

evaluation, a postal survey to all involved external services is undertaken annually. FAMSAC has received 68 survey responses over the last three years. Comments have been consistent and positive. Several suggestions on ways to improve community awareness of the service have been implemented. For clients, an anonymous questionnaire is given to them at the 12-week follow-up visit. On completion, this can be placed in the drop box in the front of the clinic or posted for return to the service. Sixty five questionnaires have been completed over the past three years. Data from these questionnaires has again been positive and used to improve the service. A comprehensive report on the past three years of service is available from FAMSAC (for contact details see table on page 13 and 14).

NEW SOUTH WALES

Rape Crisis Online

Good practice criteria

- ✓ Takes account of contemporary research and practice developments in the field of sexual assault
- ✓ Contributes to improving systems' responses to sexual assault, or is directed at preventing sexual assault
- ✓ Demonstrates a sensitivity towards the barriers faced by victim/survivors in disclosing and reporting sexual assault
- ✓ Includes processes of accountability and evaluation
- ✓ Demonstrates a capacity for replication (that is, other services/organisations could adapt/re-model the program for their use)

Rape Crisis Online is a therapeutic-response program for victims of sexual assault. It offers an alternative way for callers to access New South Wales Rape Crisis Centre counsellors by providing a real time, online, person-to-person crisis intervention service accessed via the Centre's website. The project started in April 2005 and the Internet site will go live in July 2005 at: <http://www.nswrapecrisis.com.au/>. The program's target group is women and children. The development of Rape Crisis Online has been based on the experiences of the existing online component of Kids Helpline Australia and the New South Wales Rape Crisis Centre telephone service. Kids Helpline is an early intervention service, and three per cent of their online contacts are considered crisis contacts. Sexual assault is considered a crisis contact.

Research indicates that young people feel comfortable in an online environment, so it is envisaged that this project will increase access to counselling particularly for young people. Additionally the family computer is usually situated in a more private part of the house rather than the living area where the telephone, and the rest of the family, are often located.

Online access will be for one to two contacts only, after which callers will be encouraged to make telephone contact with the service. Online contact gives the person the opportunity to "check the Centre out" before committing to the more personal voice-to-voice contact. Information will be provided and counsellors will encourage callers to overcome the shame, fear and other barriers many victims experience and to seek the help they have a right to.

As with all New South Wales Rape Crisis Centre services, Rape Crisis Online is based on feminist principles and aims to be holistic, empowering, accountable and accessible. The Centre operates from a trauma response model. The project has been developed specifically to increase access to counselling services.

One way in which the Rape Crisis Online service reflects good practice is by taking into account contemporary research and practice developments in the field of sexual assault. Research indicates that 65 per cent of people under 25 years use the Internet as their first source of information gathering in relation to health. Rape Crisis Online builds on the 25,000 plus hits to the Centre's website by providing a way for visitors to make contact directly with a counsellor. It also includes a process of accountability and evaluation, in that an internal evaluation has been planned with measures of success being assessed according to the following criteria:

- an increase in the number of callers who make contact for the first time;
- an increase in the number of callers who indicate they may speak with Police;
- number of callers who indicate they would not have made initial contact by phone; and
- service user feedback.