

## Role of the Hotline/Helpline in Serving Survivors of CSA

Presented by:  
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Resource Sharing Project  
  
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### Today's Objectives

After this session, you will be able to:

- Identify how the hotline/helpline is a valuable resource to survivors of CSA.
- Utilize strategies for effective, supportive advocacy over the phone.



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### Who is in the room?

How do you identify?

- advocate
- medical personal
- law enforcement
- prosecution
- technical assistance provider
- other

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How do survivors of CSA currently use your hotline/helpline?

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What is the role of the hotline/helpline?



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Connection to our Services

- Survivors of all ages deserve services that are survivor centered and trauma informed.
- The hotline/helpline is an entry point.



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### Connection to our Services

- Share information anonymously
- “Test” sharing experience
- Power to end the call
- Can talk anytime
- Accessible

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### Connection to our Services

- **Specifically for rural survivors of CSA**
- **Access to resources and support**
- **Reduces isolation**
- **Share information anonymously**

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### A Trauma Informed Hotline/Helpline

- Survivors are invited to share as much or as little as they like.
- Survivors are invited to take their time; there are no caps on time.
- Survivors’ calls are responded to promptly; they are not required to leave a message or wait for a sexual assault specific advocate to return their call.
- Advocates listen to, re-empower, and re-connect survivors.



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### A Comprehensive Hotline/Helpline

- Crisis intervention
- Ongoing advocacy
- Wide range of callers



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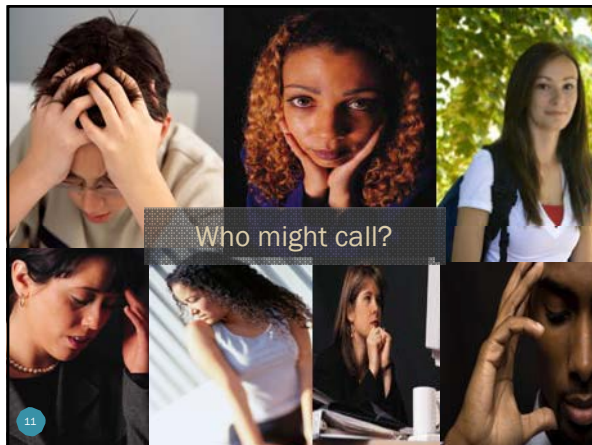
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Who might call?

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### What about children?

- Most often its friends or family
- OR
- Adolescent or adult survivor abused as a child
- Usually not an entry point
- Ongoing advocacy and comprehensive services



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### Reasons for Calling



Emotional Reactions

- Guilt, Shame, Self-Blame
- Embarrassment
- Fear, Distrust
- Sadness, Isolation
- Lack of Control, Anger
- Numbness
- Confusion
- Shock, Disbelief

13 From NSVRC Fact Sheet: Impacts of Sexual Violence  
[http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/NSVRC\\_Publication\\_FactSheet\\_Impact\\_of\\_sexual-violence.pdf](http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/NSVRC_Publication_FactSheet_Impact_of_sexual-violence.pdf)

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### Reasons for Calling



Psychological Reactions

- Nightmares, Flashbacks
- Depression
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Feeling Numb
- Feeling Jumpy (Hypervigilant)
- Anxiety
- Phobias
- Low Self-Esteem

14 From NSVRC Fact Sheet: Impacts of Sexual Violence  
[http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/NSVRC\\_Publication\\_FactSheet\\_Impact\\_of\\_sexual-violence.pdf](http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/NSVRC_Publication_FactSheet_Impact_of_sexual-violence.pdf)

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### Reasons for Calling



Physical Reactions

- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Increased startle response
- Concerns about physical safety
- Physical injury
- Concerns about contracting an STI or HIV
- Eating Disorders
- Substance Use or Abuse

15 From NSVRC Fact Sheet: Impacts of Sexual Violence  
[http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/NSVRC\\_Publication\\_FactSheet\\_Impact\\_of\\_sexual-violence.pdf](http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/NSVRC_Publication_FactSheet_Impact_of_sexual-violence.pdf)

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“I often don’t know what to offer survivors of CSA, it seems all I can do is listen, and that doesn’t feel like enough.”

~ advocate

A circular inset photograph of a woman with long dark hair, sitting at a table with her head buried in her hands, appearing distressed. The photo is framed with a white scalloped border.

Photo by nikkorsnapper

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How does this impact  
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### Impact on our Hotline/Helpline Work

- Amount, length, and frequency of calls
- Need for self-care
  - personal resiliency
- Remember we are helping, even when it doesn't feel like it
- You are a valuable resource!

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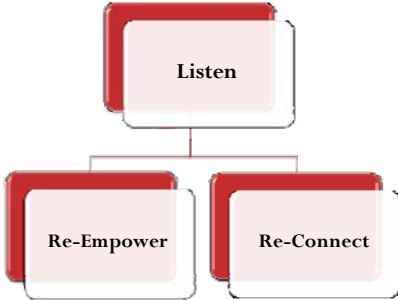
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### Advocates can



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graph TD; Listen[Listen] --- ReEmpower[Re-Empower]; Listen --- ReConnect[Re-Connect];
```

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### Active Listening

- Learned skill requiring
  - Energy
  - Concentration
  - Practice of specific techniques
- Comprehend, reflect, and respond to words and feelings



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### Active Listening Skills

- Being mindful of body language
- Staying calm and open minded
- Being self aware
- Believing the survivor's perspective



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What are some barriers to listening?

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### Barriers to Listening

- Rushing
- Giving advice
- Moving into problem solving mode
- Not being authentic
  - using canned lines or scripts
- Personal beliefs or triggers
- Judgment
- Sympathy



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### Active Listening with Kids



- Not all kids tell about their abuse in the same way
- Ask questions to clarify meaning
  - Don't assume you know what they mean.
- Be honest and sincere
- Remember to not give advice

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### Re-Empower

- Stabilize
  - Their reactions and feelings are normal
  - Safety plan
  - Use grounding strategies



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### Re-Empower

- Validate
  - their value and rights
  - feelings about the abuse
  - strengths and courage
  - ability to heal
  - sense of power and self-worth
  - empathy, not sympathy



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### Re-Connect



- Explore options
- Identify support
- Identify resources

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A person who is heard feels understood, cared about, connected, and hopeful.

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Photo by celestria

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## Things to Consider

As you work to enhance your hotline/helpline services for survivors of CSA.



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## Confidentiality



- Are there limits to the level of confidentiality that you can provide?
- What are the mandatory reporting requirements for your state?
- What is the potential impact on your hotline/helpline services?

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## Name

- How do you refer to this service/name this service?
  - crisis line, hotline vs. helpline, support line
- What does the name of your service communicate to the community about the purpose of this service or who it is for?



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### Multilingual Access



- How are you going to ensure multilingual access – including the Deaf community?

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### Training

- What are the training needs of staff and volunteers?
  - Initial training
  - Agency orientation
  - On-going training
  - Topics



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### Technology



- How can we use technology to reach survivors of CSA?
  - Text line
  - Online
- Are there any ethical considerations?

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## Thank You!

- Valerie Davis [valerie@iowacasa.org](mailto:valerie@iowacasa.org)



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## Let's keep the conversation going!

- *Cultivating Possibilities*, a FREE national conference for OVW Rural Grantees on sexual assault services in dual/multi-service advocacy agencies, is coming in May, 2014.
- Check out <http://resourcesharingproject.org/rural-sexual-assault-services> for information on *Cultivating Possibilities*, free webinars on rural sexual assault services, and other publications and resources.
- Get in touch with us about your rural questions or thoughts:  
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