



# Galway Rape Crisis Centre

SERVICES FOR SEXUAL  
TRAUMA & ABUSE

The Lodge, Forster Court, Galway, 091-56480

## Psychological Support Team

### Information Pack

**Thank you for your interest in volunteering with us, this service only exists due to the kindness and generosity of spirit of our valued Volunteers**

#### **Who are we looking to volunteer**

We are looking for female volunteers, aged 25 years and upwards to support and advocate for survivors in the aftermath of a sexual assault or rape.

#### **It is essential that all volunteers are:**

- Empathic, non-judgemental, respectful, committed to the role and reliable.
- Good listeners with good communication and interpersonal skills.
- Available to commit to 100% of Training Dates.
- Willing to attend 10 hrs. of personal therapy during the training days, with an Accredited Psychotherapist, this will be at their own cost.
- Previous experience of personal therapy is desirable not essential.
- Able to draw on life experiences where they have been supported and/or have supported others.
- Open to self-reflection and group work process.
- Living within a 40 minute drive from Galway City centre.

- Able to commit for 2 years (3 times per month on the roster) after successful completion of the training process.
- Willing to follow guidelines and represent the GRCC in a positive manner
- Computer literate.

### **What will you receive**

- Full Training which includes all the theory and practise required for the role.
- There is also a strong emphasis on personal development throughout the training and within the role.
- Monthly Supervision and ongoing support from the Psychological Support Team Manager.
- Out of pocket expenses whilst volunteering.
- On-going training opportunities.
- The opportunity to make a difference and to be part of an organisation made up of dynamic and passionate individuals who provide a much needed service for Galway and surrounding counties.

### **What is the Selection Process**

**Due to the fact that we work with vulnerable people aged 14 years and upwards, we have a comprehensive selection and ongoing screening process.**

#### **This includes:**

- Online application form.
- Group and/or individual interviews.
- 60 hours of training.
- Reviews during training and at the end of training.
- 3 month shadowing and probationary period (10 shifts on call)
- Garda Vetting.

## What is the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

- **The Sexual Assault Treatment Unit** has been providing specialist care for females and males aged 14 years and over who were recently sexually assaulted or raped. The Galway SATU opened in August 2009.
- The specialist team of SATU staff provide easily accessible holistic services, in a supportive and sensitive manner.
- The service addresses the medical, psychological/emotional needs and appropriate follow up care needs for survivors of sexual crime.
- This includes provision of treatment such as emergency contraception and medication to reduce the possibility of developing a sexually transmitted infection.
- The SATU services respond to requests from the Gardaí for the collection of forensic evidence to aid the legal process. If a person wishes to report an incident to An Garda Síochána, this should be done as quickly as possible and delays should be avoided.
- SATU also provide services for people who do not wish to report the incident to the Gardaí.
- There is no charge for any of the SATU services or follow up appointments. SATU services can be contacted at any time via An Garda Síochána, or by contacting the individual SATU.
- The psychological support within the Galway SATU is a 24/7 service provided by Galway Rape Crisis Centre Psychological Support Team.
- GRCC Psychological Support Team services to the SATU unit operate under best practise principles based on national guidelines.
- Best practise indicates that psychological support is provided by **female** Psychological Supporters.
- Best practise also advises a response timeframe of one hour, which means that applicants should live **no further than 40 minute drive** from Galway City.

## What is the role of the Psychological Support Team

The role of the Psychological Support Team is outlined in the SATU National Guidelines (4<sup>th</sup>ed.) and is defined as follows:

- **Supporting survivors through each component of the SATU service that they choose.**  
This includes deciding whether to have a Forensic Clinical Examination or a Health Check, going through an Examination or Health Check and speaking with An Garda Síochána.
- **Serving as an information resource for survivors.**
- **Providing survivors with crisis intervention and support** to help cope with the trauma of the assault and begin the healing process.
- **Actively listening to survivors** to assist in sorting through and identifying their feelings.
- **Letting survivors know their reactions to the assault are normal** and dispelling misconceptions regarding sexual assault.
- **Advocating for survivors' self-articulated needs to be identified and their choices to be respected**, as well as advocating for appropriate and coordinated response by all involved professionals.
- **Assisting survivors in planning for their safety and well-being.**
- **Aiding survivors in identifying individuals who could support them as they heal.**
- **Linking survivors with relevant services.**
- **Responding in a culturally and linguistically sensitive and appropriate manner** to survivors from different backgrounds and circumstances and advocating for the elimination of barriers to communication.

## **What is involved in the Training**

### **Stage 1 Core Psychological Support Team Training**

We offer a specialised training which equips trainees with the core skills required to support and advocate for a survivor in the aftermath of a sexual assault and rape.

The training consists of twelve training days. We put strong emphasis on creating a safe learning environment that provides a space to explore the impact of sexual violence.

Our training is evidence based using an approach of mixed learning methods which have been shown to get the best outcomes for learners.

Furthermore, the training is based on a best practise approach in relation to both supporting survivors and managing the impact of trauma on the Psychological Supporter.

#### **Methods used include:**

- Presentations
- Brainstorming
- Experiential exercises
- Reflective practise
- Role plays
- Experiential work involving artwork
- Skills practice in pairs and in small groups
- Group discussions

#### **Some of the topics covered:**

- The History of RCC's
- Role of Psychological Support Team
- Myths around Sexual Violence
- Rape and the Law
- Trauma and its impact on the survivor
- Vicarious Trauma and Self-Care
- Active Listening
- Consent
- Reflective Practise
- Crisis Intervention

## **The Psychological Support Team Training also includes specialist input from members of the SATU multi-disciplinary team and An Garda Síochána.**

The role of the Gardaí within the SATU and the legal process including reporting a sexual assault or rape.

Clinical Nurse Specialist- history of SATU, role of the forensic examiner, forensic examination, medical care, after care and procedures.

### **What we ask of Stage 1 Trainees:**

- 100% attendance at our twelve days training – this is essential as each individual weekend builds on the skills and knowledge from the previous weekend.
- Openness to self-reflection, feedback and direction.
- Willingness to participate in the personal development aspect of the training.
- To engage with the material.
- Group participation.
- Genuine interest in supporting survivors.
- To engage in a minimum of 10 hours of personal therapy (cost incurred by trainees)
- To meet individually with trainers for mid-term-mentoring/assessment and again at the end of the core training block.

### **Stage 2 Induction and Shadowing Program**

Successful trainees of the first Stage will be invited to the induction day and the shadowing program.

**Induction** is one additional training day which covers the practicalities and procedures of the role together with a visit to the SATU Unit.

**Shadowing Program** is a three month placement where the Psychological Support Team Manager provides telephone support and mentoring to each trainee while on call and during their first case at the SATU. This gives the Psychological Support Team Manager an opportunity to support and mentor the trainee Psychological Supporter as they gain a greater insight into the practicalities of the role and the challenges they may face.

## **What we ask of Stage 2 Trainees:**

- Be on call for three times per month chosen by you  
Day Roster: Mon-Sun: 9.30am to 5.30pm  
Night Roster: Mon-Sun: 5.30pm to 9.30am
- Attend monthly group supervision
- Follow all policies and procedures
- Be open to feedback, self-reflection and support

## **After completion of both stages of the training successful trainees will be invited to join the GRCC Psychological Support Team and asked to:**

- Commit to a minimum of two years'
- Be on call for three times per month chosen by you  
Day Roster: Mon-Sun: 9.30am to 5.30pm  
Night Roster: Mon-Sun: 5.30pm to 9.30am
- Attend monthly group supervision
- Work as part of a team
- Follow policies and procedures of GRCC
- Take on the Role of Roster Manager on a rotational basis.  
This requires diverting the telephone to the relevant Psychological Supporter on call.