Innovative practices and lessons learned:
Creating a community legal partnership for
teen and youth survivors of sexual assault.

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YWCA GLA strives to meet community needs in Greater Los Angeles through our Empowerment Centers located throughout the city. Each location houses various programs including:

- Youth Programs
- Sexual Assault Crisis Services
- Child Development
- Senior Engagement
Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice (LACLJ)

Our mission is to provide direct representation, advocacy and education to low-income families facing the greatest barriers to justice.

Priority Areas:
- Access to Justice
- Domestic Violence
- Immigration
- Teen LA

Located in East Los Angeles;
Has served low-income residents of Los Angeles for over 40 years.

Sexual Assault Program

Services are provided for those 12 years of age and up at three different program locations: Compton, South Los Angeles, and South Bay/Long Beach.

Program services are provided by student interns and volunteers through a 40-hour training program certified by the State of California with particular emphasis on cultural diversity and sensitivity.

- Services include*:
- Accompaniment: 24-hour advocate support at hospitals, law enforcement agencies, and courts
- Community Education: workshops and community events which increase awareness of sexual violence
- Counseling: individual counseling, group counseling, and healing art services
- Crisis Intervention: community resources and 24-hour crisis hotline 1-877-Y HELPS U (1-877-943-5778)
- Prevention Education: workshops and events to decrease the occurrence of sexual violence
- Self Defense: a women’s empowerment model based on awareness, assertiveness, and physical techniques
- Clothesline Project: participants create t-shirts that depict various forms of violence against women, then publicly display them to “air out the dirty laundry”
Where do civil legal services fit into this picture?

Who are the key players in a multi-disciplinary approach to intervention work?
The Criminal Justice System

Survivors of Sexual Assault and the Legal System

The American Legal structure consists of two main parallel justice systems: Criminal and Civil.

Survivors might interact with one system, both systems, or neither system. Survivors might interact with the systems one at a time, both at the same time, or never.
The Criminal Justice System

- The survivor is only a witness (not a party) but has certain rights as a crime victim.
- The prosecutor (on behalf of the government) decides whether to charge a crime.
- In court, the government brings the case against the defendant.

The Criminal Justice System

Investigates and prosecutes crimes.
Triggered by a report to law enforcement.
If the criminal defendant is found guilty...

...punishments might include jail or prison, probation, conduct orders, mandatory treatment (for drug/alcohol abuse or sex offenses), and/or fines.

The Criminal Justice System

Prosecution must prove that the defendant is guilty of the crime "beyond a reasonable doubt."
**The Civil Justice System**

- Survivor generally brings the case himself or herself against the perpetrator, school, employer, government, etc.
- Survivor (usually) has control over whether to bring the case or not.
- Survivor is a party to the law suit (Plaintiff/Defendant or Petitioner/Respondent).
- State and Federal laws sometimes create special rights for survivors of sexual assault.

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**The Civil Justice System**

Resolves private disputes between people.

Triggered by an individual retaining an attorney.
If the civil defendant is found liable...

...the court may grant the victim injunctive relief, order the defendant to compensate the victim for the harm done ($$$) or both.

The Civil Justice System

Plaintiff must prove their case by "the preponderance of the evidence," that is, more likely than not.
How can a civil attorney help a sexual assault survivor?

A civil attorney can provide concrete solutions to the everyday problems survivors face after the assault.

- Safety
- Immigration
- Housing
- Education
- Employment
- Family Law
- Financial Issues
- Privacy
- Criminal Justice Advocacy

Most survivors of sexual assault will never interact with the criminal justice system.

Sexual Assault is an under-reported crime.

- 60% of sexual assaults are never reported to law enforcement.
- Only 4% of all assaults will lead to a felony conviction.

Immigration

Safety
Education

Housing
Family Law

Employment
Privacy

Financial Issues
Civil Legal Services and Youth Survivors

Criminal Justice Advocacy
How do we provide legal services to young survivors?

- Client Centered and Teen Friendly
- Holistic
- Trauma Informed
Our Mission
The YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

Our Vision
As a YWCA, we advocate for justice and dignity for all people. For over a century, the YWCA Greater Los Angeles has provided housing and supportive services. YWCA GLA is pioneering a model of community centers and housing — co-created with diverse stakeholders — to transform lives, build self-reliance and, ultimately, strengthen communities.

Community Legal Partnership
Our Mission
The YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

Our Vision
As a YWCA, we advocate for justice and dignity for all people. For over a century, the YWCA Greater Los Angeles has provided housing and support services. YWCA LA is pursuing the model of permanency, safety, and reunification, we support adults with children who have been trafficked, prostituted, and/or initiated into sex work.

Our Mission
We fight for the rights of vulnerable families and advocate for a more just legal system.

Our Vision
Our vision is a strong community where families are safe, stable, and free from injustice.
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Questions?