



TAKE BACK THE POWER

The truth about sexual violence



RAPE CRISIS OFFERS HEALING

POORLY-FUNDED CENTER STILL PROVIDES SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS

The Rape Crisis Intervention and Prevention center, based in Chico, has been providing desperately-needed help to victims of sexual assault in Butte, Glenn and Tehama counties for the last four decades.

But don't let the name fool you—their free help is not just for rape victims. They offer assistance to any man, woman or child who has experienced the trauma of unwanted sexual imposition recently or in the past. This includes stalking, harassment and all forms of sexual violence. The center, which is struggling financially due to major cutbacks, even extends their services to friends, family or associates of victims in need of medical, security and psychological assistance.

Though most victims don't report sexual crimes due to the shame and shock, contacting Rape Crisis through their 24 hour crisis line (530-342-RAPE) can be the start to a new lease on life.

“No matter what, we'll keep the doors open.”

Hope Aguirre, executive director at Rape Crisis, is a living testament to this. She was sexually abused as a child and for years afterward lived in silent fear. At 32 her therapist referred her to Rape Crisis, where she took advantage of the organization's counseling, education and support groups. Her life has changed completely.

“I'm a different person today,” she said. “I'm much more outspoken and not afraid of my own shadow. I tell everyone, the day you come to us for help is the day your whole outlook on life will change for the better.”

Rocky Cruz, Rape Crisis assistant executive director and program director, heartily agrees—she was born into a family of addiction, sexual and domestic violence in the early 1950s. Her home life got so bad, she ran away at the tender age of 13 and found no support at the time. It was safer on the streets than at home.

“For many victims, the sexual assault is like they were murdered, then they become the walking dead,” said Cruz, who is now a gregarious and welcoming personality at Rape Crisis. She credits her turnaround to the counseling she received. “I went from being a victim to a survivor to a thriver.”

Chico's Rape Crisis center was founded in the garage of one of four Chico State students who took the initiative in 1974, inspired during the early years of the modern women's movement. Word of their sorely-needed services quickly spread and soon financial contributions from Chico State and the local sheriff's department allowed them to help victims in five counties: Butte, Plumas, Tehama, Glenn and Colusa.

Soon Rape Crisis centers were springing up all over California and the state contributed financially for the first time in 1978 with \$200,000, according to Linda Bowen of California Emergency Management Agency, which oversees state backing for the centers.

In the years since, Cruz and Aguirre have seen many changes, but most distressing is the drop-off in funding due to the Great Recession and a shift to financing of Rape Crisis programs. State financing for Rape Crisis centers is only \$45,000 for the entire state, said Cruz. She also noted there are no longer donations from Chico State.

But Aguirre shows steely determination.

“No matter what, we'll keep the doors open,” she said. “We'll keep thinking positively and believing in our mission to help victims/survivors.”

On the positive side, the City of Chico still contributes approximately \$23,000 per year to help local residents, Cruz said. She is also thankful the center has seen an upswing in volunteers from Chico State and Butte College in recent years.

In the meantime, Cruz is still thrilled to be assisting those in such desperate need.

“I love this job,” Cruz gushed. “There's a saying that if you can find a job you love you'll never have to work a day in your life. That's totally me.”

MAKE THE CALL.

Whether you live in Butte, Tehama or Glenn counties, a Rape Crisis center is nearby and open to calls. Remember, the biggest step is often the first—if you have been sexually violated in any way, past or present, don't hesitate to seek help. Call one of your local Rape Crisis centers.

BUTTE/GLENN COUNTY: (530) 891-1331 TEHAMA COUNTY: (530) 529-3980



SPREADING LIKE A DISEASE

A FAMILY RELATES THE HORROR
OF INTERGENERATIONAL INCEST

"As a toddler, I remember going to the swimming hole with my family," said Jan, an elderly woman who has lived in the Chico area her entire life. "My father's brother would take me to the pickup and perform oral sex on me. I'm just barely walking, just at two or three. It was like that the rest of my life with him, for as long as I can remember."

Jan and her six siblings were continually singled out by adult relatives throughout their childhood, taken from their beds at night to perform hideous incestuous acts. The abuse—which extended to her brothers, as well—was so frequent and commonplace, she was 16 years old before she realized having sex with her uncle wasn't normal.

"None of us ever said anything about it to our parents, and I don't know why."

As an adult, her haunting memories were made all the more painful when she realized her brothers, in turn, had become child molesters as well. Jan's daughters, Sue and Kim, were abused in the same manner from an early age at the hands of her brother, who was recently sentenced to 25 years in prison for possession of child pornography.

"He did it anally with me, and he covered my mouth," Kim said, fighting tears.

The proper term for this family's story is "intergenerational incest," abuse that spreads through a family from one generation to the next in a cyclic fashion.

"We didn't get the full value of a good parent because of what [our mother] went through, we didn't have that luxury," Sue said. "And now we haven't been good parents. We're praying our kids will be a little better."

The three women, all adults now, have struggled with alcoholism and found forming stable relationships difficult.

"Everybody's life is affected in some way—your children and your husband, it's all connected and all of your relationships will get messed up," Kim said. "You need to get help. Thank God for the Rape Crisis center."

They have been receiving treatment from the Rape Crisis center as a group and on an individual basis, maintaining that talking about their experiences with counselors is the best medicine. Jan is the only of her siblings to openly acknowledge the abuse, which has drawn a divisive line in the family. She feels that by keeping their memories locked inside, her brothers and sister are preventing themselves from beginning the healing process.

"None of us ever said anything about it to our parents, and I don't know why," Jan said. "It was never discussed in our house, no one ever told us, 'Your body is yours, don't let anyone touch you like that. That's you.' There were seven of us, and none of us ever said a word to our parents."

"They don't want to lift that burden, but we have always talked about it," Sue said. "Our nieces, aunts, uncles they don't have good relationships. Life in our family is a façade."

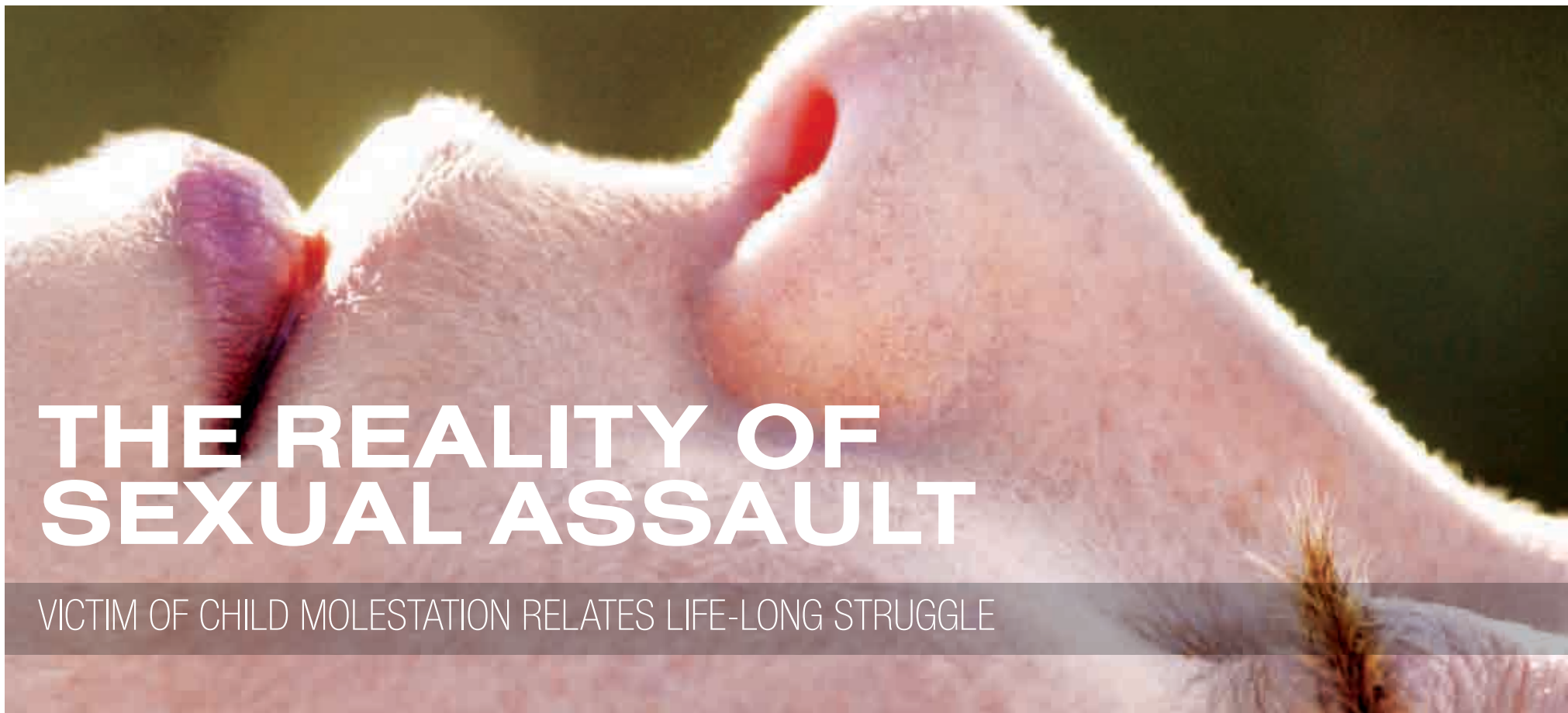
Jan illustrated the powerful sense of shame and guilt that goes hand-in-hand with rape and molestation and the equally profound sense of relief that comes with telling the story.

"It was only recently I was able to talk to my cousin about what [my uncle] did to me," she said. "She told me my father did the same things to her when she was a child. We were both crying—I was crying for her, she was crying for me. And here we are, in our seventies, talking about it for the first time."

COUNSELING AT RAPE CRISIS

If you feel you have been sexually violated in any way in the past or present—including rape, assault, harassment or adults molested as children—the knowledgeable and friendly counselors at Rape Crisis are willing to lend an ear.

- Best deal in town—counseling is free!
- Open to children 12 and up, younger on a case-by-case basis.
- Open to any gender.
- Open to any sexual orientation.
- For survivors, 6 counseling sessions per issue.
- For significant others (spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends, friends, family, co-workers) 6 counseling sessions per issue.
- Counselors: Cindy B., Cindy D., Michelle, Jenny, Yvonne, Marcia, Cinda, Carina, Ginger and Rose



THE REALITY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

VICTIM OF CHILD MOLESTATION RELATES LIFE-LONG STRUGGLE

"I'm a proud lesbian, and I was born that way," Nina says, speaking slowly and purposefully, staring hard out of her one good eye. "When I was two, you couldn't put a dress on me. When I was fifteen, I came out. I say that because while I was sexually assaulted at a young age by a male family member, that's not why I'm a lesbian. I want to make sure that's clear."

Nina S., a 30-year old volunteer at the Rape Crisis Center whose real name is being withheld at her request, has suffered from a common misconception her entire life—children who are sexually assaulted or raped will become homosexual adults. While she suspects being molested as a child is at the root of her long-running trust issues, struggles with addiction, self-destructive behavior, suicide attempts, the development of her debilitating attachment disorder and an apparent inability to love herself, she staunchly maintains she was a lesbian from day one.

"I was in small town Oregon, with small-town minds. I was this masculine, or more," she says, gesturing to herself. Indeed, it's easy to imagine Nina as the consummate elementary school tomboy—underneath a cowboy hat is a shock of orange hair, buzzed at the sides and long on top.

It is immediately apparent that Nina has suffered, physically and emotionally, since her formative years. What skin isn't covered by heavy men's clothing is covered in long, white scars from cutting herself repeatedly since high school. Behind a pair of glasses is one eye that alternates between fiery intensity and a deep sadness.

She lost her other eye attempting suicide by shooting herself in the head at 21 years old.

"All my life, I've been uncomfortable with being a woman," she said. "And I'm trying to become more comfortable with who I was born, and I don't think it's because I was born in the wrong body, biologically. I'm not comfortable with my body and my sexuality—not because I'm not cool with my lesbianism, just the idea of sex."

"I don't know if a lot of people feel like sexual abuse, assault and rape is a reality, but it has been to me."

Nina was exposed to the dark side of human sexuality as a mere toddler.

"My mom would take us to these teaching houses just full of people who are members of this fellowship, as they call it," she said with tremendous difficulty. "That was total access to me by people I can't name. When you're two or three, you don't really form complete memories of things."

The details of her second sexual assault—this time by her uncle—don't come readily to mind. She estimates it occurred between the ages of three and seven. It was around this same time she started "acting out" in school, flying into aggressive rages and breaking down emotionally, drawing the ire of teachers and school administration. She was already out of favor with her Catholic school principal for refusing to wear dresses and keep her hair long.

"I'm angry now, because nobody stopped and looked into it and just punished me," she said. As a teenager she was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. "The key criteria are real or imagined fear of abandonment and black and white thinking, so someone's either on your shit list or you're worshipping them."

Nina finds solace in volunteering at Suicide Prevention Education Intervention and the Rape Crisis center, a place where she has clearly established friendships with the counselors and has reached a level of comfort that has otherwise been lacking in her life.

"I care about this organization," she said. "These people are awesome and they're doing a good thing. I don't know if a lot of people feel like sexual abuse, assault and rape is a reality, but it has been to me."

24-HOUR CRISIS LINE: (530) 342-RAPE (7273)

PART OF THE WORLD AGAIN

RAPE SURVIVOR RELIVES NIGHTMARE

It's a miracle that Susan Bardin is alive today. Her life, however, is far from what it was prior to being beaten, raped and left for dead at the bottom of a 35-foot ravine nearly 12 years ago. The 56-year-old Chico resident says things will likely never be the same, and her account of what happened on that frigid winter night is equally chilling.

On Nov. 30, 2000, Bardin stopped into Duffy's Tavern for a drink while on her way to her daughter's house. It wasn't the best of circumstances—she had just been kicked out of her home by an abusive boyfriend. A man approached Bardin's table carrying a pitcher of beer. They began talking and eventually went outside to have a cigarette.

That man—Glen Clark, a convicted sex offender who was out on early release and had been brought up on rape charges twice before—invited Bardin to sit inside his van to smoke. Her first instinct was to not accept the invitation, but the chill on her skin (she recalls it being around 21 degrees) was too much. They smoked a joint, and things began getting uncomfortable as Clark's behavior became more erratic. This time Bardin went with her intuition and searched for the door handle in the back of the van. There wasn't one.

That's when Clark sucker-punched her in the temple and smashed a crowbar across Bardin's head. The van was parked across the street from the Chico city council building as people walked by. Bardin was out-cold, and eventually came to from the motion of the vehicle, which—unbeknownst to her—was now heading down a dark stretch of Highway 32 toward Forest Ranch.

"My body slid [across the floor of the van] in my own blood when he hit the brakes and I hit my head on the back door," Bardin recalls. "That's when I knew I was in trouble."

Clark pulled over and continued to beat her. Bardin says he beat her for almost an hour, calling her degrading names and making her repeat them back to him. When she refused, Clark strangled her and raped her, at one point using the crowbar, and shoved her down a 35-foot ravine—naked and left for dead. To this day Bardin isn't sure how she was able to climb out of the ravine that night.

"A woman kept telling me to get up. I don't know if it was a guardian angel, or an angel—I'm not very religious. But I followed the voice."

The two men who found her on the side of the road initially mistook her cries for those of a coyote. The damage to Bardin's face was so severe they couldn't tell if she was 16 or 60, only that she was female. When all was said and done, Bardin needed \$50,000 in surgery just to replace her teeth. She's still partially blind in her left eye, and contracted hepatitis C, which she struggles to deal with to this day.

Glen Clark is currently serving two life-sentences for rape. And Bardin—who moved to Chico from New Jersey in 1984—continues to take things day by day. She says Rape Crisis has been there when others haven't, and has helped her make sense of the ordeal.

"Don't let that other person eat you alive."

"They helped me stand up for myself," she explains. "I lost any strength that I had—I felt like a big nothing. You feel like you're being punished. You do learn to live with it. You just hold on to yourself. Don't let that other person eat you alive."

It hasn't been easy. Many of Bardin's friends abandoned her after the attack ("It scared them, they didn't know what to do"), and she continues a taxing drug treatment for hepatitis C. It's clear that a lot hinges on the next nine months. Bardin says if she can successfully get through her treatment, things could start looking up.

"It would mean the world to me—I wouldn't feel so fatalistic about things," she says. "I'd like to feel like a productive member of society, do some art and feel like I'm part of the world again."

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Senate Bill 534, signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown late last year, guarantees victims of sexual assault access to medical treatment and a forensic examination without having to participate in the criminal justice system. Previously, if a survivor did not cooperate with law enforcement and was unable to pay, they may not receive a forensic exam. Know your rights—if you are the victim of sexual assault, demand medical attention. The law took effect Jan. 1, 2012.

SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES



Darren Holley finds people are often surprised to discover he works as a volunteer at the Chico's Rape Crisis Center.

"A lot of people think it's strange, and I think that's because of the misconception that it's a women's issue," he said. "But it's not, this affects men, women and children of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds."

Holley has worked at the center since 2008, and admits he started solely to get credits towards the psychology degree he received from Chico State in 2009.

"Even after the class was over I found I was here for a totally different reason," he said. "I realized I was actually working for something, and this was a really important issue that a lot of people don't see. I didn't realize how common it was."

Now, Holley sees the world through different eyes.

"I didn't realize how common it was."

"It's really changed my relationships with people. Once I started doing this a lot of women, and some men, came to tell me about their experiences. They knew they could feel safe telling me something they'd kept inside and held back for a long time. I can't walk into a room now without thinking that, for every six women there, one has or will experience sexual assault at some point in their life."

Holley noted even the one-in-six statistic falls short, as so many assaults go unreported. He readily shared another number—only one-in-16 perpetrators spends any time behind bars.

"A lot of that is because of the stigma, people are afraid to report, or even discouraged to do so," he said. "A lot of officers will ask, 'Are you sure you want to go through with this?' which is a subtle discouragement. Sometimes nobody believes the victim, or they're afraid following through will be like reliving the trauma all over again."

Holley said another dangerous misconception is "the idea of the guy hiding in the bushes," because most rapes are committed by someone the victim knows. "Because they know each other, the perpetrator sometimes gets a different idea of where the boundaries are," he said, adding that alcohol is a big factor, impairing judgment on both sides. "The number one date rape drug isn't GHB or something like it, it's alcohol. Especially in a town like Chico, that's a huge factor. Legally, a person can't give consent if they're under the influence, and people need to understand that and quit using it as an excuse."

Holley said his favorite part of the job is education, when he visits area schools and juvenile halls. "I'd rather stop a problem before it happens than deal with the aftermath," he said. "The education isn't just teaching people how to keep themselves safe, but teaching people what's right and wrong, to respect boundaries and that no means no."

"People have been so desensitized," he said. "If you think of the term 'take advantage of,' what does it really mean? It's a softer way of saying rape. People need to understand that."

MYTHS & FACTS

MYTH: Women ask to be raped.

FACT: Rape is a violent and humiliating experience. Rapists use intimidation and threats to gain power over the intended victims. No one asks to experience the fear and trauma of rape.

MYTH: Only young, attractive girls get raped.

FACT: Rapists do not choose victims on the basis of appearance or age. Any woman can be raped. The reported age range of victims is from 2 days old to 103 years old.

MYTH: Rapists are strangers.

FACT: Studies show that 60 to 80 percent of rapists know their victims. Acquaintance rape and date rape are real dangers, especially for the vulnerable populations of teens and young adults.

MYTH: Rape is an impulsive act done for sexual gratification.

FACT: The majority of rapes are planned in advance, either by the rapist stalking the victim or waiting for a safe opportunity and then finding a victim. Sexual gratification is not the motive—rape is an act of anger and aggression in which sex is used as a weapon.

AN EAR TO THOSE IN NEED

"I was the kid who watched and listened to everything," said Megan Brightling, recalling what brought her to work as a Rape Crisis volunteer. "I was very observant and very bold."

"Even from a young age, I was aware that sexual assault was happening all around me," Brightling, a Chico State psychology student in her last semester, continued. She grew up in a small town where "everyone knew everybody's business, but no one would talk about what was happening."

Brightling recalls her first experience as a counselor, of sorts.

"The first time this issue came up was with a fellow student when I was in fifth grade," she said. "Everyone knew she had problems at home, but nobody bothered to ask her what they were. I asked, and she told me her dad had raped her. I tried to tell my parents about what was happening, and it was then I realized that even 'good' people who want to help others were unable to accept that my friend was being sexually violated by her father."



"Then, a year or so later, my male friend was called over to the same girl's house," Brightling continued. "Once she got him into her house, she forced him into a room with bars on the windows and forced him to have sex with her. She wanted to be able to tell everyone my male friend had

gotten her pregnant, instead of the reality that she was pregnant by her father. People have always talked to me, so counseling is a natural course for me to follow."

Brightling said some people find her outspoken nature discomfiting when talking about sexual violence, but she's found kinship and a spiritual home at Rape Crisis.

"Coming here I found other people who are also caring and outspoken, so it was kind of a homecoming for me. It's been very validating and empowering."

"We're encouraged to be people first and volunteers second, to commit to each case on a personal level," Brightling said. "There have to be boundaries, of course, but we don't remain distant and removed like in a lot of psychiatric work."

She explained that by making a human connection with survivors rather than taking a textbook approach to counseling, it allows the counselors to meet their clients in a respectful and honest place instead of simply checking a list of common problems experienced by survivors.

Brightling formerly worked as a volunteer with victims of domestic violence and has always lent a caring ear to those who need to open up about sensitive subjects, and said she didn't expect to be shocked by the things she'd encounter working with survivors of sexual violence. She was wrong.

"I was most surprised by the number of adults molested as children who are still being abused as adults by the same people who violated them as children. That speaks to the insidious and deep-seeded psychological trauma that results from sexual violence."

"Chico being a college town, people assume we'd mostly deal with what happens in the bars, with alcohol and date rape situations. But that's no more common than someone being raped by their father at home. This work brings an understanding of how prevalent sexual violence is and how devastating it is to those who experience it," Brightling said of her experience at Rape Crisis. "You can never walk out the door and forget, or go back to the place where you'd hear stories and just think, 'That's not me.' After this training, you can't go back and not care."

NATIONAL INTIMATE PARTNER & SEXUAL VIOLENCE SURVEY

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey. This will be an ongoing, nationally representative survey that assesses experiences of sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence among adult women and men in the United States. The survey presents data from the first year of data collection, based on 16,507 completed telephone interviews (9,086 women and 7,421 men) in the general population sample. Some striking figures:

- **Nearly 1 in 2 women** (44.6 percent) and 1 in 5 men (22.2 percent) experience sexual violence other than rape throughout their lifetime.
- **Approximately 1.3 million** women reported being raped in the 12 months prior to taking the survey.
- **51.1 percent** of female survivors identified the perpetrator as a former or current intimate partner and 40.8 percent of female survivors reported being raped by an acquaintance.
- **35 percent** of the women who were raped as minors were also raped as adults.

ADULT BROKEN CHILDREN

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a press release on Feb. 2, 2012 illustrating the socioeconomic impact child maltreatment (defined as neglect, physical abuse, psychological abuse or sexual abuse) can have on an individual through their adult years. These people become "adult broken children," often channeling their experiences into drug and alcohol abuse, self-mutilation, suicide, promiscuity and violent behavior. Some notable points:

- Child abuse and neglect cost the United States **\$124 billion** in 2011 through strain on the health care, education, criminal justice and welfare systems.
- The estimated cost to someone who experiences maltreatment as a child is **\$210,012** over the course of their lifetime.
- People from **disadvantaged childhood** backgrounds find it harder to get ahead later in life.
- If a child experiences poverty between the ages of one and five, **it can actually affect the brain at a neurobiological level**, possibly because of stress hormones being in overdrive during those formative years. The same stress hormones are in overdrive during sexual violence.

How has sexual violence affected your life or that of a loved one?

SPEAK OUT AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE

FIND YOUR VOICE!
BE SILENT NO MORE !

It takes great courage to speak out against sexual violence.
We hope that there are many voices to add to ours.
Join us at our "Shine-the-Light" ceremony on the last day
of April. We will read them out loud and their voices, your
voice will be silent no more.

3 CENTS A DAY FOR 30 DAYS

CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE!

Since 1974 we have been available 24 hours a day/7days a week/365 days a year. We Assist and Advocate for ALL Sexual Assault Survivors [Women, Men and Children] living in and around Butte, Glenn & Tehama Counties.

Approximately, 310,014 Residents live in the Tri-County Area. If 50K Residents participated @ \$0.03 a day x 30 days =a total of \$0.90 for the month of April. That \$0.90 x 50K Residents would=\$45k

UNRESTRICTED DOLLARS HELP SURVIVORS WITH:

- *Clothing when their clothes are taken for evidence collection.
- *Transportation to the Hospital, Law Enforcement Interviews, Court, Support Groups and Counseling appointments.
- *Lodging & occasionally a meal.

**INTERVENTION
Rape Crisis and
PREVENTION**

APRIL IS NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH!

We need YOUR help...please STEP UP and be one of the 50K Residents; whose \$.90 cents will make a difference! You can SPEAK OUT against Sexual Violence.

CALL 530-342-RAPE

Collect Calls Accepted