**Procedure: RAPE / ST. FRANCIS**

**NON-EMERGENCY:**

If an incoming call is of a NON-EMERGENCY nature, such as inquiring about the various services provided by St. Francis, the Crisis helpline Specialist should explain to the caller that **we are only an EMERGENCY After-Hours answering services and that they should call again on the next business day.**

**Do NOT take ANY messages.**

**RAPE / EMERGENCY:**

[An “**emergency**” would be any caller who is currently in crisis over a sexual assault, either ***recent* OR *re-lived*,** and wants/needs to speak to a Rape counselor.]

**If a caller is in crisis and requests to speak with a qualified Specialized Rape Counselor, the Crisis helpline Specialist is** to take the following steps:

1. Assess the caller's safety and let them know they have reached CONTACT and we are the Emergency Answering Service for St. Francis.
2. Take their FIRST name (But> **ONLY if they are comfortable giving it to you)**
3. Get their phone number, REPEAT IT BACK FOR ACCURACY and remind the caller that the phone needs to be set to accept blocked calls.
4. Let the caller know that you are going to call the on duty Emergency St. Francis Counselor and they will call them back immediately.

**\*\*VERY IMPORTANT:**

*In an 2018 Ongoing -presentation from St. Francis, the Rape Advocate requested that when at all possible, it is preferred to forward the victims contact information to Back up as soon as possible, so an Advocate can directly reach out to the sexual assault victim immediately.*

St. Francis has advised that it has been found to be ***MORE*** traumatic for the victim to repeat their story, so **the CONTACT Worker should NOT attempt to question or create a bond with the victim, *unless* they are ABSOLUTELY reluctant to speak to a St. Francis Advocate.**

***General Background Information* on the St. Francis Sexual Assault Advocate Process:**

*The following information is for the* CONTACT Helpline Specialists’ *knowledge* ***ONLY****. This information is* ***NOT*** *to be passed along to the caller, but is provided to HS,* **ONLY** *to gain a deeper understanding of the overall process that is taken by St. Francis Advocates. WE, as CONTACT Helpline Specialists are* ***NOT*** *educated on the legalities involved in Sexual Assaults, so it is* ***CRITICAL*** *that we do* ***NOT*** *disperse ANY advice unless we have been given specific direction of an Advocate.*

*Often, people believe that once they go to the hospital and an advocate is called, everything is legalized, and police are* automatically *involved. THAT IS INCORRECT.*

1. **The Rape Advocate will meet the victim** at the hospital to console and comfort them. However, just because the victim goes to the hospital, **it does NOT mean that a report MUST be filed.**
2. **ALL services are FREE OF CHARGE & CONFIDENTIAL to victims of Sexual Assault** . *This is important to understand, because this means that the victim* should *NOT recieve any bills in the mail, nor is their insurance involved.* ***EVERYTHING****, including counseling is 100% free and confidential.*
3. With support and assistance from the *St. Francis Advocate,* any action taken from that point forward, **will be solely at the discretion and** **decision OF THE VICTIM**.They are able to walk into any hospital and state:

“I was raped and I want a rape kit and to be tested for STDs and pregnancy.”

*This when the victim has all the power handed back to them, which was taken from the rape.* ***(Utilizing the phrase of “taking back power” is very important, as the victim OFTEN feels broken and powerless)***

1. If a victim chooses to go to the hospital and does not wish to press charges, they will **NOT** be forced to do so. HOWEVER, they will still be able to be tested and given medication to avoid STDs and pregnancy.
2. If the victim requests, the police will take the report and bag all the evidence. However, no further action will be taken UNLESS THE RAPE VICTIM REQUESTS legal action to be taken.

\* VIP: The police will hold all evidence gathered from the rape kit for a period of five (5) years. (*This way if the victim chooses in 3 years that they now want to press charges all the evidence is preserved and they can go forward at that point.)*