

Statement

Establish Crisis Support Centres in Comprehensive Responses to the Needs of Sexual Violence Victims

Judicial, medical, and social services are equally vital and closely intersecting in the handling of sexual violence incidents. According to the Guidelines for Medico-Legal Care for Victims of Sexual Violence published by the World Health Organisation (2003), the arrangement of providing victims with health services along with access to police and judicial proceedings within a hospital or medical clinic setting assures victims' medical and emotional needs can be addressed without delay and is deemed as an ideal location for such service model.

Today in Hong Kong, sexual violence victims are required to rush around different departments (including hospital, police station, Forensic Pathology Service) to seek for assistance by themselves. The currently prolonged arrangement also requires the victim to repeatedly give their account of the incidents for at least 5 to 7 times: For cases that happened within the past 72 hours, the victim will have to visit the hospital alone to receive emergency contraception and other medical assistance. If the victim chooses to report their case to the police, they will be required to visit the police station that is within the region of where the case happened and tell the incident at the report room. The case will then be referred to Criminal Investigation Division (CID) and/or crime squad for follow up, the victim will be asked to repeat the incident and provide a statement again to the CID and/or crime squad. If necessary, further complementary statement will be taken in a later time. After statement-taking, the victim will be arranged to the Forensic Pathology Service for a forensic medical examination. The victim will then be asked to provide an account of what happened again during the examination. If the victim requires emotional support, they will have to seek for the appropriate social service unit for counselling support by themselves or through referral.

Currently, some sexual violence cases have its medical examination, statement-taking, and/or forensic medical examination take place in the hospital's Accident & Emergency Department (AED). Although some hospitals have been able to provide a multi-purpose room for the above procedures, the reality is that most AEDs have not been able to provide a room for such purpose. The victim is resulted to undergo procedures behind a cubical curtain. This arrangement is lacking privacy and safety for victims of sexual violence, and it is far from an ideal location for the provision of a one-stop service. To meet the physical and emotional needs of the victims, a location that can promise privacy and security for victims should be considered equally as vital as the interdepartmental coordination in the offering of support services.

The Hong Kong Legislative Council is holding a debate session on 12th December for a motion moved by Dr Hon Pierre CHAN – 'Requesting the Government to set up crisis support centres for sexual violence victims and abused children in public hospitals' (Click [here](#) for the motion). We support the motion and strongly demand for the proposed crisis support centres:

1. A 24-hour crisis support centre that provides one-stop and comprehensive services should be established within 3 public hospitals located respectively in New Territories, on Hong Kong Island, and in Kowloon.
2. The crisis support centres should be victim-centric instead of professional-centric. The 'one-stop' post-crisis emergency services should include: Medical check-up and follow-up, forensic evidence collection, police-reporting and statement-taking (equipped with required facilities), social workers' support and counselling. The

- provision of services must be timely, in respect to the victim's dignity, privacy, confidentiality, and in the pursuit of a non-judgmental demeanour.
3. The crisis support centres should be designed to conform in the standards listed in the World Health Organisation's Guidelines for Medico-Legal Care for Victims of Sexual Violence, advocating for safety, comfortability, undisturbed, and in a high privacy setting.
 4. The crisis support centres should be equipped with a team of task force in the management of sexual violence cases, e.g.: case managers and counsellors, they should have undergone professional and specified training to enhance their skills and sensitivity in handling of sexual violence cases.
 5. The centres recognize the characteristics and needs of different groups of women with disability(including: physically handicapped, hearing impaired, visually impaired, mentally handicapped, ex-mentally ill and othes), to ensure that they receive appropriate supports and communications; provide various types of accessible information, such as simple graphic versions, sign language translation, braille; offer sign language interpretation services for hearing-impaired women to assist with their cases.

We call for the support from the public to the motion and the set-up of crisis support centres that offer all-rounded service to victims of sexual violence.

Initiating Organisations/Groups:

Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women

RainLily

Joint Organisation/ Groups:

Association of Women with Disabilities Hong Kong

Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres

Hong Kong Women Workers' Association

The Association for the Advancement of Feminism

New Arrival Women League

Action for REACH OUT

Women Affairs Department, Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association

Women's Committee, Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions

About Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women

Established on 8 March 1997, the Association is the member of The Community Chest of Hong Kong, we support gender equity and with concerns about women facing sexual violence. The Association aims to urge both the government and the public to address issues relating to sexual violence against women; to assist the victims to fight for their rights; and provide support to help victims lead a life of self-confidence and dignity. (www.rainlily.org.hk)