



4 Golden Rules of Institutional Advocacy: Leading an Effective Interagency Response to Violence against Women

#1: Centralize victim safety, well-being, and autonomy

- Know the scope and scale of violence against women.
- Stay focused on what works for victims rather than what makes a system run more efficiently. Understand how institutions organize workers to process cases.
- Advocates centralize women and children’s experiences within in their organizations. They have a key role in leading interagency work to focus on the needs, safety, and well-being of women/survivors.

#2: Develop a strong knowledge base

- Anecdotes, advice from individuals, personal experience, statistics, etc., cannot show the whole picture.
- Research the issues and know:
 - Circumstances women face
 - Institutional responses and their outcomes
 - How workers are organized to act on cases.
 - Institutional assumptions, theories, and concepts

#3 Use a systemic and social change analysis

- Expose systemic problems; not individuals.
- Always focus on case processing and weaknesses in case processing—not individuals—that contribute to poor outcomes for victims/survivors.
- Know and recognize how institutions standardize their responses.

#4 Use a model of constructive engagement

- Problem-solving rarely works in an atmosphere of criticism or personal attack.
- Assume that practitioners can and will help and work with them as true colleagues.
- Be respectful; build relationships and trust.
- Understand consequences for survivors of using a judgmental approach with practitioners.
- Avoid backing a practitioner or an agency into a corner.
- Remain solution-oriented.
- Bring all points of view into the discussion.
- As a leader, facilitate analysis and problem solving. Avoid acting as a gatekeeper—or a hero.



8 Methods Institutions Use to Organize and Coordinate Workers

1. Rules & regulations

Laws, administrative rules, court rulings, policies, and directives, etc., that direct and guide management of the institution and tell workers what they must do

2. Administrative practices

All ways that standardize how workers do what rules and regulations require them to do—e.g., forms, reports, screening tools, routing instructions

3. Resources

Funding, materials, processes, and personnel needed to accomplish the work of the institution

4. Concepts & theories

Theories, assumptions, language, categories, etc., that organize workers to talk and act in certain ways

5. Linkages

The ways institutions connect workers to other workers and processes, to the people who seek or draw into its services, and to other institutions, such as federal regulating agencies or state legislatures

6. Mission, purpose, & function

Overarching purpose of a system (e.g., criminal court), a specific process within that mission (e.g., arraignment), and a specific practitioner role (prosecutor)

7. Accountability

Person to person (e.g., perpetrator to victim), practitioner to practitioner (e.g., 911 call-taker to patrol officer), agency to agency (e.g., prosecutor's office to probation), agency to person (e.g., police to victim/survivor), and institutions to due process

8. Education & training

Formal and informal ways that workers learn their jobs and are exposed to different concepts and theories and professional thinking and practice

