

WHAT IS S.A.R.T.?

S.A.R.T. is the *SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM* of San Diego County. S.A.R.T. is a victim-sensitive program designed to provide a team approach to responding to sexual assaults in our community. S.A.R.T. began in June 1990, when a San Diego woman was raped. For nine hours after the rape, she was transported from hospital to hospital by law enforcement. When a medical facility that could treat her was finally found, she spent more time sitting in the waiting room. There was no rape kit at this facility, no one there for the victim's emotional support. Appalled by this lack of appropriate and sensitive care, then County Supervisor, Susan Golding and the Department of Health Services, initiated the movement for a county-mandated Sexual Assault Response Team. The program began officially in 1991. Thousands of victims have been assisted, counseled and consoled by the S.A.R.T. team. Before S.A.R.T., most victims endured the aftermath of assault by themselves, feeling frightened and alone. The S.A.R.T. team consists of a specially trained nurse examiner to provide an evidentiary examination and medical support, a law enforcement officer to conduct an investigation and provide emergency assistance, and a victim advocate who is there to provide emotional support, referrals and information to the victim. San Diego is the largest city in the United States utilizing the S.A.R.T. concept. The program has been very successful and is now looked at as a leader throughout the country.