

Chapter 15

Logistics

“No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burden of another.” ~ Author unknown

RVAP VOLUNTEERING: POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Advocate Requirements

We take our commitment to victims very seriously and require our volunteers to do the same. Our advocates complete training certification and participate in continuing education provided by RVAP staff members. Practicing new skills, gaining experience, and continually learning is key to providing the best services possible. Therefore, we require a minimum number of call shifts, attendance at monthly meetings, and compliance with call shift guidelines.

Confidentiality

It is essential that you keep complete confidentiality about anything that you hear or are told about RVAP clients. Confidentiality means that you may not discuss the details of any client (whether you worked with the client, or you heard it from another RVAP advocate or staff) with anyone outside of RVAP. This includes anyone who is not a current volunteer or staff member of RVAP. It also means that no one (including police officers and medical personnel) outside of RVAP may see call sheets.

Any breach in confidentiality will likely be grounds for immediate dismissal.

Call Shifts

RVAP volunteer advocates may take shifts on weekdays, weekends, and holidays.

Shifts are either AM or PM.

AM Shift: 8am-5pm, M-F. 9am-5pm Saturday-Sunday.

PM Shift: 5pm – 8am, M-F. 5pm-8am Saturday and Sunday.

Volunteers are expected to sign up for **three shifts per month**, for a minimum of **one year**.

Any questions or accommodation requests may be directed towards the volunteer coordinator.

Call Structure

There are always at least two advocates on call: the first-call and the in-person (IP) advocate. Whenever there is a hospital call or a police call, the first-call advocate will answer the call and notify the SBU right away. The SBU will dispatch the IP advocate. The IP advocate must be able to get to the hospital (UIHC or Mercy Hospital) or police stations in Johnson County in no more than 20 minutes.

When advocates are on call, they will be assigned a cell phone. SBU will contact advocates through this cell phone first, and reach out to advocates personal cell phones if they are unable to reach the advocate.

The primary responsibility of the SBU is to be available for support and consultation for advocates. The SBU is available to take calls in the event of a vacant call shift or in an emergency if an advocate cannot continue a shift. The SBU will also serve as the IP on cases involving people with significant mental illness, physical injury, or in other cases that might call for services beyond the level of training for volunteers. We encourage you to call your SBU as often as necessary to ask questions and process calls.

When you return your equipment following a shift, it is important to check in with the volunteer coordinator to process any calls you took. If the volunteer coordinator is unavailable, another staff member will be available to process with you. It is important for all of us to have support as advocates; this is a difficult job, and we value our connections with each other.

Monthly Meetings

Advocates are required to attend monthly advocate meetings. Meeting times and locations vary based on staff and volunteer schedules. Advocate meetings are an important time to process calls, get information relevant to volunteering with RVAP, hear agency and policy updates, receive continuing education and support from staff members and other volunteers, and socialize with each other.

If an advocate misses two meetings in six months, the advocate will be asked to attend a skills review with the Volunteer Coordinator or another staff member before volunteering again. Advocates who cannot attend a meeting due to an unavoidable conflict should let the Volunteer Coordinator know ahead of time and arrange a time to find out what they missed.

Bag Pick-Up

The day that your shift starts, you should come to the office **to pick up your bag between 12:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.** If there is an emergency and you cannot do so, call the office and let the Volunteer Coordinator know as soon as possible. Once you have checked-in with the Volunteer Coordinator or other staff member, you will be given an advocate call bag, which is your advocate tool kit. It contains a call book with the shift schedule, the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) schedule and contact sheet, a supply of call sheets, and victim support information. There is also an Iowa Sexual Abuse Hotline Referral Guide, a National Center Guide, and manila packets that contain brochures & fliers to give to survivors and significant others at the hospital or police department. Most importantly, the call bag has your phone and a charger. **Never leave the bags unattended. Also, do not leave them exposed to extreme heat or cold.**

Be sure to talk with a staff member to be briefed on information you will need when picking up your call bag before you go on call. **Allow 5-10 minutes to check in and out.** Once you have checked your call bag for all the necessary equipment and materials, you will sign your call bag out on a sign-out sheet, including your name, the date and time, whether you are on first-call or IP, and the name of your cell phone.

Bag Drop-off

Return your call bag by 12pm on the next business day. In order to maintain confidentiality, do not have anyone else return your call bag. If there is an emergency and you are not able to return the bag yourself, you must call the office and let the Volunteer Coordinator know so you can make other arrangements.

When returning your bag, check the equipment in on the same form as when you checked out. A staff member should be around to talk about your shift. It is helpful to let us know if you used the last of any of the supplies in the call bag. If you have problems with the cell phone during your shift, let your SBU know immediately. This information should also be given to the Volunteer Coordinator when the bag is returned.

Call Sheets

For every call you take, you will fill out a call sheet as completely as possible, including a brief summary of the call. Please be sure to fill out each section on the call sheet, even if the answers are mostly “unknown.” Try to include the perpetrator’s name and demographics if possible. These sheets are used for statistics and are important for many reasons. Not only do many of our funding sources require this information to obtain or maintain grants, but call sheets are an important tool in revealing potential trends in sexual assault.

It is okay if you cannot answer every section — we do not want the stats to get in the way of the advocacy, but sometimes, you can get that information by listening or asking a question. Most clients tend to naturally reveal most of the information that we track. It will be helpful for you to become comfortable with the type of information recorded on a call sheet as soon as possible so that you can take mental note of call sheet relevant information during the course of an advocacy. You should not fill out a call sheet during a call; it can be a distraction when you are focusing on the needs of the caller, although you might jot down notes. Be sure to return your call sheets with your call bag.

CLIENT RIGHTS

People who use RVAP services are entitled to:

- Confidentiality
- Choice as to whether or not they want services
- Respect
- An empathic, non-judgmental listener
- Access to information about agency boundaries and policies
- Knowledge that RVAP personnel adhere to those policies

We solicit feedback to ensure we are meeting client needs. We provide paper evaluation forms. It is also important for us to know if someone has a negative experience with RVAP. Our grievance policies are outlined below.

GRIEVANCE POLICIES

Throughout the grievance process, a client or volunteer has the right to an advocate of her/his choosing.

Client Grievance Policy

If a client has a concern or grievance with RVAP or members of our staff, they have the following options:

- Concern about crisis services: contact the Volunteer Coordinator or Executive Director
- Concern about counseling services: contact the Johnson County Services Coordinator or Executive Director
- Concern about educational programming: contact the Education Coordinator or Executive Director
- If after talking with the Executive Director, the client does not feel that their issues have been adequately addressed, they may direct concerns or complaints to the chairperson of the RVAP Advisory Board.

The client may contact any of these individuals in person, in writing, by phone or via email. Contact information for these individuals is available on our website (rvap.org) or by calling the RVAP office at 335-6001. This process can be done anonymously.

Volunteer Grievance Policy

If you have a concern or a conflict regarding any part of your volunteer experience, there are options available to you:

- Meet with the Volunteer Coordinator, Executive Director and/or Assistant Director. You are invited to communicate any concerns to these staff members. You may request a written reply to your complaint.
- Request that your complaint be reviewed by the RVAP Advisory Board, in person or in writing, either with or without staff present.

Volunteers may contact any of these individuals in person, in writing, by phone or via email. Contact information is available on our website (rvap.org) or by calling the RVAP office at 335-6001. This process can be done anonymously.

Additional Resources

If a client or volunteer wishes to register a complaint outside our agency, the following resources are available:

- UI Office of the Vice President of Student Services 335-3559
- UI Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity 335-0705
- UI Ombudsperson 335-3608

- Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault (515) 244-7424

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Advocates must adhere to their signed confidentiality agreement.
- Understand the structure of call shifts and the difference between first-call, IP and SBU.
- Utilize your SBU who is there for you!
- Equipment must be returned by you by 12:00 the following weekday and picked up no later than 3:30 p.m.
- Call sheets must be filled out as completely as possible.
- Respect and follow the boundaries that staff sets for clients. You are not doing the client a favor by ignoring boundaries; rather you are making boundaries unclear and confusing.
- Do not give a client your full name, phone number or any other way of contacting you personally.
- What the grievance policies are for clients and volunteers.

Rape Crisis Line: Policies & Procedures 213

Crisis Calls Error! Bookmark not defined.

Non-Crisis CallsError! Bookmark not defined.

Client Rights 216

Grievance Policies 216