

# Woman creating comfort kits for SANE program patients



Sarah Sherman founded the We're Here for You project to create comfort kits for people who undergo sexual assault evidence examinations.

By Payge Woodard

A New Brunswick woman is working to bring comfort to people who undergo a sexual assault evidence kit examination, after her own "awful" experience.

Sarah Sherman of Fosterville, was 38-years-old when she underwent a nearly three-hour examination after she was assaulted. During the exam, a specialized nurse collects and preserves evidence following a sexual assault.

She said the sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE) were amazing, but laying there going over what happened was traumatic, and she only felt worse when it ended and her clothing needed to be collected as evidence. Sherman said she was given paper underwear, paper slippers and an ill-fitting outfit from a donation bin.

"I was embarrassed. I didn't want anybody to see me," said Sherman.

While the incident happened 17-years-ago little has changed, according to Sherman

"When I was at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital last week they showed me they have bins of things that have been donated," she said. "They are things that would make a person feel worse after going through that situation."

She wants to fix that.

In December, she launched the 'We're Here for You' project. Sherman is working to collect clothing and hygiene items for comfort kits to give to survivors after the exam.

Kits will include soap, deodorant, and inexpensive basic new clothing items because Sherman said they'll likely be thrown out as the survivor tries to move on from that night.

Gas and food gift cards will also be available for those who've had to travel to reach services.

At first, Sherman thought the project would be small, just enough to aid the Upper River Valley Hospital, until she learned there was a greater need. She now hopes to serve all facilities that offer the SANE program.

In New Brunswick, the program is offered at 12 hospitals.

Sherman has a donation drop-off location at Campbell's Towing & Auto in Woodstock and arranges donation pick-up for Fredericton, but she hopes to continue to grow.

SANE coordinator Roxanne Paquette praised Sherman's project saying it's a wonderful initiative.

"It will certainly help the patient to have something that is more comfortable or fits them better than what we could offer them," she said.

For more information on how to donate, contact [werehereforyounb@gmail.com](mailto:werehereforyounb@gmail.com).