

# Role and Referral Pathways of the Forensic Nurse Examiner



# Objectives of this session

- Background of the FNE role
- The role of the FNE in Victoria, Australia
- The referral process in our regional area

# A little history.....

- 1970's United States
- 1996 Us and Canada
- Program differs to the Australian model....
- Called SANE - Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner
- Structure of the program differs

# Role of the SANE

- Care for the sexual assault victim, offers emotional support while attending to his/her physical needs
- In Australia, one of the differences is that the Nurse, while providing quality care is not necessarily there in a supportive role. There are others that provide the emotional support during their journey such as CASA (Centre Against Sexual Assault)



# Role of the Forensic Nurse in Australia

- Examine the victim of sexual assault
- Collect forensic samples as required
- Document injuries clearly
- Provide treatment for injuries
- Arrange referrals as required

# Role of the Forensic Nurse in Australia

Documentation includes:

- History, medical and sexual
- Injuries
- Treatment received inc. medications
- Forensic specimens collected
- Professionals involved

# Role of the Forensic Nurse in Australia

## Medico-legal report

- Includes a complete professional report regarding the examination
- Provides an opinion to the reader regarding the findings from the examination

# Role of the Forensic Nurse in Australia

## Court attendance:

- Attends court when requested
- Provides support for the medico-legal report

# Forensic Nurse role in Victoria

- Provides a blood collection service to the Victorian Police, when requested, for drug and alcohol testing of the general public in Traffic offences



# The Future of the Forensic Nurse

Potentially a widening of the role in general

- To include an examination of general assaults

Relaxing of the current policies

- To include the examination of potential victims, prior to Police involvement

# Referrals from the Police

Police have a code of practice which is used as the basis of their response to sexual assault

Vietnamese

## Sexual assault

**For more information**

A number of these websites have access to different languages. They may put you in contact with a culturally specific service.

Women's Legal Service Victoria  
email: justice@vicnet.net.au  
Telephone: 9642 0877  
Freecall regional areas: 1800 133 302

Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA)  
www.casa.org.au  
Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line  
Telephone: 1800 806 292

Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service  
www.iwvcs.org.au  
Telephone: 9898 3145

Domestic Violence & Incest Resource Centre  
www.dvirc.org.au  
Telephone: 9486 9866

Department of Human Services  
www.dhs.vic.gov.au  
Telephone: 1300 650 172 (general enquiries)  
After Hours Child Protection - Statewide  
Telephone: 131 278

Islamic Women's Welfare Council  
of Victoria Inc.  
email: iwvcc@vicnet.net.au  
www.vicnet.net.au/~iwvcc  
Telephone: 9419 7888

Victoria Police Website  
www.police.vic.gov.au

**Emergency contact numbers**


Emergency (24 hours)	000
Police (24 hours)	000
Ambulance (24 hours)	000
Telephone Interpreting Service (24 hours)	131 450
Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line (24 hours)	1800 806 292
Victim Support Agency (not 24 hours service)	1300 659 419
Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service (24 hours)	1800 015 188
Office of the Public Advocate Freecall regional areas (not 24 hours service)	9603 9500 1300 309 337

**What to do if it happens to you or someone you know**

**DISCLAIMER**

The information contained in this pamphlet is in the nature of general content only and is not intended to be advice on any particular issue relating to sexual assault.

The reader should not act on the basis of any material in this pamphlet without obtaining advice relevant to his or her own particular situation. The State of Victoria, its servants and agents including all members of the Victoria Police expressly disclaim any liability to any person in respect of any action taken or not taken in reliance on the contents of this pamphlet.



**What is sexual assault?**

Sexual assault is an act of violence. Sexual assault is a violation of human rights. It is a crime against the individual and the community.

People of all ages and backgrounds experience sexual assault. It can happen in marriage. It can happen in the family. It is the responsibility of adults within the family, the community and government to ensure that children are emotionally and physically safe. Sexual assault can occur to both males and females although women and children are more vulnerable.

The law does not distinguish between male and female perpetrators.

**What the law says**

The law says both parties must agree to the sexual act.

Sexual assault is an act which is:

- Unwanted
- Occurs without free agreement or permission
- Makes the victim feel uncomfortable or afraid

This may occur as a single incident, or progress over time.

The law states that sexual assault can take various forms including rape.

**Some examples are:**

- Penetration of a penis, object or other body part (ie finger) in the victim's vagina or anus, or putting a penis in the victim's mouth
- Touching, fondling or kissing or being forced to touch in a sexual way

Situations where the law says you are unable to agree:

- If you are drunk
- If you are drug affected
- If you are unable to understand the sexual nature of what is happening
- If you submit because you are held against your will
- If you are a child

In Victoria it is a crime to commit -

- Sexual offences against adults and children

**If you have been sexually assaulted**

Many people do not report sexual assaults due to fear, shame or concern they will not be believed. If you have been sexually assaulted you can talk to the following services. All of these services will provide support and appropriate referrals.

- Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA)
- Doctor
- Community Health Centre/Hospitals
- School/University
- Health services, counselling and support services
- Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service
- Domestic Violence & Incest Resources Centre
- Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria Inc.

The police can work with these services to help keep you safe.

**Contacting police**

If you are sexually assaulted you can call 000 or go to a police station. Police have Sexual Offences and Child Abuse (SOCA) Units staffed by specially trained police who respond to victims of sexual assault and child physical abuse.

**What can police do?**

- Police must investigate all reports of crime. This may include identifying the perpetrator/s and wherever possible apprehending that person/s.
- If reported to police, they work with you to ensure your safety.
- Access medical/counselling services
- Speak to you about what may happen in the presence of an interpreter or, if necessary, a person supporting you. It is important that you feel comfortable with your interpreter and it is also important that you tell police if you are not.
- Initiate investigation which may require a detailed statement from you about what has happened.
- Police will speak to you about what may happen next in the police process. This may include speaking to the suspect/s and gathering information.
- May take matter to court for the prosecution of the perpetrator/s where possible.

**Children (under 17 years of age)**

- In situations where children have been sexually abused police are required to inform the Department of Human Services (DHS).
- Police and DHS will determine if further action is required.

# Our Current Referral Process



Thankyou for inviting me here today to widen  
the knowledge of the Forensic Nurse role here  
in Victoria and Australia