



Survivor Advocate for Emergency Response (SAFER) Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Updated 1/2024

Program Description: After a 40-hour training, SAFER volunteers will provide accompaniment, advocacy, and support to child and adult victims of sexual abuse, domestic/family violence, and sex trafficking in the emergency room as they receive acute medical care. Thirty hours (30) of training are provided in-person at The Safe Center and the remaining 10 hours are provided in a virtual, self-paced format. Volunteers are scheduled to be on-call for 12-hour periods to assist victims at any of the local Nassau County hospitals. Volunteers are asked to serve a minimum of two shifts (12 hours each) per month and must arrive at the hospital within 45 minutes of receiving a call. Advocates must participate in 10 hours of education and training every year after initial training, provided free in various formats. This program requires residence in Nassau County or Western Suffolk County and a minimum commitment of one year.

How many weeks is the class?

SAFER training will take place over the course of five weeks.

How many nights a week?

There are two training sessions each week.

How many hours each night?

Each training session is three hours long (6-9pm), with breaks included.

Can you miss any classes?

It is important for trainees to attend every training session. We allow one missed class for emergency reasons. There are also key training sessions that, if missed, will result in dismissal from the training class. Those dates will be provided to trainees when accepted into the training class. If you know of a scheduling conflict, please discuss that with the Volunteer Coordinator or Program Supervisor during the application process.

Are there recordings if you miss the classes, do you offer makeup classes?

Trainees should plan to attend every training session. The ability to make up missing training hours is dependent upon the content covered in the session and is subject to Program Supervisor approval. As mentioned above, there are certain key training sessions that, if missed, will result in dismissal from the training class.

Are they in person, can you participate online?

30 hours of training is held in-person at The Safe Center LI at 15 Grumman Rd. W., Ste. 1000, Bethpage, NY 11714. The remaining 10 hours are web-based trainings that trainees must complete independently.

How old do you need to be?

SAFER volunteers must be 18 years or older.

How many shifts do you need to take in a month?

To remain in good standing with the program, SAFER volunteers are asked to cover a minimum of two 12-hour shifts per month (24 hours total) and can choose whichever shifts suit their availability.

How long are the shifts?

Shifts are scheduled from 8am-8pm (“day shift”) and 8pm-8am (“night shift”). During their scheduled shift, SAFER volunteers are asked to remain in Nassau County and be accessible by phone.

Can I tag along with someone experienced before I go out on my own?

We do our best to support each SAFER volunteer as they become adjusted to the role. The 40-hour SAFER training provides all the information, resources, and support volunteers need to fulfill their job duties. While there are opportunities for mentorship from seasoned volunteers, accompanying new volunteers on their first shift(s) will be explored on a case-by-case basis.

What kinds of assistance is available to me when I am out on a call?

SAFER volunteers have access to The Safe Center’s 24/7 Hotline and a Program Supervisor who can provide support when needed.

Approximately how long are the calls?

Emergency room visits are not typically brief. The length of stay is often dependent on the survivor’s individual needs and the availability of medical personnel to perform the specialized exams required in these cases. Therefore, SAFER volunteers should expect to be at the hospital for several hours at a time.

What type of certification do I receive at the end of the training?

All SAFER trainees will “graduate” with a Rape Crisis Counselor (RCC) certificate in accordance with the Nassau County Department of Health. This certificate is only valid in one’s role as a SAFER volunteer and expires when a volunteer departs from the team.

Are there additional trainings required to maintain my RCC?

After the initial 40-hour training, SAFER volunteers are required to take 10 hours of continuing education in relevant topics every year following initial certification. Plenty of free training opportunities are shared with volunteers throughout the year to help them meet this requirement.