

**Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts/Center for Living and Working
Promising Practices in Serving Crime Victims with Disabilities**

Informed Consent/Confidentiality Form

We deeply appreciate your willingness to share your stories and your knowledge about the experiences of people with disabilities when it comes to personal safety in their communities. We are gathering information about barriers to reporting sexual assault and barriers to accessing services for healing and recovery following a sexual assault. We will be gathering information throughout November and December of 2003 and into January of 2004. This information will form the basis of a strategic plan being developed by the RCCCM and the CLW as part of a three-year grant called "Promising Practices in Serving Crime Victims with Disabilities." The strategic plan will be completed by the end of February 2004. Participation in the Conversation Group allows people with disabilities to inform what changes are needed to eliminate barriers for people with disabilities who seek to report violent crimes.

You have the right to withdraw from participation at any time. You also have a right to confidentiality with some exceptions, which are required by the State of Massachusetts. Briefly, these laws require the reporting of child abuse, caregiver abuse of people with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 59, criminal activity against people with disabilities between the ages of 19 and 59, and the reporting of elder abuse by caregivers of people age 60 and of criminal activity committed against elders age 60 and over. We must report when people are a danger to themselves or others.

We ask that participants in the group respect the privacy of others and agree to keep confidential anything that is shared in the group. This means not repeating stories you heard in the group outside the group. It also means not sharing the names of other group members with anyone outside the group. You understand, in making this pledge to keep confidential everything that is said and done in the group, that sometimes mistakes happen and information can be inappropriately shared. With this in mind, you are aware that someone with a legal interest could subpoena information shared in the group.

Your name, or personal identifying information will not be shared outside the Conversation Group itself, which includes the project staff present at the time and the group participants. We are looking for themes and common experiences that will help change policies. This aggregate information will become part of a written document to be submitted to SafePlace, Austin, Texas as part of the national grant entitled "Promising Practices in Serving Crime Victims with Disabilities."

Throughout this process, you have the right to ask questions and receive answers. You have a right to receive referrals and resources for dealing with any discomfort that may arise from the material being discussed. You have the right to have a counselor present to address any discomfort you may have. Discussions with RCCCM counselors are

privileged by law and cannot be subpoenaed, with the exception of mandated reporting requirements.

“I understand that my participation is completely voluntary. I understand the risks involved and know that I can withdraw from participation at any time. I understand that my privacy will be respected as allowable by law. I agree to keep confidential everything that is discussed in the group. I understand that I will receive a \$20.00 cash stipend upon completion of the group.

(Signature)

(Print name)

(Date)