

SANE & SART: ENHANCING PROFESSIONAL RESPONSES TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

A Unified Team Approach



WHAT IS A SANE?

A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) is a registered nurse with advanced training concerning the performance of comprehensive medical/forensic examinations on victims of sexual offenses who are 14 years old or older. For information see KRS 314.011(14). SANE credentials are issued through the Kentucky Board of Nursing, after completion of 40 hours of classroom instruction and 60 hours of clinical training. For information see 201 KAR 20:411. Upcoming training information is available from KASAP's Statewide SANE/SART Coordinator.

WHAT IS A SART?

A Sexual Assault Response Team, or SART, is a multidisciplinary approach to responding to sexual violence. A SART consists of a SANE or physician, law enforcement official, and a sexual violence victim advocate (disciplines that initially respond to victims who report within 96 hours).

SARTs have two primary purposes: to limit further trauma to victims and to improve the quality of evidence collection and investigation. Because victims are required to tell and retell about the violence, many say that post-assault events can be as traumatizing or more traumatizing than the actual assault. By reducing the number of retellings, SARTs reduce trauma to victims and initiate support systems that are critical to healing. Furthermore, SART response may reduce the likelihood that multiple statements can be used to attack the victims' credibility and create obstacles to successful prosecution.

Kentucky communities have choices on how to operate SARTs, i.e., whether the team should be based in a hospital, law enforcement agency, or victim service agency. Some communities also maintain interagency councils that include other professionals who interact with and/or support victims after the initial response, such as the Commonwealth's Attorney, crime laboratory personnel, and clergy members. Other communities have worked to develop collaborations, but have not formalized a SART program.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SART?

- ◇ SARTs improve evidence collection and preservation, ensure better maintenance of the 'chain of custody' of evidence, and increase the availability of qualified expert witnesses.
- ◇ Utilizing a victim-centered approach allows the SART to provide compassionate, efficient, and highly skilled care and support throughout the criminal justice system.
- ◇ Across the country, SART programs have been proven to increase reporting of sexual violence and conviction rates. According to records from the Allen County Indiana Superior Court, convictions for rape have increased from 20% to 60% since the inception of the Fort Wayne Sexual Assault Treatment Center in 1994 (one of the first SARTs).

WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF SART MEMBERS?

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- ◇ Provide for the victim's safety
- ◇ Conduct interviews of victims, perpetrators, and others
- ◇ Apprehend the perpetrator(s)
- ◇ Conduct criminal investigation
- ◇ Build case for the prosecutor
- ◇ Provide information as required by the Crime Victim Bill of Rights, for information see KRS 421.500-575

VICTIM ADVOCATE

- ◇ Believe the victim and provide support throughout the initial process
- ◇ Help explain the exam process
- ◇ Accompany the victim through the exam phase
- ◇ Hold the victim's hand, both literally and figuratively
- ◇ Provide information about victims' rights and compensation
- ◇ Provide referral to available community resources

SANE OR PHYSICIAN

- ◇ Obtain a detailed history
- ◇ Perform a head-to-toe assessment
- ◇ Perform a detailed genital exam
- ◇ Collect forensic evidence
- ◇ Document findings
- ◇ Provide follow-up and referrals
- ◇ Provide court testimony

WHAT IS SART TRAINING?

SART Training provides essential information about the dynamics of sexual violence and related laws, sexual assault medical/forensic examinations, and specialized techniques for investigating sex crimes. Team members are trained together using a forty-hour curriculum that meets the didactic training requirements for SANEs, as set forth in 201 KAR 20:411, refer to www.lrc.state.ky.us/home.htm. Training together provides many team-building opportunities and enables team members to understand each member's roles.

SART Trainings, which are organized by KASAP's Statewide SANE/SART Coordinator, are offered at locations across Kentucky. KASAP also provides publications and technical assistance to help with SART development. Upon request, KASAP will gladly provide an adaptable model. For more information, visit www.kasap.org or contact the Statewide SANE/SART Coordinator: sane@kasap.org.

