

# Rape Crisis Center: Reminds community of sexual assault survivor services

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Erin Thornley Parisi, Executive Director of the Rape Crisis Center in Dane County, reminds the community that the Rape Crisis Center is available 24/7 to provide services to survivors of sexual assault and their support networks.

“We want to remind people that we remain available during the Safer-At-Home order,” said Erin Thornley Parisi. “Survivors are not alone. I encourage anyone who needs support in relation to surviving any form of sexual assault at any time in their life, to call our Helpline at 608.251.7273. Staff are available 24 hours per day. To protect our clients and staff from the COVID-19 pandemic, at this time our services are available by phone and through video conferencing. But we are here for all people affected by sexual assault of any nature.

The Rape Crisis Center remains available to victims of sexual assault who are seen by a forensic nurse in Dane County. UnityPoint Health - Meriter has the county-wide Forensic Nurse Examiner program, and they contact the Rape Crisis Center any time a victim presents to their emergency department. “Under normal conditions, we go to the hospital any time a victim/survivor of sexual assault is there, 365/24/7. Safety and support remain the highest -so priority for The Rape Crisis Center, during the COVID - 19 health crisis, we are still with clients by phone,” said Thornley Parisi.

Thornley Parisi reminds the public that it is always better for a victim to have an Advocate present when getting a post-sexual assault medical, health care or forensic evidence collection exam, as well as when victims choose to report their assault to law enforcement. “It can be a confusing time for a victim/survivor so we

are with survivors by phone at this time, to provide emotional support and ensure they clearly understand all of their options and rights,” says Thornley Parisi. We are with you! You are not alone!

In addition to hospital and law enforcement advocacy, throughout the Safer-At-Home order, Rape Crisis Center Advocates continue to help survivors with resources and paperwork related to the criminal justice process, to help access Title IX rights and to provide continuous emotional support. The agency’s education department focuses on teaching effective prevention programming and conducting outreach as well as verbal and physical self-defense. Many educational opportunities are available through video conferencing.

The Rape Crisis Social Media Channels will be providing further educational and unifying videos, and support content to our circles in the near future. The Rape Crisis Center wants to continue to remind the community that you are not alone, we are here to advocate for you with continued support during the COVID-19 Pandemic and beyond.

The Rape Crisis Center’s mission is to promote hope, help and healing for those harmed by sexual violence and to strive, through education and outreach, to create social change to end sexual violence.