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nmsahelp.org

For Immediate Release
Monday, October 21, 2024
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Statewide Sexual Assault Helpline Launches Today

New helpline builds capacity for New Mexico providers and survivors

Albuquerque, NM - Today, the New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (NMCSAP) launched the New Mexico Sexual Assault Helpline (NMSA Helpline), a survivor-centered support system built to connect survivors to someone trained to listen and direct them to a local program as needed.

The NMSA Helpline is accessible 24/7 by phone, text, and online chat. Survivors can call or text 1-844-667-2457 or access the Helpline and online chat functions at nmsahelp.org. It has been built by New Mexicans for everyone in New Mexico to give survivors anonymous, confidential connection. The Helpline has been designed with language accessibility options and bilingual staff and interpretation services are available for those seeking services in languages other than English.

“The NMSA Helpline is a labor of love, built for and dedicated to all of the sexual assault programs that have been doing this work with us for decades. The hard truth is that even with our state-wide coalition, the demand for services outweighs what is available resource-wise,” says Alexandria Taylor, executive director of the New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs. “The Helpline is a resource to build that connection where one program might be at capacity for the day, but now they can refer people to call, text, or chat with our Helpline responders at any time of day, from

anywhere in the state so that folks who are seeking help can find it with us.”

A recent NMCSAP sponsored victimization study, the first of its kind in New Mexico in the last two decades, identified that 76.1% of New Mexicans affected by sexual assault are not making it to help resources. The full data from this survey will be released in the coming months ahead of the 2025 New Mexico Legislative Session.

One of the largest gaps in sexual assault support in New Mexico is service to rural communities—resources are particularly sparse across central and eastern New Mexico. Built with existing programs in mind, the Helpline is meant to bolster support programs by offering survivors a way to reach out for help after sexual assault even if they need assistance outside of the physical range of existing services or outside of these programs’ operating hours.

“Our communities are stronger when they’re connected and supported. Strong, healthy communities are built and sustained through connection—healing from sexual assault is no different,” says Rachel Cox, deputy director of programs of NMCSAP. “For survivors in need of support, the Helpline builds a bridge between the network of existing services by connecting them to a fellow New Mexican trained to listen and connect.”

During COVID-19 shutdowns in 2020, the new dynamic of isolation created immense challenges for survivors. Isolated survivors were without their support systems - their families and communities - and distance from rural communities to sexual assault services seemed to grow wider. The pandemic revealed the need for a layer of statewide coordination to ensure that survivors across NM had access to services and connection to support. NMCSAP took on this complex challenge and began taking thoughtful steps to build a solution that would work for New Mexico’s unique communities. The NM Sexual Assault Helpline now exists as a bridge for survivors of sexual assault to the network of existing services, connection and support.

The New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (NMCSAP) provides education, support, and advocacy to address all aspects of preventing and responding to sexual violence in NM from an anti-racist, anti-oppression foundation. Learn more at <https://nmcsap.org>.

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