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Vanderbilt rape trial inspires more calls to Sexual Assault Center

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Reported by Larry Flowers **CONNECT**

NASHVILLE, TN (WSMV) - The emergency hotline at the Sexual Assault Center in Nashville has been ringing off the hook.

"We do tend to see an increase of victims reaching out for help," said Amber Stevenson, clinical supervisor at the center.

One of the reasons is the high-profile Vanderbilt rape trial.

"Streaming this live and in the community, having so much access to this story in particular, I think reminds the community how horrific rape really is," Stevenson said.

According to counselors at the center, there has been a spectrum of emotions from clients.

"Ranging from, 'This is really difficult for me to hear and watch, it's bringing up images and memories of what I've gone through,'" Stevenson said. "And we're also seeing the other extreme of survivors feeling empowered that their voice is being heard."

Sexual Assault Center workers are also using the trial as an avenue to reach out to victims on social media.

"SAC is a safe place for survivors to come that they won't be judged here and their character won't be questioned," Stevenson said. "This is a safe place for healing."

According to the center, one out of every six women has been the victim of a rape or attempted rape in their lifetime. One in every four college women reports surviving a rape or attempted rape.

Sexual assault is one of the most under-reported crimes. More than 30 percent of survivors never disclose the experience to anyone.

The center has been providing healing for sex crime victims for more than 20 years. If you or a victim need help, contact the Sexual Assault Center of Nashville at 1-800-879-1999.

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