

The Alaska Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (AK-SAKI) Research Component

A Process Improvement Analysis of the Alaska Department of Public Safety's Sexual Assault Investigation, Prosecution, And Victim-Survivor Engagement And Support Processes

Final Report

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The Alaska Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (AK-SAKI) Research Component

A Process Improvement Analysis of the Alaska Department of Public Safety’s Sexual Assault Investigation, Prosecution, And Victim-Survivor Engagement And Support Processes

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

Between 2006 and 2016, approximately one-third of sexual assault kits (SAKs) collected by the Alaska State Troopers (AST) were not submitted to the laboratory for forensic testing. In light of the national problem of untested kits¹ and this local SAK submission gap, the Alaska legislature passed Senate Bill 55 in 2017 requiring testing of all previously unsubmitted SAKs, signaling a shift to a “test all” policy in the near future. Indeed, in 2019, the Alaska legislature passed House Bill 49 enacting Alaska Statute 44.41.065 which requires testing of all SAKs within one year of submission to the State Crime Lab.² It is within this context that the Alaska Department of Public Safety (DPS; the parent agency of AST) and their organizational partners (hereafter referred to as the Alaska Sexual Assault Kit Initiative or AK-SAKI working group) sought to understand and improve their policies and procedures related to sexual assault (SA) investigations, prosecutions, and victim-survivor engagement and support.³

¹ Campbell, R., Feeney, H., Fehler-Cabral, G., Shaw, J., & Horsford, S. (2017). The national problem of untested sexual assault kits (SAKs): Scope, causes, and future directions for research, policy and practice. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 18*(4) 363-276.

² There are some exceptions to this testing requirement. If the case is resolved before the SAK has been tested, the SAK does not have to be tested within one year. Additionally, a SAK is ineligible for testing if it is scientifically unviable; it does not meet eligibility requirements for inclusion in the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS; a national DNA database where forensic profiles of known sexual assault and other perpetrators are collected and available for use by law enforcement agencies for investigating sexual assault cases and identifying suspect-perpetrators); or it was collected from a person who reported their sexual assault anonymously. The full text of AS 44.41.065 can be found at <https://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#44.41.065>.

³ Cravez, P. (2018). Sexual assault kit initiative: Alaska making progress. *Alaska Justice Forum, 34*(4), 1-2. For more information on DPS sexual assault kit projects, visit <https://dps.alaska.gov/Comm/SAK/Home>.

A Note on Terminology

Throughout this report, those who have experienced an SA are referred to as *victim-survivors* to capture the often complex identity of these individuals. Exceptions to the use of *victim-survivor* are made when referring to *victim advocates* or *victim advocacy*, as the commonly used language for referring to these professionals and their work does not include the use of term *survivor*; when referring to *victim impact statements*, as again the commonly used language does not include the term *survivor*; when direct quoting interview participants (interview participants used a variety of different terms such as *patients*, *clients*, *victims*, *survivors*, *complaining witnesses* depending on their position and/or professional role in the criminal justice system); and when quoting definitions of justice and other language that was shared with both interview and survey participants that used just the term *victim*. Those who have been accused of committing an SA are referred to interchangeably as *suspect-perpetrators*, *suspects*, and *perpetrators*, depending on the context in which the term is being used, to acknowledge the balance of innocence until proven guilty in the eyes of the law with many victim-survivors' conviction and certainty in knowing they have been victimized by someone, identity known or not. Some tables use the terms *victim* and *suspect* only for space/brevity concerns.

Methodological Overview

The philosophy driving this research design was to start with questioning basic assumptions about justice. Before DPS can consider where and how to make changes to better achieve justice, they first need to know to what extent and in what ways they are already achieving justice. Before they could assess their current effectiveness in achieving justice, they must know which metrics count as “justice.” In the spirit of being victim-centered, conceptions of justice must come, at least in part, from the perspectives of sexual assault victim-survivors themselves. Therefore, this research project sought to answer the following three primary questions with the objective of generating policy and practice recommendations for DPS to improve their policies and procedures related to sexual assault investigations, prosecutions, and victim-survivor engagement and support:

1. What are key stakeholders' experiences with sexual assault investigations, prosecutions, and victim-survivor engagement and support, and how do those experiences compare to their perceptions of just outcomes?
2. How common are the experiences and just outcomes identified by key stakeholders?
3. What factors shape the likelihood of achieving those just outcomes?

Research question 1. What is Justice?

The first research question was answered by conducting 66 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the Alaska State Trooper sexual assault case process (40 system professionals and 26 victim-survivors who had reported to AST) and then qualitatively identifying key themes and concepts from the transcripts of these interviews. These interviews were conducted in 2019. The objectives were to understand the range of stakeholders' perceptions of policies, procedures, and practices; the range of stakeholders' perceptions of justice (including both processes and resolutions); potential intersections and conflicts between individual stakeholders' experiences and their own perceptions of justice; and potential intersections and conflicts across different stakeholders' perceptions of justice.

Research Question 2. Is Justice Done?

The second research question was answered using three data sources:

1. Quantitative data from a self-administered, online survey of 117 victim-survivors of adult SA in Alaska (who may or may not have reported to AST) collected in 2020;
2. A random sample of 995 case records selected from all adult SA and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) incidents reported to AST from 2012 through 2016; and
3. Excerpts from the 2019 qualitative interviews to give context to the survey and agency record data.

Although some variables needed to answer this research question were available through DPS and Department of Law (Law) agency records (e.g., what percent of cases make it through each stage of the criminal justice process), other variables that came out of the stakeholder interviews were not

available in those records (e.g., victim-survivors' harm being acknowledged by criminal justice system actors and being treated with belief). Therefore, a self-administered, online survey was implemented in 2020 to collect quantitative data from 117 victim-survivors of adult SA in Alaska on their experiences with SA and reporting (or not) and their perceptions and priorities of justice.⁴

The random sample of 995 incidents was selected from all adult SA and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) incidents reported to AST from 2012 through 2016 (N = 2741), and data on relevant case processing variables for those 995 incidents was provided by the Alaska Departments of Public Safety and Law in 2021. These records provide insight into traditional case processing outcomes such as the percentages of cases referred to Law and accepted for prosecution.

The qualitative interview participants also provided insight into whether they believe justice is done in SA cases reported to AST and potential factors they believed could shape whether justice is done.

Research Question 3. What Increases the Likelihood of Achieving Justice?

The third and final research question was answered by extracting reasons given by the interview participants as to which factors they believe shape justice, as well as by examining bivariate relationships between variables in the agency case records. The qualitative interview participants were also asked for their recommendations for improvement, and these recommendations are organized in this report into twenty different topic areas, although some recommendations fit into multiple topic areas.⁵

⁴ Although many of the 117 survey participants did not report to any law enforcement, and among those who did report many reported to law enforcement other than the Alaska State Troopers, their perspectives are valuable and can still inform on the justice needs and expectations of victim-survivors.

⁵ Survey participants were also asked for their recommendations but because of limited time and resources at that point in the study implementation, those recommendations were not coded and synthesized and are therefore not included in this report.

Key Findings

Research question 1. What is Justice?

In response to the question, “What does justice mean to you?” (regarding cases of sexual assault), the qualitative interview participants gave a variety of answers that were classified into 24 different definitions of justice. These definitions included “standard” criminal justice system functions such as incarceration, guilty verdicts, forensic testing of the sexual assault kit, monitoring perpetrators, arrest, due process, trial, quick resolution, restitution/compensation, and rehabilitation or treatment for perpetrators. These definitions also involved not-so-standard functions of the criminal justice system, but that are still tied to the functions of system professionals as the definitions centered on how others view and treat victim-survivors: belief, acknowledgement, compassionate treatment, professionals doing their best, and giving victim-survivors voice and choice. Further, some of the definitions of justice were broader than what the criminal justice system alone can offer- or could perhaps result without the criminal justice system altogether- such as healing, consequences for perpetrators, prevention of sexual assault, dialogue around sexual assault, public education, apology, and retribution.

To present these different definitions systematically, they are sorted by the priorities assigned to them by the participants in the victim-survivor survey. More specifically, they are presented in order of most often prioritized as within victim-survivors’ top three justice definitions (see Figure 1).

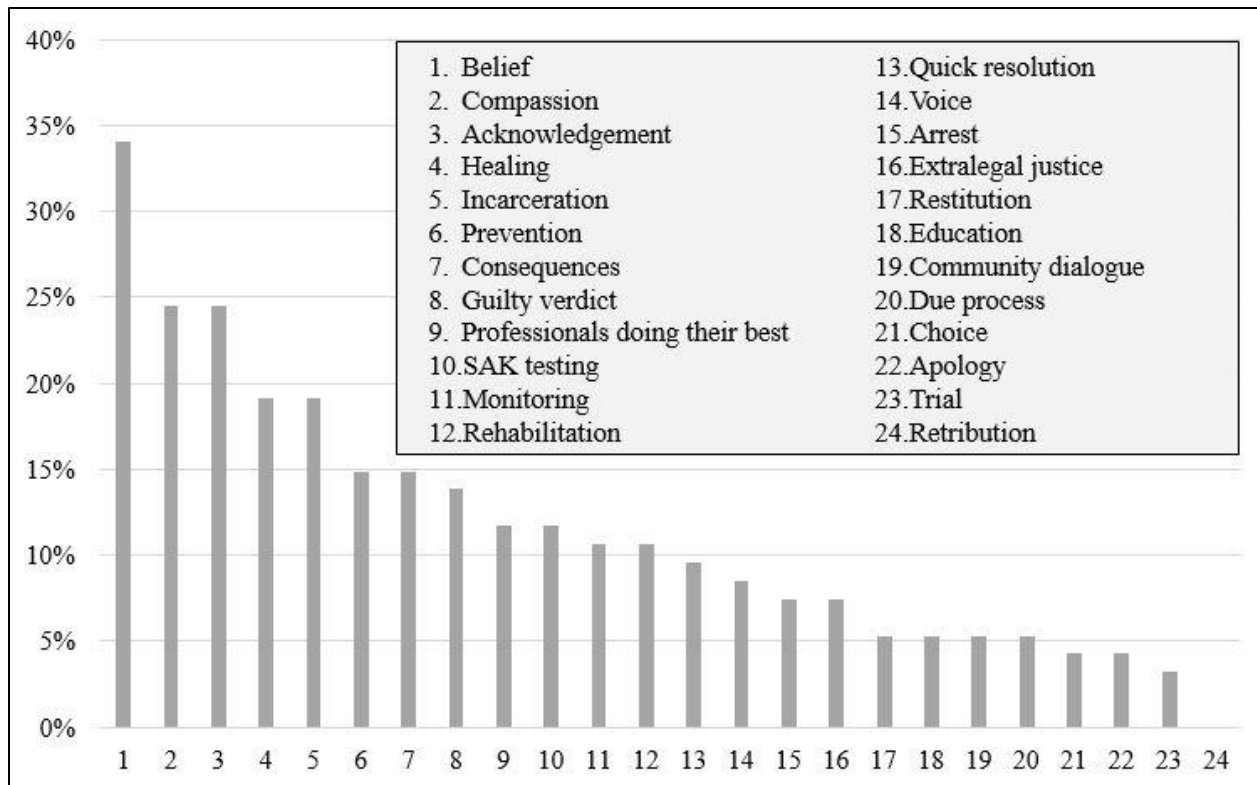


Figure 1. Prevalence of each justice outcome as being among adult sexual assault victim-survivors top three justice priorities (N = 94).

Note. See full definitions of each justice definition in Appendix D. The N for the top 3 justice priorities is 94 because 23 survey participants selected more than one priority for their first, second, and/or third choice, making their data unusable for this particular calculation.

When sorted into top priorities using the quantitative victim-survivor surveys, *belief* (“*Believing the person who was sexually assaulted. This belief could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, or the community.*”) was far and away the most commonly valued justice outcome with over one-third of survey participants selecting this definition. *Belief* was followed by a tie between *acknowledgement* [“*Acknowledgement of the harm done to the person who was sexually assaulted. This acknowledgement (acceptance of the truth or existence of something) could come from the criminal*

*justice system, friends and family, the community, and/or the perpetrator.”]⁶ and *compassionate treatment* (“*Compassionate treatment of the person who was sexually assaulted by the professionals in and around the criminal justice system. This could include the police, victim advocates, medical professionals, etc.*”), each selected by almost one-quarter of survey participants as being one of their top justice priorities. These top three justice priorities have direct implications for professionals interfacing with victim-survivors: belief, acknowledgement, and compassionate treatment can all be demonstrated and expressed to validate the victim-survivors experiences when they are disclosed.*

The next top priorities were again a tie between *incarceration* (“*Jail or prison time for the perpetrator, regardless of whether this changes their behavior.*”) and *healing* (“*Healing for the person who was sexually assaulted. This healing could come over time, through therapy and/or individual resiliency, and could sometimes involves moving from an identity of “victim” to that of “survivor.”*”), each selected by almost one-fifth of survey participants as being one of their top justice priorities. Instead of incarceration as a method to achieve retribution (which was ranked last as a priority for victim-survivors), both victim-survivor and system stakeholder interviewees more often spoke of incarceration as a method of deterrence, prevention/incapacitation, monitoring perpetrators, rehabilitation, and/or acknowledgement. Incarceration is a primary form of justice that the criminal justice system administers, and thus this justice priority of victim-survivors is in line with that priority. Regarding healing, although this may be seen as an outcome that is outside the responsibility of the criminal justice system, as will be explored in subsequent findings section, the actions and outcomes of the criminal justice system can facilitate healing for victim-survivors in a variety of ways.

⁶ Acknowledgement and belief are very similar conceptually, but acknowledgement includes the implication of an understanding and/or knowledge of *the harm done* to a victim, whereas belief is more centered on simply believing that a sexual assault occurred. Acknowledgement also often included more overt action, whereas belief was more passive.

Research Question 2. Is Justice Done?

To answer the question of whether justice is done in cases of sexual assault reported to AST, all three data sources provided some perspective. Because of the extensive and varied definitions of justice for which there are no agency records (i.e., *belief, acknowledgement, compassionate treatment*), and because of low participation in the victim-survivor survey among victim-survivors who reported to law enforcement (specifically, to the Alaska State Troopers), there was very little quantitative information to determine whether most of the types of justice are or were actually achieved. The data presented to answer this question are therefore preliminary and exploratory, and should be interpreted as giving a somewhat limited view of whether justice is done.

With this acknowledgement that the victim-survivor survey data is exploratory, this data suggests that there is progress to be made in achieving most types of justice definitions, including those most prioritized by victim-survivors: belief, acknowledgement, compassion, incarceration, and healing. The data also show that when considering justice as an overall concept, over half of victim-survivors see no justice being done for them.

Indeed, when considering criminal justice case processing stages as definitions of justice, the agency records also indicate that, typically, fewer than half of cases at each stage in the process make it through to the next stage (see Figure 2). Of the 995 cases reported, 524 included SA cases and 490 included SAM cases (a handful of cases included both). Of the 524 SA cases, 32.8% were referred for prosecution, 22.7% of those referred were accepted for prosecution (7.4% of all SA cases reported), and 41% of those accepted resulted in a guilty plea or conviction for an SA/SAM offense (3.1% of all SA cases reported). Of the 490 SAM cases, 32.7% were referred for prosecution, 42.5% of those referred were accepted for prosecution (13.9% of all SAM cases reported), and 60.3% of those accepted resulted in a guilty plea or conviction for an SA/SAM offense (8.4% of all SAM cases reported).

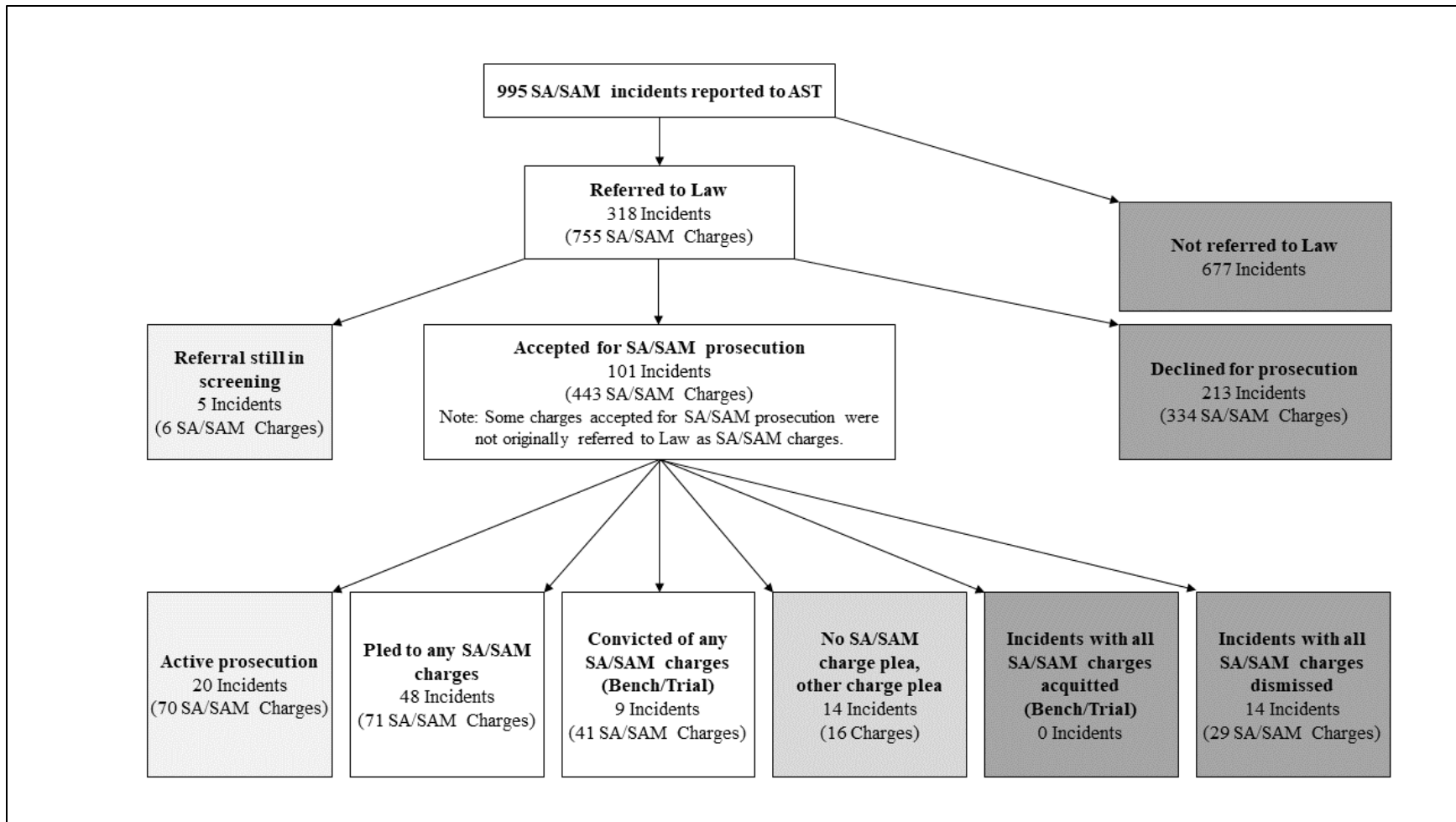


Figure 2. Case outcomes for a random sample of 995 sexual assault (SA) and/or sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) cases reported to the Alaska State Troopers between 2012 and 2016.

When considering all justice outcomes with the context of system and victim-survivor stakeholder perspectives and experiences from the qualitative interviews, the answers varied from confident ‘yesses’ to resounding ‘nos,’ and everywhere in between when asked whether justice was done or is done. These discussions of justice done also indicate that one’s perceptions of whether justice is done is contingent on the totality of one’s experience with a number of factors, and that no one event, experience, or interaction wholly shapes one’s perceptions.

Research Question 3. What Increases the Likelihood of Achieving Justice?

To answer the question of what increases the likelihood of achieving justice in cases of sexual assault reported to AST, the qualitative stakeholder interview data and the quantitative agency records provided some perspective. Because quantitative data was only available for analyzing which variables were related to specific criminal justice outcomes in the agency records (incidents being referred for prosecution and incidents being accepted for prosecution), much of the data presented in this section comes from the qualitative interviews and represents stakeholders’ perceptions of why they think different just outcomes do or do not happen. The data presented to answer this question are therefore preliminary and exploratory, and should be interpreted as giving a somewhat limited view of what increases the likelihood of achieving justice. Stakeholder interview participants’ recommendations for improvements are also included in this section.

Factors Shaping Justice Outcomes from Stakeholder Interviews

The factors suggested by stakeholders in the qualitative interviews that might shape the likelihood of achieving justice outcomes are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of factors suggested by system professional and victim-survivor stakeholders in qualitative interviews that might shape the likelihood of achieving justice outcomes.

| Justice outcome | Possibly shaped, influenced, and/or facilitated by... |
|--|---|
| Belief / Acknowledgement / Compassion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troopers prioritizing fact gathering vs. providing empathetic, belief-centered responses • Victim-survivor behavior (e.g., alcohol use) |
| Consequences / Arrest / Trial / Guilty verdicts / Incarceration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trooper investigative techniques and skills • Availability and quality of evidence • Forensic technology • Other victim-survivors reporting common suspect-perpetrator • Ability to prove case beyond a reasonable doubt • Potential for victim-blaming • Law workload • Victim-survivor willingness to proceed and proactivity • Racism toward Alaska Native victim-survivors |
| Healing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to healing services such as therapy, treatment, victim-survivor services, and healing techniques • Referral to treatment and services • Dialogue with others about one’s experiences with SA • Moving past self-blame • Belief and acknowledgement by system professionals • Tone and content of initial system professionals’ responses to SA • Victim-centered, trauma-informed responses • Being heard by perpetrator • Resolution of case in criminal justice process • Speed of resolution of case in criminal justice process |
| Prevention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful consequences through the criminal justice system • Incapacitation of those convicted of sexual offenses (through incarceration and monitoring) • Swift responses from the criminal justice system • Treatment and rehabilitation for those who are sexually abused • Community dialogue and public safety ads • Educating community members about victimization risks^a • Educating and empowering victim-survivors when responding to reports of victimization^a |
| SAK testing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim-survivors choosing to have SAK collected • Quality or existence of other evidence in case when case would not depend on SAK testing outcomes <p><i>*Note: As of 2019, all SAKs will be tested within one year of submission to the State Crime Lab (with some exceptions – see Footnote 2)</i></p> |
| Professionals doing their best | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal justice professionals’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workload ○ Burnout / Self-care ○ Amount of experience ○ Training ○ Personal investment in each case |

Table continued on next page...

Table 1 continued...

| Justice outcome | Possibly shaped, influenced, and/or facilitated by... |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual assault being reported by victim-survivor • Forensic evidence being entered into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) • Sex offender registration laws |
| Rehabilitation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in rehabilitation for sex offenders • Opportunities for rehabilitation for sex offenders • Criminal justice system priorities |
| Quick resolution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity of investigations • Rotating AST shifts in rural locations • Delay of assignment of defense attorneys to suspect-perpetrator |
| Voice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma-informed sexual assault response team (SART) interview process • Victim impact statements • Options for ways to deliver victim impact statements • The MeToo movement |
| Extralegal justice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community priorities and actions • Community attachment/detachment from justice process • Availability of alternatives to criminal justice system |
| Restitution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim-survivors awareness about compensation options • Assistance for victim-survivors in applying for compensation/restitution • Availability of other financial assistance • Suspect-perpetrator resources to pay restitution |
| Dialogue around sexual assault | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptability and safety of speaking out about sexual assault • Beliefs about victim-survivors' strength to engage in discussions |
| Public education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of responding to sexual assault and providing victim-survivor compensation • Controversy around sex education |
| Apology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspect-perpetrators' acknowledgement of their actions • Criminal justice investigation process |
| Choice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SART exam procedures • Law's ability to contact victim-survivor • Amount of time to settle on a plea deal • Victim-survivor expressing opinion about plea deal to judge |
| Retribution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim-survivor desire for retribution • Criminal justice system priorities |

Note. The factors listed in this table are not recommendations made by the interview participants, but in many cases are related to recommendations that were made.

The justice outcome “due process” is not included in this table because it is ensured through a set of constitutionally guaranteed rights.

^a Educating community members about victimization risks was suggested by at least one interview participant as a way of effectively preventing victimization from happening. It is acknowledged here that this type of suggestion places some of the onus of preventing victimization on potential victim-survivors themselves, which to some connotes victim blaming. It should therefore be emphasized that this table is meant to comprehensively represent the findings of what was shared during the interviews, and not the perspectives of the authors and funders of this report, and there is *no* intent to place the blame of victimization on sexual assault victim-survivors.

Factors Shaping Justice Outcomes from Agency Records

The agency case records provided by DPS and Law also provided some insight into whether certain factors were related to case processing outcomes. Based on what was shared by system stakeholders in the qualitative interview data as shaping justice outcomes (see Table 1), available and relevant victim-survivor, perpetrator, and incident characteristics in the agency case records database were analyzed using bivariate analyses (testing whether two variables are statistically related to each other). These available and relevant victim-survivor and incident characteristics included the geographic location of the assault; alcohol or drug involvement; whether or not forensic evidence was collected for a case; the victim-offender relationship; victim-survivor racial identity, gender, and age; and time between the assault and the report. The two case processing outcomes examined were:

- 1) Reports of SA/SAM resulting in SA/SAM charges being referred for prosecution or not, and
- 2) Incidents referred for prosecution resulting in SA/SAM charges being accepted for prosecution or not.

There were not enough cases in the stages of the process after being accepted for prosecution (such as cases dismissed, in active prosecution, etc.) to conduct analyses. It is important to emphasize that all relationships are merely correlations and that bivariate analyses alone do not establish a causal relationship between variables.

For adult SA cases, only specific geographic location was significantly related to whether a case was referred for prosecution: SA incidents reported in Detachment E were significantly less likely to be referred for prosecution than incidents reported outside of Detachment E.

For SAM cases, geographic location was significantly related to whether a case was referred for prosecution. SAM incidents reported in Detachment C were significantly less likely to be referred for prosecution than incidents reported outside of Detachment C. Conversely SAM incidents reported in

Detachment D were significantly more likely to be referred for prosecution than incidents reported outside of Detachment D. Additionally, when examining rural, off-road areas to non-rural, off-road, SAM incidents occurring in rural, off-road areas were significantly *less* likely to be referred for prosecution.

Alcohol or drug involvement, American Indian/Alaska Native identity, and victim-survivor gender were all also related to whether a case was referred for prosecution for SAM cases. Incidents where alcohol and drugs were involved were significantly more likely to be referred for prosecution than those where no alcohol or drugs were involved. Incidents involving victim-survivors with American Indian/Alaska Native identity were significantly less likely to be referred for prosecution than those without a victim with AIAN identity. Finally, incidents with at least one male victim were significantly less likely to be referred for prosecution than those with no male victim-survivors.

No variables were found to be related to whether a case was accepted for prosecution for either SA or SAM cases.

Stakeholder Recommendations to Improve Justice Achievement from Interviews

Finally, every recommendation made by the stakeholder interview participants was included in this report to demonstrate the depth and breadth of the recommendations put forth by both system stakeholders and victim-survivors. It is important to emphasize that the intent behind sharing these recommendations *is not to endorse* these recommendations, rather it *is to comprehensively represent the findings* of what was shared during the interviews.

The stakeholder recommendations are organized by topic area, although some stakeholder recommendations could have fit in multiple topic areas. The topic areas are therefore not mutually exclusive. The stakeholder recommendations ranged from suggesting that those who have been assaulted report as soon as possible, to improvements in investigations, a greater willingness to prosecute SA cases, and society-wide cultural shifts in how we view consent and SA more broadly. These topic areas are not organized by importance of the recommendations, and are instead organized to first follow the criminal

justice process (starting with reporting of the crime, moving on to the first response and then the following investigation, so on and so forth), followed by a listing of more general topic areas that could apply to multiple stages of the criminal justice process such as communication with the victim, training, and resources, funding, and personnel. The topic areas that the stakeholder recommendations were sorted into were:

1. Reporting sexual assaults to the criminal justice system
2. First response
3. Investigations - Interviews
4. Investigations - Glass warrants
5. Investigations - General
6. Prosecution
7. Forensic analyses of evidence
8. Speed of criminal justice process
9. Victim-survivor knowledge about criminal justice process
10. Communication and follow-ups with victim-survivors on their case.
11. Tone of interactions with victim-survivors
12. Healing resources and other services for victim-survivors
13. Continuous quality improvement
14. Training
15. Inter-agency communication, collective understanding, and collaboration
16. Resources, funding, and personnel
17. Burnout and vicarious trauma
18. Known suspect-perpetrators of sexual assault
19. Laws/statutes
20. Community dialogue and public education around sexual assault

The Alaska Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (AK-SAKI) Research Component

A Process Improvement Analysis of the Alaska Department of Public Safety's Sexual Assault Investigation, Prosecution, And Victim-Survivor Engagement And Support Processes

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Between 2006 and 2016, approximately one-third of sexual assault kits (SAKs) collected by the Alaska State Troopers (AST) were not submitted to the laboratory for forensic testing. In light of the national problem of untested kits⁷ and this local SAK submission gap, the Alaska legislature passed Senate Bill 55 in 2017 requiring testing of all previously unsubmitted SAKs, signaling a shift to a “test all” policy in the near future. Indeed, in 2019, the Alaska legislature passed House Bill 49 enacting Alaska Statute 44.41.065 which requires testing of all SAKs within one year of submission to the State Crime Lab.⁸ It is within this context that the Alaska Department of Public Safety (DPS; the parent agency of AST) and their organizational partners (hereafter referred to as the Alaska Sexual Assault Kit Initiative or AK-SAKI working group) sought to understand and improve their policies and procedures related to sexual assault (SA) investigations, prosecutions, and victim-survivor engagement and support.⁹

⁷ Campbell, R., Feeney, H., Fehler-Cabral, G., Shaw, J., & Horsford, S. (2017). The national problem of untested sexual assault kits (SAKs): Scope, causes, and future directions for research, policy and practice. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 18*(4) 363-276.

⁸ There are some exceptions to this testing requirement. If the case is resolved before the SAK has been tested, the SAK does not have to be tested within one year. Additionally, a SAK is ineligible for testing if it is scientifically unviable; it does not meet eligibility requirements for inclusion in the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS; a national DNA database where forensic profiles of known sexual assault and other perpetrators are collected and available for use by law enforcement agencies for investigating sexual assault cases and identifying suspect-perpetrators); or it was collected from a person who reported their sexual assault anonymously. The full text of AS 44.41.065 can be found at <https://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#44.41.065>.

⁹ Cravez, P. (2018). Sexual assault kit initiative: Alaska making progress. *Alaska Justice Forum, 34*(4), 1-2. For more information on DPS sexual assault kit projects, visit <https://dps.alaska.gov/Comm/SAK/Home>.

A Note on Terminology

Throughout this report, those who have experienced an SA are referred to as *victim-survivors* to capture the often complex identity of these individuals. Exceptions to the use of *victim-survivor* are made when referring to *victim advocates* or *victim advocacy*, as the commonly used language for referring to these professionals and their work does not include the use of term *survivor*; when referring to *victim impact statements*, as again the commonly used language does not include the term *survivor*; when direct quoting interview participants (interview participants used a variety of different terms such as *patients*, *clients*, *victims*, *survivors*, *complaining witnesses* depending on their position and/or professional role in the criminal justice system); and when quoting definitions of justice and other language that was shared with both interview and survey participants that used just the term *victim*. Those who have been accused of committing an SA are referred to interchangeably as *suspect-perpetrators*, *suspects*, and *perpetrators*, depending on the context in which the term is being used, to acknowledge the balance of innocence until proven guilty in the eyes of the law with many victim-survivors' conviction and certainty in knowing they have been victimized by someone, identity known or not. Some tables use the terms *victim* and *suspect* only for space/brevity concerns.

Organizational and Operational Contexts

Eighteen years prior to Alaska becoming the 49th state in the United States of America in 1959, the Alaska State Troopers (AST) were established in the territory of Alaska as the Territorial Highway Patrol.¹⁰ Although they have undergone several name, organizational, and responsibility changes since their establishment, their mission broadly has been and is to preserve the peace, enforce the law, prevent and detect crime, and protect life and property.¹¹ They are, essentially, the primary rural law enforcement

¹⁰ State of Alaska Department of Public Safety. (n.d.) Alaska Department of Public Safety Alaska State Troopers History. Retrieved from <https://dps.alaska.gov/AST/Recruit/History>

¹¹ State of Alaska Department of Public Safety. (n.d.) Division of Alaska State Troopers. Retrieved from <https://dps.alaska.gov/AST/Home>

agency of Alaska. Because Alaska does not have counties, Sheriff's Offices or Deputies, the Alaska State Troopers provide complete law enforcement services for areas outside of the traditional "city limits" of most Alaska communities. The greater majority of Trooper recruits start their careers in one of AST's urban posts (Palmer/Wasilla, Fairbanks, and Soldotna). Most of AST's other posts are in semi-rural (on the road or ferry system) or very rural areas (villages off the road or ferry system). These posts are part of larger geographical jurisdictions which are known as detachments.¹²

There are four main Detachments which are differentiated by a letter designator: A-D. The state was divided into five Detachments at the time the bulk of this report was written: A-E. Before report publication, E Detachment was incorporated into A Detachment as A Detachment North, so references will be made to E Detachment in this report. A Detachment is comprised of two sub-Detachments: North and South. Certain posts within A, B and D Detachments serve more urban or populated areas while the C Detachment service area is solely characterized by large areas of land with small communities spread far apart, often not connected to the main population centers of the state or each other by road (therefore only accessible by plane, boat, or snow machine). Often, communities in Alaska are referred to as on road or off road or rural/remote vs urban.

A Detachment North (formerly E Detachment) includes 21,701 square miles of land on the Kenai Peninsula, roughly 40,000 residents relying on AST services, and 35 commissioned officers (roughly one Trooper per 1,142 residents).¹³ A Detachment South includes 36,000 square miles of land on the Southeast panhandle of Alaska, roughly 10,000 residents relying on AST services, and 14 commissioned officers (roughly one Trooper per 714 residents). B Detachment includes 52,465 square miles of land in

¹² State of Alaska Department of Public Safety. (n.d.) Alaska Department of Public Safety Alaska State Troopers Recruitment. Retrieved from <https://dps.alaska.gov/AST/Recruit/RuralUrban>

¹³ Commissioned officer numbers include Captains, Lieutenants, Sergeants, and Troopers. Numbers in this report are current numbers (October 2021) and do not reflect the numbers at the time of the study.

the Matanuska Susitna Valley (“Mat-Su”), one of the main population centers in the state. The AST posts in Wasilla and Palmer serve an estimated 91,000 residents with 47 Troopers, meaning roughly one Trooper per 1,936 residents. The AST post in Glennallen serves an estimated 3,000 residents with five Troopers, meaning roughly one Trooper per 600 residents. C Detachment includes 216,077 square miles of land: the entire Western region of Alaska, from Kotzebue in the north to the entire Aleutian Chain and the island of Kodiak in the south. With 65 Troopers and an estimated 43,000 residents relying on AST services in C Detachment, this means roughly one Trooper for every 661 residents and 3,324 square miles of land. D Detachment includes 163,700 square miles of land in the Interior of Alaska, with an estimated 114,000 residents and 56 Troopers (roughly one Trooper per 2,035 residents).¹⁴ I Detachment, known as the Alaska Bureau of Investigation (ABI), has 45 Troopers which investigate major crimes including homicides, sexual assaults, child sexual abuse as well as technical and financial crimes. I Detachment has Troopers (investigators) located in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Soldotna, and Palmer. At the time of this writing, AST is in the process of adding ABI investigators to Bethel, Kotzebue, Nome, and King Salmon.

Between 2012 and 2016, 2,741 sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) incidents were reported to AST, averaging roughly 548 cases per year. Generally, Troopers receive training on how to respond to SA and SAM incidents through several mechanisms. The first is the statutorily required training (AS 18.65.240) that each new recruit receives at the training academy. The statutory requirement is for 12 hours and the current number of hours of instruction is 16. In addition to academy level training at the beginning of their tenure, officers/Troopers may attend sexual assault response team trainings (SART trainings) provided in partnership between the Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA), AST, the Alaska Department of Law (Law), the Alaska Nurses Association (AaNA), the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVA), and the Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center. The SART training is a four-day course (32 hours). While SART focuses on

¹⁴ State of Alaska Department of Public Safety. (n.d.) Division of Alaska State Troopers. Retrieved from <https://dps.alaska.gov/AST/Home>

adult victim-survivors of sexual assault, ChildFirst focuses on the forensic interviewing of children. The ChildFirst course is a 5-day course which participants must take a written test as well as pass a mock interview. Alaska is considered a ChildFirst state which means all child victim-survivors of sexual assault are forensically interviewed by a ChildFirst trained individual and the interview takes place at a Child Advocacy Center (CAC). Many of the CACs in Alaska are accredited. The Child First training is coordinated through the ChildFirst Leadership Team, the Child Welfare Academy and the Alaska Children's Alliance.

While SART is not required, AST makes every effort to ensure that Troopers working sexual assault cases are enrolled in SART at the earliest available option. As stated above, for a Trooper to interview a minor at a CAC, they must have taken and passed the ChildFirst course.

Academy level training, SART and ChildFirst are the three main training sessions offered specific to SA and SAM. However, additional training has made available to include a bi-annual conference on Child Maltreatment, in person training conducted under the SAKI grant, regional training with outside experts, webinars and online training. Most recently, AST is in the process of augmenting SART training with additional training specific to trauma-informed interviewing.

Methodology

Research Questions and Objectives

Given the research goal and various state statute changes and the geographic and organizational contexts, the philosophy driving this research design was to start with questioning basic assumptions about justice. Before the Alaska Department of Public Safety (DPS) could consider where and how to make changes to better achieve justice, they first needed to know to what extent and in what ways they are already achieving justice. Before they could assess their current effectiveness in achieving justice, they must know which metrics count as “justice.” In the spirit of being victim-centered, conceptions of justice must come, at least in part, from the perspectives of sexual assault victim-survivors themselves. Therefore, the following three primary research questions were developed in 2018 with the objective of generating policy and practice recommendations for DPS to improve their policies and procedures related to sexual assault investigations, prosecutions, and victim-survivor engagement and support:

1. What are key stakeholders’ experiences with sexual assault investigations, prosecutions, and victim-survivor engagement and support, and how do those experiences compare to their perceptions of just outcomes?
2. How common are the experiences and just outcomes identified by key stakeholders?
3. What factors shape the likelihood of achieving those just outcomes?

Because of the different methodologies used to answer each of these questions, the sampling, data collection, and analytic plan for each are described below.

Semi-Structured Stakeholder Interviews

The first research question was answered by conducting semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the sexual assault case process and then qualitatively identifying key themes and concepts from the transcripts of these interviews. The objectives were to understand the range of stakeholders’ perceptions of policies, procedures, and practices; the range of stakeholders’ perceptions of justice

(including both processes and resolutions); potential intersections and conflicts between individual stakeholders' experiences and their own perceptions of justice; and potential intersections and conflicts across different stakeholders' perceptions of justice.

Interview Samples

The interviews were not intended to generate generalizable information on *all* key stakeholders' experiences and perceptions. Instead, they were intended to generate the *range* of experiences and perceptions that key stakeholders might have. This range of possibilities could then be further explored using more representative methods. Therefore, for the interviews, purposive sampling was used to maximize the variation in experiences until saturation was reached. Saturation is the point at which the interviews no longer produce new conceptual insights.¹⁵ There were two subsamples for this part of the research. The first subsample included system stakeholders, meaning those who are professionally involved in the officially reporting of adult sexual assaults to the Alaska State Troopers (AST). The second subsample included victim-survivor stakeholders, specifically victim-survivors who reported an adult sexual assault to AST. These two subsamples are described in more depth below, along with how they were recruited into the study.

Victim-Survivor Stakeholder Subsample Recruitment. From February through September 2019, victim-survivors who reported an adult sexual assault to AST between 2006 and 2016 were recruited to participate in a 1-2 hour interview. Victim-survivors who were minors (less than 18) at the time of their assault were excluded due to the differing legal, social, and cultural implications between adults and minors as victim-survivors,¹⁶ as were individuals whose cases were still open or re-opened due

¹⁵ Bloor, M. & Wood, F. (2006). *Keywords in qualitative methods: A vocabulary of research concepts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

¹⁶ Mulla, S. (2014). *The violence of care: Rape victims, forensic nurses, and sexual assault intervention*. New York: New York University Press.

to CODIS hits resulting from the SAKI testing of previously untested kits.¹⁷ The 2006 through 2016 window for reporting was selected to focus on cases in more recent history (thus the 2006 beginning) but also to ensure that the case had had enough time to reach its end point (thus the 2016 end).

Attempts were made to interview as diverse a sample of victim-survivors as possible in terms of geographic locality in the state, age, gender, and racial identities. With victim-survivors' safety and autonomy at the forefront of the recruitment process, participants were recruited using flyers posted in physical locations (airports, victim-survivor service agencies, libraries, community centers, health centers, grocery stores, tabling events; etc.)¹⁸ and online (primarily through Facebook but also through email newsletters and Craigslist); victim-survivor service agencies reaching out to victim-survivors to tell them about the study; and news coverage by various local print, TV, radio, and online outlets. The principal investigator (PI) also conducted two outreach trips in May and June to build awareness about and interest in the study in rural, predominantly Alaska Native communities. These trips were organized in partnership with the local DVSA organizations (the Bering Sea Women's Group [BSWG] in Nome and Safe and Fear Free Environment [SAFE] in Dillingham). The trips included meet-and-greet events with food and a casual atmosphere for asking questions about the study. The trip to Nome included visiting three smaller village communities in the BSWG service region. Attempts were made to conduct similar trips to the Emmonak and Bethel areas, but given time and resource constraints among potential partner organizations, it was not possible to organize these trips by the close of the interview recruitment period.

¹⁷ CODIS is an acronym for the Combined DNA Index System, a national DNA database where forensic profiles of known sexual assault and other perpetrators are collected and available for use by law enforcement agencies for investigating sexual assault cases and identifying suspect-perpetrators.

¹⁸ Flyers were known to be posted in Ambler, Anchorage, Aniak, Bethel, Brevig Mission, Buckland, Deering, Delta Junction, Dillingham, Emmonak, Fairbanks, Gambell, Homer, Hooper Bay, Iliamna, Juneau, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk, Kodiak, Kokhanok, Kotzebue, Levelock, Naknek, Nelson Lagoon, Newhalen, Noatak, Nome, Noorvik, Point Hope, Sand Point, Selawick, Seward, Shungnak, Soldotna, St. Mary's, St. Michael, Talkeetna, and Tok. It is also possible that flyers were posted in other communities by other volunteers who helped spread the word.

The recruitment flyers (Appendix A) were available in English, Yup'ik, and Inupiaq. For simplicity purposes, the recruitment flyer did not include all sample criteria, thus potential participants had to call the PI and answer a series of screening questions to determine their eligibility. If potential participants were eligible, the PI then scheduled a separate date and time with them for the actual interview. When recruitment closed at the end of September 2019, 89 potential participants had made contact with the PI expressing their interest in the study (this includes email and phone contact but does not include missed phone calls for which no voicemail was left). Of those 89, 53 participated in the screening process. Of those 53, 31 screened as eligible to participate. Of those 31, 26 participated in either an in person or video/phone interview.

Victim-Survivor Stakeholder Subsample. All 26 victim-survivors who participated identified as female/women, but were diverse across age at the time of the assault, racial/ethnic identities, where in the state they had experienced their sexual assaults, and the year that they reported to AST. Fourteen were 18-29 years old at the time of the assault that they reported to AST, 6 were 30-39, 4 were 40-49, and 2 were 50 or older. Fourteen identified as Alaska Native/American Indian (AIAN), 3 as Hispanic/Latina, and 16 as White (these numbers add to more than 26 because some participants indicated more than one racial/ethnic identity). Specific AIAN identities included Aleut/Alutiiq, Athabaskan, Cherokee, Haida, Inupiaq, Mayan, Sioux, and Yup'ik. Regarding where in Alaska they experienced their assaults, 2 were in A Detachment¹⁹ (Southeast), 6 in B Detachment (Southcentral), 6 in C Detachment (Western), 6 in D Detachment (Interior), 2 in E Detachment (Kenai Peninsula), and 4 in Anchorage.²⁰ Regarding year of

¹⁹ Detachments are the geographic jurisdictions for the Alaska State Troopers. The state was divided into five Detachments at the time the bulk of this report was written: A-E. Before report publication, E Detachment was incorporated into A Detachment. A Detachment South includes Southeast Alaska (formerly just "A Detachment"), A Detachment North includes the Kenai Peninsula (formerly "E Detachment"), B Detachment includes the Mat-Su Valley and surrounding areas, C Detachment includes all of Western Alaska, and D Detachment includes Interior Alaska.

²⁰ AST does not typically have jurisdiction over crimes committed in the Anchorage municipality. One of these cases was initially reported to AST and was then triaged to the Anchorage Police Department (APD). The remaining three were most likely *not* AST cases, although the participants believed that they

report, 2 reported in 2006, 1 in 2007, 2 in 2008, 3 in 2010, 1 in 2011, 2 in 2012, 5 in 2013, 1 in 2014, 4 in 2015, and 6 in 2016.

System Stakeholder Sub-Sample Recruitment. For this study, *system stakeholders* are professionals who engage with sexual assault victim-survivors who report to the Alaska State Troopers and/or their cases. Because of the focus on cases between 2006 and 2016, system stakeholders were limited to those who had worked for or with AST sexual assault cases since at least 2016. Nine types of professional categories were included: (1) Alaska State Troopers; (2) sexual assault nurse examiners / forensic nurse examiners (SANE/FNEs); (3) sexual assault response team (SART) community coordinators; (4) victim advocates; (5) Department of Law (Law) representatives; (6) Defense Bar representatives; (7) Superior Court judges; (8) Department of Public Safety Crime Lab forensic analysts; and (9) Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs²¹).²² As with the victim-survivor sample, variation in experience and perspectives was desired. More perspectives were sought from the professions interacting most often with the victim-survivors, with at least three types of each system stakeholder from each professional category being interviewed.

To select participants, comprehensive lists of all eligible system stakeholders and their contact information were provided to the PI by various agencies and then a random sample of system

were. For these cases, their interactions and perceptions of law enforcement are not included in the results, but their perceptions of and experiences with other system stakeholders are included, as are their thoughts regarding justice.

²¹ Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs) are paraprofessional emergency first responders who serve rural Alaska communities that generally do not have a state, city, or municipality law enforcement presence. They work with other public safety professionals to serve these communities in a variety of emergency circumstances.

²² Stakeholder types were selected based on those in professions most likely to have contact with AST sexual assault cases. Other types of stakeholders, such as community health aids (CHAs) and private defense attorneys, would have been appropriate to include but there were no comprehensive lists readily available for sample selection.

stakeholders was selected from each list.²³ Once selected, the PI attempted contact with those individuals to ask them to participate in the study. If no response was given after at least two contact attempts over approximately two weeks, or if the request to participate was declined, the PI randomly selected a new name to replace that individual and began the outreach process for that newly selected individual.

System Stakeholder Subsample. After outreach to 145 individuals, the final sample consisted of 40 system stakeholders (a 27.6% response rate). These stakeholders included 11 participants with work experience as an Alaska State Trooper, 3 Department of Public Safety Crime Lab forensic analysts, 3 as superior court judges, 5 as attorneys with the Department of Law, 3 as public defenders, 7 as sexual assault nurse examiners SANE/FNEs, 6 as SART coordinators, 7 as victim advocates, and 3 with the VPSO program. These numbers total more than 40 because some individuals had served in more than one role; in particular, the role of SART coordinator is typically filled by victim advocates or SANE/FNEs. Cumulatively, these 40 system-stakeholders had a minimum of 636 years of work experience in the justice, human, and health services fields. Eight had worked in or for A Detachment (Southeast), 9 in or for B Detachment (Southcentral), 20 in or for C Detachment (Western), 11 in or for D Detachment (Interior), and 9 in or for E Detachment (Kenai Peninsula) (again, numbers add to more than 40 because many individuals had served in or for more than one Detachment).

Interview Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted either in-person or over the phone or a video-conference platform. All interviews were audio recorded. The victim-survivor interviews lasted a mean of just over one hour (ranging from 21 minutes to 1 hour and 44 minutes), for a total of 28.1 hours. System stakeholder interviews lasted a mean of 1.4 hours (ranging from 34 minutes to 2 hours and 17 minutes),

²³ The only groups for which there were no existing comprehensive lists were Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner (SANE/FNEs). However, because of the small number of these professionals in Alaska and the dense nature of this professional network, the PI was able to work with known SANE/FNEs and SART coordinators to compile a list to select names from.

for a total of 54.3 hours. General topics included participants' experiences with the sexual assault case process, their perceptions of why and how the case(s) was/were processed that way, and what they wanted/want out of the process to achieve justice. For victim-survivors, the questions are framed in reference to their specific case. For the system stakeholders, the questions are framed in reference to AST sexual assault cases more broadly. The victim-survivor stakeholder interview guide is included in Appendix B and the system stakeholder guide in Appendix C, but the main questions were (*victim-survivor format* | system stakeholder format):

1. *Tell me about your experiences reporting the sexual assault that happened to you.* | Tell me about the process a victim-survivor goes through when they report a sexual assault to the Alaska State Troopers.
2. *What do you remember the most about the above process?* | What about this process stands out the most to you?
3. *In general, in these situations, what does "justice" mean to you?* | In general, for these types of cases, what does "justice" mean to you?
4. *With that in mind, was "justice" done in your case?* | With that in mind, is "justice" usually done in sexual assault cases reported to the Troopers?
5. *Could anyone in the process have done anything differently to make you feel that justice was done?* | Could anyone in the process do anything differently to make you feel that justice is being done?
6. *Do you have any recommendations for improving the process for victim-survivors in the future?* | What would be your top recommendations for improving the process for survivors?

Interview Data Cleaning and Coding

All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim by Rev.com. Rev.com was recommended by a number of fellow Criminologists doing qualitative research involving women and crime. Further, they signed a non-disclosure agreement in advance of beginning transcription services. Each transcript from

Rev.com was cleaned for errors by research technicians working directly for the PI. The technicians also marked person and place names for the PI to redact in the de-identifying process.

Once the transcripts had been cleaned, the PI and the research technicians began the open coding process to develop the codebook, where they each independently coded the same transcript with thoughts, ideas, themes, and concepts. This open coding process was also informed by their collective knowledge of the content of the interviews from the interview and cleaning processes. They then met to discuss the different codes they had identified and began compiling a master list. They repeated this process with several more transcripts before they began to synthesize the list of codes down to major concepts, events, and themes. They continued to synthesize while coding new transcripts and then meeting after each to discuss and synthesize the master list. After completing this process on seven transcripts and meeting for over 60 hours, the team agreed on a final codebook with over 200 codes.

Using this final codebook, the three research technicians each independently coded a different set of transcripts (the original seven transcripts used for the open coding process were scrubbed of any codes and were recoded during the final coding process). Each coded transcript then went through a consensus coding process, where a second research technician examined the codes given by the other and added in codes that were missing and deleted codes that were inappropriate for certain segments. Areas of discrepancy (additions, deletions, and changing the length of a coded quotation) were either discussed and settled between the two technicians, or marked with a “Quality Assurance” code for the PI to review in the final data cleaning process. This consensus process of checking the reliability of coded segments was used instead of producing an intercoder reliability statistic because of the large number of codes that were not mutually exclusive. Once all of the coded transcripts had been coded and reviewed by the research technicians, the PI merged all the files and reviewed each of the QA coded quotations. The PI also merged redundant codes and renamed others in this final cleaning process.

Interview Data Analyses

The interview data were analyzed for this project by running queries (searches) of quotations that had been coded with one or a combination of multiple codes. For example, one could query the code “Belief” and would be shown all quotations in the dataset that had been labeled with this code. One could also query “Belief” and “Dissatisfaction with criminal justice process” and would be shown all quotations that had been labeled with both of these codes. Queries could also be narrowed by different characteristics of the interview participants. For example, the scope could be narrowed to look at just quotations from system stakeholders or just victim-survivors, or to look at just system stakeholders with work experience in a specific detachment. After running each query, the PI read through the output and summarized the findings. This process was iterative, with some findings generating ideas for new queries.

Victim-Survivor Surveys

The objectives of answering the second and third research questions (*How common are the experiences and just outcomes identified by key stakeholders?* and *What factors shape the likelihood of achieving those just outcomes?*) were to describe the prevalence of different experiences and justice expectations and to identify areas for improving the effectiveness of the sexual assault investigation, prosecution, and victim-survivor engagement and support processes. Although some variables needed to answer these questions were available through DPS and Law agency records (e.g., the relationship between the victim-survivor and suspect, victim-survivor demographics, and incident location), other variables that came out of the stakeholder interviews were not available in those records (e.g., victim-survivors’ harm being acknowledged by criminal justice system actors and being treated with belief). Therefore, a self-administered, online victim-survivor survey was administered to understand those additional variables.

The victim-survivor interview process shaped the development of the victim-survivor survey design in numerous ways. First, it became apparent that recruiting only participants who had reported to AST was difficult because of the small population who met that criteria. Second, the PI was contacted by

dozens of victim-survivors who had reported to other agencies or who had never reported and they were all eager to share their experiences. Many were very disappointed that they were not eligible for the interviews. To make the survey inclusive of more sexual assault victim-survivors and to garner a larger sample, the AK-SAKI Working Group Research Subcommittee made the decision to expand the eligibility and purpose of the victim-survivor survey. Although survey participants did not necessarily have to have reported to any law enforcement, and if they did report they did not have to have reported to the Alaska State Troopers, their perspectives are valuable and can still inform on the justice needs and expectations of sexual assault victim-survivors.

Survey Recruitment

Anyone who had experienced a sexual assault in Alaska when they were 18 years or older was eligible to participate in the survey. Participants were recruited using flyers that were shared online via email, eNewsletters, and on social media from February through mid-June 2020. Participants received a \$25 Amazon gift card code, and this was advertised on the flyer. The survey was self-administered online using the Qualtrics platform, and began with a brief screening process to ensure that participants met the eligibility criteria.

Initially, a generic, anonymous link was provided on the flyer for potential participants to access the survey. However, this method immediately garnered dozens of responses with IP addresses tracking all over the United States with illogical and inappropriate response patterns. After pausing the survey and considering various options, the survey was reopened with a new link and was only shared via email and newsletters (*not* on social media). This worked for roughly one month, as evidenced by responses coming in at the anticipated rate and with more logical and appropriate response patterns. However, toward the end of March, it appeared that the link to the survey had again been compromised and dozens of responses were coming in with implausibly short completion times. Therefore, the survey was again paused and it was decided that to garner more responses without compromising the integrity of the data, potential participants had to call the PI from a phone number with a 907 area code (Alaska's only area

code) to receive an individualized link to the survey via email. This method was employed for the duration of the recruitment period.

Survey Sample

The survey link was accessed 664 times. Over half of those who accessed the link never progressed to the consent page (N = 340). Of the 324 that consented to participate, 272 were eligible to participate. Of those 272, 117 survey responses were ultimately retained for the final sample. The 155 that were not included in the final sample were removed for a variety of reasons, including completing less than 50% of the survey, selecting an option at the end of the survey marking their data as unusable,²⁴ having a large number of inconsistencies in their responses, and being marked as spam during the data gathering process. Figure 3 diagrams this selection process.

²⁴ In an effort to mitigate the inclusion of data based on false experiences, survey participants were presented with the following item at the end of the survey: *“Sometimes people take surveys just to see what the questions are or to get the compensation money, even if the survey does not apply to them. This can be a problem because it skews the results of the study, making it harder to fix systems or services for those who have been sexually assaulted. If, for whatever reason, you have taken this survey but you have never experienced a sexual assault in Alaska as an adult (18 years or older), please select “Unsafe data” below. If you have experienced a sexual assault in Alaska as an adult (18 years or older), please select “Safe data.” You will receive a gift card regardless of your response.”*

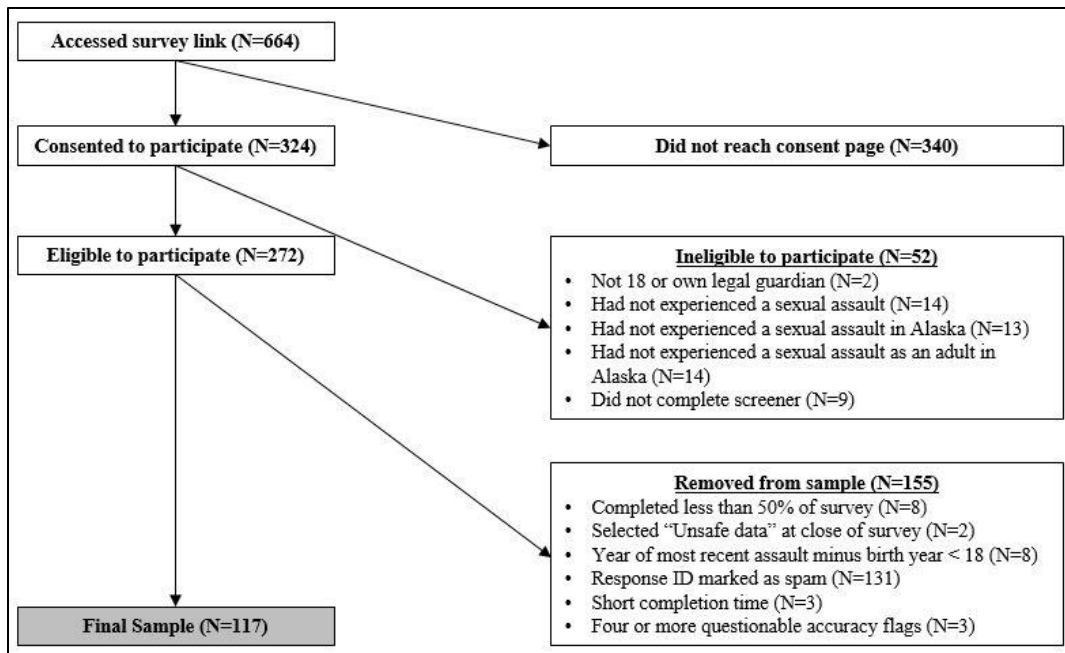


Figure 3. Diagram of selection process into final sample for victim-survivor survey.

Among the 117 survey participants included in the sample, the mean age was 36.9 years (standard deviation [s.d.], 11.6). One identified as male, 5 as non-binary, and 111 as female. Those that identified as non-binary were asked to which binary gender their life experiences were closest, with one indicating male, three indicating female, and one declining to answer.²⁵ Almost half (47%) identified as Alaska Native or American Indian, either exclusively or in combination with either racial identities (the overlap was largely with White identity). Less than 3% identified as Asian (exclusively or in combination with other racial identities), and slightly more than 3% identified as Black (exclusively or in combination with other racial identities). Six participants identified as Hispanic or Latinx, and all six of those individuals

²⁵ Those who did not identify as male or female were asked how they identified and then to which binary gender their life experiences were closest. This second question was asked in order to include them in one of the two binary gender categories in bivariate analyses. However, there was not enough gender variation to use a gender variable, so this information was un-needed. However, this was a unique approach to measuring gender created for this study that should be further explored by other quantitative researchers concerned with accurately measuring gender identities while also generating variables with sufficient variation across limited categories that can be used in quantitative analyses.

also identified as White. Almost three-quarters of the sample (73.5%) identified as White, exclusively or in combination with other racial identities. No one identified as Middle Eastern, North African, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander. Of those that identified as Alaska Native (N=49), 24.5% identified as Athabaskan, 20.4% as Aleut/Aluutiq/Sugpiaq, 28.6% as Inupiaq, 14.3% as Tlingit/Tsimshian/Haida, and 38.8% as Yup'ik/Cup'ik (these add to more than 100% because multiple participants selected more than one Alaska Native cultural group).

Survey Measures

The survey was developed by the PI with assistance from the project research technicians based on the content of the stakeholder interviews. Survey development was also informed by existing literature and was vetted by the AK-SAKI Working Group Research Subcommittee, which included a victim-survivor advocacy representative to ensure the emotional, mental, and physical safety of the research participants during the data collection process. Participants were asked about experiences with adult sexual assaults in Alaska and reporting to law enforcement; reasons for non-reporting (if applicable); details of what happened after they reported to law enforcement (if applicable); whether they interacted with a variety of system stakeholders regardless of reporting to the law enforcement (such as medical professionals, victim advocates, prosecutors, judges, etc.) and how they believed that they were treated by some of those professionals; their perceptions of justice; and their recommendations for improving processes for victim-survivors of sexual assault. The entire survey instrument is included in Appendix D and only the questions on perceptions of justice are elaborated upon here.

To measure perceptions of justice, survey participants were presented with the following text:

“Justice” means different things to different people. Below are different ways that people have described “justice” when reflecting on cases of sexual assault. There will be several pages of different definitions. How important is each definition of justice to you?

Response options for each type of justice were “Very important,” “Moderately important,” and “Not at all important.” Examples of these justice definitions include:

- Believing the person who was sexually assaulted. This belief could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, or the community.
- Consequences for the perpetrator so that they know they have done something wrong, regardless of what those consequences are.
- Quick resolution of the case in the criminal justice system.
- Restitution or compensation for the person who was sexually assaulted for any financial costs resulting from the assault or reporting (e.g., personal belongings lost as evidence, security system installations, medical and therapy costs, etc.)

After survey participants indicated how important each definition of justice was to them, they were then presented with a new list that included each of the justice definitions that they indicated were “Very Important.” They were then instructed to rank the top three definitions that were most important to them. They were asked to select only one definition as number one, only one as number two, and only one as number three. Finally, participants were presented with the full list of justice definitions one final time and asked whether each was achieved for them, not achieved for them, not applicable to their situation, or whether they did not know.

Survey Analyses

The survey data were downloaded from Qualtrics as comma-separated value files and imported into Stata 17 for cleaning and analyses. Univariate (single variable) analyses were conducted to generate sample characteristics (descriptives), usually in the form of measures of central tendency and percent agreement with/endorsement of various items.

Agency Records

Alaska DPS and Law agency records were analyzed along with the victim-survivor surveys to answer the second and third research questions (*How common are the experiences and just outcomes identified by key stakeholders?* and *What factors shape the likelihood of achieving those just outcomes?*).

The agency records allowed for focusing on the criminal justice system case processing of AST incidents and included both sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) cases.²⁶

Agency Records Sample

A random selection of 995 incidents was selected from all SA and SAM incidents reported to AST from 2012 through 2016 (N = 2741), selecting roughly 200 from each year. A sample was used rather than the population because the data needed to be cleaned manually to be used in analyses and cleaning all cases was unfeasible. These 995 incidents included 524 SA cases and 490 SAM cases (19 cases included both SA/SAM cases). The characteristics of the full sample and the SA and SAM subsamples are displayed in Table 2.

²⁶ Although the interviews and surveys focused on adult sexual assaults due to the differing legal, social, and cultural implications between adults and minors as victim-survivors of sexual assault, SAM cases were included in the agency records because they could easily be gathered and parsed out from the SA cases, and because there was interest in knowing how SAM cases moved through the case processing stages.

Table 2. Characteristics of 995 adult sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) incidents reported to AST between 2012-2016 sampled from DPS and Law agency records.

| | Percent (%) of | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| | SA/SAM Incidents (N=995) | SA Incidents (N=524) | SAM Incidents (N=490) |
| Minimum # of victims per incident | | | |
| 1 | 90.1 | 93.5 | 86.1 |
| 2+ | 9.9 | 6.5 | 13.9 |
| Minimum # of suspects per incident | | | |
| 1 | 94.1 | 92.9 | 94.5 |
| 2+ | 5.9 | 7.1 | 5.5 |
| Detachment of assault | | | |
| A | 4.0 | 4.6 | 3.9 |
| B | 19.8 | 16.2 | 22.9 |
| C | 44.4 | 46.0 | 43.5 |
| D | 20.3 | 22.3 | 17.6 |
| E | 9.75 | 8.8 | 10.8 |
| Anchorage or North Slope | 1.7 | 2.1 | 1.4 |
| Incident involved drugs or alcohol | 37.3 | 56.1 | 18.0 |
| SAK collected for... | | | |
| Victim | 21.1 | 34.7 | 6.33 |
| Suspect | 2.8 | 4.39 | 1.22 |
| Victim-suspect relationship. Victim was... ^a | | | |
| Current or former partner | 11.7 | 16.7 | 5.5 |
| Friend, acquaintance, or otherwise known | 51.4 | 61.3 | 40.9 |
| Child, grandchild, or familial child/grandchild | 14.4 | 2.2 | 27.2 |
| Sibling or step-sibling | 5.8 | 3.8 | 8.3 |
| Parent, grandparent, or other family member | 18.1 | 15.4 | 23.4 |
| Stranger | 2.0 | 3.1 | 0.3 |
| At least one suspect identified as... ^b | | | |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 53.6 | 60.6 | 47.8 |
| White | 36.8 | 29.6 | 43.7 |
| Other | 4.3 | 5.1 | 3.5 |
| At least one victim identified as ... ^c | | | |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 52.0 | 57.0 | 46.6 |
| White | 31.8 | 32.5 | 31.3 |
| Other | 1.9 | 2.2 | 1.5 |
| Suspect gender ^b | | | |
| Female | 4.4 | 3.4 | 5.3 |
| Male | 97.5 | 98.3 | 96.8 |
| Victim gender ^c | | | |
| Female | 89.3 | 93.4 | 85.1 |
| Male | 13.2 | 9.0 | 18.2 |

Table continued on next page...

Table 2 continued...

| Mean age (s.d.) ^d | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Suspect | 31.8 (14.7) | 32.4 (13.9) | 30.7 (15.4) |
| Victim | 18.2 (12.1) | 25.5 (11.9) | 10.1 (4.8) |

Note. For most characteristics, the rows add to more than 100% because of incidents involving more than one victim-survivor and/or suspect-perpetrator.

^a Data were missing on victim-suspect relationship for 541 (40.6%) total incidents, 206 (39.3%) for SA incidents, and 199 (40.6%) for SAM incidents.

^b Data were missing on 318 (32.0%) total incidents for suspect-perpetrator racial identity and gender, on 169 (32.3%) for SA incidents, and on 149 (30.4%) for SAM incidents.

^c Data were missing on 55 (5.5%) total incidents for victim-survivor racial identity and gender, on 22 (4.2%) for SA incidents, and on 33 (6.7%) for SAM incidents.

^d Data were missing on 366 (36.8%) of total incidents for suspect-perpetrator age and on 95 (9.6%) for victim-survivor age.

Agency Records Measures

In addition to the characteristics listed above in Table 2, the agency records also included information on the more specific location of the offense(s), more specific information on when the offense(s) occurred and when they were reported to AST, the number and types of charges attached by AST per incident, whether a sexual assault kit was collected and submitted to the lab, which charges were referred to Law for prosecution, which charges were accepted by Law for prosecution, the disposition of each case, and the dates of all decisions within the criminal justice process.

Agency Records Analyses

Agency records were shared with the PI by each agency (DPS and Law) in the form of Excel spreadsheets. These were imported into Stata 17 for cleaning and analyses. The data were then merged on a series of identifiers, which the incident number being the primary identifier. As with the victim-survivor survey analyses, analyses included univariate and a limited set of bivariate analyses.

Summary of Methods

This study involved multiple research questions (each with sub-questions) and three different types of data collection (semi-structured interviews, quantitative surveys,²⁷ and agency records) spanning multiple data sources and samples. These are summarized below in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of research questions, data collection methods/data sources, and samples for the AK-SAKI research

| Research questions | Data collection/sources | Samples |
|---|---|--|
| 1. What are key stakeholders' experiences with sexual assault investigations, prosecutions, and victim-survivor engagement and support, and how do those experiences compare to their perceptions of just outcomes? | 1. <i>Semi-structured interviews (Qualitative)</i> | 1. System stakeholders (Alaska State Troopers; sexual assault nurse examiners; sexual assault response team community coordinators; victim advocates; Department of Law representatives; Defense Bar representatives; Superior Court judges; Department of Public Safety Crime Lab forensic analysts; and Village Public Safety Officers) (N=40) 2. Victim-survivors who reported their experiences with adult sexual assault to the Alaska State Troopers between 2006 and 2016 (N=26) |
| 2. How common are the experiences and just outcomes identified by key stakeholders? | 2. <i>Online survey (Quantitative)^a</i> | 3. Victim-survivors who had experienced a sexual assault in Alaska when they were 18 years old or older (N=117) |
| 3. What factors shape the likelihood of achieving those just outcomes? | 3. <i>Alaska Department of Public Safety case records (Quantitative)</i> 4. <i>Department of Law case records (Quantitative)</i> | 4. Sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) cases reported to the Alaska State Troopers in 2012 through 2016 (N=995) |

^a Some open-ended, qualitative questions were included in the online survey, but those items were not analyzed or used in this report.

²⁷ Some open-ended, qualitative questions were included in the online survey, but those items were not analyzed or used in this report.

Findings

To most succinctly triangulate the information from the different data sources and generate policy and practice recommendations for the Alaska Department of Public Safety (DPS) and their partner agencies, the results are broken into three parts:

1. Which just outcomes DPS and partner agencies should prioritize (*What is Justice?*)
2. How DPS and partner agencies have been performing in relation to those just outcomes (*Is Justice Done?*)
3. Areas for improving achievement of those just outcomes (*What Increases the Likelihood of Achieving Justice?*)

It is important to note here that all findings and quotes from the qualitative interviews represent the perceptions and ideas of individual participants which have not been verified or fact checked in this report. This disclaimer pertains largely to claims about human behavior and the state of the research on these topics.

Findings Part 1 of 3: What is justice?

To begin, findings on definitions of justice/just outcomes for sexual assault cases are presented. This includes how each definition of justice was prioritized by the survey sample, and the qualitative dynamics of those definitions of justice from the semi-structured interviews. *Essentially, answering this question (What is justice?) establishes which justice outcomes the Department of Public Safety and partner agencies should consider prioritizing.*

With 66 interview participants (40 system stakeholders and 26 victim-survivors), this amounted to dozens of definitions in response to the question, “In [cases of sexual assault], what does justice mean

to you?”²⁸ Therefore, to present these different definitions systematically, they are sorted by the priorities assigned to them by the participants in the survey. More specifically, they are presented in order of most often prioritized as within victim-survivors’ top three justice definitions (see Figure 4). It is also important to note that each quotation by a participant could have been coded with multiple themes/concepts, and most participants’ definitions of justice fell into multiple categories.

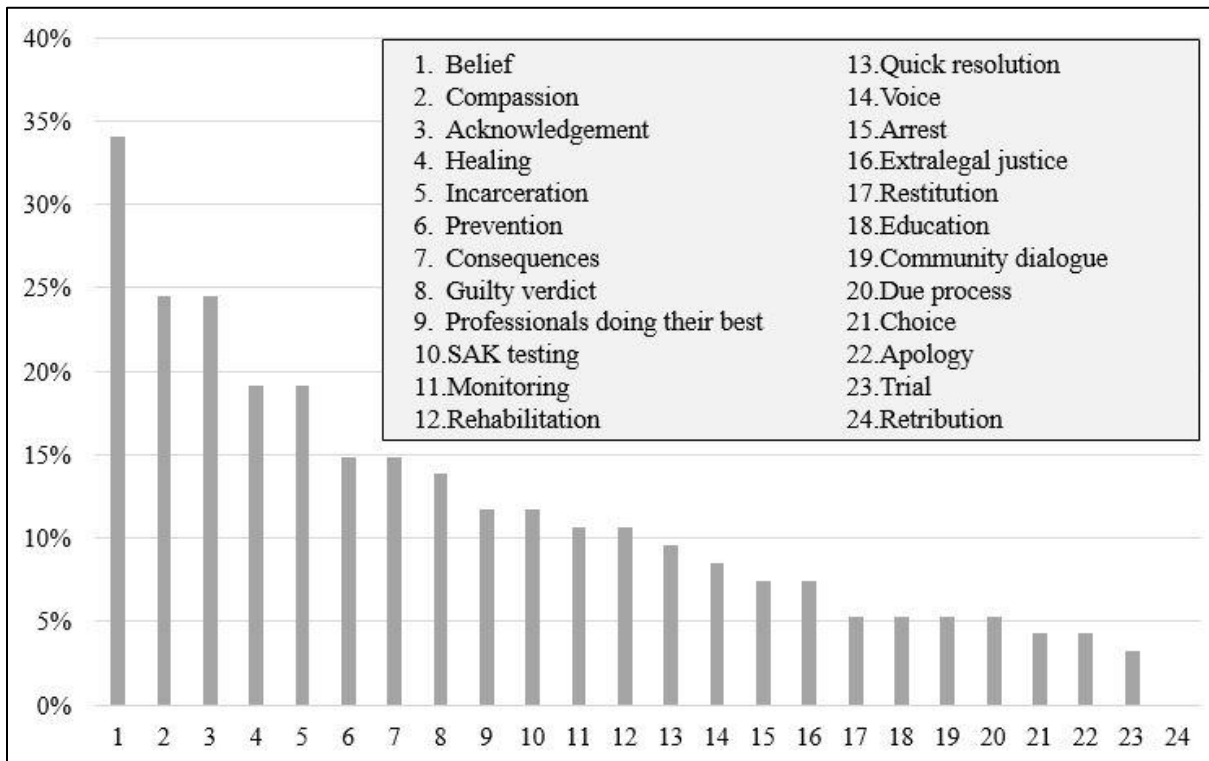


Figure 4. Prevalence of each justice outcome as being among adult sexual assault victim-survivors top three justice priorities (N = 94).

Note. See full definitions of each justice outcome below or in Appendix D. The N for the top 3 justice priorities is 94 because 23 survey participants selected more than one priority for their first, second, and/or third choice, making their data unusable for this particular calculation.

²⁸ One common response to the question of defining justice involved the interview participant’s use of the word “*accountability*” or some variation of. Participants were asked to explain what accountability meant to them if they used the term in their response. Definitions of accountability were quite varied: e.g., something should happen to the perpetrator (repercussions as accountability); the perpetrator should apologize (apology as accountability). Because accountability did not have a universal meaning for study participants, it is not included as one of the justice outcomes. However, the justice outcomes that are used account for the interview participants’ varying definitions of accountability.

To avoid perpetuating the callousness of considering victim-survivors to be “another number,” but to maintain confidentiality, the interview participants are each given a pseudonym for this report. System stakeholders are referred to by their profession and a count number only.

Belief

Belief was defined for survey participants as “*Believing the person who was sexually assaulted. This belief could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, or the community.*” Over one-third (34%) of the survey participants selected *belief* as one of their top three justice priorities, making it the most commonly valued justice outcome.

When asked to define *justice* during the interviews, victim-survivor Sojourner stated:

[Y]ou get, in your mind, “Okay, I can now live with this. You believe somebody else believed me, knew it was true,” which obviously I have a support network that they know what was going on. ... And, it’s like you have that support that believes you, that knows what happened, really happened.

This definition was also brought up in the system stakeholder interviews, with Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 2 stating, “[J]ustice would mean simply start by believing.”

Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement was defined for survey participants as “*Acknowledgement of the harm done to the person who was sexually assaulted. This acknowledgement (acceptance of the truth or existence of something) could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, the community, and/or the perpetrator.*” Almost one-quarter (24.5%) of the survey participants selected *acknowledgement* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying it with *compassionate treatment* as the second most common justice priority. Acknowledgement and belief are very similar conceptually, but acknowledgement includes the implication of an understanding and/or knowledge of *the harm done* to a victim, whereas belief is more centered on simply believing that a sexual assault occurred. Acknowledgement also often included more overt action, whereas belief was more passive.

During the interviews, acknowledgement as justice was often discussed in regards to the perpetrator acknowledging that they had harmed the victim, although acknowledgement from others was also discussed. As an example of acknowledgement from those who had caused the harm as justice, victim-survivor Tarana explained:

[T]he message needs to be understood that that's not okay. And, I mean, and that's really justice is that person knowing that, I mean, that was just wrong.... Understanding that you don't take the people's rights away from them like that. ... there was just something not quite right in his head, and I'm sure it would have, it didn't take him long just that very next day to realize that he had done something wrong.

Victim-survivors also spoke of perpetrator exposure as a form of public acknowledgement of what had happened. Victim-survivor Laura tearfully explained the importance of this during her interview:

I want justice. That's all. It's just I want him exposed. He's like, that's what he was worried about. "If anyone thinks-, " He goes "it's not like it was rape or anything."

System stakeholders also described justice as acknowledgement from perpetrators and from the system. Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 2 described the importance of acknowledgement from perpetrators:

Let's get people acknowledging what they did, and taking responsibility for what they did, and having consequences for what they did.

Whereas Prosecutor 2 described the importance of acknowledgement from the system, although with a caveat that they wavered as to whether this constituted justice:

[F]or sexual assault cases specifically, I feel like justice has been done if, regardless of whether the case is prosecuted, regardless of whether the outcome is successful, regardless of the sentence that is ultimately obtained, if a victim feels that she's been respected through the process, like she's been taken seriously, like we have appropriately responded to the report that she'd made, then I feel satisfied with that outcome. I'm not saying that's necessarily justice, I'm saying I feel satisfied with that outcome.

Compassionate Treatment

Compassionate treatment was defined for survey participants as “*Compassionate treatment of the person who was sexually assaulted by the professionals in and around the criminal justice system. This could include the police, victim advocates, medical professionals, etc.*” Almost one-quarter (24.5%) of the survey participants selected *compassionate treatment* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying it with *acknowledgement* as the second most common justice priority.

In the interviews, victim-survivor Emmeline describes the role of compassion as justice as making the victim-survivor feel like more than another number:

[N]ot feeling like just another rape case. Not just- I don't know. I just felt like they had no emotion for people in my situation. 'Cause they say Alaska's, like, number one for sexual assault cases and stuff. And, when I look back on it, that's how I felt like I was treated after they told me that the case was closed.

When asked if she was referring to feeling “like another number,” she confirmed that that was how she felt because of the lack of compassion.

Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 6 also talked about compassion, stating:

I think when I hear the term justice, obviously my mind obviously jumps to the criminal justice system, but I don't know that that's the best indicator or measure of justice. Because justice, aside from legal- legalese (laugh), also is the concept of right- I guess treatment, or a right treatment or experience.

They elaborated later by saying, “*my definition of justice, that 'I've been heard, I've been believed. I feel like there is a level of care and compassion here.'*”

Incarceration

Jail or prison time was defined for survey participants as “*Jail or prison time for the perpetrator, regardless of whether this changes their behavior.*” Almost one-fifth (19.2%) of the survey participants selected *jail or prison time* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying it with *healing* as the third most common justice priority. Instead of incarceration as a method to achieve retribution, both victim-survivor and system stakeholder interviewees more often spoke of incarceration as a method of

deterrence, prevention/incapacitation, monitoring perpetrators, rehabilitation, and/or acknowledgement. For example, after answering the question, “What does justice mean to you?” with “real jail sentences,” victim-survivor Angela went on to elaborate on how incarceration serves the purpose of consequences and monitoring dangerous individuals:

Well because it's a consequence of your actions. You committed a crime, you hurt somebody else, you ruined their life. You know, he inflicted permanent damage. I don't think community service is gonna make a damn bit of difference. You know, having the consequences and if he doesn't go to jail, then, and if he went to jail, or if he didn't go to jail, he still needed to be on that sex offenders list. Because people need it to be known, because he's dangerous.

Alaska State Trooper 4 also spoke of incarceration as a way of keeping people safe from the perpetrator:

Justice for me in the structure that we have this is a couple things. Stopping the victimization, so either the suspect stops sexually assaulting people or is put in jail so they can't. So some sort of accountability is provided that either makes it so they choose not to continue committing crimes or they're not able to commit more crimes.

Healing

Healing was defined for survey participants as “*Healing for the person who was sexually assaulted. This healing could come over time, through therapy and/or individual resiliency, and could sometimes involves moving from an identity of “victim” to that of “survivor.”*” Almost one-fifth (19.2%) of the survey participants selected *healing* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying it with *incarceration* as the third most common justice priority.

Both victim-survivors and system stakeholders defined justice as healing in the interviews:

And, so, I think that for me justice means having a space where survivors can heal and can regain a sense of safety. - Laverne

Justice is essentially the victim being made whole again, or if not whole, at least along the way to being made whole again. - Village Public Safety Officer 3

Consequences for Perpetrators

Consequences was defined for survey participants as “*Consequences for the perpetrator so that they know they have done something wrong, regardless of what those consequences are.*” Almost 15% of the survey participants selected *consequences* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying it with *prevention of sexual assault* as the fourth most common justice priority.

In the interviews, victim-survivor Audre discussed the lack of consequences as injustice, particularly for Alaska Native communities:

Well I feel like that person should pay for it. I mean they think they should pay for it by losing their freedom, you know? I feel like women kinda don't have a foot up with things like this. Like they just- you see it in so many things. The Justin Schneider case, you know? You know there's missing women and murdered women. You know, like in the Native communities there's- it's just so prevalent, and so many people get away with it. So, to me that's frustrating.

Victim-survivor Abigail took a religious perspective on justice as consequences, explaining:

The Bible talks about justice. The Bible says to respect the law, because God put them in place to protect you, to keep the law. But if you disobey the law, then there's gonna be consequences.

When asked to define justice, victim-survivor Eleanor explained how the justice system giving the perpetrator consequences was a demonstration of belief:

I would say that the victim is honored with the perpetrator getting consequences that are appropriate to make her, or him, the victim, be able to let it go and feel like, (sigh) okay, I got justice. Like they were defended. Their honor, you know. They were believed, they're believed, you know. They're supported, and they put away the bad guy. He went to jail, you know. Like, supported and hon- you know, believed in, like - and the consequences that were fair to the dude, you know. Or the female.

Victim Advocate 4 also defined justice as consequences:

I think, you know, justice, when we're talking about sexual assault, justice to me means that somebody's held accountable for that. If the perpetrator is held accountable, and that there's some type of consequence for that behavior. That to me is justice. That victims' rights are enforced. Nobody has the right to do this to another person. And there's that consequence, whether it's either jail or whatever the case may be.

Prevention of Sexual Assault

Prevention of sexual assault was defined for survey participants as “*This could be preventing anyone from ever sexually assaulting someone else, or preventing those who have already sexually assaulted someone from doing so again.*” Almost 15% of the survey participants selected *prevention of sexual assault* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying it with *consequences for perpetrators* as the fourth most common justice priority. Both the concept of preventing a specific perpetrator (or perpetrators) from offending again as well as deterring potential perpetrators were highlighted as justice by both victim-survivor and system stakeholder interviewees. For several, this was their first response to the question, “What is justice?”

For him not to come around, not to be in the village. I did- I do not want this to happen, you know, again, with other ladies or their kids. – Coretta

It shouldn't even have to happen, or shouldn't happen again. – Maya

Making sure it's not done to somebody else. That the same offender, doesn't do it to someone else. – Ruth

Oh yeah, that is like a pipe dream of mine, where women don't have to worry about getting killed by their domestic partners or worried about getting raped by, you know, their uncle or somebody that they're drinking with. That would be my perfect world-my dream world, but I know it's got a long, long, long way to go. –Alaska State Trooper 9

Guilty Verdict

Close to 14% of the survey participants selected *a guilty verdict in a court of law* as one of their top three justice priorities, making this the fifth most common justice priority. Victim-survivor Angela captured this event as justice in her discussion of how she did not think her perpetrator would have received a guilty verdict:

Even if this went to trial, I don't even know if that would be justice, specifically just because it probably wouldn't get a guilty verdict based on the evidence that was presented.

Judge 3 discussed the importance of a guilty verdict as a first step in justice after being asked to elaborate on what perpetrators being accountable meant to them:

Well, the very first thing is that there's a determination by the trial of fact that you in fact committed this crime. If the case goes to trial. It could come about by means of a guilty plea as well. You know, under a plea bargain or whatever. So, the first step is- there is a finding that the person committed a crime. And then accountability as far as a sentence would depend on, you know, the facts of the case, the person's prior record, and what they're guilty of and the related sentencing ranges.

Forensic Testing of the Sexual Assault Kit

Almost 12% of the survey participants selected *forensic testing of the sexual assault kit (and other evidence, if collected)* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying it with *professionals doing their best* as the sixth most common justice priority.

Although none of the victim-survivors specifically addressed this topic when defining justice, Simone did talk about the importance of processing sexual assault kits (SAKs) earlier in the interview, both in terms of monitoring and identifying perpetrators but also as a symbolic step in addressing sexual violence:

I think they need the kit. I mean, what I think is that they need to at least have his DNA in some system. My understanding is the kit and his DNA being in the system are somewhat linked. So if the kits aren't getting done, then his DNA's not in the system. And why don't we have that? It just feels weird. Like, there's some weird -again, somebody's dragging their feet along the way, here. And, I mean, I hear there's a lot of budget involved here. But, come on. Honestly, I just feel, like at some point, they just need to at least do that step. It's just one little step. Yeah, just the step with the DNA. Just one little step. It seems little.

Crime Lab Analyst 1 also talked about how processing SAKs is a way of acknowledging victim-survivors and their expectations, despite the fact that many of these tests would not produce useable evidence in a case:

These are- we know our success rate is gonna be terrible. You know, this, "Numbers. Numbers." And what I try to step back and realize is that for some people that is a necessary element of justice. It is a way of saying, "I know you heard me because you worked this kit." ... On a pragmatic level, that's hard. That's a very expensive way to

get justice. I'll throw this out there: I think part of justice is being heard. Both sides, all parties. Being heard, listened to impartially, and dealt with fairly.

Professionals Doing Their Best

Almost 12% of the survey participants selected *professionals in the criminal justice system doing their best (regardless of the case outcome)* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying it with *forensic testing of sexual assault kits* as the sixth most common justice priority.

Although none of the victim-survivors specifically addressed this topic when defining justice, it was discussed in many other ways during the interviews. For example, Audre describes how all of the professionals involved in her case tried hard for her, and that that was a great experience despite larger circumstances:

Well I feel like, for pretty much like I said with my experience, I had a great experience with, you know, the Trooper, the detectives, the nurse. Everything was, I think, done in the way it should have been. I don't think there's any improvement there, really. And again, I feel like the DA worked with what he had. So for me I just don't really have, you know, for the exception of improving laws, there's, you know, and that's a lot bigger thing. I think that they all worked their hardest. That that was what they wanted. You know, they didn't want to go to trial and lose. I mean nobody wants to lose. You know if you just look at it in simple facts, but nobody likes losing. But they tried. They tried hard.

Alaska State Trooper 3 did define justice in terms of professionals doing their best, clarifying that this was one of two aspects of justice for them:

[I]t is absolutely a huge part of my belief in justice of just the disciplines that are involved executing their duties diligently and fairly. So that would include the forensic nurses. That would include the advocates. That we do our job. That we do our job to the best of our ability. Even though these are really difficult cases to work. We just do our job the best we can. That is- if we do that- if the system works the way it's supposed to work of each person doing their job to the best of our ability, it's possible to have justice in that sense where everybody did their job correctly. And still not have justice in the first sense because, like I said, a lot of these cases we can do everything right, there's still not going to be successfully prosecuted because they're difficult cases to prove. So, so there really is two different, I believe, there's two different aspects of justice in my mind.

Monitoring Perpetrators

Monitoring perpetrators was defined for survey participants as “*Monitoring perpetrators in the community to prevent them from or catch them if they assault someone else. This monitoring can be done by the criminal justice system (probation or parole), or informally by a network of community members.*” Just over 10% of the survey participants selected *monitoring perpetrators* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying it with *rehabilitation or treatment for perpetrators* as the seventh most common justice priority.

A number of victim-survivors referenced this idea of justice during the interviews, with Lael summarizing it neatly:

Well, and I think what [justice] is, too, is just- even just having them on a sexual offender list, saying, "Hey, this person really did rape somebody." And it actually gets on their record. ... Just so they're on that registered sex offender list and say, "Hey, you know, watch out for this person."

Alaska State Trooper 1 also discussed monitoring as justice along with incarceration and rehabilitation:

I'm all for any sex assault suspect that's convicted being on a list the rest of their life. And basically I'm all for that person going to jail for however long they see fit, but I think they also need to be put in sex offender treatment as well, just to analyze the possibility of rehabilitating them. However, something so heinous as a sex assault, I believe, jail time, registration and an analysis for treatment needs to happen.

Rehabilitation or Treatment for Perpetrators

Rehabilitation or treatment for the perpetrator was specified for survey participants as “*Rehabilitation or treatment for the perpetrator to address underlying causes of their behaviors and prevent them from perpetrating in the future.*” Just over 10% of the survey participants selected *rehabilitation or treatment for the perpetrator* as one of their top three justice priorities tying it with *monitoring perpetrators* as the seventh most common justice priority. In the interviews, the discussions of rehabilitation or treatment for perpetrators was often tied to the concept of deterrence or prevention, which victim-survivor Rosy captured in her discussion of justice:

I've been thinking about that since my other report ... and what does that look like for me and, well, for me the point of- the point of going through due process and going through everything is so that the person that is doing these things will stop doing it, and stop hurting other people, and that to me is the point (laugh). So to me it's just somehow getting them to stop. Getting them into treatment. Getting them to stop drinking alcohol ... But a lot of it has to do with, you know, alcohol, impulse control, just being gone when people use alcohol and substances, other substances, that mess with somebody's judgment. So getting treatment for that if that's a problem, getting treatment for how they're viewing women, or whoever it is that they assaulted, making sure that there's adequate treatment, either while they're in prison or on probation. You know, people that have poor impulse control like this, they need to keep on working the program even when they're out of prison as far as I'm concerned.

Victim-survivor Abigail again took a religious perspective in her discussion of rehabilitation as justice, explaining that she believed people can change through their relationship with God, “Well, I have a really hard time with all of it, because I'm a Christian and I believe that everybody has a chance to change if - They, they can change if they get in a relationship with God.”

Public Defender 1 discussed the importance of rehabilitation as justice by tying together the victim-offender overlap, prevention, and resource allocation:

What we are doing with sexual assault cases, because many, many, many, many, many offenders were themselves offended against, as children. So what we are doing with sexual assault cases is we're condemning the butterfly and praising the caterpillar, and that seems pretty silly to me. We should try and prevent the caterpillar from becoming the butterfly. And obviously you have to know about the sexual assault, but even once they're the butterfly, once they're a sexual offender, locking them away for 40, 50 years may not be the wisest choice, even as a resource. The notion that sex offenders will always recidivise [sic] is just not supported by the facts, by the statistics. they actually have a lower rate of recidivism than most other. So I think if we put more money into treatment and less money into jailing people, we could probably reduce the rate of sexual assault, and people wouldn't be faced with this choice of, "I think I'm innocent, but whatever." You know? "She was drunk and she's claiming she was blacked out. I couldn't tell, but it's a risk." You know? And, "I'm looking at 50 years if I'm convicted."

Quick Resolution

Almost 10% of the survey participants selected *quick resolution* of the case in the criminal justice system as one of their top three justice priorities, making this the eighth most common justice priority. It was common for interviewees to discuss the length of time it takes to process a sexual assault case, although no victim-survivor interviewees specifically referred to a quick resolution when defining justice.

It was apparent, however, that the length was seen as something like an injustice. For example, when asked if she knew why it took three months for her perpetrator to be arrested, victim-survivor Alice replied:

Nope. ... I don't know why. I don't know if it was just ... the investigation was coming to an end. And so, "'Kay, cool- we're there, now we just have to go to court, and then he's gonna stay in there. Like that's the goal. He doesn't get to do this to people.'" And that didn't happen.

She then summarized the ensuing three years in and out of the prosecution/court process as “hell.”

Many system stakeholders expressed not only their own frustration with the lengthiness of the process, but also how they perceived victim-survivors to be frustrated and retraumatized by it. Indeed, Alaska State Trooper 3 described this lengthiness as an injustice:

I believe that's an injustice to delay court just for the sake of delaying it. Whatever reasons come up. You know, sometimes there's valid reasons that extend it. But I think, by and large, they're not. And so, it's just a delay that is more trauma on the victim.

Voice

Voice was defined for survey participants as “*Being heard when speaking about sexual assault. For persons who have been assaulted, this might include being heard in court during testimony or when delivering a victim impact statement, or it could involve being heard by friends, family, and/or the community when sharing about one’s experiences.*” Almost 9% of the survey participants selected voice as one of their top three justice priorities, making this the ninth most common justice priority. Victim-survivor Sheryl stated this succinctly in her definition of justice, “*I think that you should be heard. Your voice should be heard.*” Victim Advocate 6 also expressed this definition of justice succinctly, “*To me it consistently will mean the victim having the opportunity to be heard and respected through the process.*”

Arrest

Arrest was specified for survey participants as “*Arrest of the perpetrator, regardless of whether that arrest leads to a charge and/or conviction.*” Almost 8% of the survey sample selected *arrest* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying it with *extralegal justice* as the tenth most common justice priority. For victim-survivor Malala, an arrest was the bare minimum standard for justice, “I’d say justice would be at least have an arrest.” Indeed, arrest was discussed by some as a form of acknowledgement for victim-survivors, where the arrest represented the fact that the criminal justice system was taking the incident seriously. Conversely, some would discuss the absence of even an arrest as evidence that their case was not being taken seriously.

Alaska State Trooper 9 spoke of arrest as the first step toward justice:

I mean, first thing, is an arrest. I mean, and if I had to be really honest, it not happening at all, but I know I will never live in that world (laugh). But I mean, justice for me is: there is an immediate arrest. Second would be, you know, a conviction. The victim having his or her day in court with that perpetrator would be justice.

Extralegal Justice

Extralegal justice was defined for survey participants as “*Justice that happens outside of the criminal justice system. This could include the perpetrator losing their job or being held accountable by their family, friends, or community, or any other form of justice that does not involve the criminal justice system.*” Almost 8% of the survey participants selected *extralegal justice* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying it with *arrest* as the tenth most common justice priority.

In the interviews, victim-survivor Dorothy explained how justice for her was to expose the perpetrator within her professional networks because she lacked faith in the criminal justice system, but that she had reservations about this form of extralegal justice:

Like what I did was just pretty much smear the dude and like, ruin his career (laugh). I don't think that was- or I mean not public, I didn't go public. I didn't go on Facebook or anything, I just had conversations with enough individuals to keep him out of dangerous situations. But I did that because I didn't have faith in the system. And it was my own fault too. I should have gone and got a SART kit immediately, but, yeah. I

think the system needs to be fixed so people will have faith in it because I don't think just smearing people and accusing people publicly is the solution. Cause it seems to work better, but it's not fair because that is where you risk, you know, their- and we have a justice system for a reason. We have innocent until proven guilty for a reason and I don't want to see that subverted. So I would rather see our actual system fixed.

In defining justice as procedural justice, Judge 3 described the need of services for all victim-survivors, including those who do not report to the criminal justice system:

Just in broader strokes, again the majority of these are not reported. But those people need help as well and that help needs to be available and also that they need to be made aware of what help is available. You know, some communities have shelters, some of those shelters are- I think fairly- have fairly robust programs with counseling and things available. Some have living rooms and beds and such. They can provide advocates, they can help explain to the person how the process works, they can help plug the person into other services.

Restitution

Restitution was specified for survey participants as “*Restitution or compensation for the person who was sexually assaulted for any financial costs resulting from the assault or reporting (e.g., personal belongings lost as evidence, security system installations, medical and therapy costs, etc.)*” Just over 5% of the survey participants selected *restitution* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying this priority with *due process, dialogue around sexual assault, and public education* as the eleventh most common justice priority.

Victim-survivor Gloria discussed a sexual assault case from another state in which the victim-survivor was able to receive restitution through a civil court case. Gloria then reflected on her own situation: she had been out of work for a year out of fear of her perpetrator and had gone to therapy to address the trauma of her assaults. She explained that help in paying for those costs would have been a form of justice for her:

I guess this -and it wasn't in Alaska, it was, like, some other state: she had done this, like, found this loophole or whatever that her case got dismissed for insufficient evidence, but she found a way to basically sue him for ruining her life, is how she put it. He had to pay her therapy bills, her medical bills ever since that happened, her lost wages from work that she missed out on. Like, it was a whole really cool thing. Like, that would be neat. Like, I couldn't hold a job for almost a full year actually after we

stopped dating because I was so terrified of him trying to kill me. Like, I mean, if I had gotten my therapy sessions paid for by the person who caused them, that'd be neat (laughs). Like, even just something as simple as that.

This definition was also brought up in the system stakeholder interviews, with Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 7 explaining that accountability could include monetary reparations to the victim, although it could look different on a case-by-case basis:

I don't think that punishment is really the accurate word. I mean there needs to be some kind of- and you can't really do reparations for an assault like that. I guess that's why I think it looks different for different people what is going to, for that person make a difference, you know? Is that, how are we gonna get it out there that it's not okay? I mean maybe it is going to counseling. That they had to go to x amount of counseling. Maybe they had to go to, you know- or learning or some kind of training, you know, where they're learning about respect or something. Maybe they have to go talk to other people. There's a lot of different ways that you can be- creative ways or not. You know, some people it's monetary. Some people it's just, you know, being- having to stay away from somebody. You know, it's just, there's a lot of different ways that people can be held accountable.

Due process

Due process was specified for survey participants as “*Due process to protect the rights and presumed innocence of those who are accused of sexual assault. Due process includes the accused’s right to a lawyer and to be proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt by a jury of their peers.*” Just over 5% of the survey participants selected *due process* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying this priority with *restitution*, *dialogue around sexual assault*, and *public education* as the eleventh most common justice priority.

In the interviews, victim-survivor Laverne acknowledged the importance of due process for justice, although her focus was on justice being holding perpetrators accountable:

And, so, for me justice means holding people accountable in a way that is beneficial- to the benefit of the survivor. And taking that into account, and, like, and obviously like respecting the presumption of innocence and all of that. Like, I'm not saying throw everyone in jail, and throw the key out.

Prosecutor 4 talked at length about justice as due process, mainly in terms of fairness for defendants in particular:

We need to be consistent with how we treat similarly situated defendants in similarly situated situations. ... I have an equal obligation to treat that defendant fairly as I do to treat the victim fairly in a case. I don't have the luxury of being able to just vilify the defendant and essentially deciding that I wanna put him away in prison for as long as I can because the victims want that to happen. That is not justice. That's not what my role is. My role is to basically understand what the evidence is, to be an advocate for the truth, and to treat people fairly. And, you know, yes, we should absolutely be treating victims fairly with dignity and with respect. But at the end of the day, we have to treat defendants consistently, too. And when ... we're making decisions about how to handle cases, what, whether or not to make an offer, one of the things that I look for... is, "Are we treating this person the same way that we treated the person that had the same set of facts, the same history, and the same circumstances six months before in the same manner? ... You can't make him a harder offer because you don't like working with his defense attorney because his defense attorney is, you know, a pain in your ass. It can't be that, "Well that victim really was fine with the offer, but this victim wants the guy to spend the rest of his life in prison. So, you know, yeah, we gave that guy 15 years, but we should give this guy 40 years because the victim wants that." No, I mean that's not what we should be doing. We should be treating people consistently.

Dialogue around Sexual Assault

Dialogue around sexual assault was specified for survey participants as “*This dialogue can include (often difficult) conversations in the criminal justice system and/or the community, and involves working to address the issue together, as a collective.*” Just over 5% of the survey participants selected *dialogue around sexual assault* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying this priority with *restitution, due process, and public education* as the eleventh most common justice priority.

Victim-survivor Janet reflected on how the interviews themselves were a start of this dialogue, and tied dialogue as justice to healing for victim-survivors and, ultimately, to prevention of sexual assault:

And perhaps this is a really skewed perspective, but I feel like the only justice that can really be had, is me treating myself justly and not being that weird little brand-new adult who feels like she has to take all the responsibility of this as a secret and hold it to her like a teddy bear. (long pause) And I kind of feel like this interview is really helping me with that, you know? Just, sharing some of the responsibility, which is a huge weight on your shoulders, and I am so thankful and grateful that you are willing to do that. It's a huge deal. It is a huge deal. Wow. So I think, even just, having started this study, is justice. Publishing the study is going to be justice. Engaging with the material and bringing it to the public eye in any form, is what's going to be justice. I- every- every person that I recognize heading for one of my situations, that I can stop and I do, that is justice. Ending the cycle is justice.

Victim Advocate 3 also discussed this dialogue as justice, but with a focus on how communities need to have the dialogue about taking sexual assault seriously and committing to address it, with or without the criminal justice system:

I wish communities would hold each other accountable. Because when you don't have law enforcement, when you don't have anything, if there is a community sort of response of, "This is not okay and we're not going to ignore it," then that would be great. But I mean, the problem of course, in villages is everybody's related to everybody, and you could face some terrible retribution yourself if you held people accountable like that. 'Cause again, in some communities, there's a lot of nepotism and people who get away with shit, and people who can't. So, but I think that's true everywhere, like, in the nation. We need to hold people accountable. Only like 2% of sexual assault cases are tried and convicted out of all the ones that are reported. And also, there's still so much victim blaming that goes on when it comes to sexual assault. So, what I want from my region is what I want for the nation.

Public Education

Public education was specified for survey participants as “Public education about sexual assault and its consequences, along with existing resources and ways to support those who have been sexually assaulted.” Just over 5% of the survey participants selected *public education* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying this priority with *restitution*, *due process*, and *dialogue around sexual assault* as the eleventh most common justice priority.

When defining justice, victim-survivor Margaret explained the importance of public education so that her kids would know about the threat of sexual assault:

I wanna make sure that my kids know about, you know, rape is out there, people will try to hurt you. And you need to know how to protect yourself, and stand up and, you know, make them aware.

Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 2 also discussed this importance in their response to the question of defining justice, elaborating on the importance of not only the threat but what constitutes sexual assault and who perpetrates it:

That we could be, you know, we- justice is, you know, if our culture or our community has an understanding like, "Yeah this is how- this is what sexual assault is." You know, "This is what it looks like. It doesn't always look the way you think it looks

like." Or, "This is how common it is," or, "It's with people that you know or with your family."

Apology

Apology was specified for survey participants as *"Apology for the harm done to the person who was sexually assaulted. This apology could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, the community, and/or the perpetrator."* Just over 4% of the survey participants selected *apology* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying this priority with *choice or control* as the twelfth most common justice priority.

Apology was not talked about often in the interviewees' discussions of justice. In fact, no victim-survivors referenced apology in their definitions of justice. Victim-survivor Naomi explained that the man who had sexually assaulted her had vaguely apologized for his actions, and when asked if his apology meant anything to her, she responded:

No, I honestly just thought of it now when you asked me again, cause I, I don't really think too much about that and now it doesn't matter.

Similarly, apology did not come up often in the system stakeholder interviews. Victim Advocate 2 only briefly referenced it in their definition, suggesting that apology could serve as an indicator of perpetrator acknowledgement of their behaviors:

[J]Justice means that, in whatever manner it is, and it doesn't even have to be legal through the court system, that all perpetrators are accountable- they are held accountable- there is something there, there is acknowledgement, punishment, or what is that word? Restitution. Apology. There is something there that happens so that the perpetrator understands and can acknowledge his or her actions.

Choice or Control

Choice or control was specified for survey participants as *"Choice or control for the person who was sexually assaulted. This could include having a say in whether or how things happen, such as whether to participate in a forensic exam, whether to report to law enforcement after a forensic exam (anonymous report), whether to participate in an ongoing investigation, whether or not to pursue charges*

in a case, etc.” Just over 4% of the survey participants selected *choice or control* as one of their top three justice priorities, tying this priority with *apology* as the twelfth most common justice priority.

Victim-survivor Gloria discussed how at her place of employment she was given the control of having the man who sexually assaulted her removed from the building, and how empowering it was for her to exercise that control:

And like my justice is at my job where I love working because I can go up to any manager and say, "Hey, my rapist is in the store. Can I go point him out to you?" And we walk over there together in our red vests, and I point him out, and I say, "That's [perpetrator's full name]. He raped me," and they escort him out. And that's the best feeling- Is they don't question it.

In the system stakeholder interviews, Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 5 framed justice in terms of what the victim-survivor wants:

The best outcome for the patient. That's the easiest way to say it. If the patient wants the man off the street- or woman, because it isn't always the man- but if the patient wants that person off the street, to not harm other people like she or he was harmed, and they're willing to go through the whole process to see it happen, that would be justice in that case. Other cases there are women that- or men that- don't want to go through the whole court process. And so the best outcome for them would be able to heal from what happened and to move on in their life in a positive direction.

Trial

Only 3% of the survey participants selected “*the case going to trial, regardless of the perpetrator being found guilty*” as one of their top three justice priorities.

As with a number of other outcomes, trial was seen as justice by some because it can serve as a form of formal acknowledgement and a willingness to take cases of sexual assault seriously. In her discussion of justice, victim-survivor Malala discussed the symbolic importance of the Larry Nassar trials and the injustice she saw with Alaska Native women in particular not getting to go to trial:

But the thing I was gonna say about Nassar is, because these all these women are famous athletes- and I'm just a dumb Native from [rural] Alaska, we don't get- we don't get nothing. (crying) We get nothing. We don't even get a report. These guys get national attention. They get to get up there in front of the judge and they get to give- tell their story and be believed and we get nothing.

In the system stakeholder interviews, Crime Lab Analyst 2 talked about trial as an important stage in the justice process:

I just think if the evidence supported an allegation, then it should be considered by a jury. And then if their verdict was based on all the evidence, not just the DNA evidence but other things.

Retribution

Retribution was defined for survey participants as “Retribution, or punishment inflicted on the perpetrator as vengeance for their harmful actions.” No one selected retribution as one of their top three justice priorities in the survey, although it was brought up in both the victim-survivor and system stakeholder interviews.

Victim-survivor Naomi most directly defined justice as retribution:

I have this stupid fantasy that always plays out in my head that like, one day, like, he's gonna be brought to court and I'm gonna have to testify along with all these other women, if they do come forward, and he's gonna go to jail. I mean that's the only thing I've ever wanted, was some sort of, like, punishment, for punishing me for so long, for so many days. I just wanted some sort of retribution. ... Personally, I want him dead. ... [I]t's just mostly just wanting an eye for an eye, basically.

Alaska State Trooper 7 also took a retributive view of justice, focusing in particular on their perception of the limited possibility of rehabilitating sex offenders:

Well I mean let the punishment fit the crime. If you made the decision to- it's obviously a sliding scale. There's not really a right answer here. If you decided to break into somebody's house in the middle of the night and some random stranger that you don't know, and sexually assault them, there's- I mean I'm a believer in the death penalty for that, you know. I mean I really- I think it should be a heavy hammer because this isn't an option of- a lot of these people really aren't particularly rehabilitable. I mean they have one of the highest, or the highest recidivism rate with sex crimes, of any type of crime, period. And if you've made that decision to break into somebody's house in the middle of the night, it's going to be- I don't- again, short of murdering somebody, I don't know what more violent awful thing you could do, and we got to hold a heavy hammer over that.

Summary of Findings for “What is Justice?”

In response to the question, “What does justice mean to you?” (regarding cases of sexual assault), the qualitative interview participants gave a variety of answers that were classified into 24 different definitions of justice. These definitions included “standard” criminal justice system functions such as incarceration, guilty verdicts, forensic testing of the sexual assault kit, monitoring perpetrators, arrest, due process, trial, quick resolution, restitution/compensation, and rehabilitation or treatment for perpetrators. These definitions also involved not-so-standard functions of the criminal justice system, but that are still tied to the functions of system professionals as the definitions centered around how others view and treat victim-survivors: belief, acknowledgement, compassionate treatment, professionals doing their best, and giving victim-survivors voice and choice. Further, some of the definitions of justice were broader than what the criminal justice system alone can offer- or could perhaps result without the criminal justice system altogether- such as healing, consequences for perpetrators, prevention of sexual assault, dialogue around sexual assault, public education, apology, and retribution.

When sorted into top priorities using the quantitative victim-survivor surveys, *belief* (“*Believing the person who was sexually assaulted. This belief could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, or the community.*”) was far and away the most commonly valued justice outcome with over one-third of survey participants selecting this definition. *Belief* was followed by a tie between *acknowledgement* (“*Acknowledgement of the harm done to the person who was sexually assaulted. This acknowledgement (acceptance of the truth or existence of something) could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, the community, and/or the perpetrator.*”)²⁹ and *compassionate treatment* (“*Compassionate treatment of the person who was sexually assaulted by the professionals in and around the criminal justice system. This could include the police, victim advocates, medical*

²⁹ Acknowledgement and belief are very similar conceptually, but acknowledgement includes the implication of an understanding and/or knowledge of *the harm done* to a victim, whereas belief is more centered on simply believing that a sexual assault occurred. Acknowledgement also often included more overt action, whereas belief was more passive.

professionals, etc.”), each selected by almost one-quarter of survey participants as being one of their top justice priorities. These top three justice priorities have direct implications for professionals interfacing with victim-survivors: belief, acknowledgement, and compassionate treatment can all be demonstrated and expressed to validate the victim-survivors experiences when they are disclosed.

The next top priorities were again a tie between *incarceration* (“*Jail or prison time for the perpetrator, regardless of whether this changes their behavior.*”) and *healing* (“*Healing for the person who was sexually assaulted. This healing could come over time, through therapy and/or individual resiliency, and could sometimes involves moving from an identity of “victim” to that of “survivor.”*”), each selected by almost one-fifth of survey participants as being one of their top justice priorities. Instead of incarceration as a method to achieve retribution (which was ranked last as a priority for victim-survivors), both victim-survivor and system stakeholder interviewees more often spoke of incarceration as a method of deterrence, prevention/incapacitation, monitoring perpetrators, rehabilitation, and/or acknowledgement. Incarceration is a primary form of justice that the criminal justice system administers, and thus this justice priority of victim-survivors is in line with that priority. Regarding healing, although this may be seen as an outcome that is outside the responsibility of the criminal justice system, as will be explored in subsequent findings section, the actions and outcomes of the criminal justice system can facilitate healing for victim-survivors in a variety of ways.

Findings Part 2 of 3: Is Justice Done?

This findings section focuses on AST and partner agencies' policies and practices and how these align with the perceptions of justice outlined above in *Findings Part 1 of 3: What is Justice? Essentially, answering this question (Is Justice Done?) establishes the strengths and weaknesses of DPS and partner agencies in achieving justice.*

Data for this section come from the stakeholder interviews (both victim-survivor and system), the victim-survivor surveys, and the agency records. First, general data from the surveys and agency records are presented. Following this presentation, a more robust discussion of these results is given which includes context from the qualitative interviews. This more in depth discussion is organized in order of the justice definitions most often prioritized as within victim-survivors' top three justice definitions in the victim-survivor survey. Findings from the stakeholder interviews include interview participants' experiences with and discussions of the various themes throughout the interviews, including their answers to the explicit question of whether they believed justice was/is done and their answers to the question about what stands out to them about the sexual assault case process.

Victim-Survivor Surveys

The victim-survivor online survey measured perceptions of justice being done with a series of questions on how the survey participants felt they were treated by various criminal justice professionals, whether they felt each of the 24 pre-determined definitions of justice had been achieved for them, and finally whether they felt that overall justice had been done for them after they were sexually assaulted. Twenty-three of the survey participants had reported a sexual assault to AST, ten of whom also participated in the stakeholder interviews.

The first series of questions regarding justice done measured whether the survey participants felt respected, believed, judged, blamed, safe with, and prioritized by a variety of system professionals during their interactions with them (if applicable). Response options were 'yes,' 'no,' 'neutral / no feelings either way,' or 'not applicable (I did not interact with this type of professional).' The results for those whom

each interaction was applicable are included in Table 4. As can be seen in each column header, only a small number of survey participants had interactions with these various types of professionals (23 with the Alaska State Troopers, 40 with victim advocates, 37 with SANEs or other medical professionals, and 30 with the District Attorney's Office).

Table 4. Survey participants' (those who had experienced an adult sexual assault in Alaska) perceptions of how they were treated during their interactions with various criminal justice system professionals when they reported a sexual assault.

| <i>During your interactions with [type of criminal justice professional], did you feel...</i> | Alaska State Troopers (n = 23) | | | Victim advocates (n = 40) | | | SANEs or other medical professionals (n = 37) | | | The District Attorney's Office (n = 30) | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--|-----------------------|------------------|--|-----------------------|------------------|
| | <i>Yes</i> (%) | <i>Neutral</i> (%) | <i>No</i> (%) | <i>Yes</i> (%) | <i>Neutral</i> (%) | <i>No</i> (%) | <i>Yes</i> (%) | <i>Neutral</i> (%) | <i>No</i> (%) | <i>Yes</i> (%) | <i>Neutral</i> (%) | <i>No</i> (%) |
| Respected? | 43.5 | 17.4 | 39.1 | 82.5 | 12.5 | 5.0 | 84.2 | 7.9 | 7.9 | 56.7 | 10.0 | 33.3 |
| Believed? | 56.5 | 4.4 | 39.1 | 90.0 | 10.0 | 0.0 | 72.8 | 8.1 | 19.1 | 50.0 | 16.7 | 33.3 |
| Judged? | 47.8 | 8.7 | 43.5 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 90.0 | 21.1 | 2.6 | 76.3 | 26.7 | 20.0 | 53.3 |
| Blamed? | 30.4 | 17.4 | 52.2 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 90.0 | 8.3 | 16.7 | 75.0 | 23.3 | 13.3 | 63.4 |
| Safe? | 52.2 | 17.4 | 30.4 | 82.5 | 10.0 | 7.5 | 81.1 | 10.8 | 8.1 | 46.7 | 23.3 | 30.0 |
| Prioritized? | 21.7 | 8.7 | 69.6 | 53.4 | 28.2 | 18.4 | 56.8 | 27.0 | 16.2 | 29.0 | 19.4 | 51.6 |

The next set of questions regarding justice done measured survey participants agreement with whether they felt each of the 24 pre-determined definitions of justice had been achieved for them. For each definition of justice, participants could indicate whether it was achieved for them, not achieved, not applicable to their situation, or if they did not know. These responses are included in Table 5.

Table 5. Survey participants' (those who had experienced an adult sexual assault in Alaska) perceptions on whether each type of justice was achieved for them when they were sexual assaulted.

| | Full sample % (denominator N) | Reported to any law enforcement % (denominator N) | Reported to AST % (denominator N) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Belief | 51.5 (101) | 50.0 (58) | 47.8 (23) |
| Acknowledgement | 35.6 (101) | 34.5 (58) | 43.5 (23) |
| Compassion | 43.8 (89) | 51.7 (58) | 47.5 (23) |
| Incarceration | 17.6 (74) | 25.5 (51) | 38.9 (18) |
| Healing | 60.8 (102) | 58.9 (56) | 60.9 (23) |
| Consequences | 15.2 (99) | 22.8 (57) | 27.3 (22) |
| Prevention | 7.4 (95) | 7.4 (54) | 4.6 (22) |
| Guilty verdict | 13.7 (73) | 20.0 (50) | 27.8 (18) |
| SAK testing | 30.8 (65) | 40.4 (47) | 41.2 (17) |
| Professionals doing their best | 23.7 (76) | 28.1 (57) | 39.1 (23) |
| Monitoring | 9.3 (75) | 10.4 (48) | 15.0 (20) |
| Rehabilitation | 3.7 (82) | 5.9 (51) | 4.8 (21) |
| Quick resolution | 6.3 (64) | 8.7 (46) | 11.1 (18) |
| Voice | 53.5 (101) | 52.6 (57) | 56.6 (23) |
| Arrest | 21.1 (76) | 29.1 (55) | 27.3 (22) |
| Extralegal justice | 13.8 (94) | 17.0 (53) | 25.0 (20) |
| Restitution | 6.0 (83) | 9.8 (51) | 4.8 (21) |
| Due process | 27.9 (68) | 33.3 (51) | 36.8 (19) |
| Dialogue around sexual assault | 30.3 (89) | 31.5 (54) | 26.1 (23) |
| Public Education | 24.2 (91) | 24.5 (53) | 22.7 (22) |
| Apology | 16.5 (103) | 13.8 (58) | 26.1 (23) |
| Choice | 42.5 (80) | 42.3 (52) | 40.0 (20) |
| Trial | 16.4 (73) | 22.2 (54) | 23.8 (21) |
| Retribution | 3.8 (79) | 6.3 (48) | 5.6 (18) |

Note. Responses 'No,' 'Yes,' and 'Don't know' are included in the denominator. Denominators within samples vary because participants could select 'not applicable to my situation' and were thus not included. Reasons for selecting 'not applicable to my situation' could include the outcome not being a justice priority for those participants, because they did not disclose or report their assault(s), or because they did not try for certain outcomes (among other reasons). Column samples are not mutually exclusive (the full sample includes those who reported to any law enforcement, and those who reported to any law enforcement includes those who reported to AST).

Finally, the results for the question of whether the survey participants who reported to AST felt that overall justice had been done for them after they were sexually assaulted are included in Figure 5. The majority (56.5%) indicated that no justice at all had been done for them, with another 21.7% indicating that some justice had been done but mostly it had not. Not quite one-fifth (17.4%) indicated that justice had either been done mostly for them or completely for them.

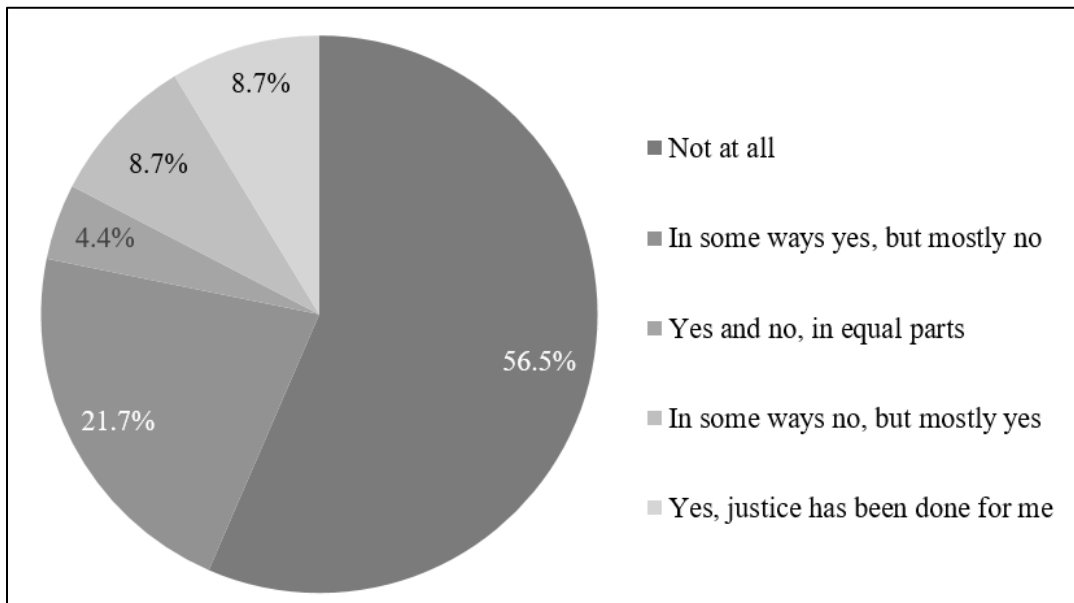


Figure 5. Responses to the question, “Overall, do you believe that justice has been done for you after you were sexually assaulted?” among survey participants who reported to AST (n = 23).

Agency Case Records

The agency case records from DPS and Law allowed for descriptive analyses of case processing and various characteristics of adult sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) reports to the Alaska State Troopers (AST). Figures 6, 7, and 8 provide the case processing breakdowns for a random sample of 995 SA or SAM cases reported to AST in the years 2012-2016. In each figure, ‘incidents’ refers to unique cases reported to AST. Figure 6 includes both SA and SAM cases, whereas Figure 7

includes just SA cases and Figure 8 just SAM cases. Table 6 summarizes the case attrition from these figures with percentages. Table 7 contains the length of time for case processing between all stages of the reporting process, from the time of the sexual assault to the report to AST, to the time AST completed their investigation, to the time the case was referred to Law, to the time Law either opened the case or declined to prosecute, to the time it was dismissed or there was a verdict (plea or trial). These results are relevant to a number of definitions of justice and are discussed in various sections below.

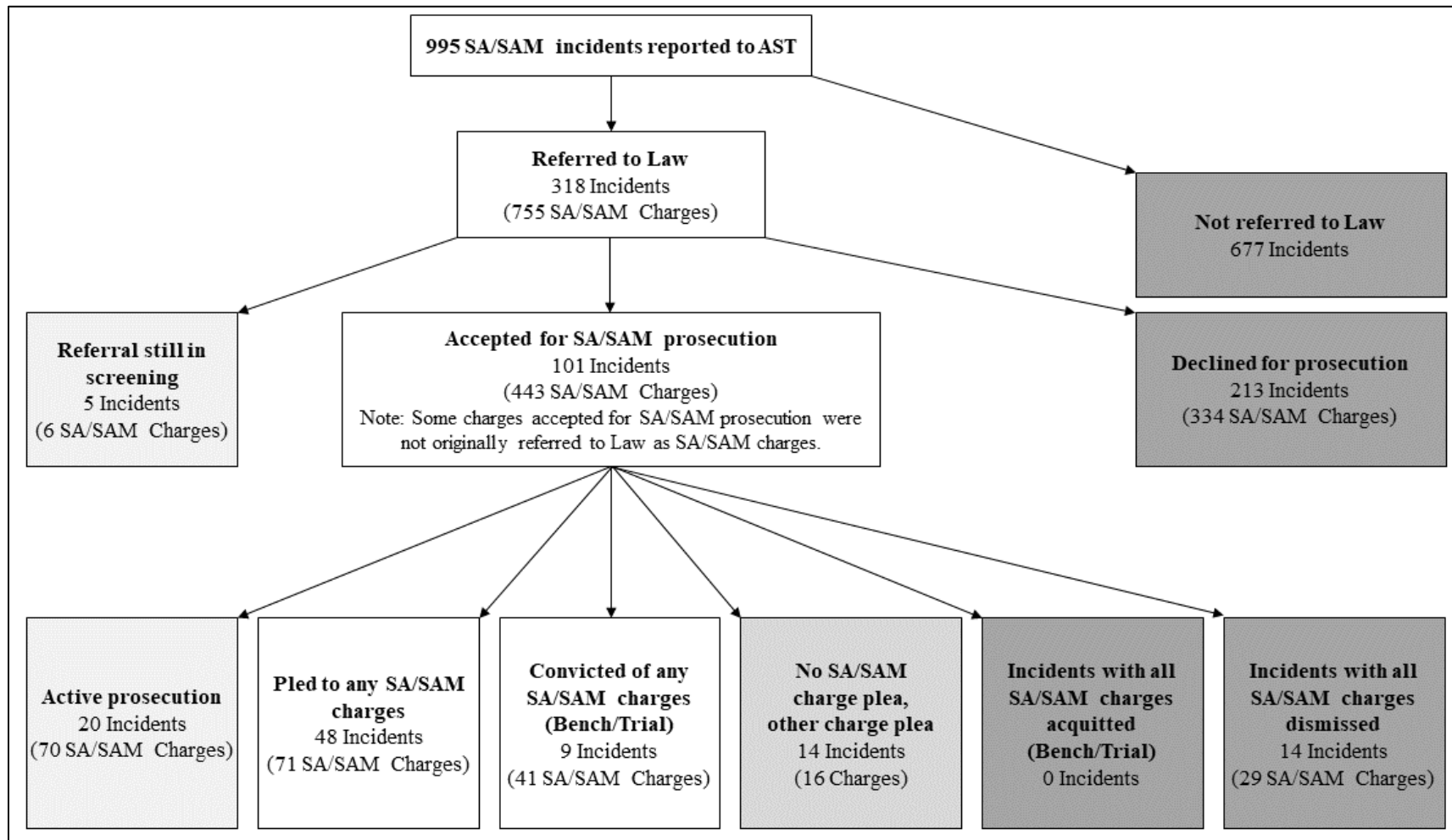


Figure 6. Case outcomes for a random sample of 995 sexual assault (SA) and/or sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) cases reported to the Alaska State Troopers between 2012 and 2016.

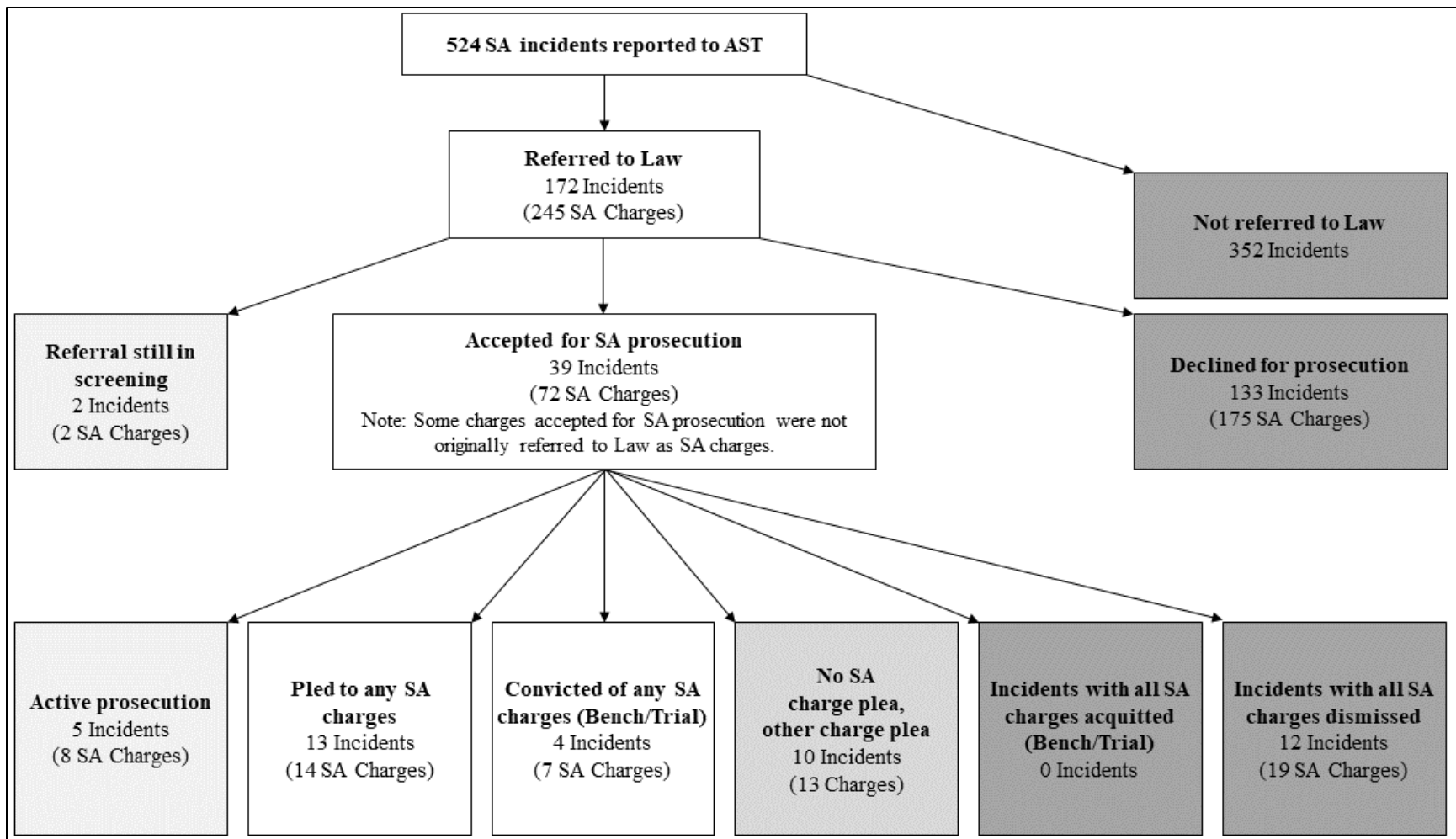


Figure 7. Case outcomes for a random sample of 524 sexual assault (SA) cases reported to the Alaska State Troopers between 2012 and 2016.

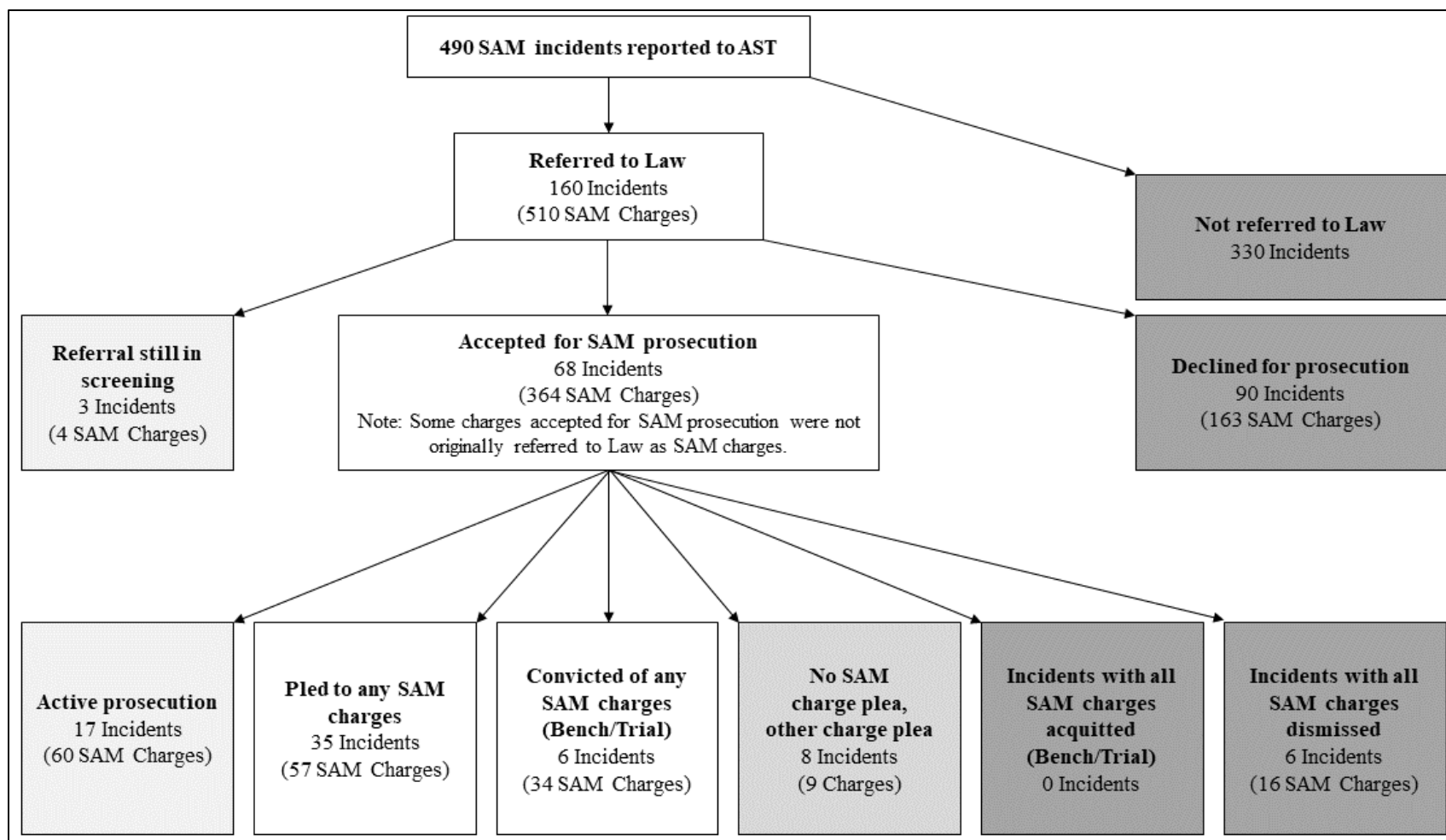


Figure 8. Case outcomes for a random sample of 490 sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) cases reported to the Alaska State Troopers between 2012 and 2016.

Table 6. Case attrition for a random sample of 995 sexual assault (SA) and/or sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) cases reported to the Alaska State Troopers between 2012 and 2016.

| | SA/SAM Incidents | | | SA Incidents | | | SAM Incidents | | |
|--|------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|------------|---------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
| | N | % of above | % of reported | N | % of above | % of reported | N | % of above | % of reported |
| Reported | 995 | n/a | n/a | 524 | n/a | n/a | 490 | n/a | n/a |
| Referred for prosecution | 318 | 32.0 | 32.0 | 172 | 32.8 | 32.8 | 160 | 32.7 | 32.7 |
| Accepted for prosecution | 101 | 31.8 | 10.2 | 39 | 22.7 | 7.4 | 68 | 42.5 | 13.9 |
| Pled guilty or convicted of SA/SAM offense | 56 | 55.4 | 5.6 | 16 | 41.0 | 3.1 | 41 | 60.3 | 8.4 |

Table 7. Days between stages of the sexual assault reporting process for a random sample of 995 sexual assault (SA) and/or sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) cases reported to the Alaska State Troopers between 2012 and 2016.

| Days between.... | N | Range | Mean (s.d.) | Median |
|---|-----|------------|----------------|--------|
| Sexual assault and report to AST | 994 | 0 – 13,322 | 455.2 (1345.8) | 2 |
| Report to AST and AST completion | 986 | 0 – 2,461 | 172.7 (274.3) | 76.5 |
| AST completion and referral to Law | 318 | 0 – 2,297 | 65.5 (266.7) | 6 |
| Referral to Law and Law open/decline decision | 312 | 0 – 1,799 | 202.4 (341.5) | 49 |
| Law open decision and verdict (plea or trial) | 64 | 30 – 2,243 | 649.4 (413.1) | 546 |

Note. Only 11 cases had all SA/SAM charges dismissed and only 9 cases went to trial for a guilty verdict on an SA/SAM charge (versus plea agreements), therefore data on these cases was not included because of the small Ns.

The above survey and case record results are now discussed in the context of the different definitions of justice and with more detail from the stakeholder interviews.

Belief

As noted in Table 4, over half (56.5% of 23) of the victim-survivors who participated in the surveys who reported an adult sexual assault to AST felt believed during their interactions with law enforcement, and half (50% of 30) of those who interacted with Law felt believed during those interactions. A larger share felt believed during their interactions with victim advocates (90% of 40) and SANEs (72.8% of 37).

Data on experiences with belief are also presented in Table 5 with 47.8% of survey participants who reported to AST affirming that belief was achieved for them. It is important to note that this measurement is less specific to their experiences with AST than the data presented in Table 4, as *belief* was defined in the survey as “*Believing the person who was sexually assaulted. This belief could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, or the community.*”

In the stakeholder interviews, victim-survivor Simone noted how shocking it was to not feel believed by the Trooper investigating her case:

It was just bizarre experience of being treated as though I was not telling the truth. ... It was like- He just made it very clear to me, and I think it's hard to even say what he said, because it was so shocking. He just made it clear that they're not just investigating him, they're also investigating me. And they're trying to get to the bottom of the story. And, you know, my story may not be true. He didn't say those words, but what he did say made that very obvious. And I was shocked. And that was very uncomfortable.

Conversely, victim-survivor Gloria noted that her experience was better than it could have been because she was believed:

I mean, he's the only Trooper I've dealt with, and I think it could have been better, but it could have been so much worse at the same time. And for one, I think that's an awful mindset to have, and two, I really feel for the people who have had a worse experience. Because I mean, you can have somebody who sits there and tells you,

"Oh, well that's not rape." And it's, what do you do then? I mean, the one person you're -like what do you do? And yeah, it's just hard.

Acknowledgement

As shown in Table 5, 43.5% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that acknowledgement was achieved for them. This measurement was not specific to AST with acknowledgement being defined for survey participants as “*Acknowledgement of the harm done to the person who was sexually assaulted. This acknowledgement (acceptance of the truth or existence of something) could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, the community, and/or the perpetrator.*” Acknowledgement and belief are very similar conceptually, but acknowledgement includes the implication of an understanding and/or knowledge of *the harm done* to a victim, whereas belief is more centered on simply believing that a sexual assault occurred. Acknowledgement also often included more overt action, whereas belief was more passive.

In the stakeholder interviews, victim-survivor Lael labeled the lack of acknowledgement of her experience as being particularly traumatic:

And then that's where I was having problems with the State Trooper. The State Trooper that took over, or that was handling my case. ... She was not a nice State Trooper. ... She was just really mad. She treated me really badly. It- almost like it was my fault that this happened. And that was traumatic in it of itself, and just going through all of that and not knowing what happened to me was really painful. And, not having support of anybody, and nobody, you know, saying, "Hey, I'm really sorry this happened to you, and I'm really sorry you went through that. I can help you." Nobody did that. Everybody was really mean. And it was real horrible to go through that all by myself and just to go through all that drama- and not having anybody support me. And, so, it was really bad.

Conversely, when prompted to share what stood out to her about the reporting process, victim-survivor Libby noted that her experience was positive because she did feel acknowledged: “*I didn't feel dismissed. So, that was kind of, I guess, validating. So, you know, I felt like it was fairly streamlined, that they were really prepared, that they took their job seriously and wanted to help.*”

Compassionate Treatment

As shown in Table 5, 47.5% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that compassionate treatment was achieved for them. This was not specific to AST with *compassionate treatment* being defined for survey participants as “*Compassionate treatment of the person who was sexually assaulted by the professionals in and around the criminal justice system. This could include the police, victim advocates, medical professionals, etc.*”

In the stakeholder interviews, when asked what stood out the most to her about her reporting process, victim-survivor Gloria said:

I think the lack of human decency probably. Like, it's kind of like when you go into a store and you can really tell that someone, like, this is either someone's first day in customer service, or they've just never worked a day of customer service in their life. Like, it was kind of like that. Like, “if I treated a customer like this, I would get fired” type of thing. ... I felt like just another patient in first care type. Like, another day another dollar type of situation. Like I'm nothing to you. I'm just the one that helps pay your paychecks type of weird thing. Like, I didn't feel special. And, like, I wasn't necessarily asking to, it's just - make me feel like I'm worth something.

Conversely, when asked what stood out most to her, victim-survivor Audre explained a different experience:

I felt like for me, really, the whole experience with the Troopers, and the detectives, and the nurses, and [victim services] was a positive thing. They were a positive. ... I didn't have like a nightmare story. I've heard women that have, and read cases recently, you know, where it's not been- they haven't been treated right. But my experience with everybody was a good experience, with everybody in the system. 'Cause I mean it- I can't imagine how much worse it would be if nobody believed you, if you didn't have all that support from people that you don't even know really. I mean compassion and support.

Consequences / Arrest / Trial / Guilty Verdicts / Incarceration

The justice definitions of incarceration, consequences for perpetrators, trial, arrest, and guilty verdicts are combined into one section here because of the overlap in the data of these concepts.

When looking first at the victim-survivor survey data as shown in Table 5, 38.9% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that incarceration was achieved for them. *Jail or prison time*

was defined for survey participants as “*Jail or prison time for the perpetrator, regardless of whether this changes their behavior.*” Just over one-quarter (27.3%) affirmed that consequences were achieved for them, with *consequences* defined as “*Consequences for the perpetrator so that they know they have done something wrong, regardless of what those consequences are.*” Similarly, just over one-quarter (27.8%) affirmed that a guilty verdict in a court of law was achieved from. Less than one-quarter (23.8%) affirmed that *the case going to trial, regardless of the perpetrator being found guilty* was achieved for them, and 27.3% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that arrest was achieved for them. *Arrest* was specified for survey participants as “*Arrest of the perpetrator, regardless of whether that arrest leads to a charge and/or conviction.*”

Looking next to the agency records, these data provide prospective on the percent of cases to reach each stage of the criminal justice case process. To first summarize Figure 6 and the first set of three columns in Table 6, of the 995 sexual assault or sexual abuse of a minor (SA/SAM) incidents reported to AST, 318 were referred to Law for prosecution (32% of incidents reported). Of those 318 incidents referred for prosecution, 101 were accepted for prosecution by Law (31.8% of those referred and 10.2% of incidents reported). Of the 101 that were accepted for prosecution, 56 resulted in either a guilty plea or a guilty conviction on at least one SA/SAM offense (55.4% of incidents accepted for prosecution and 5.6% of incidents reported).

To next summarize Figure 7 and the second set of three columns in Table 6, of the 524 SA incidents reported to AST, 172 were referred to Law for prosecution (32.8% of incidents reported). Of those 172 incidents referred for prosecution, 39 were accepted for prosecution by Law (22.7% of those referred and 7.4% of incidents reported). Of the 39 that were accepted for prosecution, 16 resulted in either a guilty plea or a guilty conviction on at least one SA offense (41% of incidents accepted for prosecution and 3.1% of incidents reported).

To summarize Figure 8 and the third set of three columns in Table 6, of the 490 SAM incidents reported to AST, 160 were referred to Law for prosecution (32.7% of incidents reported). Of those 160

incidents referred for prosecution, 68 were accepted for prosecution by Law (42.5% of those referred and 13.9% of incidents reported). Of the 68 that were accepted for prosecution, 41 resulted in either a guilty plea or a guilty conviction on at least one SA offense (60.3% of incidents accepted for prosecution and 8.4% of incidents reported).

Finally, to give context from the stakeholder interviews, regarding guilty verdicts and subsequent incarceration, a few system stakeholders held the perspective that perpetrators of sexual assault are usually held accountable by the criminal justice system (Judge 2 and Alaska State Trooper 8, for example). It is worth noting, however, that perceptions on justice being done were frequently qualified as based on which part of the process that professional was most directly involved with: “In terms of what I see play out in the trial context, I think yes, the verdicts are generally correct. . . . But there’s a filter that precedes that batch that gets into the courtroom” (Judge 1). Alaska State Trooper 1, conversely, indicated that there was a fairly even mix of successful prosecutions compared to unsuccessful prosecutions.

Some participants noted that justice is done or was done for them in the form of consequences. Village Public Safety Officer 2 noted that the justice system “does not go easy on these guys ” when perpetrators are found guilty. Perpetrators of a handful of the victim-survivor interviewees were found guilty and incarcerated, and these interviewees noted that this meant justice was done at least in that respect (Coretta, Simone, and Elizabeth, for example). Similarly, victim-survivor Janet was granted a restraining order against her perpetrator, which for her was at least some justice in the form of a consequence.

For those who perceived a lack of meaningful consequences and therefore that justice is or was not being done, interviewees framed their responses in a variety of ways. The first was in the failure to move cases through the criminal justice process and ultimately have perpetrators found guilty. The second was regarding the consequences for those who were found guilty. Regarding moving cases through the criminal justice process, Prosecutor 4 answered the question of whether justice is usually done by stating, “*No, because if we were doing justice, we would have a better balance of victims having their cases taken*

seriously, having the opportunity to basically have the offenders held accountable. I think that often that is not the case.” Several others, including victim advocates, sexual assault nurse examiners, and at least one representative of AST, VPSOs, the Crime Lab, and another prosecutor all expressed similar sentiments. Victim Advocate 1 explained the impact of this on victim-survivors:

And I know a lot of the victims don't feel like it was worth it. You know, they go through all of that, basically, the interview and exam is making them relive, you know, this horrible moment in their life and then for it to be for nothing, or it's how they see it.

Indeed, at least ten of the victim-survivor interviewees said that justice was not done for them (in full or in part) because, in the most concise words of Ruth, “*nothing was done.*” Audre expressed this lack of consequence by explaining how her perpetrator’s life was mostly unaffected, and Laura expressed it as a lack of exposure of her perpetrator. These different individuals’ cases progressed to different points in the criminal justice process, ranging from no investigation being done, to Law declining to pursue charges, to charges being dismissed, and ultimately, to perpetrators being found not guilty. For Emmeline, who had significant bruising from her attack and had reported in time to have them measured and photographed as part of her SART exam, nothing happening (not even an arrest) was so distressing that this was the only time she needed a break from the interview. After that break she summarized: “*I just felt like another rape case they didn't want to deal with.*” Even Margaret, who received direct acknowledgement and an apology from her perpetrator did not believe that justice had been done for her because the criminal justice system had not held him accountable.

In cases where those who commit sexual assault are found guilty by the criminal justice system, there was still a sentiment expressed by some that the consequences were not meaningful enough. Alaska State Trooper 7 argued that this was true of sentencing for all crime in Alaska, stating “*It is a joke [in Alaska] ... It's ridiculous.*” Alaska State Trooper 3 also argued that people often do not get the punishment that they deserve for doing ‘horrific crimes.’ Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 3 described how frustrating it is that they can collect all the evidence, including photographing injuries, and

then the perpetrator takes a plea deal and are back out on the street in five years. At least one of the victim-survivor interviewees, Elizabeth, also said that justice was not done for her because although her perpetrator was incarcerated, she did not believe that he was incarcerated for long enough.

Healing

As shown in Table 5, 60.9% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that healing was achieved for them. This measurement was not specific to AST with *healing* being defined for survey participants as “*Healing for the person who was sexually assaulted. This healing could come over time, through therapy and/or individual resiliency, and could sometimes involves moving from an identity of “victim” to that of “survivor.”*”

In the stakeholder interviews, victim-survivor Libby focused on her healing process when answering the question of justice being done, “*I feel that justice has been done – not from the legal system. ... I feel the most whole or, like, back to how I was. You can’t get back that time and that’s okay.*” Other victim-survivor interviewees also focused on that healing, including Tarana and Sojourner. Sojourner also elaborated on the ability to receive support from her family, friends, and community as justice being done.

Prevention of Sexual Assault

As shown in Table 5, 4.6% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that prevention of sexual assault was achieved for them. It is important to note that the description of prevention in the survey was framed as prevention broadly and not prevention that would solely be the responsibility of AST or other enforcement, with it being defined for survey participants as “*This could be preventing anyone from ever sexually assaulting someone else, or preventing those who have already sexually assaulted someone from doing so again.*”

In the stakeholder interviews, victim-survivor Tarana framed justice being done in part because of her belief that her perpetrator did not go on to harm anyone else. Victim-survivor Rosy, however, explained that justice had not been doing for her because she did not know if their perpetrator had stopped

offending and victim-survivor Sheryl explained that justice had not been done for her because she believed that her offender had gone back to drinking and drugging, and potentially sexually assaulting others.

The system stakeholders also mostly discussed prevention/deterrence as not happening. Public Defender 1 focused their answer to the question of whether justice is done on the relationship between being sexually abused as a child and going on to perpetrate sexual violence. They explained that the system/society does not do justice when it fails to treat/heal those victim-survivors before they become perpetrators themselves. For Alaska State Trooper 5 and Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 3, justice was not being done because perpetrators' behaviors were not being changed by their interactions with the criminal justice system. Crime Lab Analyst 1 also discussed the lack of justice because of repeated criminal justice system contacts, but instead with a focus on victim-survivors: "*We get victims who appear in five, in six, in seven cases. Has justice been done for this person?*"³⁰

Forensic Testing of the Sexual Assault Kit

As noted in the introduction to this report, the Alaska legislature passed Senate Bill 55 in 2017 requiring testing of all previously unsubmitted SAKs, and passed House Bill 49 in 2019 enacting Alaska Statute 44.41.065 which requires testing of all SAKs within one year of submission to the State Crime Lab (with some exceptions – see Footnote 8). Therefore, at the time this report was completed in 2021, all SAKs submitted to the State Crime Lab will be tested, so the findings discussed in this section are only relevant to past cases.

As shown in Table 5, 41.2% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that *forensic testing of the sexual assault kit (and other evidence, if collected)* was achieved for them.

³⁰ Including this quote about repeat victimizations is not intended to place the onus of prevention on victim-survivors, but is instead meant to emphasize that for many participants, prevention meant preventing any sexual assault from happening at all and not just preventing their own specific perpetrator from harming others. Thus, when someone is victimized, especially victimized repeatedly, prevention has not been achieved.

In the victim-survivor stakeholder interviews, several participants noted that they did not know whether their SAK had been tested or considered in their case, including Eleanor, Sheryl, Alice, Libby, and Emmeline. Eleanor expressed surprise to even be asked the question, as she assumed that all SAKs were tested when collected. Laura, however, expressed a much more cynical understanding, and while expressing frustration about the lack of public safety she said that she wanted to ask lawmakers, “*Why you keep giving them funding? What are they doing with it? 'Cause they're not doing rape kits and they're not processing rapers.*”

In the system stakeholder interviews, Crime Lab Analyst 2 focused on sexual assault kits not being submitted to the lab as an explanation of why justice was not being done:

Like, why were they sitting there? And I think those aren't questions to be answered by me, but the people who sat on them, or the managers of those people. I mean, yeah, I'd be curious what the answers were, and I'd be pissed if I was one of the survivors of that.

In response to the same question (about justice being done), Crime Lab Analyst 1 explained that although in earlier years their techniques were not as advanced for testing forensic evidence, the science they have done has been sound given the limitations of the science at the time of analysis.

Professionals Doing Their Best

As shown in Table 5, 39.1% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that *professionals in the criminal justice system doing their best (regardless of the case outcome)* was achieved for them.

At least three victim-survivors discussed how justice was not done for them because of the way they were treated by criminal justice system professionals: Lael felt that justice was not done in part because she felt blamed for her sexual assault by the Trooper she reported to; Eleanor was not included in or informed about the trial events that ultimately led to her perpetrator being sent to jail; and Tarana felt that justice was not done in part because no one had followed up with her to check on her after her report (Tarana did not wish to pursue the criminal justice process, so the lack of follow up was not about

“nothing being done” to move her case forward, but that no one felt like they should check in on her after her report).

Two victim-survivor interviewees (Naomi and Dorothy) noted that they did not feel like justice was done for them because they believed their cases had not been properly investigated. Dorothy, who had evidence to believe the person who had sexually assaulted her was a serial perpetrator, stated her disbelief about the lack of evidence turned up during AST’s investigation: “*There should be a way to build a case against this guy. Like, there’s no doubt.*”

Multiple system stakeholders in the stakeholder interviews framed their affirmation that justice is done around individual system stakeholders doing their best work, even in the face of limited resources and even if they play a small part. Different system stakeholders framed this differently, with general statements about system professionals “*doing what they can with the resources that they have*” (Alaska State Trooper 5), to comments about cases being processed in a timely manner (Judge 3), to people being treated fairly (Alaska State Trooper 3), and that prosecutors decide to prosecute despite the difficulty of success with sexual assault cases because they take these cases seriously and believe they should be prosecuted (Prosecutor 4). Alaska State Trooper 3 acknowledged that everybody does not always do their best, although with the caveat that sometimes that is because of mistakes rather than mal-intent.

Monitoring Perpetrators

As shown in Table 5, 15.0% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that monitoring perpetrators was achieved for them. *Monitoring perpetrators* was defined for survey participants as “*Monitoring perpetrators in the community to prevent them from or catch them if they assault someone else. This monitoring can be done by the criminal justice system (probation or parole), or informally by a network of community members.*” In the stakeholder interviews, participants talked about monitoring being done in a variety of ways.

Victim-survivor interview participants mostly noted how monitoring was not achieved for them, even when it seemed it should have been. Gloria defined justice as including her perpetrator being on a

sex offender list that limits his employment opportunities, but stated that that did not happen for her. Similarly, Susan noted that justice was not done for her because her perpetrator would not end up with a sexual assault on his record that would always follow him. Angela noted that she learned from a mutual acquaintance of her perpetrator that her perpetrator had committed a sex offense in the past when he was younger but that he was not on a sex offender's registration list. Sojourner also noted a history of violence against women on her perpetrator's record that had happened before her assault. Both were puzzled as to how these persons were able to continue their patterns of violence despite this apparent record of offenses.

Some victim-survivors did see monitoring happen. Alice noted that her perpetrator needed a third-party custodian during the prosecution/court phase of her case, and Laverne explained how her perpetrator seemed to have a number of other victim-survivors, and that someone had set up a website similar to a website he operated that alerted people to the allegations of sexual assault against him.

For the system stakeholder interview participants, those who discussed monitoring also seemed to call the efficacy of monitoring into question. Crime Lab Analyst 1 noted that they did not know how law enforcement officers go about connecting reports of sexual assault in cases of potential serial offenders, nor how often law enforcement officers remember that the DNA evidence can be used in that process. Prosecutor 4 explained that the expectations about the use of DNA to monitor and identify perpetrators of sexual assault do not match the reality of which DNA is allowed to be entered in CODIS and which individuals are likely to have a CODIS profile.

Alaska State Trooper 3 noted that because a lot of villages do not have a law enforcement presence or even a paraprofessional law enforcement presence, there is no one in those communities to enforce protection orders or enforce bail conditions. Alaska State Trooper 7 also questioned whether those convicted of sex assault were being properly monitored, particularly in regards to their computer use and using computers to commit other sex offenses.

In a case of noting monitoring was happening, Prosecutor 2 explained that pre-sentence reports that contain victim impact information are always on an individual's record if they are convicted, and noted that those are helpful for establishing a pattern of behavior in a later case.

Rehabilitation or Treatment for Perpetrators

As shown in Table 5, 4.8% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that rehabilitation or treatment for perpetrators was achieved for them. *Rehabilitation or treatment for the perpetrator* was specified for survey participants as “*Rehabilitation or treatment for the perpetrator to address underlying causes of their behaviors and prevent them from perpetrating in the future.*”

In the stakeholder interviews, few participants discussed rehabilitation in terms of whether it was done (or is generally done). Victim-survivor Tarana did not see her perpetrator get the help she thought he needed. Victim-survivor Sheryl's perpetrator participated in a number of rehabilitative programs for sobriety and sex offender treatment, although she was not convinced that the programs were effective. Alaska State Trooper 3 said that they saw courts prioritizing rehabilitation for sex offenders over the safety and health of the victim-survivor and the public.:

What I hear in court is people prioritizing the rehabilitation of the offender over the safety and health and, of the victim and the public. And other potential future victims and it communicates, to me, that our system doesn't believe this is that serious. ... And it seems like there's been a huge focus on- that somehow the scales have become unbalanced where we're more focused on the rehabilitation of a perpetrator than punishment and safety of people from becoming victimized further.

Quick Resolution

When looking first at the victim-survivor survey data as shown in Table 5, 11.1% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that *quick resolution* of their case in the criminal justice system was achieved for them.

Additional data on the length of time of case processing comes from the agency records. Table 7 contains the length of time for case processing between all stages of the reporting process, from the time of the sexual assault to the report to AST, to the time AST completed their investigation, to the time the

case was referred to Law, to the time Law either opened the case or declined to prosecute, to the time it was dismissed or there was a verdict (plea or trial). A value of 0 indicates that the two events happened on the same day. Because of the strong positive skew of each of these time distributions, both the mean and median are included as measures of central tendency.

As can be seen in Table 7, the number of days it took for a sexual assault to be reported to AST ranged from 0 to 13,322 days, with a median of 2 days. Once reported, the number of days from report to AST completing their investigation ranged from 0 to 2,461 days, with a median of 76.5 days. Once the investigation was completed, the number of days from investigation completion to the case being referred to Law ranged from 0 to 2,297 days, with a median of 6 days. Once referred to Law, the number of days from being referred to Law to Law making an open/decline decision ranged from 0 to 1,799 days, with a median of 49 days. Finally, once the case was opened by Law, the number of days from opening the case to a verdict ranged from 30 to 2,243 days, with a median of 546 days.

To give context from the stakeholder interviews, when asked what stood out to them about the process of sexual assault cases moving through the criminal justice process, both Alaska State Trooper 3 and Prosecutor 2 both elaborated on the pervasively slow pace of cases moving through the prosecution phase. In the words of Alaska State Trooper 3:

The more frustrating part, for me because it totally outside of my control, is the ... time that the person's actually charged to the time prosecution is done, is unacceptable to me. I mean, to put the victim through that where a defendant can delay the court hearings over and over and over with no recourse for saying, "Enough is enough," like this, "What about justice for the victim?" And what, "It's time to go to court." That doesn't exist as far as I've ever seen. Granted, I'm not a lawyer going through all those. There's many hearings that happened in that time frame. But to me, that's totally unacceptable, but I don't think that process can change. That's our Constitution. That's our court procedures. It seems to me that there should be a recourse for seeking justice for the victim in a more timely way. Seems to me there should be court rules that establish- we shouldn't be able to just delay, delay, delay, delay, delay, forever. But it- that tends to happen. I mean, we have trials sometimes that happen four or five years after the incident. That's insane. So that to me is the biggest frustration.

Victim-survivor Simone also commented on how slowly her case moved through the prosecution process and the burden this placed on her and her family:

And they also furthered the sentence repeatedly, and it was like, every time I had, you know, I wanted people to show up at the courtroom. And it's in [another community], because this thing happened down, you know, out of town. And every time, I'm like, rallying the troops and going, "Okay, this is the day. We gotta go, we all have to get a hotel," you know, it's like, and then they would change it. And I just felt like - and then there was a reason for changing it that was such bogus, it was like, "She didn't, she hadn't had a chance to look at the case". And I was like, "What? It's been two years. You haven't had a chance to look at it? You kidding me?" So, that was very uncomfortable.

Victim-survivor Alice, on the other hand, noted that she was not concerned with the speed of the resolution of her case, and that she would have rather that it took longer to get the right outcome:

I guess if the lawyer would have really fought- not that he didn't fight for me- but really, I think, I remember him saying he wants it closed, and he- this case has been open for so long, and he just wants to help me get it closed so I can move on. And I'm- I don't need it closed, I need- you know, I don't give a shit if it's open. I just need it to be done correctly. You know? Like if you take ten years, great, but if- probation is not cutting it, you know?

Voice

As shown in Table 5, 56.6% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that voice was achieved for them. This was not specific to AST with *voice* being defined for survey participants as “Being heard when speaking about sexual assault. For persons who have been assaulted, this might include being heard in court during testimony or when delivering a victim impact statement, or it could involve being heard by friends, family, and/or the community when sharing about one’s experiences.”

In the stakeholder interviews, victim-survivor Eleanor noted that although her perpetrator was incarcerated for a separate offense, she did not feel that justice was done in her case because, in part, she was never given the chance to testify against him.

In the system stakeholder interviews, Crime Lab Analyst 1 noted that victim-survivors in Alaska often go unheard, so justice is ‘probably’ not always happening:

I also know as a citizen of Alaska that if you listen to communities, if you listen to public radio, and you hear the victims from Nome who say, 'We're not listened to.' 'Nobody's following up on our cases.' What I would say is there's certainly a component of victims who do not feel that justice has been served. Has it or not? My guess is that some of them have a point. My guess is it's not 100%, but my guess is a lot of them have a point. So, is justice served? Has justice been served? I like to think often. Realistically, probably not always.

Similarly, Victim Advocate 6 said that justice was not done in sexual assault cases because victim-survivors are not heard or respected through the process.

Because of it's long and drawn out, it's easy for you to lose a victim in two years. And it's really easy for a victim to get discouraged in two years of appearing and not going forward and they say it's going to go forward or changes in terms of conditions of course, things like that and constantly having to go back to court. When plea deals are offered if the victim is not actively working with The Office of Victim's Rights, you don't consistently see them being consulted before, like they should be. Oftentimes you will see them being consulted after it's been offered or after it's been accepted.

Extralegal Justice

As shown in Table 5, 25.0% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that extralegal justice was achieved for them. *Extralegal justice* was defined for survey participants as “*Justice that happens outside of the criminal justice system. This could include the perpetrator losing their job or being held accountable by their family, friends, or community, or any other form of justice that does not involve the criminal justice system.*”

In the stakeholder interviews, victim-survivor Tarana explained how she was disappointed that there were no options other than pursuing criminal justice charges and sending her perpetrator to prison for long time. Although she desired some sort of response, she was treated like she had wasted everyone's time by reporting and not wanting to pursue criminal charges. Similarly, Public Defender 1 talked about the injustice that occurs when the victim-survivor may want something different from what the criminal justice system has to offer:

There's a lot of pushing the alleged victim to maintain their story, and even pushing witnesses who don't necessarily support what the- don't support factually what the alleged victim claimed happen to, you know, support the survivor, which has huge issues, in my opinion. There is a push for conviction, not necessarily for justice.

Victim Advocate 2 discussed extralegal justice happening when answering the question about justice being done, explaining how small, Alaska Native communities will make comments toward, shun, and even berate those they know have committed a sexual assault.

Restitution

As shown in Table 5, 4.8% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that restitution was achieved for them. *Restitution* was specified for survey participants as “*Restitution or compensation for the person who was sexually assaulted for any financial costs resulting from the assault or reporting (e.g., personal belongings lost as evidence, security system installations, medical and therapy costs, etc.)*”

In the stakeholder interviews, victim-survivor Naomi explained that she had to purchase a number of personal items that were taken as evidence after her assault, some of which were quite expensive. She applied for victim-survivor compensation but was denied:

I didn't meet all the qualifications or something, or there wasn't an express need, really. Which I get it, I mean people are trying to find places to live and eat and work and I'm just crying about my [stuff], like, I know I come from privilege, so it kinda irritated me.

Victim-survivor Emmeline application to the VCCB for moving expenses and lost wages was denied for reasons she could not entirely remember, but thought that it was related to her employment at the time she applied.

Victim-survivor Simone was compensated for therapy services by the Violent Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB) and received financial support from her local DVSA advocacy provider for certain expenses such as clothing and lost wages due to attending various court dates, but expressed frustration that she was not able to be compensated by VCCB for purchasing a security system for her home.

Victim-survivor Audre was also was able to get compensation for her various losses related to her assault and following court procedures through the VCCB. Victim-survivor Laverne also received

compensation from the VCCB, and was able to get counseling through a grant program through her local DVSA advocacy provider.

Due Process

As shown in Table 5, 36.8% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that due process was achieved for them. *Due process* was specified for survey participants as “*Due process to protect the rights and presumed innocence of those who are accused of sexual assault. Due process includes the accused’s right to a lawyer and to be proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt by a jury of their peers.*”

In the stakeholder interviews, Simone talked at length during her interview about the over-emphasis on due process creating injustice:

There's this concern about the poor, innocent guy who goes to jail for the wrong thing, but what about all those innocent women? There's just an innocence side of this that's not being weighed. And people can't even understand what I'm saying when I say that to them. Like, yes, you're concerned about this innocence. What about this innocence? Is there any way you could see there's innocence over here? ... I honestly think that, in the same way that people, you know, this way we went from talking about prejudice to now we talk about bias all the time at work instead. It's obvious that there's a bias towards all these poor, innocent men, in my opinion.

In the system stakeholder interviews, Public Defender 3 noted that justice is done in terms of procedural justice and due process because Alaska has robust procedures and good quality legal professionals. Public Defender 2, however, discussed not seeing justice being done at times because of breaches of due process. They explained that this could involve judges signing off on search warrants for invasive exams of suspects, but it also involves the difficulties in being released on bail, even without a criminal history.

Dialogue around Sexual Assault

As shown in Table 5, 26.1% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that community dialogue around sexual assault was achieved for them. *Dialogue around sexual assault* was specified for

survey participants as “*This dialogue can include (often difficult) conversations in the criminal justice system and/or the community, and involves working to address the issue together, as a collective.*”

In the stakeholder interviews, Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 2 noted that they see more community dialogue happening around sexual assault when asked what stands out to them about the sexual assault reporting process:

Just with the whole thing. The whole, even sort of recent cultural things that I've seen like on the news, or in the media. Like, "Me Too" Movement. Or something. There's something going on where people are talking about this more. At the same time that I'm learning about it more and I've been doing the job and of course I'm a nurse so through my lens you know, I see the shift. It's like we have to really shift this whole thing into, just like understanding of trauma and like, as a healthcare issue.

When talking about ways that justice has been done for her, victim-survivor Libby referenced her ability to talk about what happened to her with others:

Like I said about talking about it, I tried to talk about it because, you know, even before this whole like Me Too movement. And I think mostly for many reasons, one, I think it's healthy to, you know, work through it. And I think that any time you've gone through any, whatever, any weird thing, that gives you an ability to relate to people, you know, in a level you couldn't previously.

Victim-survivor Simone talked at length in her interview about the need for community dialogue, particularly because she does not see the necessary dialogues happening now:

And I try and talk about it a lot, and I try to talk about it in the same way someone might talk about a snowstorm, like getting caught in an avalanche. Cause it is a life-threatening experience, and you don't know which ones gonna go off and so it's terrifying. And I think that people are- feel fine talking about avalanches. But they don't feel- our culture doesn't feel fine about talking about rape. And it's important to me to normalize it that way. Because I feel like if one of my coworkers were to come into work and talk about the avalanches that they get caught in, nobody tries to stop them. And no one, you know, people aren't just like frozen in spot, or any of those things that happen when - and I honestly believe all of the experiences we have are just like an avalanche.

Public Education

As shown in Table 5, 22.7% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that public education was achieved for them. *Public education* was specified for survey participants as “*Public*

education about sexual assault and its consequences, along with existing resources and ways to support those who have been sexually assaulted.”

Most of the discussion on public education in the stakeholder interviews was centered around recommendations for more or better public education, which will be elaborated on in *Findings Part 3 of 3: What Increases the Likelihood of Achieving Justice?*

Victim Advocate 7 did discuss how their organization does a ‘great job’ of traveling to health fairs and other events in communities surrounding their hub community to spread the word about resources available for victim-survivors, usually a couple of times a year to each community. Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 5 also discussed being a part of community outreach and education in their communities, putting on presentations about sexual assault, sexual abuse of minors, how to report, and services available.

Prosecutor 1 discussed how most jurors have ‘none’ of the education and training on childhood trauma and the dynamics of sexual assault (and how this is a problem for how they view victim-survivors whose demeanor and behavior do not match preconceived notions for how victim-survivors should feel and act).

Apology

As shown in Table 5, 26.1% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that apology was achieved for them. *Apology* was specified for survey participants as “*Apology for the harm done to the person who was sexually assaulted. This apology could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, the community, and/or the perpetrator.*”

As discussed in the findings section on stakeholders’ definitions of justice, apology from the person who committed the sexual assault was not often talked about in the interviews. Victim-survivors Naomi, Margaret, and Sheryl all mentioned that their perpetrators had apologized directly to them. Victim-survivor Coretta received an apology for her perpetrator’s actions from the perpetrator’s sister, but not the perpetrator himself. No other family members of his apologized to her, but Coretta mentioned that

she would like for them to say sorry for what he did. Victim-survivor Angela explained how shortly after being assaulted her perpetrator acted as if nothing had happened, and she expressed anger about his lack of apology: “*And not even an apology or, ‘I’m sorry’ or- I don’t know what I fucking expected.*” Victim-survivor Naomi explained that her perpetrator’s apology did not mean much to her, whereas victim-survivor Margaret explained that her perpetrator’s apology, which came with a request for forgiveness, filled her with a ‘raging anger.’

Choice or Control

As shown in Table 5, 40.0% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that choice or control was achieved for them. *Choice or control* was specified for survey participants as “*Choice or control for the person who was sexually assaulted. This could include having a say in whether or how things happen, such as whether to participate in a forensic exam, whether to report to law enforcement after a forensic exam (anonymous report), whether to participate in an ongoing investigation, whether or not to pursue charges in a case, etc.*”

In the system stakeholder interviews, many participants talked about the lengths they go to throughout the process to ensure that victim-survivors are given choices and options, particularly regarding the SART exam process. Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 6, for example, shared the following when asked what stood out to them about the sexual assault reporting process:

Probably what comes to mind immediately is what I tell patients when I initially encounter them, which is, “Whatever you do here in the clinic today when I’m working with you, I want you to be comfortable with the choices and decisions that you have made surrounding what you did here at the clinic during this process. Whether that’s going through the clinic, or through the process or stopping partway through, I want you to be able to look back on this experience when we all come together and you’ve told us what’s happened and that’s what you choose to do. I want you to be happy with whatever decisions you’ve made for what we’ve done here today. When you look back tomorrow, next year, ten years from now, I want you to be able to feel like you have had some control over what’s happened in the time that I’ve been with you.” And I think a lot of times that is very therapeutic for patients because oftentimes they didn’t have any control or say in what happened to them. So I always strive to give them as much choice as I can, and I understand once charges are filed and it goes through the court system, you know, they don’t have that control anymore. But, I want them to understand that at least in the initial time surrounding that report,

they do have some control for what they want to do versus not do and be supported in that.

Indeed, victim-survivor Abigail noted that she felt she was given this choice and control during her SART exam: “They were sensitive. They did ask me ‘Is it okay?’ They didn't make me do anything. They gave me a choice. I could've said no. They didn't try to force me. I understood why they wanted to.” Conversely, however, when asked what stood out to her about her reporting process, victim-survivor Angela had this to say about the lack of choice and control she was given regarding who she shared her story with:

I'm never gonna forget how callous he was. They should've sent a female. And I even asked for one. Yeah, and my advocate asked for one also. 'Cause they could have, at that point, said, “You know what, let's not do this today. I know you've told your story a whole lot of times, how about we wait until we have a female officer and we'll come to you?” That would've been perfect. That is not how it went down. And I know they do that, because I've been, as I've said, I have been an advocate, so I've been with women where they have been like, you know, “I would rather have a female.” And then, you know, that is suggested, then they can do that.

Retribution

As shown in Table 5, 5.6% of survey participants who reported to AST affirmed that retribution was achieved for them. *Retribution* was defined for survey participants as “*Retribution, or punishment inflicted on the perpetrator as vengeance for their harmful actions.*”

In the stakeholder interviews, victim-survivor Libby described how a friend of hers took retributive justice into their own hands and physically assaulted her perpetrator, although this was not something she expressed a desire for or necessarily condoned. Victim-survivor Malala chose to see justice being done in God exacting vengeance for her: “*The only justice I've got so far was from God. And when my ex-husband dropped dead of a heart attack, that was justice.*”

Victim-survivor Ruth talked about how sex offenders are ‘dealt with in jail,’ which aligns with the idea of justice as retribution being done: “*The line of most hated goes from the childhood sex offender, and then the rapist is right there next to him. You know? So, prison's hell for them.*” Public Defender 1 also emphasized that retributive justice is done through sex offenders’ experiences while incarcerated:

Those who are accused of sex offenses, especially child sex offenses, are a target in jail. They just are. And we don't protect people enough in jail. They essentially have the choice of being in solitary confinement or being in the general population and risking getting beat, raped.

Victim Advocate 2 discussed how communities sometimes may exercise retributive justice:

There are probably social consequences in the community itself. ... If you live in a small community and somebody's been sexually assaulted, it's usually happens that everybody finds out. All adults usually find out and there might be comments to that person, or shunning, or yelling.

Judge 2 also saw retributive justice being done, although not all the time:

But justice, I think, would also be defined as a punishment that equals a crime. And maybe that our justice system, or justice doesn't necessarily allow for that all the time. And I might be a little philosophical on you, but I think that people are held to account more often than not and that's a good thing. And so I think to that extent, justice is done.

Alaska State Trooper 3, however, saw retributive justice rarely happening:

The only analogy that comes to mind is leveling the scale of if an unjust [sic] thing was done- such as a horrific crime- then part of- punishment is an aspect of justice, I believe. And that seems, again, seems to be something that's been lost. Is that not punishing people for horrific things they do is injustice. And it seems like there's been a huge focus on- that somehow the scales have become unbalanced where we're more focused on the rehabilitation of a perpetrator than punishment and safety of people from becoming victimized further. ... So by that definition of justice, justice doesn't happen very often.

Summary of Findings for “Is Justice Done?”

To answer the question of whether justice is done in cases of sexual assaults reported to AST, all three data sources provided some perspective. Because of the extensive and varied definitions of justice for which there are no agency records (i.e., *belief, acknowledgement, compassionate treatment*), and because of low participation in the victim-survivor survey among victim-survivors who reported to law enforcement (specifically, to the Alaska State Troopers), there was very little quantitative information to determine whether most of the types of justice are or were actually achieved. The data presented to

answer this question are therefore preliminary and exploratory, and should be interpreted as giving a somewhat limited view of whether justice is done.

With this acknowledgement that the victim-survivor survey data is exploratory, this data suggests that there is progress to be made in achieving most types of justice definitions, including those most prioritized by victim-survivors: belief, acknowledgement, compassion, incarceration, and healing. The data also show that when considering justice as an overall concept, over half of victim-survivors see no justice being done for them.

Indeed, when considering criminal justice case processing stages as definitions of justice, the agency records also indicate that, typically, fewer than half of cases at each stage in the process make it through to the next stage. Of the 995 cases reported, 524 included SA cases and 490 included SAM cases (a handful of cases included both). Of the 524 SA cases, 32.8% were referred for prosecution, 22.7% of those referred were accepted for prosecution (7.4% of all SA cases reported), and 41% of those accepted resulted in a guilty plea or conviction for an SA/SAM offense (3.1% of all SA cases reported). Of the 490 SAM cases, 32.7% were referred for prosecution, 42.5% of those referred were accepted for prosecution (13.9% of all SAM cases reported), and 60.3% of those accepted resulted in a guilty plea or conviction for an SA/SAM offense (8.4% of all SAM cases reported).

When considering all justice outcomes with the context of system and victim-survivor stakeholder perspectives and experiences from the qualitative interviews, the answers varied from confident ‘yesses’ to resounding ‘nos,’ and everywhere in between when asked whether justice was done or is done. These discussions of justice done also indicate that one’s perceptions of whether justice is done is contingent on the totality of one’s experience with a number of factors, and that no one event, experience, or interaction wholly shapes one’s perceptions.

Findings Part 3 of 3: What Increases the Likelihood of Achieving Justice?

This section focuses on which factors are related to achieving the different types of justice outlined in *Findings Part 1 of 3: What is Justice?* Data for this section come from the stakeholder interviews (both victim-survivor and system) and the agency records. *Essentially, answering this question (What Increases the Likelihood of Achieving Justice?) establishes areas to focus on for improving justice for sexual assault survivors.*

This section begins by exploring factors that might shape each type of justice, organized in order of the justice definitions most often prioritized as within victim-survivors' top three justice definitions in the victim-survivor survey. These sections are then followed by interview participants' recommendations for improving the sexual assault case process, organized by topic area.

The factors that might shape each type of justice come largely from the stakeholder interviews. After being asked whether they believed justice was done/being done for sexual assault cases reported to the Alaska State Troopers, interview participants were asked why or why not they thought justice was done/being done. Throughout the interviews, they also discussed why they thought certain events or behaviors happened or did not happen, including different elements of justice.

The factors that might shape each type of justice also come from univariate and bivariate analyses using the agency records. These analyses include descriptive data on Law's documented reasons for choosing not to prosecute, and bivariate analyses assessing whether statistically significant relationships existed between various victim-survivor and incident characteristics and two case processing outcomes:

- 1) Reports of SA/SAM resulting in SA/SAM charges being referred for prosecution or not,
and
- 2) Incidents referred for prosecution resulting in SA/SAM charges being accepted for prosecution or not.

Belief / Acknowledgement / Compassionate Treatment

The justice definitions of belief, acknowledgement, and compassionate treatment are combined into one section here because of the overlap of these concepts in the stakeholder interview data. *Belief* is defined for this study as “*Believing the person who was sexually assaulted. This belief could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, or the community.*” *Acknowledgement* is defined as “*Acknowledgement of the harm done to the person who was sexually assaulted. This acknowledgement (acceptance of the truth or existence of something) could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, the community, and/or the perpetrator.*” Acknowledgement and belief are very similar conceptually, but acknowledgement includes the implication of an understanding and/or knowledge of *the harm done* to a victim, whereas belief is more centered on simply believing that a sexual assault occurred. Acknowledgement also often included more overt action, whereas belief was more passive. *Compassionate treatment* is defined as “*Compassionate treatment of the person who was sexually assaulted by the professionals in and around the criminal justice system. This could include the police, victim advocates, medical professionals, etc.*”

In the stakeholder interviews, Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 6 noted that empathetic, belief centered responses by Troopers tended to get overshadowed by those Troopers trying to systematically collect the facts and send someone to jail:

There's facts and statutes and definitions and stuff that have to be met for law enforcement to proceed forward, in the legal criminal justice process. And I think that sometimes that focus can get in the way of their doing their job- but, with that mindset sometimes that justice and my definition of justice, that “I've been heard, I've been believed. I feel like there is a level of care and compassion here.” Sometimes that- I don't want to say it's missing- but is overshadowed by “I need the facts so I can do my job, so I can, you know, put this person in jail and I need to go that route.”

Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 1, Victim Advocate 1, and victim-survivor Ruth noted that engaging in behavior that could put one at risk for victimization, particularly alcohol use, could shape system stakeholders' belief in as well as empathy for the victim-survivor.

Consequences / Arrest / Trial / Guilty Verdicts / Incarceration

The justice definitions of incarceration, consequences for perpetrators, trial, arrest, and guilty verdicts are combined into one section here because of the overlap in the data of these concepts. *Jail or prison time* is defined for this study as “*Jail or prison time for the perpetrator, regardless of whether this changes their behavior.*” *Consequences* is defined as “*Consequences for the perpetrator so that they know they have done something wrong, regardless of what those consequences are.*” *The case going to trial* includes the caveat of “*regardless of the perpetrator being found guilty.*” *Arrest* also includes the caveat of “*regardless of whether that arrest leads to a charge and/or conviction.*”

This subsection will begin with data from the qualitative stakeholder interviews hypothesizing about why these criminal justice system consequences do or do not happen. This exploration is followed by a series of analyses using the agency records.

Stakeholder Interview Participants Perspectives on Criminal Justice Consequences

Many stakeholders discussed the importance of evidence and how evidence quality determines whether or not justice is done. Alaska State Trooper 9 discussed the difficulties of consent cases, where the only evidence is the word of the victim-survivor against the word of the suspect-perpetrator. Consent cases were discussed at length in many of the system stakeholder interviews. Victim Advocate 1 noted that evidence is hard to collect in sexual assault cases, which was, again, a common theme throughout the system stakeholder interviews. It was also noted that when there was no other evidence, these cases may often hinge on a confession directly to an investigator or during a Glass warrant effort.³¹ This means that gathering successful evidence is often dependent of investigator skill. Crime Lab Analyst 3 noted that

³¹ “Glass warrant” is the colloquial term used to describe a conversation between the suspect-perpetrator and either a cooperating victim-survivor or another party. The conversation is recorded by law enforcement with the knowledge of the cooperating party and with the intent of using any incriminating or exculpatory statements in the ongoing criminal investigation. They are called Glass warrants because of the 1978 *State of Alaska v. Glass* Alaska Supreme Court case determining the need for a warrant to record these conversations.

forensic technology is continuously advancing, but they are still not able to identify suspect profiles in all cases. Finally, victim-survivor Gloria noted that because there was not enough evidence in her case alone, she was told that her perpetrator may face legal consequences in the future if other victim-survivors he assaulted came forward. She noted, *“And I was like, that’s like a good and a bad thing. Like, I really hope this never happens, but is my only justice relying on someone else getting hurt? That’s terrible. Like, that’s not comforting.”*

Regarding the decision to prosecute and cases moving forward in the process more generally, interviewees noted the high threshold of needing to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Judge 3 and Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 1 noted that prosecutors do not want to put victim-survivors through the prosecution process if they believe the case will not meet be able to meet that criteria. Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 1 also noted that victim-survivor blaming attitudes may often shape potential “reasonable doubt” in these cases that do not move forward. Victim-survivor Simone spent a significant portion of her interview discussing the problems for ensuring justice created by the need to reach the standard of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt:

Well, justice to me looks like, for one thing, that the innocent you know, this constant concern that we have about the wrong person going to jail for the thing. And therefore, we need to have absolute proof or whatever it's called. and it, you know, so much of that is based on how much money you have, for someone to help you get your proof or not. Or, or squash it. But, it looks to me like there's a lot more focus on the innocent people who aren't getting anything. And all the people I know who have been raped, many of them by their intimate partners, none of them reported it. And honestly, it would have probably gotten nowhere if they had, which is why they aren't reporting it.

Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 1 and Victim Advocate 1 also noted that the workload at Law influences the decision to prosecute, with Victim Advocate 1 noting that this leads to cases being dropped when they should not be:

And sadly, I think our prosecutors are so overworked that they don't have the time to be able to put all their effort into every, you know, single case, because they have to split it up among all of their cases. So, sometimes, I think some of them get dropped sooner than they should.

Victim-survivor willingness to proceed was noted as being a key variable in the success of cases in the criminal justice process, although Victim Advocate 4 noted that this willingness does not always lead to a successful prosecution. Victim-survivor Simone captured the sentiment of many by noting the importance of going beyond just being willing to proceed, but being proactive in one's pursuit of justice: *"I'm kind of a symptom of justice being achievable as long as I participate heavily in it."*

For those who discussed victim-survivors' willingness to proceed shaping justice being done, they also reflected on factors shaping willingness to proceed. Alaska State Trooper 5 discussed the importance of the investigator being compassionate and empathetic in their communication with the victim-survivor to keep them engaged and thus ensure justice.

Finally, when discussing justice being done generally, two victim-survivor interviewees (Angela and Malala) discussed their beliefs that the lack of justice for them and others may be due to racism against Alaska Native individuals:

"And it feels like aren't- it feels like- it's almost Indigenously targeted, too. Because we, there, we have friends in the community who are, you know, are non-Native. And every time there's justice. Why? What makes us so different?" Angela

"Natives get nothing. I don't wanna keep saying Native, but that's what I am and that's who I am. And we are the most raped people in the whole world. We're the most raped people our whole life and nobody does nothing. Nobody." Malala

Agency Case Records and Criminal Justice Consequences

This section includes bivariate analyses assessing whether statistically significant relationships exist between various victim-survivor and incident characteristics and case processing outcomes using agency case records provided by DPS and Law. Based on what was shared by system stakeholders in the qualitative interview data as shaping justice outcomes, available and relevant victim-survivor, perpetrator, and incident characteristics in the agency case records database were analyzed using bivariate analyses (testing whether two variables are statistically related to each other). These available and relevant victim-survivor and incident characteristics included the geographic location of the assault; alcohol or drug use;

whether or not forensic evidence was collected for a case; the victim-offender relationship; victim-survivor racial identity, gender, and age; and time between the assault and the report. The two case processing outcomes examined were:

- 1) Reports of SA/SAM resulting in SA/SAM charges being referred for prosecution or not, and
- 2) Incidents referred for prosecution resulting in SA/SAM charges being accepted for prosecution or not.

There were not enough cases in the stages of the process after being accepted for prosecution (such as cases dismissed, in active prosecution, etc.) to conduct analyses. Chi square analyses were used for all relationships except for victim-survivor age and time between assault and report. For these latter two variables, logistic regression was used.

Only statistically significant findings are elaborated on – if no statistically significant relationship was found between two variables, that is noted in the relevant section. It is also important to emphasize that all relationships are merely correlations and that bivariate analyses alone do not establish a causal relationship between variables. All bivariate findings are summarized in Tables 8 (adult SA cases) and 9 (SAM cases).

These bivariate analyses are followed with a very brief exploration of data from Law’s agency records documenting their reasons for declining to prosecute.

Detachment.³² When looking at adult SA incidents, whether incidents occurred in A, B, C, or D Detachments was *not significantly related* to whether incidents were referred for prosecution. SA

³² The geographic jurisdictions of AST are called detachments. There are four main Detachments which are differentiated by a letter designator: A-D. The state was divided into five Detachments at the time the bulk of this report was written: A-E. Before report publication, E Detachment was incorporated into A Detachment as A Detachment North, so references are made to E Detachment in this report. A Detachment is comprised of two sub-Detachments: North and South. Certain posts within A, B and D Detachments serve more urban or populated areas while the C Detachment service area is solely

incidents occurring in E detachment were referred for prosecution 10.9% of the time compared to 34.3% of incidents occurring outside of E detachment ($\chi^2 = 10.55$, $p < 0.01$), meaning SA incidents occurring in E Detachment were significantly *less* likely to have SA charges referred for prosecution than those not occurring in E Detachment.

When looking at SAM incidents, whether incidents occurred in A, B, or E Detachment was *not significantly related* to whether incidents were referred for prosecution. SAM incidents occurring in C detachment were referred for prosecution 24.9% of the time compared to 38.6% of incidents occurring outside of C detachment ($\chi^2 = 10.345$, $p < 0.01$). SAM incidents occurring in D detachment were referred for prosecution 45.4% of the time compared to 30.0% of incidents occurring outside of D detachment ($\chi^2 = 7.645$, $p < 0.01$). In summary, SAM incidents in C Detachment were significantly *less* likely to have SAM charges referred for prosecution than those not occurring in C Detachment, whereas SAM incidents in D Detachment were significantly *more* likely to have SAM charges referred for prosecution than those not occurring in D Detachment.

In both adult and minor incidents of sexual assault/abuse, Detachments were *not significantly related* to whether incidents with SA/SAM charges referred to Law were accepted for prosecution (although there were not enough cases for analyzing E Detachment for adult SAs nor A Detachment for SAMs).

Rural, Off-Road. In addition to examining Detachment, a measure was created examining whether the assault occurred in a rural, off-road census area compared to a non-rural, off-road census

characterized by large areas of land with small communities spread far apart, often not connected to the main population centers of the state or each other by road (therefore only accessible by plane, boat, or snow machine).

area.³³ This measure was intended to serve as an indicator of communities that are less accessible and which may experience greater delays in response times due to their isolated nature.

When looking at adult SA incidents, whether incidents occurred in rural, off-road areas was *not significantly related* to whether incidents were referred for prosecution.

When looking at SAM incidents, 26.3% of those occurring in rural, off-road areas were referred for prosecution, compared to 38.8% of those occurring in non-rural, off-road areas ($\chi^2 = 8.770$, $p < 0.01$), meaning SAM incidents occurring in rural, off-road areas were significantly *less* likely to be referred for prosecution.

In both adult and minor incidents of sexual assault/abuse, rural, off-road location was *not significantly related* to whether incidents with SA/SAM charges were accepted for prosecution.

Alcohol or Drug Use. Alcohol or drug use (AOD) was *not significantly related* to whether incidents were referred for prosecution in adult cases of sexual assault. However, when looking at SAM incidents, AST referred 53.4% of incidents involving AOD for prosecution, compared to only 28.1% of those that did not involve AOD ($\chi^2 = 21.014$, $p < 0.001$), meaning for SAM incidents, incidents involving AOD were significantly *more* likely to be referred for prosecution.

In both adult and minor incidents of sexual assault/abuse, AOD involvement was *not significantly related* to whether incidents with SA/SAM charges were accepted for prosecution.

SAK Collection. Victim-survivor SAK collection was *not statistically related* to whether charges were referred for prosecution nor to whether charges were accepted for prosecution for SA or SAM

³³ Census areas were designated as being “rural, off-road” if the majority of communities in the area are not connected to the main highway systems spanning Interior Alaska down to the Kenai Peninsula. Census areas designated as rural, off-road included Aleutians East, Aleutians West, Bethel, Dillingham, Haines, Juneau, Ketchikan Gateway, Kodiak Island, Lake and Peninsula, Nome, North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon, Wade Hampton, Wrangell-Petersburg, and Yukon-Koyukuk. Census areas designated as non-rural, off-road included Anchorage, Denali, Fairbanks North Star, Kenai Peninsula, Matanuska-Susitna, Southeast Fairbanks, and Valdez-Cordova.

incidents. Suspect-perpetrator SAK collection was *not statistically related* to whether charges were referred for prosecution for both SA incidents. There were not enough cases for analyzing whether suspect-perpetrator SAK collection was related to whether charges were referred for SAM incidents, and for whether SA or SAM incidents were accepted for prosecution.

Victim-Offender Relationship. Relationships between victim-survivors and the suspect-perpetrators were broken down as the victim-survivors' relationship to the suspect-perpetrator, where the victim-survivor could be a

- 1) current or former intimate partner;
- 2) friend, acquaintance, or otherwise known;
- 3) child, grandchild, or familial child/grandchild;
- 4) sibling or step-sibling;
- 5) parent, grandparent, or other family member; or
- 6) stranger.

For the bivariate analyses examining whether relationships were significantly related to case processing outcomes, all types of relationships were examined except for the stranger category because the number of assaults committed by strangers was too small for meaningful analyses. Victim-survivors as intimate partners were only examined for adult SA cases and victim-survivors as children/grandchildren and as siblings were only examined for SAM incidents because of low numbers of cases meeting these criteria. However, none of the relationship categories were statistically related to whether adult SA incidents or SAM incidents were referred for prosecution or whether they were accepted for prosecution.

Racial Identity. Because the main racial identities of victim-survivors in the agency records sample were Alaska Native/American Indian (AIAN) and White, with very few belonging to other racial identities, and because only 6 cases involved both a White and AIAN victim, this subsection will look at

victim-survivors identified as AIAN compared to all other racial identities, with the understanding that the comparison group is predominantly White.

When looking at adult sexual assault incidents, AIAN victim-survivor identity was *not significantly related* to whether charges were referred for prosecution. When looking at SAM incidents, however, charges were referred for prosecution for 29.1% of incidents involving an AIAN victim, compared to 40.2% of those not involving an AIAN victim-survivor ($\chi^2 = 6.109$, $p < 0.05$), meaning SAM cases involving an AIAN victim-survivor were significantly *less* likely to have a SAM charge referred for prosecution than cases not involving an AIAN victim-survivor.

In both adult and minor incidents of sexual assault/abuse that had SA/SAM charges referred to Law by AST, AIAN identity was *not significantly related* to whether or not charges were accepted for prosecution.

Gender. In both adult and minor incidents of sexual assault/abuse, female victim-survivor involvement was *not significantly related* to whether charges were referred for prosecution. Male victim-survivor involvement was not related to whether adult SA incidents were referred for prosecution. Incidents involving at least one male victim-survivor were referred for prosecution for 19.8% of SAM incidents, compared to 36.6% of SAM incidents not involving a male victim-survivor ($\chi^2 = 11.368$, $p < 0.01$), meaning SAM cases involving at least one male victim were significantly less likely to be referred for prosecution than those not involving a male victim.

There was not enough variation to examine the relationship between gender and incidents accepted for prosecution.

Age. For both adult SA and SAM incidents, age was significantly related to the odds of a case being referred for prosecution, with increases in age increasing the odds of a case being referred. For adult SA incidents this significant relationship was a 1.76% increase in the likelihood of being referred

for each age increase in years ($p < 0.05$). For SAM incidents this significant relationship was a 5.4% increase in the likelihood of being referred for each age increase in years ($p < 0.05$).

Age was *not significantly related* to incidents being accepted for prosecution for both SA and SAM incidents.

Time between Assault and Report. For both adult SA and SAM incidents, the number of days between the assault and the report to AST was *not significantly related* to the odds of a case being referred for prosecution, nor to the odds of a case being accepted for prosecution.

Table 8. Chi square bivariate analyses examining relationships between incident and person characteristics and referral and acceptance for prosecution for adult sexual assault (SA) incidents.

| | | Referred for prosecution (N = 524) | | Accepted for prosecution (N = 168) | |
|------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| | | % | χ^2 | % | χ^2 |
| Detachment | A | 45.8 | 2.123 | 16.7 | 0.136 |
| | Non-A | 31.6 | | 21.2 | |
| | B | 28.2 | 0.749 | 29.2 | 1.179 |
| | Non-B | 33.0 | | 19.4 | |
| | C | 33.6 | 0.377 | 18.8 | 0.402 |
| | Non-C | 31.1 | | 22.7 | |
| | D | 37.6 | 1.977 | 20.5 | 0.005 |
| | Non-D | 30.7 | | 91.0 | |
| | E | 10.9 | 10.552** | - | - |
| | Non-E | 34.3 | | - | |
| Rural, off-road | Rural, off-road | 35.8 | 3.549 | 18.8 | 2.082 |
| | Non-rural, off-road | 28.1 | | 28.2 | |
| Alcohol or drugs involved | AOD involved | 35.7 | 3.675 | 22.6 | 0.000 |
| | Non-AOD | 27.8 | | 22.7 | |
| SAK collected | Victim SAK | 34.6 | 0.713 | 27.0 | 1.053 |
| | No victim SAK | 31.0 | | 20.2 | |
| | Suspect SAK | 43.5 | | - | |
| | No suspect SAK | 31.7 | | - | |
| Relationship (Victim was...) | Partner | 37.7 | 1.462 | 25.0 | 0.022 |
| | Non-partner | 46.8 | | 26.6 | |
| | Friend / otherwise known | 47.2 | 0.732 | 23.4 | 1.153 |
| | Non-friend / otherwise known | 42.3 | | 31.5 | |
| | Parent / grandparent / other family member | 44.9 | 0.004 | 26.1 | 0.001 |
| | Non-parent / grandparent / other family member | 45.4 | | 26.4 | |
| Racial identity | AIAN | 36.7 | 3.148 | 19.1 | 2.184 |
| | Non-AIAN | 29.2 | | 28.8 | |
| Victim gender | At least one female victim | 31.7 | 0.978 | - | - |
| | No female victims | 39.5 | | - | |
| | At least one male victim | 26.9 | 1.020 | - | - |
| | No male victims | 33.0 | | - | |

* p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001

Note. The overall N for analyses varies based on missing data. Cells with no values did not have enough cases for meaningful analyses.

Table 9. Chi square bivariate analyses examining relationships between incident and person characteristics and referral and acceptance for prosecution for sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) incidents.

| | | Referred for prosecution (N = 490) | | Accepted for prosecution (N = 157) | |
|------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| | | % | χ^2 | % | χ^2 |
| Detachment | A | 42.1 | 0.803 | - | - |
| | Non-A | 32.3 | | | |
| | B | 40.2 | 3.739 | 51.2 | 1.744 |
| | Non-B | 30.4 | | | |
| | C | 24.9 | 10.345** | 35.9 | 1.524 |
| | Non-C | 38.6 | | | |
| | D | 45.4 | 7.645** | 42.1 | 0.007 |
| | Non-D | 30.0 | | | |
| | E | 24.5 | 1.784 | 46.2 | 0.070 |
| | Non-E | 33.6 | | | |
| Rural, off-road | Rural, off-road | 26.3 | 8.770** | 35.9 | 2.212 |
| | Non-rural, off-road | 38.8 | | | |
| Alcohol or drugs involved | AOD involved | 53.4 | 21.014*** | 43.8 | 0.014 |
| | Non-AOD | 27.11 | | | |
| SAK collected | Victim SAK | 41.9 | 1.297 | 64.3 | 2.829 |
| | No victim SAK | 32.0 | | | |
| | Suspect SAK | - | - | - | - |
| | No suspect SAK | - | | | |
| Relationship (Victim was...) | Child / grandchild / familial child/grandchild | 53.2 | 1.801 | 47.6 | 0.041 |
| | Non child / grandchild | 44.3 | | | |
| | Friend / otherwise known | 46.2 | 0.022 | 46.3 | 0.000 |
| | Non-friend / otherwise known | 47.1 | | | |
| | Parent / grandparent / other family member | 44.1 | 0.244 | 38.7 | 0.936 |
| | Non-parent / grandparent / other family member | 47.5 | | | |
| | Sibling / step-sibling | 29.2 | 3.243 | - | - |
| | Non-sibling / step-sibling | 48.3 | | | |
| Racial identity | AIAN | 29.1 | 6.109* | 41.3 | 0.134 |
| | Non-AIAN | 40.2 | | | |
| Victim gender | At least one female victim | 33.9 | 2.103 | - | - |
| | No female victims | 25.0 | | | |
| | At least one male victim | 19.8 | 11.368 | 33.3 | 1.087 |
| | No male victims | 36.6 | | | |

* p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001

Note. The overall N for analyses varies based on missing data. Cells with no values did not have enough cases for meaningful analyses.

Law Reasons for Declining to Prosecute. The reasons for declining to prosecute SA/SAM

charges as documented in Law agency records are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10. Reasons for declining to prosecute 313 SA/SAM charges for a random sample of sexual assault (SA) and/or sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) incidents reported to the Alaska State Troopers between 2012 and 2016 that were also referred for prosecution.

| | SA/SAM (N = 313 declined charges) | | SA (N = 164 declined charges) | | SAM (N = 149 declined charges) | |
|---|---|------------|---|------------|--|------------|
| | N | % of total | N | % of total | N | % of total |
| Evidentiary Issue | 209 | 66.8 | 123 | 75.0 | 86 | 57.7 |
| Procedural | 55 | 17.6 | 25 | 15.2 | 30 | 20.1 |
| Other (e.g., not enough evidence or no corroboration) | 49 | 15.7 | 16 | 9.8 | 33 | 22.2 |

For all SA/SAM charges that were declined (313 charges over 205 incidents), 66.8% were because of evidentiary issues (e.g., not enough evidence or no corroboration), 17.6% because of procedural issues, and 15.7% for other reasons. The relative percentages for SA and SAM cases separately are also included in Table 10. The total number of charges declined in Table 10 is different from the number declined listed in Figures 6, 7, and 8 because of missing data on the reasons for declining.

Healing

A number of factors were identified in the stakeholder interviews as being important for healing, defined for this study as *“Healing for the person who was sexually assaulted. This healing could come over time, through therapy and/or individual resiliency, and could sometimes involves moving from an identity of “victim” to that of “survivor.”*”

One set of factors involved non-criminal justice system related events. A number of victim-survivor interview participants, including Rosy, Gloria, Naomi, Laura, Emmeline, Laverne, and Abigail, discussed access to healing services such as therapy, treatment, victim-survivor services, and healing techniques as being important for their healing. Gloria also noted the importance of being referred to treatment and services, as a number of victim-survivors might not know these resources exist. Libby, Gloria, Angela, Naomi, Elizabeth, Janet, Margaret, and Laverne, noted that being able to dialogue and talk with others was an important part of their healing. Gloria also identified being able to move past blaming herself as important for her healing.

Several system stakeholders noted the importance of how the criminal justice system responds to reports of sexual assault being important for victim-survivors' healing. Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 6, for example, noted that belief and acknowledgement by professionals in the criminal justice system were important for healing. On the same note, Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 2 elaborated on how all of the initial responses by the system professionals to the victim-survivor were crucial for that person's healing:

My main goal is caring for this person and helping them to not have to go through that again. Or, what we know is that the way we respond to them in that moment; that exact moment that that Trooper pulls up. Or that exact moment that she calls and talks to dispatcher. The way they respond, the tone of their voice, the words that they use, the skills that they have to listen and collect that history of the crime, that matters in the way that victim is going to recover and heal from what happened to them. That minute. The tone in your voice, the body language that you're using, can make or break your case I think. And at the very least, if we're outside of the law enforcement, criminal prosecution element of it, it will help that victim heal and be healthier, and then hopefully not be a victim again.

Victim Advocate 5 also noted that they perceived a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach to be important for beginning victim-survivors' healing process. Similarly, Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 1 identified being able to give victim-survivors the information they want in the moment during the SART exam as being important for starting their healing process.

Being heard in court by her perpetrator gave victim-survivor Alice some empowerment that allowed for her to heal. Before her case was finally closed and she was able to give her victim impact statement, however, Alice discussed how her case being open in the court prevented her from healing:

And they just kept pushing it back, and I was not healing, because it was every- and then the VINE, I kept getting texts from VINE, and, well, your whatever happens.³⁴ You know, and like, "I'm- I can't heal from this," because I can't heal and then have something remind me that it's not done and then have- I just was regressing.

Victim Advocate 7 echoed the importance of closure in the criminal justice system as being important for victim-survivors being able to close that 'chapter' and begin moving on and healing.

Prevention of Sexual Assault

Prevention of sexual assault was defined for this study as “*This could be preventing anyone from ever sexually assaulting someone else, or preventing those who have already sexually assaulted someone from doing so again.*” Stakeholder interview participants’ thoughts on how to increase the likelihood of prevention of sexual assault included ideas on general deterrence (preventing the general community from perpetrating sexual assault), specific deterrence (preventing those who have already committed sexual assault from doing so again), and how those who might be victimized could avoid victimization.³⁵

Regarding thoughts on general deterrence, Public Defender 1 noted that investing in treatment and rehabilitation of people who have been sexually abused would prevent them from perpetrating future sexual assaults. Prosecutor 3 talked at length about the importance of community dialogue and public safety ads to create cultural shifts in how we think about violence for preventing sexual violence. Alaska

³⁴ VINE is a national victim notification network and VINELink is an online portal for crime victims to get notifications about their cases. See <https://www.vinelink.com/#what-is-vine> and <https://apprissafety.com/vine3/> for more information.

³⁵ For many interview participants, prevention meant preventing any sexual assault from happening at all and not just preventing their own specific perpetrator from harming others. Thus, when someone is victimized, especially victimized repeatedly, prevention has not been achieved. Including this discussion is not meant to put the onus of prevention on victim-survivors nor to blame victim-survivors for their victimization.

State Trooper 7 focused on general deterrence through the swift reactions of the criminal justice system to reports of sexual assault, such as a prompt arrest:

There's one thing that I don't like that- that pissed me off about attorneys is they seem to lose sight of the here and now and the importance of letting somebody have closure and letting bad people go where bad people belong. And so I don't like to call because they're looking at it through attorneys glasses where, "Well as soon as you arrest this guy, it starts the clock, and we only have 180 days to bring it to trial, and if you arrest him then it starts the clock and we still have all these other things to do." It's like, "Yeah, well if I arrest him, it sends a message to everybody else not to do stuff like that.

Regarding specific deterrence, some participants, including Alaska State Trooper 4, Alaska State Trooper 5, and Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 3, noted that meaningful consequences through the criminal justice system could provide specific deterrence, where those who had been caught and punished for sexual assault would not do so again in the future. Village Public Safety Officer 3, Prosecutor 2, and victim-survivor Alice all noted that incarceration prevents further perpetration of sexual assault by incapacitating the person who is incarcerated.

Regarding prevention by avoidance of victimization, Village Public Safety Officer 3 thought prevention could be achieved by educating community members about victimization risk factors. Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 2 saw the interactions with and education provided by Troopers as being important in shaping victim-survivors future victimization (or lack thereof):

I know it's response when Troopers are responding to a sexual assault, or domestic violence, or whatever it is, it's response. But, in that response, that's the prevention. The prevention is right there. The prevention is when that Trooper has support, and education, and training on how to talk to a victim. That support and education, and training on how to encourage them to come in for an exam and get that evidence. And how to have trauma-informed care, how to have listening skills, how to do forensic interviewing, motivational interviewing. And then what happens- open ended questions. All these things that I think they're starting to get but they are preventing that person from being re-victimized. Or that person's child from being exposed to this domestic violence for the rest of their lives, or whatever. By giving them those things. That will prevent future crime.

Forensic Testing of the Sexual Assault Kit

As noted in the introduction to this report, the Alaska legislature passed Senate Bill 55 in 2017 requiring testing of all previously unsubmitted SAKs, and passed House Bill 49 in 2019 enacting Alaska Statute 44.41.065 which requires testing of all SAKs within one year of submission to the State Crime Lab (with some exceptions – see Footnote 8). Therefore, the findings in this section related to why tests were tested is no longer entirely relevant.

However, Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 2 did give some insight as to why victim-survivors may choose to even participate in the SAK collection:

I guess the reason they choose to do the kit is because, I think sometimes they just think that's what you do. That's what you're supposed to do or something. It's like the only thing to do, it's like something tangible to do. And it gives them a way to like really acknowledge, you know, to like have someone- as a healthcare provider it's like, "Okay, I can do the kit. Let's address this. Let's take this seriously. We're taking- you know, this thing is a serious thing. I'm really paying attention to you." You know, "I'm really acknowledging and believing you." Or whatever. I mean, "We're doing this. This is real." So it's a way to sort of give them something.

Regarding reasons that SAKs were tested prior to the legislative changes discussed above, a number of system stakeholders discussed how the SAK was not needed if there was sufficient other evidence to convict the perpetrator, or if the case was a ‘consent case,’ where the only evidence is the word of the victim-survivor against the word of the suspect-perpetrator.

Professionals Doing Their Best

Professionals in the criminal justice system doing their best (regardless of the case outcome) was often explained by system stakeholders in terms of the effects of workload, burnout, experience, and training on system professionals’ performance. All of these aspects were often discussed as being highly interrelated. Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 1, for example, discussed the importance of these for shaping job performance:

I mean with anything, the more you do it, the better you're going to get. And if you have the training and it's hard to get everybody trained. And everybody proficient. You know, if you have 20 prosecutors that are all supposed to do these cases and

they're being spread out nobody's ever going to be proficient because you don't have enough experience. And the same thing with law enforcement, nursing, advocacy, unless you do it, you know, every day. And we see that with forensic nurses, they quit for one of two reasons. A, they don't get enough cases so they don't feel proficient, they don't feel like they're experts. So they don't feel like they could do a good job, so they quit. Or they're so overwhelmed by doing so many cases that they get burned out.

Victim Advocate 3 talked about how a lack of training and burnout can affect how SANEs or other medical professionals interact with victim-survivors:

They're not as highly trained as the former person was. While they're doing, I think, an adequate job at their medical duty as a forensics evidence, I think they sort of stray into making judgments, like right in front of the victims, as well. About, you know, "You shouldn't be drinking," or just things that are not helpful. But I also think that's an element of burnout. There's so much sexual assault and it's the same situation over and over and over again. And we only interact with the victim and not the offender. And I think that's why it's easy to sort of place judgment on the victim, and forget about the offender.

Alaska State Trooper 10 talked about the importance of self-care in mitigating the secondary trauma of dealing with sexual assault cases so that they can continue to do the work:

I think there's certain cases that everybody will never forget that they've had in their career, but you've got to find a release on it, whatever it is, you gotta take care of yourself. And somebody used to tell me, one of my FTOs, my Field Training Officer told me, "You have to take care of yourself, because you can't take care of anybody else if you don't." And he goes, "You can only go so long at work in something before you need to." And we all try to do a check on each other. So, like, "Hey, I think it's, you know, go home, get some rest," type of deal. Especially when we were working the homicides, and the sexual assaults that are coming in in-between that, and you're overwhelmed and you're trying to get things done, and you're trying to meet everybody's needs. But you do have to take that time for yourself.

Victim-survivor Naomi noted that there was not a lot of evidence in her case, but noted that she believed the lack of movement with her case was also attributable to the investigator not caring about her case and therefore not doing their best:

"I don't think there was a lot of evidence, but also just the bigger scope of things, I don't think people care. I don't even think the detective cared that much, even if he works in the sexual assault victims unit. I think these are just, like, cases to them."

Monitoring Perpetrators

In the stakeholder interviews, a number of both victim-survivor and system stakeholders noted that the act of reporting and collecting evidence in one case, even if that case did not result in a conviction, allows for greater monitoring of perpetrators. *Monitoring perpetrators* was defined for this study as “*Monitoring perpetrators in the community to prevent them from or catch them if they assault someone else. This monitoring can be done by the criminal justice system (probation or parole), or informally by a network of community members.*”

A number of victim-survivors, including Rosy, Simone, Sojourner, and Janet, noted that they reported so that there would be a record of their perpetrator and so that his behaviors would be monitored.

Victim-survivor Gloria noted that the Trooper who investigated her case noted that if other reports were to be made against her perpetrator, her report was on file and would get brought back up. Victim-survivor Libby also noted that this fact about other reports was shared with her via the letter she received from the District Attorney’s Office regarding their decision not to prosecute in her case. Victim-survivor Laverne was given a similar message after her SART exam and kit was collected, where the Trooper noted, “*You know we have his DNA, it’s going to be encoded, like we’ll put in CODIS, we’ll catch him next time.*”

Prosecutor 4 explained that although collecting DNA and entering it into CODIS in cases where guilt is already determinable by other evidence does not add anything extra for that particular case, it does have the value of creating a CODIS profile for that individual in the case of other reports of sexual assault involving that suspect-perpetrator. Victim-survivor Simone echoed this sentiment:

I think they need the kit. I mean, I think, what I think is that they need to at least have his DNA in some system. My understanding is the kit and his DNA being in the system are somewhat linked. So if the kits aren't getting done, then his DNA's not in the system.

Additionally, Alaska State Trooper 4 noted that sex offender registration laws allow for greater scrutiny and monitoring of those who have the potential to further commit sex offenses.

Rehabilitation or Treatment for Perpetrators

Rehabilitation or treatment for the perpetrator was defined for this study as “*Rehabilitation or treatment for the perpetrator to address underlying causes of their behaviors and prevent them from perpetrating in the future.*”

Participants in the stakeholder interviews talked only about why they see rehabilitation for perpetrators *not* happening. For some, they questioned whether rehabilitation is even possible for those who have committed sex offenses. For others, they talked about the lack of opportunities to be rehabilitated, either through society’s eyes or through the criminal justice system.

Victim-survivor Libby questioned whether those who choose to believe their behavior is okay can be rehabilitated. Alaska State Trooper 4 said that they did not believe sexual assault offenders were capable of being fixed and that they are already “entrenched” with a certain mindset. Alaska State Trooper 7 said that they do believe sex assault offenders can change, although later specified that they did not believe that a lot of them were capable of being changed. Prosecutor 1 also had doubts about whether many people who commit sex assaults are able to be rehabilitated in general. Crime Lab Analyst 2, however, said that while they used to believe that people who commit sex offenses were not capable of change, their position had changed over time. Victim-survivor Abigail, too, saw the potential for change through one’s relationship with God.

Prosecutor 1 does not believe that the state does a good job at rehabilitating sex assault offenders because it is not really a priority for the system. Public Defender 1 explained that because of the backlog for in-custody sex offender treatment, a first felony sex offender pleading to a low-level sex offense would “almost certainly” not receive treatment prior to getting out of jail. Victim-survivor Angela said that she does not see a lot of states spending resources on rehabilitation anymore because “*they feel like it’s a waste of money.*” Victim-survivor Dorothy said that she does not see the opportunity for rehabilitation and redemption in society, whereas drug offenders or other types of offenders are offered

those opportunities. Alaska State Trooper 7 said that people can change, but they need to be sentenced for longer so that the system has time to change their behavior.

Quick Resolution

In the stakeholder interviews, system stakeholders identified a number of reasons why sexual assault cases can take so long to work their way through the criminal justice system.

Alaska State Trooper 7 noted that there is often a delay in arresting suspect-perpetrators because of the complexities of doing a sexual assault investigation:

And then it's weeks and months go by and, "How come he's still not arrested? And you guys aren't doing anything." It's like, no, it doesn't work like that. Like he's going to lie. Like we know our job and know how we deal with suspects. He's likely- nobody just usually calls us up and says, "Yeah, I sexually assaulted this girl. Like can I sign up for 25 years please?" You know? That doesn't happen. So we have to do Glass warrants. We have to do- and sometimes we have aggressive victims that obviously are victims, but they don't get that their meddling in the process is hindering our investigation.

Prosecutor 1 noted that these investigations can also take a long time due to rotating shifts in certain rural locations:

If you're sitting out in Galena or to some degree even Bethel or Emmonak, if you're the Trooper out there, if you're in Emmonak to maybe have one Trooper on duty for a two week stint. There's a lot of stuff and other things going on, they may not have time to deal with it adequate. Or- if some of our biggest problems come in with places and I think I'm presuming it's a problem with those places that have Troopers that go in for two weeks, and then, come out. ... If something happens the day before they leave, it's not like they stay and work the case, they leave. And you've got a two-week gap with nothing going on, and so, that's a problem with those cases. They need to be worked right then not two weeks later.

Alaska State Trooper 4 perceived delays being due to the timing of defense attorneys and Law being able to meet:

There's a long delay and then interaction between the district attorney and the victim usually goes south because the victim was experiencing the fact that nothing is happening for months and months and months and months. While the district attorney is often waiting for a defense attorney to be assigned and start meeting with them and talking about a potential resolution for the case, most of these cases will resolve with the plea. And that's just the way it works.

Voice

Voice being defined for this study as “*Being heard when speaking about sexual assault. For persons who have been assaulted, this might include being heard in court during testimony or when delivering a victim impact statement, or it could involve being heard by friends, family, and/or the community when sharing about one’s experiences.*” For the most part, stakeholder interview participants talked about mechanisms that have given or give victim-survivors voice, such as the SART interview process, victim impact statements, and even the MeToo movement.

Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 1 elaborated on how trauma-informed interviewing gives victim-survivors the opportunity for being heard:

So the best approach usually during the interview and when you have team members who are seasoned and have been doing this is, we just ask the patient, the victim to start telling us their story, what happened, start from wherever you're comfortable. And we just let them talk and tell what happened in their own words, try not to interrupt them, if there are moments where they are tearful or whatever, or maybe they need a break- in the beginning of the interview they're told if you need a break, if anything, just let us know, and we may need to take breaks, if they're-And again that's going back to being trauma-informed, you know, giving them time to, to kind of regroup or do what they need to do to take care of themselves. So we'll just let them talk and tell their history.

Victim impact statements are also a mechanism to give victim-survivors voice, even when they are not comfortable delivering the statements themselves. Prosecutor 2 elaborated on how the victim-survivors voice can be shared even in these circumstances:

And then I also tell them, you know, “You may also make a statement in open court during the sentencing hearing, or alternatively, if you don't feel comfortable or safe doing that, you can tell me what you want the court to know.” And so in one case I had a victim, she wanted the court- she hadn't at the moment that we went into sentencing, she didn't know what she wanted the court to know. But in the middle of the hearing she understood. Her thoughts came together. She didn't feel comfortable saying them. So she and I had a brief meeting- we took a break in the sentencing proceeding, had a brief meeting. She gave me the outline of what she wanted me to say, and then I said it. So any way that we can get the victim's message across, I'm happy to do.

Stakeholder interview participants discussed the MeToo movement in a variety of ways, but Dorothy specifically referenced how the movement might have changed how she thought and talked about her sexual assault:

If he was anyone else, if he was someone my age, that would have been, "I cheated on my boyfriend." Like, no doubt. That would have been my mentality because at that age- now I feel differently, and I don't know if, like, society is slightly different now with the Me Too movement or if it's just my own mentality, but I know that I would have much rather- I mean not that- that cheating on your boyfriend is good- but I would have much rather not admitted that I was sexually assaulted at that time. That was the last thing I wanted to admit.

Extralegal Justice

Extralegal justice was for this study as “Justice that happens outside of the criminal justice system. This could include the perpetrator losing their job or being held accountable by their family, friends, or community, or any other form of justice that does not involve the criminal justice system.”

Regarding the lack of extralegal justice options, at least two victim advocates described how justice was not being done at the community level because sometimes families and communities will rally around perpetrators no matter what (according to Victim Advocate 2), or that there just is no community response to the assault when the community could hold perpetrators accountable (according to Victim Advocate 3). Victim Advocate 3 noted that this lack of community response could be due in part because they see justice as something that happens ‘far away’ without an impact on their day-to-day lives.

Victim-survivor Tarana noted that she was not interested in pursuing the criminal justice process and there were no alternatives to this process for her to seek justice, therefore she was left with no options:

I mean if it comes down to nothing happens, or something really extreme and scary happens, then I might as well just say no.... Extreme and scary as in we take this to trial, and y'all treat him like he's a murderer, and you know, and I a whore, you know, if it comes down to this guy getting 50 years in prison because, you know, of a crappy situation, I'd rather just say, you know, whatever.

Restitution

Restitution was defined for this study as “*Restitution or compensation for the person who was sexually assaulted for any financial costs resulting from the assault or reporting (e.g., personal belongings lost as evidence, security system installations, medical and therapy costs, etc.)*”

In the stakeholder interviews, several victim-survivors noted that their ability to be compensated or receive restitution hinged on being alerted to the possibility of such compensation and on assistance in applying for it. Gloria was never told about the opportunity to seek compensation for her therapy from the officer she reported to, therefore she did not apply. Audre and Laverne were referred to the Office of Victims’ Rights and the VCCB compensation process by their local DVSA advocacy providers, and they did apply. For Laverne, her DVSA advocacy provider helped her fill out the VCCB paperwork. Ruth knew about the possibility of compensation through the VCCB because of a flyer she had once seen at a courthouse. Tarana found out about the VCCB and their services through a friend who was a victim of a violent crime and got compensation, but not until years after she reported her assault.

Victim-survivor Angela suggested that she could sue her perpetrator for restitution but that he was broke and that he would not be able to pay if she did sue, therefore she did not seek restitution through this method. Victim-survivor Libby did not seek compensation because her insurance paid for her healthcare needs associated with the assault.

Due Process

Due process was defined for this study as “*Due process to protect the rights and presumed innocence of those who are accused of sexual assault. Due process includes the accused’s right to a lawyer and to be proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt by a jury of their peers.*” Because due process is ensured through a set of constitutionally guaranteed rights for suspect-perpetrators and is not often left to individual decision-making or actions, factors that increase the likelihood of due process will not be discussed here.

Dialogue around Sexual Assault

Dialogue around sexual assault was defined for this study as “*This dialogue can include (often difficult) conversations in the criminal justice system and/or the community, and involves working to address the issue together, as a collective.*”

As noted in prior sections, victim-survivor Simone had a lot to say about the importance of community dialogue around sexual assault. As far as why these conversations do not happen as often as they should (in her opinion), Simone gave a few reasons. The first was that it is dangerous to speak out, and that to change that every individual needs to practice personal courage and speak out regularly about sexual assault and rape: “*I think that the only way to make things less dangerous is to, is to speak out daily. You have to literally work on your own personal courage. I have to work on mine every day.*” The second reason she saw dialogue around sexual assault not happening is because of a (false) belief that victim-survivors are too fragile or damaged to engage in these discussions, and she therefore saw it as being important to change the narrative of the ‘damaged victim story’ to engage in meaningful dialogues.

Public Education

Public education was defined for this study as “*Public education about sexual assault and its consequences, along with existing resources and ways to support those who have been sexually assaulted.*” Although a number of stakeholders discussed the importance of public education during the interviews, few gave reasons as to why it does or does not happen. Alaska State Trooper 4 suggested that the financial burden on the criminal justice system would be too much if all sexual assaults were reported, thus there is minimal incentive to encourage reporting. Victim-survivor Tarana also suggested that there was a financial motive to not spread awareness about victim-survivor compensation.

Public Defender 2 suggested that perhaps public education is not as widespread and comprehensive as it should be because delivering sex education is controversial.

Apology

Apology was defined for this study as “*Apology for the harm done to the person who was sexually assaulted. This apology could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, the community, and/or the perpetrator.*”

Although some victim-survivor interview participants identified apologies that came from their perpetrators organically, a number of interviewees (system and victim-survivor) noted that apologies are often facilitated through the criminal justice process. Alaska State Troopers 4 and 6 both discussed how these apologies will sometimes come out during the interview process, and sometimes perpetrators will write a letter of apology as part of the confession process.

Choice or Control

Choice or control was defined for this study as “*Choice or control for the person who was sexually assaulted. This could include having a say in whether or how things happen, such as whether to participate in a forensic exam, whether to report to law enforcement after a forensic exam (anonymous report), whether to participate in an ongoing investigation, whether or not to pursue charges in a case, etc.*” As with the concept of giving victim-survivors voice, stakeholder interview participants talked about mechanisms that have given or give victim-survivors choice, such as the SART exam. They also discussed reasons that victim-survivors may not be given a choice or control in how their case moves forward.

Many system stakeholders emphasized how victim-survivor choice is built into the SART exam process, as represented in the following quote from Sexual Assault/Forensic Nurse Examiner 4:

And then the advocate and myself will discuss the exam process and evidence collection with my patient and allow them to understand the process from beginning to end. And we review the consent, so that they understand what they can consent to and what they, you know, can choose not to participate in. After that portion of it, we, if the exam is consented to and the evidence collection, then we move into the exam process. At which time the patient is allowed to have the advocate or any other support person in the exam with them. And they are informed that they can take as many breaks as they need to and whatnot and, you know, encouraged to communicate with the forensic examiners to how they're feeling, how they're doing throughout the

exam. The entire process- as far as my aspect of it, the medical aspect- is one hundred percent patient-led. If the patient chooses to be done in the middle of it, that's entirely within their right, and that's outlined on our consent forms and we make sure that they're aware of their choice to do so. Prior to the exam, we explain to them the benefits of having evidence collection, as well as the drawbacks, should they decide not to proceed with evidence collection. No patient is talked into or convinced that they need to participate in this, you know, we just try to fully inform them, and allow them to make that informed decision.

Victim Advocate 6 explained that victim-survivors may not be given a chance to give their opinion on the outcome of a case if Law is not able to reach the victim-survivor before offering a plea, or simply if they were running out of time and wanted to move the case forward:

When plea deals are offered if the victim is not actively working with The Office of Victim's Rights, you don't consistently see them being consulted before, like they should be. Oftentimes you will see them being consulted after it's been offered or after it's been accepted. And I don't know that the excuses given for that are true or not. Like, "We tried you, we couldn't get ahold of you," or, "We just were running out of time and we went to move forward with an offer."

Prosecutor 4 pointed out, however, that victim-survivors do have the opportunity to talk to the judge about plea deals that have been offered and can voice their opinions if they disagree with it.

Retribution

Retribution was defined for this study as “*Retribution, or punishment inflicted on the perpetrator as vengeance for their harmful actions.*”

In the stakeholder interviews, victim-survivor Gloria mentioned that people in her life were interested in inflicting punishment on her perpetrators on her behalf, although she advocated against them doing so:

And it was actually about how I wanted people to stop telling me they want to kill him. That, I didn't need that. I didn't want people to be like, 'Oh, where does he live? I'll go kill him.' Like, I don't want that. I don't want him to die at all.

Victim-survivor Ruth also was not interested in retribution, which could be a contributor to why retribution does or does not happen outside the criminal justice system.

Inside the criminal justice system, Alaska State Trooper 3 expressed that they believe retribution or punishment does not happen as often as it should because the system is too focused on rehabilitation.

Interviewee Recommendations for Improvement.

Every recommendation for improvement made by interview participants is included below to demonstrate the depth and breadth of the recommendations put forth by both system stakeholders and victim-survivors.³⁶ It is important to emphasize that the intent behind sharing these recommendations *is not to endorse* these recommendations, rather it *is to comprehensively represent the findings* of what was shared during the interviews.

The recommendations are organized by topic area and roughly follow the order of the criminal justice process, although some recommendations could have fit in multiple topic areas. The topic areas are therefore not mutually exclusive.³⁷

1. Topic area: Reporting sexual assaults to the criminal justice system
 - 1.1. Victim-survivors should report right away.
 - 1.2. AST should publicly admit to not doing their best and commit to doing better to build trust and reduce hesitancy to report.
 - 1.3. Public education campaigns for communities and potential victim-survivors demystifying the criminal justice system and processes: including the importance of reporting and doing so quickly, what to do if you are a victim, what happens when you report, etc.
 - 1.4. More community relations building efforts on behalf of AST, primarily through community presence, to increase reporting and success of investigations.
2. Topic area: First response
 - 2.1. Phone dispatchers should more clearly outline options and process for victim-survivors when they report.

³⁶ Survey participants were also asked for their recommendations but because of limited time and resources at that point in the study implementation, those recommendations were not coded and synthesized and are therefore not included in this report.

³⁷ These topic areas are not organized by importance of the recommendations, and are instead organized to first follow the criminal justice process (starting with reporting of the crime, moving on to the first response and then the following investigation, so on and so forth), followed by a listing of more general topic areas that could apply to multiple stages of the criminal justice process such as communication with the victim, training, and resources, funding, and personnel.

- 2.2. Law enforcement agencies should have a warm hand-off when victim-survivors report SAs outside their jurisdictions.
- 2.3. Utilize more female first responders and interviewers.
- 2.4. Prioritize creating comfort and privacy for victim-survivors during initial report: empathetic and patient interactions, more comfortable interview space with fidget and comfort items, greater privacy for SA victim-survivors in emergency rooms, encourage support persons, etc.
- 2.5. Initial response should include partner team with different skill sets: investigative and interpersonal
- 2.6. Empower victim-survivor during initial response.
- 2.7. Debrief before leaving interview.
- 2.8. Increase local options for doing SART exam and evidence gathering.
3. Topic area: Investigations - Interviews
 - 3.1. Information provided by victim-survivor after initial interview should be valued equally to information during initial interview.
 - 3.2. Restate how questions about fear and feeling threatened are asked.
 - 3.3. Listen to victim-survivors.
 - 3.4. Emphasize belief in interviews and structure it so that it does not confuse victim-survivors.
 - 3.5. Fly victim-survivors to neutral area to conduct interview.
4. Topic area: Investigations - Glass warrants
 - 4.1. Thoroughly brief victim-survivors before Glass warrant.
 - 4.2. Give victim-survivor emotional time and space between initial report activities and Glass warrant.
 - 4.3. Do Glass warrants before offender knows of criminal investigation.
 - 4.4. Use persons other than the victim-survivor to try to get confession if necessary.
 - 4.5. Use the Glass warrant.
5. Topic area: Investigations - General
 - 5.1. Conduct more thorough investigations.
 - 5.2. Create system of accountability to ensure officers are doing thorough investigations.
 - 5.3. Give victim-survivor equal voice in investigation as perpetrator and allow victim-survivor to respond to discrepancies.
 - 5.4. Communicate with suspects in an empathetic way to elicit confessions.
 - 5.5. Law should get involved early on and sit in during AST interviews.
 - 5.6. Get victim-survivor and witnesses involved in case as early as possible.
 - 5.7. Use coordinated responses within AST to respond to SAs.
 - 5.8. Have more experienced, specialized AST investigators handling SA cases.
 - 5.9. Use specialized units (within all agencies) as much as possible.

- 5.10. Submit the case to Law and let them make the decision about probable cause.
6. Topic area: Prosecution
 - 6.1. Pursue higher charges.
 - 6.2. Prioritize fighting case hard rather than getting it over with.
 - 6.3. First responders should advocate more to DA for prosecution on behalf of victim-survivor.
 - 6.4. Prosecute more sexual assault cases.
 - 6.5. Take more cases to trial rather than settling for plea deals.
 - 6.6. Law should meet with victim-survivors before making prosecution decisions.
 - 6.7. Communicate with victim-survivors as prosecutor (do not pass it off to paralegals) and communicate in person.
 - 6.8. Prosecutors need to have difficult conversations with victim-survivors about memory, trauma, and how that aligns with evidence in the case.
 - 6.9. Victim-survivors should not have to look at perpetrator during court proceedings.
7. Topic area: Forensic analyses of evidence
 - 7.1. Expand Crime Lab resources and analysis capacity.
 - 7.2. Provide more money, training, and education for Crime Lab analysts.
 - 7.3. Test all SAKs.
 - 7.4. Test SAKs in anonymous cases without victim-survivor consent.
 - 7.5. Prioritize DNA testing for cases where the SAK has greater potential to offer benefit.
 - 7.6. Better communication to other agencies about Crime Lab capabilities.
8. Topic area: Speed of criminal justice process
 - 8.1. Law enforcement officers need to move faster with investigations and report writing.
 - 8.2. Law needs to move faster with processing cases and moving them forward.
 - 8.3. The process for establishing MOUs across agencies needs to be smoother and faster.
 - 8.4. Make the whole criminal justice process go faster.
9. Topic area: Victim-survivor knowledge about criminal justice process
 - 9.1. Communicate to victim-survivor how long the process might take to get lab results.
 - 9.2. Have assigned victim advocate system navigator to help victim-survivors through the criminal justice process and make them aware of resources.
 - 9.3. Victim-survivors should have choice of advocates to meet their communication style needs.
 - 9.4. Victim advocates need a better understanding of the role of the investigators so they can communicate this better to the victim-survivor.
 - 9.5. Provide legal counsel for victim-survivors while they navigate the criminal justice process.
 - 9.6. Lawyers available through OVR should be held accountable to high standards and should more actively advocate for victim-survivors' rights to be respected.

10. Topic area: Communication and follow-ups with victim-survivors on their case
 - 10.1. AST, Law, and victim advocates should communicate regularly with victim-survivors, even when there is no progress to report.
 - 10.2. Proactively give victim-survivors access to police report and review it with them.
 - 10.3. Revisit paperwork and overview of process with victim-survivor after initial report.
 - 10.4. Provide updates to victim-survivors in writing along with verbal communication.
 - 10.5. Have a portal where victim-survivors can check the status of their case.
 - 10.6. Explain investigations for victim-survivors and why things can or cannot be done.
 - 10.7. Do not get victim-survivors' hopes up about the potential of evidence.
11. Topic area: Tone of interactions with victim-survivors
 - 11.1. Remain victim-survivor centered.
 - 11.2. System professionals must treat everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of their life choices and circumstances.
 - 11.3. Ensure system professionals are trauma-informed and interact accordingly.
 - 11.4. Professionals need to start by believing victim-survivors.
 - 11.5. System professionals should try their hardest.
 - 11.6. System professionals should acknowledge the gravity and seriousness of victim-survivors' experience(s) with sexual assault.
 - 11.7. System professionals should be authentic and compassionate during interactions with victim.
12. Topic area: Healing resources and other services for victim-survivors
 - 12.1. Have immediate mental health counseling to process initial shock of the sexual assault.
 - 12.2. Expand safe house options for victim-survivors to access immediately after the sexual assault in both rural and urban locations.
 - 12.3. Send victim-survivors home with care package, including resource lists.
 - 12.4. Make information about resources more approachable/digestible.
 - 12.5. Proactively connect victim-survivors to services and follow-up on that linkage.
 - 12.6. Do not require a police report to get VCCB restitution.
 - 12.7. Advertise VCCB services more widely.
 - 12.8. Improve access to affordable mental health care, social services, and other healing services in all Alaska communities.
 - 12.9. Have victim-survivor support groups that are well known.
13. Topic area: Continuous quality improvement
 - 13.1. Continuously engage in quality assessment and improvement.
 - 13.2. Take a hard look at SART dynamics and process and decide whether to replace it.
 - 13.3. Data sharing and inter-agency review of case processing on a regular basis to hold each other accountable and make improvements.

- 13.4. Continue the professionalization of the law enforcement.
14. Topic area: Training
 - 14.1. Train Troopers better on collecting probative DNA samples.
 - 14.2. Train Troopers better on what kind of evidence the DA needs for a successful prosecution.
 - 14.3. Train Troopers better on how to investigate SA cases and look at multiple forms of evidence.
 - 14.4. Train Troopers better on Alaska Native cultural competency.
 - 14.5. Train Troopers better on all aspects of trauma (including vicarious trauma).
 - 14.6. Provide on-going training.
 - 14.7. All system professionals need specialized training for SA.
 - 14.8. Train VPSOs to connect victim-survivors to victim advocacy, mental health resources, etc.
 - 14.9. Ensure that SART training is relevant to each profession.
 - 14.10. Ensure that training is quality.
 - 14.11. Provide training specifically for SART coordinators.
 - 14.12. Expand SART training opportunities.
 - 14.13. Provide cooperative, multidisciplinary training.
 - 14.14. Build system professionals' emotional intelligence, particularly those who work with victim-survivors.
 - 14.15. Provide more training for judges on victim-survivors' experiences in the criminal justice process.
15. Topic area: Inter-agency communication, collective understanding, and collaboration
 - 15.1. Enhance all SART professionals cross-understanding of roles and responsibilities.
 - 15.2. Build trusting, communication, collaborative, supportive SARTs.
 - 15.3. More transparency and information sharing between agencies regarding reports and outcomes of sexual assault cases.
 - 15.4. Greater statewide organization of SARTs and SART coordinators for professional development and cross-learning on how to coordinate.
16. Topic area: Resources, funding, and personnel
 - 16.1. Provide more AST personnel.
 - 16.2. Provide more Law personnel, including victim-witness paralegals.
 - 16.3. Provide more SANE personnel.
 - 16.4. Provide more personnel across all professions.
 - 16.5. Allocate more resources and investigative personnel to rural Alaska.
 - 16.6. Provide local, trained law enforcement in more communities.
 - 16.7. Victim advocacy programs need to be supported.
 - 16.8. Provide more consistent funding for SARTs.

- 16.9. Pay system professionals better.
- 16.10. Increase diversity in identity, culture, gender, etc. among system professionals.
- 16.11. Have greater public and political commitment to actually doing public safety right.
- 16.12. Provide more resources all across the board.
17. Topic area: Burnout and vicarious trauma
 - 17.1. Troopers need to feel like the work that they do is beneficial so that they do not burn out.
 - 17.2. Ensure agencies and organizations are aware of vicarious trauma and provide support for employees.
 - 17.3. Remove Troopers from communities where they are projecting their doubt about SA reports onto victim-survivors and community members.
 - 17.4. Address turnover and burnout through building professional trust and increasing staff.
18. Topic area: Known suspect-perpetrators of sexual assault
 - 18.1. Provide more, earlier, and cheaper treatment for sex offenders.
 - 18.2. Develop a monitoring system for repeat perpetrators that existing victim-survivors can access.
 - 18.3. Hold offenders accountable through tribal courts.
 - 18.4. Switch emphasis from punishment of suspect-perpetrators to treatment of suspect-perpetrators.
19. Topic area: Laws/statutes
 - 19.1. Change how statutes define sexual assault.
 - 19.2. Enact stricter penalties for perpetrators.
 - 19.3. Change rules around discovery so that evidence sharing goes both ways.
 - 19.4. Place limitations on how many times / how long a court case can be extended.
 - 19.5. Change laws that place blame on victim-survivor.
 - 19.6. Have alternative justice processes to court process for cases that will not or do not hold up in court.
20. Topic area: Community dialogue and public education around sexual assault
 - 20.1. Stakeholders need to have these conversations: What does justice look like? How are we all playing our part? How are those things hindering or putting up barriers for victim-survivors to come and report? What can we do to help break down those barriers, or to support the victim-survivor more? Are there justice trade-offs – healing over successful prosecution?
 - 20.2. Amplify community dialogue to demonstrate prevalence of sexual abuse.
 - 20.3. Provide more education about consent and which behaviors constitute sexual assault.
 - 20.4. Have more dialogue about the gendered dynamics of sexual assault.
 - 20.5. Encourage more culturally relevant, strengths-based prevention work at the local level.
 - 20.6. Increase public awareness about realities of crime and victimization risk.

- 20.7. Provide more education in villages around potential victimization in urban areas.
- 20.8. Change attitudes toward and acceptance of sexual violence.
- 20.9. Address the reality that there will be false reports.
- 20.10. Provide more education about the gravity of making false statements to the police.
- 20.11. Have public education on difficulties faced by criminal justice system professionals.
- 20.12. Facilitate system wide understanding of rural-urban community differences.
- 20.13. Everyone needs to build proactive courage to handle difficult problems.

Summary of Findings for “What Increases the Likelihood of Achieving Justice?”

To answer the question of what increases the likelihood of achieving justice in cases of sexual assault reported to AST, the qualitative stakeholder interview data and the quantitative agency records provided some perspective. Because quantitative data was only available for analyzing which variables were related to specific criminal justice outcomes in the agency records (incidents being referred for prosecution and incidents being accepted for prosecution), much of the data presented in this section comes from the qualitative interviews and represents stakeholders’ perceptions of why they think different just outcomes do or do not happen. The data presented to answer this question are therefore preliminary and exploratory, and should be interpreted as giving a somewhat limited view of what increases the likelihood of achieving justice. Stakeholder interview participants’ recommendations for improvements are also included in this section.

Factors Shaping Justice Outcomes from Stakeholder Interviews

The factors suggested by stakeholders in the qualitative interviews that might shape the likelihood of achieving justice outcomes are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11. Summary of factors suggested by stakeholders in qualitative interviews that might shape the likelihood of achieving justice outcomes.

| Justice outcome | Possibly shaped, influenced, and/or facilitated by... |
|--|---|
| Belief / Acknowledgement / Compassion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troopers prioritizing fact gathering vs. providing empathetic, belief-centered responses • Victim-survivor behavior (e.g., alcohol use) |
| Consequences / Arrest / Trial / Guilty verdicts / Incarceration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trooper investigative techniques and skills • Availability and quality of evidence • Forensic technology • Other victim-survivors reporting common suspect-perpetrator • Ability to prove case beyond a reasonable doubt • Potential for victim-blaming • Law workload • Victim-survivor willingness to proceed and proactivity • Racism toward Alaska Native victim-survivors |
| Healing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to healing services such as therapy, treatment, victim-survivor services, and healing techniques • Referral to treatment and services • Dialogue with others about one’s experiences with SA • Moving past self-blame • Belief and acknowledgement by system professionals • Tone and content of initial system professionals’ responses to SA • Victim-centered, trauma-informed responses • Being heard by perpetrator • Resolution of case in criminal justice process • Speed of resolution of case in criminal justice process |
| Prevention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful consequences through the criminal justice system • Incapacitation of those convicted of sexual offenses (through incarceration and monitoring) • Swift responses from the criminal justice system • Treatment and rehabilitation for those who are sexually abused • Community dialogue and public safety ads • Educating community members about victimization risks^a • Educating and empowering victim-survivors when responding to reports of victimization^a |
| SAK testing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim-survivors choosing to have SAK collected • Quality or existence of other evidence in case when case would not depend on SAK testing outcomes <p><i>*Note: As of 2019, all SAKs will be tested within one year of submission to the State Crime Lab (with some exceptions – see Footnote 8)</i></p> |
| Professionals doing their best | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal justice professionals’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workload ○ Burnout / Self-care ○ Amount of experience ○ Training ○ Personal investment in each case |

Table continued on next page...

Table 1 continued...

| Justice outcome | Possibly shaped, influenced, and/or facilitated by... |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual assault being reported by victim-survivor • Forensic evidence being entered into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) • Sex offender registration laws |
| Rehabilitation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in rehabilitation for sex offenders • Opportunities for rehabilitation for sex offenders • Criminal justice system priorities |
| Quick resolution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity of investigations • Rotating AST shifts in rural locations • Delay of assignment of defense attorneys to suspect-perpetrator |
| Voice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma-informed sexual assault response team (SART) interview process • Victim impact statements • Options for ways to deliver victim impact statements • The MeToo movement |
| Extralegal justice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community priorities and actions • Community attachment/detachment from justice process • Availability of alternatives to criminal justice system |
| Restitution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim-survivors awareness about compensation options • Assistance for victim-survivors in applying for compensation/restitution • Availability of other financial assistance • Suspect-perpetrator resources to pay restitution |
| Dialogue around sexual assault | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptability and safety of speaking out about sexual assault • Beliefs about victim-survivors' strength to engage in discussions |
| Public education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of responding to sexual assault and providing victim-survivor compensation • Controversy around sex education |
| Apology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspect-perpetrators' acknowledgement of their actions • Criminal justice investigation process |
| Choice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SART exam procedures • Law's ability to contact victim-survivor • Amount of time to settle on a plea deal • Victim-survivor expressing opinion about plea deal to judge |
| Retribution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim-survivor desire for retribution • Criminal justice system priorities |

Note. The factors listed in this table are not recommendations made by the interview participants, but in many cases are related to recommendations that were made.

The justice outcome “due process” is not included in this table because it is ensured through a set of constitutionally guaranteed rights.

^a Educating community members about victimization risks was suggested by at least one interview participant as a way of effectively preventing victimization from happening. It is acknowledged here that this type of suggestion places some of the onus of preventing victimization on potential victim-survivors themselves, which to some connotes victim blaming. It should therefore be emphasized that this table is meant to comprehensively represent the findings of what was shared during the interviews, and not the perspectives of the authors and funders of this report, and there is *no* intent to place the blame of victimization on sexual assault victim-survivors.

Factors Shaping Justice Outcomes from Agency Records

The agency case records provided by DPS and Law also provided some insight into whether certain factors were related to case processing outcomes. Based on what was shared by system stakeholders in the qualitative interview data as shaping justice outcomes (see Table 1), available and relevant victim-survivor, perpetrator, and incident characteristics in the agency case records database were analyzed using bivariate analyses (testing whether two variables are statistically related to each other). These available and relevant victim-survivor and incident characteristics included the geographic location of the assault; alcohol or drug use; whether or not forensic evidence was collected for a case; the victim-offender relationship; victim-survivor racial identity, gender, and age; and time between the assault and the report. The two case processing outcomes examined were:

- 1) Reports of SA/SAM resulting in SA/SAM charges being referred for prosecution or not, and
- 2) Incidents referred for prosecution resulting in SA/SAM charges being accepted for prosecution or not.

There were not enough cases in the stages of the process after being accepted for prosecution (such as cases dismissed, in active prosecution, etc.) to conduct analyses. It is important to emphasize that all relationships are merely correlations and that bivariate analyses alone do not establish a causal relationship between variables.

For adult SA cases, only specific geographic location was significantly related to whether a case was referred for prosecution: SA incidents reported in Detachment E were significantly less likely to be referred for prosecution than incidents reported outside of Detachment E.

For SAM cases, geographic location was significantly related to whether a case was referred for prosecution. SAM incidents reported in Detachment C were significantly less likely to be referred for prosecution than incidents reported outside of Detachment C. Conversely SAM incidents reported in

Detachment D were significantly more likely to be referred for prosecution than incidents reported outside of Detachment D. Additionally, when examining rural, off-road areas to non-rural, off-road, SAM incidents occurring in rural, off-road areas were significantly *less* likely to be referred for prosecution.

Alcohol or drug involvement, American Indian/Alaska Native identity, and victim-survivor gender were all also related to whether a case was referred for prosecution for SAM cases. Incidents where alcohol and drugs were involved were significantly more likely to be referred for prosecution than those where no alcohol or drugs were involved. Incidents involving victim-survivors with American Indian/Alaska Native identity were significantly less likely to be referred for prosecution than those without a victim with AIAN identity. Finally, incidents with at least one male victim were significantly less likely to be referred for prosecution than those with no male victim-survivors.

No variables were found to be related to whether a case was accepted for prosecution for either SA or SAM cases.

Stakeholder Recommendations to Improve Justice Achievement from Interviews

Finally, every recommendation made by the stakeholder interview participants was included in this report to demonstrate the depth and breadth of the recommendations put forth by both system stakeholders and victim-survivors. It is important to emphasize that the intent behind sharing these recommendations *is not to endorse* these recommendations, rather it *is to comprehensively represent the findings* of what was shared during the interviews.

The stakeholder recommendations are organized by topic area, although some stakeholder recommendations could have fit in multiple topic areas. The topic areas are therefore not mutually exclusive. The stakeholder recommendations ranged from suggesting that those who have been assaulted report as soon as possible, to improvements in investigations, a greater willingness to prosecute SA cases, and society-wide cultural shifts in how we view consent and SA more broadly. These topic areas are not organized by importance of the recommendations, and are instead organized to first follow the criminal

justice process (starting with reporting of the crime, moving on to the first response and then the following investigation, so on and so forth), followed by a listing of more general topic areas that could apply to multiple stages of the criminal justice process such as communication with the victim, training, and resources, funding, and personnel. The topic areas that the stakeholder recommendations were sorted into were:

1. Reporting sexual assaults to the criminal justice system
2. First response
3. Investigations - Interviews
4. Investigations - Glass warrants
5. Investigations - General
6. Prosecution
7. Forensic analyses of evidence
8. Speed of criminal justice process
9. Victim-survivor knowledge about criminal justice process
10. Communication and follow-ups with victim-survivors on their case.
11. Tone of interactions with victim-survivors
12. Healing resources and other services for victim-survivors
13. Continuous quality improvement
14. Training
15. Inter-agency communication, collective understanding, and collaboration
16. Resources, funding, and personnel
17. Burnout and vicarious trauma
18. Known suspect-perpetrators of sexual assault
19. Laws/statutes
20. Community dialogue and public education around sexual assault

Limitations

The three data sources for this project (interviews, surveys, and agency records), all have limitations regarding how these findings should be interpreted and applied.

First, the interview data do not inform on how common any perspective or experience was. Instead, these data inform on the range of possible types of perspectives and experiences. In other words:

the interview data demonstrate the variety of types of perspectives and experiences that happened, but not what percentage of people had those perspectives or experiences. This is not a limitation, necessarily, as the purpose of these data was to demonstrate range and not prevalence, but it is important to be clear about their purpose for those unfamiliar with qualitative data. Regarding presenting the full range of possibilities, it is possible that not enough interviews were conducted and thus the range of perspectives and experiences documented is not actually comprehensive of all that could have been documented.

Second, the survey data, which *were* intended to document the prevalence of different perspectives and experiences (meaning: how common they were), were limited by the non-random selection of survey participants. Participants were recruited by advertisements and had to opt in to participation, rather than being randomly contacted by the research team for participation. Potential participants first had to be made aware of the survey via social media, email lists, or other methods, which could have created a selection effect that disproportionately excluded certain types of participants (e.g., those who do not use social media or ready access to a computer). After being made aware of the survey, potential participants then had to choose to participate, which could have disproportionately included participants with certain types of experiences or perspectives (e.g., victim-survivors with particularly negative or particularly positive experiences may have chosen to participate, whereas those with more neutral experiences may not have). Thus, whether the survey participants are representative of the overall population they were intended to represent is unknown. Lastly, because of the small sample size, only univariate (single variable) analyses could be conducted.

Finally, the agency records were limited by missing data and the small number of cases that were accepted for prosecution limited the analyses that could be conducted. It is also important to emphasize that all relationships established by the bivariate analyses were merely correlations and that bivariate analyses alone do not establish a causal relationship between variables.

Appendix B. Victim-Survivor Stakeholder Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Conversations began with introductions, small talk, and answers to questions about the study. For phone participants, the conversation began with confirming that the participant was in a safe and private setting. Once the participant had settled in, the PI reviewed the consent form with the participant (it had been shared with them in advance) and any questions or concerns they had at that time. After the consent process, the following script was followed (but not verbatim so as to ensure a casual conversation flow). The PI checked in periodically with the participant during the interview to ensure that they were not too distressed to continue.

As a reminder, the purpose of this interview is to gather information on your experiences with reporting a sexual assault to the Alaska State Troopers between 2006 and 2016. Some people have multiple experiences with assault and violence, but because this project is about specific cases and our time today is limited (2 hours), I will ask you to focus on the events that meet the study criteria. This does not mean that I don't care about your other experiences; I just want to make sure that we get the information that we need for the current study. If you reported multiple sexual assaults to the Troopers between 2006 and 2016, please share what you are able to about all of these experiences.

If at any point these questions bring up distressing feelings or otherwise make you too uncomfortable to continue, please let me know and we can talk through your options. A victim advocate who is professionally trained to talk to victim-survivors about their experiences is available right now and I can connect you with them if you want. I will also provide you with other safe options of people who can support you. If we have to end the interview early, we can talk about continuing it at a later point if that is something you want to do.

Phone surveys only: *If, at any time, you do not feel physically or emotionally safe, you can just say "Goodbye". I will understand and I will not call you back. You can call me back if you'd like at [relevant project phone number]. If anyone asks who you were talking to and you are not comfortable telling them, you can tell them that I am a researcher conducting a health survey through the University of Alaska Anchorage. You can give them this number [relevant secondary phone number] as the project phone number.*

As a note, I may pause during the interview to take notes. Because we are being recorded, this should not take too long, but I may need to write down something that I want to ask about later.

With all of the above in mind, I'm going to start with a few quick questions about you so that we have an idea about the variety of types of people we interviewed. Are you ready to move forward?

1. *What is your current age?*
2. *What is your gender (male, female, or something else)?*
3. *What is your primary racial or ethnic identity (for example: American Indian/Alaska Native; Black or African American; White; East Asian; etc.)?*
4. *We are now going to talk about your experiences. Before we talk about your reporting experience, I want to give you the opportunity to share with me any information that you would like to share or that you think is important for me to know about the sexual assault that you reported. You can share as much or as little as you want.*

Follow-up questions if not contained in answer to above:

- a. *How old were you when you experienced the sexual assault?*
- b. *How long after the sexual assault did you report the assault? What year was that?*
- c. *Where (in which community) were you sexual assaulted?*
5. *Tell me about your experiences reporting the sexual assault that happened to you.*

Follow-up questions if more depth is needed:

- a. *Can you tell me about the first person you told? **Probes:** And then what? Can you tell me how the Troopers found out about the sexual assault?*
 - b. *Can you tell me more about your experiences with the Troopers when you reported?*
 - c. *Can you tell me more about your experiences with the nurse or other medical professionals during this process? **Probes:** Were you at a clinic, a hospital, or both?*
 - i. *Did you have an exam in which evidence was collected, sometimes known as a SART or forensic exam? **Probe:** What was that like? What do you remember the most?*
 - d. *Was someone there during the reporting process specifically to support you other than your friends and family, such as a victim advocate?*
 - e. *Did the person(s) who assaulted you get arrested?*
 - f. *Can you tell me more about your experiences with the prosecutor during this process?*
 - g. *Do you know if the prosecutor took your case to court? **Probe:** What was that like?*
 - h. *What happened with your case? (As in, how did it end?)*
 - i. *How were you kept up to date on your case? **Probe:** Who was the last person you heard from about your case?*
6. *What do you remember the most about the above process? **Probes:** What was the most positive? What was the most negative? Tell me more about that...*
 7. *The purpose of this research project is to try to understand survivors' experiences, including yours. A big part of that is understanding what justice means for survivor-victims of sexual assault. In general, in these situations, what does "justice" mean to you?*
 8. *With that in mind, was "justice" done in your case?*

Follow-up questions if more depth is needed:

- j. *For who?*
 - k. *Why or why not? (i.e., what factors do you think shape the likelihood of justice?)*
 - l. *What did you want to happen when you reported your assault?*
 - m. *If not, what would justice have looked like?*
9. *Could anyone in the process have done anything differently to make you feel that justice was done?*
 10. *Do you have any recommendations for improving the process for survivor-victims in the future?*
 11. *Is there anything else I should have asked you about reporting and the process that you went through?*
 12. *Do you have any questions for me?*

Thank you for answering all of those questions and sharing your experiences with me. It takes courage to do that and I will try very hard to make sure your voice is heard in shaping and improving experiences for survivors of sexual assault in the future. Before you go I want to check on how you are feeling emotionally and physically and make sure that you know about resources available to you.

[At this point the PI confirmed that the participant had received the resource list on the back of the FAQ sheet and/or knew that it existed. They were also asked if they would like to be contacted when the final report becomes available.]

Appendix C. System Stakeholder Semi-Structured Interview Guide

1. Before we get into the full interview, can you tell me a little bit about your position: what you do, how long you've been working in that role, and any other information about yourself that is relevant to sexual assault responses.
2. Tell me about the process a victim-survivor goes through when they report a sexual assault to the Alaska State Troopers.

Follow-up questions if more depth is needed:

- a. Who is usually the first person survivors tell? **Probes:** Can you tell me more about that interaction? How do the Troopers usually find out about the assault (e.g., from VPSOs, shelters, medical providers, directly from survivor, third parties, etc.)?
 - b. Can you tell me more about the role of the Troopers in this process?
 - c. Can you tell me more about the role of nurses or medical professionals in this process? **Probe:** What difference does the medical location (i.e., clinic versus hospital) make in the process?
 - i. Can you tell me more about the forensic exam process, also known as a SART exam?
 - d. Can you tell me more about the role of victim advocates in this process?
 - e. Do the people accused of sexual assault often get arrested? **Probe:** Why or why not?
 - f. Can you tell me more about the role of prosecutors in this process?
 - g. Can you tell me more about the court experience for survivors who report?
 - h. What is usually the outcome of sexual assault cases reported to the Troopers?
 - i. How are survivor-victims kept informed about their cases? **Probe:** How and when are they contacted? Who is responsible for communicating with them about their cases? Who is the final person to make contact with them when their case has gone as far as it will go?
3. What about this process stands out the most to you? In what ways? What is the most positive? What is the most negative?
 4. The purpose of this research project is to understand survivors' experiences. A big part of that is understanding what justice means for survivor-victims of sexual assault and for those working within the criminal justice, medical, and victim services systems who might have the ability to help secure that justice for them. In general, for these types of cases, what does "justice" mean to you?
 5. With that in mind, is "justice" usually done in sexual assault cases reported to the Troopers?

Follow-up questions if more depth is needed:

- a. Who is it being done for (i.e., the state, sexual assault survivors who report, the accused and/or convicted)?
 - b. Why or why not? (i.e., what factors do you think shape the likelihood of justice?)
 - c. If not, what would justice look like?
6. Could anyone in the process do anything differently to make you feel that justice is being done?
 7. What would be your top recommendations (no more than 3) for improving the process for survivors?
 8. Is there anything else I should have asked you about responses to sexual assaults reported to the Troopers?
 9. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix D. Victim-Survivor Survey

Welcome to the AK-SAKI victim-survivor survey: Share your experiences for change!

Before we ask any questions, we will share about our research so that you can make an informed choice to participate.

Consent

Research purpose

Dr. Ingrid D. Johnson, Assistant Professor at the University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center is researching how the Alaska State Troopers and other agencies respond to reports of sexual assault. The point is to better understand what happens when sexual assaults are reported and whether hopes for justice are met. Also important to this understanding is why sexual assaults go unreported. This survey is called the “AK-SAKI” victim-survivor survey.

Participation

You are being asked to take part in a 25-30 minute survey. The survey will be about your experiences with sexual assault, where and how you sought help or resources for those assaults, and what justice means to you in relation to sexual assault. You will also be asked for your recommendations for improvement at the end of the survey. Your experiences, along with the experiences of others, will be shared (without your name being used) with the Alaska State Troopers and other agencies. They will use this information to improve how they respond to sexual assaults in the future. Your experiences may also be shared (without your name being used) in research presentations, articles, and/or trainings at various state, national, and international conferences and events.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate and you must be your own legal guardian.

Voluntary nature of participation

It is your decision to participate in this survey. If you choose to participate, you may stop the survey at any time. You may skip questions that you do not want to answer.

Confidentiality

Your responses on this survey are confidential. The only identifying information attached to your answers will be your IP address and email address. IP addresses are tracked to monitor for duplicate participation and will not be shared with anyone other than Dr. Johnson. Your email address is attached to your response because you were emailed a unique link to the survey to participate. If you are eligible and you participate, you will also be asked to enter your email address in a separate survey so that you gift card can be emailed to you. Your email address will not be seen by anyone other than Dr. Johnson and will be deleted from the final dataset once data collection is complete. Your de-identified data could be used in future research projects by Dr. Johnson or other researchers.

Data security

Digital copies of the data will be kept on password secured hard drives in the locked office of Dr. Johnson.

When you are finished with this survey, we recommend that you protect your own data security on your electronic device by clearing your browser history. Although the answers to survey questions will not be visible to anyone, someone could see that you visited this website and may ask you why. If you would rather not explain it, clearing your browser history will make it so that no one can see you were here. Click here [[link to https://www.computerhope.com/issues/ch000510.htm](https://www.computerhope.com/issues/ch000510.htm)] to get information on clearing your browser history.

Potential Benefits of Participation

Taking part in this survey could give you the chance to share your thoughts on being assaulted in a new way. This could be relieving and/or empowering for you. It also provides you with the chance to be linked to resources for victims/survivors of sexual assault.

Potential Risks of Participation

Taking part in this survey could be emotionally difficult. You will be asked to think about things that could have been traumatic for you. This could bring back some of the feelings and responses that you experienced at the time of the assault.

The “EXIT” button at the top of your screen will take you directly to Google if you need to leave the survey quickly. If you would like talk to a trained, neutral person about your experiences or the experiences of others with sexual harm or sexual assault, the “RESOURCES” button will open a page of local and national phone numbers for you to call in a new tab (so your survey will not be closed).

Compensation

If you are eligible for participation and you participate in the survey, you will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card. You will be directed to a separate page at the end of this survey where you will enter your email address. Your email address will not be connected to your answers on the survey. The code for the gift card will be emailed to that address within 3 business days.

Contacts

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Johnson at 907-786-1126 or idjohnson@alaska.edu. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject or you feel those rights have been violated, please contact the UAA Office of Research Integrity and Compliance at 907-786-1099 or uaa_oric@alaska.edu.

Consent

To further protect your identity, your name and signature are not being collected to show that you agree to take part in this study. Instead, if you agree to take part in this survey, please check the “I AGREE” box below. Checking this box means that you have read the information that we just shared and that you agree to take part in this study.

- a) I AGREE that I have read the study information, I am my own legal guardian, and I AGREE to participate in this study. [GO TO SECTION E]
- b) I DO NOT AGREE to participate in this study and/or I am not my own legal guardian. [GO TO WU1]

Section E: Eligibility

E INTRO

Thank you for your interest in the AK-SAKI survey. Our first questions are to determine whether you are eligible to participate.

E1

Are you at least 18 years of age and your own legal guardian?

- 1 No [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]
- 2 Yes
- 1 Don’t know [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]
- 2 Prefer not to say [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]

E3_proceed

Our next questions are about your experiences with sexual assault. Please remember that your participation is voluntary and you do not have share any more than you are comfortable sharing. The “EXIT” button at the top of your screen will take you directly to Google if you need to leave the survey quickly. If you would like talk to a trained, neutral person about your experiences or the experiences of others with sexual harm or sexual assault, the “RESOURCES” button will open a page of local and national phone numbers to call in a new tab (so your survey will not be closed).

Are you still willing to proceed?

- 1 No [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]
- 2 Yes

E4

Many people have experienced sexual assault. Sexual assault can be committed by people someone knows well, such as romantic or sexual partners, friends, teachers, coworkers, supervisors, or family members, or by acquaintances or strangers.

By sexual assault, we mean sexual contact or behavior that occurs without consent, including:

- Forcing someone to perform or receive sexual acts, including sexual touching, oral sex, or penetrating someone's body (forcing can include physical force as well as emotional coercion, psychological force, manipulation, and/or threats of force)
- Sexual acts with someone who cannot currently give consent due to an intellectual disability, mental illness, or other mental disability
- Attempting to do any of the above

Sometimes sexual assault can happen when a person is unable to consent to it because they were asleep, or because they were drunk, high, drugged, or passed out from alcohol, drugs, or medications. This can include times when they voluntarily consumed alcohol or drugs or they were given drugs or alcohol without their knowledge or consent. Please remember that even if someone uses alcohol or drugs, what happens to them is not their fault.

Please note: the legal definition of sexual assault in Alaska is narrower than the above definition. Although what happened to you may be sexual assault per the above definition, that does not necessarily mean it is considered sexual assault according to Alaska law.

Have you ever experienced a sexual assault?

- 1 No [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]
- 2 Yes
- 1 Don't know [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]
- 2 Prefer not to say [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]

E5

Have you ever experienced a sexual assault in Alaska as either a resident or visitor to the state?

- 1 No [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]
- 2 Yes
- 1 Don't know [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]
- 2 Prefer not to say [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]

E6

Have you ever experienced a sexual assault in Alaska when you were at least 18 years old?

- 1 No [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]
- 2 Yes [GO TO SECTION PC]
- 1 Don't know [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]
- 2 Prefer not to say [SCREENED OUT – GO TO WU1]

Section PC: Participant Characteristics

Thank you for answering those questions. We are honored that you are willing to share with us about your experiences. Before we ask for more detail, we want to learn a little more about you as an individual.

PC1

In which year were you born?

[yyyy]

PC2

What is your gender identity?

- 1 Woman [GO TO PC4]
- 2 Man [GO TO PC4]
- 3 Other: _____ [GO TO PC3]
- 2 Prefer not to say [GO TO PC4]

PC3 [IF PC2=3]

Although you identify as [PIPE IN ANSWER FROM PC2], would you say that your life experiences in relation to your gender are closer to the experiences of women or the experiences of men?

- 1 Women
- 2 Men
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

PC4

What are your racial-ethnic identities? (Please select all that apply)

- Alaska Native
- American Indian
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latina/o
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other (please specify):
- Other (please specify):
- Other (please specify):

PC5

Which Alaska Native cultures do you identify with? (Please select all that apply)

- Aleut
- Athabascan
- Cupik
- Eyak
- Haida
- Inupiat
- Tlingit
- Tsimshian
- Yupik (Central)
- Yupik (St. Lawrence Island)
- Other (please specify):
- Other (please specify):
- Other (please specify):

Section MARS: Multiple assaults and report screening

MARS1_INTROa

Thank you for telling us a little about you. Our next questions are to learn more about your experiences with sexual assault. This will help us ask the right questions about the help you received after the assault. Please remember that your participation is voluntary and you do not have share any more than you are comfortable sharing.

Are you still willing to proceed?

- 1 No [GO TO MARS1_INTROb]
- 2 Yes [GO TO MARS2]

MARS1_INTROb [IF MARS1_INTROa=1 (UNWILLING TO PROCEED)]

If you do not want to share more about your experiences with sexual assault, you can end the survey completely or you can skip to the section on support that received after the assault(s). What would you like to do?

- 1 End survey completely [GO TO WU2]
- 2 Answer the questions about support received after the assault(s) [GO TO SECTION VSE]

- 3 I have changed my mind and would like to continue answering the questions about my experiences with sexual assault [GO TO MARS2]

MARS2

How many sexual assaults have you experienced in Alaska as an adult (18 years or older)?

- 1 One [GO TO MARS3]
- 2 More than one [GO TO MARS4]
- 3 I have not experienced a sexual assault in Alaska as an adult [SKIP TO WU1]
- 1 Don't know [SKIP TO MARS4]
- 2 Prefer not to say [SKIP TO MARS4]

MARS3 [IF MARS2=1 (ONE ASSAULT IN AK AS ADULT)]

Did you report the sexual assault that you experienced in Alaska as an adult (18 years or older) to the police? By police we mean state Troopers, municipal or city police, and/or Village Public Safety Officers.

- 1 No [GO TO MARS5]
- 2 Yes [GO TO MARS5]
- 1 Don't know [GO TO SECTION VSE]
- 2 Prefer not to say [GO TO SECTION VSE]

MARS4 [IF MARS2=2 (MORE THAN ONE ASSAULT IN AK AS ADULT)]

How many of the sexual assaults that you experienced in Alaska as an adult (18 years or older) did you report to the police? By police we mean state Troopers, municipal or city police, and/or Village Public Safety Officers.

- 1 I never reported any of my experiences with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult to the police [GO TO MARS_SEGWAYa]
- 2 I reported one of my experiences with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult to the police [GO TO MARS_SEGWAYb]
- 3 I reported more than one, but not every sexual assault that I experienced in Alaska as an adult [GO TO MARS_SEGWAYb]
- 4 I reported every sexual assault that I experienced in Alaska as an adult to the police [GO TO MARS_SEGWAYb]
- 1 Don't know [GO TO SECTION VSE]
- 2 Prefer not to say [GO TO SECTION VSE]

MARS_SEGWAYa [IF MARS4=1 ; >1 assault, none reported]

You indicated that you experienced more than one sexual assault. Please answer the next set of questions based on **your most recent experience with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult.**

MARS_SEGWAYb [IF MARS4=2,3,OR 4 ; >1 assault, any reported]

You indicated that you experienced more than one sexual assault and that you reported at least one of those assaults. Please answer the next set of questions based on **your most recent experience with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult that you reported to the police.**

MARS5

In which year did you experience this sexual assault? (If you don't remember the exact year, please give your best estimate)

[NUMBER ENTRY RESPONSE]

MARS6

Who sexually assaulted you when you experienced this sexual assault? Please check all that apply.

- 1 A romantic or sexual partner, such as a husband or wife, boyfriend or girlfriend, someone you were dating or having sex with, etc.
- 2 A non-romantic or non-sexual friend
- 3 A non-romantic or non-sexual acquaintance
- 4 A stranger
- 5 Other (please specify): _____
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

MARS7

What was or were the racial-ethnic identities of person or persons who sexually assaulted you? Please check all that apply.

- 1 Alaska Native
- 2 American Indian
- 3 Asian
- 4 Black or African American
- 5 Hispanic or Latina/o
- 6 Middle Eastern or North African
- 7 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- 8 White
- 9 Other: _____
- 10 Other: _____
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

MARS8

What was the gender of the person or persons who sexually assaulted you? Please check all that apply.

- 1 Woman [GO TO PC4]
- 2 Man [GO TO PC4]
- 3 Other: _____ [GO TO PC3]
- 2 Prefer not to say [GO TO PC4]

MARS9

Were you under the influence of alcohol or drugs when you were sexually assaulted? Please remember that even if someone uses alcohol or drugs, what happens to them is not their fault.

- 1 No
- 2 Yes
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

MARS10

Were you experiencing homelessness when you experienced this sexual assault? By homeless, we mean that you were either living in a place not meant to be lived in, an emergency shelter or transitional housing, or a temporary location (such as a motel, hotel, or with family or friends) without being able to stay in that housing for an extended period of time.

- 1 No
- 2 Yes
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

MARS11

At the time that you experienced this sexual assault, had you ever been arrested or otherwise negatively involved with the criminal justice system?

- 1 No
- 2 Yes
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

MARS12

Were you physically injured during this sexual assault? (For example, were there bruises, scratches or cuts, broken bones, etc?)

- 1 No
- 2 Yes
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

MARS13

In which region of Alaska did this sexual assault occur? If you are not sure, select the region that seems closest.

- 1 Arctic (North of the Brooks Range from Canada to the Chukchi Sea, Utquiagvik, etc.)
- 2 Interior (North of the Alaska Range, south of the Brooks Range, Fairbanks, etc.)
- 3 Western (Kotzebue, Nome, Bethel, Dillingham, etc.)
- 4 Southwestern (Kodiak Island, Alaska Peninsula, and Aleutian Islands)
- 5 Southcentral (Anchorage, Mat-Su, Valdez, Kenai Peninsula, etc.)
- 6 Southeast (Skagway, Haines, Yakutat, Juneau, Ketchikan, etc.)
- 7 I was not sexually assaulted in Alaska when I was an adult (18 years old or older)[GO TO WU1]
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

Section VSE: Victim support and engagement

VSE_INTROa

Our next questions are to learn more about your experiences with receiving support after you were sexually assaulted as an adult in Alaska. Please remember that your participation is voluntary and you do not have share any more than you are comfortable sharing.

VSE_INTROb [IF MARS4=1 ; >1 assault, none reported]

As a reminder, please answer the next set of questions based on **your most recent experience with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult.**

VSE_INTROc [IF MARS4=2,3, OR 4 ; >1 assault, any reported]

As a reminder, please answer the next set of questions based on **your most recent experience with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult that you reported to the police.**

VSE_INTROd [didn't answer questions on number of assaults or reports]

If you have never reported a sexual assault to the police, please answer the next set of questions based on **your most recent experience with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult.**

If you have reported a sexual assault to the police, please answer the next set of questions based on **your most recent experience with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult that you reported to the police.**

VSE1

Did a medical professional examine you after the sexual assault?

- 1 No
- 2 Yes
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

VSE1B [IF VSE1 = 1 (NO)]

Why were you not examined by a medical professional after the sexual assault?

I did not want to be examined or have evidence collected

No exam was offered

I reported my sexual assault too late

I did not want to travel for the exam

Other (Please specify):

- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

VSE2 [If VSE1=2]

Which type of medical professional examined you? Please check all that apply.

- 1 A community health aide
- 2 A nurse
- 3 A sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) or forensic nurse examiner (FNE)
- 4 A doctor

5 Other (please specify):

-1 Don't know

-2 Prefer not to say

VSE4 [If VSE1=2]

Did a medical professional conduct collect evidence from your clothing and/or body?

1 No

2 Yes

-1 Don't know

-2 Prefer not to say

VSE5 [IF VSE4=2]

Did the person who collected evidence from your body and clothing have special training to do so?

1 No

2 Yes

-1 Don't know

-2 Prefer not to say

VSE6 [IF VSE4=2]

Did you have to travel to a different community to meet with the medical professional who collected the evidence?

1 No

2 Yes

-1 Don't know

-2 Prefer not to say

VSE7 [IF VSE4=2]

Was the evidence collected from your clothing and/or body tested?

1 No

2 Yes

-1 Don't know

-2 Prefer not to say

VSE8 [If VSE1=2]

Was a follow up medical exam scheduled after your first examination?

1 No

2 Yes

-1 Don't know

-2 Prefer not to say

VSE9 [If VSE8=2]

Did you attend your follow up medical exam?

1 No

2 Yes

-1 Don't know

-2 Prefer not to say

VSE10 [IF VSE9=1]

Why did you not attend your follow up medical exam? Please check all that apply.

I forgot

I did not get a reminder

I was not able to make it at that time

I had to work

I did not have anyone to watch my kid(s)

I did not want my partner to know where I was going

I did not want to do it

I did not think it was important

Other (please specify):

-1 Don't know

-2 Prefer not to say

VSE11 [IF VSE9=2]

Was the follow up medical exam helpful?

1 No

2 Yes

-1 Don't know

-2 Prefer not to say

VSE12

We would like to know more about whether anyone referred you to certain services at any point and whether you used those services after you were sexually assaulted.

Please check all that apply.

| | Someone referred me to this service or resource. | I used or accessed this service or resource. |
|--|---|---|
| Victim advocate or a victim advocacy agency | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The Office of Victims' Rights (OVR) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The Violent Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mental health services | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Public health services | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (Please specify): _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (Please specify): _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

VSE13

Do you have anything to clarify or add about receiving support after being sexually assaulted? [OPEN TEXT ENTRY]

**[IF MARS3=1 OR MARS4=1,2,OR 3, GO TO SECTION NR
IF MARS3=2 OR MARS4=4, GO TO SECTION R]**

Section NR: Non-reporting to LE

NR1_INTROa [IF MARS3=1 OR MARS4=1 (NEVER ANY POLICE REPORT FOR 1+ SA)]

Please share why you didn't report the sexual assault(s) that you experienced in Alaska as an adult to the police.

NR1_INTROb [IF MARS4=2 OR 3 (MORE THAN 1 SA, BUT DID NOT REPORT EVERY 1 TO LE)]

You said that you experienced multiple sexual assaults in Alaska as an adult (18 years or older), but that you did not report all of them to the police. Please share why you didn't report the other sexual assault(s) that you experienced as an adult in Alaska to the police.

NR1_INTROc [IF SKIPPED # OF ASSAULTS AND REPORTING QUESTIONS]

If you have experienced a sexual assault that you didn't report to the police, please answer the next set of questions about why. Sometimes people report some sexual assaults to the police but not others. If this is true for you, please answer for why you didn't report the assaults that you didn't report.

If you have reported every sexual assault that you have experienced to the police, please skip to the next section.

NR2a

There will be multiple pages, each with different reasons for not reporting. **Please check all that apply.** After you have seen all options, you will be asked which were the most important reasons for not reporting.

- **Page 1**
 - I had previously had a bad experience with the police before
 - I had reported a sexual assault to the police before and nothing happened
 - I was worried about my own criminal record or involvement with the police
- **Page 2**
 - I did not feel comfortable with the police or did not like the police
 - The police would not have helped
 - Reporting to the police seemed like too much trouble
 - I did not think that the police would believe me
 - I did not trust the police
- **Page 3**
 - There were no police in my community to report to
 - I did not want to travel outside my community to make the full report
- **Page 4**
 - I did not want to go through the sexual assault forensic exam (when they collect evidence from your body)
 - I did not want to get the person who sexually assaulted me in trouble with the police
 - I was afraid that the person who sexually assaulted me or their family members would harm me if I reported it to the police
 - I was afraid that other people I know, such as family, neighbors, or employers, would find out
 - I was afraid that reporting would negatively affect my family or community
 - I was afraid that my family or community would view me as a traitor for reporting
- **Page 5**
 - I dealt with it myself
 - Someone in my household or family dealt with it
 - I reported it to someone other than the police
- **Page 6**
 - I did not believe it was a crime
 - I believed it was too private or personal
 - I did not think that it met the legal definition of sexual assault in Alaska
- **Page 7**
 - I had been drinking or using drugs at the time of the assault
 - I could not remember all of the details of the assault
 - I did not know who the assailant was
 - The assailant was a romantic or sexual partner (such as a husband or wife, boyfriend or girlfriend, someone you were dating or having sex with, etc.)
- **Page 8**
 - I was too ashamed
 - Silence is the norm
 - Someone(s) in my community (family, friends, church, etc) persuaded me not to report it to the police
 - Some other reason: _____
 - Some other reason: _____
 - Some other reason: _____

NR10 [IF MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE GIVEN FOR NR2a]

Based on the answers you provided, we now ask that you rank the reasons that you didn't report to the police by importance to you.

Please select

only one reason as your primary reason for not reporting,
only one reason as your secondary reason, and
only one reason as your third reason.

These should be the top three reasons that you did not report to the police.

NR3

Do you have anything to clarify or add about not reporting sexual assault? [OPEN TEXT ENTRY]

[IF MARS3=1 OR MARS4=1, GO TO SECTION PTSS

IF MARS4=2 OR 3 GO TO SECTION R]

Attention check (roughly halfway through):

Please select the answer that states "I am still paying attention to the survey questions."

- 1 I enjoy spending time with friends and family
 - 2 I go grocery shopping weekly
 - 3 I am still paying attention to the survey questions
 - 4 I enjoy traveling overseas
- 1 Don't know
-2 Prefer not to say

Section R: Reporting to CJ system

[THIS SECTION ONLY FOR MARS3=2 OR MARS4=2, 3, OR 4 (ANY REPORTING TO LE)]

R1_INTROc [IF NO ANSWERS ON # OF ASSAULTS AND REPORTING]

The next set of questions are about reporting sexual assaults to the police.

If you have never reported a sexual assault to the police, please select "skip reporting questions" below to skip these questions.

If you have reported a sexual assault to the police, please answer the next set of questions based on your most recent experience with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult that you reported to the police.

Skip reporting questions

Continue on to reporting questions

R1_INTROa [IF MARS3=2 OR MARS4=2 (ONE SA AS ADULT IN AK REPORTED TO LE)]

The next set of questions are about **reporting the sexual assault that you experienced in Alaska as an adult (18 years old or older) to the police**.

R1_INTROb [IF MARS4=3 OR 4 (MORE THAN ONE SA AS ADULT IN AK REPORTED TO LE)]

The next set of questions are about reporting sexual assaults to the police. As a reminder, please answer based on **your most recent experience with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult that you reported to the police**.

R2

In which year did you report this sexual assault? If you are not sure, please give your best guess.

[NUMBER ENTRY RESPONSE]

- 1 Don't know
-2 Prefer not to say

R3

Which type of police officer(s) did you report this sexual assault to? Please select all agencies that apply (they are in alphabetical order).

- Alaska Department of Corrections
Alaska State Troopers
Alaska Wildlife Troopers

Anchorage Airport Police and Fire Department
Anchorage Police Department
Bethel Police Department
Bristol Bay Borough Police Department
Cordova Department of Public Safety
Craig Police Department
Alaska Department of Corrections
Dillingham Police Department
Fairbanks Airport Police and Fire Department
Fairbanks Police Department
FBI or other federal agency
Fort Yukon Police Department
Haines Police Department
Homer Police Department
Hoonah Police Department
Juneau Police Department
Kenai Police Department
Ketchikan Airport Safety
Ketchikan Police Department
King Cove Police Department
Klawock Department of Public Safety
Kodiak Police Department
Kotzebue Police Department
Metlakatla Police Department
Military police
Nome Police Department
North Pole Police Department
North Slope Borough Police Department
Palmer Police Department
Petersburg Police Department
Saint Paul Police Department
Sand Point Police Department
Seldovia Police Department
Seward Police Department
Sitka Police Department
Skagway Police Department
Soldotna Police Department
Tribal or Village Police Officer
Unalakleet Department of Public Safety
Unalaska Department of Public Safety
University Police Department - Anchorage
University Police Department - Fairbanks
Valdez Police Department
Village Public Safety Officer
Wasilla Police Department
Whittier Department of Public Safety
Wrangell Police Department
Yakutat Department of Public Safety
Police in other state/country
-1 Don't know
-2 Prefer not to say

R4

Please check all that apply in relation to what happened after you reported your sexual assault.

We want to know **who you expected to follow up with you** and **who *did* follow up with you**.

| | I expected this professional/agency to follow up with me after I reported my sexual assault. | This professional/agency did follow up with me after I reported my sexual assault. |
|---|---|---|
| The police | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Victim advocate(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) or other medical professional | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Representative(s) from the district attorney's office (prosecutors, district attorneys, assistant district attorneys, or victim-witness paralegals) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (Please specify): _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

R5

Was the person (or persons) who sexually assaulted you arrested in connection to the sexual assault?

- 1 No
- 2 Yes
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

R6

Has your case been resolved or closed?

- 1 No [GO TO R15]
- 2 Yes
- 1 Don't know [GO TO R15]
- 2 Prefer not to say [GO TO SECTION PTSS]

R7

How did your case resolve or close?

- 1 The case was closed without charges being sent by the police to the district attorney's office
- 2 The case was closed without charges being filed by the district attorney's office
- 3 Charges were pursued by the district attorney's office, but the grand jury failed to indict
- 4 The person(s) who sexually assaulted me pleaded guilty to a charge that was not a sexual assault charge (for example, assault or coercion)
- 5 The person(s) who sexually assaulted me pleaded guilty to sexual assault (this includes a reduction of charges to a lower level sexual assault)
- 6 There was a trial and the person(s) who sexually assaulted me was found not guilty of sexual assault
- 7 There was a trial and the person(s) who sexually assaulted me was found guilty of sexual assault
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

R8 [IF R7=1]

Why were charges not pursued? Please select all that apply.

- 1 Insufficient evidence
- 2 The person who sexually assaulted me said that it was consensual
- 3 My case did not meet the legal definition of sexual assault in Alaska

4 Other (please specify): _____

-1 Don't know

-2 Prefer not to say

R9a

Were you consulted before your case was resolved or closed?

1 No

2 Yes

-1 Don't know

-2 Prefer not to say

R9b

Did you want to be consulted before your case was resolved or closed?

1 No

2 Yes

-1 Don't know

-2 Prefer not to say

R10

We want to know **who notified you** and **who you wanted to notify you** that your case had been resolved or closed. Please select all that apply.

| | This person notified me that my case was resolved or closed. | I wanted this person or agency to notify me that my case was resolved or closed. |
|---|---|---|
| The police | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Victim advocate(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Representative(s) from the district attorney's office (prosecutors, district attorneys, assistant district attorneys, or victim-witness paralegals) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A judge | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (Please specify): _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No one notified me that my case was resolved or closed (check either box) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I did not want to be notified that my case was closed (check either box) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prefer not to say | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

R11

Now we want to know **how you were notified** and **how you wanted to be notified** that your case had been resolved or closed. Please select all that apply.

| | I received this type of notification that my case had been resolved or closed. | I wanted to receive this type of notification that my case had been resolved or closed. |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Mailed letter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Email | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Phone call | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In person talk | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify): _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I did not want to receive notification that my case was resolved or closed (check either box) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prefer not to say | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

R12

Did you understand what was happening with your case as it was being investigated, charged, and/or prosecuted in the criminal justice system?

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Sort of
- 3 Yes
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

R13 [IF R6=1 ; CASE IS STILL OPEN]

Where in the criminal justice process is your case?

- 1 The police are still investigating
- 2 The police have sent the case to the district attorney's office
- 3 The district attorney's office decided to pursue charges and we are waiting to present to the grand jury
- 4 The district attorney's office decided to pursue charges and we are now in the pre-trial process
- 5 The person(s) who assaulted me has/have been found guilty and we are waiting for their sentencing hearing
- 6 Other (Please specify):
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

R14 [IF R6=1 ; CASE IS STILL OPEN]

Do you understand what is happening with your case in the criminal justice system?

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Sort of
- 3 Yes
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

R15 [IF R6=1 ; CASE IS STILL OPEN]

Do you want to be consulted before your case is resolved or closed?

- 1 No
- 2 Yes
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

R16 [IF R6=1 ; CASE IS STILL OPEN]

Who did you want to notify you when your case is resolved or closed? Please select all that apply.

- 1 The police
- 2 A representative from the district attorney's office
- 3 A victim advocate
- 4 A judge
- 5 Other – Please specify: _____
- 6 I do not want to be notified when my case is resolved or closed.
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

R17 [IF R6=1 ; CASE IS STILL OPEN]

How do you want to be notified when your case is resolved or closed? Please select all that apply.

- 1 Mailed letter
- 2 Email
- 3 Phone call
- 4 In person talk
- 5 Other – Please specify: _____
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

R18

Do you have anything to clarify or add about how your case was handled after you reported to the police?
[OPEN TEXT ENTRY]

Section PTSS: Perceptions of treatment by system stakeholders

[FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS (REPORTERS AND NON-REPORTERS)]

PTSS_INTROa

Our next questions are to learn more about how you felt you were treated after you were sexually assaulted as an adult in Alaska. **If you did not interact with one or more of the professionals listed below, please select the “not applicable” option for each.** Please remember that your participation is voluntary and you do not have share any more than you are comfortable sharing.

PTSS_INTROb [IF MARS4=1 ; >1 assault, none reported]

As a reminder, please answer the next set of questions based on **your most recent experience with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult.**

PTSS_INTROc [IF MARS4=2,3, OR 4 ; >1 assault, any reported]

As a reminder, please answer the next set of questions based on **your most recent experience with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult that you reported to the police.**

PTSS1a

During your interactions with **the police**, do/did you feel...

| | Yes | No | Neutral / No feelings either way | Not applicable (I did not interact with this type of professional) |
|---|-----|----|----------------------------------|--|
| Respected? | | | | |
| Believed? | | | | |
| Judged? | | | | |
| Blamed, in part or fully, for the assault(s)? | | | | |
| Safe? | | | | |
| Like your case was a priority? | | | | |

PTSS1b

Would you like to add anything about your interactions with the police? [OPEN TEXT FIELD HERE]

PTSS2a

During your interactions with **the victim advocate(s)**, do/did you feel...

| | Yes | No | Neutral / No feelings either way | Not applicable (I did not interact with this type of professional) |
|---|-----|----|----------------------------------|--|
| Respected? | | | | |
| Believed? | | | | |
| Judged? | | | | |
| Blamed, in part or fully, for the assault(s)? | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Safe? | | | | |
| Like your case was a priority? | | | | |

PTSS2b

Would you like to add anything about your interactions with the victim advocate(s)? [OPEN TEXT FIELD HERE]

PTSS3a

During your interactions with **the sexual assault nurse examiner or other medical professional(s)**, do/did you feel...

| | Yes | No | Neutral / No feelings either way | Not applicable (I did not interact with this type of professional) |
|---|-----|----|----------------------------------|--|
| Respected? | | | | |
| Believed? | | | | |
| Judged? | | | | |
| Blamed, in part or fully, for the assault(s)? | | | | |
| Safe? | | | | |
| Like your case was a priority? | | | | |

PTSS3b

Would you like to add anything about your interactions with the sexual assault nurse examiner or other medical professional(s)? [OPEN TEXT FIELD HERE]

PTSS4a

During your interactions with **the representative(s) from the district attorney’s office** (prosecutors, district attorneys, assistant district attorneys, or victim-witness paralegals), do/did you feel...

| | Yes | No | Neutral / No feelings either way | Not applicable (I did not interact with this type of professional) |
|---|-----|----|----------------------------------|--|
| Respected? | | | | |
| Believed? | | | | |
| Judged? | | | | |
| Blamed, in part or fully, for the assault(s)? | | | | |
| Safe? | | | | |
| Like your case was a priority? | | | | |

PTSS4b

Would you like to add anything about your interactions with the representative(s) from the district attorney’s office? [OPEN TEXT FIELD HERE]

Section JUST: Perceptions and Priorities of Justice

JUST_INTROa

Our next questions are to learn more about how your beliefs about justice. Please remember that your participation is voluntary and you do not have share any more than you are comfortable sharing.

JUST1a

“Justice” means different things to different people. Below are different ways that people have described “justice” when reflecting on cases of sexual assault. There will be several pages of different definitions.

How important is each definition of justice to you?

| | Very important | Moderately important | Not at all important |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Acknowledgement of the harm done to the person who was sexually assaulted. This acceptance of the truth or existence of something could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, the community, and/or the perpetrator. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Apology for the harm done to the person who was sexually assaulted. This apology could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, the community, and/or the perpetrator | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Arrest of the perpetrator , regardless of whether that arrest leads to a charge and/or conviction. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Being heard when speaking about sexual assault. For persons who have been assaulted, this might include being heard in court during testimony or when delivering a victim impact statement, or it could involve being heard by friends, family, and/or the community when sharing about one’s experiences. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Believing the person who was sexually assaulted. This belief could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, or the community. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The case going to trial , regardless of the perpetrator being found guilty. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Choice or control for the person who was sexually assaulted. This could include having a say in whether or how things happen, such as whether to participate in a forensic exam, whether to report to law enforcement after a forensic exam (anonymous report), whether to participate in an ongoing investigation, whether or not to pursue charges in a case, etc. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Compassionate treatment of the person who was sexually assaulted by the professionals in and around the criminal justice system. This could include the police, victim advocates, medical professionals, etc. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Consequences for the perpetrator so that they know they have done something wrong, regardless of what those consequences are. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dialogue around sexual assault. This dialogue can include (often difficult) conversations in the criminal justice system and/or the community, and involves working to address the issue together, as a collective. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Due process to protect the rights and presumed innocence of those who are accused of sexual assault. Due process includes the accused’s right to a lawyer and to be proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt by a jury of their peers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Extralegal justice (justice that happens outside of the criminal justice system). This could include the perpetrator losing their job or being held accountable by their family, friends, or community, or any other form of justice that does not involve the criminal justice system. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Forensic testing of the sexual assault kit and other evidence, if collected. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A guilty charge for the perpetrator in a court of law. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Healing for the person who was sexually assaulted. This healing could come over time, through therapy and/or individual resiliency, and could sometimes involves moving from an identity of “victim” to that of “survivor.” | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Jail or prison time for the perpetrator, regardless of whether this changes their behavior. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Monitoring perpetrators in the community to prevent them from or catch them if they assault someone else. This monitoring can be done by the criminal justice system (probation or parole), or informally by a network of community members. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Prevention of sexual assault. This could be preventing anyone from ever sexually assaulting someone else, or preventing those who have already sexually assaulted someone from doing so again. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Professionals in the criminal justice system doing their best, regardless of the case outcome. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Public education about sexual assault and its consequences, along with existing resources and ways to support those who have been sexually assaulted. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Quick resolution of the case in the criminal justice system. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Rehabilitation or treatment for the perpetrator to address underlying causes of their behaviors and prevent them from perpetrating in the future. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Restitution or compensation for the person who was sexually assaulted for any financial costs resulting from the assault or reporting (e.g., personal belongings lost as evidence, security system installations, medical and therapy costs, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Retribution, or punishment inflicted on the perpetrator as vengeance for their harmful actions. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Are there other ways that you would define justice that are important to you? (If not, please leave blank). Other: _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other: _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other: _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

JUST1b [IF MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE RATED AS “VERY IMPORTANT” FOR JUST1a]

Among the definitions of justice that you shared were “very important” to you, **which three are the most important?**

Please select only one type of justice as #1, only one as #2, and only one as #3.

JUST4intro

Now we would like to know whether you feel that justice has been done for you in relation to the different definitions.

Please share whether you feel that the following were achieved for you when you were sexually assaulted (regardless of how important it was or is to you).

If you have never reported an adult sexual assault to the police in Alaska, answer these items based on your most recent experience with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult.

If you have reported an adult sexual assault to the police in Alaska, answer these items based on your most recent experience with sexual assault in Alaska as an adult that you reported to the police.

JUST4a

Were the following achieved for you when you were sexually assaulted?

| | Yes, achieved for me | No, not achieved for me | Not applicable to my situation | Don't know |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Acknowledgement of the harm done to the person who was sexually assaulted. This acknowledgement (acceptance of the truth or existence of something) could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, the community, and/or the perpetrator. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Apology for the harm done to the person who was sexually assaulted. This apology could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, the community, and/or the perpetrator | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Arrest of the perpetrator , regardless of whether that arrest leads to a charge and/or conviction. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Being heard when speaking about sexual assault. For persons who have been assaulted, this might include being heard in court during testimony or when delivering a victim impact statement, or it could involve being heard by friends, family, and/or the community when sharing about one's experiences. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Believing the person who was sexually assaulted. This belief could come from the criminal justice system, friends and family, or the community. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The case going to trial , regardless of the perpetrator being found guilty. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Choice or control for the person who was sexually assaulted. This could include having a say in whether or how things happen, such as whether to participate in a forensic exam, whether to report to law enforcement after a forensic exam (anonymous report), whether to participate in an ongoing investigation, whether or not to pursue charges in a case, etc. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Compassionate treatment of the person who was sexually assaulted by the professionals in and around the criminal justice system. This could include the police, victim advocates, medical professionals, etc. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Consequences for the perpetrator so that they know they have done something wrong, regardless of what those consequences are. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dialogue around sexual assault. This dialogue can include (often difficult) conversations in the | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| criminal justice system and/or the community, and involves working to address the issue together, as a collective. | | | | |
| Due process to protect the rights and presumed innocence of those who are accused of sexual assault. Due process includes the accused's right to a lawyer and to be proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt by a jury of their peers. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Extralegal justice (justice that happens outside of the criminal justice system). This could include the perpetrator losing their job or being held accountable by their family, friends, or community, or any other form of justice that does not involve the criminal justice system. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Forensic testing of the sexual assault kit and other evidence, if collected. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A guilty charge for the perpetrator in a court of law. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Healing for the person who was sexually assaulted. This healing could come over time, through therapy and/or individual resiliency, and could sometimes involves moving from an identity of "victim" to that of "survivor." | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jail or prison time for the perpetrator, regardless of whether this changes their behavior. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Monitoring perpetrators in the community to prevent them from or catch them if they assault someone else. This monitoring can be done by the criminal justice system (probation or parole), or informally by a network of community members. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Prevention of sexual assault. This could be preventing anyone from ever sexually assaulting someone else, or preventing those who have already sexually assaulted someone from doing so again. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Professionals in the criminal justice system doing their best , regardless of the case outcome. | | | | |
| Public education about sexual assault and its consequences, along with existing resources and ways to support those who have been sexually assaulted. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Quick resolution of the case in the criminal justice system. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Rehabilitation or treatment for the perpetrator to address underlying causes of their behaviors and prevent them from perpetrating in the future. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Restitution or compensation for the person who was sexually assaulted for any financial costs resulting from the assault or reporting (e.g., personal belongings lost as evidence, security system installations, medical and therapy costs, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Retribution , or punishment inflicted on the perpetrator as vengeance for their harmful actions. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other: _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other: _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other: _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| | | | | |

JUST5

Overall, do you believe that justice has been done for you after you were sexually assaulted?

- 1 Not at all
- 2 In some ways yes, but mostly no
- 3 Yes and no, in equal parts
- 4 In some ways no, but mostly yes
- 5 Yes, justice has been done for me
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

JUST6

Do you have anything to clarify or add about justice in cases of sexual assault? [OPEN TEXT ENTRY]

Section CO: Close-out

CO_INTRO

This is the final section of the survey. Here we want to know your recommendations and a few other details before we finish.

CO1

Between March and September 2019, did you participate in a research interview (one-on-one conversation) with Dr. Ingrid Johnson about reporting to the Alaska State Troopers, after which she gave you an Amazon or Visa gift card? [PICTURE OF DR. JOHNSON HERE]

- 1 No
- 2 Yes
- 1 Don't know
- 2 Prefer not to say

CO2

Do you have any recommendations for improving responses to or services and resources for sexual assault in the state of Alaska? [NO CHARACTER LIMIT TEXT FIELD]

CO3

Please tell us anything else that we should know about your experiences with sexual assault, particularly related to seeking help and/or justice.

[NO CHARACTER LIMIT TEXT FIELD]

CO4

Sometimes people take surveys just to see what the questions are or to get the compensation money, even if the survey does not apply to them. This can be a problem because it skews the results of the study, making it harder to fix systems or services for those who have been sexually assaulted.

If, for whatever reason, you have taken this survey but you have never experienced a sexual assault in Alaska as an adult (18 years or older), please select “Unsafe data” below. If you have experienced a sexual assault in Alaska as an adult (18 years or older), please select “Safe data.” You will receive a gift card regardless of your response.

- 1 Unsafe data
- 2 Safe data

Section WU: Wrap up

WU1

[FOR THOSE WHO:

- ARE UNDER 18
- ARE NOT THEIR OWN LEGAL GUARDIAN
- HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED A SEXUAL ASSAULT IN ALASKA AS AN ADULT (OR WHO DON’T KNOW OR PREFER NOT TO SAY)]

Thank you for your interest in this survey. Although many people care deeply about the issue of sexual assault and want to have their voices heard, this specific survey is only for individuals who:

- Are at least 18 years of age
- Are their own legal guardian
- Have experienced a sexual assault in Alaska when they were at least 18 years of age
- Are willing and able to share about their experiences

Please express any concerns or questions about this study to the study principal investigator, Dr. Ingrid D. Johnson at idjohnson@alaska.edu or 907-786-1126. You may also contact the UAA Office of Research Integrity and Compliance at 907-786-1099 or uaa_oric@alaska.edu.

To be notified when the study findings are available, please follow [this link] to add your email address to the notification list.

We strongly advise that you clear your browser history. Although your answers to survey questions will not be visible to anyone, someone could see that you visited the Qualtrics website and may ask you why. If you would rather not explain it, clearing your browser history will make it so no one can see you were here.

To get information on clearing your browser history, click here.

If you would like to talk with a trained, neutral person about your experiences or the experiences of others with sexual harm or sexual assault, you can call the free, confidential **National Sexual Assault Hotline (RAINN.org) at 1-800-656-4673**. There are also many free, local hotlines and resources within Alaska, listed below.

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Alaska statewide: Standing Together Against Rape | 1-800-478-8999 |
| Anchorage: Abused Women’s Aid in Crisis, Inc. | (907) 272-0100 |
| Anchorage: Standing Together Against Rape | 1-800-478-8999 |
| Anchorage: Victims for Justice | 1-888-835-1213 |
| Bethel: Tundra Women’s Coalition | 1-800-478-7799 |
| Cordova Family Resource Center | 1-866-790-4357 |
| Cordova: Native Village of Eyak | (907) 424-7738 |
| Craig: Helping Ourselves Prevent Emergencies | (907) 826-4673 |
| Dillingham: Safe and Fear-Free Environment | 1-800-478-2316 |
| Emmonak Women’s Shelter | (907) 949-1443 |
| Fairbanks: Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living | 1-888-478-7273 |

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Haines: Becky's Place | (907) 303-0076 |
| Homer: South Peninsula Haven House | 1-800-478-7712 |
| Juneau: AWARE | 1-800-478-1090 |
| Kenai: Kenaitze Indian Tribe | (907) 335-7600 |
| Kenai: The LeeShore Center | (907) 283-7257 |
| Ketchikan Indian Community | (907) 228-9327 |
| Ketchikan: Women in Safe Homes | 1-800-478-9474 |
| Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis Center | 1-888-486-3625 |
| Kotzebue: Maniilaq Family Crisis Center | 1-888-478-3969 |
| Nome: Bering Sea Women's Group | 1-800-570-5444 |
| Palmer: Alaska Family Services | 1-866-746-4080 |
| Petersburg: Working Against Violence for Everyone | (907) 518-0555 |
| Seward: Seaview Community Services | 1-888-224-5257 |
| Sitkans Against Family Violence | 1-800-478-6511 |
| Unalaskans Against Sexual Assault & Family Violence | 1-800-478-7238 |
| Utqiagvik: Arctic Women in Crisis | 1-800-478-0267 |
| Valdez: Advocates for Victims of Violence | 1-800-835-4044 |

WU2 [SURVEY COMPLETION]

That concludes our survey. Thank you so much for your time. We cannot express our gratitude for you being willing to share so much with us. We hope to do justice with your experience and help make things better for others who experience similar harm.

After you have reviewed the information below, you can follow [\[this link\]](#) to a separate survey where you can enter your email address to receive your \$25 gift card. You will also be asked if you would like to be added to the mailing list to be notified when the study findings are available.

Please express any concerns or questions about this study to the study principal investigator, Dr. Ingrid D. Johnson at idjohnson@alaska.edu or 907-786-1126. You may also contact the UAA Office of Research Integrity and Compliance at 907-786-1099 or uaa_oric@alaska.edu.

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| | |
|--|----------------|
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| Bethel: Tundra Women's Coalition | 1-800-478-7799 |
| Cordova Family Resource Center | 1-866-790-4357 |
| Cordova: Native Village of Eyak | (907) 424-7738 |
| Craig: Helping Ourselves Prevent Emergencies | (907) 826-4673 |
| Dillingham: Safe and Fear-Free Environment | 1-800-478-2316 |
| Emmonak Women's Shelter | (907) 949-1443 |
| Fairbanks: Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living | 1-888-478-7273 |
| Haines: Becky's Place | (907) 303-0076 |
| Homer: South Peninsula Haven House | 1-800-478-7712 |
| Juneau: AWARE | 1-800-478-1090 |
| Kenai: Kenaitze Indian Tribe | (907) 335-7600 |
| Kenai: The LeeShore Center | (907) 283-7257 |
| Ketchikan Indian Community | (907) 228-9327 |
| Ketchikan: Women in Safe Homes | 1-800-478-9474 |

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis Center | 1-888-486-3625 |
| Kotzebue: Maniilaq Family Crisis Center | 1-888-478-3969 |
| Nome: Bering Sea Women's Group | 1-800-570-5444 |
| Palmer: Alaska Family Services | 1-866-746-4080 |
| Petersburg: Working Against Violence for Everyone | (907) 518-0555 |
| Seward: Seaview Community Services | 1-888-224-5257 |
| Sitkans Against Family Violence | 1-800-478-6511 |
| Unalaskans Against Sexual Assault & Family Violence | 1-800-478-7238 |
| Utqiagvik: Arctic Women in Crisis | 1-800-478-0267 |
| Valdez: Advocates for Victims of Violence | 1-800-835-4044 |

COMPENSATION PAGE

Please enter your email address in the box below at which you would like to receive your \$25 Amazon gift card. Your email address will not be associated with your answers on the survey.

[ENTRY BOX]

Please check this box if you would like the above email address to be added to the mailing list to be notified when the study findings are available.

[After submitting above]

Thank you. You should receive your \$25 Amazon gift card within 3 business days.

We strongly advise that you clear your browser history. Although your answers to survey questions will not be visible to anyone, someone could see that you visited the Qualtrics website and may ask you why. If you would rather not explain it, clearing your browser history will make it so no one can see you were here.

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