

# Supporting Survivor Reentrants: Learning to Serve Those Returning Home

2022 National Sexual Assault Conference

Co-Presenters  
Courtney Dunkerton  
Anna Wallin

North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault

**NCCASA**  
EDUCATION • ADVOCACY • REGISTRATION



# Presenters

- ▶ Courtney Dunkerton (she/her)
  - ▶ Human Trafficking Program Coordinator
  - ▶ SSRP Project Coordinator
- ▶ Anna Wallin (she/her)
  - ▶ Program Evaluator
  - ▶ SSRP team member

North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault



The North Carolina Coalition  
Against Sexual Assault  
is an inclusive statewide alliance  
working to end sexual violence  
through education, advocacy, and  
legislation.

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

North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault

**NCCASA**  
EDUCATION • ADVOCACY • REGISTRATION

## Our Framework

NCCASA as a statewide coalition uses a social justice framework. Therefore, our work is done from a strong intersectional, social justice perspective. By centering our work around marginalized communities, everyone is served.

## Our Work

Organize and sponsor statewide trainings

related to sexual violence

Support rape crisis programs

Resource sharing and technical assistance

Legislative agendas and policy change

(local and national level)

Anti-human trafficking outreach and

awareness

Prevention education

Colleges and universities

North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault

**NCCASA**  
EDUCATION • ADVOCACY • REGISTRATION

## Acknowledgements

Not all women are victims

Not all men are perpetrators

Any gender can be a victim

Any gender can be a perpetrator



# Workshop Objectives

By the end of this workshop, participants should be able to:

1. Explain the barriers unique to re-entrants who have experienced sexual violence
2. Describe the language use related to incarceration and reentry that promotes safety and equity
3. Identify strategies to equip community partners to address sexual violence in their own service area



# Workshop Overview


- ▶ Introduction to the Project
- ▶ Who Are Survivor-Reentrants?
- ▶ The Value of Collaborative Partnerships
- ▶ Process
- ▶ The Importance of Shared Language
- ▶ Key Findings
- ▶ Resources that Connect Survivors to Services
- ▶ Q/A





# POLL

# Introduction to the Project



The initial goal was to create a resource for formerly incarcerated individuals that would direct them to services for any sexual abuse experienced prior to, during, or post-release.

Information from those with lived experience would inform the development and content of the resource.

# Who are Survivor Reentrants?

- ▶ Community members returning home
- ▶ Language Matters
- ▶ Impact of Early Release
- ▶ Survivors of Sexual violence

# Reentry Simulation

- ▶ Opportunity for those without lived experience of incarceration to understand the multiple barriers to daily needs and how all paths seemed to lead back to incarceration.
- ▶ How would those who were also sexual assault survivors experience reentry?



# The Value of Collaborative Partnerships


North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault

**NCCASA**  
EDUCATION • ADVOCACY • REGISTRATION

# Our Team





The background features a complex, abstract design. On the right side, there are several overlapping, semi-transparent blue geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons. The central and right portions of the image are dominated by a dense, multi-colored stream of thin, flowing lines in shades of red, orange, yellow, green, and blue, creating a sense of movement and energy. The overall aesthetic is modern and vibrant.

“Because these relationships were built on trust and respect, we were better equipped to tackle difficult topics together.”

# Process: How We Met our Goals

North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault

**NCCASA**  
EDUCATION • ADVOCACY • REGISTRATION



**Have you recently been released from prison or jail?**



**Have you experienced sexual violence or human trafficking at any time in your life?**



We are seeking participants to interview to find the best ways to connect citizens with community resources and information.

If you would like to participate in the Supporting Survivor Re-entrants Project email [SSRP@nccasa.org](mailto:SSRP@nccasa.org) or text or call (919)899-5521



At the time of the interview, you will receive a \$20 giftcard for your participation.

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IS COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL, AND YOUR NAME WILL NOT BE ATTACHED TO THE PROJECT**

Your voice matters! Your voice is powerful!


THE NC COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT, ORANGE COUNTY LOCAL RE-ENTRY COUNCIL, AND THE ORANGE COUNTY RAPE CRISIS CENTER

# How to Safely Disseminate Information to Invite Key Informant Participants?

# The Importance of Shared Language

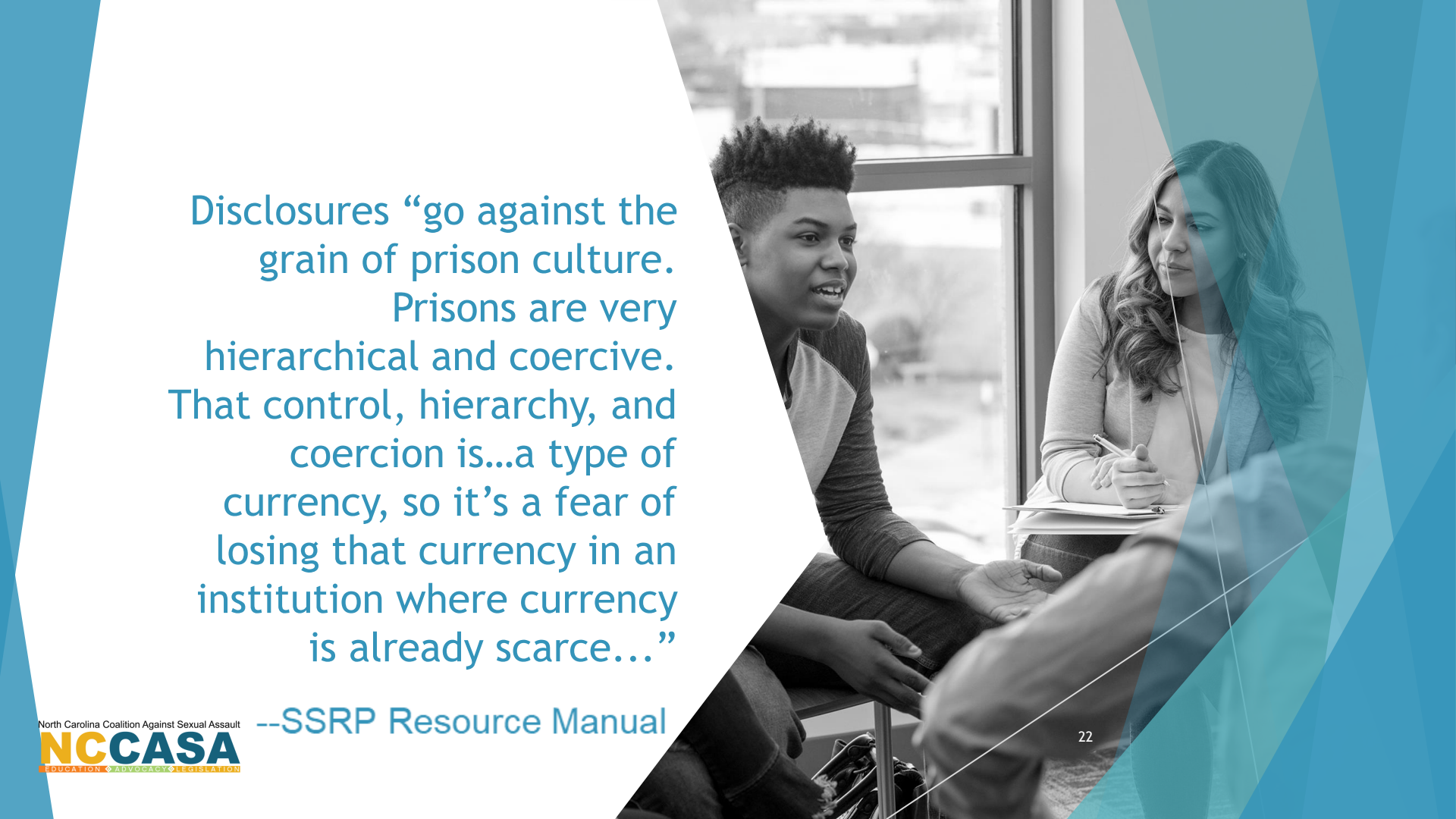
North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault

**NCCASA**  
EDUCATION • ADVOCACY • REGISTRATION



“There’s some language that just doesn’t resonate outside of the rape crisis center world.”

--SSRP Resource Manual



Disclosures “go against the grain of prison culture. Prisons are very hierarchical and coercive. That control, hierarchy, and coercion is...a type of currency, so it’s a fear of losing that currency in an institution where currency is already scarce...”

--SSRP Resource Manual

# Resources: Connecting Survivors to Services

# Supporting Survivor Reentrants Resource Manual

Emergent Space

Statistics of  
incarceration rates  
and sexual violence

Highlights and  
Lessons Learned  
narratives

Key findings and  
recommendations

Forms and  
documents created  
to capture data and  
create resources

Resource tools:  
Returning Home  
Resource and BLESS  
Tool

Reentry and COVID



# BLESS Tool Booklet



Primer for Local Reentry staff and Council Partners



Provide basic information on responding to disclosures of sexual violence



Service providers encouraged to seek additional info/training on sexual violence



Last page (13) can be used as a quick reference guide

# “Welcome Home” Resource and Guide

Contains info about sexual violence and local support contacts

For those reentering community

Intended to be included in any welcome home info packet

Guide is for service providers working with reentrants

# Key Findings and Recommendations

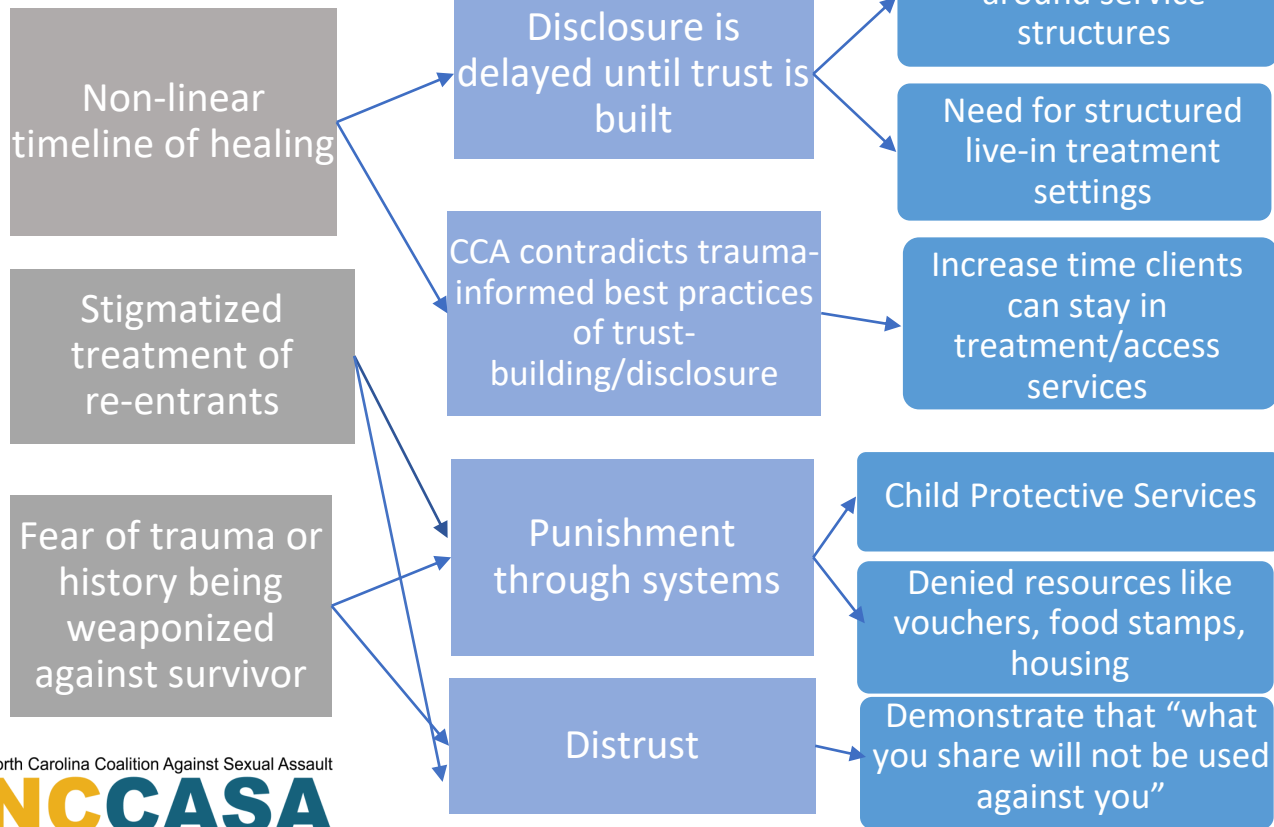


# Key Informant Interviews

- ▶ Who we Interviewed: Service providers in Orange County who work with reentrants
- ▶ 3 individual provider interviews that lasted 90-120 minutes, and a focus group at a substance use treatment facility with 6-8 providers over two sessions of 90 minutes each
- ▶ Main Interview Question: *What are the priority needs of people who have experienced incarceration and sexual violence?*

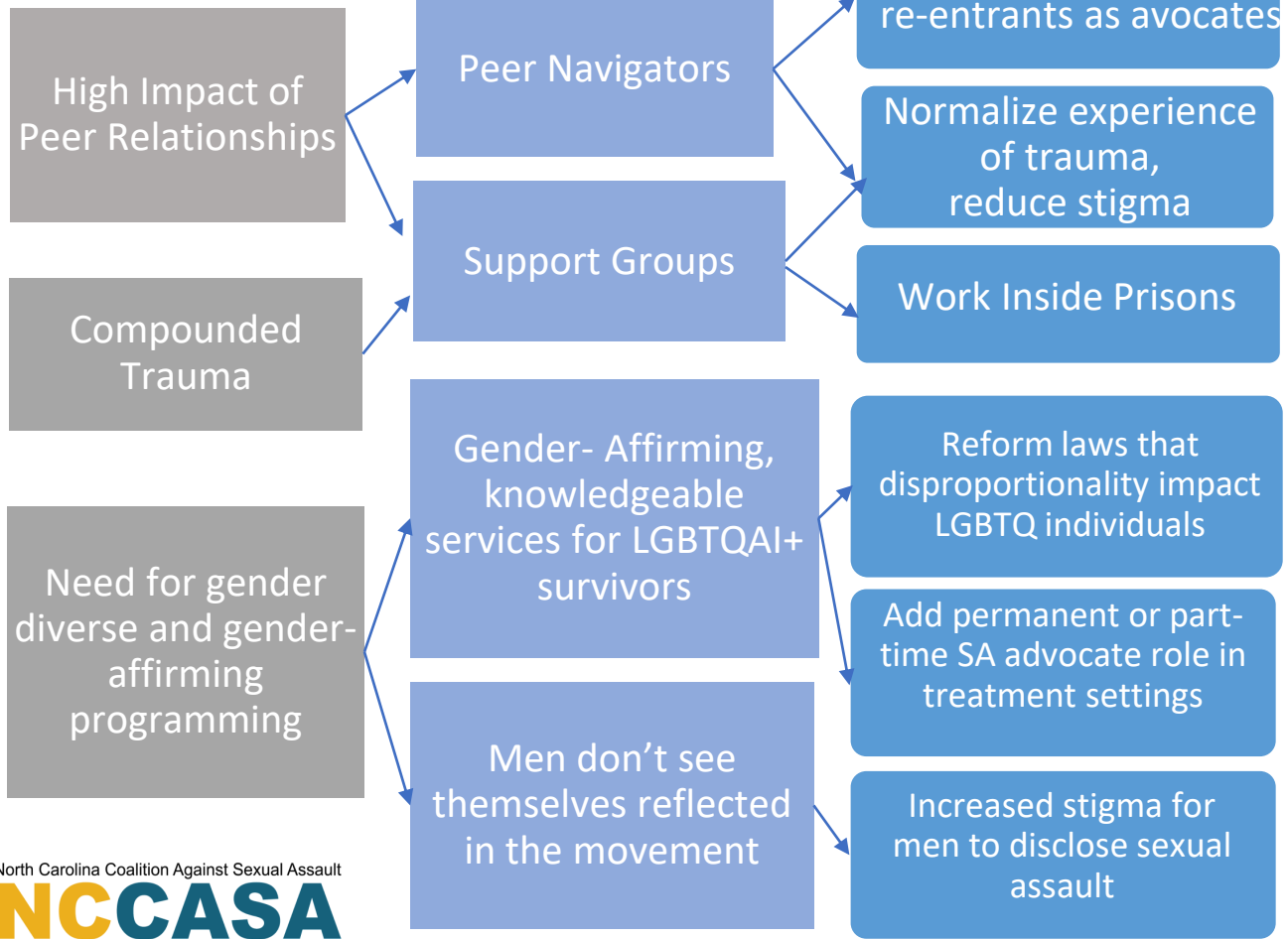
"Having the right staff is key. If anyone judges them or hurts them with information, they will immediately shut down. (Need to) break down barriers from childhood trauma that taught "don't trust, don't talk, don't feel"

- Focus Group Participant



## Recommendations

- **Train Housing staff in basic SA advocacy**
- **Increase comprehensive, integrated services that includes sexual assault advocacy**
- **Reduce disincentives to share trauma with social service staff**
- **De-stigmatize and increase access to mental health treatment-inside and outside prisons**



## Recommendations

- Society-wide gender and sexual diversity awareness
- Make language around perpetration/victimization gender neutral
- Increase representation of men and boys in SA movement
- need to encourage inmate-led programming\*
- Psycho-education about Trauma and PTSD in multiple settings, including non-clinical

# Recommendation Summary

**Hierarchy and intimidation** is a big part of **prison culture** and enforced upon inmates and within their subcultures

## Societal/ Systems

- Advocate for billing structure flexibility to allow treatment without diagnosis
- Change gender norms
- De-stigmatize and increase access to mental health treatment
- De-stigmatize incarceration
- Increase funding for re-entry services
- Offer programs that indirectly address SV, framed as "community gathering" to target norms change. Don't use words like "survivor", "trauma", "help"

## Agency/ Relationship

- Develop trauma-informed advocacy training for all treatment/housing staff
- Integrate SA information into 12-step or Drug/ Alcohol treatment groups
- Add permanent SA advocate role in treatment settings

## Individual

- Increase self-worth and self-autonomy
- Empower decision making
- Increase sense of personal safety



## Ways you can use “SSRP” Resources:

- ▶ Incorporating Key Findings in your work
- ▶ Share materials with other service providers in area
- ▶ Train on using them
- ▶ Incorporate resource materials in your own direct service provision
- ▶ Increase professional development among staff and community service organizations





# Questions

North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault



[Courtney@nccasa.org](mailto:Courtney@nccasa.org)

[anna@nccasa.org](mailto:anna@nccasa.org)

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

We'd love to hear from  
you!