

Online Terms and Conditions/Privacy Policy Effective Date: March 1, 2018

WHAT TEXT/CHAT IS AND ISN'T: The text and chat platforms are meant to provide information and support to individuals utilizing our services in ways that include, but are not limited to; sexual assault information, support to victims or concerned others (those who are seeking support for victims), and those looking for information on other services.

While many users find the text and chat service to be supportive and helpful, it is not, nor is it intended to be, professional counseling or mental health treatment. Text and chat sessions are conducted by staff who are not professional therapist, social workers or counselors; they are professional advocates who are specifically trained to support survivors of sexual violence, as well as their families, friends and community members. Information shared with you through text and chat is not intended to be mental health or medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Also, none of the information shared with you is intended, in any way, to constitute legal advice.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY: Your privacy and security are very important to us. The following information will help you understand what information we collect online, and how we handle that information once we collect it. This policy will tell you if we disclose that information to anyone, and what choices you have regarding how we use that information.

By using the text and chat services, you agree to this Terms and Conditions/ Privacy Policy. The terms and conditions may change from time to time without prior notification, so please consult this document regularly for any such changes.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

DEFINITION: “*Personally Identifiable Information*” is information about you that would identify you, such as your name, address, contact information, date of birth, or racial, ethnic, or religious identity.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY: Our text and chat services are an online system. Our text and chat services are intended to be anonymous and you will NOT be asked to provide your name, address, e-mail address, or any other Personally Identifiable Information in order to access either chat or text services. If you wish to receive additional services, our advocates may ask you for information such as your phone number or email address so that we may contact you to provide the requested services. Only provide this information to our advocates.

We are committed to keeping your information confidential. We will not knowingly release any confidential or personally identifiable information without your express, knowing, fully informed written consent or as required by Maine law which includes mandated reporting laws. The most confidential and secure method of communication with us is via our hotline/telephone or face to face communication. If you are concerned about confidentiality online and wish to speak with an advocate, please call 1-800-871-7741.

MANDATED REPORTING: We serve individuals all over the state of Maine and are governed by Maine law. Mandated reporting laws may require us to record and report information regarding the abuse or neglect, or suspected abuse or neglect, of someone less than 18 years of age or an incapacitated or dependent adult. If you tell us this kind of information, we may have to record it and provide it to the appropriate authorities. If it becomes clear that our advocates need to make a report, it is helpful to

gather as much information as possible. In that situation, the advocates will inform you of your options about providing further personal information and how that information can be helpful, but the choice to share that information or, to choose not to, is yours.

RECORDS and DATA: The information conveyed by you to our Advocates during your online chat or text session is intended to be part of a private conversation between you and the advocate, and will NOT be recorded, stored, saved, or catalogued by us or our text/chat service provider. Our text/chat provider does not retain records of any conversations that occur. After texts or chats are terminated, transcripts are self-destructed. We do collect aggregate statistical data, such as the number of people served, in order to inform our services and report to funders.

REALITIES OF THE DIGITAL AGE: We have worked with our text and chat provider to make all text and chat communications as secure as possible. However, there are a number of situations that are a reality of digital communication that mean your security and privacy cannot be guaranteed. These situations include an external data breach, a virus or malware on your device, the security of the technology on your device and the possibility that someone with access to your devices may have access to your text and chat messages, call and/ or internet. There are many things you can do to protect your privacy and confidentiality. First, you do not have to share any personal information like your age, name or where you live. We also recommend that you not record or store any sessions in order to protect your privacy. Once you have finished your chat, it is important that you [clean your computer's cache and history, then erase the cookies](#) on your computer or mobile device. This prevents anyone from going into your computer or device and checking up on your internet activity. Here is a link to more information about how to clear your text messages and internet history:

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF TEXT and CHAT: Understanding that the experiences of sexual violence survivors can result in strong emotions, the advocates will use their best judgment in working with text and chat users and may decide to end a conversation if it becomes abusive or offensive.