

IAFN's Spotlight-on-a-Member



Andrew Mahoney

LOCATION: New Orleans, LA, USA

WORK SETTING: New Orleans Family Justice Center

FORENSIC NURSING EXPERIENCE: 12 years

YEARS OF IAFN MEMBERSHIP: 10 years

Andrew is in a highly innovative role as a forensic nurse within a community based domestic violence and sexual assault agency. Knowing that many of the thousands of victims in New Orleans do not seek forensic health services at a hospital setting, Andy has joined the NOFJC to provide forensic health services, particularly to strangulation victims who are at the highest risk for homicide. Andy brings his many years of experience and trauma-informed care to fill a much-needed gap in our community. He has quickly integrated into the multidisciplinary model of the NOFJC and has begun to collaborate across agencies to provide the best care to patients possible.

Andy states that, 1) My main motivation was my memory of how we treated SA survivors in ED back in the 80s. We knew it was wrong, but we did it anyway. One night I was seeing a SA survivor with an ED physician. After we finished the exam, he said to her “if you want, Andy and I will be happy to testify in court for you”. Initially I didn’t like him saying that, but then it gradually dawned on me that he was right, and that was how we are supposed to do this work. After that, I always volunteered to care for survivors. When I worked at University, I became aware of the SANE program at Charity, and admired their knowledge and commitment. I was lucky enough to have been mentored by all the charter SANEs from the beginning. I saw my first survivors in the “tents” at the Convention Center, right after Hurricane Katrina. I always framed my approach as “if this was my sister, how would I want the staff to treat her?” 2) First and foremost I enjoy seeing the difference in my patients’ demeanor when I discharge them after an exam. You can see that they are less anxious, more composed, sometimes even hopeful. Doing this work has given me a deeper understanding of my own personal philosophy of nursing, what it means to serve people, and of evidence-based practice. I’ve definitely become a better nurse. I love teaching other healthcare providers about caring for forensic patients—hopefully it makes a difference in the care they give. I learn something from each and every patient I meet. 3) I am a Netflix addict. I like travelling, reading, cooking. I sing in the choir at church. I am a “transplant” from Ohio, have been in New Orleans since 1994. My partner and I live in the Irish Channel.

Andy deserves to be spotlighted because he is an excellent nurse through and through. You can see in the way he treats every patient and every coworker that he sees dignity and value in all. He has eagerly joined a brand-new type of program for our community and is creating it from the ground up with enthusiasm and integrity.

