

# SEXUAL VIOLENCE SURVIVOR SUPPORT GUIDE

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## PURPOSE

Through this guide, Crossroads expresses a commitment to respond to sexual violence and increase equitable access to support and accompaniment for survivors of sexual violence where the alleged perpetrator is a Crossroads' staff member, volunteer, or Board member, or if the incident happens as a direct result of Crossroads' work.

This guide outlines organization-wide steps for providing support to survivors of sexual violence and is not intended to address the process to follow in the case of investigations, which is outlined separately in the Crossroads Investigation Guide. All survivors are entitled to the support outlined in this guide regardless of whether they choose to report the incident or participate in an investigation<sup>1</sup>.

This guide is designed to serve as a **road map** for Crossroads ensuring that everyone involved in the response and support plan receives the same information, in accordance with the relevant confidentiality measures.

The guide aligns with the Canadian Council for International Cooperation Leaders' Pledge on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct, Crossroads' Sexual Violence Code of Conduct, and Crossroads' policies on Sexual Violence, Gender, and Respect in the Workplace, and meets the contractual obligations issued by Global Affairs Canada.

## OUR DUTY OF CARE

Crossroads is committed to creating and maintaining a respectful, trusted, and inclusive workplace and programs free from sexual violence throughout its operations and programs globally.

At Crossroads, we recognize our duty of care to all the people we work with, employ, and engage with, which is further amplified by the power imbalances inherent in our programs, projects, and activities.

As light has been shed on sexual violence within our sector, it is our duty of care to ensure proactive measures are in place to prevent and mitigate risk of sexual violence and do no harm in the communities we serve.

Crossroads is committed to providing equitable support to all survivors of sexual violence perpetrated by Crossroads staff or which happens as a direct result of Crossroads' work, regardless of whether they are staff, volunteers, or members of the communities where we work, no matter when and where the incident occurred.

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<sup>1</sup> [OXFAM GB Survivor Policy](#) References are made in footnotes to indicate sectoral practices which have informed this Guide's development. References are not a replacement for any part of this Guide, which is the primary road map to be used across all Crossroads' operations.

Crossroads recognizes that service provision will differ from place to place, and it may not always be possible to access some services. Crossroads will bear any reasonable costs of accessing services, on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the survivor.<sup>2</sup>

Crossroads is equally committed to ensuring all staff receive the assistance they require to maintain their security, their physical and emotional health, and well-being.<sup>3</sup>

## WHO DOES THIS GUIDE APPLY TO?

This guide applies to Crossroads' operations globally including all Crossroads' programs and workplaces, which extends beyond the offices of Crossroads. The term "workplace" includes all locations and situations where the work of Crossroads takes place. This also includes individuals' homes if unwelcome phone calls or visits are being made by another person associated with Crossroads.

This guide applies to staff<sup>4</sup>, Board members, interns, volunteers, contractors, and subcontractors, including local partners and ultimate beneficiaries,<sup>5</sup> referred to collectively as stakeholders.

This guide applies to any stakeholder who can be asked to accompany a survivor. Crossroads expects people working directly on field activities or in regular contact with volunteers, as the most likely individuals to play that role.

All survivors of sexual violence perpetrated by Crossroads staff, or sexual violence which happens as a direct result of Crossroads' work, regardless of whether they are staff or members of the communities where we work, are eligible to receive support as outlined in this guide, no matter when and where the incident occurred.<sup>6</sup>

This guide applies to all incidents of sexual violence as defined by the Crossroads Policy on Sexual Violence.

## CROSSROADS' COMMITMENT TO A SURVIVOR-CENTRED APPROACH

Pursuant to the Crossroads' Sexual Violence Code of Conduct, when responding to sexual violence, Crossroads uses a survivor-centered-approach by giving control over the decision-making process to the survivor following an incident.

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<sup>2</sup> [OXFAM GB Survivor Policy](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability](#)

<sup>4</sup> Staff includes Crossroads' employees globally.

<sup>5</sup> Contractors, subcontractors, local partners and ultimate beneficiaries are defined by the [Contribution Agreement – General Terms and Conditions, Global Affairs Canada Website](#)

<sup>6</sup> [OXFAM GB Survivor Policy](#)

Concretely, Crossroads provides space and time for the survivor to express their needs and arrange for relevant support. The healing process following a traumatic experience takes different forms and is not perceived as linear or “one-size fits all”.

Crossroads actions and interventions are guided by four guiding principles, which are the international standards that all service providers should know and follow. Respecting the guiding principles is critically important for the survivor’s recovery.

The four principles of a survivor-centred approach include **safety, confidentiality, respect, and non-discrimination:**

- **Safety:** The survivor’s safety is ensured (for example, protection from retaliation for coming forward), and the survivor is not forced to maintain contact with the alleged perpetrator.
- **Confidentiality:** Information is shared on a “need to know basis.” It is shared only with others bound by confidentiality who need to know in order to provide assistance and intervention to the survivor, which have been agreed to by the survivor.
- **Respect:** Crossroads’ actions and responses are guided by respect for the wishes, rights and dignity of the survivor including their right to stay informed and retain ownership and decision-making power.
- **Non-discrimination:** Crossroads acknowledges that measures must be taken to account for the numerous perspectives, identities, lived experiences or circumstances of each survivor, also referred to as intersectionality. Crossroads is committed to making survivor support as accessible as possible, considering gender, different cultures and abilities.

For some survivors, identity will be an important consideration and they may choose to report to somebody they trust or with whom they share elements of identity, including but not limited to gender, sexual orientation, level of ability, race, socio-economic status, nationality, language, etc. and not necessarily follow one specific route of reporting. Taking this into account, Crossroads encourages survivors to report an incident to a person they trust within the organizational structure.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is a requirement for many survivors to disclose. Some survivors report shame, stigma, and embarrassment after sexual violence. As such, Crossroads has a responsibility to ensure that certain measures be followed to respect the survivor’s dignity and privacy. Information is to be shared on a “need-to-know” basis, and only information necessary to provide support to the survivor, satisfy reporting obligations, or as required by law, in line with the Crossroads Sexual Violence Policy. Information will only be disclosed to people bound by confidentiality and upon consent of the survivor.

A confidant has a duty to inform the designated person responsible for the prevention of sexual violence that an incident has occurred, as outlined in the reporting lines in this guide below. The survivor's identity and details of the incident must not be disclosed without the victim's consent. The anonymity and confidentiality of the survivor's personal information must be respected.

No staff member, Board member, current volunteer, or future volunteer (other than those directly involved in supporting the survivor) should have information about this incident that would allow them to deduce who the survivor is, based on the year, placement country or other factors. The partner organization would be informed of the incident only if it is agreed upon by the survivor.

Limits to confidentiality exist where we are required to disclose by law. We cannot promise not to notify local authorities as we might be obliged by law in certain countries, or it might also be mandatory before accessing medical services.

### **Some advice when discussing confidentiality with the survivor:**

- Explain that this Guide is designed to protect their privacy.
- Inform them of your obligation to report the incident to Crossroads but explain that information would be shared on a "need-to-know" basis, and only with people bound by confidentiality. (See the section below: lines of reporting).
- Discuss with them the level of confidentiality they wish to maintain.
- Discuss with them the possibility of informing the partner organization (if pertinent).
- Inform the survivor that Crossroads will respect the decision of the survivor, out of their volition, if they choose to go public with the incident and share it.

Any discussions surrounding the incident must not take place in open areas and must include the most limited audience. Office doors should be closed when discussing the event.

Any discussions around repatriation, mandate termination or travelling to access a service provider, etc. should be undertaken without publicly signalling the reason for return or travel. Instead, in collaboration with the survivor, another reason for travel should be defined.

## **INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

- Annex 3 of this Guide should be saved as the only document that contains the details of

the incident.

- Once completed, it must be password protected and saved in the confidential folder on SharePoint designated for this purpose.
- Incident reports should only be accessible to the Responder, the Volunteer Mobilization Manager or Human Resource Mobilization Officer and the Executive Director.
- The incident must not be listed in the incident register.
- The incident report can only be circulated via e-mail when no other options are available. It should not be stored in an e-mail inbox. If circulated via emails, the email title should indicate that it includes confidential information.
- The incident report may not be discarded in recycling or regular waste disposal without being shredded.

## SURVIVOR SUPPORT REPORTING LINES

When an incident of **sexual exploitation or abuse** is reported **by a stakeholder** to somebody within Crossroads' structure, certain individuals are accountable for the support provided to the survivor and others for reporting to Global Affairs Canada, depending on the funding of the project in which the incident occurred. These accountabilities are outlined in **Annex 2**.

When an incident occurs, the trusted Crossroads staff member or volunteer must inform *either* the **Volunteer Mobilization Manager (for volunteers)** or the **Human Resource Mobilization Officer (for staff)** and they will inform the Program Director and the Executive Director.

For the purposes of reporting and investigations, Crossroads staff may also report an incident via the Crossroads' Sexual Violence Consultant (outside of Crossroads' structure) Email: [declare@cinl.org](mailto:declare@cinl.org) or call/text: 438-985-7598. The Sexual Violence Consultant reports anonymously, and therefore cannot request support for an individual survivor.

Lines of reporting will always follow lines of accountability. Therefore, Board members might need to be notified as well but should not receive information that can allow the identification of the survivor.

*Details are not provided to other individuals unless agreed to by the survivor.*

Crossroads has provided a baseline of training and information to all staff and volunteers in order to respond to an incident of sexual violence which has been disclosed to them. Crossroads has also identified specific regional focal points that have received additional training in order to provide information and support and meet compliance requirements in cases of sexual violence. More information on their roles and responsibilities can be found in **Annex 2**.

## SURVIVOR SAFETY AND SECURITY

One of the primary concerns following an incident of sexual violence is the safety of the survivor. Preventing a subsequent incident, injury or victimization should be a priority.

An immediate security and safety assessment should be made. The safety of the survivor in relation to the perpetrator must be taken into consideration. If there is a risk of sexual violence occurring again, or retaliation, then consideration should be put into where the survivor may be most safely located. This analysis and concern should be discussed with the survivor before a decision is made. Measures that may be necessary to keep the survivor safe may include, but are not limited to:

- Immediately identifying transportation and lodging to a safe location (paid for by Crossroads if necessary),
- Limiting access to Crossroads' facilities,
- Making arrangements for alternative supervisory relationships,
- Discontinuing contact between the survivor and the perpetrator.

Should the survivor be a volunteer who wishes to continue the mandate, confirm that it is safe to return to the community, their accommodations, and their work. Ask the survivor what support they would need in feeling secure. Support volunteers in taking actions that will reinforce their safety (i.e., changing locks on doors, temporarily relocating to live with a friend, moving to other accommodations, moving in with a host family).

## SURVIVOR MEDICAL CARE

Sexual violence can have serious consequences on the physical and psychological health of survivors. In cases of sexual assault, it is important to inform survivors that a medical appointment is highly recommended. The choice to consult a doctor is always theirs to make.

There are different ways to proceed depending on whether medical support is needed, whether it is urgent, or if it is not needed.

In some locations, a police report is required prior to the survivor being able to obtain medical support. All Focal Points will be aware of this information for their country /region.

If medical support is needed **urgently**, accompany the survivor to the nearest reputable medical facility.

If medical support is **time sensitive but not urgent**, please follow the steps below:

- Reassure the survivor that accessing medical support is for their own safety and well-being. Explain that you are aware that seeing a medical professional right after an assault can be traumatic but that it is suggested so that all critical precautions can be taken, and their well-being can be supported.
- Contact the medical facility and ask what services are available. Confirm whether all procedures can be done in one visit or whether multiple visits will be required. Establish if the survivor will be asked for their consent before a physical examination is performed.
- Explain to the survivor what to expect when accessing medical support.
- Ask the survivor if they want medical support. If the survivor **wants** medical support, offer to accompany them. If they do not feel comfortable being accompanied by you, ask the survivor if they would like another adult to be present (e.g., adult of the same gender). If the survivor **does not want** medical support or it is not needed, make sure to note this in the incident report in **Annex 3** below.
- Encourage the survivor to seek medical support at the most reputable service provider available. If needed, support them in identifying that facility.
- If possible (and pertinent), it is recommended for the survivor to avoid showering, bathing, changing clothes or brushing teeth. If more than 72 hours have gone by since the assault, it is less pertinent.
- In the case of a volunteer or staff member, discuss calling the insurer. You can offer to call the insurer on behalf of the survivor to notify them of the situation and open a claim to support the cost of medical care.
- In the event that the survivor invites Crossroads' support, accompany them throughout the process.



## MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Surviving a sexual violence is a traumatic experience. Crossroads wants to take all necessary steps to ensure the survivor receives the support they need in a timely manner. Symptoms of anger, fear, anxiety, physical pain, sleep disturbance, lack of appetite, shame, guilt, depression, and intrusive thoughts can develop in the days to weeks following the assault. Survivors can be reluctant or unsure about seeking support fearing that thinking or talking about their experience will be too painful. However, most survivors find counseling helpful in the process of recovering and moving on with their life.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Content from up-to-date website, Patient education: Care after sexual violence (Beyond the Basics)

Crossroads volunteers and staff have access to counseling support through the Employee Assistance Program and through Crossroads insurance provider.<sup>8</sup>

Volunteers and staff can access the Employee Assistance Program at [www.lifeworks.com](http://www.lifeworks.com) or by calling 1.844.880.9142.

Volunteers can access their insurance plan by emailing [servicecenter@xn.com](mailto:servicecenter@xn.com), or calling +800.9623.6837 from outside North America or calling collect to 1.514.843.9604.

Staff can access their insurance plan by visiting [www.canadalife.com](http://www.canadalife.com), or calling 1-855-222-4051.

## LEGAL/LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE<sup>9</sup>

For many survivors, disclosing sexual violence involves recounting deeply traumatic incidents. Treatment of the information may be handled differently from one location to another, potentially resulting in emotional difficulties for the survivor.

Should the survivor be interested in notifying the police or seeking legal recourse, Crossroads' role is to ensure that they can do so as soon as possible once the decision has been made. Crossroads cannot provide survivors with legal advice or representation; however, they can endeavour to find sources of legal support whenever possible.<sup>10</sup>

The survivor might need some time before making their decision to contact the police and/or seek legal advice and should be provided some flexibility, if/when possible. Volunteers and staff have been provided with contact information for local police, but Crossroads can ensure they know how to proceed.

Before reporting, survivors should be briefed on the process. In some locations, a police report is required prior to the survivor being able to obtain medical support. All Focal Points will be aware of this information for their country /region.

When reporting to local police, ideally the survivor would be accompanied by someone, and Crossroads can offer this option to the survivor.

<sup>8</sup> [OXFAM GB Survivor Policy](#)

<sup>9</sup> [DIGNA: Toolkits for addressing PSEA Toolkit D - Examples of Flowcharts](#)

<sup>10</sup> [OXFAM GB Survivor Policy](#)

## PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY

Following sexual violence many individuals experience a loss or a lack of control and power. By providing space and time for the survivor to express their needs, Crossroads can refer the survivor to the best adapted service available for this specific individual.

While accompanying the survivor, Crossroads needs to ensure that every step and option available are explained beforehand. By doing so, the survivor can provide consent for each step, or articulate other needs and priorities.

Depending on the laws and legal obligations related to sexual violence in each country of activities, Crossroads might not be able to provide the flexibility required by the survivor. As an organization accompanying a survivor, Crossroads needs to stay alert to that reality, not promising something that might not be possible to deliver and reviewing the legal framework that applies to each incident reported.

If an individual chooses to go through a medical exam, for example, it is helpful to be able to explain some of the procedures that might take place. Medical professionals might be obliged to report the incident to local authorities. Informing the survivor about this last element is important.

Considering that services vary from one location to another, please refer to the Country Security Guide and/or the Focal Point before accompanying a survivor to a medical center.

The goal is to inform the survivor about the steps related to the medical follow-up and for them to be able to provide informed consent, or to decide not to access medical services.

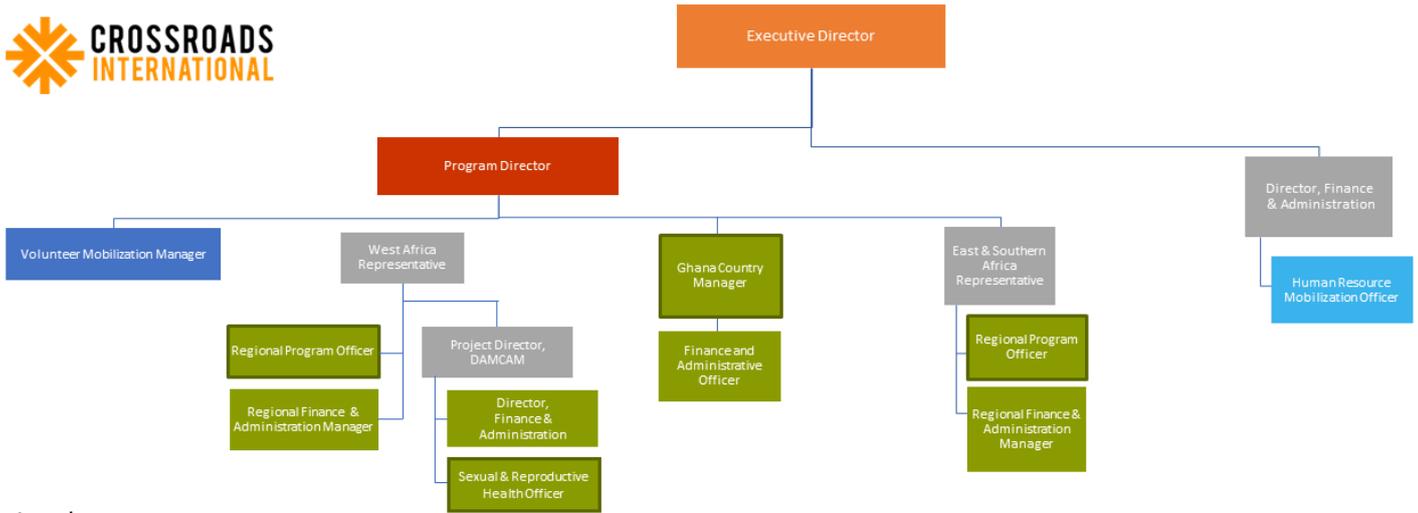
***If you have any questions or comments about this guide, please contact the Volunteer Mobilization Manager (if the survivor is a volunteer) or the HR Mobilization Officer (if the survivor is a staff member).***

## ANNEX 1: SURVIVOR SUPPORT CHECKLIST (FOR CROSSROADS STAFF)

- STEP 1** Reassure the survivor that you are there to support them.
- STEP 2** Ascertain that the survivor is no longer at risk of further assault or injury and safe in their current location. If this is not the case, proceed with identifying safety needs, including potential transportation, and lodging to a safe location.
- STEP 3** Discuss the need for medical support and accompany the survivor (as needed/ agreed upon by the survivor). In some locations, a police report is required prior to the survivor being able to obtain medical support. All Focal Points will be aware of this information for their country / region.
- STEP 4** Fill out the description of the incident (located in the incident report below in Annex 3).
- STEP 5** Discuss emotional and psychological support.
- STEP 6** Remain in contact with the survivor on a regular basis (daily or twice daily check-ins for the first few days while the survivor is seeking medical treatment). Document your check-ins and report to the Focal Point.
- STEP 7** Discuss the survivor's options vis-à-vis continuing their mandate. In some instances, the survivor may want or need to be immediately repatriated. This might need to include discussion with the survivor's insurer. If the return portion of the plane ticket is not covered by the insurance, Crossroads will assume the cost of returning the survivor home.  
  
Should the survivor be a volunteer and wish to continue the mandate, confirm that it is safe to return to the community, their accommodations, and their work. Ask the survivor what support they would need in feeling secure upon returning. Support the volunteer in taking actions that will reinforce their safety.
- STEP 8** Discuss the option of notifying local law enforcement. Again, note that in some locations, police report is required prior to the survivor being able to obtain medical support. All Focal Points will be aware of this information for their country / region.
- STEP 9** If the survivor is returning to their home country, discuss with the survivor their options for support including medical assistance that touches physical, emotional, and psychological support.

## ANNEX 2: RESPONSIBILITY FOR PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Incidents should be reported to a person at Crossroads, with the choice being made based on the level of trust the survivor has in the Crossroads staff member or volunteer.
- All staff members have read and agreed to abide by Crossroads Prevention of Sexual Violence Code of Conduct and Policy and received a base level of training in responding to incidents of sexual violence.
- Focal points in the field have received additional training to support survivors and have greater knowledge of available resources. For this reason, they may be the best person for the survivor to contact if they fulfil the trust requirements of the survivor.
- Back-up focal points have also received the additional training, so they are positioned to respond in the event the focal point is absent.
- Other Crossroads staff have also received additional training due to specific responsibilities inherent in their roles. Individuals listed below must be notified when incidents of sexual violence occur as they are responsible for the following:
  1. To ensure survivors receive the required support.
    - For volunteers only, the Volunteer Mobilization Manager
    - For staff (including interns and contractors) only, the Human Resources Mobilization Officer
    - For partner organization staff, beneficiaries or community members, the Program Director
    - For Board members, the Executive Director
  2. To ensure reporting requirements of Global Affairs Canada are met.
    - The Program Director
  3. To ensure organizational and board reporting requirements are met.
    - The Executive Director
- As such, when an incident occurs, the trusted Crossroads representative must inform *either* the Volunteer Mobilization Manager (for volunteers) *or* the Human Resources Mobilization Officer (staff) and they will inform the Program Director and the Executive Director.
- Refer to this organigram for an overview of those responsible for the prevention of, and response to, sexual violence at Crossroads:



## Roles and Responsibilities for Sexual Violence Prevention and Response

**Legend:**

- Organizational responsibility & reporting to board
- Responsibility for PSEA reporting to GAC
- Responsibility for survivor support (volunteers)
- Responsibility for survivor support (staff)
- Focal point (additional training & knowledge of resources)
- Back-up to focal point (same training as focal point)
- Support role to staff with SV prevention & response responsibilities

- Notes:**

  - All Crossroads staff have received a base level of training in the prevention of sexual violence.
  - PSEA = Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

## ANNEX 3: SEXUAL VIOLENCE INCIDENT REPORT *(to be completed by Crossroads staff)*

**Note: This section is to be filled out by Crossroads staff in consultation with the survivor. It does not need to, nor should it be filled out all in one day.**

### Description of the incident

Briefly describe the sexual violence incident, including the following information: date and time, place, circumstances, witnesses, and individuals involved, current physical and psychological condition of the survivor, etc.

Make sure to write a clear record of the incident using the survivor's own words and make sure to allow them to read and validate what you have written. If they are illiterate, read out the text to ensure you have captured what they meant.<sup>11</sup>

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Is the (alleged) perpetrator from Crossroads (volunteer, intern, staff, or Board member)?

YES  NO

Is the (alleged) perpetrator from one of Crossroads' partner organizations?

YES  NO

Is it likely that the survivor will be in contact with the (alleged) perpetrator again? (i.e., perpetrator being from a local institution, local authority, a neighbour, friend, etc....)

YES  NO

<sup>11</sup> [DIGNA: Toolkits for addressing PSEA Toolkit C-Examples of Reporting Forms](#)

## Medical support

Would the survivor like to receive medical support? YES  NO

Please comment briefly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Emotional support

Would the survivor like to receive emotional support? YES  NO

Please comment briefly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, does the survivor want support from Crossroads in identifying a resource? YES  NO

Some resources are identified in the Country Security Guide and Survivor Tip Sheet 4: List of Resources and Service Providers in Canada.

Please include the resource recommended by Crossroads:

Resource / Name of professional: \_\_\_\_\_

## Support of loved ones

Is the survivor receiving support from friends and family? YES  NO

Please comment briefly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## High risk behaviour

Crossroads wants to avoid labeling survivors but needs to be made aware of survivors exhibiting

high risk post-trauma symptoms (e.g., substance abuse, suicidal thoughts).

Does the survivor exhibit high risk post-trauma symptoms? YES  NO

Please comment briefly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Law enforcement

Would the survivor like to contact the police? YES  NO

Please comment briefly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Legal services

Would the survivor like to contact legal services? YES  NO

Please comment briefly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### ***If the survivor is a volunteer:***

Upon the survivor's return to their home country, Crossroads is no longer required to support the volunteer throughout the medical process, but a trusted Crossroads staff member should make follow-up phone calls to inquire as to the volunteer's mental and physical state, unless the volunteer expresses their wish not to be contacted by Crossroads. Crossroads should discuss with the volunteer options for medical (physical/emotional and psychological) at home and offer to support them in identifying support options as part of their return home.

**Follow-up phone calls:**

**Phone call 1**                      **Date:** MM/DD/YYYY

Please comment briefly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone call 2**                      **Date:** MM/DD/YYYY

Please comment briefly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***If the survivor is a staff member:***

A trusted colleague should call to inquire about the survivor’s mental and physical state unless the staff member expresses their wish not to be contacted about the incident.

**Follow-up phone calls:**

**Phone call 1**                      **Date:** MM/DD/YYYY

Please comment briefly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone call 2**                      **Date:** MM/DD/YYYY

Please comment briefly: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: MM/DD/YYYY

**Name and signature of Crossroads staff member:** \_\_\_\_\_