



Helping Sexual Assault Survivors Close to Home

On Monday, November 16th, a memorandum was signed making a collaborative community response and specialized medical providers available to sexual assault survivors coming forward for help at the Rusk County Memorial Hospital (RCMH) in Ladysmith. RCMH's sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs) will now perform a compassionate and comprehensive medical forensic exam and collect physical forensic evidence corroborating the nonconsensual sexual assault. They also offer information, treatment, and referrals for STIs and reproductive health services from Public Health and ensure patients are offered TimeOut's crisis intervention, support and legal advocacy before, during, and after the exam. The examiners will follow up on the physical evidence with Rusk County Law Enforcement and be available for legal testimony with the District Attorney to support successful prosecution of the perpetrator.

To learn more about RCMH's SANE program and how you can be involved in promoting our community's safety, [click here](#).

Pictured above (left to right) are representatives of the community agencies who signed off on the response protocols: Rusk County Sheriff Jeff Wallace, Rusk County District Attorney James Rennecke, Ashley Kuprin (TimeOut), Ladysmith Chief of Police Al Lobermeier, Becky Steinbach (TimeOut), Katie Bement (TimeOut), Megan Gorseger (TimeOut), Brittney Olson (TimeOut), Ginger Francis (WCASA), Rusk County Memorial Hospital CEO Charisse Oland, Sara Krall (End Domestic Abuse WI), Rusk County Health Officer and Public Health Supervisor Anita Zimmer

Thanks to the Ladysmith News and Alyssa Melin for the photo!

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Program Highlights

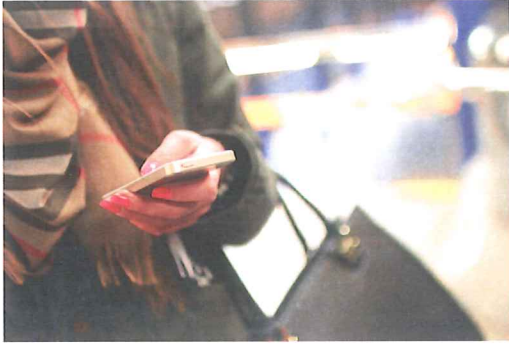


Thank You, Chefs!

TimeOut's second annual Men in the Kitchen fundraiser was a huge success! Our talented and enthusiastic chefs each created unique four course gourmet meals for their table of diners. All the ticket proceeds came back to benefit TimeOut. Chefs, thank you for your incredible support for our work and courage to break the silence on the violence in our community! See you next October! [Click here to view photos >>](#)

Text Line Staffed Around the Clock this Holiday Season

For most of us, the holidays are a joyous time



to gather with friends and family. For people in abusive relationships, however, the holidays can make staying safe more challenging than usual. The added financial stress, long hours traveling in a small vehicle back and forth...

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Advocate Story

I push into my office at 7:30am, slopping coffee on my desk and dropping my bookbag on the floor. I boot up my computer and check voicemail messages; one from the Sheriff's Department about a client they referred who will be in at 8 this morning, and another from my 11:00 client with a few questions regarding his statement for... [Read More >>](#)

"You're imperfect, and you're wired for struggle, but YOU ARE WORTHY of love and belonging." -- Brene Brown



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Newsletter

December 2015 E-Newsletter

SANE Program Facts

- **The NEED:** In 2014, TimeOut served 101 sexual assault survivors. As of early November 2015, TimeOut served 175 sexual assault survivors (112 of those survivors also suffered from domestic violence).
 - 68% of sexual assaults are not reported to the police ([RAINN](#))
 - Only 1/3 of sexual assault victims receive medical care after an assault ([BJS](#))
 - 98% of rapists will never spend a day in jail ([RAINN](#))
- **What do Rusk County Memorial Hospital's (RCMH) SANEs do?** Amber Kowalski and Michelle Skopec, RCMH's sexual assault forensic examiners, perform the medical forensic exam, gather information for the medical forensic history, collect and document forensic evidence, and document pertinent physical findings. They offer information, treatment, and referrals for STIs and reproductive health services to Rusk County Public Health. They coordinate with TimeOut advocates to ensure patients are offered crisis intervention, support and legal advocacy before, during, and after the exam. They may follow up with Rusk County Law Enforcement and the District Attorney for prosecution purposes.
- **What kind of training do SANEs have?** RCMH's SANEs took the WI Department of Justice's week-long training that meets the standards of the International Association of Forensic Nursing. They also received extensive training as part of the live clinical skills lab. They will be pursuing SANE board certification in the upcoming year.
- **How does the collaborative response work?** RCMH, Rusk County District Attorney, Rusk County Sheriff's Department, Ladysmith Police Department, Rusk County Public Health and TimeOut are all committed to responding to sexual assault survivors regardless of which agency they come to first. We function as a team to connect the survivor to all services he or she wants. We will help ensure the person receives consistent, respectful, survivor-centered services from all community agencies. The group will prioritize medical and advocacy services and follow the survivor's requests at all times. Survivors are 2/3 more likely to follow through with reporting the assault if an advocate responds and a collaborative response system is in place. (Ledray, SANE Development and Operation Guide)
- **Does SANE make our community safer?** Yes. SANE testimony has been critical in helping prosecutors obtain increased numbers of guilty pleas from defendants and hold them accountable. Physical evidence is the most impactful evidence a prosecutor can introduce to a jury. The Director of a Wisconsin SANE program reported that during a 3 1/2 year period, there was a 100% conviction rate of sex

offenders where a SANE testified at trial. (Ledray, SANE Development and Operation Guide)

- **How can I help?** If you're a medical provider at RCMH, take the SANE training! There will be four sessions and four clinicals offered in 2016. [Click here for more information](#). If you'd like to be trained in as a 24/7 response advocate for survivors, email Katie at TimeOut: katie@timeoutabuseshelter.org.

Text Line Staffed Around the Clock this Holiday Season

For most of us, the holidays are a joyous time to gather with friends and family. For people in abusive relationships, however, the holidays can make staying safe more challenging than usual. The added financial stress, long hours traveling in a small vehicle back and forth, large groups of rambunctious, sugar-laden kids, and increased access to alcohol can all be “gasoline on the fire” in an abusive relationship. Survivors’ families and friends often struggle with seeing their loved ones in abusive relationships and do not know of ways to help and support them.

TimeOut’s text line and phone hotline are available to anyone, not just survivors. Call or text our 24/7 phone hotline or text line and we can help you find ways to make the holidays safer for your friend or family member. The first time a survivor reaches out for help is a precious and sometimes fragile opportunity. It’s hard to know what to do or say. Via text or phone, whichever you’re comfortable using, we can share tips on how you can help the survivor feel less isolated and more supported. We can help you understand the dynamics of domestic violence and why they don’t just leave. We can even give you ideas for making a tailored safety plan with the survivor that protects them and their kids (for example, you calling for help if a code word is used).

- **24/7/365 Text line: 715-532-6976**
- **24/7/365 Phone hotline: 1-800-924-0556**

We’re confidential and anonymous, and you may just save your friend or family member’s life!

If you’d like some suggestions of what to say to help a friend or family member, check out [this resource](#) from the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Advocate Story: A Day in the Life of an Outreach Advocate

I push into my office at 7:30am, slopping coffee on my desk and dropping my book bag on the floor. I boot up my computer and check voicemail messages; one from the Sheriff’s Department about a client they referred who will be in at 8 this morning, and another from my 11:00 client with a few questions regarding his statement for his restraining order. I return phone calls and rush through my emails, answering the crucial ones a minute before my bell rings, notifying me of a visitor. I know I need to prepare for my girls’ group this afternoon—as they are brilliant and ask the best questions—but that’ll have to wait for later.

My crisis client comes in, falling into my arms, crying. This is not the first time she’s been hurt—far from it. This is, however, the first time she’s had the courage to talk about it. We sit, and through tears she tells me about years of abuse: the belittling and name calling that happens on a daily basis, the threats and fear, the physical

violence that doesn't seem to hurt as badly as the other abuse she endures. The most recent physical incident left her with rope burn marks on her neck and bruises on her face, chest, and wrists. As we talk further, she mentions not feeling as though she has the option to ever say "no" to him and—until now—didn't realize it was possible to be raped within a relationship. She says the realization is important, but she just can't deal with that right now. We talk about her options, including filing for a restraining order, though she feels that is too dangerous right now, especially with their children involved. She's committed to protecting them, but knows a restraining order would make that difficult. She and I also work together on a tentative safety plan and outline a few next steps for getting her and the children out of the house safely. Three hours later, she is feeling calmer and has a renewed sense of purpose. We plan to meet up again later this week.

As she walks out, my afternoon restraining order client walks in. He has his statement prepared, and, thankfully, we had the foresight to get his paperwork ready for court the day before. We go through the paperwork and discuss exactly what steps he can expect through this process. Later I help him get his paperwork notarized at the Clerk of Courts office and turned over to the judge's office. The judge signs it, his office sets a date for the hearing, and the paperwork is filed and turned over to the Sheriff's Department for service. My client leaves feeling relieved and in control of parts of his life again.

I head back down to my office in time to catch a phone call from the school; one of the girls from my group is in crisis and needs to meet with me before group. I quickly make a phone call rescheduling a follow-up meeting with an ongoing client who is now in a stable situation, grab my group materials, and head over to the school. When I arrive, she is waiting for me in the guidance office. She explains that she has been battling depression—something I knew—but last night took it a step further and cut herself deeply. She does not want her parents to know, and, feeling a little over my head, I ask if we can invite a school guidance counselor into our meeting. She agrees, and as we talk we discover the trauma she has encountered through her life: a past boyfriend of her mother's was abusive to her and her mom, an ex-boyfriend of her own left lasting scars on her legs and back, a party this summer went too far and though she cannot remember what happened to her that night, she fears the worst. I ask if she'd like to share any of this in group, but she says she is not yet ready. She is, however, willing to schedule a time for her mom to come in and meet with all of us. She wants to talk to a doctor about her depression and hopes her mom agrees to allow it.

Girls' Group is the bright spot of my day, as always. My girls are energetic and funny and upbeat most days, despite the difficult situations they face. They support and genuinely trust each other in a way that gives me hope. Today we—fittingly—discuss trauma and how to move forward from trauma. The girls color with pencils as I give them skills and tools for combating repetitive thoughts, panic attacks, and negative memories. As group ends, I have one girl stay after and tell me how thankful she is not only for the information today, but for group in general. I leave the school feeling so grateful to be doing the work I do.

Before bringing this long but rewarding day to a close, I stop back at my office to drop off materials and check my messages. I return a phone call from a client and check in with the local newspaper and radio station regarding their coverage of our upcoming awareness events. When I finally check my email, I realize I forgot to turn in some grant information, but that will have to wait until tomorrow.

Each task is as important as all the others, but some have a much bigger impact on individual's lives. This job is not for most people, but it's a passion that some of us cannot live without. Some days may be chaotic, but at the end of those days it's the realization that our office is busy because people trust us and feel safe with us, something they may not have elsewhere in their lives. To hear that even one person feels better because of our

services truly gives our lives perspective.

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