

# Help Wanted:

## How to Hire Great Domestic Violence Advocates, Course A

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WASHINGTON STATE COALITION

**WSCADV**

AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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**Lesson 1:**  
**Get Ready to Hire**

# Get Ready to Hire!

Elements of this module will provide you with tools and confidence to get started on your next hiring process. This is the leg work **before** posting the job opening. What this course will cover:

- 1) Hiring at DV programs
- 2) What to Look For
- 3) The Job Description
- 4) Developing the Hiring Timeline



# Hiring at DV Programs

Our movement for social change is exciting and attracts great people.

At the same time, we face a lot of challenges in hiring for advocate jobs.

Let's take a look at a few of these.

# What Attracts People to the Work?

- It's some of the most important, rewarding work in the world!
- We've got a great movement for social change!
- Working as an advocate can be a life-changing experience!
- Working in our movement presents opportunities to make the world better for people, families, and communities!
- You get to work with creative, independent, super-smart co-workers!



What else is rewarding at your organization that you want to be sure to talk about?

# Hiring Challenges

- These jobs have a reputation of being stressful with high burn-out
- Pay/benefits are often lower than they should be. (We can and should pay living wages.)
- Our field can attract rescuers and people who need praise for heroics.
- Recruiting and hiring a racially diverse staff takes extra time, money, and dedication.
- Our partners sometimes expect us to hire “professionals” with mainstream credentials.

# Values are the Foundation of Hiring

Aligning your hiring process with your organization's values and mission are essential. This is because if your new hire's values do not align with the organization, chances are you won't be working in harmony.

Before you begin working on the necessary documents, ask yourself a broader question about the ideal candidates you'd like to recruit.

Pause now to pull out your organization's mission and values statement, so that you can think about how to incorporate these into the job description, timeline, interview questions, etc.

# Reality Check:



Are you prepared to offer a level of pay and benefits that can reasonably attract and retain ideal, diverse candidates?

If not, do you have the power to increase compensation if needed?

Are there other intangible benefits you can offer that might be attractive to your ideal candidate? (e.g. flexible schedules, shorter work week, independence)

# Good Hiring Takes Time

Hiring your ideal candidate takes more time and preparation than we often feel we have. Because these jobs are often funded by time-limited contracts and grants, and because we're providing crisis services, you may feel pressure to fill vacant positions ASAP.

Resist the urge.

Hiring the right person will pay off in less supervisory head-aches, less turn-over, and better team morale.

# What to Look for

Some candidates will come to you with DV advocacy experience, but there can be other great candidates out there. Besides compassion and an interest in DV, look for:

- Eagerness and interest in making change;
- High energy, ideas, hopes and dreams;
- Problem-solving, ability to handle many responsibilities;
- DV or “school of hard knocks” life experience. Addiction recovery or even former incarceration can lead to invaluable ability to connect with many survivors.



# Core Qualities of Great Candidates

- Creative energy about the job
- Ability to identify obstacles that survivors face
- Demonstrated ability to think through a crisis
- Ability to treat all people with respect and non-judgmentally support survivors to make their own decisions
- Comfort level with survivors who present with many issues/obstacles (such as addiction or mental illness)
- Commitment to supporting diversity
- Ability to round out (and not just replicate) your staff

# Hire for Core Qualities, Not (Just) DV Education

“It is easier to teach someone about domestic violence than it is to teach them to be **organized, dependable, or strong communicators.**”

*(Cris Sullivan, Mission-Focused Management and Empowerment Practice:  
A Handbook for Executive Directors of Domestic Violence Programs)*

# Hiring Non-Traditional Candidates

It can feel more comfortable to hire people who come across as traditionally “professional” – educated, middle-class, mainstream, and who appear drama-free.

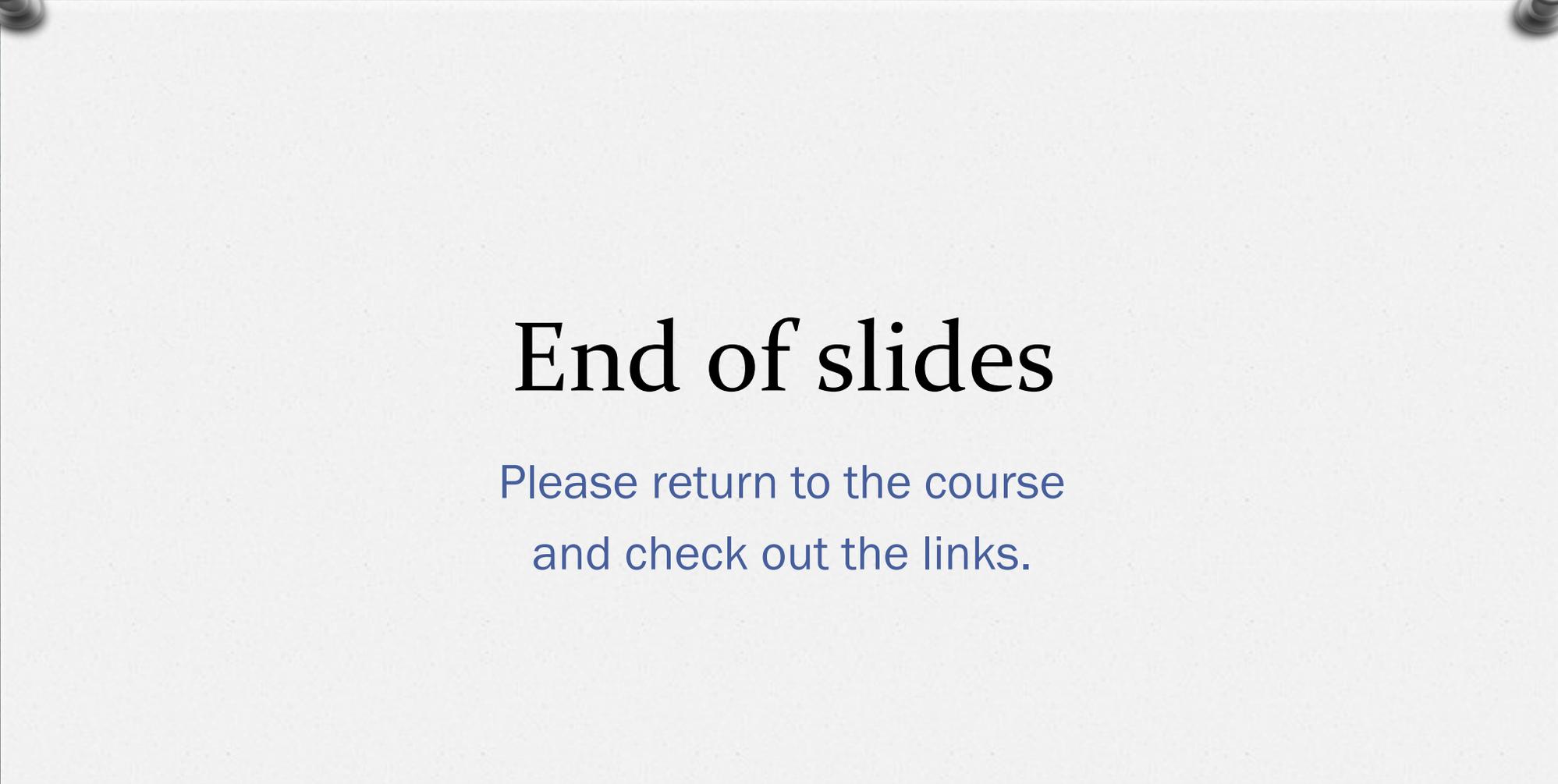
If this is a challenge for your agency, then identify what similarities already exists amongst your staff, and consider what diverse backgrounds, life experiences, personality, and practical skills your team needs in your next hire.

# What Does Your Team Need?

Ask yourself and your team:

- What kind of strengths, skills, and personalities will bring us more balance?
- How could our staff better reflect the population and community we serve?
- Who are we not reaching or serving well, how could this hire help the organization do better?





# End of slides

Please return to the course  
and check out the links.