

# *POST RAPE CARE*

## An advocacy toolkit

We believe that every survivor of a sexual offence should have access to care. Without specialised support services after the incident, survivors might find it difficult to participate in the criminal justice system. We want survivors to be able to choose if and how they fight for justice.

## What is Post Rape Care?

Post Rape Care refers to FIVE essential services that provide immediate physical, emotional and legal support to rape survivors.

Access to these support services is crucial for their well-being and gives them the opportunity to report the crime should they choose to.

The five components of post rape care are:

1. **Medical care**
2. **A forensic examination**
3. **Psycho-social support**
4. **Referral for longer term counselling**
5. **A means to report the rape to the police**

Ensuring that every survivor in South Africa has access to all five of these Post Rape Care components whether they are accessing them in Sandton or Matatiele is the change in the law that we are fighting for.

## The Importance of Post Rape Care

Per SAPS statistics in 2022 and 2023, more than 12,000 sexual offences are reported per quarter in South Africa. As a severely underreported crime, the number of reported sexual offences forms only a percentage of overall incidents of rape - meaning that MORE than 40,000 people in South Africa experience sexual offences and need access to Post Rape Care services annually.

Facilities like Thuthuzela Care Centres provide these essential services all in one place, for FREE. These services need to be protected by law so survivors have the RIGHT to access all five components of Post Rape Care nationwide.

In South Africa, the term 'sexual offences' includes rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, child pornography, incest, bestiality, and necrophilia – these include instances of compelled sexual acts, where either a third person is coerced to perform a sexual act, or an individual is coerced to perform a sexual act on themselves.

- The Criminal Law  
(Sexual Offences and Related Matters)  
Amendment Act 32 of 2007

## What is Our Ask?

PIZZA. We think of access to Post Rape Care the same way that we think about Debonairs Pizza – proudly South African, one in every mall and garage (700+ nationwide) and guaranteed quality taste.

When you walk into a Debonairs whether in Mpumalanga or Gauteng, you know what to expect. You can trust that you have access to the same menu, well-portioned ingredients and the trademark taste.

We propose that accessing Post Rape Care services should be the same.



A survivor accessing post rape care anywhere in South Africa should trust that they have access to:

1. **Medical care:** This includes the provision of PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis), emergency contraceptives, antibiotics and the treatment of any physical injuries.
2. **A forensic exam:** By an authorised and qualified medical professional in order to collect crucial physical evidence for potential investigation and prosecution of the case.
3. **Psycho-social support:** Containment counselling provides emotional support and helps a survivor cope with the trauma they have experienced.
4. **Referral:** For long-term counselling and support to address the psychological and emotional impacts of the assault.
5. **A means to report the rape to the police:** The option to report the sexual offence with the police without having to travel to a police station. This is enabled by coordination between the relevant stakeholders involved, namely: the Department of Health; Department of Social Development; National Prosecuting Authority; the police, NGO service providers.

There are less than 70 Thuthuzela Care Centres in our country. We need to advocate for the continued national rollout of Post Rape Care facilities like these so that ALL survivors in South Africa have access to these critical services.

## Survivors, What Are Your Rights?

If you have experienced sexual violence, it is important to understand the risks to your health, what your health rights are and how to access free health services. You do NOT need to open a case to access these services - you have a right to be assisted even if you only choose to open a case later, or not at all.

Doctors' advice is to get medical treatment as soon as possible to prevent sexually transmitted diseases. It is vital to get medical attention at a Post Rape Care facility within 72 hours, which is three days.

Even though it is not necessary to report the case to the police, you might want to preserve the medical evidence that can be found on your clothes, which should be wrapped in a newspaper NOT a plastic bag if you want to bring them with you.

At the Thuthuzela Care Centre, should you wish to report, the police will be called to take your statement and open a case.

Because you are also the victim of a crime and medical evidence can be used in court to make a stronger case against the rapist(s), there are some risks you need to know about when you go for medical treatment and intend to report the case:

- A rape kit can only be done within 72 hours after the rape so that DNA evidence can be collected. If you go later than that they will not be able to collect evidence like saliva, semen or blood from the rapist on your body.
- If you wash or change your clothing before going to the hospital, you might leave behind valuable evidence of the rape.
- If you remove your clothes but take them with you and put them in a plastic bag the evidence could be lost too. It is best to go in the clothes you were wearing and not to wash your body, but if you have removed your clothes take them with you in a cloth, paper bag or newspaper.





## Sexual Assault Examination Kit (SAEK) or Rape Kit

A set of specially made items and boxes used to gather forensic evidence and preserve it in a clean, uncontaminated package that can be transported to a forensic laboratory for analysis, in a case of sexual assault. This evidence can later be used to aid a criminal investigation.

### Why are TCCs so Important?

Survivors who go directly to specially designated post rape care facilities, such as the TCCs, have an overall improved experience with the criminal justice system because they can get all of the services they need in one place administered by trained staff. They also receive all of the information they need about what they can expect from the next steps of the journey. In order for survivors to choose to engage with the criminal justice system, they need comprehensive care as soon as possible after the incident, including the opportunity to report the crime.

The TCC model has received international recognition, but there are currently less than 70 such facilities across the country, most of which are established in metropolitan areas, leaving survivors living outside of these areas without access to the specialised services provided.

Our proposed solution is to advocate for the funded rollout of equitable and universal post rape care services across the country. This will provide survivors with the necessary care and enable them to engage with the criminal justice system if they should choose to do so. Our tactics for making this possible are as follows:





## 1. Research & Information Gathering:

- Identify and meet with key role players in different government departments to understand their influence and garner support.
- Collaborate with researchers to gather information on available services and the need for universal post rape care.



## 2. Lobbying:

- Lobby government decision-makers in relevant departments such as the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, Parliamentary Portfolio Committees, South African Police Services, National Prosecuting Authority, Department of Social Development, and Department of Health.
- Lobby for legislative amendments to protect post rape care services in the law.



## 3. Community Mobilization:

- Host regular community meetings to understand the challenges faced by communities within the criminal justice system to bring community issues to the forefront and advocate for systemic change.
- Assist members of parliament in raising questions to government officials, ensuring accountability to communities nationwide.





#### 4. Coalition Building:

- Work closely with other organisations which focus on sexual violence and judicial accountability to build a stronger voice as we advocate for comprehensive post rape care.



#### 5. Media Advocacy:

- Utilise existing strong relationships with print media, digital media, radio stations and television stations to disseminate campaign messages and advocate for change.
- Leverage social media platforms to reach a wide audience, distribute popular education materials, define post rape care services, highlight their benefits and our vision of the future – what would it look like when this campaign succeeds?



#### 6. Popular Education:

- Like this toolkit, our popular education materials are used for both awareness raising and influencing. They will provide our campaign with a physical footprint as well as information that explains why and how people should support the campaign.



Currently, these types of services are provided in an often uncoordinated and inconsistent manner, with different facilities implementing different models.

This means that survivors in different parts of the country have access to unequal levels of services. In some areas, mostly rural, very little post rape care services exist, or survivors have to travel far to the access the existing services.

We believe that survivors everywhere should receive the support they need where they need it. Stand with us to fight for change.

Stay updated on the campaign and join the fight by following us on social media.



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**IF YOU CAN'T  
SPEAK TO  
ANYONE,  
SPEAK TO US.**

**Contact our helplines on:**

English: 021 447 9762

isiXhosa: 021 361 9085

Afrikaans: 021 633 9229

WhatsApp line: 083 222 5164