

# confidential sexual violence advocates



A Confidential Sexual Violence Advocate (CSVA) is often one of the first points of contact a survivor of sexual violence has when they reach out for help. CSVAs take a compassionate, trauma-informed approach to victim advocacy, working within sexual violence programs across New Jersey to provide support and resources for survivors.

## WHAT ROLE DO CONFIDENTIAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE ADVOCATES PLAY?

CSVAs serve at New Jersey's 21 county-based sexual violence programs, where they assist with crisis intervention, hotline calls, and survivor advocacy. CSVAs also make up one-third of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), an interdisciplinary team of experts that includes law enforcement officers and forensic nurse examiners. When SARTs are activated by survivors of sexual violence, team members work together to provide help accessing and navigating the various medical, legal, and other support services available to survivors.

### CSVA AVAILABILITY

In addition to serving as part of the 3-pronged SART response, CSVAs are available to support all survivors and their loved ones through New Jersey's local sexual violence programs and hotlines.

As a part of SARTs, CSVAs support survivors and their loved ones by:

- Providing crisis intervention and emotional support while maintaining victim confidentiality;
- Offering service referrals and information on resources;
- Accompanying survivors through medical, legal, and court procedures.

CSVAs receive highly specialized, ongoing training on the dynamics of sexual violence, the effect that trauma can have on survivors, and best practices for supporting and empowering survivors when interacting with various systems. CSVAs respect the autonomy of each survivor they support and ensure that the survivor's needs and safety are prioritized every step of the way. CSVAs don't make decisions for survivors, but rather serve as guides and provide information about the various ways survivors can interact with systems.

## PROTECTING SURVIVOR CONFIDENTIALITY

As confidential advocates, CSVAs give survivors a safe and neutral place to process their trauma and explore their options. CSVAs are required to protect survivors' privacy and confidential information (see *N.J.S.A. § 2A:84A-22.14-15*), unless one of the two following exceptions are met:

1. The victim instructs the advocate to disclose information through written consent;
2. The victim discloses information about child abuse or neglect, which CSVAs are mandated by law to report (see *N.J.S.A. §§ 9:6-8.9, 9:6-8.10, 9:6-8.14*).

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR SART?

Survivors who are 13 years of age or older, experienced an assault within the last 5 days, and consent to a SART activation can access the SART services.

SART activation can occur at a hospital, police station, or sexual violence program. Survivors can request or decline any of the components of a SART—law enforcement, forensic nurse examiner, or confidential advocacy services—when they consent to an activation. Once activated, SART members must respond within one hour.

## HOW TO BECOME A CSVA

CSVAs work as agents of social change in their communities. They are committed to serving survivors and their loved ones with compassion, empathy, and respect. CSVAs may support their program's 24-hour hotline, serve as a member of the Sexual Assault Response Team, and assist survivors in making informed decisions and navigating available systems and services.

**You can apply to become a CSVA at one of New Jersey's sexual violence programs if you meet the following requirements:**

- 18 years of age or older;
- Reside in-county or within short distance of a county program;
- Have a valid driver's license and/or reliable transportation;
- Confidence in providing direct service to survivors (or a willingness to learn!);
- Consent to criminal background check;
- Willingness to improve knowledge of sexual assault and systems;
- Commitment to serve all individuals in the community, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, faith or spiritual practice, income, or ability.

### **Atlantic County**

AVANZAR | 800 - 286 - 4184

### **Bergen County**

healingSPACE | 201 - 487 - 2227

### **Burlington County**

CONTACT of Burlington County | 856 - 234 - 8888

### **Camden County**

Services Empowering the Rights of Victims (SERV) of Camden County | 866 - 295 - 7378

### **Cape May County**

Coalition Against Rape and Abuse (CARA) | 877 - 294 - 2272

### **Cumberland County**

SERV of Cumberland County | 800 - 225 - 0196

### **Essex County**

SAVE of Essex County | 877 - 733 - 2273

### **Gloucester County**

SERV of Gloucester County | 866 - 295 - 7378

### **Hudson County**

Hudson SPEAKS | 201 - 795 - 5757

### **Hunterdon County**

SAFE in Hunterdon | 888 - 988 - 4033

### **Mercer County**

Womanspace | 609 - 394 - 9000

### **Middlesex County**

Center for Empowerment | 877 - 665 - 7273  
Rutgers University - New Brunswick, Office of Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance | 732 - 932 - 1181

### **Monmouth County**

180 Turning Lives Around | 888 - 264 - 7273

### **Morris County**

Morris CARES | 973 - 829 - 0587

### **Ocean County**

St. Francis Counseling Services | 609 - 494 - 1090

### **Passaic County**

Passaic County Women's Center | 973 - 881 - 1450

### **Salem County**

Salem County Women's Services | 856 - 935 - 6655

### **Somerset County**

Zufall Health Center | 908 - 526 - 7444

### **Sussex County**

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Intervention Services (DASI) | 973-875-1211

### **Union County**

Union County Rape Crisis Center | 908 - 233 - 7273

### **Warren County**

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Crisis Center (DASACC) | 908 - 453 - 4181

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The New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA) is the statewide organization representing 21 county-based rape crisis centers and Rutgers University's Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance. NJCASA elevates the voice of survivors and service providers through advocacy, training, and support for efforts to create safer communities for all people.

**nj coalition**  
against sexual assault