

STATE OF NEW YORK

1789

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 15, 2021

Introduced by Sens. SANDERS, HARCKHAM, HOYLMAN, KAPLAN, KENNEDY, LIU, SKOUFIS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Judiciary

AN ACT to amend the civil practice law and rules, in relation to establishing that domestic violence advocates may not disclose any communication made by a client to the advocate except in certain circumstances

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Section 4510 of the civil practice law and rules, as added
2 by chapter 432 of the laws of 1993 and subdivision (d) as amended by
3 section 49 of part A-1 of chapter 56 of the laws of 2010, is amended to
4 read as follows:

5 § 4510. Rape crisis counselor or domestic violence advocate. (a)
6 Definitions. When used in this section, the following terms shall have
7 the following meanings:

8 1. "Rape crisis program" means any office, institution or center which
9 has been approved pursuant to subdivision fifteen of section two hundred
10 six of the public health law, as added by chapter 432 of the laws of
11 1993, offering counseling and assistance to clients concerning sexual
12 offenses, sexual abuses or incest.

13 2. "Rape crisis counselor" means any person who has been certified by
14 an approved rape crisis program as having satisfied the training stand-
15 ards specified in subdivision fifteen of section two hundred six of the
16 public health law, as added by chapter 432 of the laws of 1993, and who,
17 regardless of compensation, is acting under the direction and super-
18 vision of an approved rape crisis program.

19 3. "Client" means (i) any person who is seeking or receiving the
20 services of a rape crisis counselor for the purpose of securing coun-
21 seling or assistance concerning any sexual offenses, sexual abuse,

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD00042-01-1

1 incest or attempts to commit sexual offenses, sexual abuse, or incest,
2 as defined in the penal law; or

3 (ii) any victim of domestic violence as defined in section four
4 hundred fifty-nine-a of the social services law.

5 4. "Domestic violence program" means a residential program for victims
6 of domestic violence or a non-residential program for victims of domes-
7 tic violence as defined in section four hundred fifty-nine-a of the
8 social services law or any similar program operated by an Indian tribe,
9 as defined by section two of the Indian law.

10 5. "Domestic violence advocate" means any person who is acting under
11 the direction and supervision of a licensed and approved domestic
12 violence program and has satisfied the training standards required by
13 the office of children and family services.

14 (b) Confidential information privileged. A rape crisis counselor or
15 domestic violence advocate shall not be required to disclose a communi-
16 cation made by his or her client to him or her, or advice given thereon,
17 in the course of his or her services nor shall any clerk, stenographer
18 or other person working for the same program as the rape crisis counse-
19 lor or domestic violence advocate or for the rape crisis counselor or
20 domestic violence advocate be allowed to disclose any such communication
21 or advice given thereon nor shall any records made in the course of the
22 services given to the client or recording of any communications made by
23 or to a client be required to be disclosed, nor shall the client be
24 compelled to disclose such communication or records, except:

25 1. that a rape crisis counselor or domestic violence advocate may
26 disclose such otherwise confidential communication to the extent author-
27 ized by the client;

28 2. that a rape crisis counselor or domestic violence advocate shall
29 not be required to treat as confidential a communication by a client
30 which reveals the intent to commit a crime or harmful act;

31 3. that a domestic violence advocate shall not be required to treat
32 as confidential a communication by a client which reveals a case of
33 suspected child abuse or maltreatment pursuant to title six of article
34 six of the social services law;

35 4. in a case in which the client waives the privilege by instituting
36 charges against the rape crisis counselor or domestic violence advocate
37 or the rape crisis program or domestic violence program and such action
38 or proceeding involves confidential communications between the client
39 and the rape crisis counselor or domestic violence advocate.

40 (c) Who may waive the privilege. The privilege may only be waived [~~by~~]
41 if the client, the personal representative of a deceased client, or, in
42 the case of a client who has been adjudicated incompetent or for whom a
43 conservator has been appointed, the committee or conservator provides
44 the rape crisis counselor or domestic violence advocate with informed,
45 written and reasonably time-limited consent.

46 (d) Limitation on waiver. A client who, for the purposes of obtaining
47 compensation under article twenty-two of the executive law or insurance
48 benefits, authorizes the disclosure of any privileged communication to
49 an employee of the office of victim services or an insurance represen-
50 tative shall not be deemed to have waived the privilege created by this
51 section.

52 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.