

# Developing a Sexual Abuse Nursing Team for a Michigan Healthcare System

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## PURPOSE

- To initiate a Sexual Abuse Response Team (SART) for forensic evidence collection within a hospital system
- Specifically, this SART development will focus on training sexual abuse nurses within a healthcare system in the metro Detroit, Michigan area
- Organizations, like HAVEN (an organization for sexual abuse & domestic violence in Oakland County MI), provide on-call, around-the-clock availability for Safe Therapeutic Assault Response Team (START) Nurses to designated facilities for forensic exams (Beaumont, 2019).
- This educational training proposal will focus on the development of a program to train the healthcare system's own nurses to become Sexual Assault/Abuse Nurse Examiners (SANEs) for their own cases

## OUTCOMES

- Due to the nature of this educational proposition, there is no definitive way to measure outcomes at this time.
- Post initial education & clinical setting check-offs, SANE nurses voluntarily sign up for 12-hour call shifts.
- A proposed goal is for this training among the employees in the health system, & reevaluated at the 3-month, 6-month, & 1-year benchmarks after initiation
  - a) the system will reevaluate the effectiveness of this format and adjust the standards as needed
  - b) implement best care standards & evidence-based practice according to Michigan law & IAFN protocols
  - c) be able to properly follow set standards & propose written policies to formulate a sexual assault protocol algorithm
  - d) establish consistency in care to better appraise if program expansion to other facilities.
- Feedback will be openly welcomed from forensic trained nursing staff, patients who were treated, community advocates, and educators.

## BACKGROUND

- Michigan has the 4th-highest rape rate in the US: 7,235 reported cases. Rape is especially prevalent in Detroit, MI (World Population Review, 2021)
  - Michigan State Police statistics indicated 11,188 offenses related to sexual assault were reported to law enforcement in 2016 (Michigan.gov, 2018)
  - Crime rates continue to decrease in other offenses, except for rape (World Population Review, 2021)
  - 2017-2018 saw a 28% increase in rape cases (World Population Review, 2021); 697 cases increased to 894 in 1 year
- Sexual abuse impacts a person's mental, physical, emotional, & social state (Focht, 2019)
  - Traumatic memories, behavior/personality changes, mental health issues, fatigue, & substance abuse can result in survivors
- To decrease reoccurrence of sexual violence SANEs must provide support: recognize the issue, advocate for vulnerable populations, and provide the initial treatment, and resources to promote recovery
- Forensic nurses are responsible for identifying outcomes & providing a plan of care (American Nurses Association [ANA], 2017). SANE programs & proper training are essential.

## CONCLUSION

- Large health systems have become an integral part of patient care for all health services
- Establishing an education plan to train sexual abuse/assault nurses to recognize injuries, provide empathy & support, and access to other services to assist patients affected by sexual violence is imperative to the metro Detroit community
- It is my hope that this educational training format will help the MI healthcare network to:
  - a) implement, trial, & improve the start of a forensic nursing program
  - b) assist victims with immediate needs after sexual trauma
  - c) instill nursing care that will further expand upon the integrity and excellence of the health care system

## METHODS

- Nurses will train at a central, corporate office, then designated to 3 facilities (suburbs near Royal Oak, Dearborn, & Grosse Point) to begin.
- Patients may transport themselves, EMS may transport to nearest facility, or other hospitals in-network can transfer within 30mins to the nearest facility with SANE staff available.
- Evaluation of the intended training & education objective for SART team response implementation:
  - a) Likert-scale evaluation of training & readiness
  - b) Educational skills stations to practice
  - c) Written examination (2 attempts for 75% or higher)
  - d) Free text area for suggestions to improve development of the SART response after the 40-hour extensive training
- Due to the nature of this education improvement, an Institutional Review Board approval was neither sought, approved, nor necessary.

## RELEVANCE TO NURSING

- Sexual abuse nurses bridge the gap to advocate for victims and assist law enforcement in the collection of forensic evidence, affiliated injuries, and a narrative history to build a better case.
- For health systems in places like Michigan, where rape percentages are high & resources are minimal, it's important to have reliable & trustworthy SANE nurses to learn these standards and implement them into practice.
- SANEs are the most important resource when the patient needs assistance & should act according to their nursing practice & the laws where they practice. Therefore, this takes extensive training and recurrent education for forensic-related specialties.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



### The Integrated Practice Model for Forensic Nursing Science

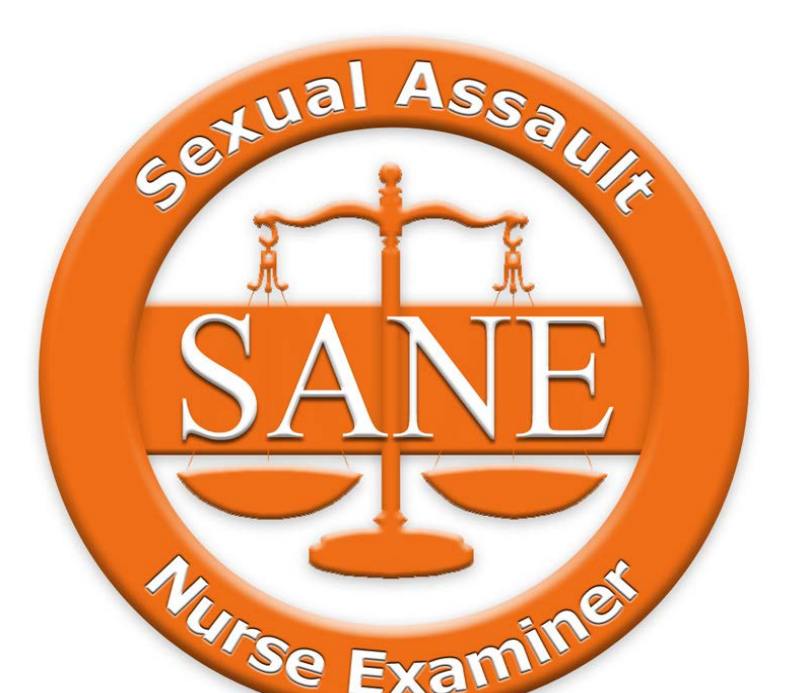
synthesizes the multidisciplinary and multisectorial framework for the accountability in forensic nursing, forensic science, and criminal justice overall (Lynch, 2011, p. 74).

### SART Coordinated Response to Sexual Assault



### The SART Coordinated Response to Sexual Assault Model

emphasizes the multidisciplinary approach to response of sexual abuse. The model generalizes the basic duties of hospitals, victim advocates, law enforcement & prosecutors (End Violent Encounters, 2021).





# References

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