

# IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

*Survivor Inspired Change*

## HELPFUL TOOLS FOR EMS RESPONDING TO A SEXUAL ASSAULT

### What can I do?

- Start by believing the victim. Use active listening and non-blaming language.
- The trauma from a sexual assault can affect a victim's response. A victim may react or respond in a way counterintuitive to expectations. There is no right or wrong way to react.
- You may be providing the first safe presence in which to speak about this assault for a survivor.
- A victim of sexual assault has the following options:

To seek medical treatment at a hospital emergency room. (Most emergency rooms provide a private waiting area for sexual assault victims)

To either report or NOT report to law enforcement

To have forensic evidence collected WITH OR WITHOUT a police report. Evidence stored for 2 years.

Explain to victims the importance of preserving evidence until it can be collected by trained professional (e.g. do not wash, change clothes, urinate, defecate, smoke, drink, eat, brush hair or teeth, rinse mouth)

- Identify the rape crisis center in your area.
- A victim has a right to a sexual assault advocate present to provide support and information.

### Evidence Preservation

- Explain all of your actions to the patient and obtain consent for all treatment.
- Always wear gloves to avoid interference with evidence.
- Stabilize injuries that need immediate treatment if and only if the victim agrees.
- If possible have client sit on linen on gurney. Fragments of evidence may fall onto linen.
- If clothing or jewelry is removed have patient place each in a paper bag to preserve potential evidence.

### Documentation

- Document victim's demeanor and statements related to the assault (e.g. time, date, place of attacks)
- Document all findings, procedures and assessments in meticulous detail.
- Offer transportation to medical facilities where medical/forensic exams are performed.
- Notify receiving facilities of estimate time of arrival.
- Notify receiving SANE or doctor of evidence collected (if any).



## **Sexual Assault Facts<sup>1</sup>**

- In Texas 1 in 5 women & 1 in 20 men have been sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime.
- Over 80% of Texans who were sexually assaulted DID NOT report to law enforcement.
- Only 19% of the sexual assaults were committed by complete strangers, leaving over 80% of sexual assaults committed by someone known to the victim.

## **Who Are the Perpetrators?**

- Over 80% of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim.<sup>1</sup>
- Most rapists remain undetected.<sup>2</sup>
- Studies also confirm the undetected rapist is a serial hunter and serial offender– not the misunderstood drunk guy.<sup>2</sup>
- Over 94% of rapists roam free with only 3% ever spending a day in jail.<sup>3</sup>

## **Dynamics**

No one “asks” to be sexually assaulted, it is an act committed without consent (period).

Non-stranger rapes are the least likely to get reported and progress through the judicial process, yet account for a majority of the sexual assault occurrences in your community.

98% of non-stranger rapes do not involve a weapon.<sup>4</sup>

The use of alcohol and drugs during non-stranger rape and brief encounter rape is very common.<sup>5</sup>

Victims of non-stranger rape experience a high degree of inner struggle, shame and often blame themselves for the crime.<sup>5</sup>

Non-stranger and brief encounter rape victims are more likely than other victims to be blamed and to have their entire past sexual histories scrutinized, and as a result feel re-victimized.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Busch, N.B., Belly, H., DiNitto, D.M., Neff, J.A. (2003) A Health Survey of Texans: A Focus on Sexual Assault. Institute of Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, University of Texas at Austin

<sup>2</sup>Madigan, T. (2012). The serial rapists is not who you think. Star Telegram Online Retrieved from: [www.star-telegram.com/2012/08/19/4191666/the-serial-rapist-is-not-who-you.html](http://www.star-telegram.com/2012/08/19/4191666/the-serial-rapist-is-not-who-you.html)

<sup>3</sup>Retrieved from: <http://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/reporting-rates>

<sup>4</sup>Lisak, D., Miller, P.M. (2002) Repeat Rape and Multiple Offending Among Undetected Rapists. Violence and Victims (Vol.17 N.1) pp.73-84

<sup>5</sup>Non-Stranger(Acquaintance) & Brief Encounter Rape document. SAFVIC Curriculum-Funded by the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor Grant#WF-08-V30-20700-05 (Updated June 2012)

