



National Alliance to
End Sexual Violence

Glossary of Terms

<p>Community Based Advocate vs. System Based Advocate</p>	<p>A person who is specially trained to provide survivor-centered support, information, and referral to those who have been or care for someone who has been subjected to sexual violence. Advocates provide support that is grounded in the survivor’s self-identified needs, ensures that survivors have the resources to make well-informed decisions about their care and options, ensures compliance with victim’s rights laws and honors the survivor’s resiliency and right to exercise control over their lives. Advocates work closely with community providers such as mental health therapists, medical and criminal legal professionals to ensure that survivors have trauma informed and competent care. In many communities, survivors can speak with advocates with legally protected confidentiality (Resource Sharing Project (RSP)).</p> <p>Community Based Advocates are different from Systems Based Advocates that are employed within the criminal legal system. Communications with System Based Advocates are generally not covered by statutory privilege and therefore confidentiality protections for survivors are not the same.</p>
<p>Confidentiality & Privileged Communication</p>	<p>Advocates have an ethical and often legal obligation to protect the personally identifying information of the victims/survivors they serve. Rape Crisis Centers provide free and confidential services to all survivors and, depending on the state/territory law, may be obligated to do so under statute. Regardless of whether there is a privilege statute that applies to advocates in your state or territory, programs that received funding through FVPSA (and other federal programs) have a mandate to protect the personally identifying information of those they serve. § 1370.4 FVPSA Confidentiality Requirements</p> <p>Many states have statutory language that codifies confidentiality and privileged communication that may apply to Rape Crisis Centers and their advocates.</p>

<p>Consent</p>	<p>Consent is the voluntary, positive agreement between individuals to engage in specific sexual activity.</p> <p>Lack of agreement or silence is not consent; not fighting back is not consent; having consented in the past is not consent now; consent to activity A is not consent to activity B; being unable to give or withhold consent (because of cognitive disability, for example, or being intoxicated) is not consent. Giving in is not the same as giving consent – it may be a survival strategy, an attempt to avoid worse harm, or a sign that a survivor senses there are no other options. Consent is an active, not a passive agreement (RSP).</p>
<p>Culturally Specific Services</p>	<p>Pursuant to 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(7), “culturally specific services” means community-based services that include culturally relevant and linguistically specific services and resources to culturally specific communities. Pursuant to 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(6), “culturally specific” means primarily directed toward racial and ethnic minority groups (as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 300u-6(g)) (which means American Indians (including Alaska Natives, Eskimos, and Aleuts); Asian American; Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders; Blacks; and Hispanics). The term “Hispanic” or “Latino” means individuals whose origin is Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or any other Spanish speaking country. This underserved population definition also includes other population categories determined by the Secretary [of Health and Human Services] or the Secretary’s designee to be underserved.”</p>
<p>Empowerment</p>	<p>The process of helping return choice, agency, and control to those who were subjected to sexual violence and in the process lost their sense of control over their circumstances, environment, and most importantly their own bodies. It is important to understand that “empowerment” is not something an advocate “gives.” It is the advocate’s role to create an environment that honors the survivor’s ability to identify their needs and engage their own agency to meet their needs. It recognizes the survivor’s resiliency and capacity to identify what will be useful/helpful for them in the healing process. In effect, they are supported in becoming their own advocate (RSP).</p>
<p>Healing</p>	<p>Healing is an acknowledgement of the process that survivors go</p>

	<p>through to restore their health and wellbeing after a devastating event. Healing is typically thought of as restoring the mind, body, and spirit to wholeness. In no way does this imply that sexual assault survivors are damaged or unwell. They have suffered trauma but their inherent strength can be reclaimed through the healing process. The healing process is different for each individual and can be strengthened by the family, community, and social support surrounding the survivor (RSP).</p>
Rape	<p>Rape is a type of sexual assault involving sexual penetration of any kind without consent. Rape is defined variably in law. The FBI definition of rape is: “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.”</p>
Rape Crisis Center	<p>A nonprofit, nongovernmental, or tribal organization, or governmental entity in a state other than a territory that provides intervention and related assistance to victims of sexual assault without regard to their age. In the case of a governmental entity, the entity may not be part of the criminal justice system (such as a law enforcement agency) and must be able to offer a comparable level of confidentiality as a nonprofit entity that provides similar victim services. See 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(25)</p>
Rape Culture	<p>Rape culture is understood as a complex set of beliefs that encourage sexual aggression and supports sexual violence. It is a society that values silence, secrecy, and privacy so that incidents of sexual violence remain hidden. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture, targets of rape perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women and other vulnerable groups as the norm. In a rape culture, both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life, inevitable (Buckwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 2005, p. xi).</p>
Restorative Justice	<p>Restorative justice is a growing practice in both the criminal and social justice fields that seeks to repair and address the harm experienced by victims, as well as any harm done to their community. Restorative justice also has been identified as a</p>

	<p>strategy for addressing underreporting of sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence by offering victims an option for remedying the harm while also responding to their concerns about how they will be treated by the criminal justice systems (Office on Violence Against Women).</p>
SANE/SART	<p>SANE: A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner is a Registered Nurse who has received special training to provide comprehensive care to sexual assault victims, including the collection of forensic evidence. SANEs may also provide expert testimony during the prosecution of a case.</p> <p>SART: A Sexual Assault Response Team is a community-based group of individuals that coordinates the community response to sexual assault survivors. Members of the team may include advocates, law enforcement, health care providers, educators, prosecutors, and others.</p>
Sexual abuse	<p>Sexual abuse is a term more commonly associated with sexual contact with children. An adult who was sexually abused as a child is an adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse. Services for adult survivors are as critical and important as those for survivors who have recently been assaulted.</p>
Sexual assault	<p>The term ‘sexual assault’ means any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent (Family Violence Prevention and Services Act).</p>
Sexual harassment	<p>Sexual harassment can include “quid pro quo” elements such as requiring certain sexual contact for something else in exchange—maintaining a job, for example. More commonly it includes unwanted or unwelcome sexual attention such as touching, kissing, or repeated requests for sexual attention. Legal definitions vary with regard to requiring proof of “severe and pervasive”</p> <p>Sexual harassment under Title IX includes any unwelcome sexual conduct, such as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.</p>
Sexual violence	<p>A spectrum of any sexual act committed against someone without that person’s freely given consent. The spectrum</p>

	<p>defines the full range of experiences that are included under sexual violence- when a sexual act is used as a tool of violence, humiliation, or degradation. Some of those experiences are not considered criminal violations in most states, even though they may be experienced as violating or threatening (RSP).</p>
<p>Supportive Services</p>	<p>Services for adult and youth victims of family violence, domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault and their dependents that are designed to meet the needs of such victims and their dependents for short-term, transitional, or long-term safety and recovery. Supportive services may be provided in the immediate aftermath of the experience of violence as well as at any time a survivor seeks support over their lifetime.</p> <p><u>Supportive services include, but are not limited to:</u> Direct and/or referral-based advocacy on behalf of victims and their dependents, counseling, case management, employment services, referrals, transportation services, legal advocacy or assistance, child care services, health, behavioral health and preventive health services, culturally and linguistically appropriate services, and other services that assist victims or their dependents in recovering from the effects of the violence (45 CFR § 1370.2).</p>
<p>Survivor/Victim</p>	<p>The term survivor is used for a person who has been subjected to an act of sexual violence and chooses to identify not as a victim but as someone with self-agency, strength, and resilience. Typically, this term is preferred by someone who is past the initial response to the assault/violence, feels as if they have progressed through a healing process and are less defined by the violence than by their ability to move forward (RSP).</p> <p>The term victim is used for a person who has been subjected to an act of sexual violence. This term is related to the criminal legal system’s understanding of someone who has been the target of a crime. This term is often used in the field interchangeably with survivor or simultaneously with survivors as in victim/survivor (RSP).</p> <p>Not all victims/survivors have the same preference for this terminology. When working with those who have experienced sexual violence, it is best to use, if necessary, terminology that</p>

	they feel best identifies their experience.
Trauma-Informed Services	An approach to advocacy and other services that is grounded in an understanding of the impact of trauma such as sexual violence on the survivor. Trauma-informed services are informed by research that identifies the neurophysiological adaptations the brain makes when survival is paramount and how those adaptations recur when similar threats seem imminent (RSP).

For more information contact:

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