



RAPE RESPONSE

REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS

What do volunteer advocates for Rape Response do?

Rape Response volunteers serve as on-call advocates for sexual assault victims and their families. Volunteers respond to requests for medical advocacy at all Birmingham area emergency rooms and the SANE Facility. The volunteer provides emotional support, answers questions, and explains necessary procedures. She informs the victim about the counseling and support services offered by Rape Response and may provide her with clothing to wear home from the medical facility and a packet of information. Additionally, she may offer support or answer questions for the family at the medical facility, but the victim remains our primary concern and focus of attention.

Must I have any special training or experience in order to apply?

No. Although professional counselors and therapists do sometimes volunteer their time at Rape Response, most volunteers are not professional helpers. In fact, a strong distinction exists between the type of work done by volunteer advocates and that of professionals.

What are the requirements that I must meet before making an application?

You must be a high school graduate at least 18 years old with a genuine interest in helping others. You must not be currently receiving services provided by any Crisis Center program. Rape Response volunteers must also have access to reliable transportation and carry automobile liability insurance. Sexual assault survivors must be emotionally ready to assist other survivors and be no less than a year past their own assault/abuse experience.

What's involved in the screening process?

You will be asked to complete an oral/or written exercise and be interviewed by a professional staff member. The entire process takes about an hour. Some of the qualities screened for include dependability, emotional maturity, stability, absence of harsh or

judgmental attitudes, and personal insight. Information on your application will be verified by a background check. Three personal references must also be provided. All of the information you give us is held confidential.

What happens if I'm accepted?

Once accepted, volunteers will receive approximately 30 hours of training. Topics include Rape Trauma Syndrome, Offender Profiles, Medical Procedures, Suicide Intervention, and Communication and Counseling Techniques. Trainees must complete all training before they will be allowed to serve in an on-call capacity.

What's expected of me once I finish training?

Because the Crisis Center makes a considerable investment in training volunteers, a minimum commitment of one year's service from the date of graduation is asked from each volunteer in return. Rape Response volunteers are asked to take two 12-hour on-call shifts per month. While on call, a volunteer goes about her normal routine outside the Center and is only contacted if a victim requires her services. Following each on-call period, Rape Response volunteers will be contacted by a staff member to discuss calls, both to provide quality control of services delivered to victims and to provide the volunteer with support and continuing education for the many varied situations she may encounter. Paperwork must be completed and turned in to the Center within 24 hours following completion of an on-call shift. All information about cases must be held in the strictest confidence.