Volunteer Role: Forensic Medical Exam (FME) Volunteer

Organization: Rape Crisis Midwest

Location: Limerick/Clare/North Tipperary

Time Commitment: Flexible

About Rape Crisis Midwest

Rape Crisis Midwest (RCM) works for the protection of all people from all forms of sexual violence and abuse. It primarily supports survivors of sexual abuse and violence through free, confidential support and counselling, working from an intersectional feminist framework. RCM deliver services utilising a survivor-centred and trauma-informed model. RCM operates from the knowledge that survivors have the capacity to grow and heal and that they are the experts in what they need. Survivor identified indicators of recovery and healing inform the way in which services are delivered and developed. A trauma-informed model means services are offered with the understanding that a survivor's reactions are a normal response to trauma. RCM believes that responding to sexual violence in our society and holding perpetrators to account starts with supporting survivors in ways that are respectful of their dignity, healing and choices. RCM works to hold perpetrators accountable for their behaviour and counteract rape culture and victim blaming. The headquarters for Rape Crisis Midwest services is in Limerick with satellite services in both Ennis and Nenagh. Our service delivery includes counselling; Garda and court accompaniment; advice, to both survivors, and their supporters; and sexual violence training to individuals and organisations. We work nationally in partnership with Cuan – the Domestic, Sexual & Gender Based Violence Agency and Rape Crisis Ireland.

Role Purpose

The Midwest FME service is provided to persons reporting a rape or sexual assault to the Gardaí. The service is delivered in partnership with ShannonDoc, An Garda Síochana, University Hospital Limerick and HSE Primary Care. FME Accompaniment Volunteers provide emotional and practical support to survivors attending for a forensic medical exam after a recent rape or sexual assault. This presence helps reduce anxiety, reinforce the survivor's dignity, and promote their rights throughout the judicial process.

Key Responsibilities

- Attend FME Unit on-call when a survivor presents for a forensic exam
- Provide emotional support and reassurance before, during (if requested), and after the examination
- Inform survivors of their rights, options, and available supports
- Work closely but independently of medical staff and An Garda Síochána, maintaining survivor autonomy
- Ensure survivors are offered appropriate follow-up care and referrals
- Complete accurate and confidential post-call debrief and handover with RCM staff
- Debrief with staff or peers after each call to support your own wellbeing
- Offer a calm, supportive, and non-judgmental presence

Ideal Volunteer Profile

- Calm, empathetic, and emotionally resilient
- Able to remain composed and supportive in high-pressure situations
- Comfortable with medical settings and sensitive subject matter
- Committed to survivor-centred, non-judgmental support
- Available for night/weekend on-call shifts (rota-based)
- Aged 23+, Garda vetted, and willing to complete specialized training
- Access to transport is highly desirable
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Committed to survivor-centred, trauma-informed values
- Committed to the values of consent, empowerment, and survivor advocacy

All FME volunteers undergo in-depth training covering

- Sexual violence and trauma-informed care
- FME protocols and forensic procedures
- Emotional regulation and crisis communication
- Confidentiality, boundaries, and safeguarding
- Self-care and peer support

What You'll Gain

- A deeply meaningful opportunity to support survivors in crisis
- Advanced training in trauma-informed crisis response
- Experience in multidisciplinary and medical settings
- Ongoing supervision, debriefing, and peer connection
- A certificate of service and reference following sustained engagement

How to Apply

Please contact us at info@rapecrisis.ie or 061 311 511 to express your interest and request a volunteer application form. We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds and walks of life.

Note: All volunteers must complete process of Garda Vetting complete a short induction and agree to uphold our code of conduct regarding confidentiality, respect, and dignity for survivors.