**Overcoming the Reluctance or Refusal to Serve on the Team**

Below are some common concerns and suggestions on how to address them:

1. **Lack of time** – many potentially work for agencies that are understaffed and all members are likely extremely busy, making it a challenge to prepare for and attend EDRT meetings. Emphasize how team membership can result in the development of better and more efficient services or the improved identification of criminal cases. Multidisciplinary teams work collaboratively to avoid the duplication of efforts and make more appropriate referrals, saving time. Chairpersons should be sensitive to members’ time constraints and keep meetings focused and within the scheduled time.
2. **Lack of objectivity and potential for harming other work relationships** – many team members often collaborate on other teams, boards, or committees and may regularly provide services to elder abuse victims. These close connections can affect their objectivity and create concerns that their EDRT work might be seen as criticism, potentially harming their professional relationships and the older adults they serve.
3. **Uncertainty about the work of the EDRT** – The idea of an EDRT is unfamiliar to many agencies, professionals, and individuals involved in elder abuse work. Prospective members may require education on the team’s purpose, how it functions, and what their responsibilities would entail. This is especially crucial for representatives from agencies that typically close cases once a client has passed away, as well as for others who may not immediately recognize the importance of reviewing a death when they could focus their efforts on assisting living individuals who need their support.
4. **Fear of being criticized and blamed** – If potential members have encountered instances where other teams have assigned blame to members for deaths or system failures, they or their program administrators may hesitate to join an EDRT out of fear of facing similar criticism. Providing education and a clear commitment from the team leader and members to foster a ‘no blame, no shame; approach can help address this concern.
5. **Concern that information shared at team meetings will be disclosed and used outside team meetings** – Potential participants may worry that confidential information shared during meetings could be disclosed, either intentionally or unintentionally, leading to political, legal, or disciplinary consequences for individuals or agencies involved. Team leaders should emphasize any statutory protections in place or being developed to prevent the disclosure of confidential information, team discussions, or records, including protection from subpoenas. Regardless of legal protections, leaders should also highlight the importance of fostering a team culture, supported by written policies or agreements, that ensures confidentiality is strictly upheld.
6. **Concern about upsetting public officials who think that elder abuse is not a problem** – Public officials often claim that elder abuse is not an issue in their state or community. Potential participants and administrators might worry about political consequences if the EDRT identifies elder abuse and systemic gaps contributing to premature deaths. Team leaders should emphasize that the political fallout could be greater if these issues go unaddressed and it becomes known that the agency declined to join efforts aimed at resolving them.
7. **Intimidation about other team members** – Some potential participants may feel intimidated by joining an EDRT alongside doctors, lawyers, and medical examiners, especially if they lack advanced degrees. Team leaders should reassure them that their knowledge and experience are crucial to the team’s success and highlight how their insights into victims, perpetrators, and services are valuable to the work.
8. **Concern about looking at pictures of injured, dead victims** – Some potential members may hesitate to join due to concerns about viewing distressing images of victims or hearing emotionally painful stories. To address this, team leaders should emphasize the benefits of EDRT participation, reassure members that the focus is on systemic responses rather than graphic details and discuss how vicarious traumatization will be managed. Leaders can also acknowledge the tragedy of the deaths but highlight how the team’s work can provide meaning and prevent the loss from being in vain.