

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

**Screening Interview for Conversation Group**

**First Name:** (Only) \_\_\_\_\_

**My safe phone number is** \_\_\_\_\_

**Best times to reach me are:** Morning \_\_\_\_\_ Afternoon \_\_\_\_\_ Night \_\_\_\_\_

**Best time for me to attend group:** 10-12 \_\_\_\_\_ 1-3 \_\_\_\_\_ 3-5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6-8 \_\_\_\_\_

**Childcare needs:** names and ages of children \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Accommodations needed for children:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Accommodations:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose of Conversation Groups:** The Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts and the Center for Living and Working are collaborating on a three-year grant called “Promising Practices: Serving Crime Victims with Disabilities.” We have received this grant from SafePlace, a domestic violence, sexual assault agency in Austin, Texas. In the first year of the grant we want to talk with people in the disability community about what happens to them when they are crime victims. Do they get the support they need in reporting crimes to the police and law enforcement agencies? Do they know where to go for support and healing? What are the barriers people with disabilities encounter in reporting crimes and in getting help from social service agencies? The conversation groups are a way for people with disabilities to share their concerns about safety in their community.

The first year of the grant is about getting gathering information and identifying needs. Several conversation groups will be held throughout Worcester County to allow for as many people with disabilities to inform this process as possible. We want people to feel safe in their participation. The conversation groups will be held at the Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts. This is a safe location where many other social service agencies are located, including agencies that serve people with disabilities, such as the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and the Audiojournal, a radio program that

provides audio services to people who are visually impaired. The RCCCM is located at 799 West Boylston Street, Worcester. There is a bus stop directly in front of the building. The building has wheelchair ramp off the side parking lot. There are accessible restrooms.

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### **What are your expectations in participating in the conversation Groups?**

The conversation groups will benefit people with disabilities in Worcester County who are crime victims. The disability community as a whole will inform how money will be spent in the second year of the grant to implement policies that will make it easier for people with disabilities to report sexual assaults and receive better service in healing from the aftermath of this crime. The conversation groups will not benefit a single individual. We are looking for themes and common experiences of many people. Counselors will have resources and referral information available for those who indicate a need for follow up services at any point in the process of participating in the grant.

**Safety Considerations:** Any information that people with disabilities share regarding their experiences with crime is greatly appreciated. We do not want people to share at the expense of personal safety. Some safety issues to consider are:

**Emotional triggers** – It is possible an issue might be raised in the group that could be upsetting. Counselors will be on hand to help people deal with that. It is also helpful to think about this in advance so that self-care measures can be put in place beforehand. Do you have some thoughts about this? What needs do you have in this area?

**Limits of confidentiality** – Do you have a legal case pending in court? If so, there are considerations it is important for you to know about. There is only a slight chance that any information you share in the conversation group would become available to the courts; however it is important to know that there are limitations to confidentiality laws that allow for information to be subpoenaed. This does not mean that it would not be beneficial for you to participate. It does mean it would be important to not share information in the group that would jeopardize your court case in any way. Any conversations you may have with an individual counselor from the Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts cannot be subpoenaed and used against you in a court of law, except for those situations covered by the mandated reporting laws of Massachusetts.

**Mandated reporting** - By Massachusetts law, we are required to report instances where a child under 18 is being abused. Between the ages of 18 and 59 we are required to report instances where people with disabilities are being abused by caregivers. We are also mandated to report known criminal activity involving people with disabilities to the DPCC Hotline. Over 60 years of age, we are

mandated to report known criminal activity to the elder abuse hotline. In all cases we are mandated to report individuals who are a danger to themselves or others.

**Confidentiality:** We are asking that everyone involved in the conversation groups, staff and participants, take a pledge to respect the confidentiality of all who share their experiences and stories. The groups will not be recorded or videotaped. We will take notes and use newsprint. This information will be used to identify themes and common experiences. No information will ever be used that betrays the identity of individuals.

**Trained counselors are available:** There will be a trained counselor from the Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts available to you before, during and after your participation in the disability project. If you choose to participate in the conversation group, there will be a counselor available should you need one at any time during or after the group. If you need follow up services, referrals, and resources will be made available to you. At any time, you are welcome to contact the RCCCM from 9am to 5pm and speak to a hotline counselor here. After five, you can call the hotline at 1-800-870-5905. It is important to know that you can leave the conversation group if you do not feel comfortable at any time.

**Anonymous survey:** At end of the group, we ask that participants complete an anonymous survey. This survey will provide valuable information about your experiences with violence. If you have information to contribute that you do not feel comfortable sharing in public, the survey provides an opportunity to be specific, without fear of mandated reporting concerns. Confidentiality is implicitly guaranteed in this process. Also, you may after pre-screening, decide that you want to participate only by filling out a survey. We welcome and respect this decision.

**How information will be used:** All information from the conversation groups and surveys will be used to determine how monies will be spent in our second grant year to make reporting sexual assaults and receiving follow-up services for sexual assault more usable and accessible to people with disabilities. No personal identifying information will be kept. We are looking for commonalities and themes from participants' experiences that would show us where policy change is needed. The information will be shared between the RCCCM, the CLW, SafePlace, and the Community Advisory Group involved in this project. From our conversations with you and from the consumer survey we collect, we will develop a strategic plan for the addressing the concerns you have expressed. Your participation will directly inform this process. We appreciate your courage, insight and support in participating in this process.

**Informed consent:** We are asking that you sign an informed consent form acknowledging your awareness of the process and risks involved in participating in the Conversation Groups.

**Stipend:** A one-time stipend of \$20.00 will be paid to those who participate in the conversation groups. It will be paid at the end of the group. You will be asked to sign a

form acknowledging that you have received the stipend. Only your first name will be required.

**Refreshments:** Refreshments will be served one-half hour before the group begins.

**Follow-up:** Within seven to ten days of your participation in a Conversation Group someone from RCCCM will contact you by telephone to see how you are feeling about participating. We will be providing abuse prevention and safety planning sessions for those who want them. We will notify you of dates and times of these sessions.

**Other questions or concerns:** Is there anything we have not discussed that you would like to ask about or share?

**Thank you**