

**SARSSM ACCOMPANIMENT PROTOCOL**  
**(TEMPORARY)**

**COVID-19 GUIDANCE**

**Introduction:** There is tremendous value in having advocates provide in person

accompaniments, but for the safety of patients, advocates, and the community, SARSSM and the SAFE Nurses in York and Cumberland County are strongly discouraging advocates from going to the hospital to do accompaniments. This is not coming from formal hospital policy, but their opinions and expertise. The hospitals are doing all they can to keep all patients safe. People should still come to the Emergency Department if they need a Forensic Exam.

**Suspension of all in-person Accompaniments:** SARSSM advocates have been given the direction to not support survivors in person via emergency-based accompaniment services. These emergency-based, in-person accompaniments include:

- ✓ Hospitals
- ✓ Any medical facilities
- ✓ Police departments
- ✓ Court Houses

**Note:** The term "SARSSM Advocates" includes both volunteers & staff. The term "Survivors" includes patients/victims whom are going to the hospital, police department or court house to make a report, undergo a sexual assault forensic exam or file a protection from abuse and/or harassment order.

**What SARSSM is doing to support survivors in the meantime:**

- ✓ SARSSM is offering phone support before, during and/or after accompaniments occur.
- ✓ Some hospitals have video capabilities so that survivors can see the advocate, however this cannot be guaranteed for every accompaniment. MECASA is also strongly advising that we do not use video, as it is not confidential.
- ✓ SARSSM will be keeping in contact with all head SAFE nurses at each hospital in York and Cumberland County to make sure we are continuing communication to guide survivors and advocates
- ✓ SARSSM will be allowing SAFE nurses and medical personnel to make follow up referrals for survivors to get the ongoing support they need following a sexual assault forensic exam (see below for referral protocol)
- ✓ All helpline support via the phone will continue to be offered for survivors, concerned others and providers. Text/chat will be available during regular hours which are 8am – 11pm, Monday – Friday
- ✓ SARSSM is ensuring that all hospitals in York and Cumberland County have a sufficient amount of "hospital packets."

**24-hour Statewide Sexual Assault  
Helpline: 1-800-871-7741**

**Text/Chat:**

Mon - Fri, 8am - 11pm

Text at 1-800-871-7741

Chat by visiting: sarssm.org

✓ **Hospital Packets will consist of:**

- White Folder
- SARSSM Hotline Card
- Booklet: Coping with Sexual Assault
- Text/chat book-mark
- Maine Crime Victims Compensation Board Brochure (also located in the SAFE kit)
- SART Advocate Brochure
- Handouts:
  - Emotional First Aid for Sexual Assault Survivors
  - Strategies for Long Term Healing
  - Emotional First Aid for Teens
  - Emotional First Aid for Parents
  - Emotional First Aid for Family
  - Victim Compensation
  - HIV Testing Confidential vs. Anonymous
  - AIDS and HIV Services Testing Locations
  - SARSSM Services Helpline Info
  - SARSSM Services
  - FAQ Sheet about Hospital Accompaniments and an Advocate's Role

**Making a Referral for On-Going Support:**

✓ **Things to think about before making a referral:**

- Does it seem like the survivor will be navigating some complex systems after the hospital? Complex systems can look like the criminal or civil justice system, it can look like applying for victim compensation, looking for a therapist, etc.
- Did the survivor decide to make a police report at the hospital and will need support following up with them?
- Have you explained SART services to the survivor? Are they interested in receiving ongoing support?

✓ **How to make a referral:**

- Always make sure to ask the survivor if they want a referral before making one. SART advocates will not reach out to survivors without their permission, nor do they have capacity to follow up with every single person who has undergone an exam and does not need on-going support
- **With regards to HIPPA** – it is probably best practice to call the helpline at **1-800-871-7741** to make a referral WITH the survivor. **Have the survivor and you be prepared to disclose this information to the helpline advocate:** survivor's name (first name is fine), contact number, county they reside in, **ask if it is okay to leave a voicemail** – make sure you ask this! SART advocates will only call back a couple of times and cannot leave voicemails without permission. You are also welcome to ask the survivor if they prefer texting. Some details about the type of on-going support they would need is helpful, like “this survivor is trying to make a police report, but unsure how to go about it and does not feel like making a report right now at the hospital.”
- Helpline advocates will take down all this information via the phone and then make an internal referral to the SART program. SART advocates typically call survivors back within 2 – 3 business days.



**SARSSM**  
Sexual Assault Response Services  
*of Southern Maine*

## SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM ADVOCATE REFERRAL

*(For use by Service Providers)*

Person who is making referral: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency making referral: \_\_\_\_\_

Town where incident occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact Information

Person to contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this person the victim?             YES             NO

Is it OK to contact person?             YES             NO

Is it OK to leave a voicemail?             YES             NO

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_                      Victim's Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Anything else we should know? [Click here to enter text.](#)

*Please email completed forms to [cs1@sarsonline.org](mailto:cs1@sarsonline.org).*

*A SART advocate will contact the victim within 2 business days.*

*24 Hour Crisis and Support Line - 1-800-871-7741.*