

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii
<i>About the Authors</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	x
<i>Introduction</i>	xi
Chapter 1 A Movement is Born: (E)Merging Theory and Practice	1
Chapter 2 The Centres: Change and Challenges	17
Chapter 3 Sticking Plaster or Survival? Defining the Work	36
Chapter 4 The Rape Crisis Federation	56
Chapter 5 Rape Crisis Now: Surviving or Thriving?	69
Chapter 6 Stop All the Raping! Ongoing Campaigns	84
<i>References</i>	97
<i>Web Resources</i>	101
<i>Glossary of Abbreviations</i>	103
<i>Glossary</i>	105
<i>Appendix 1 Rape Crisis Groups Questionnaire</i>	111
<i>Appendix 2 Federating Flowchart</i>	113
<i>Appendix 3 Rape Crisis Centres in Ireland and Scotland</i>	115
<i>Appendix 4 Sexual Assault Treatment Units and Sexual Assault Referral Centres</i>	117
<i>Appendix 5 Victims Fund Grants 2007: breakdown by region of awards</i>	119
<i>Index</i>	121

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Table 1.1 Opening dates of Rape Crisis services

Table 3.1 Services provided by Rape Crisis centres

Table 4.1 Arguments for and against a network

Table 5.1 Expenditure of charities – groups with limited or no financial history

Table 5.2 Expenditure of charities – groups with less than £15,000 per annum expenditure

Table 5.3 Expenditure of charities – groups with more than £100,000 per annum expenditure

Figures

Figure 2.1 Range of 'violences' and 'causes' identified by Rape Crisis volunteers at a training session

Figure 2.2 From Manchester Rape Crisis – Policy Document, circa 1990

Figure 2.3 Notes from Manchester Rape Crisis Training

Figure 5.1 Rapes reported in Ireland in 1996

Figure 5.2 Rapes reported to the police in Scotland in 2000

Figure 5.3 Support received from SARCs, friends and relatives

Figure 5.4 Expenditure of Rape Crisis centres 2004

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of Richard Edward Cook.

Acknowledgements

This book was in our hearts and in our heads long before it made it onto paper. We have many people to thank but we would like to start with the publishers whose patience has been generous, throughout.

The book would still be an idea without the women who have contributed by: completing questionnaires; giving interviews; making comments; reading drafts; contributing diagrams and illustrations and entries for the glossary. We especially want to thank: Sheila and Lee, Maggie, Jenny, Cath L., Sheila B., Sandra Mc., Jude, Nicole, Shahidah, Sue, Kay B., Julie B. and everyone who completed the questionnaire and who took part in impromptu interviews.

We try to acknowledge the passion of the women who started this movement and who have nurtured it, throughout this volume. We also need to acknowledge our own personal debt to those women here. Many women have enriched our lives and the lives of the thousands of women who have used the services of Rape Crisis throughout its more than thirty year existence. We could not have written this book without any of them because **they are** Rape Crisis. They have listened to us while we were on our soapboxes and challenged us when they felt we were wrong. The sisterhood we have received has been beyond measure.

We have friends within the movement, and in other parts of our lives, who have provided support and strength, even if they weren't aware of it at the time. For wisdom and downright feminist awareness (that sometimes leaves her staggered) Helen wants to thank Julie Mc.; for showing me the way but not always agreeing, Kay; a loyal friend and mentor, Eileen; my rocks, Maggie and Paula; always there for a coffee and a sounding board, Maria; my amigos, Gill and Sarah; someone who taught me that you don't let anyone or anything get you down, Marcia; and Julie and Kathy whose transatlantic friendship has often been a lifeline. Helen also wants to say thank you to her husband David who frequently put a cup of coffee in front of her at the computer while she refused to speak because of the 'very important sentence rattling around in my head'; her children Barry and Sally have been very supportive of mum's strange research area and are very loved; her ma-in-law; Doreen and her mum and dad are unlikely to ever read this book (but they might read this part if told they get a mention); so thanks go to Val and Stan and also her two brothers Ricky and Stephen.

Kate wants to thank all of her friends who have ever shown an interest in 'the book' but in particular to acknowledge the endless support from Annie Muse, Margaret Cook and Stevie. Thank you all, so much.

About the Authors

Dr Helen Jones hates to be put in a box but will describe herself as a feminist, teacher, researcher, writer, website monkey and activist. She has taught in universities in the UK and the US and is currently employed at Manchester Metropolitan University, where she works with some of the brightest students in the country. There she teaches on a range of criminology and criminal justice topics and enjoys introducing her students to issues that really matter in the world. This, combined with feminist activism, has seen her involved in the Home Office Sex Offences Review, the Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme (VVAPP) and the Inter-Ministerial Advisory Panel on Sexual Violence. Over the years she has been a collective member and unpaid consultant to the Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre in Merseyside and often speaks about the Rape Crisis movement at conferences, on the radio and in the press but doesn't like being on television.

Dr Kate Cook is a radical feminist activist, who is also a lesbian, a teacher and a writer. She began working in Rape Crisis as a volunteer in 1990, after a summer school for the legendary OU women's studies course *The Changing Experience of Women*. Her experience duly changed at that point and she became a busy member of the Manchester Rape Crisis collective, acting as a support worker as well as becoming involved in all of the aspects of running the centre, from painting and maintenance through to training volunteers and outside speaking. Through this work she has met a number of wonderful women (including Helen) many of whom have contributed to this volume. She has also developed some skills which she tries to give back to the movement through continued links with Rape Crisis, through campaigning work with CER; TAR and JFW (see Glossary of Abbreviations) and through her teaching. At various times Kate has also been a member of the *Manchester Women's Liberation Newsletter* and *Eve's Back*.

Preface

Thank goodness this book has been written! This might be a strange phrase to begin a book with, but it is the honest reaction that will ripple through the Rape Crisis movement as they read this book. Across the world, Rape Crisis work has gone on relatively quietly, unassumingly, for the last three decades. The focus of individual Rape Crisis centres has been to provide high quality, woman-centred support to as many survivors as they are able to, although demand for support is high and funding low. On the ground this often feels like a continuous uphill struggle. At the national level, the Rape Crisis Federation (1996–2003) and now Rape Crisis England and Wales (2003–) has been focused on supporting the work of the network of individual centres, and on fundraising and campaigning for change at a national level (alongside its sister organisations in Scotland and Ireland). Admittedly, this ‘head down and get on with things’ approach has led to ours unintentionally being a fairly insular movement. This is why this book will be so highly valued by members of the Rape Crisis movement – at last there is an opportunity for those outside the movement to learn about some of our work, and hopefully understand our motivations.

Rape Crisis: Responding to Sexual Violence represents a tentative opening of a door that has been largely shut for three decades. It documents the Rape Crisis movement’s simultaneously depressing and inspiring journey. Depressing because it highlights the myriad of problems faced by even the strongest of centres. Depressing because it emphasises the ubiquitous nature of rape. Depressing because it represents reality – we simply do not have enough Rape Crisis centres left to provide the support that every survivor needs and deserves. On one level the book charts the gradual decline of the Rape Crisis movement. However, on another level, it stands as a testament to the strength of so many women. Brave women who ring our helplines and visit our centres, using words they never thought they could. Inspiring women who have dedicated their lives to supporting survivors. Dedicated women who refuse to rest until things change. Focused women who have a vision of a world free from rape. Passionate women for whom the term ‘good enough’ does not feature within their vocabulary.

This book will come as a welcome read for anyone who despairs that sisterhood is over. It will comfort those who think sisterhood is meant to be easy! It may surprise those who question the need for feminist politics in contemporary society. *Rape Crisis: Responding to Sexual Violence* reminds us why the personal is still the political. It reminds us why we must never give up.

Dr Nicole Westmarland, Chair of Rape Crisis (England and Wales)

Introduction

It is estimated that in 2003 about 80,000 women experienced rape and attempted rape (Walby and Allen, 2004) in England and Wales but that only 629 cases resulted in successful prosecutions. If you reported a rape to the police in 2003 you had a mere 5.6 per cent chance of getting the rapist convicted. All of this is well-publicised now: there is a crisis in the Criminal Justice System's response to rape. However, this book focuses on a parallel concern. At the same time as Britain is failing survivors of rape in the courts there is an erosion of the most effective method of supporting survivors of rape – the Rape Crisis movement.

The need for support

Any woman might ask herself what she would do if she was raped – and some of us know the answer to this question, as we have lived through rape. For many, we are not sure about going to the police, or going to court and with the conviction rate at an all-time low that is not surprising. However, many of us do know that we want or we would want some support, from someone who understands what rape is about and how hard it is to live with. For around 30 years now that support has most often come from a Rape Crisis centre. However, most of the public know little about these centres or how they are run. This book documents the story of Rape Crisis in the UK, from its small beginnings, to a peak in the 1990s and through to a decline, at the beginning of this new century. However, this is not a history book. It does not attempt to document the often turbulent stories of the individual centres. Instead it tries to create a permanent record of the philosophies and ideas that underpinned the original Rape Crisis centres and to show how these centres have changed and evolved, during their 30 year history. The book provides the reader, whether an interested individual, a student or academic, a professional or voluntary worker, with something of the flavour of the original Rape Crisis work, whilst evaluating the place of that work in British society of the twenty-first century.

The emergence and development of the Rape Crisis movement

Both of the authors of this book have worked with the Rape Crisis movement in the UK, been part of the movement and taught about the movement. So often we would sit down, drink coffee (or beer, on a good day) and bemoan the fact that no single book existed to tell the story of how Rape Crisis emerged, to give voice to the women

who work within the movement and to document the services, struggles and successes that make up one of the most enduring features on the feminist landscape. So we decided that it was about time that we did it ourselves. We regard this book as a step in the process of documenting Rape Crisis in the UK. We hope that it can act as a catalyst to encourage others to do further research, and write about the centres and the aspects of the work that we have (inevitably) not done justice to. With this in mind we have tried to document our sources well, to help any future researchers. Additionally, and as our biographies make clear, we are both feminists who have worked within the groups we are writing about, and we are clearly aware that this impacts upon the way we write, the questions we ask and the subjects we choose to explore. However we make no apology for our *a priori* interest since the radical feminism which is the heart of the anti-rape movement argues that the standpoint of belonging gives a clear and important place from which to critique, to document and to develop. We do not claim the traditional objectivity of the academic author because we do not strive for that position. Instead we merely draw your attention to our experience and our leanings and leave you to decide whether these fit us to write about the movement we love so fiercely.

We have no wish to dismiss the range of feminist writings that have discussed theories of rape, the impact of victimisation and the relevance of statistical data on sexual violence; indeed we draw on some of this work within our volume. However, what this book does is something different. It aims to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the context in which the Rape Crisis movement emerged in the UK. It tells something of the beginnings of the Second Wave of Feminism (see Glossary) and of the power of the tool of consciousness-raising (or CR) (see Glossary). It moves on to examine the structures and policies of Rape Crisis, its poverty and weaknesses as well as its astounding strengths and successes. This volume enables any reader to understand what the Rape Crisis movement is, whether their interest is personal or professional. We end this book with a Glossary of terms and groups, to try to help fill in any missing 'herstory' where we may take ideas and terms from feminism for granted, but which readers might be less familiar with.

We chart the political context of the Second Wave of Feminism and the theoretical developments that ran alongside the emergence of the anti-rape movement which had its roots in the CR groups of the Women's Liberation Movement in the United States (Brownmiller, 1999). The book explains how feminist groups spearheaded the early development of Rape Crisis centres in the UK, examines the state of the Rape Crisis movement in the first decade of a new century and finds that storm clouds may be looming. In the US, it has been suggested that the future of independent Rape Crisis groups is uncertain (O'Sullivan and Carlton, 2001). This declaration could just as easily be made in the UK. As in the US, new legislation has been heralded as women's salvation, Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) have been

formed providing a one-stop shop for reporting rape and receiving health treatment, and local Victim Support groups support survivors of sexual violence, as do some hospitals. Additionally, GP surgeries, social services and criminal justice agencies are now signposting services to primary and secondary care counselling or clinical psychiatry services. To an extent these changes have come in response to feminist challenges. However, they have also been influenced by other non-feminist shifts towards professional counselling, also emanating from the United States.

Rape Crisis – now and in the future

In light of these changes, perhaps then the need for Rape Crisis groups is no longer real? Those working at the front line will tell you otherwise. Speak to Rape Crisis workers and they will be happy to tell you about the range of services they provide which are both unique and necessary. Happy, that is, if they are not too busy trying to provide frontline services, whilst constructing funding bids for grants to keep the centre running, holding recruitment and training sessions to maintain the number of volunteers required and attending inter-agency partnership meetings to try to influence practice and policy in local statutory agencies. The Rape Crisis movement in the UK may have a similar future to that of its sister movement in the USA: indeed this would not be surprising as each movement has shared much in terms of political and practical development. To know whether this is really likely, however, we need evidence of the development of the Rape Crisis movement, here in the UK. To date, there is surprisingly little to go on. Whilst a constant stream of literature on the nature and extent of rape has been produced in the past 20 years, there is a space in the body of knowledge. This book aims to fill that gap, specifically outlining the work of Rape Crisis centres in England and Wales and also drawing comparisons with similar centres and networks in Scotland and Ireland.

In order to document the movement we have collected data from many sources, including annual reports and other documentation kindly supplied to us by Rape Crisis centres. We also draw upon an archive of the papers of the (now defunct) Rape Crisis Federation of Wales and England and upon a number of published sources. However, we felt the need to try to paint an up-to-date picture of the movement and so we have also asked groups about structures via a questionnaire, seeking some outline data on their organisation and its history. Representatives from a smaller number of groups have then participated in detailed interviews which create core material for the case studies used in this work.

In the early days, Rape Crisis centres struggled to provide telephone support to women who had been raped, but centres have developed since then to provide ever more services to wider groups of women and girls. This volume therefore examines these changes and considers some of the critical issues facing the work of Rape Crisis

today. This began as a movement of women joined together in small and somewhat isolated groups which generally operated on a 'collectivist' structure (see Glossary). Today those collectives have largely disappeared. It has been argued that as Rape Crisis centres changed in their structures, so their philosophies changed (Campbell, Baker and Mazurek, 1998; Bevacqua, 2001) and, to some extent, the move towards 'professionalism' (see Glossary) has impacted on their political stance (Collins and Whalen, 1989). We try to unpick these trends in our discussions.

About this book

Chapter 1 begins by outlining the background, explaining the birth of the Rape Crisis movement in 1972, emerging from the fresh ideas of American second-wave feminism. The aim of this chapter is to allow an insight into the formation of the British Rape Crisis centres, which came later and so, we need to start out with the pioneers who inspired our own Rape Crisis founders. The chapter looks at the radical feminist ideals behind Rape Crisis and sketches the events that led to the formation of the very first centres. The American groups have tended to move towards professionalism and away from their radical grounding, in the years since (Matthews, 1994) and the chapter provides a little discussion of that shift. However, the reasons for change are not necessarily the same in the US as in Britain and the main focus of this volume remains the British Rape Crisis groups. The second half of the chapter therefore moves on to examine the foundation of Rape Crisis here in Britain, beginning in London, in 1976 but also gives some idea of the spread of the idea of Rape Crisis across the UK and Ireland. The chapter goes on to outline some of the core values that have defined the (British) Rape Crisis movement, in its approach to work and to the outside world, looking in particular at links between this fledgling movement and other feminist groups existing at that time.

This allows **Chapter 2** to begin to look at the development of the movement, since those early days. This chapter discusses some key changes and challenges that the early groups went on to face and critically evaluates whether the politics of the movement have changed with these shifts. The chapter also draws on interviews with three of the existing groups, to provide some outline of the development of these groups from their early beginnings. In turn, all of this sets the scene for Chapter 3 to develop a closer examination of the range of services offered by the groups today, drawing on interview and questionnaire results. This includes some analysis of internal stresses, which influence the lived reality or 'living dynamic' of Rape Crisis work. The concept of the 'living dynamic' is introduced in Chapter 2 but can be used to unpick a number of the aspects of this form of feminist engagement. We have already made it apparent that we know we have both gained much from our involvement in this movement. However, it is fair to say that other women who have become part of Rape Crisis have sometimes found this a terribly uncomfortable and

stressful experience. **Chapter 3** tries to examine why this is so, moving on to look at the women who take part in Rape Crisis work and to draw out the pressures that the work creates for individuals. This chapter also examines a modern trend in service provision, which is involvement in the wider sphere of local services, through inter-agency partnership work.

Although the Rape Crisis movement was formed in the 1970s, early groups had no nationally organised body. Later however this began to shift, with meetings between groups and, eventually the formation of the Rape Crisis Federation (RCF) in the mid-1990s. **Chapter 4** documents this development, examining the pros and cons of forming a national network and showing that while there were difficulties involved in bringing together a movement 'often divided on fiercely held ideological beliefs' (Grant, 2001) the move to organise was successfully accomplished, if short-lived. The RCF closed in 2003, but, like a phoenix from the ashes of that group another co-ordinating group emerged to continue to provide a national voice for the movement and rebuild a network of the remaining Rape Crisis centres. Chapter 4 ends with a look at this new group and at the lessons which can be learnt from the troubled story of the RCF.

Chapter 5 rounds up our look at the support work of the centres by providing a snapshot of the Rape Crisis movement at the time of writing. This chapter draws on data from the Scottish and Irish Rape Crisis networks and from other sources. The chapter also evaluates the relationship between the Rape Crisis movement and statutory services for women experiencing sexual violence.

As Susan Brownmiller's history of the American Women's Liberation Movement shows, the beginning of the anti-rape movement saw the issues of supporting survivors and campaigning for change as entirely intertwined (Brownmiller, 1999). Today this is no longer the case: although many groups would wish to be involved in campaign work they find it hard to devote any time or energy to that side of the 'crisis'. **Chapter 6** looks at this trend and at the current campaigns which are often peopled by women who have worked within Rape Crisis or other support services (such as Women's Aid). The book concludes, as it began, by looking at the links between theory and practice, and by drawing the various strands of this work together; by offering some ways forward, in terms of practical tools for survival which might help to ensure that there are Rape Crisis centres for as long as there are women who need the support these specialists can offer.