



March 20, 2020

Dear Community Members, Colleagues and Friends,

As the state designated sexual assault agency in Somerset County, Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS) at Zufall Health in Somerville has been working diligently with our parent organization as well as our state coalition and other stakeholders to ensure the safe continuity of services for victims of sexual assault during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of the Somerset County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), trained Confidential Sexual Violence Advocates (CSVAs or "Advocate") are specifically trained to offer information, options, and support to victims of sexual assault prior to having a medical forensic exam or giving a formal statement to law enforcement.

While we are adhering to federal and local public health directives, please rest assured that our commitment to victims remains steadfast. As of now, for the safety of victims, staff, and advocates, our services will be offered remotely as follows:

- 1) Our hotline at **(908) 526-7444**, will remain available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- 2) Hospital and law enforcement accompaniments in person will be suspended and instead offered remotely, if an advocate is requested. If a sexual assault victim presents at the police station, and they choose to speak to an advocate, please call our hotline **(908-526-7444)** for immediate assistance. If a victim presents at the Emergency Department, and the Forensic Nurse Examiner (FNE) determines they would like to speak with a CSVA, the FNE will contact our hotline directly to arrange for remote advocacy services.
- 3) We continue to provide individual counseling remotely via telehealth – our clinicians are on-site at our organization while clients are at home. Zufall Health is using
- 4) All outreach and prevention work in the community is suspended at this time although we hope to still connect and collaborate with some of our partners remotely.

We will continue to modify and update our services based on public health and organizational directives, and we will keep you informed of any changes. We know that together, we can continue to provide support to victims of sexual assault.

We appreciate your support and understanding during this time and wish you and your families continued health.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 908-526-2335 x124.

Best,

Julie Krupinski, LCSW

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