



Wexford
Rape
Crisis | Services for
Domestic, Sexual
and Gender-based
Violence **Est. 1995**

Wexford Rape Crisis Strategic Plan 2017-2020

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History:

Wexford Rape Crisis was established in 1995 as an indirect result of the Kilkenny Incest Investigation and the need for a free counselling service in the Co Wexford area. It quickly expanded as more and more survivors sought counselling. As numbers increased so too did our outreach service which includes Gorey, Enniscorthy & New Ross. Our counsellors are professionally qualified and accredited with relevant recognized Accreditation Bodies. We are also members of local groups including the Wexford Support Network on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (WSN), The Children's and Young Person's Services Committee (CYPSC) for Co. Wexford, including membership of the Working group for Young People and Mental Health, The Domestic Abuse Forum and the Children and Family Support Network (CFSN). The Service is also a member of the Managers Forum for Rape Crisis Centres.

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to provide a counselling service sensitive to the needs of survivors of Sexual Violence, Rape, Childhood Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment, that is empowering, non-judgmental and consistent in approach that promotes the safety, privacy and dignity of the survivor. Key principles which underpin the development of our service:

- Violence & Sexual Abuse in relationships must always be viewed as an abuse of Human Rights. They must not be rationalised or minimised and there must never be an acceptable or tolerable level of violence.
- Anyone can be a victim of sexual violence, irrespective of age, race, income or employment status.

Services:

Helpline:

Free Telephone Counselling & Support is available for survivors who can speak confidentially to a trained counsellor, set up an appointment, have their questions answered or get any information needed on counselling.

One to One Counselling:

Wexford Rape Crisis offers long and/or short-term counselling to female and male survivors of domestic, sexual and gender based violence.

Support counselling is also available to a partner, family member or friend who often feel powerless when someone close to them has been raped or sexually abused.



Adolescent Counselling:

Wexford Rape Crisis provides one to one adolescent counselling to boys and girls aged 12 and upwards who have experienced Domestic , Sexual or Gender-Based Violence in their lives. The counsellor is specifically trained and qualified in this area to work therapeutically with young clients on their road to healing and growth.

Support counselling is also offered to parents/ guardians if they need guidance or support. Presently this service is limited and is only available in Wexford town.

Our outreach service is available in Enniscorthy, Gorey and New Ross.

Education and Prevention:

Manuela Riedo Programme:

Wexford Rape Crisis is one of four centres national that delivers this programme to young people. It is a 12 hour, comprehensive, evidence informed education programme to sexual violence prevention with both learning and evaluation as integral parts of the delivery. It is targeted at 15-16-year olds in the area of sexual violence prevention and sets out to encourage ongoing dialogue about sexual violence, which will challenge prevailing attitudes tolerant of sexual violence and contribute towards the reduction of sexual violence in Ireland.

The aim of programme is to reduce levels of sexual violence in Ireland by the engagement of young people 15-16 years in a dialogue that explores healthy relationships, challenges attitudes, knowledge and skills in relation to sexual violence and harassment and consent.

Advocacy & Court/Garda Accompaniment:

Counsellors at the Centre can make referrals to other agencies or liaise with other services or agencies on behalf of clients. We also accompany clients to GP services, hospitals, clinics, garda stations or court. We prepare Victim Impact Statements where required.

List of Board Members:

Mairead Sinnott (Chairperson)

John Cuddihy (Secretary)

Laura Lawlor (Vice-Chairperson)

Christine Hore

Dr. Moira Slevin

Damien Jordan

Darron Jordan



Chairpersons Address:

It is with great pleasure that I ask you as Chairperson of Wexford Rape Crisis to enjoy this copy of our Strategic plan.

This project started many years ago when we gathered our board, staff and volunteers from the Centre and laid the foundation for this great work. We have put a plan in place to achieve the numerous items that the initial group raised. I have chosen three main priorities from the plan to guide me during my term as Chairperson of my hard-working Board. They are

1. Raising awareness of the work we do around the county.
2. Rebranding Wexford Rape and Sexual Abuse Support services to a more manageable name and logo.
3. New premises for the Wexford Manager and Counsellor's, the current ones are too small for our needs.

I would like to acknowledge the support of Clare Williams, our Manager, who has supported the Board members, Counsellor's, Manuela Riedo Project Worker and Volunteers to make my priorities, and the many other items you will read about in our plan, become reality.

Special thanks to our staff and self employed Counsellors for their help and support with this project and huge appreciation to them for the great work they do for all our clients in Gorey, Wexford, Enniscorthy and New Ross. Our Manuela Riedo Project Worker is doing great prevention work for us in the schools around the county. Our volunteers play a vital role too and their work is much appreciated.

My fellow board members sit on sub-committees for audit, rebranding, premises and fundraising to ensure progress is made on the items you will read about in this report.

Mile Buiochas to one and all who have had an input in this project. Special thanks to Mary Gallagher our former Chairperson who started this process. Together we embrace the challenge that this report has presented and together we will do our best to ensure that all survivors of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence will be the better for their interaction with our team of Counsellors and therapists.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and please contact us on 1800 33 00 33 if you are interested in helping us in a voluntary capacity or if you, or someone you know needs our expertise to help them cope with abuse.

Now...let's turn these words into action!

Le gach dea ghui!

Mairead Sinnott

Theme One: Awareness Raising

Our work is sensitive and yet we are constantly seeking ways to raise awareness of the services and supports that we offer to people who have experienced, rape, sexual assault, past childhood sexual abuse or any kind of sexual trauma in their lives. We aim to reach out into the community to alert people to our service and to make ourselves accessible to reluctant clients. We want to remove any stigma associated with attending our service and also to encourage funders and philanthropists to contribute financially to the ongoing development of our work.

Actions:

**The following are the main actions to progress
our awareness raising work:**

1. Review and update our literature on a regular basis
2. Circulate promotional material to media regularly
3. Select and brief a public figure to endorse and champion our service
4. Arrange one high profile event per annum to broadcast our existence and show our work
5. Divide the year into four segments and strategically plan to have at least one promotional event per segment
6. Strengthen our web presence and ensure all web based material is relevant, up to date and dynamic
7. Proactively find ways to publicly talk about the service and promote it in soft ways at strategic events and to specific influential people
8. Develop a strategy to comment proactively and carefully around topics of relevance to our service in both the national and local media

Responsibility for Leading this Action will rest with:

Manager with support of staff, relevant sub groups and oversight of our Board

Theme Two : Branding

We currently operate under the brand Wexford Rape Crisis Centre. We have also used the name Wexford Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Service (WRSASS). We believe that it is timely that we develop a brand that reaches out to people in a more meaningful way. The purpose is to bring our service and what it stands for into people's awareness.

Actions:

The following are the main actions to develop a brand that promotes our work in a clear, purposeful and sensitive way:

1. Set up a branding working group/sub group to project manage the re branding process over a six month period commencing November 2017. This will include managing the background research, costing and art and design work.
2. Conduct a short piece of research to gauge people's views of our service (internal and external) and generate suggestions for an appropriate and powerful brand that conveys the extent and depth of our work (prevention, education as well as one to one counselling) to a wider audience
3. Seek the advice of branding expert
4. Collate all ideas, workshop with Board and staff and develop brand.
5. Launch brand through a specific event with media support

Responsibility for Leading this Action will rest with:

Sub group charged with re branding with support of manager and staff and oversight of our Board

Theme Three : Relationships

Relationships are important in our work and we seek to create and cultivate good working relationships with a range of organisations and people to advance our work. We need to be working well with a range of surrounding stakeholders in order to respond to the needs of our clients. Our relationships with surrounding people and organisations matter to us. These include our relationships with:

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clients ● Parents ● Families ● Schools ● GPs ● Pharmacies ● HSE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tusla ● Court Clerks ● The Gardai ● Media ● Politicians ● Fundraisers ● The whole community |
|---|---|

Actions:

The following are the main actions to strengthen our working relationships with surrounding stakeholders:

1. Connect with secondary schools in County Wexford through talks and workshops
2. Deliver the Manuela Programme
3. Connect with local national schools on the theme of Respect
4. Connect in targeted ways with GPs and other health professionals
5. Seek out specific sponsorship
6. Continue to nurture our relationships with named contacts in the local media
7. Continue to work on our web presence and social media communication and interactions relevance to our service in both the national and local media

Responsibility for Leading this Action will rest with:

Manager with support of staff in the delivery and oversight of our Board

Theme Four : Services & Supports

The services and supports that we provide are the cornerstone of our work at Wexford Rape Crisis. We offer counselling to both men and women and young people aged 16 and over who have experienced, rape, sexual assault, past childhood sexual abuse or any kind of sexual trauma in their lives. In addition we offer support counselling to a partner, family member or friend who is supporting the person who has been abused. All our efforts centre on providing a professional quality service.

Actions:

The following are the main actions to ensure the continued provision of professional and quality services and supports:

1. Provide one to one counselling by our qualified counsellors
2. Provide court accompaniment
3. Deliver group work programmes
4. Deliver the Manuela Programme
5. Actively fundraise through specific events
6. Design and implement an outcomes measurement tool with the support of an expert/academic
7. Advocate and influence on issues relating to women's sexual health and well being

Responsibility for Leading this Action will rest with:

Manager with support of staff in the delivery and oversight of our Board



Theme Five : Human Resource Management & Development

At Wexford Rape Crisis we know that our team and working relationships are vital to the success of our organisation and the quality of the services that we offer. We seek to operation to the highest standards professionally and ethically. We are committed to continually improving our services and the way we work in tune with best practice.

Actions:

**The following are the main actions to
develop our organisation and our team:**

1. Finalise our staff handbook
2. Develop a structured training plan for the organisation
3. Provide ongoing training and CPD for staff and board members
4. Convene formal and informal opportunities for staff team and Board members to meet and interact
5. Revisit employee contracts and update as necessary
6. Implement annual performance reviews and appraisals
7. Initiate networking and learning events with other charities and /or similar services to encourage sharing learning and good practice

Responsibility for Leading this Action will rest with:

Manager with support and oversight of our Board



Theme Six : Premises

The quality and atmosphere of our building, working environment and the places where we welcome and work with our clients on a one to one basis are central to the quality of our service. We know that our current premises are unsuitable and inadequate in terms of access, space and light. We are seeking open, welcoming and light filled spaces for our counselling and support services. We currently have four locations for our service in County Wexford, Gorey, Enniscorthy, Wexford town and New Ross. Achieving a suitable location in Wexford town is an immediate priority action for Wexford Rape Crisis.

Actions:

The following are the main actions that will progress our work finding new premises for our Wexford town service:

1. Continue our contact with local estate agents in Wexford in the short term to press them to find potentially suitable locations for us to view.
2. Communicate widely, making our need for a premises known to influential people in Wexford County Council, local press and radio, local businesses, philanthropists and property owners.
3. Arrange a feature in the local media to express our need for suitable new premises and let this double up as a positive communication about our services and supports
4. Name the criteria that we believe necessary to satisfy our requirements, e.g. central location in Wexford town, accessible, light, bright and welcoming, spacious accommodate staff and with one to one counselling rooms, short to medium rental agreement. Our longer term vision is to source a more therapeutic setting for a holistic centre.

Responsibility for Leading this Action will rest with:

Manager and Chairperson with support the Board in terms of oversight.



Theme Seven : Social Media

We recognise that effective and ethical use of social media is vital to promoting our service to clients and communicating the value of our work. Social media in all its current and emerging forms, e.g. facebook, twitter, etc. enables us to reach out to clients and other stakeholders that are relevant to our work. We also include press, radio, TV, leaflets and fliers amongst the methods that we use to promote and communicate our work. The primary purpose is to raise awareness of our service with the general public and so to alert potential clients to the supports that we offer. We do this in a respectful and ethical manner, always mindful of the sensitivities associated with our work.

Actions:

The following are the main actions that will progress our promotional and communications work through the social media:

1. Develop an annual plan of events to promote WRC and an accompanying social media strategy to ensure we maximise all appropriate publicity from each event.
2. Develop a set of messages that are conducive to social media platforms such as twitter and that are appropriate to target at different groups and organisations, e.g. second level students, young people, sports organisations and general public.
3. Show and share our short film (Say Something) in strategically powerful locations
4. Keep our website up to date and attractive to all stakeholders
5. Continue to develop our social media presence through a carefully managed and moderated facebook page and twitter account
6. Seek the advice of a social media expert to guide us on the ethics of our social media strategy and practice.

Responsibility for Leading this Action will rest with:

Manager with support of staff in the delivery and the Board in terms of oversight



Theme Eight : Policy & Procedures

We understand our obligations in terms of good governance and we know the role that policy and procedures play in this regard. We are committed to creating safe boundaries and protocols for all involved in delivering and participating in our work.

Actions:

The following are the main actions that will progress the refinement of our policies and procedures in tune with good governance:

1. Complete and implement our Employee Handbook
2. Ensure all staff and Board members are aware of our policies and procedures
3. Conduct regular Health and Safety check
4. Review our governance to ensure full compliance with Governance Code for Charitable organisations
5. Seek client feedback on our service through a structured process including our outcomes measurement tool
6. Conduct an annual review of our service and this Action Plan
7. Build in reflection and review into Board meeting to check on progress of this Action Plan

Responsibility for Leading this Action will rest with:

Manager and Chairperson with support the Board in terms of governance and oversight.

Funders

Manuela Riedo
Foundation

TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Wexford Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Service,
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