



“Forensic nursing is the practice of nursing globally when health and legal systems intersect”  
IAFN

CRMC FORENSIC NURSING DEPARTMENT

# Defined: The Forensic Nurse Examiner

A forensic nurse is a nurse who provides specialized care for patients who are victims and/or perpetrators of trauma (both intentional and unintentional).

Forensic Nurses are **NURSES** first and foremost. However, the specialized role and education of forensic nurses goes far beyond medical care; forensic nurses also have a specialized knowledge of the legal system and skills in injury identification, evaluation and documentation. After attending to a patient's immediate medical needs, a forensic nurse often collects evidence, provides medical testimony in court, and consults with legal authorities.

# Training and Funding

- ▶ Specially trained in evidence collection with the Wyoming kits
- ▶ Court trained
- ▶ Specialized training for each type of victim we may serve with even more training for the sexual assaults
- ▶ We are a partially grant funded program through the Wyoming Division of Victim Services and truly blessed to have generous support from CRMC and our foundation

# What Do We Do?



- ▶ Sexual Assault (Adult, Adolescent, and Child)
- ▶ Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)
- ▶ Child Abuse
- ▶ Strangulation
- ▶ Elder Abuse
- ▶ Human Trafficking
- ▶ Physical Assaults
- ▶ Suspect (Evidence collection and photography)

# Role of The Forensic Nurse Examiner

The PRIMARY role of the Forensic Nurse is to assess, medically observe & evaluate, refer, and coordinate care of the victim of violence/assault.

The Forensic Nurse works to ensure the best medical outcome for the patient while providing the opportunity for the collection and preservation of forensic evidence.

*Assists in coordination of victim cooperation with law enforcement, safety planning, and follow up medical care.*

# Forensic Nursing Department Services

Head to toe  
medical forensic  
examination

Thorough  
documentation of  
patient assault

Medical Forensic  
Photography

Biological  
evidence  
collection

Prophylactic  
medications for STI  
and pregnancy  
prevention

1:1 trauma  
informed care for  
the patient

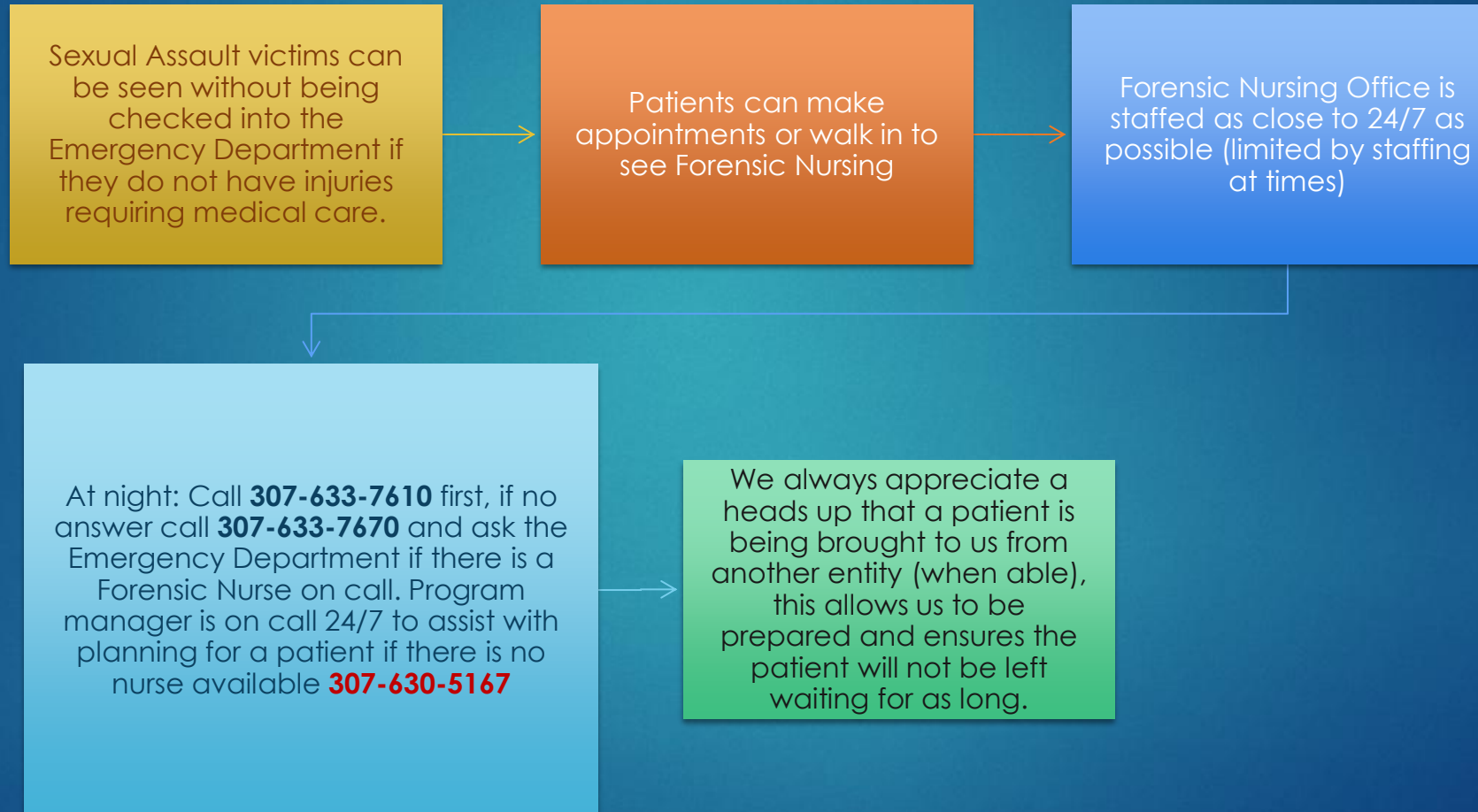
Provide community  
resources specific  
to patient need

Obtain patient  
advocates

Assist patient with  
contacting law  
enforcement to  
report

Forensic nurse  
court testimony

# Forensic Nursing Department Process





# Exam Process

- ▶ The patient will present to the emergency department and request to see the forensic nurse.





# Exam Process

- ▶ The patient will be brought back to the private forensic consult and exam rooms.
- ▶ The patient is **ALWAYS** allowed to choose which portions of the exam are and are not performed.

# Exam Process

- ▶ The nurse will explain the patient's exam and reporting options and the patient will provide the history of their assault in the consultation room.
- ▶ The patient may have support people and advocates present with them so long as they are not a danger to safety. They may be asked to step out of the room for portions of the exam.



# Exam Process

- ▶ The patient will be moved to the exam room for the physical exam.
- ▶ Detailed photography of patient injuries and healthy tissue is the standard of care.
- ▶ Patients will be asked to leave clothing that was worn during the assault for evidence.





# Collecting Records

- ▶ Direct Number: **307-633-7925**
- ▶ Check in at the admissions desk to collect records
- ▶ We do not release records out of our office





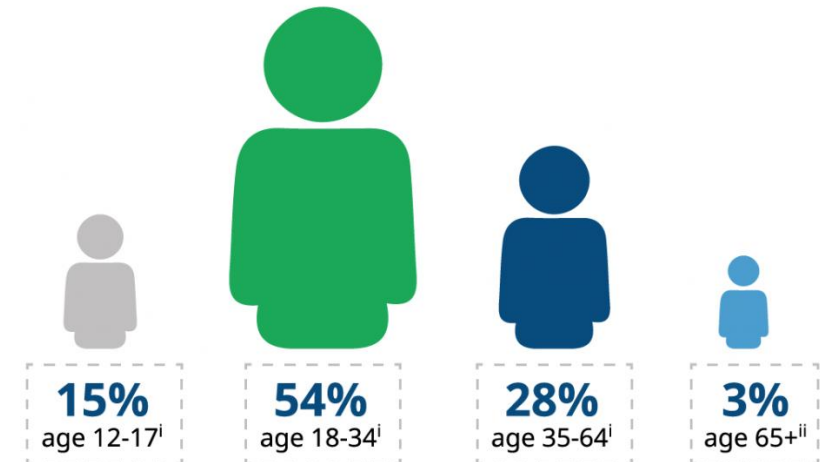
# Sensitive Information

# Facts: Sexual Assault

- ▶ **1 out of every 6** American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime.
  - ▶ **9 out of 10 victims** of Sexual Assault are female.
- ▶ About **3% of American men**—or **1 in 33\***—have experienced an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime.
- ▶ The **majority of child victims are 12-17**.
  - ▶ Of victims under the age of 18: 34% of victims of sexual assault and rape are under age 12, and 66% of victims of sexual assault and rape are age 12-17.

RAINN, NSVRC

## THE MAJORITY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS ARE UNDER 30



RAINN

National Sexual Assault Hotline | 800.656.HOPE | [online.rainn.org](https://online.rainn.org)  
Please visit [rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence](https://rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence) for full citation.<sup>2</sup>

## Facts: Domestic violence/ Intimate Partner Violence

- ▶ On average, nearly **20 people per minute** are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. In the course of one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men.
- ▶ **1 in 3 women** and **1 in 4 men** have been victims of [some form of] physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime.
- ▶ **1 in 15 children** are exposed to intimate partner violence each year, and 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence.



# Power and Control Wheel



# Facts: Child Abuse

- ▶ More than 702,000 children are abused in the U.S annually.
  - ▶ **Almost 40% were a parent or caregiver of the child victim.**
  - ▶ **90% of alleged abusers were related** in some way to the child victim.
  - ▶ Child Protective Services agencies substantiated, or found strong evidence to indicate that, **63,000 children a year** were victims of sexual abuse.

# Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

► Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the child or vulnerable adult has one or more of the following indications:

- Unexplained burns, bites, bruises or black eyes
- Bone fractures-spiral fracture of the femur and skull fractures
- Seems frightened of the parents or care- taker
- Favoring or avoiding contact with a body part
- Covering or hiding certain body parts
- Limping that was not noticed before
- Wounds that have similarity to items found around the home

(For example, puncture wounds from a hairbrush, or burns from cigarettes etc)

- Untreated injuries in various stages of healing
- Sprains, dislocations
- Reports someone physically is hurting them
- Aggressive, disruptive and/or destructive behavior

# Facts: Human Trafficking

- ▶ The International Labour Organization estimates that there are 20.9 million victims of human trafficking globally.
  - ▶ 68% of them are trapped in forced labor.
  - ▶ 26% of them are children.
  - ▶ 55% are women and girls.
- ▶ An estimated **1 out of 5** endangered runaways reported to the (US) National Center for Missing and Exploited Children were likely **child sex trafficking victims**.
  - ▶ *Of those, 74% were in the care of social services or foster care when they ran.*

# The Experience of Trauma

*“Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.”*

**— Judith Herman,**  
*Trauma and Recovery*



Traumatization occurs when both internal and external resources are inadequate to cope with external threat.



The mind and body reacts in its own unique way to the traumatic experience



A traumatic experience impacts the entire person.



The way we think, the way we learn, the way we remember things, the way we feel about ourselves, the way we feel about other people, and the way we make sense of the world are all profoundly altered by traumatic experience.

# Trauma: The ACEs Study (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

- ▶ *The study showed direct and consistent links between trauma in childhood leading to the onset of chronic disease and ongoing social disparities into adulthood.*

[CDC-Kaiser Adverse Childhood Experiences Study](#)

The 10 ACEs the researchers measured:

- ✧ Physical, sexual and verbal abuse.
- ✧ Physical and emotional neglect.
- ✧ A family member who is:
  - ✧ Depressed or diagnosed with other mental illness;
  - ✧ Addicted to alcohol or another substance
  - ✧ In prison.
- ✧ Witnessing a mother being abused.
- ✧ Losing a parent to separation, divorce or other reason.



# Trauma Informed Care Tips & Tricks

Many victims have a history of negative interactions with previous victimizations.

Patients are within their rights to decline ANY services provided at the hospital unless court ordered or under involuntary hold.

Get creative, offer options, return later if possible.

Forensic Nursing Exams are often traumatic, and many patients choose not to complete them.



# How to Become Trauma Informed

- ▶ Trauma-informed care acknowledges that understanding a patient's life experiences is key to potentially improving engagement and outcomes while lowering unnecessary utilization.
- ▶ In order to be successful, trauma-informed care must be adopted at the organizational and clinical levels.
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOoNIpr-7Tk>

# Who are the Forensic Nurses

- ▶ Forensic Nursing Office (307) 633-7610
- ▶ Barbara Horton MBA, BSN, RN- Forensic Nursing Program Manager

Personal Cell- (307) 630-5167

Email- [Barbara.horton@crmcwy.org](mailto:Barbara.horton@crmcwy.org)

Office- (307) 633-3050

- ▶ Karley Taylor BSN, RN
- ▶ Susan Brock ADN, RN
- ▶ Julianne Lukassen BSN, RN

