




## SAFESTAR: Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Support Training Access and Resources

*Empowering Women in Our  
Communities to Combat  
Sexual Violence through  
SAFESTAR*

Presented by:  
Southwest Center for Law & Policy  
SAFESTARS: Genoveva Antone, Cordelia Clapp & Arlene  
O'Brien



## Why do we need SAFESTARs?

- When someone is sexually assaulted on Tribal lands, access of a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) who perform healthcare exams to collect evidence from a victim's body is not available in most of the Tribal communities.
- "A 2005 survey of IHS facilities found that in areas served by facilities that do not provide emergency services for rape victims, women can face a round trip of up to 150 miles in order to reach a facility where the forensic examination can be performed." - *Maze of Injustice, Amnesty International, 2007*



## According to the United States Bureau of Justice 2006

- ▣ American Indian/Alaska Native women are more than 2.5 times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than women in the USA in general
- ▣ 34.1 per cent of American Indian/Alaska Native women - or more than 1 in 3 - will be raped during their lifetime; the comparable figure for the USA as a whole is less than 1 in 5



## SAFESTAR: The Project

Designed by experts in Indian Country criminal justice, advocacy, and health care. SAFESTAR is a unique model of healthcare that trains community-based, lay healthcare providers (such as midwives, traditional healers, community health representatives, etc.) to provide medical/forensic examinations for Indian victims of sexual assault.



## SAFESTAR is:

- Community Developed
- Community Implemented
- Community Integrated
- Public Health Supported
- Individual and Community Focus



## Who is a SAFESTAR?

A person (currently all women):  
**Trained in a 40-hour course** approved by USDOJ, FBI, and IAFN to provide **evidence collection** to sexual assault survivors demonstrating **competency** and **respect** when conducting the **evidentiary exam**





## SAFESTAR Curricula

- ❑ 40 hour (1 week) course taught by Indian Country SANEs, criminal justice professionals & advocacy experts based on model of SANE course & taught in your community
- ❑ 16 hour Multi-disciplinary “meeting” /training with federal and tribal healthcare, criminal justice and advocacy professionals
- ❑ The SAFESTAR “rolling exam kit”



## SAFESTAR 40 Hour Training


- ❑ Culturally appropriate
- ❑ Cognizant that each AI/AN Nation has different laws, customs, traditions, language, policies, procedures & resources
- ❑ Establishes or enhances the attitudes, knowledge and skills of AI/AN women to perform a medical/forensic exam
- ❑ Delivered by IAFN and SWCLAP on-site
- ❑ Hands on skills included



## SAFESTAR Training

This training will teach you how to:

Determine if a victim of sexual assault needs to be sent to a hospital or clinic for immediate treatment

## SAFESTARs will learn how to:

Create a written report (document) describing a victim's sexual assault

**SAFESTAR**  
**SEXUAL ASSAULT MEDICAL/FORENSIC RECORD**

Location of Examination: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Examination: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Patient: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Brought In By: \_\_\_\_\_

Others Present: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Assault: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Assault: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Choosing

To report the crime and authorize release of evidence to law enforcement

Law Enforcement Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Case #: \_\_\_\_\_

Officer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Officer ID: \_\_\_\_\_

The Anonymous Sexual Assault Option


Kit #: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical forensic exam without kit




## You will learn how to:

Perform an exam to check a victim for injuries and, if the victim chooses to, collect evidence from his/her body



## You will learn how to:

Make referrals to help the victim heal (in mind, body, and spirit) after the assault





## Eye Witness Evidence

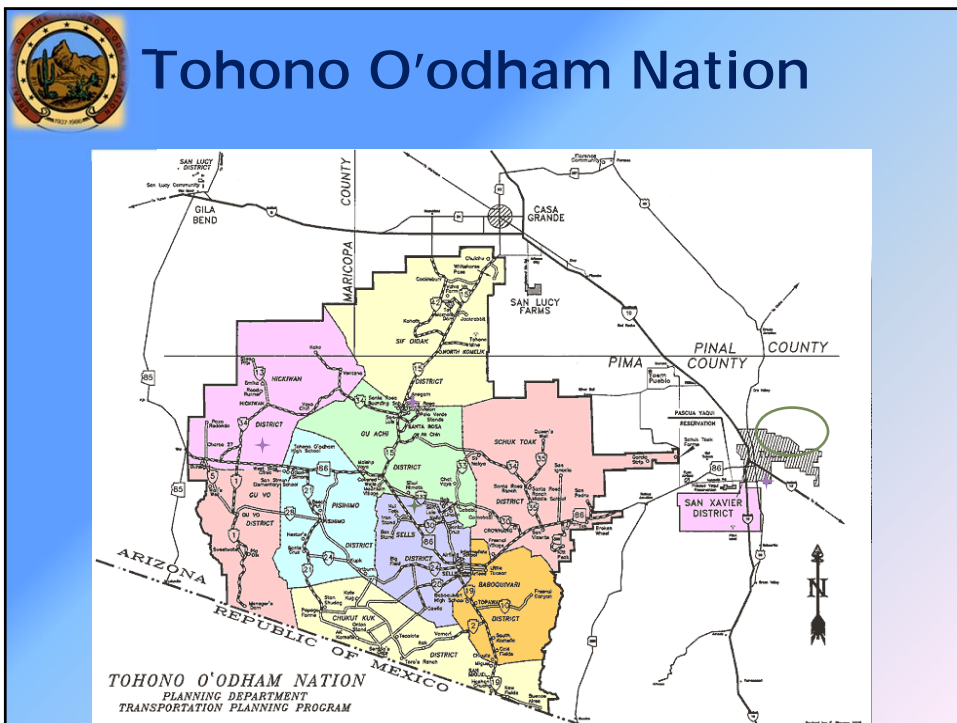
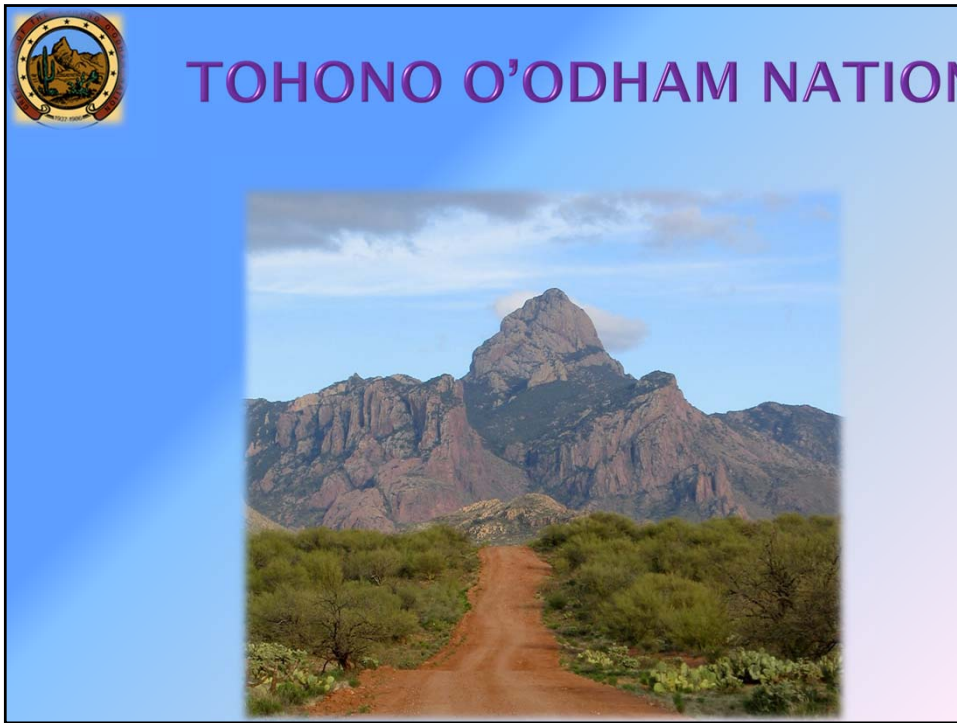
SAFESTARs can testify in court as to what they:

- DID** (took photos, buccal swabs, etc.)
- SAW** (abrasions, bleeding, torn shirt, etc.)
- HEARD** (excited utterances, etc.)
- SMELLED** (urine on garments, etc.)
- FELT** (large bump on victim's head, etc.)
- CAN NOT** testify as an expert witness




## Tohono O'odham Nation and Arizona 1<sup>st</sup> SAFESTARs

- ❑ Selected as “pilot project site”
- ❑ SAFESTAR now being rolled out nationally to AI/AN communities lacking access to SANEs
- ❑ US Attorney, FBI, BIA, IHS are fully of project
- ❑ Each SAFESTAR site requires cross-training state, federal, tribal law enforcement, prosecutors, health providers and advocates







# Baboquivari Mountain






## Why SAFESTAR is needed:

On the **Tohono O'odham Nation**, there is **NO SANE** and the Nation **DOES NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO DO RAPE EXAMS**

**Indian Health Service**, the primary source of medical care for most of our AI/AN women, lacks SANEs



**SAFESTAR captures those who would otherwise not seek care**






### Purpose of the Tohono O'odham SAFESTAR's:

- ▣ Address the lack of sexual assault nurse examiners in Indian Country
- ▣ Improve community education
- ▣ Address the relatively low number of tribal and federal prosecutions of sexual assault crimes committed against Native women by increasing the availability of evidence



## SAFESTAR

We came together as Tohono O'odham women to develop a safer vision for our community: one where every woman & child will be free from sexual violence!





## SAFESTAR

Revitalizes Tohono O'odham **Himdak**  
(Way of Life)

- We are all related to one another and need to take care of one another
- Provides support and resources at the village and community level
- Provides traditional options and choices for the sexual assault survivor
- Re-captures the important and positive role that women have in our community



## *SUFFER IN SILENCE*

### Delayed Reporting or NO Report

- ❑ Shame and Blame
- ❑ Cause of disharmony among family and community
- ❑ Confidentiality concerns in tight knit tribal communities
- ❑ No Confidence in the criminal justice & healthcare systems (re-victimized/no consequences for perpetrators the norm)
- ❑ Incest issues
- ❑ Difficulty discussing sexual contact or attempted sexual contact with others



## Initial Results of Pilot Program: First 6 Months

- ▣ Cross-training of SANEs and local hospital in Tucson on working effectively with Tohono O'odham = **improved SANE exams & overall medical treatment** for all Tohono O'odham and AI/AN
- ▣ SANEs in town now **referring victims** back to SAFESTARs for **traditional medicine** & to link victim with **advocates/resources**
- ▣ **Increase in disclosure of sexual assault** (especially historical rapes) in 6 months project in effect
- ▣ Increase in referrals & access to services (health, mental health, services, etc.) on Nation



## Initial Results

- ▣ Increased **awareness of the long term health effects of sexual violence** on the Nation
- ▣ Anecdotal evidence of women with historical sexual assaults who disclosed to SAFESTARs now **improving self-care** (diabetes compliance, weight loss, etc.)
- ▣ **Traditional medicine** people now conducting ceremonies for victims with large family & community support for ceremonies



## Initial Results

- ❑ Open discussions now occurring with **elders on traditional responses** to sexual violence & **historical trauma**
- ❑ Opened up widespread discussion of traditional and non-traditional responses to sexual violence & effects on parenting over generations
- ❑ **Tribal jail inmates** addressing their own victimization & assisting SAFESTAR with community sexual violence awareness (creating shawls and banners for SAFESTARs and events, etc.)



## Initial Results

- ❑ New **Cross-training** of federal/tribal/state law enforcement, prosecutors, victim services = **enhanced MDT/SART** & awareness of unique issues facing AI/AN victims
- ❑ New, successful widespread grassroots **community education** on sexual violence & access to resources (radio, newspaper, cultural events, walk's, etc.)
- ❑ New ability to **speak about** sexual violence and **incest** openly in public for the first time



## The SAFESTAR Project is:

Focused on empowering Tribal communities to create meaningful, positive change in their response to sexual assault for our future generations





*THANK YOU*

*COMMENTS ?*

*QUESTIONS??*