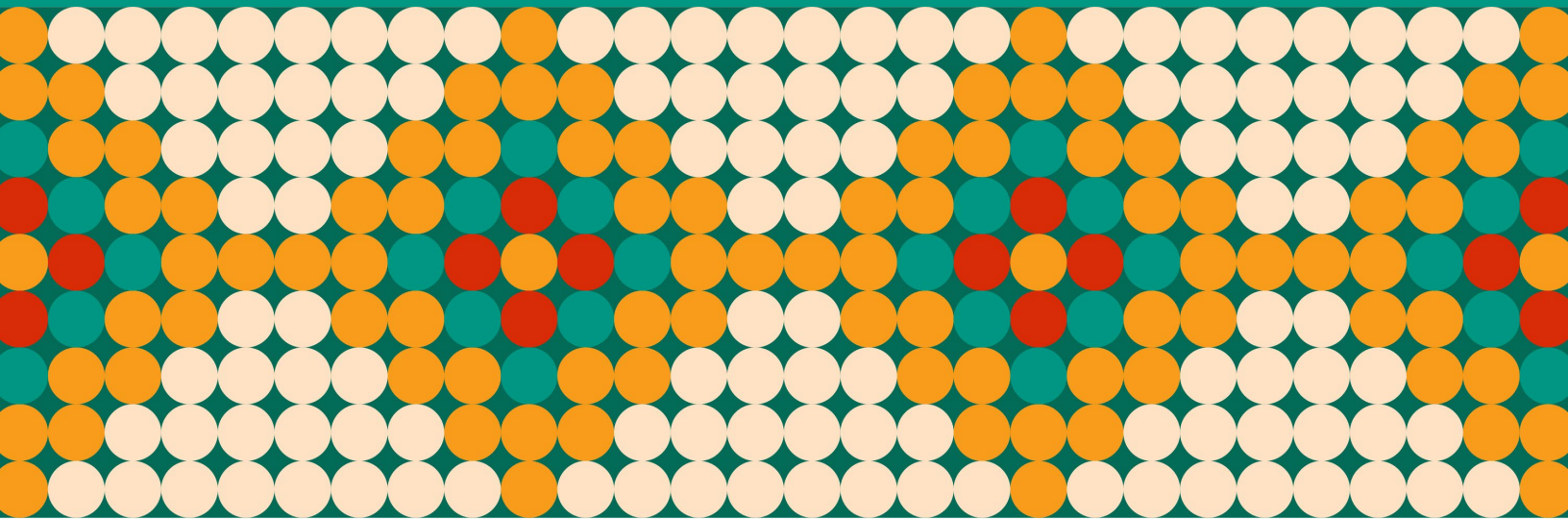


You are in Control

Information about medical forensic exams and
Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners



**Urban Indian
Health Institute**
A Division of the Seattle Indian Health Board

Seeking medical attention after a sexual assault can be difficult and retraumatizing, but it is important to take care of your health and can be a critical step in bringing perpetrators to justice. Medical forensic exams are available at emergency rooms and are always free. Having a forensic medical examination completed by a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE nurse) allows for a specially trained nurse to care for you and collect evidence that can be instrumental in getting a conviction, should you choose to do so. You have the right to crisis intervention, counseling, support, medical care, and legal services, regardless of whether the assault is reported to law enforcement





SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN NATIVE COMMUNITIES, A BACKGROUND

More than 84% of American Indian and Alaska Native women and more than 81% of American Indian and Alaska Native men have experienced violence in their lifetimes. Those numbers amount to over 1.5 million and 1.4 million, respectively. Of the over 84% of Native women, over 55% of them experienced sexual violence; of the over 81% of Native men, over 25% of them experienced sexual violence.¹

Sexual violence is a devastating problem in urban, rural, and tribal Native communities. Because of systemic racism and a history of mistreatment by law enforcement and medical practitioners, law enforcement and medical systems have eroded trust within Native communities.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners are your allies.

A SANE nurse is a registered nurse with special education and training to care for people who have experienced sexual violence and collect evidence that could be used in court. They provide information and support to you so you can make the best healthcare decisions for yourself.²

After you experience a sexual assault, if you choose to seek medical treatment, a SANE nurse will do a forensic medical exam during which they will



care for you and your injuries.



collect any evidence available.



refer you to crisis intervention, support services, and necessary medical follow up care.



YOU ARE IN CONTROL DURING A FORENSIC MEDICAL EXAM

Forensic medical exams for sexual assault are always free of charge. You are in complete control of what happens during the exam and what procedures the nurse does. Reporting to the police is never required unless a child has been assaulted—then reporting is mandatory.

During the exam, with your consent the nurse will



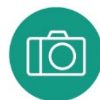
take a medical history.



identify and care for any injuries you may have sustained.*



collect physical evidence.*



take photos of injuries if needed.*



assess your risk of sexually transmitted diseases and give preventative treatment when necessary.*



assess your risk of pregnancy and provide emergency prevention options.*



give crisis information and referral to support services and provide referrals for appropriate medical follow up.²

*This may include doing a pelvic exam or observing your genital area.



YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY ALWAYS COME FIRST

During a forensic medical exam, the SANE nurse will tell you exactly what they are doing and why, and you have the choice to refuse any part of the process.

You can have someone with you to act as your medical advocate—that person can be a friend, family member, or someone else you trust. All of your information is kept private and will not be released to anyone without your permission.²



YOU ARE IMPORTANT AND WORTH BEING CARED FOR

A SANE nurse can evaluate you within 96 hours (four days) of the assault. It is best, however, to call 911 or go to an emergency room right away so that evidence is not destroyed.

As difficult as it is to not clean yourself or change your clothes, having a forensic exam done by a SANE nurse without removing, damaging, or destroying evidence gives you the best chance at seeing your perpetrator convicted.

Any information about you or the exam is kept confidential—neither the perpetrator nor anyone in your community will know you had a forensic medical exam after an assault. Your health and safety are the most important thing during an exam, and remember, you can say “no” to any part of the process.

You are important and worth being cared for, acknowledged, and seen.

For more information about this topic and others, visit www.uihi.org.

It is recommended that you do not



wash yourself, brush your teeth, or rinse your mouth.



wash your hands or any wounds.



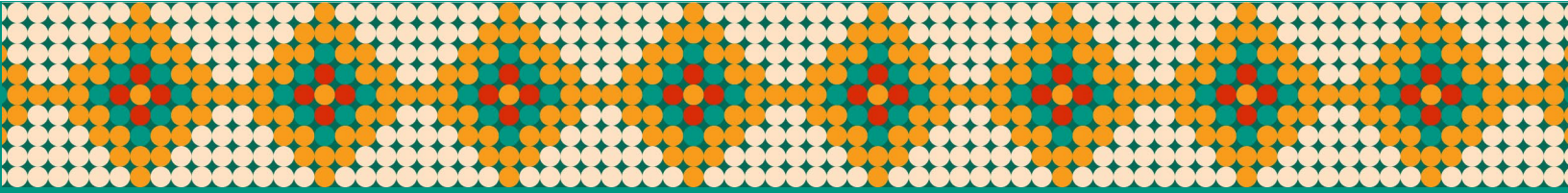
eat, drink, or go to the bathroom.



change your clothes.

REFERENCES

- 1 Rosay, André B., Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men: 2010 Findings from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2016, NCJ 249736.
- 2 Hospital PR. Sexual Assault Treatment & Resources: Pullman Regional Hospital. Sexual Assault Treatment & Resources | Pullman Regional Hospital. <https://www.pullmanregional.org/patient-care/services/emergency-care/sexual-assault-treatment-resources>. Accessed May 13, 2021.



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**Our mission is to decolonize data,
for indigenous people, by indigenous people.**
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