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What we are...

LACASA is a non profit organization. LACASA believes the crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse must be eliminated from our society; therefore, LACASA supports victimized adults and children, educates the community and encourages positive action. Legal Advocates at LACASA are responsible for knowing the laws and legal hurdles faced by survivors of domestic and sexual violence. All of our services for survivors, their friends and families are free and confidential.

What we are not...

Legal Advocates are not attorneys. We are not authorized to give legal advice. We can never represent you in Court. We do not work for the police or the Prosecutor's office. We will not pressure survivors to follow a certain course of action. We are a source of information and referral, to provide legal options to survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence and child abuse.

LACASA also offers...

24 Hour Crisis Lines, Emergency and Transitional Shelter, Counseling, Support Groups, On Call Response, Child Abuse Services, Sexual Assault Recovery Assistance, Children and Youth Services, Friend and Family Member Services, Batterer's Treatment Groups, Prevention and Education Services, Systems Change and Community Coordination.

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Resources

LACASA 24-Hour Toll-Free Crisis Line

866-522-2725

LACASA Legal Advocacy

517-548-1350

Livingston County Prosecutors Office

Victim/Witness Coordinator

517-546-1850

Livingston County Jail

517-546-2440

Legal Aid

517-546-8555

Livingston County Clerk's Office

517-546-9816

Friend of the Court

517-546-0230

Abuse crosses all lines, including race, gender, sexual orientation, physical/mental abilities, age, religion and income.

LACASA is committed to serving all individuals.

Mission Statement

LACASA believes that crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse must be eliminated from our society; therefore, LACASA supports and shelters victimized adults and children, educates the community and encourages positive action.



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LEGAL INTERVENTION PROJECT

Legal Advocacy for Survivors of Sexual Assault



Working to end domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse.

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Legal Advocacy Services

Legal Advocates provide free, confidential, and non-judgmental legal advocacy to survivors of sexual assault. A Legal Advocate will consider your safety while helping you to navigate the legal system. LACASA's Legal Advocacy services include:

Criminal Justice Advocacy

A Legal Advocate can accompany you to court, police departments, meetings with attorneys and prosecutors. We can explain the criminal prosecution and assist you in testifying. We will facilitate your participation in pre-sentence investigations and help you write a victim impact statement. If you choose not to participate in the legal process we can work to keep you informed of the case status.

Civil Advocacy

Legal Advocates can help you complete and file the paperwork needed to obtain a Personal Protection Order (Restraining Order). Assistance may also be provided for completing forms to access Crime Victims Compensation. If you decide to pursue a civil suit, LACASA can provide information and support through this process as well.

On Call Services

Once you go to the hospital or talk to the police, they may page a member of LACASA's On Call Team. This person will contact you to support you through the medical exam, answer questions that you may have, and discuss your options. The On Call Team does not work for the police and information that you share with them is confidential.

Frequently Asked Questions

- ◆ What are the different sexual assault charges?

In the legal system, sexual assault is called Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC). There are four main types.

- CSC 1 and 3: Involve vaginal, oral or anal penetration. The maximum sentence can be up to life for CSC 1 and up to 15 years for CSC 3.
- CSC 2 and 4: Involve sexual contact. The maximum sentence for CSC 2 is up to 15 years and CSC 4 is up to 2 years or \$500.

There may be other related charges and an Advocate can discuss these with you.

- ◆ What if the assailant and I had a past sexual relationship?


Regardless of who committed the crime, or what type of relationship you had, sexual assault is still against the law. Therefore, it is possible to prosecute spouses and dating partners.

- ◆ Do I have to speak to the defense attorney?

Some defense attorneys may attempt to contact you. You may speak to the attorney representing the assailant, but you are under no obligation to do so. If you do talk to them, you may want to contact a Legal Advocate at LACASA or the Victim/Witness Coordinator at the prosecutor's office. You can discuss this conversation to clear up any misunderstandings, doubts or questions.

- ◆ Will the media release my name?

In general, the media have a strict code of conduct that prohibits the release of any victim's name to the public, unless the victim agrees. This also applies to pictures of the victim.

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- ◆ What if the assailant and I are of the same gender?

Regardless of the perpetrator's gender, sexual touching without consent is still a crime. It is common for victims of same-gender sexual assault to feel more shame and embarrassment. However, do not let this stop you from coming forward. We can help support you through this process as well.

- ◆ What about child victims of sexual assault?

The charges are the same when a child is the victim. If your child has been victimized and will be testifying in court, LACASA can help. We can explain the court proceedings and roles of court personnel to your child. This way, we can diminish some of the confusion and fear related to going to court. LACASA also provides individual counseling and support groups for friends and family of the survivor.

- ◆ Do I have to testify?

If the case goes to trial you will probably be asked to testify. If you are subpoenaed as a witness, you must be present in court on the ordered date and time. If you feel that it is unsafe to testify, or if others pressure you not to testify, you can discuss this with us.

- ◆ Who presses charges against the defendant?

The prosecutor's office represents the People of Michigan and they decide whether or not to press charges. Your input is still very important and will be considered. It is not necessary for you to retain an attorney unless you decide to pursue civil action.

