

Tips & Strategies

Tips and Strategies for Meeting the
Minimum Services Standards for
Sexual Assault Programs in Texas

September 2014

Introduction

Sexual Assault Programs (SAPs) are obligated to provide five specific minimum services as a part of their contracts with the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). These services are identified in Chapter 420 of the Texas Government Code and are as follows:

- 24-Hour Crisis Hotline
- Crisis Intervention
- Advocacy
- Accompaniment to Hospitals, Law Enforcement Offices, Prosecutor's Offices and Courts
- Public Education

In January 2014, the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA), with funding from the OAG, formed a committee comprised of TAASA staff, representatives from local sexual assault programs throughout Texas, representatives from the OAG, and other community stakeholders. The committee developed and recommended standards (or criteria) for each of the five minimum services that Texas Sexual Assault Programs are required to provide.

The standards were created to provide an understanding of the five minimum services and what it means, at a basic level, for program delivery. These standards are not intended to serve as a best practice model nor as a comprehensive outline for sexual assault services, but rather as the most basic set requirements. There are many aspects of service provision that are important, but that are not addressed in this document including, but not limited to, therapeutic counseling, support groups, and systems advocacy.

This document is intended to provide Sexual Assault Programs with tips and strategies for meeting each standard and potential methods to demonstrate the fulfillment of each standard. Explanations and further clarification of the standards are offered as well. This document reiterates language from the standards for minimum services, but reading this document should not replace reading the actual standards for minimum services as published by the Office of the Attorney General. If there is any discrepancy between the standards as they are written in this document and the standards as published by the OAG, the OAG standards prevail.

At the end of each section is a list of activities typically performed when providing each minimum service. The activity list is a suggested list of potential activities. It is not an all-inclusive list of all possible activities nor is it a checklist of required activities. For new staff/volunteers in particular the activities list can serve as a general guide to ensure staff/volunteers know where to start when first working with a survivor.

This document also provides a guiding philosophy of sexual assault programs and the services they provide. The guiding philosophy section was developed by the standards committee to describe and define the unique nature of Sexual Assault Programs. The guiding philosophy offers a foundation in which sexual assault services and program delivery, including the minimum services, should be rooted.

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24 Hour Crisis Hotline

Criteria	Tips & Strategies
<p>The SAP must maintain a 24 Hour Crisis Hotline for survivors of sexual violence to provide immediate, confidential, non-judgmental support, crisis intervention, information and referrals.</p>	<p>There are several pieces to this criterion. The first is that the Hotline exists; consider maintaining copies of bills for the phone number associated with the hotline.</p> <p>The immediacy of Hotline call response is addressed directly in another criterion.</p> <p>Confidentiality is a hall mark of Hotlines. Sexual Assault Programs should consider how to ensure Hotline caller confidentiality. Methods might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an agency, have clear guidelines on confidentiality that are shared with employees/volunteers. • Have each SAP employee/volunteer answering the Hotline sign a confidentiality statement. • Ensure the Hotline accepts calls from blocked numbers and does not utilize Caller I.D. • If an answering service is used, have a detailed confidentiality policy with the provider. Conduct training with the answering service employees to ensure they understand the confidentiality policy. • If calls are forwarded to an employee/volunteers personal phone number, ensure that only the employee/volunteer will answer the Hotline and that calls should be taken in a private area where the conversation will not be overheard. • If employees/volunteers answering the hotline are calling the survivor from a personal phone, utilize I.D. blocking. <p>Non-judgmental support must be provided to all callers. To ensure a non-judgmental response consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to employees/volunteers on the variety of responses to sexual violence. • Provide training to employees/volunteers to respect and value the diversity of survivors. • Have each employee/volunteer sign an agency non-

	<p>discrimination policy.</p> <p>The provision of crisis intervention, information and referral are key functions of a Hotline. To track and document the provision of crisis intervention, information and referrals include consider utilizing a Hotline Call checklist or log where employees/volunteers can note if Crisis Intervention, information or referrals were made. Maintain copies of the checklist or logs for documentation purposes.</p>
<p>A 24 Hour Crisis Hotline means a telephone line answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by trained Sexual Assault Program (SAP) staff or volunteers.</p>	<p>Chapter 420 of the Government Code defines a Sexual Assault Program as an entity that, among other things, provides the minimum services to adult survivors of stranger and non-stranger sexual assault. Sexual Assault Programs should ensure they are conducting sufficient outreach and promotion to ensure Hotline services are provided to adult survivors of stranger and non-stranger sexual assault.</p> <p>To document the 24 hours a day/7 days a week nature of the hotline, consider maintaining copies of employee/volunteer schedules providing coverage of the hotline.</p> <p>Training requirements are addressed in a separate criterion.</p>
<p>The Hotline number must be accessible to the public via the SAP’s website and in public directories that cover the SAP’s service area, if available.</p>	<p>Public directories are meant to include local phone books and 211, if they are present in your community.</p> <p>If the agency has a website, the hotline number should be easily found on the home page.</p>
<p>Where advertised, the Hotline indicates 24 hour availability and specifies ‘sexual assault’ or indicates the hotline provides assistance to survivors of sexual assault.</p>	<p>Other terms can include ‘sexual trauma’ or ‘sexual violence.’</p>
<p>SAPs must ensure employees/volunteers provide Hotline services subject to confidential</p>	<p>Texas law is specific regarding the confidential nature of communications when providing sexual assault services. SAPs should be familiar with the Confidential Communications statutory requirements which include:</p>

<p>communication requirements in the Texas Government Code, Chapter 420, Subchapter D.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibitions against the sharing of any information about a client or services provided to a client • Narrow and specific exceptions to confidentiality • Specific requirements for a client to waive confidentiality <p>Note: A SAP that receives VAWA or VOCA funds may have additional specific confidentiality requirements. See page 23 of this document for more information, and refer to guidelines in your grant award documents.</p>
<p>Hotline calls must be answered immediately either by a SAP employee/volunteer or a 3rd party answering service and connected to a trained SAP employee/volunteer within 5 minutes. Hotlines must have at least one bypass feature in place to accommodate more than one call at a time (busy signal and call-waiting features do not satisfy the bypass feature). Bypass calls must be answered or returned by a trained SAP employee/volunteer within 15 minutes.</p>	<p>While Hotline calls must be answered within 5 minutes by a trained SAP employee/volunteer, it is permissible for Hotline calls to be answered by an answering service or other individual or organization that has not completed the training requirements as outlined in this standard as long as the caller is connected to the trained SAP employee/volunteer within 5 minutes. If the SAP employee/volunteer is on a hotline call and an additional call comes into the hotline, the hotline should have a ‘bypass feature’ such as an answering machine or voicemail. The hotline caller whose call is bypassed should receive a return call by a trained SAP employee/volunteer within 15 minutes of their original call.</p>
<p>SAP employees/volunteers providing 24 Hour Crisis Hotline services shall complete training that meets the OAG’s Sexual Assault Training Program Certification Requirements contained in the OAG’s Sexual Assault Training Program Certification Guide.</p>	<p>While this standard does not require certification, it requires a SAP to provide training that would meet all of the certification requirements. Some of those training requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sexual assault program employee/volunteer must complete the training requirements within 6 months of the employee/volunteer providing any of the minimum services. • The training must cover all of the training topics as listed in the SATP Certification Guide. • The training must be a minimum of 40 hours in length, with at least 30 of those hours provided in the classroom setting.

	<p>OAG SATP Certification guidelines can be found here: https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/victims/sapcs.shtml</p> <p>Call TAASA for information or technical assistance regarding OAG Sexual Assault Training Program Certification.</p>
<p>SAP employees/volunteers providing 24 Hour Crisis Hotline services must be supervised by a SAP staff member with at least one year experience providing direct services to survivors of sexual violence.</p>	<p>Experience providing direct services to survivors ensures that supervisors are well versed in the unique needs of sexual assault survivors and can provide guidance to employees and volunteers with difficult situations.</p> <p>Experience providing direct services includes answering hotline calls, providing accompaniment, advocacy or crisis intervention, but can also include other direct services including, but not limited to, counseling, legal representation, and medical assistance.</p>
<p>Hotlines must be equipped to respond to callers who are deaf, hearing impaired or with limited English proficiency.</p>	<p>Several options exist for responding to callers who are deaf or hearing impaired. Many of these options are listed on the National Association for the Deaf website: nad.org/issues/telephone-and-relay-services/relay-services</p> <p>Options for responding to callers with limited English proficiency include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize employees/volunteers who can speak languages other than English • Partner with another SAP to transfer hotline calls • Utilizing a language line such as Language Line Solutions <p>Employees/volunteers answering the hotline should receive training on the use of any services (videophones, relay services, language lines) utilized by the sexual assault program.</p>
<p>SAPs must maintain a current resource/referral list responsive to individuals affected by sexual violence.</p>	<p>The resource/referral list should include, but not be limited to, financial, medical, legal, mental health, and social service resources.</p> <p>Ideally, the list should be updated at least annually to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm that listings are current and accurate • Provide an opportunity to solicit feedback from the referral agencies regarding the appropriateness of referrals that have been made

<p>SAP employees/volunteers answering the Hotline must have the current resource/referral list in their possession.</p>	<p>The resource/referral list may be a physical list that is provided to each employee/volunteer or a database or other electronic referral list that employees/volunteers can access when answering the Hotline.</p>
<p>The SAP must regularly evaluate the 24 Hour Crisis Hotline and, as needed, make adjustments based on the findings.</p>	<p>Evaluation of the 24-Hour Crisis Hotline may occur in a number of ways. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission for follow-up phone calls to survivors to assist/support the survivor and document their assessment of the value/results of the original Hotline call. • Observation by supervisor of employees/volunteers answering the Hotline. • Written evaluation from hotline callers who later receive other direct services • Surveys of employees/volunteers who provide Hotline services regarding continuing education needs and suggestions for improving Hotline services.

TYPICAL ACTIVITIES: 24-Hour Crisis Hotline

- Assist caller in evaluating needs
- Provide information about
 - available services and resources
 - effects of sexual violence and possible reactions
 - medical treatment/services, the criminal justice system or both
 - other services provided by the SAP, including Advocacy
- Active listening
- Exploring options
- Safety planning
- Crisis Intervention (See Crisis Intervention Standard)
- Dispatch SAP employee/volunteer for Accompaniment to hospital, if needed

Crisis Intervention

Criteria	Tips & Strategies
<p>SAPs must provide Crisis Intervention to survivors of sexual violence</p>	<p>Sexual Assault Programs (SAPs) must provide Crisis Intervention to survivors of sexual violence. In order to verify that Crisis Intervention is provided, SAPs should document the number of Crisis Interventions provided to survivors of sexual violence.</p> <p>Chapter 420 of the Government Code defines a Sexual Assault Program as an entity that, among other things, provides the minimum services to adult survivors of stranger and non-stranger sexual assault. Sexual Assault Programs should ensure they are conducting sufficient outreach to ensure Crisis Intervention is provided to adult survivors of stranger and non-stranger sexual assault.</p>
<p>Crisis Intervention means an immediate, supportive, response in order to reduce acute distress, to begin stabilization, and to assist in determining next steps.</p>	<p>The immediacy of Crisis Intervention is addressed in a later criterion.</p> <p>The supportive nature of Crisis Intervention is key. Employees and volunteers providing Crisis Intervention should do so with compassion and respect for the survivor’s background, experiences and individual circumstances.</p>
<p>Crisis Intervention must be provided by SAP employees/volunteers.</p>	<p>SAPs may not contract out or otherwise provide Crisis Intervention through a third party.</p>
<p>The SAP must provide Crisis Intervention 24 hours/day, 7 days/week via the 24 Hour Crisis Hotline and via Accompaniment to Hospitals, Law Enforcement Offices, Prosecutor’s Offices and Courts.</p>	<p>Crisis Intervention is commonly provided in conjunction with other minimum services particularly the 24 Hour Crisis Hotline and Accompaniment to Hospitals, Law Enforcement Offices, Prosecutors’ Offices and Courts. In this way, Crisis Intervention is available 24 hrs/day, 7 days/week.</p>
<p>SAPs must ensure</p>	<p>Texas law is specific regarding the confidential nature of</p>

<p>employees/volunteers provide Crisis Intervention subject to confidential communication requirements in the Texas Government Code, Chapter 420, Subchapter D.</p>	<p>communications when providing sexual assault services. SAPs should be familiar with the Confidential Communications statutory requirements which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibitions against the sharing of any information about a client or services provided to a client • Narrow and specific exceptions to confidentiality • Specific requirements for a client to waive confidentiality <p>Note: A SAP that receives VAWA or VOCA funds may have additional specific confidentiality requirements. See page 23 of this document for more information, and refer to guidelines in your grant award documents.</p>
<p>The SAP must provide Crisis Intervention on a walk-in basis during the SAP’s regular hours of operation.</p>	<p>Generally, Crisis Intervention is provided as needed, which includes in-person Crisis Intervention at the office and without an appointment during regular hours of operation. If the agency does not publicize their address, a survivor should be able to call the SAP and be informed of the address and business hours so that they might seek in-person Crisis Intervention.</p>
<p>The SAP employee/volunteer providing Crisis Intervention must complete training that meets the OAG’s Sexual Assault Training Program Certification Requirements contained in the OAG’s Sexual Assault Training Program Certification Guide.</p>	<p>While this standard does not require certification, it requires a SAP to provide training that would meet all of the certification requirements. Some of those training requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sexual assault program employee/volunteer must complete the training requirements within 6 months of the employee/volunteer providing any of the minimum services. • The training must cover all of the training topics as listed in the SATP Certification Guide. • The training must be a minimum of 40 hours in length, with at least 30 of those hours provided in the classroom setting. <p>OAG SATP Certification guidelines can be found here: https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/victims/sapcs.shtml</p> <p>Call TAASA for information or technical assistance regarding OAG Sexual Assault Training Program Certification.</p>
<p>SAP employees/volunteers providing Crisis Intervention must be supervised by a SAP staff</p>	<p>Experience providing direct services to survivors ensures that supervisors are well versed in the unique needs of sexual assault survivors and can provide guidance to employees and volunteers with difficult situations.</p>

<p>member with at least one year experience providing direct services to survivors of sexual violence.</p>	<p>Experience providing direct services includes answering hotline calls, providing accompaniment, advocacy or crisis intervention, but can also include other direct services including, but not limited to, counseling, legal representation, and medical assistance.</p>
<p>SAPs must maintain a current resource/referral list responsive to individuals affected by sexual violence.</p>	<p>The resource/referral list should include, but not be limited to, financial, medical, legal, mental health, and social service resources.</p> <p>Ideally, the list should be updated at least annually to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm that listings are current and accurate • Provide an opportunity to solicit feedback from the referral agencies regarding the appropriateness of referrals that have been made
<p>SAP employees/volunteers providing Crisis Intervention must have the current resource/referral list in their possession.</p>	<p>The resource/referral list may be a physical list that is provided to each employee/volunteer or a database or other electronic referral list that employees/volunteers can access when answering the Hotline.</p>
<p>The SAP must regularly evaluate the Crisis Intervention services and, as needed, make adjustments based on the findings.</p>	<p>Evaluation of Crisis Intervention may occur in a number of ways. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission for follow-up phone calls to survivors to assist/support the survivor and document their assessment of the value/results the of Crisis Intervention. • Observation by supervisor of employees/volunteers providing Crisis Intervention. • Written evaluation from survivors who received Crisis Intervention. • Surveys of employees/volunteers who provide Crisis Intervention regarding continuing education needs and suggestions for improving Crisis Intervention services.

TYPICAL ACTIVITIES: Crisis Intervention

- assess needs
- actively listen
- identify healthy coping skills
- explore options/problem solving
- provide information about
 - the range of services/resources provided by the SAP including 24 hour hotline
 - statutory crime victims' rights
 - the effects of sexual violence and possible reactions
 - referrals to other resources
- conduct safety planning
- assess potential for injury to self or others
- assist victims in strengthening their coping skills through empathic response

Accompaniment to Hospitals, Law Enforcement Offices, Prosecutors' Offices and Courts

Criteria	Tips & Strategies
<p>Sexual Assault Programs (SAPs) must provide Accompaniment to Hospitals, Law Enforcement Offices, Prosecutors' Offices and Courts.</p>	<p>Sexual Assault Programs (SAPs) must provide Accompaniment to Hospitals, Law Enforcement Offices, Prosecutors' Offices and Courts. In order to verify that Accompaniment is provided, SAPs should document the number and type of Accompaniments provided to survivors of sexual violence.</p> <p>Chapter 420 of the Government Code defines a Sexual Assault Program as an entity that, among other things, provides the minimum services to adult survivors of stranger and non-stranger sexual assault. Sexual Assault Programs should ensure they are conducting sufficient outreach to ensure Accompaniment to Hospitals, Law Enforcement Offices, Prosecutors' Office and Courts is provided to adult survivors of stranger and non-stranger sexual assault.</p>
<p>Accompaniment to Hospitals, Law Enforcement Offices, Prosecutors' Offices and Courts means in-person support, assistance and provision of information about crime victims' rights during the survivor's interaction with medical or criminal justice professionals at hospitals, law enforcement offices, prosecutors' offices, and courts. To qualify as an Accompaniment to a</p>	<p>The provision of support, assistance and information about crime victims' rights are key to this Accompaniment criterion.</p> <p>In this instance, support means to hold-up or buoy the survivor. Support is provided in a way that empowers survivors by identifying their strengths and following their lead.</p> <p>Assistance means checking in with the survivor to determine their needs, and if possible helping them meet those needs. This level of assistance is not to the same degree as Advocacy which would be more intensive (see Advocacy Standard).</p> <p>Crime victims' rights represent the efforts of lawmakers to provide victims of crime, including sexual assault survivors, with some safeguards to prevent re-victimization. Employees and volunteers providing accompaniment should be familiar with and offer information about crime victims' rights to the survivor. Predicting the needs of the survivor and highlighting specific rights can be particularly helpful. For example, a pseudonym</p>

<p>Hospital a minimum of 45 minutes must be spent with the survivor.</p>	<p>form may be helpful for survivors who have strong concerns about their privacy and lease termination may be important to a survivor assaulted in their apartment.</p> <p>Because Accompaniments must last at least 45 minutes, SAPs should be prepared to document the length of Accompaniments. A shorter amount of time with a victim might be considered Crisis Intervention or Advocacy.</p>
<p>Accompaniment to Hospitals, Law Enforcement Offices, Prosecutors' Offices and Courts must be provided by the SAP employees/volunteers.</p>	<p>SAPs may not contract out or otherwise provide Accompaniment through a third party.</p>
<p>The SAP must provide hospital Accompaniment services for survivors of sexual violence for a sexual assault medical forensic exam 24/hourss day, 7 days/week.</p>	<p>To document the 24 hours a day/7 days a week availability of hospital Accompaniment, consider maintaining copies of the employee/volunteer schedule for responding to requests for Accompaniment to the hospital.</p>
<p>SAPs must ensure employees/volunteers provide Accompaniment subject to confidential communication requirements in the Texas Government Code, Chapter 420, Subchapter D.</p>	<p>Texas law is specific regarding the confidential nature of communications when providing sexual assault services. SAPs should be familiar with the Confidential Communications statutory requirements which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibitions against the sharing of any information about a client or services provided to a client • Narrow and specific exceptions to confidentiality • Specific requirements for a client to waive confidentiality <p>Note: A SAP that receives VAWA or VOCA funds may have additional specific confidentiality requirements. See page 23 of this document for more information, and refer to guidelines in your grant award documents.</p>

<p>SAP employees/volunteers must provide Accompaniment services until they are no longer needed by the survivor.</p>	<p>Accompaniment is provided in order to escort a survivor through the entirety of a medical or legal meeting, examination or hearing. Simply meeting a survivor at a hospital, law enforcement office, prosecutor’s office or court and providing written materials is not sufficient. The employee/volunteer providing Accompaniment should stay with the survivor until the completion of the meeting, examination or hearing. Before leaving the employee/volunteer should check in with the survivor to ensure the survivor does not need any additional services at that time and has the number for the 24 Hour Crisis Hotline.</p>
<p>The SAP must dispatch an employee/volunteer to provide Accompaniment to a hospital within 15 minutes of receiving a request.</p>	<p>The 15 minutes is meant to describe the amount of time between the request for hospital Accompaniment and when a SAP employee/volunteer is on their way to the Accompaniment.</p> <p>Because of factors which are widely disparate across the state (e.g., distance to hospital, traffic) which may affect the amount of time it takes for the SAP employee/volunteer to arrive at the hospital, this criterion does not define the length of time it takes the employee/volunteer to arrive at the hospital after receiving a request for Accompaniment.</p>
<p>The SAP must have a system in a place to accommodate multiple or overlapping requests for Accompaniment to a hospital.</p>	<p>SAPs should be prepared for multiple or overlapping requests for Accompaniment to a hospital. SAPs should include back-up coverage by another trained SAP employee/volunteer in anticipation of multiple or overlapping requests for Accompaniment.</p>
<p>SAPs shall initiate, lead or be a key participant in a sexual assault response team. A sexual assault response team includes, at a minimum, the following core members who are first responders as identified in the Office for Victims Crime</p>	<p>In order to improve the system response to survivors of sexual assault, SAPs should lead or be a key participant in a sexual assault response team. The sexual assault response team is a means to communicate and coordinate with key professionals in a community who are responding to survivors of sexual assault. By coordinating the responses of these various professionals, the survivor will experience a smoother and more streamlined response.</p> <p>The Office for Victims of Crime, SART Toolkit is available here:</p>

<p>SART Toolkit: community-based advocates, law enforcement, and forensic medical examiners including sexual assault nurse examiners.</p>	<p>http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/sartkit/</p> <p>Call TAASA for information or technical assistance regarding SART development or coordination.</p>
<p>SAP employees/volunteers providing Accompaniment must complete training that meets the OAG’s Sexual Assault Training Program Certification Requirements contained in the OAG’s Sexual Assault Training Program Certification Guide.</p>	<p>While this standard does not require certification, it requires a SAP to provide training that would meet all of the certification requirements. Some of those training requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sexual assault program employee/volunteer must complete the training requirements within 6 months of the employee/volunteer providing any of the minimum services. • The training must cover all of the training topics as listed in the SATP Certification Guide. • The training must be a minimum of 40 hours in length, with at least 30 of those hours provided in the classroom setting. <p>OAG SATP Certification guidelines can be found here: https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/victims/sapcs.shtml</p> <p>Call TAASA for information or technical assistance regarding OAG Sexual Assault Training Program Certification.</p> <p>Note: This standard does NOT require the SAP to operate an OAG certified Sexual Assault Training Program (SATP). However, if the SAP’s Sexual Assault Training Program is not certified than Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 56.045, will not be applicable. TCCP, Art 56.045 requires that prior to a medical forensic examination, the medical professional conducting the examination shall offer the victim the opportunity to have an advocate who has completed an OAG certified SATP present with the person during the examination. Therefore, if no advocates in the community have completed an OAG certified SATP, the medical professional is not required to offer one to the survivor.</p>
<p>SAP employees/volunteers providing Accompaniment</p>	<p>Experience providing direct services to survivors ensures that supervisors are well versed in the unique needs of sexual assault</p>

<p>must be supervised by a SAP staff member with at least one year experience providing direct services to survivors of sexual violence.</p>	<p>survivors and can provide guidance to employees and volunteers with difficult situations.</p> <p>Experience providing direct services includes answering hotline calls, providing accompaniment, advocacy or crisis intervention, but can also include other direct services including, but not limited to, counseling, legal representation, and medical assistance.</p>
<p>The SAP must regularly evaluate Accompaniment services and, as needed, make adjustments based on the findings.</p>	<p>Evaluation of Accompaniment may occur in a number of ways. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission for follow-up phone calls to survivors to assist/support the survivor and document their assessment of the value/results of the Accompaniment. • Observation by supervisor of employees/volunteers providing Accompaniment. • Written evaluation from survivors who received Accompaniment services. • Surveys of employees/volunteers who provide Accompaniment regarding continuing education needs and suggestions for improving Accompaniment services.

- TYPICAL ACTIVITIES: Accompaniment**
- Attend exams, meetings, interviews and proceedings at hospitals, law enforcement offices, prosecutors' offices and courts with the survivor.
 - Provide preparation for, and information about, what to expect of the examination, interview, meeting or proceeding.
 - Explain and clarify options to the survivor.
 - Assist with immediate and basic needs such as transportation and clothing.
 - Provide referrals as needed.
 - Offer empathic, non-judgmental support and guidance, regardless of the choices a survivor makes.
 - Ensure that the survivor receives empathetic, non-judgmental treatment and advocate for the rights, needs and wishes of the survivor (see Advocacy Standard).
 - Offer crisis intervention (see Crisis Intervention Standard).
 - Provide information about Crime Victims' Compensation application and benefits.
 - With victim consent, follow-up with victim according to agency policy and procedures.

Advocacy

Criteria	Tips & Strategies
<p>Sexual Assault Programs (SAPs) must provide Advocacy to survivors of sexual violence.</p>	<p>Sexual Assault Programs (SAPs) must provide Advocacy to survivors of sexual violence. In order to verify that Advocacy is provided, SAPs should document the number of Advocacy services provided to survivors of sexual violence.</p> <p>Chapter 420 of the Government Code defines a Sexual Assault Program as an entity that, among other things, provides the minimum services to adult survivors of stranger and non-stranger sexual assault. Sexual Assault Programs should ensure they are conducting sufficient outreach to ensure Advocacy is provided to adult survivors of stranger and non-stranger sexual assault.</p>
<p>Advocacy means providing assistance on behalf of a survivor of sexual violence with third parties (e.g. schools, employers, law enforcement agencies, housing authorities, healthcare professionals, prosecutor’s offices, CVC).</p>	<p>Advocacy requires several steps which include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Checking in with the survivor to determine their needs 2. Informing the survivor of options and opportunities 3. With the survivor’s consent, acting on their behalf with third parties
<p>Advocacy must be provided by SAP employees/volunteers.</p>	<p>SAPs may not contract out or otherwise provide Advocacy through a third party.</p>
<p>The SAP must provide Advocacy 24 hours/day, 7 days/week via the 24 Hour Crisis Hotline and via Accompaniment to Hospitals, Law Enforcement Offices, Prosecutor’s Offices and Courts.</p>	<p>Advocacy is commonly provided in conjunction with other minimum services, particularly the 24 Hour Crisis Hotline and Accompaniment to Hospitals, Law Enforcement Offices, Prosecutors’ Offices and Courts. In this way, Advocacy is available 24 hrs/day, 7 days/week.</p>

<p>The SAP must provide Advocacy on a walk-in basis during the SAP's regular hours of operation.</p>	<p>Generally, Advocacy is provided as needed, which includes in-person Advocacy at the office and without an appointment during regular hours of operation. SAPs must be available to provide Advocacy on a walk-in basis during regular hours of operation. If the agency does not publicize their address, a survivor should be able to call the SAP and be informed of the address and business hours so they might seek in-person Advocacy.</p>
<p>SAP employees/volunteers must orient survivors of sexual violence to their constitutional and statutory rights and assist survivors in securing those rights.</p>	<p>While this standard does not require certification, it requires a SAP to provide training that would meet all of the certification requirements. Some of those training requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sexual assault program employee/volunteer must complete the training requirements within 6 months of the employee/volunteer providing any of the minimum services. • The training must cover all of the training topics as listed in the SATP Certification Guide. • The training must be a minimum of 40 hours in length, with at least 30 of those hours provided in the classroom setting. <p>OAG SATP Certification guidelines can be found here: https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/victims/sapcs.shtml</p> <p>Call TAASA for assistance in fulfilling the certification requirements or to apply for certification through the OAG.</p>
<p>SAPs must ensure employees/volunteers provide Advocacy subject to confidential communication requirements in the Texas Government Code, Chapter 420, Subchapter D.</p>	<p>Texas law is specific regarding the confidential nature of communications when providing sexual assault services. SAPs should be familiar with the Confidential Communications statutory requirements which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibitions against the sharing of any information about a client or services provided to a client • Narrow and specific exceptions to confidentiality • Specific requirements for a client to waive confidentiality <p>Note: A SAP that receives VAWA or VOCA funds may have additional specific confidentiality requirements. See page 23 of this document for more information, and refer to guidelines in your grant award documents.</p>
<p>SAPs shall initiate, lead or</p>	<p>In order to improve the system response to survivors of sexual</p>

<p>be a key participant in a sexual assault response team. A sexual assault response team includes at a minimum the following core members who are first responders as identified in the Office for Victims Crime SART Toolkit: community-based advocates, law enforcement, and forensic medical examiners including sexual assault nurse examiners.</p>	<p>assault, SAPs should lead or be a key participant in a sexual assault response team. The sexual assault response team is a means to communicate and coordinate with key professionals in a community who are responding to survivors of sexual assault. By coordinating the responses of these various professionals, the survivor will experience a smoother and more streamlined response.</p> <p>The Office for Victims of Crime, SART Toolkit is available here: http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/sartkit/</p> <p>Call TAASA for information or technical assistance regarding SART development or coordination.</p>
<p>SAP employees/volunteers providing Advocacy must complete training that meets the OAG’s Sexual Assault Training Program Certification Requirements contained in the OAG’s Sexual Assault Training Program Certification Guide.</p>	<p>While this standard does not require certification, it requires a SAP to provide training that would meet all of the certification requirements. Some of those training requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sexual assault program employee/volunteer must complete the training requirements within 6 months of the employee/volunteer providing any of the minimum services. • The training must cover all of the training topics as listed in the SATP Certification Guide. • The training must be a minimum of 40 hours in length, with at least 30 of those hours provided in the classroom setting. <p>OAG SATP Certification guidelines can be found here: https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/victims/sapcs.shtml</p> <p>Call TAASA for information or technical assistance regarding OAG Sexual Assault Training Program Certification.</p>
<p>SAP employees/volunteers providing Advocacy must be supervised by a SAP staff member with at least one year experience providing direct services to survivors of sexual violence.</p>	<p>Experience providing direct services to survivors ensures that supervisors are well versed in the unique needs of sexual assault survivors and can provide guidance to employees and volunteers with difficult situations.</p> <p>Experience providing direct services includes answering hotline calls, providing accompaniment, advocacy or crisis intervention, but can also include other direct services including, but not limited to, counseling, legal representation, and medical</p>

	assistance.
<p>The SAP must regularly evaluate Advocacy services and, as needed, make adjustments based on the findings.</p>	<p>Evaluation of Advocacy may occur in a number of ways. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission for follow-up phone calls to survivors to assist/support the survivor and document their assessment of the value/results of Advocacy • Observation by supervisor of employees/volunteers providing Advocacy • Written evaluation from survivors who received Advocacy • Surveys of employees/volunteers who provide Advocacy regarding continuing education needs and suggestions for improving Advocacy services

TYPICAL ACTIVITIES: Advocacy

- Attend exams, meetings, interviews and proceedings at hospitals, law enforcement offices, prosecutors’ offices and courts with the victim.
- Provide preparation for, and information about, what to expect of the examination, interview, meeting or proceeding.
- Explain and clarify options to victim
- Assist with immediate and basic needs such as transportation and clothing.
- Provide referrals as needed.
- Offer empathic, non-judgmental support and guidance, regardless of the choices a survivor makes.
- Offer crisis intervention (see Crisis Intervention Standard).
- Provide information about Crime Victims’ Compensation application and benefits.
- With the survivor’s consent, follow-up with the survivor according to agency policy and procedures.

Public Education

Criteria	Tips & Strategies
<p>The Sexual Assault Program (SAP) must provide Public Education to increase knowledge of the dynamics of sexual violence, its causes and consequences, and of available sexual assault program services.</p>	<p>Sexual Assault Programs (SAPs) must provide Public Education. In order to verify that Public Education is provided, SAPs should document the number of Public Education services offered.</p> <p>The goal of Public Education is three fold:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To increase the knowledge of the dynamics of sexual violence 2. To increase the knowledge of the causes and consequences of sexual violence 3. To increase the knowledge of available sexual assault program services. <p>Programs should consider how to measure the increase in knowledge in each of these areas. Measurement methods could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-/post- tests • Evaluations asking what audience members learned or how valuable the education was to them. • Formal or informal polling of audience members <p>Chapter 420 of the Government Code defines a Sexual Assault Program as an entity that, among other things, provides the minimum services to adult survivors of stranger and non-stranger sexual assault. Sexual Assault Programs should ensure they are providing Public Education to adult survivors of stranger and non-stranger sexual assault.</p>
<p>Public Education means workshops, speaking engagements, and distribution of printed materials.</p>	<p>Workshops, speaking engagements and distribution of printed materials are the three required forms of public education. Workshops could be offered to the general public or to professionals working in the field. Speaking engagements include press conferences, keynote addresses or other speeches. Printed materials could include, but are not limited to, agency brochures, fact sheets or booklets.</p>
<p>SAP employees/volunteers must provide Crisis</p>	<p>It is not uncommon for a survivor of sexual assault to be triggered during a workshop, speaking engagement or while</p>

<p>Intervention, information and referral to individuals making a sexual assault related outcry at Public Education events.</p>	<p>reading printed material regarding sexual assault. Employees/volunteers providing Public Education should be prepared and equipped to provide Crisis Intervention, if needed, and information and referrals to individuals making an outcry related to sexual violence.</p>
<p>SAP Public Education must use accurate information and statistics with citations.</p>	<p>To ensure credibility and the accurateness of information all statistics utilized in Public Education efforts should include citations. Generally, citations should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the most original source possible • Use the most up to date and reliable source possible <p>Common sources of sexual assault statistics include the Centers for Disease Control, World Health Organization, US Department of Justice, and the Texas Department of Public Safety. Government and University sources are typically acceptable.</p> <p>Avoid citing websites, including Wikipedia, popular books or magazines, dictionaries, radio or TV broadcasts.</p>
<p>SAP Public Education must include efforts to identify survivors of sexual violence that might not otherwise be reached (i.e. underserved or marginalized populations) and refer them to services.</p>	<p>Sexual Assault Programs must make a concerted effort to identify communities that might not be reached through typical Public Education. Underserved or marginalized populations in your community might include individuals who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speak languages other than English • are hearing or visually impaired • identify as male • live in rural areas • identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender • have mental or physical disabilities or challenges • lack financial resources • are elderly or adolescent <p>SAPs should identify which underserved or marginalized populations exist in their communities and specifically target them for outreach.</p>
<p>Public Education must be culturally and developmentally appropriate to the audience.</p>	<p>To ensure that the SAPs Public Education is culturally and developmentally appropriate to the audience, consider the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly define the intended audience for the Public Education activity. • Consider the age, values, culture, identities, and language

	<p>of the intended audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with, or better yet include, members of the intended audience during development of the Public Education activity/materials.
<p>Public Education must be intentionally inclusive of underserved and marginalized populations.</p>	<p>Public Education should be provided in a way that does not exclude underserved or marginalized populations. Workshops, speaking engagements and written materials should be free from gender and racial bias, and other stereotypes that result in survivors from underserved or marginalized populations feeling excluded. In addition, Public Education should include, to the extent possible, experiences of underserved and marginalized communities to ensure the information is relevant to a diverse population. SAPs might consider specifically sharing their non-discrimination policy and desire to be welcoming to all people.</p>
<p>SAP employees/volunteers providing Public Education must complete training that meets the OAG’s Sexual Assault Training Program Certification Requirements contained in the OAG’s Sexual Assault Training Program Certification Guide.</p>	<p>While this standard does not require certification, it requires a SAP to provide training that would meet all of the certification requirements. Some of those training requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sexual assault program employee/volunteer must complete the training requirements within 6 months of the employee/volunteer providing any of the minimum services. • The training must cover all of the training topics as listed in the SATP Certification Guide. • The training must be a minimum of 40 hours in length, with at least 30 of those hours provided in the classroom setting. <p>OAG SATP Certification guidelines can be found here: https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/victims/sapcs.shtml</p> <p>Call TAASA for information or technical assistance regarding OAG Sexual Assault Training Program Certification.</p>
<p>SAP employees/volunteers providing Public Education must be supervised by a SAP staff member with at least one year experience providing direct services to survivors of sexual violence or providing Public</p>	<p>This supervision criterion is slightly different from the supervision criterion for the other Minimum Services. This criterion requires supervisors of employees/volunteer providing Public Education to have at least one year experience providing direct services to survivors of sexual violence OR providing Public Education. Direct service experience is not a necessary qualification for individuals supervising employees/volunteers that provide Public Education.</p>

Education.	
The SAP must regularly evaluate Public Education and, as needed, make adjustments based on the findings.	<p>Evaluation of Public Education may occur in a number of ways. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation by supervisor of employees/volunteers providing Public Education • Written evaluation from individuals who received Public Education. • Surveys of employees/volunteers who provide Public Education regarding continuing education needs and suggestions for improving Public Education.
<p>TYPICAL ACTIVITIES: Public Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Speaking engagements • Distribute information through brochures, handouts or fact sheets • Participation in community events • Media campaign • Website • Social media 	

GUIDING PHILOSOPHY

What is a sexual assault program? What makes sexual assault work different? There are over 80 rape crisis centers in Texas that have each developed independently, yet they are bound by a common set of principles. These principles, which provide the framework in which sexual assault services are provided, are outlined here.

Most generally, Sexual Assault Programs (SAPs) are dedicated to the principle of victim-centered services which means the expressed needs of sexual assault survivors guide the program's service delivery. To support and facilitate healing, sexual assault programs provide victim-centered, culturally responsive services for adults and children of all diverse populations who are survivors of sexual violence. Sexual assault survivors deserve nonjudgmental, unbiased support as they make the decisions they need to regain control of their lives.

The survivors' needs and rights are the first priority of the SAP and guide the planning and decision-making of the program and staff. Survivors are informed of the specific services offered by the SAP and given choices about which services they receive. The SAP ensures staff and volunteers have the training and supervision required to provide each service. The program respects that the survivor's choices may be affected by the survivor's background, experiences and individual circumstances, and works with the survivor to address goals as identified by the survivor.

No one asks or deserves to be sexually assaulted. Sexual assault programs advocate for change within the segments of our society that continue to see sexual violence as something that victims somehow cause or bring on themselves. Sexual assault programs seek to place responsibility for violence squarely on the shoulders of perpetrators. In addition, sexual assault programs seek to illuminate the often unspoken societal rules that keep survivors silent and permit perpetrators to continue their acts of violence unfettered.

Sexual assault programs, employees and volunteers recognize and affirm that all experiences of sexual victimization are intrusive and harmful, often having short-term and/or long-term effects on survivors and their significant others. While suffering great harm, most victims can heal from sexual assault with access to appropriate support, education and resources.

Services provided by sexual assault programs are based in the following beliefs:

Services are victim-centered. The survivor of sexual violence leads the recovery process. Sexual Assault Program (SAP) employees and volunteers follow the survivor's lead as the survivor defines the issues to be addressed. The SAP supports the empowerment of the survivor by sharing information, describing all available options, and discussing possible outcomes of each. The SAP ensures the

survivor's right to make their choices and decisions about those options and the recovery process. The survivor sets the goals for the recovery process and the survivor and SAP employees/volunteers work together to achieve those goals. SAP employees/volunteers respect the decisions and choices of survivors and do not impose personal biases or preferences on the survivor. This may be different from the traditional medical model, in which the provider may be considered the expert who will direct, treat and/or cure the victim.

Services to family, friends and significant others of a survivor are also victim-centered. While services to a survivor's family, friends and significant others are centered around the needs of those individuals, they are not counter to the interests or needs of the survivor. With child victims, services are provided in the interest of the child, as expressed by the child and assessed by the sexual assault program staff.

Sexual assault programs seek to empower survivors. SAP employees and volunteers provide information, tools, resources, and opportunities to increase the capacity of survivors to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Through the empowerment-model, clients are not viewed as victims who are tarnished or broken but as survivors. Services focus on promoting the self-worth of survivors and resilience in the face of adversity.

Sexual assault programs promote the safety of survivors. Feelings of anxiety and fear will reduce the survivor's ability to recover from the assault. Both the physical and emotional safety of a survivor must be prioritized. The SAP should create an environment in which survivors feel physically and emotionally safe in order to reduce the trauma experienced by survivors and facilitate healing.

Sexual assault programs provide services without judgment. SAP employees and volunteers refrain from behaviors that communicate victim-blame or doubt regarding the survivor's account of the crime, condemnation for past behavior, or other judgmental, anti-victim sentiments.

Sexual assault programs strive for cultural humility. Cultural humility is the process by which a SAP recognizes, affirms, values and protects the dignity of diverse communities, families and individuals. This includes, but is not limited to, people of any age, marital status, gender identity or expression, education, sexual identity and orientation, culture, racial and ethnic background, religious and spiritual belief, socio-economic status, disability, residency, citizenship or immigration status, spoken language or means of communication, and HIV status. SAP employees and volunteers recognize that the same services may not be appropriate for each survivor and are flexible in their service provision in order to be responsive to the life experiences and presenting needs of each individual.

When a SAP lacks specific skill, knowledge or experience with a particular population, the premise of non-judgment will guide services. The focus will be on listening to the survivor, discerning their stated needs and providing the closest possible approximation of appropriate services, and making referrals, especially when there are more appropriate services available.

Sexual assault programs utilize a strength based approach. SAP employees and volunteers recognize and identify the creative and resourceful ways survivors cope and respect those as strategies for survival. Services effectively recognize and utilize the survivor's support system and respect the role

of extended family, informal networks, non-traditional healing, non-normative, self-help groups and other forms of support as appropriate and desired by the survivor. The employee or volunteer works with the survivor to integrate those strategies into a plan to achieve the survivor's goals.

Sexual assault program services are confidential. A sexual violence program has policies and procedures to ensure that the confidentiality of any information that would identify individuals seeking or receiving services is protected. The client's voluntary informed consent is obtained prior to sharing any information or records except in the case of mandated reporting.

Before releasing any information about the client, the client provides written authorization. The authorization form specifically states:

- a. The purpose of the release of information;
- b. The specific information that the client agrees can be released;
- c. The person or entity to whom the information is to be released;
- d. The date on which the form was signed;
- e. Clear time limits for the duration of the release of information which includes the date at which the consent for release of information terminates; and
- f. Language that clearly indicates that the consent for release of information may be revoked at any time.

A sexual violence program that receives certain state and/or federal grants or contracts that have specific confidentiality requirements should have policies and procedures to ensure compliance with those requirements. Federal funding sources with specific sexual assault related confidentiality requirements include:

- The Violence Against Women Act of 2005 grant requirements codified in 42 U.S.C. §§11383 and 13925(b)(2). These federal grant requirements include, but are not limited to, STOP grants administered by the Criminal Justice Division of the Texas Governor's Office, and
- The Victims of Crime Act grant requirements codified in 42 U.S.C. §10604(d). These federal grant requirements include, but are not limited to, VOCA grants administered by the Criminal Justice Division of the Texas Governor's Office.

Sexual assault programs are independent of any other organization that would compromise the confidential communications and relationship between a survivor and volunteer or staff. In addition, the sexual assault program is independent of any other organization that does not have as its top priority the needs and desires of a survivor or is unable to honor a survivor's choices. Advocacy programs within law enforcement or prosecutors' offices, in particular, cannot ensure confidentiality between employees/volunteers and survivors or ensure the survivor's needs, desires, and choices are the first priority.

Sexual assault program staff and volunteers are well trained, supported and supervised.

Supporting survivors of sexual violence - people who are experiencing trauma and may still be extremely vulnerable – is a difficult job. Properly trained employees and volunteers are better able to perform this

job and assist survivors. Strong supervision ensures employees and volunteers feel supported in their work and can easily receive guidance with difficult situations.

In particular, new employees and volunteers providing sexual assault services to survivors should have access to a supervisor or experienced provider who is available within a reasonable time period, either by phone or in person, for support they may need after any intervention, accompaniment or other interaction with a survivor.

Sexual assault programs are social justice organizations. Through an understanding that all sexual violence is rooted in oppression and the power imbalance inherent within oppression, sexual assault programs work to stop sexual violence by alleviating inequality and ending oppression. Sexual assault programs place the responsibility for the assault on the perpetrator and a culture accepting and dismissive of that behavior and the behaviors that lead to it. Sexual assault programs appreciate that societal change toward ending social injustice is necessary to stop sexual violence.

In every interaction with a survivor, employees and volunteers will minimize, to the extent possible, any power imbalance between themselves and the survivor. SAPs recognize that sexual assault is a consequence of social inequality and that sexual assault derives from sexism, which is both a system of advantage and oppression interwoven with all other similar forms of oppression (racism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, etc.). SAP employees and volunteers are allies against the structures of privilege and oppression which support sexual assault and take action to dismantle the structured system of cultural oppression and eliminate all forms of injustice.

Sexual assault programs are accessible. Accommodations are made for survivors according to each survivor's self-identified needs. In addition, services and materials should be available in the preferred language of the survivor.

Sexual assault program services are available to survivors across the lifespan. Services are available for survivors of sexual violence regardless of age. Survivors who are children, adolescents, young adults, adults, and later-in-life adults are all welcome at sexual assault programs and will find services appropriate to their age.

SAPs are responsive to all stages of the healing journey, regardless of when the assault and disclosure take place. After an assault, survivors may seek assistance immediately or they may wait months, years or decades. Sexual assault programs place no requirements on survivors to seek services within a particular time frame. When a survivor seeks services is decided by the survivor. Sexual assault programs are ready and able to provide assistance regardless of when the assault occurred and when the survivor decides to seek assistance.

Sexual assault programs value the role of peer support and the use of paraprofessionals. Peer counseling by non-licensed, but trained, employees or volunteers is a respected method for supporting survivors in their recovery journey. Many of the responses to being raped are normal responses to a traumatic event, not evidence of a need for psychotherapy by a licensed counselor. Peer counselors are adept at assisting survivors through these normal responses to trauma.

Sexual assault programs promote victim rights. Crime victims have specific rights afforded by the Texas Constitution (Article 1, Section 30) and the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure (Articles 56.02 and 56.021). Sexual assault programs inform survivors of these rights and provide assistance, if desired, in obtaining any and all these rights. Crime victims' rights include, but are not limited to the right to be treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity and privacy throughout the criminal justice process, the right to be reasonably protected from the accused throughout the criminal justice process and the right to be informed, present and heard throughout the criminal justice system.

Sexual assault program services are provided regardless of ability to pay. Financial status is not a factor in determining eligibility for services. A survivor or client will not be denied services because of the inability or decision not to pay. A survivor or client who chooses not to pay will not be denied services.

Sexual assault programs provide multifaceted/comprehensive services. Sexual assault programs go beyond the most immediate, pressing needs to support more in-depth healing and empowerment.

Sexual assault programs seek to form a seamless web of multidisciplinary services. Sexual assault programs seek to increase coordination and networking of agencies, organizations, and groups that impact survivors in order to develop an integrated community system of victim assistance.

* The terms "survivor" and "victim" are sometimes used interchangeably. This document uses the term "survivor" because it offers an image of a person who has been through a traumatic event, but who will, with time, overcome adversity and heal. Sometimes, this document uses the term "victim," particularly when discussing the criminal justice system or services offered in the crisis time immediately following the assault. "Victim" is also used when talking about the people who advocate for and assist crime survivors (e.g. "victim advocate," "victims' rights," "crime victim assistance," etc.).

For additional information on sexual assault programs, training and technical assistance or with any other questions, please contact the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault.

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