



Importance of the Sexual Assault Tribal Advocate

The SA Advocate will help ensure the survivor of sexual assault is fully informed from beginning to end of the process.

The advocate's role, as thoughtfully described in *The Principles of Advocacy: A Guide for Sexual Assault Advocates* (Mending the Sacred Hoop, 2004), is to act as the biased supporter of Native victims experiencing sexual violence, advocating for their expressed interests, including resources to regain control over their lives; to provide expertise founded on Native victims' experiences within justice, social service and medical systems; and to prioritize victims' safety and offender accountability in all aspects of advocacy, including maintaining confidentiality.

Informed Consent

There are two essential but separate consent processes—one for overall medical evaluation and treatment and a second for evidence collection and release.

Patients should understand the full nature of their consent to each procedure, whether it is medical or evidentiary (e.g., what the procedure entails, possible side effects, limits of confidentiality, and potential impact).

The only way to put patients in the position of being able to make informed decisions about whether to allow a procedure is by presenting them with all relevant information in a language they understand.

Patients can decline any part or all of the examination.

Seek consent for evidence collection and release in a language that the patient understands. Follow jurisdictional procedure for obtaining informed consent for the exam and evidence collection. Informed consent of patients typically is needed for:

- ✓ Notification to law enforcement or other authority (depends upon reporting requirements).
- ✓ Evidence collection and release.
- ✓ Toxicology screening.
- ✓ Release of information and evidence to criminal justice system personnel, SART/SARRT members, and partnering service providers.
- ✓ Contact with patients for reasons related to their criminal sexual assault case.
- ✓ Patient notification in case of a DNA match or additional victims.

*Excerpt from the 2013 National Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations. Adults/Adolescents. Second Edition. U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women

