

SERVING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

In considering new approaches to our daily work, including new technology, survivors must be at the center of our decision-making. This is true in ordinary times and must still apply even in a public health crisis. Below we have outlined some best practices and suggestions for you to consider implementing as we all maneuver and balance personal health safety and the everyday responsibilities that come with serving victims and survivors.

Counseling Services:

- Consider offering counseling services via video chat or by offering phone sessions as options for your clients to limit exposure and face-to-face contact.
 - Zoom is a great online platform available at a cost. Please consider purchasing utilizing your current CJD grant within an existing line item to avoid a budget adjustment. (I am happy to walk you through this process.)
 - <https://doxy.me/> and <https://vsee.com/> are two free options for you. Both are HIPAA compliant.
 - <https://kaofeng-lee-s90t.squarespace.com/digital-services-during-public-health-crises>

Hospital Accompaniment:

- Contact your local SANE or Hospital that provides sexual assault exams to discuss a plan to address survivor's needs during the exam process.
- Consider whether an advocate is needed in person or whether the SANE can call the hotline and connect the survivor with an advocate over the phone as an option for survivors to have access to advocacy.
- Train medical accompaniment staff how to perform hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub before and after all patient contact, contact with potentially infectious material, and before putting on and upon removal of protective equipment, including gloves. (if this applies)
- Please remember to communicate the availability of the stand-alone clinics in your area (if this applies) (i.e. Eloise house in Austin, Courtney's Place in Plano, etc.)

Hotline:

- In addition to regular hotline staff, consider also staffing your hotline with hospital advocates to speak to survivors during the sexual assault exam.
- Consider staffing your hotline with therapists or counselors should you decide that face-to-face sessions will be temporarily halted

Other:

- Hotel/Motel services – during times of disaster, as you all know, sexual assault and domestic violence incidents have a tendency to increase or at the very least continue at the same rate. CJD is allowing programs to offer emergency hotel/motel lodging (please use discretion on the number of nights) for survivors.

- Programs must reserve and pay for the hotel stay. Keep the receipt and notate the justification.
- This expense fits under your existing “Project supplies/DOE”
- Other expenses on behalf of the client – After a conversation with CJD, please know that bus tickets and other logistic assistance is an allowable expense under “Project supplies/DOE” if and only if the agency purchases on behalf of the client and maintains the receipt.

Many of you have implemented an intake process to assess the risks and minimize exposure for both clients and staff. For more information on these topic areas please contact Rick Gipprich at rgipprich@taasa.org or Rose Luna at rluna@taasa.org.