

The Advocate

The Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center newsletter

Responding to disclosures from children

Becca Marsh

Child and Family Therapist

Accepting that child sexual abuse is not a rarity, is the first step in supporting children living with past or current sexual abuse. Studies have shown that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18. Additionally, the number of children who disclose of sexual abuse is tragically low, one study reported only about 38% will disclose. Some children may attempt to disclose only two or three times, while many may never disclose. With information like this, it is imperative that adults are prepared to hear and respond to a child's disclosure of sexual abuse.

In order to support a disclosure we need to be able to recognize one. Disclosures often occur in pieces and typically are indirect. We have to be sensitive to what a child is communicating. Children often test the waters for an idea of their trusted adult's reaction. Children may start by speaking about a "friend" or give vague information such as "I had a dream about..." or "I saw a movie that this happened in." Children may not have the language to communicate a disclosure clearly, so we need to be sensitive to language. Generally, a child tells just the tip of the iceberg, especially at first, of what has happened or is happening. Recognizing the child may be disclosing and responding appropriately may give the child the opportunity to disclose more as they are able.



If you feel a child may be disclosing to you, the child has chosen you because they trust you as a safe person. Make every effort to remain a safe person for the child. Your support and reaction is crucial in the child's safety and healing. Below are a few guidelines that can help.

Stop and listen. Do everything you can to make a safe environment for the child. Find a private place to speak and listen to what the child is saying without interrupting or asking too many questions.

Stay calm. While what the child is telling you may be disturbing, keep your reactions calm. Children may interpret reactions of shock, disgust, or anger as directed towards them or it may raise concerns of the consequences of the disclosure.

Believe. Make sure to check in with yourself to ensure you are avoiding any denial that may creep in. It is imperative to believe what the child is saying; it is extremely rare that children make false allegations. Believing the child immediately and continuously is extremely important to the child's healing journey.

Reassure. Tell the child that they are doing the right thing by telling you, they are very brave, and you are proud of them. The child may have been keeping the secret a long time, and they might be very fearful of the consequences of telling. They also may feel shame or guilt about the abuse. Let them know the abuse is not their fault.

Be honest. Let the child know you will need to tell someone in order to help him or her.

As an adult it is your responsibility to protect this child by making a report. If you feel the child is in immediate danger call 911. Otherwise, call your local police or Child Protective Services at 1-800-922-5330 to make a report. If you know a child who has been sexually abused WASAC offers free and confidential therapy. For more information or support please call our office at 316-263-0185.

References:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/ace/prevalence.htm>

Townsend, C., & Rheingold, A.A., (2013). Estimating a child sexual abuse prevalence rate for practitioners: studies. Charleston, S.C., Darkness to Light. Retrieved from www.D2L.org.

London, K., Bruck, M., Ceci, S., & Shuman, D. (2003) Disclosure of child sexual abuse: What does the research tell us about the ways that children tell? *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 11(1), 194-226.

National Children's Advocacy Center (2014). *When a Child Discloses Abuse*. Huntsville, AL: Author.

WASAC 2015 Lunch and Learn

During the March Lunch and Learn we will be discussing what the Root Causes of Sexual Violence. We will identify what Rape Culture is and how it impacts our society.

Target audience: all community members – parents, teachers, social workers, law enforcement, advocates, college students.

Hosted by: *Viviana Macedo-Cabrales, Latino Outreach Coordinator*



Looking for new ways to support survivors of sexual assault?

We have some ideas. ICT-SOS is launching a new project called “Be the change for Wichita” You can go to their website and buy a t-shirt or hoodie AND support the Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center (WASAC) at the same time! If you choose WASAC as your organization, \$6 from every t-shirt and \$12 from every sweatshirt will come back to us. Funds raised for WASAC will help us continue providing the best care and support services to survivors of sexual violence in Wichita.

For a WASAC T-shirt:

<http://ictsos.storenvy.com/products/12177495-wasac-wichita-area-sexual-assault-center-tee>

For a WASAC Sweatshirt:

<http://ictsos.storenvy.com/products/12177546-wasac-wichita-area-sexual-assault-center-hoodie>



www.ictsos.org/bethechange



Dillons community rewards

The Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center is now registered with Dillons community rewards. Fuel points will not be affected.

You can help support WASAC just by using your Dillons card and choosing us as your organization! WASAC's reference number is 61785. Sign up today!



<https://www.dillons.com/communityrewards>



WICHITA AREA SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTER

Lunch & Learn 2015

Bring your lunch and join us from 12-1 p.m. on the last Tuesday of each month to learn more about the reality of sexual violence.

Free and open to all! No RSVP required.

- February 24: Supporting disclosures
- March 31: Root causes of sexual violence
- April 28: Brief history of Denim Day, Take Back the Night and Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- May 26: Sexual harassment in the workplace
- June 30: Staying safe online*
- July 28: Protective parenting and personal safety*
- August 25: Campus sexual assault and Title IX
- September 29: Sexual assault and substance abuse
- October 27: Risk and benefits of protection orders
- November 24: Holiday challenges and “traumaversaries”
- December 29: Warning signs of stalking

*Concurrent sessions for adults and youth

All WASAC Lunch & Learn sessions are held at our office at
355 N Waco, Suite 100.

For more information, please call 316-263-0185.

Upcoming Events

March 16: WASAC office closed

**March 18: 6:00-7:30 p.m.
Protective Parenting Class**

**March 27: 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Change the Rules Creative Showcase
Candela at The LUX
120 E. 1st Street**

**March 31: 12:00-1:00 p.m.
WASAC Lunch and Learn
Root Causes of Sexual Violence**

**April 24: 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Take Back the Night
Fairmount Park
6:30-8:00 p.m. Community Fair, Food, Booths
8:00-8:30 p.m. Rally
8:30-9:00 p.m. March
9:00-9:30 p.m. Candlelit Survivor Circle**

**May 3: 5:30-9:30 p.m.
SALSA
Supporters and Leaders Against Sexual Assault
Public at the Brickyard**

Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center

***VOLUNTEERS* NEEDED!**

Gain Experience and Skills While

Helping Survivors of Sexual Violence

Become a Volunteer Advocate!

We need volunteers to serve on the 24-hour crisis hotline and be available to accompany survivors to hospital exams and police interviews.

Our volunteer advocate training is FREE intensive education on the psychological, medical and legal implications of sexual assault, as well as other forms of oppression and how they are interconnected. Crisis intervention and counseling skills are developed through discussion, role playing and feedback. During this 40 hour training, WASAC and community partners team up to provide a detailed synopsis of the demand for response in Sedgwick County.

After completing the application and screening process, our volunteers are required to attend the 40 hour training session and complete 2 buddy shifts.

Volunteers are asked to commit for a minimum of 1 year and sign up for 2 shifts each month on the crisis line.

****Volunteers must be 21 years of age.**

Our Next 40 Hour Training Schedule:

When: Begins May 13, 2014

Every Wednesday & Thursday from 6pm-9:30pm
for 3 weeks

Saturday, May 16th & Saturday, May 23rd
From 9am-4pm

For more information contact Marty at
263-0185 or Marty@Wichitasac.com

www.wichitasac.com



Don't feel safe. Carry a whistle or air horn. Don't walk alone at night. Always tell someone where you're going. Park under a streetlight. Never accept an open drink. Check the backseat of your car before getting in. Don't stay in hotel rooms on the first floor. Vary your daily routine. Don't feel safe. Don't talk to strangers. Use the buddy system. Don't burden yourself with too many packages or bags. Don't be too friendly. Have your keys ready when you leave the store. Don't use unmarked taxis. Don't feel safe. Be realistic about your ability to protect yourself. Don't get on an elevator with someone who makes you uncomfortable. Don't dress provocatively. Don't put your first name on your mailbox. Use the peephole in your front door. Don't feel safe. Carry pepper spray everywhere. Learn martial arts or self-defense. Have a male friend record your answering machine message. Keep your phone with you at all times. Don't feel safe. Avoid secluded places. Rehearse how you would respond if attacked. Pay your own way. Don't drink from punch bowls. Don't feel safe. Don't grow your hair long. Don't go to the store at night. Don't feel safe. Walk with purpose. Don't have headphones on in public places. Learn to cope with street harassment. Don't feel safe. Avoid places that "feel off." Don't feel safe. Don't feel safe. Don't feel safe.

Tired of victim-blaming? Fed up with rape culture?

It's time to



**Join us for the Third Annual
Change the Rules Creative Showcase**

March 27, 2015, 6-9 p.m.

Presented at Candela at The LUX, 120 East 1st Street.

**For more information, or to submit original art or performances,
please contact Robin at 316-263-0185 or robin@wichitasac.com.**

Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center



Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center

Adult women (18+)

- Tuesday
Evening group
5:30 - 6:30 pm
- Tuesday
Trauma-sensitive yoga
6:30 - 7:30 pm
- Thursday
Daytime group
11:30 am - 12:30 pm

Teen girls (13-17)

- Monday
Evening group
5:30 - 6:30 pm
- Monday
Trauma-sensitive yoga
6:30 - 7:30 pm

Parents and caregivers

- Monday
6:45 - 7:45 pm

WASAC also offers short-term individual therapy for women, men, and children. To schedule an appointment, please call our office between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm.

WASAC support groups are confidential, free, and open to survivors at any point in their healing. All groups meet weekly and are open-ended, with no appointment necessary to participate. At this time, child care is not available.

WASAC office

355 N Waco,
Suite 100

SW corner of 3rd/Waco

316-263-0185