Project 360
*A Full-circle Approach with Youth who are Homeless and Victims of Sexual Violence*

Project 360 addresses the intersection of youth homelessness and sexual violence. Sexual assault is widespread among homeless youth; King County homeless youth agencies report that 20-40% of the youth they serve have disclosed sexual abuse, assault or physical violence. Many youth leave their homes due to sexual abuse. On the streets, they find that victimization is a way of life, often being forced to exchange sex for a place stay, food, or other necessities. Approximately 20% of youth who are homeless have symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder related to this violence. Project 360 will have some emphasis on youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ), as these youth comprise up to 40% of the homeless youth population.

King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC) and its partners are implementing Project 360 with federal funds from a highly competitive grant program of the Office of Violence Against Women/Department of Justice. The intention of this grant program is to develop a comprehensive, youth centered intervention project that addresses a continuum of strategies to address sexual assault among youth. Project 360 will focus on youth who are homeless.

Partners on Project 360 include:
- YouthCare (a homeless youth agency in Seattle)
- Friends of Youth (a homeless youth agency in East King County)
- Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse
- Redmond Police Department
- Interagency Academy/Seattle School District
- Riverview Learning Center/Riverview School District (East King County)

Unique to Project 360 is a trauma-informed approach that runs through all project components, including a promising practice approach to providing trauma-specific therapy, piloted by KCSARC and YouthCare. Elements of Project 360 will include: street outreach/identification of youth; Early Intervention & Response Teams in two alternative high schools; staff training at partner agencies to improve identification of and referral of youth sexual assault victims; case management; legal advocacy; trauma-specific therapy; safety planning for supportive adults in youth’s lives; sexual assault prevention and materials developed specifically for the target population; two Youth Advisors groups to guide the project in each King County region; and consultation for agencies around serving LGBTQ youth who are homeless and victims of sexual assault. Partners will provide direct services onsite at the drop-in centers of YouthCare and Friends of Youth in order to make services as accessible as possible.

The first six months of Project 360 will include an intensive planning period to identify gaps and assess needs to ensure that project implementation is as comprehensive as possible. Planning will include a gap assessment and analysis; consultation around LGBTQ issues; review of protocols used by various systems (school, police, human services) to identify and refer youth who are victims of sexual assault to services; and youth focus groups. These efforts will culminate in a strategic plan to guide the implementation of Project 360.
As a comprehensive program, Project 360 addresses the following goals:

**Prevention Goal:** Increase youth and caregivers’ understanding of what constitutes sexual assault and of ways to increase safety. The project will:
- Form a Youth Advisors Group at YouthCare and Friends of Youth in order to elicit feedback and guidance over the entire project period. Approximately 5-8 youth at each agency will participate each month.
- Adapt and develop sexual assault prevention tools, based on youth feedback.
- Implement a staff peer-training program at each homeless youth agency to train staff around safety planning and sexual assault prevention.
- Deliver prevention curricula to 200 youth annually through peer-trained staff; staff will learn to use customized sexual assault prevention tools with youth in groups or individually at YouthCare and Friends of Youths.
- Provide training for at least 30 parents and other supportive adults annually around safety planning for youth who have been sexually assaulted.

**Response Goal:** Increase service providers’ understanding of sexual assault and its impact on homeless youth so that they can connect youth to appropriate services. The project will:
- Develop and implement Early Intervention and Response Teams at the two partner alternative high schools. Teams will include school personnel, KCSARC, and a homeless youth agency representative (as well as other partners, such as law enforcement, explored during the planning period). Development of the teams will include training for school personnel and other team members on recognizing signs of sexual assault and how to connect youth to services.
- Work with systems to adjust response/referral protocols based on review recommendations of the planning period.
- Deliver 3 trainings per year (at least 15 staff each) for staff at YouthCare and Friends of Youth in order to address gaps in knowledge and agency response related to the impact of sexual assault and trauma on youth.

**Intervention Goal:** Increase access to effective sexual assault specific services (e.g., crisis response, case management, and advocacy) for homeless youth.
- Provide onsite legal advocacy to at least 50 youth annually at YouthCare and Friends of Youth.
- Provide onsite case management as part of the treatment model described in the treatment goal to at least 100 youth annually.

**Treatment Goal:** Expand and evaluate The Phoenix Project, a model program of trauma-specific therapy combined with case management, for youth with symptoms of trauma related to sexual assault.
- Provide onsite therapy at YouthCare and Friends of Youth to at least 80 youth annually. Youth will receive gift cards as incentives to participate in and complete therapy. Each youth will be enrolled in onsite case management (see above).