

Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County
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Tacoma, WA 98406-1725
<http://sexualassaultcenter.com>



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

Advocacy

A 24-hour Crisis, Information and Referral Line provides immediate assistance, information and emotional support.

1-800-756-7273 or (253) 474-7273

Advocacy services are centered around encouraging the empowerment of victim-survivors during their healing process, supporting friends and family and providing education about the issues surrounding sexual assault and abuse.

We firmly believe the right of a victim-survivor of sexual assault 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
- receive accurate and current information

The Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County provides services to any individual whose life has been 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.

Advocacy Services

The Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County provides advocacy services free of charge to any victim/survivor of sexual assault or abuse, recent or past. We also assist family members and friends of those who have been sexually assaulted or abused. Advocates are able to help clients explore options after an assault has occurred.

Our 24-hour crisis phone line connects you to an advocate to provide immediate assistance information, emotional support, and medical and legal advocacy. Additional in-person support services can be arranged by calling the crisis line.

Local for the Tacoma area (253) 474-7273 or toll-free 1-800-756-7273.

Emotional Support

An emotional reaction to a traumatic event such as sexual assault is quite natural. Many people feel “strange” or unlike themselves for different lengths of time after an assault. Emotional reactions may be of the acute or immediate kind, or long lasting, such as:

- Worry about the assault happening again
- Reminders of the assault trigger strong or overwhelming feelings
- Difficulty concentrating or feeling “spacey”
- Feeling like the assault is happening again
- Mood swings and/or overwhelming feelings
- Sleep problems and/or nightmares
- Feeling depressed, detached or not wanting to be around other people
- Eating more or less than normal
- Shortness of temper, feelings of anger, or a lack of patience with yourself or others
- Not interested in, or avoiding usual activities

Survivors may experience some or all of these symptoms. A call to the crisis line can be a first step to, or part of the ongoing process of sorting out what to do next to help you heal.

A survivor who has experienced one or more of these symptoms for longer than 2-4 months may want to call the crisis line for a referral to a therapist and/or for information about available support groups.

Medical Advocacy

It is very important to seek medical care as soon as possible after a sexual assault. (This doesn't mean you have to file a report to law enforcement.) There is a 72-hour time clock that begins to tick immediately following a sexual assault. It is within this time line that semen and other potential forensic evidence may be found on the victim's body. It is also within this 72-hour time frame that a victim has to take emergency contraception which may prevent a pregnancy. An advocate is available to meet, support and accompany a victim/survivor through medical procedures, including the forensic rape exam. Medical personnel can:

- Treat injuries.
- Treat for possible exposure to sexually transmitted disease resulting from the sexual assault.
- Test for pregnancy; offer emergency contraception within 72 hours of the rape to prevent pregnancy.
- Collect medical evidence to support the fact that a sexual assault occurred.

Legal Advocacy

A Legal Advocate is available to assist with criminal and civil proceedings at no charge to the victim/survivor. The following legal services may be provided:

Assistance during the criminal proceedings

- Assistance reporting to the police.
- Help filing for orders of protection.
- Assistance with Crime Victims Compensation (CVC).
- Accompaniment during court proceedings.
- Support advocacy after the case has been closed.

Assistance during civil proceedings

- Referrals to attorneys.
- Help filing for orders of protection.
- Accompaniment during court proceedings.
- Support advocacy after the case has been closed.

Other Resources

Police	911
Child Protective Services (CPS)	1-800-422-7517
Adult Protective Services (APS)	(253)476-7212
Mental Health Crisis Line	(253)798-4333
YWCA Shelter	(253)383-2593
DV Helpline	(253)798-4166

Volunteer Opportunities

The Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County relies heavily on volunteer support.

Advocates

Our largest numbers of volunteers are Advocates who staff the 24-hour Crisis, Information & Referral Line. Volunteers receive 30+ hours of initial training and continue to receive training while they volunteer.

Clerical volunteers

We have any number of office duties to complete and welcome this kind of volunteer assistance.

Internships

Unpaid internships are available throughout the agency's program.