

# NATIONAL EMERGENCY NURSES ASSOCIATION



Position Statement	Care of Sexually Violated Patient
Number of Pages	3
Approval Date	November 2019
Past Revision Dates	November 2011, November 2013, April 2014

## ISSUE

Statistics Canada estimates that one in four Canadians will be sexually assaulted in his or her lifetime.

Expected sequelae to sexual violence may include infection and pregnancy, post-traumatic stress disorder, somatic complaints, significantly increased substance use and substance abuse, increased utilization of health care resources, impaired social interaction, loss of productivity in the workplace, depression and suicide.

Sensitive and timely immediate treatment and appropriate referral for follow up physical and emotional care can improve the long term outlook for this vulnerable patient population. Many Emergency Registered Nurses have acquired specialized education as Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE). A SANE is a Registered Nurse with special education in the comprehensive care of sexual assault survivors, the recognition and documentation of injury, the collection of evidence, and may qualify as an expert witness in a court of law. SANE education includes crisis intervention; acute care and treatment; injury recognition and documentation; evidence detection and collection; sexually transmitted infection and pregnancy prophylaxis; appropriate referrals for subsequent care of the survivor of sexual violence.

## NENA POSITION

Emergency care of the sexual assault survivor should include safety, timeliness, privacy, sensitivity, and competence.

Sexual assault survivors may expect to receive comprehensive care of physical and emotional needs.

Sexual assault survivors may expect to receive care from health care practitioners who are prepared by education and temperament to provide competent examination and treatment in the emergency department.

Recognizing that medical care is the greater priority, sexual assault survivors may expect also to receive appropriate documentation, collection and preservation of evidence, and submission to policing agencies in accordance with current standards of forensic care.

Emergency health care providers should receive preparation to equip them to provide appropriate care, forensic services, and referral services to adult and pediatric survivors of sexual violence and their families.

# NATIONAL EMERGENCY NURSES ASSOCIATION

Sexual assault survivors should not be denied the support of a person of trust or a representative of advocacy services, if desired.

It is highly desirable that emergency departments employ sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE) to provide comprehensive care to sexual assault survivors.

Emergency Registered Nurses should collaborate to promote community awareness of sexual assault and should support community sexual assault prevention initiatives.

## References

- Campbell, R. (2004). The effectiveness of sexual assault nurse examiner programs. Retrieved May 14, 2020 from [http://www.ncdsv.org/images/VAWnet\\_EffectivenessSANEPrograms\\_11-2004.pdf](http://www.ncdsv.org/images/VAWnet_EffectivenessSANEPrograms_11-2004.pdf)
- Rotenberg, C. and Cotter, A. (2018). Police-reported sexual assaults in Canada before and after #MeToo, 2016 and 2017. Retrieved May 14, 2020 from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54979-eng.htm>
- Emergency Nurses Association. (2018). Forensic Evidence Collection in the Emergency Care Setting. Downloaded May 14, 2020 from [https://www.ena.org/docs/default-source/resource-library/practice-resources/position-statements/forensic-evidence-collection-in-the-emergency-care-setting.pdf?sfvrsn=a1f89eba\\_2](https://www.ena.org/docs/default-source/resource-library/practice-resources/position-statements/forensic-evidence-collection-in-the-emergency-care-setting.pdf?sfvrsn=a1f89eba_2)
- Emergency Nurses Association. (2010). Emergency Nurses Association Position Statement: Care of Sexual Assault and Rape Victims in the Emergency Department. Retrieved May 14, 2020 from: [http://www.ncdsv.org/images/ENA\\_CareSexualAssaultRapeVictimsInEmergencyDept\\_2010.pdf](http://www.ncdsv.org/images/ENA_CareSexualAssaultRapeVictimsInEmergencyDept_2010.pdf)
- Gonnering, Rebecca R., "'A Compromise to Help the Community": Rural Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Experiences" (2015). *All Theses, Dissertations, and Other Capstone Projects*. Paper 408. Retrieved May 14, 2020 from <https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/etds/408/>.
- Government of Ontario. (2019). Let's stop sexual harassment and violence. Retrieved May 14, 2020 from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/lets-stop-sexual-harassment-and-violence>
- Johnson, H. (2006). Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends 2006. Retrieved May 14, 2020 from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-570-x/85-570-x2006001-eng.htm>
- Ledray, L. (1999). *Sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) development & operations guide*. Washington DC: Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice.

- Littel, K. (2001). Sexual assault nurse examiner programs: Improving the community response to sexual assault victims. *Office for Victims of Crime Bulletin*, 4, 1-19.
- Moreau, G. (2019). Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2018. *Statistics Canada*. Retrieved May 14, 2020 from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/85-002-X201900100013>
- Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network. (2020). What Is a Sexual Assault Forensic Exam? Retrieved May 14, 2020 from <https://www.rainn.org/articles/rape-kit>.
- National Institute of Justice. (2017). *National best practices for sexual assault kits: A multidisciplinary approach*. Retrieved May 14, 2020 from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/250384.pdf>
- Nielson M. H., Strong L, Stewart J. G. (2015). Does Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Training Affect Attitudes of Emergency Department Nurses Toward Sexual Assault Survivors? *Journal of Forensic Nursing*. 11(3): pp137-43.
- Sievers, V., Murphy, S., & Miller, J. (2003). Sexual assault evidence collection more accurate when completed by sexual assault nurse examiners: Colorado's experience. *Journal of Emergency Nursing*, 29, 511-514.
- U. S. Department of Justice. (2013). *National protocol for sexual assault medical forensic examinations for adults/adolescents (2nd ed.)*. Retrieved May 14, 2020 from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ovw/241903.pdf>