



Houston Rape Crisis Coalition
P.O. Box 4157 • Houston, Texas 77210
228-1505 For Assistance • 524-5743 For Information

Some services offered through the Houston Rape Crisis Coalition; 24-hour telephone service through Crisis Hotline; advocates to assist victims through hospital, police & court processes; discussion group for victims; referrals to professionals; information and speakers on topics related to rape, sexual assault and self-protection; moderately priced self-defense courses.

NEWSLETTER

June 1975

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Public Seminar On Rape

Everyone is welcome to attend a seminar entitled "Rape in Our Society: Attitudes, Issues & Law." The meeting will be held from 7-10 p.m. Thursday, May 29 in the Houston Room in the University Center at the University of Houston.

The program is free and will begin with a film "Rape: A Preventive Inquiry," which portrays the first-person stories of a group of rapists in prison, a group of sexual assault victims and some police officials. Two panel discussions will follow the film: one dealing with medical-legal procedural information and the other with sociological and psychological issues related to rape. Cathy Bonner of the Texas Rape Prevention and Control Project will moderate the panels and present the film. Ms. Bonner will also facilitate the question-answer period following each panel presentation.

Some of the speakers are Allen Stilley, Chief of the Grand Jury Division of the District Attorney's office; Dr. Jean Liles, Director of Emergency Room Services at Hermann Hospital; Ruby Allums, Community Relations, Houston Police Department; Helen Copitka, Research Director Houston Council on Human Relations; Dr. Carol Weiner, Assistant Professor of History at Texas Southern University.

Houston Rape Crisis Coalition, Texas Rape Prevention and Control Project, University of Houston Office of the Women's Advocate and City of Houston Office of the Women's Advocate are jointly sponsoring this program.

Good News & Bad News

HOUSTON EMERGENCY ROOM PHYSICIANS SERVICE

Members of HRCC met with representatives of the Houston Emergency Room Physicians Service on April 24 to discuss treatment of rape victims in the hospitals they serve. It was learned that there is no hospital policy preventing treatment of rape victims; instead, the decision is largely left to the individual physician. However, at the meeting many objections were raised by the physicians. These ranged from "rape victims are not an emergency" to "let someone else do it."

There are some Houston area doctors who are sympathetic to the problems of rape victims and more than willing to examine and treat. But for the most part, though, there is no guarantee that a rape victim will be treated in hospitals other than Ben Taub and Hermann.

Anyone interested in working on this problem should call the Women's Center, 524-5743, to volunteer. Someone will return your call.

PRESBYTERIANS SUPPORT HOUSTON RAPE CRISIS COALITION

Rev. John Wimberly, a friend and advocate for HRCC, presented a resolution to the Gulf Coast Presbytery. This group had representatives from United Presbyterian Churches in Southeast Texas and Louisiana. The resolution passed unanimously. It read: "...the Gulf Coast Presbytery supports the Houston Rape Crisis Coalition's efforts to aid and help rape victims through a time of personal trauma and crisis."

TENNECO SEMINARS

Tenneco Oil Company took a giant step forward in demonstrating concern for its employees. A series of seminars on rape was presented under the direction of the Texas Rape Prevention and Control Project with assistance from Houston Rape Crisis Coalition. The seminar reached over 800 women and was received with great enthusiasm. In addition, Tenneco asked for permission to reprint HRCC's brochure for distribution among their employees and families of employees.

We applaud Tenneco's efforts and hope that other companies will take the same initiative in helping their employees learn about rape prevention. For information on this project contact Bette Anne Knoll, 524-5743

INDIANAPOLIS WORKSHOP

Summer Milton, coordinator of the advocates program, attended a workshop "Rape: One City's Approach," in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 17-20. We are looking forward to many helpful ideas and approaches. Look for Summer's reports in future newsletters and at meetings.

Bill Passes Both Houses

The rape reform legislation, House bill 284 and Senate bill 63, passed both houses early in May and is awaiting the Governor's signature. HRCC would appreciate copies of letters to and from legislators and the governor, particularly letters of thanks to Representatives Kay Bailey and Sarah Weddington.

In the version that finally passed some good things were removed, such as the definition of consent that we were hoping would make it. But a number of other good things are still in: threat can be communicated by actions, words, or deeds; evidence of victim's sexual conduct may be admitted only if, and only to the extent that, the judge finds it relevant as evidence in the case; statute of limitations extended to three years.

Rape: A Houston Concern

Medical, legal, law enforcement and rape crisis center personnel met in Austin for a three-day statewide conference on "Rape: A Texas Concern" to focus on the ways that agencies can work together to facilitate services for the rape victim and to secure convictions.

Emphasis was placed on keeping a personal touch in all the work that must be done when a case of rape is reported. Special programs in hospitals as well as a sympathetic approach by detectives were proposed as the most productive means of assuring the well-being of the victim and promoting her continued assistance in the prosecution.

The work being done by the Austin Rape Crisis Center has encouraged many women to come forward when attacked, because they know they will receive supportive services. The rate of reported rapes is up 63% in that county and the increase is attributed to the cooperation among all the systems a woman must deal with once she becomes a rape statistic.

While it seemed as if every major city in Texas except Houston has a working procedure for rape victims, Houston's hopefully will not be too much longer in arriving. The city has submitted a grant proposal to the Criminal Justice Department for the establishment of a professionally staffed service to aid rape victims from the time of the attack to the time they no longer need supportive services.

For more specific information on the conference, contact Alice Shrader, Summer Milton or Bette Anne Knoll. If you contact the city or county government to encourage them to set up these programs, please leave copies of your correspondence at the center to share with HRCC.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The next issue of the newsletter will probably be out mid-August or early September with lots of summer progress reports and plans for action for the fall. Anyone wanting updates on information here or wishing to volunteer for any project should call the Women's Center, 524-5743, and we will return your call. Thanks!

From the Bookcase

RAPE: VICTIMS OF CRISIS, Burgess & Holmstrom, \$6.95 paperback

RAPE: HOW TO AVOID IT AND WHAT TO DO IF YOU CAN'T, By Csida & Csida,
Published by Books for Better Living, \$1.50 paperback

NEWSLETTER, Texas Rape Prevention and Control Project. PO Box 13072
Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711. FREE!!

When & Where

- Thursday, May 29 "Rape in Our Society: Attitudes, Issues & Law,"
7-10 p.m., Houston Room, University Center, University of Houston
Saturday, May 31 HRCC advocates meeting, 10 a.m., Women's Center,
contact Summer Milton for more information
Tuesday, June 3 HRCC program meeting, discussion on pregnancy and fear
of pregnancy presented by Reproductive Services, 7:30 Women's Center
Tuesday, June 17 HRCC business meeting
Tuesday, July 15 business meeting
Tuesday, Aug. 19 business meeting

During July and August there will be no program meetings. They will
resume in September. Times and places to be announced. To put
something on the agenda for the business meetings contact Bette
Anne Knoll.

PLEASE JOIN US IN THE HOUSTON RAPE CRISIS COALITION!!

Name _____ Phone _____

Organization Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Individual Memberships \$3/year Organizational Memberships \$25/year

Please make check payable to Houston Rape Crisis Coalition. Send to
SUSAN WATKINS, HRCC, PO Box 4157, Houston, Tx 77210. Donations Welcome!