and a common goal of helping others.
- It provides an opportunity for survivors to find and use their voice and to help others rediscover theirs.
- It provides a safe place to heal. VOICES members have shared, "If not for the group, I am not sure I could have healed as well as I did."

### Benefits for the FJC

- VOICES members offer a unique perspective about the services being provided. Survivors should be at the table in a leadership role.
- VOICES helps survivors connect with the community by sharing powerful personal stories about the reality of domestic violence and sexual assault and their success in seeking safety with the support of the Center's services. Survivor stories hold a different kind of weight than those provided by statistics and professional experience.
- VOICES can garner community support by helping identify systemic gaps, particularly surrounding the legal system and offender accountability.
- VOICES volunteer hours can typically be used for grants as in-kind hours, whether it be the monthly group meetings, outreach, or other volunteer activities.

## III. HOW TO START A VOICES COMMITTEE



Before you start recruiting current and former clients to form your VOICES Committee, establish a committee of FJC partners to create a structure that outlines:

- 1 How members will be selected;
- 2 How the Committee will be facilitated;
- 3 How the Committee will be governed; and
- 4 What it will accomplish.

### Membership

First and foremost, VOICES Committee members should be current/former clients or survivors in the community. Whether or not a survivor is “ready” to participate in this committee is extremely subjective. As a general rule, it is recommended that a VOICES member be at least one year past the original crisis for which they sought services before joining the Committee. It is helpful to develop relationships with practitioners who work directly with the clients and can offer a professional opinion about whether they might be a good fit for the VOICES Committee. Criteria to standardize this process should be developed within your committee of FJC partners prior to recruiting or referring any VOICES members (more information to consider about recruitment can be found [here](#).)

## Referral Process

- Establish a process for FJC partners to refer current or former clients to the VOICES Committee (perhaps they received services elsewhere or never sought services).
- Keep opportunities open for potential volunteers who may not have been former clients but who are survivors of violence (perhaps they received services before the FJC opened and can offer a unique perspective on traveling all over for services that are now offered under one roof).

## Application Process

There are pros and cons for both a formal and informal application process. You can review the sample applications for ideas, as they range in detail from volunteer applications to client referral forms. Review these forms with members of your FJC partners committee and request feedback from survivors to design a trauma-informed application process that suits the needs of your community and your Center. Here are some things to consider:

- Get to know each applicant's story and situation.
- Assess safety concerns.
  - How long have they been out of the abusive relationship?
  - Does the perpetrator still pose a threat?
- Is the perpetrator in jail? Deceased? Living in the same community?
  - Is there a restraining order or protective order in place?
  - Is the applicant currently in a relationship with a known abuser?
- What information do you NEED to know about the applicant?
  - Emergency contact information
  - Personal contact information
  - Do you need a background check?
- Identify any forms that should be signed.
  - Liability waivers
  - Confidentiality agreements
- Identify standard procedures for collecting information for all other applicants and keep them consistent.
- Is a paper application enough or do you want to meet/interview the applicant as well?
  - How should the process differ between a client referral and a potential applicant who reaches out to you?
- Refer to the appendix for sample applications.

## Who Should Be a Member

Only two requirements need to be met in order to be an eligible member of the VOICES Committee:

- Being a survivor of violence.
- Ensuring the potential member is safe and will not compromise the safety of the group as a whole.

Safety is a very subjective concept and will require ongoing dialogue among your FJC partners and your VOICES Committee members, once it has been established (a more in-depth discussion on the topic of safety can be found on page 25). Some Centers have used the following criteria to create tangible protocols that protect the safety of the VOICES Committee:

- Identify a particular length of time that the survivor should be separated from the abuse/violence before joining the Committee. Many Centers have set this at one year.
- The survivor should not currently be undergoing trial or court proceedings related to the abuse and/or separation from the abusive partner.
- The survivor should not currently be in a [new] relationship with a convicted abuser.
- Establish a method of communication between the VOICES Committee and the FJC that will ensure the safety of the members.

It is also important to ensure that your membership is a diverse representation of your community. Think about:

- Language
  - Do not discourage monolingual Spanish speakers from attending because the Chair, Co-Chair, and/or staff person do not speak Spanish.
  - If there is a monolingual applicant, consider having two VOICES groups — one in Spanish and one in English — or ask if there is another VOICES member who would be able and willing to translate.
- Special populations
  - Incarcerated women
  - Sexual assault survivors
  - Elder abuse survivors
  - Domestic violence survivors
  - Parents of child abuse survivors
  - Survivors with/without children
  - Male survivors
  - LGBTQIA+ survivors
  - Tribal populations
  - Trafficking survivors
  - Other culturally-specific populations

These unique perspectives and attributes can lead to vibrant connections with the community that may not be possible otherwise. This is especially significant when considering new partnerships with community-based agencies and outreach activities.

## VOICES Offers a Unique Opportunity to Give Back

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## Welcome Orientation

Once you have assembled your Committee, or recruited new members, it is important to get them oriented to the group. They need to be brought up to speed on the specifics, such as the established Mission and Vision statements, current projects, and how they can get involved before they attend their first meeting. Furthermore, it is important that they feel welcomed. Some things to consider are:

- Drafting a welcome packet
- Holding a training session
- Offering goodies

Some Centers have offered t-shirts, materials that have VOICES and/or Center logos on them, baked goods, and other treats made by or gifted on behalf of the group.

## Facilitation

The structure of a VOICES Committee can evolve over time. You might consider having a stronger influence from the Center's staff in the beginning to get the group started. Training, support, and direction will be needed with the first generation of Committee members as they get comfortable carrying out their responsibilities. Later, the Center staff will be faced with the choice of pulling back or continuing with the same level of engagement. Work together with your VOICES Committee to make this decision; seek their input. When making this decision, consider:

- Whether a staff member should act as a facilitator.
  - Consider what time the meetings are scheduled and whether staff will be available.
- Whether a staff member or Director should be present at all of the meetings.
- Whatever you decide, ensure that the facilitation does not interfere with the group being survivor-led.

## Leadership

In addition to having a moderator assist in facilitating the meetings, identify or elect leaders from within the VOICES Committee to lead the group. There are many models to choose from; for example, an elected Chair and Co-Chair. Again, consider how this process may change over time and think about the level of interaction between the VOICES Committee and the Center.

- Will Center staff and/or Directors of partner agencies appoint the Chairs?
- Will Chairs be nominated by Center staff and elected by members of the committee? Or,
- Will Chairs be nominated AND elected by the members of the VOICES committee?



Be sure to identify the responsibilities and level of commitment expected from these positions, and make sure the nominees/appointees understand and agree to these responsibilities.

If there are only a handful of members in your Committee (especially during the early stages), will they be able:

**1** To govern themselves without establishing a leadership structure (especially if Center staff are playing a significant role during this time), or

**2** Should electing formal leadership be a precedent that is established immediately following the induction of the first generation of members?

## Committees to Consider

As the group continues to grow, the leadership structure will also evolve. Consider establishing committees and sub-committees when the group begins to take on multiple projects and responsibilities, and/or to allow committee members to focus on projects that suit them best.

### MEMBERSHIP

- Recruit;
- interview; and
- welcome new members.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

- Manage Facebook;
- Twitter;
- Instagram; etc.

### SPEAKERS BUREAU

- Work closely with Center staff to match survivor speakers with outreach/public events.

### SOCIAL COMMITTEE

- Organize social events for the group.

# Meeting Setup

Once you have coordinated a core membership, they are ready to meet. Here are some things to consider when launching a VOICES group:

## Scheduling

- Pick a consistent date for the group to meet.
  - Examples: Every 3rd Thursday OR the 10th of every month
- Date and time considerations:
  - Are evenings best to accommodate a group with working hours of 8:00 am – 5:00 pm?
  - Are weekends best to accommodate a group with a variety of working schedules?
  - Are mornings best to accommodate a group with children, many of whom would be in school at that time?

## Location

- What venues are available? If at the Center, who will ensure the facility is available?
- How many members are there in your group and what is the maximum capacity for the venue?
- Geographic considerations:
  - Choose a safe location.
  - Make it accessible by choosing a central location with free, ample parking and/or a location near public transportation.
  - Consider holding groups in multiple locations to accommodate your members.

## Agenda

- Agendas should be drafted and distributed before the meeting. Allow time to discuss topics that were raised in the previous meeting, followed by any updates. Allot time for new business items.
- A standardized agenda often includes discussion on upcoming VOICES activities, events, and/or speaking engagements. See the appendix for sample agendas.

## Facilitator

- Have an objective moderator facilitate the meetings and ensure members stay focused and on topic.

## Communication

- How are Committee members going to be notified about upcoming meetings and events?
  - Emails
  - Phone calls
  - Text messages
  - Hard copy letters
  - Facebook – private group
- Think about accessibility and cost.
- Who will take the lead in sending out notices?
  - Chair
  - Co-Chair
  - Secretary
  - Social Media Chair
  - Center Staff or Center Director
  - VOICES Committee Facilitator
- How often will notices be sent?
  - Notices can be sent out as frequently as needed per the request of the VOICES members. (Ex: one group sends out notices one week before and one day before each meeting.)

## Refreshments

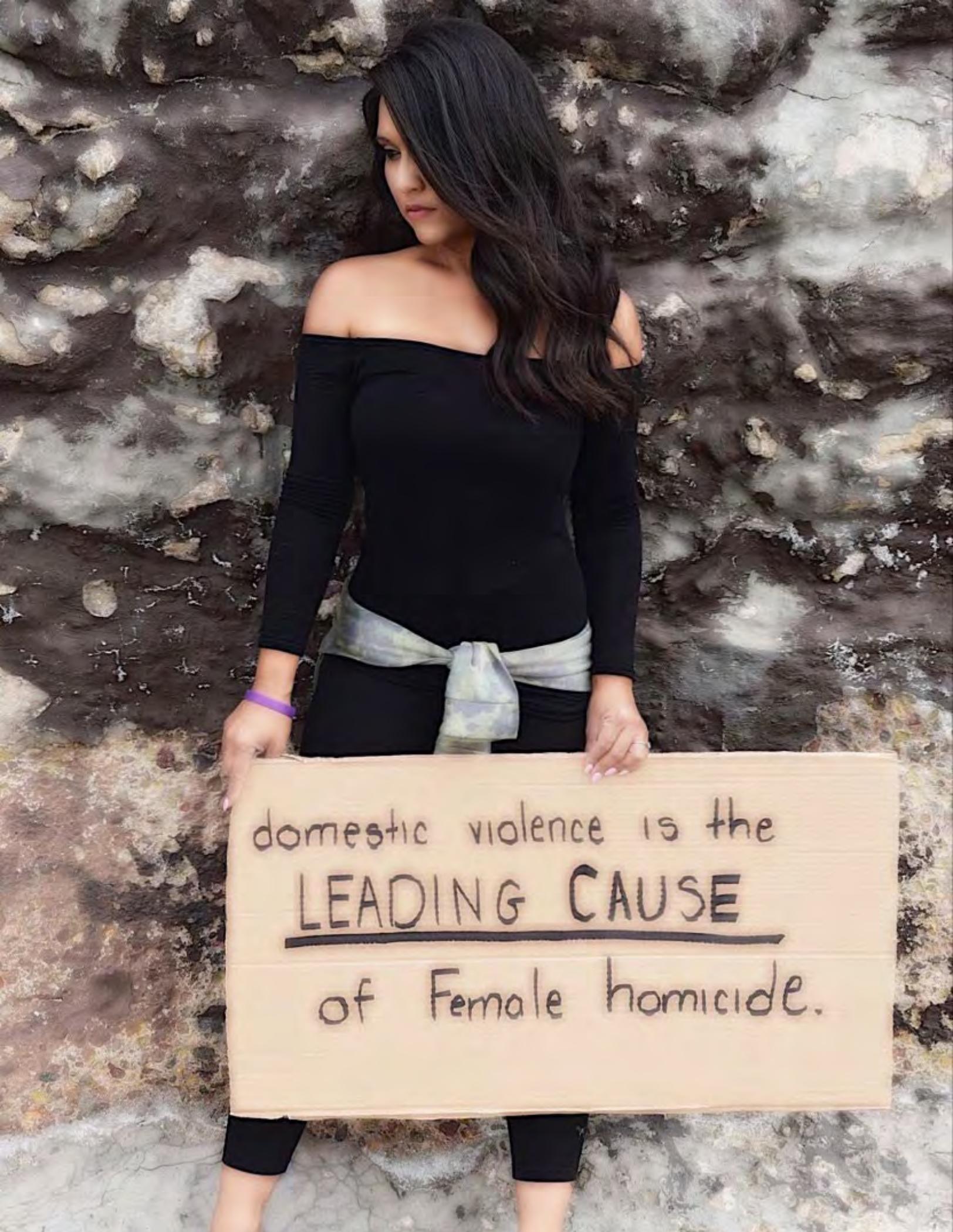
- Provide food and beverages.
- VOICES meetings may last awhile, and it is easier to facilitate a rich discussion if participants are not hungry.

## Childcare

- Lack of childcare is a common reason why members drop out.
- Offering childcare increases participation and offers a safe environment for children.

## Anticipated Accomplishments

Once the VOICES Committee has been established, work with first generation members to draft a Mission/Vision statement and establish Goals and Objectives for the group, but don't reinvent the wheel. Start with the [Mission and Vision statements of existing VOICES Committees, such as the ones listed in the Appendix](#), and adapt them to fit the needs of your community. When drafting the Goals and Objectives, think about one or two projects that the group would like to pursue initially. Remind members that the Mission, Vision, and Goals and Objectives are not set in stone and can be altered in the future.



domestic violence is the  
LEADING CAUSE  
of Female homicide.

## IV. HOW TO KEEP GOING

### Turnover

Turnover is inevitable. This is a volunteer position and may not be a priority in your members' schedules—especially when they are balancing jobs, kids, and other responsibilities. One way to manage turnover is to offer different types of membership commitment agreements. Some Chapters have enlisted full versus limited memberships.

#### Full Membership

- May require the member to be at a majority of the meetings.
- May require the member to participate in more hands-on activities (e.g. volunteering at the FJC or in court, public speaking, coordinating large community outreach events, etc.).

#### Benefits:

May better suit members who are retired, not working, and/or do not have children and may encourage a stronger commitment to the VOICES Committee.

#### Limited Membership

- Only requires the member to be at a couple of meetings throughout the year.
- Participate in more “behind-the-scenes” types of activities that can be done remotely (e.g. drafting and submitting an op-ed to the local newspaper, keeping track of/updating a social media account or group, etc.).

#### Benefits:

May better suit members who are balancing multiple responsibilities.

You may find that stipulations to membership are not necessary and/or may produce adverse reactions from potential members. Again, do what works best for your Committee, and be open to changing these policies and procedures in the future as circumstances change.

## Ongoing Recruitment

As mentioned before, turnover is inevitable. As the newness of the group starts to fade, you and your members may lose momentum. It is important to maintain a strong connection amongst the members and to hold them (or encourage their leadership to hold them) accountable for the projects and activities to which they have committed. To continue gaining momentum and maintaining group involvement, you may also consider recruitment and new membership. Some Chapters have considered Open Enrollment versus enrollment in specified intervals.

### Open Enrollment

- Pros
  - Opportunity for new members to join at any time.
  - Keeps the membership pool fresh.
  - Helps with difficulty in establishing solid membership and/or garnering fresh ideas for projects, especially in the first year or so.
- Cons
  - Depending on how many applicants and/or referrals are being submitted, it may become overwhelming and difficult to keep organized.
  - The constant influx of new members may disrupt the flow of the committee and activity completion.
  - Open Enrollment may elicit a lot of repetition, such as training about the VOICES Committee and bringing new members up to speed about current projects.

### Interval Enrollment

- Pros
  - Enroll new members during specified time periods (monthly, quarterly, or annually).
  - Committee leadership can train the new cohorts separately from the regular meetings as to not interrupt the flow of the committee.
  - Enables a little more structure and control of the enrollment process.
- Cons
  - The Committee may miss out on potential new members.
  - By the time the next enrollment interval comes around, the potential member may have committed to something else, lost interest, or updated their contact information.

Each VOICES Committee is unique and adapts to what works best for them. Some VOICES Committees start off with Open Enrollment until they establish a core group of members. Once things have settled, they switch over to Interval Enrollment to better organize the flow of their committee.

## Long-Term Goals

When the group is first established, keep the Goals and Objectives small and simple until members immerse themselves into their roles and responsibilities.

Example:

GOAL	OBJECTIVES
Community Education	Short-term Objective: VOICES members support existing Center programs (e.g. tabling events or distributing flyers).
	Long-term Objective: VOICES members develop a new community education program curriculum (e.g. teen dating violence, grounding or de-escalation techniques).
	Create a social media platform to encourage those in abusive situations to come forward for help.

## Building a State and National Network

Local chapters of VOICES are encouraged to be active in Alliance for HOPE International's VOICES Survivor Network and attend the annual conference.

- **Website** – The Alliance is currently developing a VOICES Website template.
- **Monthly video conference calls**
- **Webinars** – Alliance for HOPE International features VOICES Members on a national webinar every October in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- **Social Media** – [National VOICES Survivor Advocacy Network](#) on Facebook
- **Annual International Family Justice Center Conference** – FJC Directors should consider allocating funds for VOICES members to attend.

## Alliance Annual Family Justice Center Conference

Alliance for HOPE International hosts an annual International Family Justice Conference to discuss and educate professionals on topics that impact Family Justice Centers around the world. One topic that is often discussed is the benefit of establishing a VOICES Committee, and the Alliance often invites VOICES Committee members to speak at the Conference in order to educate professionals on the importance of survivor empowerment and creating communities after the crisis. The conference is also a great place for VOICES members to learn about emerging issues that are affecting service providers, garner new ideas for projects that can benefit their Center and community, as well as network with survivors and leaders in the FJC movement.



## V. SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

### Media Outreach

Identify the strengths of each of your members. Some people are eloquent writers, others are great with technology and creating visual aids, while still others can mesmerize a room full of people with their words and charisma. There are so many ways to educate and raise awareness about domestic violence, and VOICES members can help use their gifts and talents to garner support for your FJC.

Examples:

- Write an op-ed for the local newspapers, magazines, blogs, etc.
- Contact your local news stations and request to be interviewed by a reporter.
- Create social media groups or pages for people in your community to join or follow - use these opportunities to provide education, statistics, and information about services and support available (or lacking) in your community.
- Write letters to your legislators and identify ways they can offer support (discuss bills being currently voted on or proposed).
- Create a commercial or Public Service Announcement and submit it to be aired on local television and/or radio stations, featured during local newscasts, and/or shared online.

### FJC Client Outreach

VOICES provides a unique opportunity to connect current clients with survivors who have been in a similar situation and had to face the same systems. Their shared experiences often provide needed support and increase hope for those still in crisis.

Examples:

- The VOICES Committee can write a letter to incoming clients. This letter can offer words of support, encouragement, and advice (see appendix for sample Welcome Letter).
- VOICES Committee members can volunteer their time inside the Center to help victims feel more comfortable while they are receiving services.
- At the San Diego Family Justice Center and in Palomar, Oklahoma City's Family Justice Center, staff added "Portraits of Courage" photos of VOICES members to their Centers. Please abide by appropriate confidentiality and photo release authorization practices when considering this project.

## Community Education

Many Centers have pre-existing community education programming. The VOICES Committee can partner with the Center to help carry out the established programs and/or design something new.

Example:

- Does your Center need volunteers to help them carry out their school-based programs during the day? Consider volunteering members who have daytime availability.
- Does your Center only offer educational/outreach programs during daytime office hours? Perhaps there are other organizations or community groups who could benefit from outreach/educational programming in the evenings. Work with your Center to adapt their education program to fit the needs of these community groups, or design a new program around sharing survivor stories.
- Asking VOICES members to staff a community booth or health fair is a great way to engage both the Committee and the community.
- VOICES Committees are a valued partner in FJC fundraising events.

## Identifying Gaps in Services

Have members of the VOICES Committee received services from the Center? What were some things that were helpful in seeking safety? What were some struggles survivors experienced and how might the Center improve their services? Example:

- Work with the staff and/or Directors of the Center to discuss current services and partner agencies. Identify people and/or agencies that were supportive and identify people and/or agencies that posed additional barriers to seeking safety.
- VOICES members can also identify gaps in services or an agency that is missing from the partnership.
- VOICES members who received services in other communities can offer ideas about other programs and services that were most helpful.
- VOICES members can conduct an analysis or snapshot of the Center's services and provide feedback to the Director and/or partners.

## Public Speaking

This overlaps with many of the aforementioned sample activities, such as media outreach and community education.

- VOICES members can share personal stories; agencies are often contacted with requests for a survivor story.
- Identify a handful of members who are comfortable with public speaking, draft a formal speech, and practice with them.
- Take advantage of any public opportunity to speak, whether it is for the media, the keynote speech at an Annual Gala, kicking off a fundraising event, or developing community education programming. Be sure to also have an availability list of members who may be contacted in a pinch.
- Acknowledge any opportunities for audiences to ask questions or comment on the speech, and train your VOICES members to be able to address the tough questions.
- Prepare and support your members to speak; sharing one's story can be a very personal experience that puts members in a vulnerable position.

## Advocacy

This could involve client advocacy, policy advocacy, and/or advocating for the Center at local government meetings. Some examples include:

- Going to court with advocates or offering support to clients who are completing the application for a restraining or protective order.
- Going to City Council or County Commissioner meetings to advocate for an increase in funding when local budgets are being determined.
- If there is a bill or piece of legislation being introduced that has the potential to impact the Center or its mission, VOICES members can advocate on behalf of, or in opposition to, the bill. If it is a statewide initiative, connect with other VOICES Committees throughout the state.

## Display Boards/Visual Aids

Recruit members with creative talents to create visual aids that introduce your VOICES Committee to the community at public events.

## Commemorative Months

Centers often utilize commemorative months to foster awareness of issues in their communities and spotlight the services they provide. Take the opportunity to explore how the VOICES Network can partner with the Center to support their events and/or spearhead additional educational campaigns.

- January is annually recognized as Human Trafficking Awareness Month in addition to National Stalking Awareness Month.
- April is annually recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and as Child Abuse Awareness Month.
- October is annually recognized as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

## Community Building

One of the greatest benefits of the VOICES Committee is that it gives survivors the opportunity to engage with others and form a bond over their unique experiences. This group works hard, not only to advocate for the Center and for the safety of its incoming clients, but also to support each other as they continue to heal and grow. Take time to celebrate the hard work and accomplishments of the group and continue to strengthen relationships. Arrange for special activities to promote self-care and healing of the members and/or fun activities or parties.

## Governance

Integrating VOICES membership with Center leadership strengthens the guiding principle of being survivor-led and is an empowering practice for both VOICES members and Center clients.

- Employ a full or part-time onsite advocate to work with and support VOICES members. This practice has been successfully implemented at Sojourner Family Peace Center.
- Consider including VOICES members in steering and planning committees. Example: the Buncombe Family Justice Center has VOICES members on their hiring team.
- VOICES members should have a strong presence and be active members in the Strategic Planning processes in their community.
- VOICES Members could also serve as Board Members for Centers that have or are a 501c(3).





## V. THINGS TO CONSIDER

### Safety Concerns – Are They Ready?

Asking a client or prospective VOICES Committee member whether they are in a safe place and ready to join the VOICES Committee is a very subjective question. A survivor's response may be clouded by the desire to put the violence behind them and/or give back to others. This is why it is so important to have the input of other professionals who have worked with

them and can provide professional opinions. Safety should not only be strongly considered during the recruiting process, but also consistently throughout the member's participation. Healing is a very complex process and it is important to be mindful that unexpected things can trigger a survivor's trauma at unexpected times.

### Physical Safety

It's also important to be mindful of potential safety threats posed by the public exposure of survivors in many of the activities. When recruiting new members, talk to them about how long they had been in the relationship, the level of lethality, and how long they have been out of the relationship. Always consider ways that

your members can maintain anonymity while participating in VOICES. Think about what is posted online and whether you are listing members' names on any public documents or websites. Also, make sure there are non-public, "behind-the-scenes" activities in which members may participate if they choose.

### Emotional Safety

Talk with members about what they have done to heal from the violence. Consider clinical debriefing following each event/project (or specific events that may be a little more emotional). For example, members may have the opportunity to share their stories at a public forum and be faced with audience questions and/or feedback on their stories. Their stories are extremely personal and they may feel attacked by some audience questions or comments. This is a different experience than giving a speech full of statistics,

facts, and anonymous client examples. It is important that VOICES members feel supported and that we try to protect them from re-traumatization by effectively preparing them to deal with negative feedback and/or offering debriefings. It is also important to help them prepare for their speaking engagement by practicing their speech with them. It is a good idea to have at least one other member of VOICES go to a speaking engagement to support the speaker.

## Legal Considerations

Please be aware of the legal ramifications of a survivor naming her abuser when sharing her story if there was no conviction in the domestic violence or sexual assault case. The last thing you want for the survivor or your organization is to be charged with breaking the law. If there is not a conviction in the case, the

information has not been documented in a court of law. This might subject the victim to a lawsuit from his/her abuser. Libel is a written defamatory statement, and slander is a spoken or oral defamatory statement. Both should be taken very seriously. This awareness is not meant to silence the survivor, but to protect the survivor.



• wife 1 •

I wanted  
to warn them...  
but I was too afraid

• wife 2 •

I was  
pregnant with  
his child



• wife 3 •  
I thought  
that I  
could fix him

• wife 4 •  
I feel  
LUCKY I made  
it out alive

## SAMPLE VISION STATEMENTS

### San Diego Family Justice Center

The mission of the San Diego VOICES Chapter is to educate and raise awareness about domestic violence within our community. These brave survivors share their stories of courage, hope, and empowerment as a way to be a voice for those who don't have one yet.

### Stanislaus Family Justice Center

The mission of the local VOICES chapter is to educate and raise awareness about domestic violence and sexual assault in our community. The chapter is survivor led and survivor focused and seeks to empower women who have been impacted or affected by violence to share their stories of hope, survival and inspiration with others.

### One Safe Place, Shasta

The mission of VOICES is to promote public support and bring awareness of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Elder Abuse and Child Abuse through community education by sharing stories of hope, courage and strength. VOICES seeks to break the silence that enables abusers and VOICES empowers survivors to take a stand by raising their voice.

### Sacramento Family Justice Center

The mission of the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center VOICES Chapter is to promote safety, provide support and raise awareness on Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Human Trafficking, Elder and Child Abuse Prevention. The Sacramento Voices Chapter is survivor led and survivor focused. We seek to empower all survivors to share their stories of Hope, Survival, and Inspiration with others.

# SAMPLE VOICES APPLICATION



**VOICES**  
Sacramento Chapter  
"Hope Thrives Here"



Are you interested in having your VOICE heard? Please complete the following form and we will respond as quickly as possible. Thank you for your interest.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

LAST NAME		FIRST NAME	
ORGANIZATION			
STREET ADDRESS			
CITY		STATE	ZIPCODE
PHONE NUMBER		EMAIL	

For more information, contact Joyce Bilyeu at [bilyeuj@hopethriveshere.org](mailto:bilyeuj@hopethriveshere.org) or 916-875-4652  
[www.hopethriveshere.org](http://www.hopethriveshere.org)

For additional examples of VOICES membership applications visit our [Resource Library](#).

# SAMPLE VOICES MEMBERSHIP INTEREST FORM



**VOICES @ One Safe Place**  
1670 Market St. Suite 300 | Redding | CA | 96001  
(530) 244-0117 | [VOICES@OSPShasta.org](mailto:VOICES@OSPShasta.org)



VOICES at One SAFE Place provides support for victims of Family Violence. The goal is to share stories of hope, courage and strength. VOICES seeks to break the silence that enables abusers and to empower survivors to take a stand by finding their voice.

## MEMBERSHIP INTEREST FORM

I am interested in Committee Membership:

ACTIVE MEMBER

Attend monthly meetings, check Facebook group regularly, and participate in events

SUPPORTIVE MEMBER

Follow Facebook group regularly and limited attendance at meetings

I am interested in using my VOICE by:

PUBLIC SPEAKING

POLICY CHANGE

WRITING FOR **OSP** NEWSLETTER

PARTICIPATING IN EVENTS

**VOICES** GROUP COORDINATOR

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interest:

Are there certain areas of family violence that you would like to participate in?

\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas or suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE NEW MEMBER INVITATION TO MEET AND GREET



Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you so much for your interest in VOICES OKC.

We would like to extend an invitation to meet current and prospective members of VOICES OKC at a meet and greet lunch on Friday, April 27 at 11:30am at \_\_\_\_\_.

This meet and greet gives us an opportunity to learn more about each other in the potential membership process.

The VOICES Committee is an action-oriented group that meets twice a month to determine priorities, organize events and activities, and take action on initiatives. Because of the active nature of our efforts, we limit our active membership to 13.

We do ask that Core Committee Members attend at least one meeting per month and participate in ongoing training as a part of the group. If you feel like this may not be the right time or the right fit for you, please let us know, as we'd be happy to include you in our mailing list of event-specific volunteers. You can also always follow us on social media @voicesokc.

We look forward to meeting you!

VOICES OKC



Present: Gael, Caitlin, Michelle, Diane, and Judi

Meeting Purpose: Create “Voices”

Desired Outcomes - By the time this meeting is over, we will have:

- Formed a committee of Survivors called VOICES
- Clarified our purpose, mission and activities
- Decided on a name for this committee
- Developed speaking points for the FJC Birthday Party

## Meeting Products

### Who Are We?

We are a group of survivors who have come together to educate the community about domestic violence and help domestic violence victims learn about existing resources.

### What Are We Called?

The Name of our group is “VOICES”.

### Why Are We Here?

- Didn't want other victims to go through what we went through
- Want to channel our energy into helping instead of hating
- We're passionate about helping other victims. We worry about people who don't know about resources like the Family Justice Center
- Want to help, do more
- We are inspired by other survivors – hearing their stories lifts us up



### What is our Purpose?

- We want the media to take survivors seriously
- We want to publicly support the FJC and the services it provides for victims
- We want to educate the public about domestic violence, terminology and resources
- Get out the message: If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem
- Get out the message: Domestic Violence is not okay!

### What Do We Plan to Accomplish?

- Work with the media; contact them about DV issues
- Come up with strategies to approach and work with the media
- Be accessible to groups who want to learn more about DV; talk and make presentations
- Pass out information about resources
- Serve as a focus group for the FJC: review materials, program ideas, talk to legislators, write letters of support for or against DV legislation
- Identify a list of resources that are up to date and helpful
- Test the system; check on resources and make sure they actually exist
- Develop templates with information to give to the media

### What are our next steps?

- We will meet early on Friday to prepare for the FJC Birthday party
- Judi will send out meeting documents to Gael who will forward to other potential VOICES members
- Plan to meet again after the FJC Birthday Party

[Sample Talking Points - See page 51](#)

# SAMPLE CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT



## VOICES Survivor Committee Confidentiality Agreement



I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that  
(name of member, staff or volunteer)  
maintaining a survivor’s confidentiality is paramount to their safety.

I am required to keep survivors’ confidences and may not disclose (including to other members, volunteers or project personnel) any information regarding a survivor without consent or otherwise permitted by law.

I will not discuss survivors’ matters in public spaces, including hallways or open offices and/or conference rooms at the Family Justice Center.

I will not publicly acknowledge a survivor without their permission.

I will direct my questions regarding confidentiality to my immediate supervisor. If my supervisor is unavailable, I will direct my questions to the Director of the Family Justice Center.

I understand that a knowing and voluntary violation of the confidentiality policy can jeopardize my relationship with the Family Justice Center.

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF VOICES MEMBER

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR (IF NEEDED)

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

# SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASE FORM



## PHOTO, VIDEO, AND SOUND RECORDING RELEASE AND CONSENT FORM



By signing this Photo, Video and Sound Recording Release and Consent form, you are irrevocably giving permission to the [National Family Justice Center Alliance], their officers and employees, (“[NFJCA]”) to take and use photographs, video, or sound recordings of you. This is completely voluntary and up to you.

Your consent to the use of the photographs, video, and sound recordings including your image, likeness, appearance, and voice is forever. You will not receive compensation for the use of your image, likeness, appearance, and voice now or in the future. The [NFJCA] shall have the right to photograph, publish, re-publish, adapt, exhibit, perform, reproduce, edit, modify, make derivative works, distribute, display or otherwise use or reuse the undersigned’s image, voice and/or likeness in connection with any product or service in all markets, media or technology now known or hereafter developed in [NFJCA]’s products or services, as long as there is no intent to use the image, voice and/or likeness in a disparaging manner. The [NFJCA] shall not use the undersigned’s image, voice and/or likeness for financial profit. [NFJCA] may exercise any of these rights itself or through any successors, transferees, licensees, distributors or other parties, commercial or nonprofit. The undersigned acknowledges receipt of good and valuable consideration in exchange for this Release, which may simply be the opportunity to represent the [NFJCA] in its promotional and advertising materials as described above.

Please indicate your agreement to the foregoing by signing below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARTICIPANT’S SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE NUMBER

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

If you are under seventeen (17) years of age, your parent or guardian must sign below:

I represent that I am a parent/guardian of the minor who has signed the above release and that in that capacity [NFJCA] has my consent and authorization to use the name, voice and/or likeness as described above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT/GUARDIAN’S SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

# SAMPLE "PORTRAITS OF COURAGE" WAIVER



## "Portraits of Courage" AUTHORIZATION OF RELEASE OF PICTURES

I previously authorized representatives from the Family Justice Center and Family Justice Center Foundation to take my photo and share my personal story as part of the "Portraits of Courage" project. As part of that project, the Family Justice Center and the Family Justice Center Foundation had my full permission to use my portrait and personal story in public awareness campaigns, media releases, local and national events without limitation for the purpose of this use. I hereby revoke this authorization and direct that all photographs be released to the custody of Jearl O'Neal, the Chair of the VOICES Committee.

With this signed authorization, I hereby authorize \_\_\_\_\_, the Chair of the VOICES Committee to take possession of all photos and other information related to Portraits of Courage on behalf of the VOICES Committee and maintain custody of such photographs for use by the VOICES Committee subject to further action of the committee.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME

# SAMPLE SPEAKER REQUEST FORM



## VOICES Speaker Request Form



Would you like a speaker from the VOICES San Diego Chapter for your next event?  
Please complete the following form and we will respond as quickly as possible.  
Thank you for your interest.

LAST NAME		FIRST NAME	
ORGANIZATION			
STREET ADDRESS			
CITY		STATE	ZIPCODE
PHONE NUMBER		EMAIL	
TYPE OF EVENT		DATE OF EVENT	
LOCATION OF EVENT			
IN WHAT CAPACITY WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR SPEAKER TO SERVE?			

**Speaking Event Details**

Event Name	Date of Event	Time of Event
Speaker Arrival Time	Speech Duration	
Event Location		
Parking Details		
Contact Name	Phone Number	
Email		
Purpose of Speaking Engagement? (educational, testimonial, advocacy, specific topic, other?)		
About the Audience (which parts of your story can best benefit them?)		
Anticipated Audience Size	Type of Engagement (presentation with slides, informal speaking, panel discussion, other?)	Formal or Informal?

### Speaking Event Planning

How will you get there?	When do you need to leave to arrive on time?
What will you wear?	Who can you invite to support you?
What type of presentation will you give?	What will you need to bring?
What topics will you cover for this audience?	What topics will you <b>NOT</b> discuss with this audience?
Will you allow questions? If so, how will you respond to questions you prefer not to answer? Detour, escape hatch, or spin?	

### Speaking Event Debriefing

Who can you debrief with now?	What went well?
What were some challenges you experienced?	How do you feel afterward?
What feelings came up during the experience?	What will help you improve?

## Know Your Event

Why are you going? Know the purpose of the event. Is it:

- Educational?
- Testimonial?
- Advocacy?
- Specific topics?

Know your audience

Are they professionals? Think about how which parts of your story could benefit them in their professions.

Know where you're going and what supplies you may need:

- Location and parking details
- What time are the speakers preferred to be there?
- Are they expecting a presentation? If so, will you need to bring a laptop, travel drive, materials, etc.?

What are you going to wear?

Is it formal or informal?

What is going to help?

- Having supportive people in the audience (VOICES!)
- Practicing beforehand

## Know Your Content

Identify what you want to share and what you don't feel comfortable sharing and how much you'd like to share.

Create a plan should you be asked a question that you don't feel comfortable answering. How will you respond?

Consider the potential repercussions before sharing information such as:

- Identifying information about people connected with your experience;
- Specific or graphic details, and the triggers they may come with;
- Confidential information;
- Sharing around people who may be connected with you or anyone related to your experience

## Know Your Strategies

### DETOURS

Giving answers without disclosing personal information. Some examples:

- Many survivors of violence feel...
- It is a common stereotype that people who have been victimized are...
- Not all victims of violence are...

### ESCAPE HATCH

A soft no, or pass

- Would someone else want to answer that?
- I don't have a comment on that question
- I don't feel comfortable answering that question
- I'll pass

### THE SPIN

Respecting your story as well as others - a way to educate through a negative experience. Example: Instead of saying 'The police are horrible and have never done anything to help me.' **An educational spin** would be to say 'I did not always feel like I got the help I needed with law enforcement. Things that could have made a difference would be holding my offender accountable when they violated the VPO.' This type of response could help professionals and others in the audience see how little things can help make survivors feel safer and supported.

## Debrief

Always take the time to debrief with a trusted individual to process your experience and identify areas for improvement. It is important to process your public speaking experiences and to take care of yourself afterwards.

Think about:

- What went well and what will help you improve?
- What were some of the challenges?
- How do you feel?
- What feelings came up during the experience?

## SAMPLE FAMILY OUTREACH VIGIL INVITATION



Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We, the VOICES OKC Survivor Activism Committee, would like to extend our sincere condolences to you and your family in the wake of your recent loss.

In an effort to honor victims of domestic homicide in our community and bring awareness to this issue, we hold candlelight vigils. The vigils are held in the Myriad Botanical Gardens, with cooperation from our community partners to light the night purple.

We want to extend an invitation to attend or participate in the upcoming vigil to honor your loved one. The vigil will be held on Friday, April 6, at 7:30pm. With (and only with) your permission, we would love to recognize your lost family member by name and with a photo, or in any way you feel is appropriate. We recognize that this is a difficult time, and want to assure you that if you choose not to participate or respond to this outreach, we will honor your loss as an anonymous victim.

Please feel free to share this invitation with other friends or family members, and let us know if and how you would like to participate and honor your loved one.

Wishing your family hope and healing,

VOICES OKC

Location of Event \_\_\_\_\_

- Check preferred host locations for availability

Date of Event \_\_\_\_\_

- Consider simultaneous events/foot traffic
- Check with the host location for blackout dates/times

Time of Event \_\_\_\_\_

- Dusk/Dark
- Check sunset times online

Checklist \_\_\_\_\_

**1** If we don't know the name of the victim(s), check with local law enforcement.

- Lt. Teachman
- Kelly Marshall

**2** Attempt to contact family of the victim(s), to see if they are okay with us honoring their loved one by name and if they would like to participate and/or speak at the event. Also see if they have preferred date(s).

**4** Contact Myriad Botanical Gardens about lighting purple during the event. See if they have any blackout dates and cross-reference with family's preferred dates.

- Contact Information:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5** Set a date and time for the event (ideally taking items 2 and 3 into consideration if possible).

**6** Contact City of OKC about lighting Scissortail Bridge.

- Contact Information:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7** Design a flyer for public awareness.

**8** Cards that explain what the vigil is about.

- "In Oklahoma, 49% of women have been victims of domestic violence. Today we honor one whose life was lost."
- Design
- Print

**9** Glow sticks

- Order
- Distribute

**10** Purple ribbon stickers

- Order
- Distribute

**11** Visual focal point

- Design
- Set up

**12** Water, snacks, or other for participants

- Decide if necessary
- Purchase
- Distribute

**13** Notifications to be made:

ORGANIZATION	CONTACT NAME	METHOD	INFO
Coalition		Email	
AG's Office		Phone Call	
Law Enforcement		Email	
Public	Palomar and VOICES	Social Media	
Channel 4		Fax	
Channel 5		Email	
Channel 9		Email	
Channel 25		Email	
Free Press OKC		Email	
Daily Oklahoman		Phone Call	
Legislature		Text	
Governor's Office			
Ann Lowrance			



**VOICES @ One Safe Place**  
1670 Market St. Suite 300 | Redding | CA | 96001  
(530) 244-0117 | [VOICES@OSPShasta.org](mailto:VOICES@OSPShasta.org)



## History of the VOICES of One SAFE Place

The Shasta County chapter of VOICES was founded in June of 2011 and is patterned after the National Family Justice Center Alliance's VOICES Chapter. With the support of One SAFE Place, VOICES started with three women who found their voices and wanted to speak out against family violence. The group quickly grew and now has 24 active members. These women share a common theme: they are all survivors of some sort of family violence, they all lost their voice as they were going through their abusive situations and they are all survivors who have found their VOICE and want to empower other victims to do the same.

## Purpose of VOICES

The mission of the VOICES is to promote public support and bring awareness of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Elder Abuse and Child Abuse through community education by sharing stories of hope, courage and strength. VOICES seeks to break the silence that enables abusers and VOICES empowers survivors to take a stand by raising their voice.

## Who should be invited to join the group?

Survivors of family violence with passion, enthusiasm and commitment that desire to partner together to raise their voice to help bring public awareness about domestic violence, sexual assault, elder and child abuse.

Members must be at least one year removed from the date of their last abuse and of their relationship with their abuser. Members must not currently be in a relationship with a convicted abuser.

The most important talking point for VOICES members is to share their story about why they are involved and about how their situation has empowered them to be part of an organization that advocates for change.

- OSP was founded in 1979 by Gretchen Peterson at the Shasta County Women’s Refuge. In January of 2012 the Shasta Family Justice Center merged with the Shasta Women’s Refuge, and in June of 2013, the combined organization changed their name to One SAFE Place.
- VOICES of One SAFE Place started out with three members and is now 20 members strong.
- This group of independent women are advocating for change and offender accountability.
- The average abuse victim tries to leave their situation seven times before getting out.
- National Statistics show that 1-3 women will be victims of some type of family violence.
- In Shasta County, law enforcement receives an average of 200 calls per week related to family violence. Studies show that only 25% of those abused actually report.
- Men who witnessed their parents’ domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their own wives than sons of nonviolent parents.
- Victims must realize that the abuse is not their fault.
- Domestic Violence can be prevented by seeking help early on, educating children in our community, everyone watching out for each other and committing to a society free of domestic violence.
- In Shasta County, forcible rape is four times higher than the state average. In 2009, there were 60.4 rapes per 100,000 people as opposed to the state average of 22.5 per 100,000. Locally, only one of these rapes was committed by a stranger. This data reflects the fact that individuals are raped by people they know, meaning that women are statistically in more danger in their own homes than they are out in public.
- This isn’t those people...This is people like me.
- Nationally, the cost of intimate partner violence exceeds \$5.8 billion each year, \$4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health services.
- Locally, the cost of one domestic violence homicide is \$1.6 million to incarcerate one perpetrator for life. In August of 2010, RanDal Wert, a mother, was stabbed to death in front of her children by her long-term boyfriend Ty Rone Pitts. In the 911 tape, Ty Rone can be heard confessing to this act and saying, “Kids, come over and say goodbye to your mom.”

## Simple Powerful Things to Say to Victims of Domestic Violence

- You don't deserve to be treated this way.
- I am afraid for the safety of your children.
- There is help available.
- I am here for you when you want to get help.
- I am afraid for your safety.

## Tips on How to Help a Friend Who is in an Abusive Relationship

- Tell them it is not their fault.
- Tell them they are not crazy.
- Do not try to pretend that the abuse isn't happening or that it is not that bad.
- Tell them good things about themselves. Let them know you think they are smart, strong, and brave. Their abuser is telling them they are stupid and tearing down their self-esteem.
- Do not spread gossip--it could put them in danger.
- Try to help your friend break out of the isolation their abuser has put them in. Keep in contact with them on the phone or by going out with them.
- Do not try to make them do anything they do not want to do.
- Encourage them to build a wide support system.
- Do not blame them for the abuse or their decisions; leaving an abusive relationship is hard and usually takes a long time.
- Tell them they do not deserve it.



Dear Survivor,

We are survivors just like you. Abuse comes in many forms, including emotional, financial, and physical abuse. Everyone deserves to live a life of peace and safety, free from fear and intimidation.

You are not alone. We believe you and we believe in you.

Don't turn back now, hoping it will get better on its own. We have a tendency to ignore the danger, to believe we can handle the situation as we have done in the past. Take this opportunity to make a commitment to yourself and your future; you are deserving of love and happiness.

For your children's sake, the need to get help is even more urgent. Even though you have tried your best to protect them, they hear and see everything. Don't fool yourself, they are not asleep in bed as you have hoped. They are in fear. They fear for your safety, they are at risk, and they must be protected.

You will find that breaking the silence about your experience will take a weight from your shoulders and open the doors of the prison you have been in. In the long term, you have the responsibility to yourself to step out of isolation and find the support and validation of your experience that you need to feel whole again.

You are stronger than you think and you can make it through this. We believe in you.

Warmly,

C., L., D., M., and P.

VOICES Founding Members

Dear Survivor,

Welcome to the first day of your *brand new, beautiful, peaceful life!* We are fellow survivors, who understand that this can be a very difficult and confusing time for you. You have just taken the first step towards a safe and healthy life and we are extremely proud of you. We want you to know that *Sojourner is here to support you* as you reclaim your life.

You are not alone, and it's not your fault. *We see you, we believe you, and you matter to us.* You deserve to feel safe, and we're glad you're here. We realize that taking this big step is the first on a long road ahead, but there are many people and programs here at the Family Peace Center to guide and support you along the way. Please take advantage of all the resources and opportunities that are available for us. When you feel ready, take a look at the attached newsletter for a description of activities and classes being offered this month. The Family Peace Center is a place where you can heal from any kind of trauma, and some of these programs might be helpful as you begin your healing journey.

So keep taking steps and moving forward! We understand that you may be struggling with complicated feelings. You might still love this person who has harmed you, and want to believe the promises of change and a better future. You are worthy of a life free from abuse. *You deserve love, respect, dignity and happiness.* Sojourner is here to support whatever decision you feel is best for you and your family.

You may be a parent and need to consider your children's well-being. If you have children, they need this new life just as much as you do. It is important to know that your children have witnessed more than you realize. Whether they show it or not, chances are they feel frightened and this is affecting every aspect of their lives. Your children are at risk and they may desperately need help. So please *keep in mind that your children of any age can access all Family Peace Center services.*

These services are available for as long as you need, whether you're staying in Sojourner Truth House or living in the community. *We are so proud of you for breaking the silence.* We remember how liberating that experience was. We hope you are feeling that same sense of freedom, like a weight being lifted, as you begin to open up and talk about your experiences. That feeling of despair and complete isolation is part of your past. You have people here who care and are listening.

*We believe in you!* It took strength, bravery, and courage to get this far. We made it through this, and we know you can too. **RECLAIM YOUR VOICE!**

Warmly,  
Voices Advisory Committee

*"My mission in life is not merely to survive but to thrive." - Maya Angelou*

## SAMPLE CLIENT SURVEY QUOTES

If there is a time you need a quote from a survivor for a press release, a poster, social media, etc., here are some you can feel free to use and attribute to a survivor. Survivor quotes can be powerful elements of Public Relations strategies and convey the impact and importance of your Center to stakeholders, policymakers, and potential partner agencies. Furthermore, quotes and anecdotes from survivors who have emerged from the crisis can provide reassurance to victims contemplating accessing services.

“Thank you for being here. There is a plethora of information and services available that we were not aware of. Access to this location is great. Also, weekly services in one location make this a fabulous service. Thank you again.”

“I came in this morning worried and dreading this experience. But the staff and workers helped me leave here with hope. Thank you very much.”

“Everyone was very kind and sensitive to my needs and the needs of my children, for that I am very grateful.”

“The place is a warm environment. The people are very friendly, helpful and professional and I am thankful this place exists.”

“Everyone was very polite, friendly and professional and understanding. The lounge area was so cheerful and fun and the children’s playroom was fantastic. It was a good experience overall.”

“I enjoyed seeing my girls be kids again.”

“You guys are very great people, thank you and god bless you! The people here are the only people that seemed to care and understand my situation. I can’t thank them enough for listening to me and believing in me. Domestic abuse in the gay community is just as painful and serious as any other form of domestic violence.”

“I was apprehensive coming in thinking I could do this on my own. Thanks for your help in making me feel at ease.”

“I was utterly flabbergasted. The entire process was family friendly, organized and professional, yet nurturing and caring. Everyone treated me with dignity and respect. They even fed me and thought about my children whom weren’t here at the center. Why hasn’t this center been available for us before?! It was a holistic experience.”

“All of my questions were answered and I was informed of procedures and the way the process works. This is new to me but it’s been easy for me to grasp the process because of the assistance.”

# SAMPLE VOICES MEMBER BIO SHEET



Photo Here

We can provide if needed

## Your Story

Member's Last Name		Member's First Name	
Likes to Be Introduced As			
Address			
Phone Number		Email	
Describe abuse experienced in one sentence			
Where did your abuse occur?			
Was there a conviction? (circle one)		If YES, please explain	
YES or NO			

Please include your story of abuse on the back side of this paper. Limit account to details you would be willing to share with a general audience. Leave out names and descriptive information if possible and limit to 300 words or less. Attach a typed version if preferred.

# SAMPLE VOICES BROCHURE



[www.familyjusticecenter.org](http://www.familyjusticecenter.org)

## Speaker Request

To request a speaker call 888-511-3522 or complete the form below and mail to Family Justice Center Alliance/ VOICES 707 Broadway, #905, San Diego, CA 92101

Name:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

## Help Is Available

San Diego Family Justice Center  
(866) 933- HOPE (4673) or (619) 533-6000  
[www.sandiegofjc.org](http://www.sandiegofjc.org)

Therapy Services  
(619) 533-6089  
email: [drdlass@att.net](mailto:drdlass@att.net)

Victim of Crime Compensation Program  
(800) 777-9229

San Diego Domestic Violence Hotline  
(888) DV-LINKS (385-4657)

### Warning signs of an abusive relationship

- Do you feel nervous around your boyfriend, girlfriend, partner or spouse?
- Do you have to be careful to control your behavior to avoid their anger?
- Do you feel pressured by them when it comes to sex?
- Are you scared of disagreeing with them?
- Do they criticize you, or humiliate you in front of other people?
- Are they always checking up or questioning you about what you do without them?
- Do they repeatedly and wrongly accuse you of seeing or flirting with other people?
- Do they tell you that if you changed they wouldn't abuse you?
- Does their jealousy stop you from seeing friends or family?
- Do they make you feel like you are wrong, stupid, crazy, or inadequate?
- Have they ever scared you with violence or threatening behavior?
- Do you often do things to please them, rather than to please yourself?
- Do they prevent you from going out or doing things you want to do?
- Do you feel that, with them, nothing you do is ever good enough?
- Do they say that they will kill or hurt them self if you break up with them?

Adapted from <http://www.dvirc.org.au/whenlove/checklist.htm>



# VOICES

[www.nfjcavoices.org](http://www.nfjcavoices.org)

*The mission of the San Diego VOICES Chapter is to educate and raise awareness about domestic violence within our community. These brave survivors share their stories of survival, hope, and empowerment as a way to bring a voice for those who don't have one.*

Empowered by



SAMPLE VOICES STRATEGIC PLANNING



SOJOURNER

VOICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Overview of Strategic Goals

STRATEGIC GOALS	CURRENT STATUS
Entire Advisory Committee	
Write mission & vision statements	Goal Completed
Complete strategic planning sessions	Goal Completed
Select co-chairs, leadership roles	Goal Completed
Resctructure subcommittees; members decide which subcommittee to serve on	Goal Completed
Create strategic goals & implementation plan	Goal Completed
Add action steps to each strategic goal	Ongoing
Engagement Subcommittee	
Organize opportunities to encourage member involvement	In Progress (scrapbook, FJC Conference)
Increase member advocacy skills	In Progress (survey to identify needs)
Establish Speakers Bureau process	In Progress (portraits for profiles, consensus on what is included in bio)
Organize event for SFPC clients	Not Started Yet
Participate in Healing Circle	Goal Completed (in 2018)
Membership Subcommittee	
Establish On-Boarding Process for VOICES	In Progress (member criteria and attendance requirements established; next welcome packet and screening process)
Develop Mentor Process	Not Started Yet
Public Policy Subcommittee	
Read and speak to knowledgeable resources	In Progress (gaining knowledge, reaching out to End Abuse, etc)
Establish Specialized DV Courts (provide training for court personnel)	Not Started Yet
Educate politicians	Not Started Yet
Provide education & tools to law enforcement	Not Started Yet
Public Relations Subcommittee	
Establish public presence for VOICES	In Progress (connect with Roxy to discuss social media content)
Determine process to field community presentation requests	In Progress (Julie meeting with internal Sojourner staff to determine first steps)
Facilitate workshops for target populations	Not Started Yet
Organize Awareness Month activities	In Progress (DV Awareness)

# SAMPLE SURVIVORS' VOICES GROUP AGREEMENTS



## BUNCOMBE COUNTY | SURVIVORS' VOICES GROUP AGREEMENTS

### Mission Statement

The Buncombe County Family Justice Center VOICES chapter creates a resilient community after crisis through survivor led and focused education and awareness. We seek to empower survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault to break the silence and illuminate the path to strength, safety and hope.

### Collaboration with the Family Justice Center

Though a separate and independent, volunteer-led group, the Survivors VOICES Committee supports the work of the Buncombe County Family Justice Center by ensuring survivor input and perspective on the services at the FJC, identifying systematic gaps and ensuring survivor safety and wellbeing is prioritized and engaging the community by sharing personal stories and experience.

### Membership

VOICES members are volunteers with lived experience of domestic and/or sexual violence who join together to celebrate strength and survival and use their voices to help others through advocacy, education, and empowerment. Members of VOICES should be safe from ongoing violence, not currently in court proceedings regarding the violence and have actively participated in healing from their experience. Members complete a membership application and interview with the VOICES Chair and/or the FJC Coordinator. Members agree to attend at least four meetings a year and support the work of the VOICES Committee throughout the year.

# SAMPLE SURVIVORS' VOICES GROUP AGREEMENTS

## Leadership

VOICES is led by a Chair who is elected by members for a term of three years, for up to two terms. The elected chair also serves as the VOICES representative on the Family Justice Center Leadership Team.

## Decision Making

VOICES members will strive to make decisions based on group consensus. However, in times that consensus is not attainable, a decision may be made by a two thirds majority vote of members present at a regularly scheduled meeting.

## Conflict Resolution

VOICES members are committed to developing creative solutions which respect the needs of all parties when and if a conflict arises. VOICES members commit to encouraging a culture of respect, accountability and honesty.

## Respecting Privacy

VOICES members may share their personal experience within meetings. This information should be respected and protected by other VOICES members. VOICES members agree not to share information about another member's story or experience without the express permission of that individual.

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SIGNATURE

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DATE

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PRINTED NAME

# SAMPLE MEETING REVIEW SURVEY



**1** What is most important for you when connecting with other survivors?

**2** What did you enjoy most about this meeting? Do you have any suggestions?

**3** What, if any, are activities you would be interested in attending?  
(check all that apply)

Book club

Meal/coffee club

Walking/hiking groups

Workshops

Self defense class

Advocacy

Craft lesson

Other (write in) \_\_\_\_\_

**4** Do you have any interest in:

Public speaking

Providing training/workshops

Coordinating events

Social Media

Community outreach

Other (write in) \_\_\_\_\_

**5** Would you like more information on becoming a part of the VOICES Committee?

YES

NO

**6** May we contact you? (optional)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

**7** Additional comments:

# SAMPLE EXIT INTERVIEW



**1** Please rate your visit at the Family Justice Center today:

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
I felt safe while I was in the Center. <b>Comments:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt that my confidentiality and privacy were honored in the Center. <b>Comments:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt I was treated with respect. <b>Comments:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The services and information I received was helpful. <b>Comments:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2** Was there a service that was unavailable to you that you wished we would have had onsite?

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**3** We value what you have to say! Please write any additional comments or suggestions that you have:

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Thank you for participating in our survey. If you would like to speak with someone directly about your experience, please provide your name and contact information below or contact the Guilford County Family Justice Center Director, Catherine Johnson at (336) 641-2321 or via email at [cjohnso5@myguilford.com](mailto:cjohnso5@myguilford.com)

Name

Phone Number

Email

## VALUABLE LINKS FOR VOICES CHAPTERS

### Social Media

[facebook.com/VOICESurvivorNetwork/](https://facebook.com/VOICESurvivorNetwork/)

### Websites

[allianceforhope.com](https://allianceforhope.com)

[familyjusticecenter.org](https://familyjusticecenter.org)

[strangulationtraininginstitute.com](https://strangulationtraininginstitute.com)

[fullframeinitiative.org](https://fullframeinitiative.org)

### Videos

WHAT WE LEARNED IN 2018:  
UPDATES FROM THE TRAINING INSTITUTE ON STRANGULATION PREVENTION

[youtu.be/filgXIEwQJo](https://youtu.be/filgXIEwQJo)

SURVIVOR STORY - TARA

[youtu.be/-ZEAG59NmHg](https://youtu.be/-ZEAG59NmHg)

### Alliance Resource Library

VOICES OVERVIEW

[familyjusticecenter.org/resources/voices-overview/](https://familyjusticecenter.org/resources/voices-overview/)

VOICES SURVIVOR-DEFINED SUCCESS

[familyjusticecenter.org/resources/voices-survivor-defined-success/](https://familyjusticecenter.org/resources/voices-survivor-defined-success/)

ALLIANCE for  
**HOPE**  
INTERNATIONAL

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allianceforhope.com | 888-511-3522



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