

## Exploring Common Challenges: A Scenario Based Discussion

*The scenarios below are examples of challenges VALOR and JDI hear about regularly from PREA advocates. The goal of this exercise is to identify the challenge, develop a response, and to recognize and utilize the resources available. Ideally, this exercise is done in a group of 4 or more people. One person is reading the scenarios and questions, one person is taking notes, and the entire group is contributing to the discussion. Some answers may not apply to your agency or program, we encourage folks to adapt them to fit their needs.*

### Scenario 1: Forensic Exam

You are accompanying a survivor during a forensic exam. One of the officers agrees to wait in the hallway, while another takes their post a few feet away from the survivor. You provide a blanket to the survivor and begin to introduce yourself. You give your name, pronouns, and the name of your agency. The survivor greets you and says "Thanks for the blanket. My name is Jay, I use he/him pronouns." The officer snorts and says "He's already lying to you. This is the famous inmate Josh Marcus. You probably heard all about him in the news."

The officer agrees to allow you to have an uninterrupted conversation, and the forensic nurse begins the exam as you sit at Jay's shoulder. Jay tells you that two days ago he was forced to eat some food by fellow prisoners, which was spiked with a sedative. While drugged, he was assaulted multiple times by a fellow prisoner who had previously threatened him. Following the assault, the perpetrator forced him to shower. He does not feel safe giving the names of the people who assaulted him, but states that both are gang members. The forensic nurse interrupts to demand that Jay disclose the names of the perpetrators, saying that Jay "has to" tell her.

### CHALLENGES:

What is challenging about this experience for the survivor and the advocate? What biases or goals could be at play here for all parties involved, survivor, staff, and forensic examiner?

## RESPONSE:

What steps would you take to address this at the moment? What steps (if any) would you take at a later time?

## RESOURCES:

Who and what resources might you need to be involved to support you?

## Scenario 2: Institutional Advocacy

A survivor shares that no one has followed up with them or come to talk with them about the report they made, but when you call the PCM they share “we reached out to the inmate on xx date and then it was closed out.” Now, the advocate is confused about what actually happened.

Note: You may receive other responses like, “We already provided that update” or “I can’t share that with you. It’s on a need to know basis” with no other context.

## CHALLENGES:

What is challenging about this experience for you as an advocate? What biases could be at play here for all parties involved, advocates and correctional staff?

## RESPONSES

What steps would you take to approach this challenge in the moment and in the future?

## RESOURCES

Who and what resources might you need to be involved to support you?

## Scenario 3: Justice for Survivors

An advocate has been providing ongoing support via letter correspondence during the pandemic. After the sexual assault the

survivor's property, including TV and clothing was stolen by the person who assaulted them. They never received their property back and this was what they expressed needing the most help with. The survivor made a report to the facility and to the PREA ombudsperson. They waited for a response from the PREA Ombudsperson for 9 months. When they received a response, they learned that the outcome was determined to be unsubstantiated. The survivor was disappointed by the response and wants to sue CDCR for their untimely response and inability to get their property back. Unfortunately, the survivor also expressed disappointment with the advocate for "not doing enough" and asked, "Could you at least provide me with copies of the letters I sent you?" to help with the lawsuit.

#### CHALLENGES:

What is challenging about this experience for you as an advocate? What biases could be at play here for all parties involved, advocates and correctional staff?

#### RESPONSES

What steps would you take to approach this challenge in the moment and in the future?

#### RESOURCES

Who and what resources might you need to be involved to support you?