

Illinois Rape Victims Speak Out: A Statewide Evaluation of Illinois Rape Crisis Centers

February 2011

Executive Summary

Authors: Dr. Sherry Falsetti and Dr. Alesia Hawkins of the Division of Health Policy and Social Science Research, Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of Illinois, Rockford.

This study evaluates outcomes of rape crisis center services to rape victims and their families in Oct. 2010. **The survey of 1,245 clients showed:**

Adults: n = 771

- 98.7% of adults would use rape crisis center services again
- 93.4% of adults feel it is very important that counseling and advocacy services are provided by one agency
- 88.6% of adults were very satisfied by the services they received
- 88.3% of adults feel it is very important that information is completely confidential and under the law
- 74.5% of adults reported improvements in coping skills after seeking services
- 66.4% of adults reported improvements in their significant relationships

Adolescents: n = 283

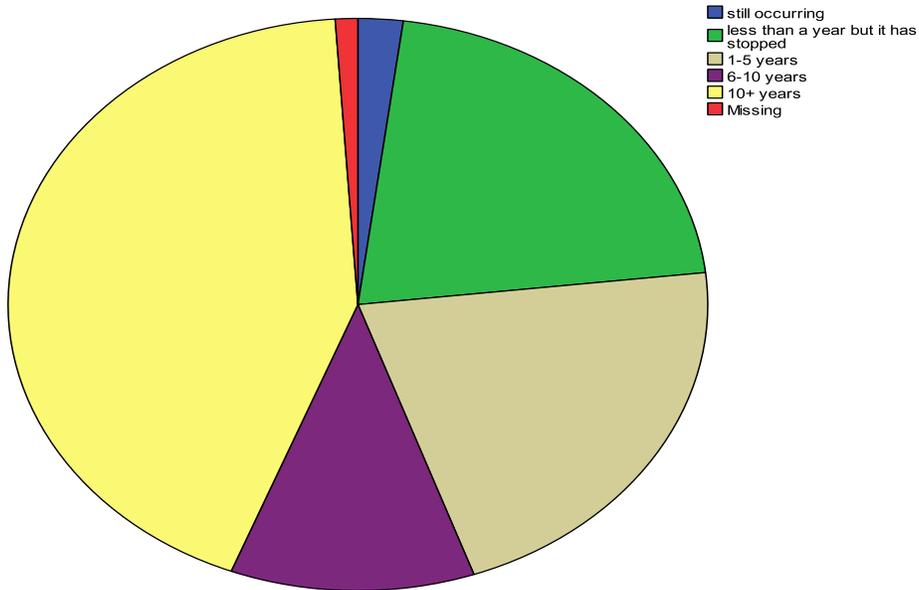
- 91.7% of adolescents would use rape crisis center services again
- 82.2% of adolescents say their behavior has improved since receiving services
- 77.2% of adolescents feel better about themselves after receiving services
- 64.9% of adolescents feel their relationships with friends/classmates have improved

Children: n = 191

- 99.5% of parents/guardians would take their children to a rape crisis center again
- 94.6% of parents/guardians felt it was very important that services were confidential
- 80.7% of parents/guardians observed positive changes in their children's behavior after receiving services from rape crisis centers
- 64.9% of parents/guardians felt their relationship with their child improved after the child received services

Counseling Services were used by:

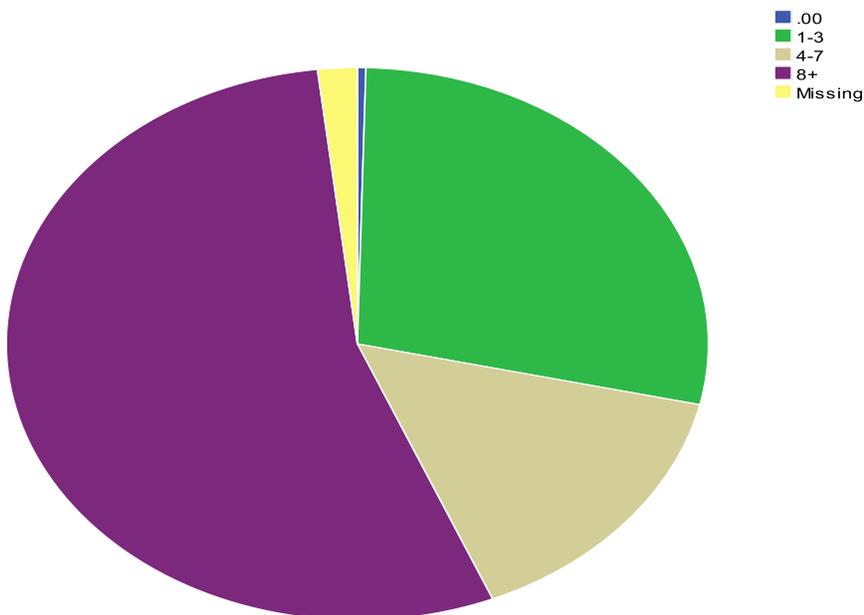
- 95% of adults clients
- 94% of adolescent clients
- 96% of child clients



Graph 1: Time since Abuse/Assault

Many victims of sexual assault wait for many years after an incident of sexual assault to seek help.

- Results of this survey found that almost half (43%) of victims waited 12 years or more to seek services.
- Another 21% reported that the abuse had occurred less than a year ago.
- Another 22% reported that the abuse had taken place 1-5 years ago.



Graph 2: No. of contacts with rape crisis center

The majority of respondents had eight or more contacts with rape crisis centers.

For a complete copy of the report please e-mail Sean Black at sblack@icasa.org or call 217-753-4117.

Recommendations

The results of this study indicate how important rape crisis centers and the unique services they provide are to adult, adolescent and child victims of sexual assault. In order to encourage immediate consideration of some of the critical issues relevant to *Illinois Rape Victims Speak Out: A Statewide Evaluation of Illinois Rape Crisis Centers*, the Division of Health Policy and Social Science Research, University of Illinois, Rockford offers the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION ONE: *In order to assure that the rape victims of Illinois receive the services they need, continued and adequate funding of ICASA rape crisis centers is necessary.*

Rape crisis centers are unique. First, their services are specialized for sexual assault survivors. Providers at rape crisis centers receive specialized training and carry *absolute privilege*. Rape crisis centers are also different because they provide not only counseling but 24-hour crisis hotlines, medical advocacy and legal advocacy for sexual assault survivors. In essence, rape crisis centers provide the full spectrum of services needed by rape victims. Not adequately funding such services could cost our state far more in lost wages, medical costs, decreased participation in the criminal justice system, and mental and physical illness.

RECOMMENDATION TWO: *Illinois must increase efforts to maintain the coalition that oversees rape crisis centers. It is only through an agency such as ICASA that services for victims can be effectively coordinated across the state.*

ICASA's oversight of Illinois rape crisis centers provides many advantages to both rape victims and rape crisis centers. For rape victims, ICASA ensures that anyone in our state who is a rape victim can access services. ICASA works with local rape crisis centers to establish and enforce comprehensive service standards. ICASA's capacity to convene and engage the centers in peer-based development of standards and peer review of grant applications and progress reports, creates a unique opportunity. Through ICASA, Illinois is able to develop and assess a statewide sexual assault services network that is informed by the thirty years of direct experience in the field.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: *Illinois' elected leaders, its criminal justice system, and its victim service agencies should carefully consider the findings and implications of this report.*

Results of this report provide overwhelming support for ICASA and rape crisis centers in Illinois. Sexual assault victims reported that they chose to receive services at a rape crisis center because of the specialized training of the staff. Those who received services reported significant improvement in many life areas that assisted them in being successful at school and work and in their relationships.