

One of "America's 100 Best Charities"
—*Worth* magazine

The National Sexual Assault *Online* Hotline

RAINN, the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization, created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline, educates the public about sexual assault and leads national efforts to improve victim services and bring rapists to justice. We recently developed a revolutionary addition to our services — the National Sexual Assault *Online* Hotline, which is the first secure web-based crisis hotline providing live and anonymous support through an interface as intuitive as instant messaging.

Providing a Groundbreaking Service

The National Sexual Assault *Online* Hotline, currently in the pilot phase, enables victims of sexual violence to get live help from a trained hotline specialist, through rainn.org. We have taken unique precautions to protect privacy and confidentiality. Victims who need help, but are reluctant to call the telephone hotline, now have the option of communicating securely online with someone who has the training to help them take steps toward recovery.

Responding to a Growing Need

Every week RAINN receives emails like the following from victims who need online help:

"I was wondering if you guys offered some kind of online services, because it is extremely hard for me to talk to someone verbally. I don't have the nerve or courage to call when I really need to."

New research shows that more and more young people are turning to the web for information about sensitive health issues. In addition, growing numbers of women look to the Internet for solutions to health problems. We must ensure that RAINN is there with a dynamic online presence for them to turn to in their time of need.

- 9 of 10 young people have been online.
- More online teens use the Internet to look up health information (75%) than to download music (72%).
- 74% of women have sought health information online.
- A majority of teens say they would prefer to talk to their own friends through instant messaging than by phone.

To adequately serve this demand, we must combine the services they need with the technology they embrace.

How the Online Hotline Works

Trained specialists from our 1,100 affiliate centers will log on for hotline shifts over our website, where they will be available to respond to users. Victims and their family and friends will visit rainn.org, anonymously request help, and be connected to a specialist for one-on-one support. While there's lots of advanced technology behind the scenes, the user interface is as clear and intuitive as instant messaging, so there's no learning curve. Anyone with a web browser can access help without downloading any software.

Safe, Secure and Anonymous

RAINN is working with VeriSign, McAfee, AOL and other top privacy and security experts to provide the safest possible experience for users of this service. Security precautions include:

- The Online Hotline servers will not log IP addresses of users.
- Transcripts of sessions will not be stored or logged.
- All communications over the Online Hotline will be encrypted using SSL.
- Visitors to the Online Hotline will not have to reveal any personal information or create a user ID in order to receive help — the service is completely anonymous.
- Content for visitors will clearly explain privacy policies and confidentiality issues, and we will have an appropriate terms of use agreement for visitors.
- We will provide users with information about any security issues or risks and how to detect and rid their own computers of spyware.

Partnering With Technology Leaders

Key partners that are donating equipment and expertise include:

- AOL (secure hosting and marketing).
- VeriSign (security infrastructure design, review and monitoring).
- McAfee (network security technology and security/vulnerability testing).
- KnowNow (event-driven software infrastructure).
- Pro bono legal help from Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett LLP; Fenwick & West LLP; and the Samuelson Law, Technology and Public Policy Clinic at Berkeley's Boalt Hall Law School.
- Financial support from the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and Office on Violence Against Women.

RAINN also has a number of valued partners within the media and entertainment industry, including NBC, CBS, ABC, Fox, Time Warner, Lifetime TV, MySpace, Google and MTV. These media and entertainment partnerships have played a large role in our successful promotion of the National Sexual Assault Hotline, and will be invaluable in during the upcoming launch of the Online Hotline.

About RAINN

RAINN is perfectly positioned to lead crisis services into the next generation, vastly improving services for victims of sexual violence:

- Network of 1,100 local rape crisis centers in communities across the country.
- Large, diverse base of trained volunteer hotline specialists.
- High visibility and credibility among women and young people and an established reputation as the leading organization in the fight against sexual violence.
- Well-established partnerships with media to promote the Online Hotline.

Since RAINN's founding in 1994, the National Sexual Assault [telephone] Hotline has helped more than one million people. Now, RAINN is expanding the definition of a hotline to include online help, to better serve a generation that has grown up, and prefers to communicate, online.

**National Sexual Assault Online Hotline:
In pilot phase at rainn.org**