

Beginnings Beginnings



May 2010

Rape and Abuse Crisis Center

All Services Provided Free-of-Charge

CRISIS INTERVENTION
24-hour hotline and
in-person assistance
(701) 293-7273
(800) 344-7273

ADVOCACY
Medical, social
service, and legal

COUNSELING
Individual and
group support

EMERGENCY HOUSING
Temporary safe shelter

**COMMUNITY EDUCATION
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE
Systems Monitoring
CourtWatch Program



**rape and abuse
crisis center**
advocacy, counseling, education.

Intervention with Child Sexual Abuse Victims

How will sexual abuse affect a child?

Children have different limitations and strengths, and no one will know for sure how any child will react to sexual victimization. Although all children are affected in some way by abuse, there are many factors which play a role in how significantly affected a child will be. Once it has been determined that a child has been sexually abused (or there is a strong suspicion, but it can't be proven), it is important to get help for that child.

What is counseling?

Many times children are fearful or embarrassed about going to counseling because they don't know what to expect. A counselor's job is not to judge a child or his/her family, but to help them through the healing process.

A counselor will address several issues during the course of counseling with a child including building trust, dealing with feelings such as shame, guilt, and sadness, and issues of body image. A counselor will also help the child deal with any possible court processes and help the child understand that he/she is NOT responsible for the abuse or for what happened to the family or perpetrator after the abuse was disclosed.

What is the parents' role?

It is important that the counselor and the parents let the child know that he/she is believed, and the abuse was not his/her fault. It is also important that the counselor and the parents let the child go at his/her own pace in discussing the abuse and its aftermath. Parents and other family members are also encouraged to receive support to deal with a child's victimization.

When will counseling end?

There is no defined time period for counseling. Healing from child sexual abuse can take a long time. Even if a child receives initial counseling and support and starts to feel better, he/she may need to seek counseling in the future. As a child ages and reaches various developmental milestones, he/she may need to go back to counseling. New issues may arise when the child reaches puberty, becomes sexually active, marries, or has children. Going back to counseling does not mean the initial counseling failed. It means some issues may not have presented themselves at that time.



“Is there a more unlikely setting than a family gathering during the holidays?”



Crisis Intervention

Advocacy

Counseling

Support Groups

Education

Vision

We will be a leader in promoting and creating a society free of personal abuse.

Purpose

We offer hope, education, and support to those affected by personal abuse.

Mission

To offer crisis intervention, advocacy, counseling, and education to all persons affected by sexual and domestic violence and to provide prevention programs to create a society free of personal abuse.

Values

We will fulfill our mission through respect, acceptance, and client-centered collaboration.

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www.raccfm.com

Likely many who listened to Heather deliver her keynote address at this year’s *Kids Are Our Business Breakfast*, I wondered, “how could this happen?” After all, Heather is a school teacher and a trained Advocate. If one of Heather’s children was sexually abused, how could any child be safe?

In so many cases of child sexual abuse, the victim knows the abuser. This was the case in Heather’s story. Could there be a more unlikely setting than a family gathering during the holidays?

As we look into this question, we also need to look at possible reasons why abuse happens. Perpetrators are opportunistic and manipulative. They commonly have a high need to be in control. Denial keeps them from having to look at themselves and the consequences of their behavior. They lack impulse control. The victims—especially young victims—are often instructed, “Don’t tell anyone about this” followed by being told either no one will believe them or by being threatened.

Heather was in-tune to her child’s behavior and knew how to respond and what questions to ask. Her vigilance prevented her child from further abuse. The cover story in this newsletter is focused on intervention in cases of child sexual abuse. This is the kind of information that Heather used in helping her child.

In recent weeks I’ve had the opportunity to attend seminars in our community featuring two internationally-known experts in the field of violence prevention. Chuck Derry and Jackson Katz challenge our attitudes and long-held beliefs regarding family violence and sexual assault and warn us not to become desensitized to these issues.

We are grateful to Heather for tapping into a source of courage to share her story with the nearly 500 people who attended the *Kids Are Our Business Breakfast*. I wish I could have polled attendees before the event—I predict most would have believed that the majority of child sexual abuse crimes are committed by strangers.

Inspired by Heather, Chuck Derry, Jackson Katz, and those who reach out to us, we’re going to be a source of knowledge and a place of help, healing, and hope. We’re going to need allies to help us build on this momentum. Read your copy of *Beginnings*—then pass it on. Contact us about becoming a Volunteer Advocate...or a Sustaining Donor. And, most importantly, believe a child if he or she tells you “something is wrong.”

Kids Are Our Business Breakfast—A 20-year Success Story

Delivered by Heather, the keynote address at our April 21 *Kids Are Our Business Breakfast* was a powerful story of child sexual abuse perpetrated against one of Heather's children. The nearly 500 people in attendance sat in silence as Heather explained that her child was abused by an older child at a family holiday celebration. Heather's personal story was a reminder that child sexual abuse can happen to any family at any time.



RAPE AND ABUSE CRISIS CENTER

The irony in this year's event is that Heather is one of RACC's trained advocates. Heather has offered help to so many others in our community, but last year was a time that the roles were reversed. Heather's family needed the help that she was so accustomed to giving to others in her role as an Advocate. We are pleased that Heather's family is healing as a result of the help they received at RACC.

While Heather graciously thanked RACC for the help she received, our sincerest thanks goes out to Heather for sharing her family's story and for her long-term commitment to helping others. By sharing her story at the 20th annual *Kids Are Our Business Breakfast*, Heather helped RACC raise \$48,000, a record amount for the *Kids Are Our Business* appeal. 44 sponsors' tables were sold this year, an increase of ten over the 2009 *Breakfast*. Two of the table sponsors were Royal Jewelers and Concorde General Agency, supporters of the *Breakfast* in each of its twenty years. In addition to these two long-term sponsors, our gratitude goes out to the other 42 sponsors (please see www.raccfm.com for list of sponsors), Dakota Medical Foundation for their \$2,500 matching grant, and everyone who attended RACC's signature event or made a contribution to support RACC's children's program.

What Can I Do to Help?

As you might expect, funding in the non-profit world has some noticeable ups and downs. Our Sustaining Donors Program is designed to level out and stabilize our funding with reliable, predictable contributions. Sustaining Donors pledge monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, or annual contributions to RACC. The pledge amount is up to the individual donor—your commitment allows our staff to plan more precisely for the future and prepare accurate budgets. These pledges can help persuade other funders to join you in supporting the Rape and Abuse Crisis Center by showing widespread, long-term commitment to our efforts in the community.

Help us to build stability into this community's crisis agency. Contact Lynn Sperial, Director of Development, by phone at 701-293-7273 or by email at lynn@raccfm.com and ask her how to enroll as a sustaining donor.

The 2010 Partners in Peace bracelets are now available for sale.

The cost is \$20 and proceeds go toward the operation of the Rape and Abuse Crisis Center.

Bracelets are available at our downtown office.

Thank you for your support!





rape and abuse crisis center

advocacy, counseling, education.

PO Box 2984 · Fargo, ND 58108

We have updated our mailing list. If your information is incorrect or you would prefer not to be on our mailing list, please drop us a note at info@raccfm.com
Thank you!

Board of Directors

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Calendar of events

Volunteer Advocate Training

Saturday, September 25 – Tuesday, October 19
Contact Nancy at nancy@raccfm.com for details

Cherries for Charity sponsored by the Cosmopolitan Club and Hornbacher's Foods. Dates to be announced.

Lobster & Lefse sponsored by the FM AM Rotary Club.
Thursday and Friday, August 12 & 13
at Newman Outdoor Field.

Take Back the Night Rally and March,
Tuesday, September 21 originating at
Oak Grove Park Main Shelter

Harvest Moon Fling, Friday, October 15
at Courtyard by Marriott, Moorhead

24-Hour Crisis Line

701.293.7273 • 800.344.7273