

# Standards for Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs

Version 3.17.14

## **Purpose of Standards**

The standards have been established to ensure a minimum standard of service and define a vision for best practice for serving survivors of sexual violence in Iowa. The standards:

- Provide a framework by which comprehensive sexual assault programs can develop an environment of trauma-informed care for survivors of sexual violence and by which quality sexual assault services can be organized, delivered and evaluated.
- Define and describe the components of the services.
- Delineate requirements which must be met during the service delivery process.

## **Eligibility for Services at a Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program**

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs will provide services to the following individuals/groups:

- Any adult or minor who identifies as a survivor of sexual assault and requests services. A program will provide appropriate referrals if there is a conflict of interest or a program policy that prevents the program from providing services to a survivor of sexual assault.
- Any other adult or minor who requests services to address their own crisis/feelings as a result of the sexual assault of a loved one.
- Individuals are eligible for services regardless of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, culture, race and ethnic background, religious and spiritual beliefs, citizenship or immigration status, spoken language or means of communication, physical and psychological disabilities and medical condition.

## **Core Services**

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs provide the following Core Services.

- 24-hour Regional Crisis Line
- Individual Counseling/Crisis Intervention
- Information, Referral and Awareness
- General Advocacy
- Support Groups
- System Change/Advocacy
- Prevention
- Medical Advocacy
- Legal Advocacy

**STANDARD #1  
REGIONAL CRISIS LINES**

<b>Standard</b>	The program must provide 24-hour, seven day a week telephone crisis line to provide immediate telephone crisis intervention services. Immediately accessible means a line answered by an advocate that has achieved a minimum of Victim Counselor training (not a pager, answering machine, voice mail or answering service). The crisis line must immediately identify itself as the regional sexual assault crisis hotline. The crisis line must have at least one bypass feature in place to accommodate more than one call at one time. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity crisis lines may not use caller I.D. capabilities. Blocked calls and collect calls (including those from correctional institutions) must be accepted.
<b>Goal</b>	To provide immediate assistance to a caller via a trained sexual violence advocate (staff or volunteer)
<b>Duration</b>	Short term. May be episodic.
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist caller in identifying and meeting immediate needs</li> <li>• Provide information about available services/resources</li> <li>• Information about the effects of sexual violence and possible reactions</li> <li>• General information about medical and legal issues</li> <li>• Offering advocacy services and information about other services available in the community</li> <li>• Active listening</li> <li>• Grounding</li> <li>• Exploring options</li> </ul>
<b>Best Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survivors are invited to share as much or as little as they like.</li> <li>• Survivors are invited to take their time; there are no caps on time.</li> <li>• Survivors' calls are responded to immediately; they are not required to leave a message or wait for a sexual assault specific advocate to return their call.</li> <li>• On-going advocacy for survivors is also a component of 24-hour crisis/support line services</li> <li>• Multi-lingual access is provided, including access to TTY</li> </ul>
<b>Documentation</b>	<p>The program must have a recordkeeping system that tracks the number of calls/contacts per reporting period and a staffing schedule that demonstrates the 24-hour/day availability the service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program should include the following information required for reporting purposes, such as the date, time, and length of call, caller demographic information and the crisis line advocate who took the call.</li> </ul>

**STANDARD #2**  
**COUNSELING/CRISIS INTERVENTION**

<b>Standard</b>	The program must provide a prompt 24-hour personal response to a variety of settings for individuals presenting a crisis related to sexual abuse/assault. Programs shall have a plan in place so that no survivor need wait more than 1 hour for an advocate to be present in a crisis situation.
<b>Goal</b>	To alleviate acute distress of sexual abuse/assault, to begin stabilization, and assist in determining the next steps. The crisis is self defined by the survivor.
<b>Duration</b>	Short term. May be episodic.
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Activities to alleviate acute stress including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psycho education about effects of trauma</li> <li>• Supportive listening, validation, and empowerment</li> <li>• Assistance with coping skills, grounding, and trigger plans</li> <li>• General information about medical and legal issues</li> <li>• Information on services available in the community</li> <li>• In partnership with the survivor, the advocate/program assesses and evaluates the survivor's needs in order to develop a service plan designed specifically for the individual survivor.</li> </ul>
<b>Best Practice</b>	<p>Programs offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency in crisis intervention for survivors who frequently access support</li> <li>• Face-to-face options available for support on an ongoing basis (distinct from professional therapy)</li> <li>• Staff and volunteers trained in and use techniques to help reduce trauma reactions</li> </ul> <p>Programs strive to offer or provide access in the community to counseling/therapy provided by trained and/or licensed counselor or therapist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned interventions and goals</li> <li>• Ongoing evaluation of counseling and therapy delivery and outcomes</li> <li>• Use of specific modalities</li> </ul>
<b>Documentation</b>	<p>The program must have a recordkeeping system that tracks the number of calls/contacts per reporting period and a staffing schedule that demonstrates the 24-hour/day availability the service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program should include the following information required for reporting purposes, such as the date, time, and length of call/contact, client demographic information and the name of the responding advocate.</li> </ul>

**STANDARD #3**  
**INFORMATION, REFERRAL, and AWARENESS**

<b>Standard</b>	<p>This standard has two sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program must respond 24 hours a day in person or by phone to direct requests for information or assistance related to sexual abuse/assault and available services.</li> <li>2. The program must pro-actively conduct community awareness activities related to sexual abuse/assault and available services to the community at-large.</li> </ol>
<b>Goal</b>	To provide sexual abuse/assault related information and resources.
<b>Duration</b>	Information and referral contacts are usually one-time, but may reoccur. Awareness activities may be one-time or reoccur.
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist individuals in evaluating what is needed, including available and appropriate services and/or resources.</li> <li>• Provide information verbally or in writing such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Available services (including advocacy services provided by the program)</li> <li>○ Referrals to appropriate and relevant resources addressing individuals' needs</li> <li>○ Information regarding sexual abuse/assault</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Information may be provided through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individual contact</li> <li>○ Outreach to underserved communities</li> <li>○ Distribution of materials</li> <li>○ Public Speaking/Presentations</li> <li>○ Community Education Events</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Best Practice</b>	<p>Programs provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening of agencies and service providers on referral list</li> <li>• Policies for maintaining confidentiality when communicating with agencies and service providers</li> <li>• Referrals for a wide range of health care (e.g., OB/GYN, chiropractors, massage therapists, acupuncturists, etc.)</li> <li>• A range of awareness activities targeted at non-traditional partners, particularly those outside of the medical and legal systems.</li> </ul>
<b>Documentation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program must have a recordkeeping system that tracks the number of calls/contacts per reporting period, an up-to-date community resource list (within the past 6 months), and a staffing schedule that demonstrates the 24-hour/day availability the service. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The program should include the following information required for reporting purposes, such as the date, time, and length of call/contact, client demographic information and the name of the responding advocate.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. The program must show they are disseminating information about sexual abuse/assault by providing examples of their program's brochures, speaker's bureau, PSAs, press releases, media kits and community events.</li> </ol>

**STANDARD #4  
GENERAL ADVOCACY**

<b>Standard</b>	The program must provide personal support and/or assistance in accessing sexual abuse/assault related services.
<b>Goal</b>	To ensure needed services and adequate support to enhance recovery from sexual abuse/assault.
<b>Duration</b>	Generally, 1 to 4 times per month; 3 months to a year
<b>Activities</b>	<p>All activities and services are survivor-focused and case specific.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing personal support, including outreach calls/visits (including in-patient or residential care settings)</li> <li>• Practical help as needed; information and referrals which are case specific and survivor-focused</li> <li>• Ongoing crisis intervention</li> <li>• Arranging for services to enhance healing (e.g., health, financial, housing)</li> <li>• Consulting with others (such as CPS, APS, Indian Child Welfare, other professionals involved in a survivor's life) regarding an individual survivor</li> </ul>
<b>Best Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An advocate initiates follow-up services with the survivor after the initial contact. Follow-up with a survivor is initiated only with the survivor's prior written permission for continued contact.</li> <li>• The goal of follow-up is to provide continued support to the survivor, with her/his defined needs.</li> <li>• Follow-up does not have a defined length of time, as the need for continued services after the initial crisis varies with each survivor.</li> </ul>
<b>Documentation</b>	<p>The program must have a recordkeeping system that ties advocacy activities to individual survivors and a staffing schedule that demonstrates the 24-hour/day availability of general advocacy services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The program should include the following information required for reporting purposes, such as the date, time, and length of call/contact, client demographic information and the name of the responding advocate.</li> </ul>

**STANDARD #5  
MEDICAL ADVOCACY**

<b>Standard</b>	The program must act on behalf of and in support of survivors of sexual abuse/assault to ensure their interests are represented and their rights upheld. For crisis situations, programs must have staff available on a 24 hour basis who can respond within one hour of a call. For long-term medical advocacy, staff should be available to accompany clients to scheduled appointments, as requested. All medical advocacy must be done with no pressure for the survivor to report sexual assault, or to have evidence collected.
<b>Goal</b>	To assist the survivor to regain personal power and control as s/he makes decisions regarding medical care and to promote an appropriate response from individual service providers.
<b>Duration</b>	May vary significantly depending upon survivor's medical needs as related to the sexual assault.
<b>Activities</b>	<p>All activities and services are survivor-focused and case specific.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate on available options so that survivors have all the information to make informed decisions about medical care and the preparations needed, including referral for possible forensic exam</li> <li>• Information about medical care/concerns, including assistance with needed follow-up</li> <li>• Support at medical exams and appointments</li> <li>• Information and/or assistance with Crime Victim Compensation applications</li> <li>• Information about sexually transmitted infections and HIV antibody testing and prophylaxis.</li> <li>• Information about emergency contraception.</li> </ul>
<b>Best Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An advocate initiates follow-up services with the survivor after the initial contact or forensic examination. Follow-up with a survivor is initiated only with the survivor's prior written permission for continued contact.</li> <li>• The goal of follow-up is to provide continued support to the survivor, with her/his defined needs.</li> <li>• Follow-up does not have a defined length of time, as the need for continued services after the initial crisis varies with each survivor.</li> <li>• The program provides medical accompaniment and advocacy for non-emergency medical services (e.g., OB/GYN care, dental care, etc.).</li> </ul>
<b>Documentation</b>	<p>The program must have a recordkeeping system that ties advocacy activities to individual survivors, document working relationships with the medical community, and a staffing schedule that demonstrates the 24-hour/day availability of medical advocacy services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program should include the following information required for reporting purposes, such as the date, time, and length of call/contact, client demographic information and the name of the responding advocate.</li> <li>• Documentation of working relationships with the medical community can vary, but often includes: letters of agreement, Memoranda of Understanding, or collaborative grants.</li> </ul>

**STANDARD #6  
LEGAL ADVOCACY**

<b>Standard</b>	The program must act on behalf of and in support of survivors of sexual abuse/assault on a 24-hour basis to ensure their interests are represented and their rights upheld.
<b>Goal</b>	To assist gaining knowledge of the criminal justice system, gain access to all avenues of participation in the legal system and to promote the responsiveness of individual legal system participants.
<b>Duration</b>	Up to several years
<b>Activities</b>	<p>All activities and services are survivor-focused and case specific.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance in making informed decisions about reporting to law enforcement and the preparations needed, including the possibility of Crime Victim Compensation benefits</li> <li>• Information about the criminal justice systems procedures, civil remedies, and Dependency, Family and Juvenile Courts, including follow-up</li> <li>• Support at interviews, trial and sentencing</li> <li>• Assistance in preparing for court; informing the survivor of her/his rights in legal settings</li> <li>• Active monitoring of case through the legal system</li> <li>• Assistance with protective/no-contact/anti-harassment orders</li> </ul>
<b>Best Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An advocate initiates follow-up services with the survivor after the initial contact. Follow-up with a survivor is initiated only with the survivor's prior written permission for continued contact.</li> <li>• The goal of follow-up is to provide continued support to the survivor, with her/his defined needs.</li> <li>• Follow-up does not have a defined length of time, as the need for continued services after the initial crisis varies with each survivor.</li> <li>• The program provides legal accompaniment and advocacy for civil law cases.</li> </ul>
<b>Documentation</b>	<p>The program must have a recordkeeping system that ties advocacy activities to individual survivors, document working relationships with the legal community, and a staffing schedule that demonstrates the 24-hour/day availability of legal advocacy services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The program should include the following information required for reporting purposes, such as the date, time, and length of call/contact, client demographic information and the name of the responding advocate.</li> <li>○ Documentation of working relationships with the legal community can vary, but often includes: letters of agreement, Memoranda of Understanding, or collaborative grants.</li> </ul>

**STANDARD #7  
SUPPORT GROUPS**

<b>Standard</b>	The program must provide regular facilitated meetings of survivors (including secondary survivors) of sexual abuse/assault with a supportive and educational focus.
<b>Goal</b>	Groups exchange information, share techniques for problem-solving, and explore feelings about the impact of sexual abuse/assault.
<b>Duration</b>	1 to 2 hour average length of time per session; 1 to 4 sessions per month; 3 months to a year
<b>Activities</b>	Group meetings with a planned beginning and ending date and an outcome-based, structured agenda with a primary focus on sexual abuse/assault issues.
<b>Best Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program offers groups that may be run by advocates or counselors/therapists</li> <li>• Groups are co-facilitated (2 staff members, staff and volunteer, or staff and other professional)</li> <li>• Program offers peer-led support groups</li> <li>• Programs offer culturally-relevant groups/talking circles</li> </ul> <p>Program offers support groups specifically for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups for adult survivors of child sexual abuse</li> <li>• Groups for male survivors</li> <li>• Groups for parents of child survivors</li> <li>• Groups for LGBTQ survivors</li> <li>• Groups for age-specific groups</li> <li>• Groups for survivors with disabilities</li> <li>• Groups in multiple languages (determined by community needs)</li> </ul> <p>Program incorporates the following holistic healing services into their menu of support group options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healing arts opportunities (e.g., art therapy, music therapy)</li> <li>• Creative arts opportunities (e.g., knitting circles, writing groups, etc.)</li> <li>• Movement and exercise groups and classes</li> <li>• Meditation and mindfulness classes and groups</li> <li>• Yoga</li> <li>• Nutritional education</li> <li>• Somatic (body) based approaches</li> <li>• Outdoor-based healing activities</li> </ul>
<b>Documentation</b>	<p>The program must have a recordkeeping system that ties support group activities to individual survivors and an up-to-date schedule (within the past 6 months) of support groups being provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs can determine how they track support group contacts. The program should include the following information required for reporting purposes, such as the date, time, and length of call/contact, client demographic information and the name of the</li> </ul>

**STANDARD #7**  
**SUPPORT GROUPS**

responding advocate.

<b>STANDARD #8</b>	
<b>SYSTEMS CHANGE/ADVOCACY</b>	
<b>Standard</b>	The program must work to coordinate the service system on behalf of survivors of sexual violence. To that end, they must develop working relationships and agreements (formal and informal) among programs and services within the broader system of care. The program must also provide training to allied professionals who may come in contact with sexual assault survivors.
<b>Goal</b>	To operate a permanent, survivor-centered system which offers, or assures access to, a comprehensive continuum of specialized sexual abuse/assault services, which is mutually accountable despite individual changes over time in regulations, procedures or people who provide service.
<b>Duration</b>	An on-going process
<b>Eligible Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop partnerships</li> <li>• Increase collaboration</li> <li>• Assess gaps in service</li> <li>• Foster cooperation</li> <li>• Develop accountability process</li> <li>• Develop new ways of delivering services</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law enforcement</li> <li>• Prosecutors</li> <li>• Judiciary</li> <li>• Child Protective Services (CPS)</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Youth Serving Agencies</li> <li>• Residential Facilities</li> <li>• Correctional Institutions</li> <li>• Social services (private and public)</li> <li>• Mental health services</li> <li>• Medical facilities/practitioners</li> <li>• Emergency services</li> <li>• Culturally Specific Services</li> <li>• Faith-based Organizations</li> <li>• Other relevant groups, task forces, networks and individuals</li> </ul>
<b>Qualifications</b>	<p>System coordination should be initiated and led by the Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program.</p> <p>The staff and volunteers representing the Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program should represent the issues of sexual abuse/assault to the community accurately, fairly and regularly. They should understand the public policy-making process; build coalitions and articulate opinion to shape public policies that are beneficial for the organization and survivors of sexual abuse/assault.</p> <p>They should commit to building community around sexual abuse/assault issues; promote effective relations among diverse agencies working with survivors of sexual abuse/assault; facilitate cooperation between all of the agencies/organizations involved with survivors of sexual abuse/assault.</p> <p>They also should encourage cooperation and collaboration with other organizations, seeking ways to improve services and/or reduce costs through cooperative efforts; share expertise with others to achieve partnerships; and organize and operate partnerships effectively.</p>

<b>Best Practice</b>	<p>The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program works with community partners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regularly review and improve protocols and policies</li> <li>▪ Create/integrate roles relevant to sexual assault intervention and prevention</li> </ul>
<b>Documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Programs can show evidence of leadership by presenting meeting minutes, meeting agenda, training agendas, letters of support, or other documents that show the program is in a leadership role.</li> <li>■ Programs can show that they are working with community partners to develop improved systems for survivors presenting meeting minutes, task force/committee rosters, letters of collaboration, or other relevant documentation that show participation of the groups listed below.</li> </ul>

<b>STANDARD #9 PREVENTION</b>	
<b>Standard</b>	The program must provide educational activities that promote attitudes, behaviors and social conditions that will reduce and ultimately eliminate factors that contribute to sexual violence. Programming must be in place that seeks to prevent sexual violence before it occurs (primary prevention). Programs that seek to teach victims to protect themselves from assault do not meet this standard.
<b>Goal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To decrease risk factors and increase protective factors in order to prevent sexual abuse/assault</li> <li>• To build collaborations with and facilitate the training of allied professionals in primary prevention initiatives</li> <li>• To promote ongoing policy development</li> </ul>
<b>Duration</b>	Varies with activities and opportunities. The focus should be on integrating prevention into communities and systems, not in providing one-time presentations.
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Any primary prevention activities (aimed at prevention of sexual violence before it occurs) that are part of building skills efforts. Activities should be consistent with the elements of the Nine Principles of Effective Prevention.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>A multisession program or set of activities that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote nonviolent behavior</li> <li>• Enhance bystander intervention skills</li> <li>• Addresses topics logically connected with sexual assault prevention (such as communication, trust, gender, boundaries, respect, building assets, social norms); or</li> </ul> <p>Prevention activities aimed at a specific community or institution that reach more than one level of the social-ecological model:<sup>2</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Individual</u>: activities aimed at changing or influencing attitudes and beliefs.</li> <li>• <u>Relationship</u>: activities aimed at influencing how people relate with their peers, families or intimate partners.</li> <li>• <u>Community</u>: activities aimed at influencing culture, systems and policies in a given setting.</li> <li>• <u>Society</u>: activities aimed at influencing larger macro-level factors such as gender inequality, religious beliefs, cultural beliefs system, societal norms, etc.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Nation, M., Crusto, C., Wandersman, A., Kumpfer, K. L., Seybolt, D., Morrissey-Kane, E., & Davino, K. (2003). **What works in prevention: Principles of Effective Prevention Programs.** *American Psychologist*, 58, 449-456.

<sup>2</sup> Levels of influence from the Social Ecological Model of Prevention, (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

<b>STANDARD #9 PREVENTION</b>	
<b>Participants</b>	<p>Individuals and groups in the general community such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children</li> <li>• Teens</li> <li>• Parents/ Caregivers</li> <li>• Community members</li> <li>• Service providers</li> </ul>
<b>Qualifications</b>	<p>Please see initial training, on-going training, and direct service requirements as outlined in the Iowa Victim Advocate Certification manual.</p> <p>Providers must have an understanding of the causes of sexual violence, prevention and social change theory, community development techniques and have demonstrated experience in educational techniques appropriate to their audience.</p>
<b>Best Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on models that encourage bystander intervention</li> <li>• The promotion of social equity and justice through seeking diverse perspectives and valuing diverse experiences</li> <li>• Skill-building for prevention as a major focus of curricula</li> <li>• Social norms campaigns that promote healthy, respectful, non-violent behaviors and relationships</li> <li>• Prevention initiatives that involve community leaders to address root causes of sexual violence</li> </ul>

## **STANDARD #10 Additional Services**

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs also provide the following Additional Services.

- The program must assist survivors with their transportation needs.
  - Transportation may be provided by the most appropriate means for the area.
  - Transportation arrangements may be provided by staff or volunteers in personal or program vehicles, commercial vehicles such as bus or cab, or allied community partners.
  - Programs shall meet with survivors in their own communities rather than requiring survivors to travel out of town to meet with the program. Programs will strive to have multiple outreach offices and staff available in their service area.
- The program provides access to supplies for personal hygiene and clothing for any survivors in need.

## **STANDARD #11 Confidentiality Requirements**

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall adhere to the following confidentiality requirements.

### **A. Confidentiality Requirement**

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs are required to maintain the confidentiality of each survivor's identity and personal information. This not only ensures that the program is in compliance with ethical and legal standards, but it also creates a safe and trusting environment for each survivor.

### **B. Legal Requirements of Confidentiality**

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs will maintain confidential records in accordance with *Iowa Code §915.20A* which states:

1. As used in this section:
  - a. "Confidential communication" means information shared between a crime victim and a victim counselor within the counseling relationship, and includes all information received by the counselor and any advice, report, or working paper given to or prepared by the counselor in the course of the counseling relationship with the victim. "Confidential information" is confidential information which, so far as the victim is aware, is not disclosed to a third party with the exception of a person present in the consultation for the purpose of furthering the interest of the victim, a person to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for the transmission of the information, or a person with whom disclosure is necessary for accomplishment of the purpose for which the counselor is consulted by the victim.
  - b. "Crime victim center" means any office, institution, agency, or crisis center offering assistance to victims of crime and their families through crisis intervention, accompaniment during medical and legal proceedings, and follow-up counseling.

- c. "Victim" means a person who consults a victim counselor for the purpose of securing advice, counseling, or assistance concerning a mental, physical, or emotional condition caused by a violent crime committed against the person.
  - d. "Victim counselor" means a person who is engaged in a crime victim center, is certified as a counselor by the crime victim center, and is under the control of a direct services supervisor of a crime victim center, whose primary purpose is the rendering of advice, counseling, and assistance to the victims of crime. To qualify as a "victim counselor" under this section, the person must also have completed at least twenty hours of training provided by the center in which the person is engaged, by the Iowa organization of victim assistance, by the Iowa coalition against sexual assault, or by the Iowa coalition against domestic violence, which shall include but not be limited to, the dynamics of victimization, substantive laws relating to violent crime, sexual assault, and domestic violence, crisis intervention techniques, communication skills, working with diverse populations, an overview of the state criminal justice system, information regarding pertinent hospital procedures, and information regarding state and community resources for victims of crime.
2. A victim counselor shall not be examined or required to give evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding as to any confidential communication made by a victim to the counselor, nor shall a clerk, secretary, stenographer, or any other employee who types or otherwise prepares or manages the confidential reports or working papers of a victim counselor be required to produce evidence of any such confidential communication, unless the victim waives this privilege in writing or disclosure of the information is compelled by a court pursuant to subsection 7. Under no circumstances shall the location of a crime victim center or the identity of the victim counselor be disclosed in any civil or criminal proceeding.
3. If a victim is deceased or has been declared to be incompetent, this privilege specified in subsection 2 may be waived by the guardian of the victim or by the personal representative of the victim's estate.
4. A minor may waive the privilege under this section unless, in the opinion of the court, the minor is incapable of knowingly and intelligently waiving the privilege, in which case the parent or guardian of the minor may waive the privilege on the minor's behalf if the parent or guardian is not the defendant and does not have such a relationship with the defendant that the parent or guardian has an interest in the outcome of the proceeding being favorable to the defendant.
5. The privilege under this section does not apply in matters of proof concerning the chain of custody of evidence, in matters of proof concerning the physical appearance of the victim at the time of the injury or the counselor's first contact with the victim after the injury, or where the counselor has reason to believe that the victim has given perjured testimony and the defendant or the state has made an offer of proof that perjury may have been committed.
6. The failure of a counselor to testify due to this section shall not give rise to an inference unfavorable to the cause of the state or the cause of the defendant.
7. Upon the motion of a party, accompanied by a written offer of proof, a court may compel disclosure of certain information if the court determines that all of the following conditions are met:

- a. The information sought is relevant and material evidence of the facts and circumstances involved in an alleged criminal act which is the subject of a criminal proceeding.
  - b. The probative value of the information outweighs the harmful effect, if any, of disclosure on the victim, the counseling relationship, and the treatment services.
  - c. The information cannot be obtained by reasonable means from any other source.
8. In ruling on a motion under subsection 7, the court, or a different judge, if the motion was filed in a criminal proceeding to be tried to the court, shall adhere to the following procedure:
- a. The court may require the counselor from whom disclosure is sought or the victim claiming the privilege, or both, to disclose the information in chambers out of the presence and hearing of all persons except the victim and any other persons the victim is willing to have present.
  - b. If the court determines that the information is privileged and not subject to compelled disclosure, the information shall not be disclosed by any person without the consent of the victim.
  - c. If the court determines that certain information may be subject to disclosure, as provided in subsection 7, the court shall so inform the party seeking the information and shall order a subsequent hearing out of the presence of the jury, if any, at which the parties shall be allowed to examine the counselor regarding the information which the court has determined may be subject to disclosure. The court may accept other evidence at that time.
  - d. At the conclusion of a hearing under paragraph "c", the court shall determine which information, if any, shall be disclosed and may enter an order describing the evidence which may be introduced by the moving party and prescribing the line of questioning which may be permitted. The moving party may then offer evidence pursuant to the court order. However, no victim counselor is subject to exclusion under rule of evidence 5.615.
9. This section does not relate to the admission of evidence of the victim's past sexual behavior which is strictly subject to rule of evidence 5.412.

**C. Ethical Requirements of Confidentiality per Federal Funding Guidelines**

Non-profit agencies that receive Office of Violence Against Women funding (including STOP) must adhere to the following **Violence Against Women Act 2005 and 2006 Updated Confidentiality and Privacy Requirements** paraphrased below:

1. To ensure the safety of victims, agencies must not disclose any personally identifying information or individual information collected in connection with services requested, utilized, or denied through agency programs or reveal individual client information without the informed, written, reasonably time-limited consent of the person.
2. Personally identifying information or personal information means (1) a first and last name; (2) a home or other physical address; (3) contact information of any sort, including postal, email or Internet protocol address, or telephone or facsimile number; (4) a social security number and (5) any other information including date of birth, racial or ethnic background, or religious affiliation, that in combination with any other non-personally identifying information would serve to identify an individual.

3. Written consent authorized by a Release of Information shall be compelled by statutory or court mandate, or by informed consent of the victim.

#### **D. Written Policies and Procedures Addressing Confidentiality**

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall have written policies for the following:

- Confidentiality
- Maintenance of Confidential Records
- Release of Information
- Duty to Inform

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall incorporate the following procedures in their written policies

- **Confidentiality Policy/Procedure**
  - Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs are prohibited from sharing personally identifying information about survivors without reasonably time limited, written and informed consent. This provision allows a survivor to choose to temporarily waive her/his confidentiality for a meeting or conversation or other limited period of time, through informed, written consent and a specific short-term release.
  - The term **personally identifying information** or personal information means individually identifying information for or about an individual including information likely to disclose the location of a victim of sexual assault and includes: (1) a first and last name; (2) a home or other physical address; (3) contact information of any sort, including postal, email or Internet protocol address, or telephone or facsimile number; (4) a social security number and (5) any other information including date of birth, racial or ethnic background, or religious affiliation, that in combination with any other non-personally identifying information would serve to identify any individual.
  - Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs are prohibited from disclosing personally identifying victim information to any third party database such as the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
  - Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs will adhere to State and Federal guidelines requiring confidentiality of client information. Statistical information shared with funders pertaining to clients will be in aggregate form.
  - For monitoring purposes, Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs will remove identifying information from case files prior to monitoring in order to ensure confidentiality.
- **Maintenance of Confidential Records Policy/Procedure**
  - Clients' paper files will be stored in a locked room, preferably in a file or other cabinet that can also be locked. All computers with client's personally identifying information will be password protected.
  - Clients should be fully informed of the agency's data collection process (computerized files, client databases, paper files, etc.) and of the risks and the uses of each of these processes.
  - Clients have the right to view or request a copy of their file or any other personal information gathered about them at any time, and to request the removal of inaccurate, irrelevant, outdated, or incomplete information from the file.

- Client files shall be kept for a minimum of four years, although they may be kept indefinitely.
  - All staff, volunteers, contract staff, IT staff, etc. who will have access to a client's personally identifying information whether in paper or computerized client files, must sign a Confidentiality Agreement which will be kept on file.
- **Release of Information Policy/Procedure**
    - Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs will not release any personally identifying information without the client's full understanding, cooperation and a release of information. The client's consent must be in writing. A release must include:
      - the specific information to be released
      - the date the release is signed
      - the purpose for which the information is released
      - name of person/agency/organization to whom disclosure is made
      - dated signature(s) of witness(as)
      - expiration date of the consent which may reflect time, date, event, or condition, depending on the nature of the information disclosed. Releases can be dated for as short a time period as one day, and should generally not be any longer than 30 days.
      - a provision that the victim/survivor may rescind the release at any time in writing
    - Releases from other agencies shall not be considered a substitute for the program securing its own release.
    - When records, staff, and/or volunteers are subpoenaed, the Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs will make every effort, within the limits of the law, to carry out the client's desired response to the subpoena. Every effort will be made by the program staff to seek permission from the client to release the information. If permission is granted, a written release of information will be signed by the client. The release of information will include what will be released, to whom it will be released and why it is being released.
  - **Duty to Inform Policy/Procedure**

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall inform the client that confidentiality may not be maintained in the following situations:

    - when a dependent adult or child has been abused, exploited or neglected,
    - when the client's life is endangered and she/he cannot give consent,
    - missing person/welfare checks,
    - matters of proof concerning chain of custody of evidence: photos, clothing, etc.,
    - matters of proof concerning physical appearance of the victim at the time of the advocate's first contact with the victim after the sexual assault,
    - when the client makes a probable threat or is violent against another person,
    - when she threatens to or deliberately causes harm to herself,
    - in the event that the court issues an order for specific information, pursuant to the process set out in Iowa Code §915.20A.

## **STANDARD #12 Non-discrimination**

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs cannot restrict services to survivors based on: race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, substance use or abuse, disabilities, income, country of origin, immigration status, or English proficiency.

### **A. Services for Survivors who are Deaf or hard of hearing**

- When working with a Deaf or hard of hearing survivor, programs must take steps to ascertain and use that person's preferred mode of communication, e.g. American Sign Language (ASL), Signed English, lip reading, note writing, Relay Iowa, etc.
- Programs shall have a TTY available and staff shall be trained in its use. Clients shall have access to the TTY, in a private environment, if they request it. Staff shall be trained in the use of Relay Iowa.
- In accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, programs shall maintain a readily accessible list of sign language interpreters and shall provide such an interpreter at the client's request.
- Advocates shall be knowledgeable about their clients' rights to sign language interpreters, and other accommodations, and will advocate for these rights within medical, legal, educational, social service, and other systems.
- Use of a certified ASL interpreter does not negate a client's confidentiality rights under Iowa Code 915.20A.

### **B. Services for Survivors with Disabilities**

Services provided shall comply with all the certified assurances tied to any grant funding, including but not limited to any applicable federal nondiscrimination requirements.

- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall have parking available for persons who are disabled, an accessible entrance, and at least one accessible restroom facility.
- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs must be proactive in identifying the barriers faced by people with disabilities who seek services and be responsive to survivors with physical, sensory, emotional, or cognitive impairments.
- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs should develop working relationships with other service providers in their communities and be knowledgeable about resources available to people with disabilities.

### **C. Services for Immigrant Survivors or Survivors who are non-English Proficient**

Services provided shall comply with all the certified assurances tied to any grant funding, including but not limited to any applicable federal nondiscrimination requirements.

- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall not inquire about immigration status as part of initial screening to determine eligibility for services.
- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall inform immigrant survivors of their right to self-petition for immigration status under the Violence Against Women Act, or as crime victims under U-visa provisions, or as victims of trafficking under T-visa provisions.

- Advocates will assist immigrant survivors with documenting and substantiating their claims of abuse as part of their petition for immigration status.
- Upon request, Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall provide interpreters to non-English proficient clients. This may include utilizing Ameritech's Language Line or other such services for translation.
- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall not use children as interpreters for counseling sessions, intake, group sessions, or other contacts in which adult issues are discussed.
- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall assist clients in securing their right to interpreters within the legal system.
- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs maintain a list of interpreters available in their communities. Brochures, information on legal rights and options, etc. are available in multiple languages.
- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs screen interpreters for their ability to maintain confidential and accurate translation services, sign a confidentiality agreement, and have training on sexual violence.

**D. Services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex (LGBTQI) Survivors**

- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall use language in crisis line calls, forms, intake materials, brochures, and in-person contact that does not assume heterosexuality and shall be gender neutral.
- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall treat survivors according to the survivor's self-identified gender.

**STANDARD #13 Grievance Procedures**

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs shall have written policies and procedures regarding survivor grievances that clearly describe the lines of decision-making for the resolution of grievances. Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs must clearly provide survivors with information about documenting the grievance and the resolution process.

## **STANDARD #14 Administrative Requirements**

### **A. Board of Directors**

1. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall be an incorporated nonprofit organization with a 501(c) 3 designation from the Internal Revenue Service, or a government agency charged with crisis response and counseling for sexual assault survivors.
2. Where the Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program is an independent organization whose mission is to serve survivors of sexual violence, the governing body shall be responsible for all policy decisions which affect personnel, budgetary and program development matters.
3. Where the Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program is a component of a multi-purpose organization, whose mission extends beyond services to survivors of sexual violence, the Board of Directors shall appoint an advisory body to give input on policy decisions that affect personnel, budgetary and program development matters of the rape crisis program.

### **B. Bylaws**

1. The Board of Directors shall be governed by the Bylaws.
2. The Bylaws must be reviewed regularly in accordance with the schedule stipulated in the document. The adoption date must be recorded in the Bylaws.
3. The Board of Directors of the contractor shall reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the counties served and shall include representatives from all counties served.

### **C. Conflict of Interest**

The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall have a written policy and procedures to reduce the potential for, or appearance, a conflict of interest. This shall apply to the functions and activities of the Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers associated with the contractor.

### **D. Fiscal**

1. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall have available fiscal records in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. These records shall be made available to IowaCASA upon request.
2. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall have a full or modified accrual bookkeeping system.
3. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall maintain fiscal records current to within thirty (30) days.
4. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program must be exempt from Federal Income Tax and have current 501(c) 3 verification by the Internal Revenue Service.
5. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program must have an established Federal Employer Identification Number issued by the Internal Revenue Service.
6. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall maintain fiscal records as follows:

Cash Disbursements Journal- this journal must reflect an accounting of expenditures. These expenditures must correspond with line items in the contractor's original contract budget or approved revision.

Cash Receipts Journal- this journal must identify income received from all funding sources.

General Ledger- all transaction records in the individual journals must also be posted to separate ledger accounts and reconciled with bank statements. This will enable the contractor to double-check all transactions.

Accounts Receivable Ledger- this ledger reflects the amount a customer owes to the contractor at any specific time. This subsidiary ledger corresponds to the General Ledger.

Accounts Payable Ledger- this ledger reflects the amount the contractor owes to vendors at any specific time. This subsidiary ledger corresponds to the General Ledger.

Payroll Journal- this journal must identify gross and net salary, taxes, benefits, and employee authorized deductions for appropriate personnel.

Receipts- all expenditures must be supported by a paid bill and with proper authorization for payment.

Tax and Benefit Payments- appropriate tax and benefit payments must be made on a timely basis and appropriately documented.

Salary and Benefits History- there shall be record of all employee transactions: hire date, salary and salary changes, time and leave documentation, changes in status, benefits afforded the employee.

7. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall have procedures in place to ensure that catastrophic loss of fiscal records is minimized.
8. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall retain its financial records for a period of five years from the contract expiration date, and for such period, if any, as specified below:
  - a. If the Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program is completely or partially terminated, the records relating to the work performed prior to the termination shall be made available for a period of five years from the date of any resulting final settlement.
  - b. Records which relate to litigation of the settlement of claims arising out of performance or expenditures under the contract to which exception has been taken by the auditors shall be retained by the Center until such litigation, claim, or exceptions have reached final disposition.

Please note that while it is not required, it is recommended as a best practice to retain financial records for a period of seven years.

#### **E. Risk Management**

1. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall develop a risk management policy which identifies and evaluates potential risk to the organization's finances, personnel, property, service recipients, and reputation.
2. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall establish procedures to minimize risks.
3. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall establish disaster recovery plans which address floods, fire, terrorist attacks, and other like disasters that render the rape crisis program inoperable.
4. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall have the following insurance coverage that meets the minimum contractual requirement of IowaCASA:
  - a. Workers' compensation
  - b. Business owners' fire and casualty
  - c. Professional liability
  - d. Employee dishonesty
  - e. Directors and officers
  - f. Unemployment compensation
5. The risk management policy shall include a process for periodic review.

#### **F. Personnel**

1. The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program has written personnel policies that are reviewed annually and address the following:
  - a. Adhere to federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disability
  - b. Work hours
  - c. A method for employee evaluation
  - d. Sexual harassment
  - e. Screening of staff through background checks to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected
  - f. Verification of references
  - g. Recruitment, selection, promotion, and termination
  - h. Overtime pay and compensatory time
  - i. Benefits
  - j. Supervision of staff
  - k. Holidays, vacation, sick leave and other leave time
  - l. Rules of conduct
  - m. Disciplinary actions
  - n. Grievance procedure
2. Written job description for all Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program positions shall be available. These written descriptions include:

- a. Job title
- b. Tasks and responsibilities of the position
- c. Required education, skills, knowledge and experience
- d. Lines of authority

**3. Staff Development**

All staff employed with a Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program should possess an understanding of the issue of sexual assault and have completed training as detailed in the Iowa Victim Advocate Certification manual.

- a. Initial training for new staff
- b. Ongoing training for personnel
- c. Policy for leaves for conferences, classes or institutes
- d. Regular staff meetings

**4. Wage and Hour Requirements**

The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs' positions should be compensated in compliance with applicable federal and state laws which include the Fair Labor Standards Act.

**5. Volunteers**

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs have written a written policy on the use of volunteers which includes:

- a. Screening of volunteers through background checks to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected
- b. Verification of references
- c. A written description of duties and rights, including confidentiality policy and practices to be given to the volunteer
- d. Provision for supervision
- e. Provision of role appropriate orientation, initial training and ongoing training
- f. Policies and procedures for recruiting and selecting volunteers
- g. Provision for termination
- h. Adhere to federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disability

## **STANDARD #15 Membership Standards**

### **Membership Dues**

IowaCASA membership dues will be established and approved by the IowaCASA Board of Directors and reviewed on an annual basis. All membership dues are due to the IowaCASA office by January 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Attendance and Participation at Membership Meetings**

- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs are required to attend regularly scheduled bi-monthly membership meetings and participate as an active member of a standing committee.
- Attendance and participation is required by the Administrator/Executive Director and Rape Prevention Educator/Sexual Assault Coordinator.
- Annually a representative from each Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs will be identified and required to attend 5 out of the 6 membership meetings and participate as an active member of a standing committee.
- The Sexual Assault Advisory Committee will approve excused absences. Absences and non-participatory committee involvement may result in the termination of active membership.

### **Reporting**

Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs are required to submit Bi-annual Center Activity Reports.

### **Ethics**

- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs, staff members, and volunteers shall adhere to the IowaCASA Code of Ethics for Victim Counselors.
- Comprehensive Sexual Assault Programs, staff members, and volunteers shall adhere to the advocate certification requirements outlined in the Iowa Victim Advocate Certification manual.
- The Comprehensive Sexual Assault Program shall maintain signed adherence documentation in the personnel/volunteer files.