

Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County
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<http://sexualassaultcenter.com>



24 Hour Crisis/Information & Referral Line (253) 474-7273 or 1-800-756-7273

About the Sexual Assault Center

*The Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County – 30+ Years Old
So Much Has Been Done and Yet So Much More to Do*

The beginning of this agency dates back to 1972, the same year often quoted as the beginning of the ‘Sexual Assault Movement’. A group of young women attending the Tacoma Learning Center surveyed Pierce County and found there were very few services available to help individuals who had been raped or sexually abused. They decided to provide support services to victims of sexual assault in the local community and founded what was then called Pierce County Rape Relief, which formally incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization in 1975. With no initial funding, they began to handle crisis calls from their own homes, with referrals and then housing and resources coming from other local organizations. Pioneers in the field have told us that when they started, they “didn’t even have language.”

Initially, agency services were designed and delivered to meet the needs of sexual assault victims during their time of crisis; hence advocacy was developed. Experience in the field, however, began to reveal more far-reaching effects of the assault on both the victim and those lives that were intertwined with the victim. Services were expanded to include secondary victim advocacy (for partners, children and other family members, and friends) and therapy, where behavioral effects could be identified and dealt with in an effort to re-attain healthy, whole individuals. In 1989, the agency changed its name to Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Pierce County to broaden the focus beyond rape to include all forms of sexual assault.

In 1997, the agency’s name changed once more to the Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County, lessening the focus on immediate crisis intervention and becoming more inclusive of prevention, education and long-term healing. During that same year, the agency became a Washington State Accredited Sexual Assault Program and as such, is responsible as the primary provider of sexual assault advocacy and education/prevention services for all of Pierce County. In the beginning, the agency struggled to meet the needs of victims; today we struggle to end sexual assault, through prevention and societal intolerance for sexual violence. Until this is accomplished the need for education and therapy services/advocacy efforts on behalf of victims, their families and friends will continue and grow as more victims become willing to step forward for help and assistance.

What finally seems to be changing is society’s unwillingness to permit sexual assault to exist. Furtherance of this progress requires us to continue to address the problem, quit

blaming victims, and hold offenders accountable for their actions. Speak about these issues with your family, friends, neighbors and associates. Don't excuse the perpetrators

by blaming the victims. Work to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions and support legislation to keep them behind bars. Drop the pretense that excuses forced sexual contact as "boys being boys (smirk)" type thing. Adopt, rather a "respect for all" type concept that requires consent and dignity.

Too much to hope for? We think not! Please join us in this movement – we need your financial and active support. This is our community and we're all responsible for its condition.

During this seeming time of change, please join us in our Mission:

SUPPORT—HEAL—EDUCATE—PREVENT
Helping the Community STOP Sexual Abuse.

We need you!

Philosophy and Goals

The Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County was created and exists to serve victim-survivors of sexual assault and abuse, and to confront the social dynamics which foster sexual assault and abuse.

Although sexual assault is often an isolated incident, it is symptomatic of a greater social dynamic. The act or threat of rape, incest, and other forms of sexual violence are used to victimize and control individuals. Sexual assault is a physical and psychological assault of profound magnitude, which impacts a victim's sense of self-esteem, trust, security and control, as well as the individual's relationship within the larger community.

The Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County is a community-based agency that advocates for victim-survivors, their families and friends. The agency embraces the goal of providing support and information so that a victim may empower herself or himself to heal, while acknowledging the victim-survivor's dignity and respect of her or his decisions.

The Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County advocates the victim-survivor's right to:

- Be believed;
- Receive non-judgmental support;
- Choose her or his own pace and path of healing;
- Expect privacy and confidentiality;
- Accept or reject any agency service offered; and
- Receive accurate and current information.

In order to serve all victim-survivors, the Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County strives to be fully accessible to all segments of the community, acknowledging differences and special needs. The agency seeks to eliminate barriers by asking for community input in assessing and broadening diverse representation within the agency. It serves individuals who have had their lives impacted by sexual assault, regardless of race, ethnicity, color, religion, disability, pregnancy, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, age, income, veteran status, marital status or any other basis prohibited by federal, state, or local law.

Although need is the only criterion for receiving services, the Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County does not provide services to staff members, board members, volunteers or consultants, or their family members or close friends. SACPC will make every effort to refer these individuals to other agencies so that they may receive appropriate support. In addition, the agency does not serve or treat offenders, but it supports the continued search by others for effective treatment.

The agency believes sexual assault can be prevented. Prevention programs focus on:

- Education: targeting youth, other service providers, and the public, to rethink unconscious beliefs that permit the behavior;
- Community Development Model facilitation and implementation, which allow individual communities to take responsibility for creating an environment that has no tolerance for sexually violent behavior;
- Confrontation of societal views and attitudes that excuse sexual assault and increase vulnerability.

SACPC recognizes the link between rape and sexism, racism, homophobia, ageism, and ableism oppression. The issues must be actively addressed.

The Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County is an integral part of a larger system encompassing all services and professions that come into contact with victims of sexual assault and abuse. As a pivotal agency in the community, SACPC is a critical force in the effort to further humanize the medical, legal, judicial and social processes that confront the victim-survivor. It is committed to interacting with the larger system in a professional and responsible manner.