



**RAPE CRISIS
M I D W E S T**

Rape Crisis Midwest Newsletter

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2012

Welcome to Issue 1 of the Rape Crisis Midwest newsletter for 2012. We hope the newsletter will become a key link in keeping all volunteers at the Rape Crisis Centre updated on fundraising and training events.

Official Opening of the New Ennis Outreach Centre for Rape Crisis Midwest by Mayor of Clare, Cllr Pat Hayes—Friday 25 November 2011.

Cllr Pat Hayes, Mayor of County Clare officially opened the new Ennis Outreach Centre for Rape Crisis Midwest on Friday, 25th November. The new centre is based at Tracklands Business Park, Clonroadmore and is managed by local counsellor, Anne Ginnane. Rape Crisis Midwest was founded over 30 years ago and has been providing a free and confidential service to survivors of rape and sexual assault in the Clare region during this time.

The new centre was opened due to the needs of services users, many of whom were travelling from different parts of Clare and finding the journey difficult. Ann Ginnane of Rape Crisis Midwest - “ We hope the centre will be a warm and welcoming place for people – having a centre in Ennis mean less travelling for many survivors from all parts of County Clare”

The new centre receives no direct government funding to service the overheads relating to the Ennis outreach office. We therefore rely heavily on the generosity of the local people to keep this centre open.

Pictured left to right, Mayor of Clare, Pat Hayes, Verena Tarpey and Ann Ginnane both of Rape Crisis Midwest.



SPACE – Tackling issues relating to alcohol and sexual violence amongst students.

A new and innovative programme initiated by Rape Crisis Midwest was formally launched in November by Councillor Mary Harty, Cathaoirleach of Limerick County Council. The programme is being run by Rape Crisis Midwest in an effort to highlight the issues surrounding rape and sexual abuse to transition year students in the Midwest Region. A number of schools have been contacted to participate in the programme and assuming the pilot is a success, our aim would be to deliver it to all schools in the Midwest Region next year.

Cathaoirleach, Mary Harty said at the Launch “ Since its foundation in 1980, Rape Crisis Midwest has provided many vital services to the public including a professional, confidential free counselling service; counselling to family and friends of survivors; training for other professionals; talks to schools, colleges, teachers and other interested groups to mention but a few. One need only look at the diverse range of issues handled by the Centre to understand how pivotal its role as a public service is”. This programme is a fantastic opportunity for students to be made aware of the circumstances surrounding sexual abuse.



From left to right: Miriam Duffy, Steve Cowhey, Mary Harty , Cathaoirleach, County Council, Eddie Lynch, Verena Tarpey, Eugene Phelan, Limerick County Council., Aileen Rouine.

Triona O’Connor—Volunteer Counselling Course

I began the training in 2010, the time has just flown by - I have loved the experience of being a part of this course, I have met some amazing women and made some life long friends! I was very nervous at the beginning as I did not know what to expect. Would I be good enough, could I handle what I was hearing, would I fit in! All these fears were dealt with almost immediately when we sat in the room that first weekend - I felt happy to be there and totally supported by Ingrid, Fiona and the others in the group. For me, I've developed as a person so much and I've grown in confidence over the past year or more. It has been a fantastic experience, but difficult at times. The issues we discuss are almost taboo in our culture, it's easier to pretend that bad things don't happen - but they do.

In this course I have learned to just sit with someone during a time in their lives that most might choose not too, this is a privilege. I have enjoyed the times on this course where I have had a "light-bulb" moment and I will be forever changed by the experience. I have felt anger, sadness and happiness at the stories I have heard - as should everyone! By increasing my awareness around rape and the issues, I have in turn made others aware, this is what we must all do. I look forward to the last few weekends with the group of women. I have learned the difference The Rape Crisis Centre makes to people's life's. I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank all involved especially Fiona and Ingrid for their support and encouragement.

Seminar highlights interagency collaboration in relation to investigation of sexual offences in Midwest Region.

A civil answer to a criminal question? – Thursday 17 November 2011.

Thomond Park was host to a seminar attended by over 45 people involving a discussion of the laws of sexual offences in Ireland. Organised by Rape Crisis Midwest, the speakers focused on the criminal prosecution of sexual offences and alternative options for compensation for victims of rape and sexual assault.

The seminar was attended by senior members of An Garda Síochána including Inspectors and Detective Sergeants, Solicitors, Barristers, HSE personnel, Probation Service personnel and counsellors.

Aisling Wall, Assistant to Policy Director of Rape Crisis Network of Ireland outlined the various sexual offences including the offence of marital rape, introduced in 1990 with only one successful prosecution under this legislation in over 20 years. The findings of a report published in 2010 (Rape and Justice in Ireland) were also discussed – in particular the fact that alcohol consumption was a significant factor by victim and defendant when allegations of sexual assault were made and this - it was argued was a major factor in the decision not to prosecute a vast number of offences owing to evidential difficulties.

Laurance Goucher spoke of alternative options to the criminal route in relation to compensation by victims for a sexual assault or rape. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal, Department of Justice will award compensation to victims who have suffered a personal injury as a result of criminal act, including rape and sexual assault. In addition, a victim can take a Personal Injuries claim (through PIAB) in the civil courts for compensation arising out of a sexual assault. It was explained that the burden of proof for a successful case would be lower than the criminal standard of ‘beyond all reasonable doubt’.

The work carried out by the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit in Dooradoyle was highlighted as an example of how Gardai, Rape Crisis and HSE interact in delivering services to victims of sexual assault in the Midwest. A specialist unit in Henry Street Garda Station enables this work to be carried out by skilled officers in communication with the Rape Crisis Centre.



Picture on the left shows Carmel O’Sullivan, Tammy Mitchell, Aisling Dwane and Sergeant Larry Galvin, Henry Street Garda Station



Picture on right: shows Inspector John O’Reilly, John Herbert Solicitor (John Herbert & Co), Verena Tarpey, Rape Crisis, Midwest, Pat Whymes Barrister, Thomas Kiely Solicitor (Ted McCarthy & Co).

Website Launch— 27 October 2011.

Rape Crisis Midwest launched their newly designed website www.rapecrisis.ie at Limerick City Hall. *The newly designed website will give comprehensive advice and support links to survivors of sexual abuse and those in the aftermath of rape and sexual assault” says Miriam Duffy, Executive Director.*



Pictured from left to right: Miriam Duffy, Kieran O'Donnell T.D. and Ingrid Wallace, Rape Crisis Midwest.



We are now on Facebook – please make friends with us by simply searching for Rape Crisis Midwest and press like



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RAPE CRISIS
M I D W E S T

Rape Crisis Midwest was founded over 31 years ago in Limerick to provide support, information and counselling services to survivors of rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse and incest. Our Head Office is based at Phoenix House, Punch's Close, Rosbrien Road, Limerick and we have full-time outreach centres inBOOK Ennis and Nenagh. We provide a number of services to survivors of sexual violence including the following:

1. Telephone and One to One Counselling—free confidential crisis, long term and telephone counseling.
2. Court & Garda Accompaniment
3. Sexual Assault Treatment Unit workers (SATU) - trained volunteers to accompany clients to the Forensic Medical Examination.
4. Training and educational programme