Welcome to the RCC. This document contains important information about our services and our business policies. Please read it carefully. The RCC’s mission is to provide help, hope and healing to those impacted by sexual violence. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between you and the RCC. You can ask any questions you may have when you sign it or at any time in the future.

Goal: Our counseling program goal is to provide counseling services to survivors of sexual assault (primary survivors) and their family members (secondary survivors) to help them overcome challenges stemming from the trauma of sexual violence. Our services can be offered in individual, family, and/or group settings. Our services main objectives are to help our clients cope with the immediate crisis, support their healing process, and help them regain a sense of control and hope over their lives.

Counseling Staff: The counselors may be graduate practicum interns, interns with the state, or licensed individuals. All counselors are supervised by a licensed mental health professional in the State of Texas.

Counseling Approaches: We provide evidence-based and trauma-informed interventions. The RCC counseling program uses a variety of therapeutic approaches, including but not limited to: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, Narrative Therapy, Bilateral Stimulation (EMDR), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and Play Therapy. Typically, clients are seen for 8-10 sessions; however, this is determined by the client and counselor. Treatment plan: Your counselor will help you identify treatment goals and develop healthy coping skills. You have the right to be informed of the progress toward your goals.

Intake Appointment: Your first appointment with a counselor will be to identify how to best meet your needs. Upon arrival, you will be provided with paperwork and then a counselor will ask you for some information about the challenges that brought you in and provide some screening questions to determine the services that may be recommended, including individual, family, or group therapy and/or advocacy services. You are free to skip any questions you don’t want to answer. We may also provide community resources when appropriate. Services for minors will involve a first intake appointment with parents to go over the paperwork, get proper consent, and determine the treatment needs.

Appointment Cancellation, No Show, and Late Arrival Policies: Appointments usually run for approximately 50 minutes. Your appointments are very important to us. When an appointment is scheduled, that time has been specifically reserved for you and if you forget, cancel, or change your appointment without enough notice, we miss the opportunity to fill that appointment with another person in need of services. We sincerely appreciate your assistance and cooperation with the following policies, as this may allow us to better schedule appointments for all clients.

1. If you need to cancel an appointment, please give us at least 24-hour notice. If you do not provide us with a 24-hour notice, or if you do not show up for a scheduled appointment, please consider that we cannot secure the same availability for subsequent appointments. You may run the risk of having to wait for an opening in your counselor’s schedule. To cancel or reschedule your appointment, please call our front desk. We do not take cancelations or rescheduling messages via text or email.
2. If you arrive 15 minutes after your scheduled time, the appointment will be canceled and rescheduled for the next available time. If you have any questions regarding these policies, please let our staff know and we will be glad to speak with you in more detail.
3. If at any time your counseling session must be canceled by your counselor due to travel, illness, or emergency, we will reschedule you for the next available appointment.

Fees & Billing: The RCC does not charge for counseling sessions, as they are paid for by state and federal grants. If that were to change, we will notify you in advance so payment arrangements can be made. Currently, we do not bill insurance. The RCC welcomes all donations and greatly appreciates any contributions.

Confidentiality: Our policies about confidentiality, as well as other information about your privacy rights, are fully described in a separate document titled Notice of Privacy Practices. You will be provided with a copy of that document. In summary, the RCC values the confidentiality of our clients and follows the legal and ethical guidelines proposed by both state and federal laws. We do not release any counseling records without your written consent. At times we may consult with other mental health professionals regarding the management of your case to ensure appropriate and quality care. Every effort will be made to protect your privacy.

4606 Centerview Dr • Suite 200 • San Antonio, Texas 78228
24-hour Hotline: (210) 349-7273 • Business: (210) 521-7273 • Fax (210) 521-7278 • www.rapecrisis.com
Limits of Confidentiality: Counselors are legally and ethically obligated to disclose confidential information when the following needs arise:

1.) To protect clients from harm to self or others;
2.) Disclosure or suspected report of abuse/neglect of children, elders, and adults with disabilities;
3.) Disclosure of abuse by another mental health provider;
4.) Subpoenas received by state and/or federal courts of law.

Confidentiality with regard to Minors: Because confidentiality is crucial in developing a positive therapeutic relationship, the child’s counselor will provide general information about the counseling session and the minor’s progress. Exceptions to this policy are when there is an imminent danger to the child or someone else. Parents are expected to be involved in the process and participate in the treatment planning.

Electronic Communication: Email, text, and other forms of electronic messages provide convenient methods of communication. Please be advised that these methods, in their typical form, are not confidential means of communication. Therefore, The Rape Crisis Center will use email communication and text messaging only with your permission, and only for administrative purposes. If you authorize these methods to communicate with The Rape Crisis Center, the center cannot guarantee secure or error-free communication. You can revoke your authorization in writing at any time.

Professional Relationship: The professional relationship requires high standards of moral, ethical, and appropriate conduct on the part of your counselor. Boundaries must be upheld and the relationship is confined to the counseling sessions. It is often an emotional relationship because it is a relationship where change is occurring. Your counselor cannot be expected to be involved in any social relationship or friendship outside the counseling session. In addition, if you choose to engage in social media with The Rape Crisis Center, your counselor cannot connect with you on social media. This is to protect the professional relationship and your confidentiality.

Benefits/Risks of Counseling: Counseling is helpful for some in reaching recovery and developing healthy coping skills after a sexual abuse; however, there are some risks involved in counseling. These may include exposure to painful trauma-related memories, emotions, or thoughts while processing them to reduce the challenges associated with trauma. In working to achieve this goal, clients might feel worse for a period of time before beginning to feel better. We encourage you to discuss any challenges with your counselor.

Terminations: Ideally, the termination of counseling is usually a mutual agreement between you and your counselor. Termination usually occurs when the treatment goals have been achieved. However, either one can initiate the termination. There are some instances in which the RCC may be ethically obligated to initiate termination. These include (1) If during the intake appointment or at some point in treatment, it becomes clear that the presenting concerns fall outside the scope and areas of competence of the RCC’s counseling department. At these times, we will work actively with you to refer you to other services who would be a better fit for your treatment needs. (2) When counseling is not helping you reach your goals (3) If at any time during the course of treatment, you engage in threatening, harassing, abusive or disruptive behavior directed toward another client, employee, or visitor. (4) Counseling cases will be closed automatically if no contact is received from you after 4 weeks without a prior plan or discussion between you and your counselor. You can return to services in the future if you decide to continue treatment.

Disputes/Complaint: If you have a complaint or concern, we hope that you would speak to your counselor or their supervisor first to try to resolve the concern. If we are unable to resolve the problem, you have the right to file a consumer complaint with the Texas State Board of Examiners on their complaint hotline at (800) 942-5540.

Office Hours: Our office hours are Monday – Thursday, 9:00am - 8:00pm, Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm, and Saturday, 9:00am-1:00pm.

Emergencies & After Hours: Your safety is our priority. Please know that we do not provide emergency services. For emergency situations, you may seek help by calling 911 or going to the nearest hospital emergency room. You may also contact the SAPD Mental Health Crisis Line 24/7 at: 210-223-7233. In case of a crisis, you may also contact our 24–hour Hotline at (210) 349-7273, or the United Way Helpline (210)227-4357.

Records: We are required to keep appropriate records of the services we provide. Records are kept for 7 years after the last date of services. All records are kept confidential and the RCC follows HIPAA procedures and guidelines. Records will not be disclosed without client’s authorization unless one of the four exceptions listed above occurs. If you would like a report sent to another provider, we require a signed release of records and we recommend you review and discuss the case notes with your counselor. The RCC reports outcomes to funders; however, all information is de-identified to protect your confidentiality.
**Services to Minors:** When making an appointment for a minor, consent for services must be given by the legal parents, managing conservators, guardians, or a person designated by the court to have the authority to consent prior to initiating services with the minor. An initial appointment is scheduled with the parents to obtain the proper consent. It is our policy that ALL legally authorized persons representing the minor will need to sign the consent for services. If the minor is named in a custody agreement, divorce decree or court order, we must obtain and review the most updated copy and keep it in the minor’s record. Under the Texas Family Code, a minor can consent for services if one of the following conditions is present: suicide prevention, chemical addiction or dependency, sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, and/or pregnancy, or if a minor is emancipated or active duty with the armed services of the U.S. The counselor will need to inform the minor’s parents of the services provided with or without the minor’s consent. Services to children are for the purpose of supporting the minor’s healing process after sexual abuse and to support the family with immediate crisis. We do not make custody evaluations nor provide expert recommendations regarding possession of or access to child.

**Nondiscrimination policy:** The Rape Crisis Center welcomes all survivors, regardless of sexual orientation, age, gender, gender identity or expression, race, ethnicity, religion, immigrant status, or ability.

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**Consent for Services**

By signing below, you acknowledge that:

1. You have read and understand all of the above and agree to The Rape Crisis Center counseling policies.
2. All questions about this consent have been answered.
3. You have received a copy of this consent.

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**Authorization for Electronic Communication**

I understand that electronic communication (emails) and cellular phones do not guarantee private or secure communication. I authorize The Rape Crisis Center to send me email and/or text messages to remind me of my appointments.

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**Email address and/or text messaging number to which The Rape Crisis Center can send YOU information (please print)**
Acknowledgment of Receipt of HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices

I hereby acknowledge that I have received and have been given an opportunity to read a copy of The Rape Crisis Center Notice of Privacy Practices. I understand that if I have any questions regarding the Notice or my privacy rights, I can contact the Rape Crisis Center Privacy Officer.

Printed Name of Client or Legal Authorized Person  Signature of Client or Legal Authorized Person  Date

Acknowledgment of Receipt of Information on Crime Victim’s Rights in Texas and VINE Program

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the crime victim’s rights in the State of Texas and the Texas Victim Information and Notification Everyday VINE program by the office of the Attorney General by The Rape Crisis Center

Printed Name of Client or Legal Authorized Person  Signature of Client or Legal Authorized Person  Date

Has the information increased your knowledge of rights crime victims have in the State of Texas?

Yes (   ) No(   )