



RAPERECOVERYCENTER

AUGUST 2005 VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

Frustrated with Law Enforcement?

Have you ever found yourself, or your client, frustrated with the response of law enforcement? As an ex-law enforcement officer, I will lend you my view and give you an action plan for the more egregious cases.

First of all - let's start with the fact that most law enforcement officers would never consider themselves (or their role) an advocate for victims or justice. Many officers have been trained to respond on cases to gather "just the facts" and have never been trained in conducting rape investigations.

Although many officers are very kind and would like to be helpful, they may not have received the training and tools they need to effectively and sensitively help a victim of rape and sexual assault. Almost by default, I have found that many officers respond in a way that is easiest for them or their Standard Operating Procedure.

I don't know of any agency that requires that their officers be sensitive to victim needs. However, most agencies do require their officers to be courteous to the public in general.

This is why your response and the on-going work that we do with victims is so critical. We can help buffer the "fact gathering" role of law enforcement and supplement it with reflective listening and empowering knowledge. We can be warm and fuzzy when law enforcement isn't!

That is to say - when a client is feeling frustrated with law enforcement, we do not work to undermine the police, or their fact-gathering role in the criminal justice process. But we can empathize with the client, help them to understand the role of law enforcement, and suggest ways in which they can vent their frustration (informal or formal complaint).

However, you may find yourself in a situation where the law enforcement officer is out-of-line or rude to you or the victim. If you have first-hand knowledge of an inappropriate response by law enforcement you can call their supervisor*

and tell them about your experience (i.e., register an informal complaint). Typically, the Sergeant will talk to the officer about your concerns and the complaint will not be part of the officer's departmental file. If a client reports that they feel they have been treated unfairly or rudely, let them know that they can report misbehavior to the officer's Sergeant as well (we should not report complaints second-hand).

Another informal option is to forward the complaint and/or victim to Erica Thoen, our Victim Services Coordinator or myself. We can raise the concern with the appropriate agency during our monthly Salt Lake Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) meeting. The SART meetings are a multidisciplinary gathering that is attended by a representative from the majority of County police agencies.

For the most egregious situations, you or a client can file an Internal Affairs complaint with the law enforcement officer's agency. Staff can assist you or the client with the process, which may include formal taped interviews. This type of complaint can be substantiated or unsubstantiated through the department's internal investigation and the record will be kept in the officer's departmental file. The department will decide what type of punishment, if any, will occur if the complaint is substantiated.

If the complaint is a civil rights violation or a Utah Victims Rights statutory offense, refer the client to staff and we can assist with an appropriate referral to an attorney.

Note: We are also very interested in hearing about an outstanding response by law enforcement! Please let Erica know of great responses as well, so that we can send a letter to the officer's Sergeant.

Heather Stringfellow, MPA
Executive Director

*Please consult with David or Heather before initiating any complaints as a RRC volunteer or staff.

Rape in Utah: A Survey of Utah Women About Their Experience with Sexual Violence

The Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) recently released its findings in a report entitled "Rape in Utah: A Survey of Utah Women About Their Experience with Sexual Violence".

The CCJJ, in conjunction with the Office of Crime Victim Reparations, developed and administered a survey of Utah women about their experience with sexual violence.

In part, this survey was commissioned to investigate published estimates from a national study that indicated that one in five women in Utah will be raped during their lifetime. This 20% figure only addressed female victims, and spoke directly towards rape, or forced sexual assault. The one in five figure was estimated for Utah using a mixture of findings from a national survey and demographic characteristics of Utah's population. ("One in Five, Rape in Utah: A Report to the State", Kenneth J. Ruggerio, Ph.D. and Dean G. Kilpatrick, Ph.D., May 15, 2003. National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center.)

Findings include, but are not limited to:

- o Rape is the only category of violent crime in which Utah's rate exceeds the nation's average.
- o Nearly one in three Utah women will experience some form of sexual violence during their lives.
- o Child molestation was the most common form of sexual violence reported, followed closely by rape.
- o Approximately one in eight women in Utah will be raped sometime during their lifetime.
- o Almost ninety percent of victims experienced their first sexual assault before their 18th birthday.
- o Of sexual assault victims, 96.6% were victimized by a male.
- o Only 8.6% of respondents were victimized by a stranger.
- o Only 9.8% of respondents who were sexually assaulted reported the crime to the police.

Laurel Duncan

UCASA ~ Executive Director

To access the full report go to:
www.justice.utah.gov/research/crime/rapeinutah.pdf

PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO DROP BY THE OFFICE AND PICK-UP YOUR NEW VOLUNTEER POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL!

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT

Patricia Marchant

What is your profession?

Interesting question because I'm one of those Jill (Jane) of all trades, blessed with multiple opportunities which I'm willing and able to do. I continued my career as an HR Consultant for another year when my position was cut at the University of Utah in the summer of 2000. I liked working for myself so much that I became more creative and so far have been successfully self employed for the past four years. I have contracted work in public relations, marketing and sales, special event coordination and hosting, building festival stages, providing technical assistance, replacing sprinkler systems to elderly caretaking and planting residential gardens. I also decided to become certified as a Personal Trainer three years ago, turning a passion into something potentially lucrative. I love dogs yet never really had the place to keep one so I started a company called, "Patricia's Pampered Pets."

What is your favorite movie?

I love movies. My favorite? That's tough. I'll say anything that stimulates me intellectually, emotionally and even spiritually. They can be such a great escape.

List a hobby or two.

I used to be a Journalist so I still love to write. Travel is also a passion. My most interesting trip was biking 750 miles in Chiapas and Xuahaca, Mexico through Guatamala to EL Salvador on a tandem bicycle.

Why do you volunteer at RRC?

I used to be a Police Officer. When I changed careers in 1992, I still wanted to contribute and stay affiliated with law enforcement. RRC was offering volunteer training, I happened to read about it and decided that would be my volunteer commitment for the year. Now its been 11 plus years.

What makes you unique?

My free spirit, endurance and imagination.

Favorite Quote

"To friendship and health, the only true forms for wealth. Salud"

NEW VOLUNTEER LISTSERVE!

The Rape Recovery Center is excited to launch its new volunteer listserve - an email-based tool to connect volunteers and share information. If you have used online newsgroups or mailing lists before, the listserve will operate similarly.

Since RRC volunteers take crisis line shifts from home and/or respond to area hospitals when called out, there are often few opportunities to meet and talk with other volunteers. As we continue to work with survivors of sexual assault we gain new insights, discover new community resources, and are frequently faced with difficult situations.

A few months ago, RRC staff began discussing how to create a forum for volunteers to share their experiences, pose questions, solicit and offer feedback, and create a welcoming culture among volunteers. The listserve will hopefully stimulate discussion and be a way for volunteers to stay engaged in this work over the long term.

RRC staff will also use the listserve to offer feedback and to post policy and activity updates. In the next few weeks you will be receiving an email with information about how to subscribe to the listserve.

So stay tuned! This is a great way to post questions you have been dying to ask, request feedback on a crisis call or hospital response case, or to share an experience you believe other volunteers may benefit from reading. . If you have questions in the coming weeks, please don't hesitate to call Erica at 467.7282, ext. 21.

RRC ANNOUNCEMENTS

RRC HAS HIRED A NEW COUNSELOR!!!

Please join our office in welcoming Rocio Paredes-Mora. Rocio, a recent graduate of the University of Utah's MSW program, will be providing crisis intervention counseling, group facilitation, hospital response and crisis line services with a particular emphasis toward Spanish-speaking clients. Rocio is going to be a tremendous addition to the RRC staff and we are all very excited!

TTY IS UP & RUNNING!!!

To better serve victims of rape and sexual violence from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, RRC now has TTY. The TTY phone number is 467-5551, but is only available during regular business hours. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing community can access our services during non-business hours using Relay Services by calling ?

VOLUNTEER MONTHLY MEETINGS & TRAININGS

To better support our tremendous volunteers RRC will be hosting one meeting per month on the last Wednesday of each month. These meetings will be for all volunteers to come together for either a roundtable to "decompress" and discuss, in-service training, or a PARTY!

This project funded by the CDC Rape Prevention
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

VOLUNTEER BBQ

August 31st @ RRC (begins at 5:30 pm)

VOLUNTEER ROUNDTABLE

September 28th @ RRC (begins at 5:30 pm)

SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER TRAINING

October 3rd - 7th (for more info. contact Dianne Fuller at 910-3690 or at slsane@comcast.net)

HRT TRAINING

TBA

VOLUNTEER EDUCATOR TRAINING

October 19th @ RRC (begins at 5:30 pm)