

**Janice Griffin ~ Nominated by Rape Crisis Center (RCC)**  
**2014 Winner of the Sally Sunde Family Advocate Award**



"Janice's 20 years of experience bring such richness and depth to her work with clients. And her tenure here seems to have only strengthened her dedication as an advocate and counselor."  
"When someone who's been traumatized walks in the door, you can't simply tell them to have hope for the future. Janice works with survivors to help them discover that for themselves."  
— Kelly Anderson, Executive Director, Rape Crisis Center

Janice Griffin said she feels like she has lived several different lifetimes, because she came to counseling after having many other jobs—such as working in a florist shop, working on a farm, and managing a gift store. "I love counseling and advocacy work, which I'd done as a volunteer. When I turned 40 I decided to go back to grad school and focus on counseling as a vocation."

Janice had volunteered over the years at Women's Transit Authority, OutReach, and RCC. "At OutReach I facilitated coming-out groups for women, and at RCC I co-facilitated a support group," she explained.

One way Janice shares her expertise as an RCC employee is by offering trainings: to employees of RCC, of the state, and of local groups like Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (RCC and DAIS do cross-training for each nonprofit's staff and volunteers). She also trains seminarians. "As future clergy they learn how to assist sexual assault victims in their congregations," she noted.

Janice has greatly expanded RCC's weekly psycho-educational Women's Empowerment Group at the Dane County Jail, which RCC began in 1999. "The vast majority of incarcerated women have abuse histories, and many of them are in for drug-related charges. Drugs and alcohol are a common way of self-medicating to numb the pain of abuse," said Janice. "We try to help survivors learn healthier ways to cope with their abuse histories."

Kelly Anderson, Executive Director at RCC, noted that "in this work you can hear shocking details of unrelenting abuse from an early age, especially from people in the jail setting. For a counselor to hear that and not be overwhelmed—and to make sure the victim doesn't feel judged—is very difficult. When you see how well Janice works with people it's clear why her sessions are filled every week. In fact people are waiting to join this group."

In addition, Janice has developed expertise working with male survivors, those in the LGBT community, those with disabilities, and especially those who are developmentally disabled. She noted, "some studies have found that 86% of developmentally disabled women will be sexually abused at some point. It's an incredibly vulnerable population."

Among her most impressive skills: Janice can help survivors rediscover their hope for the future. "They think it was taken away from them forever," said Janice. "I tell them I'll keep their hope for them until they're ready to reclaim it."

"When I work with support groups at RCC, the transformation of women is powerful to see. And the trust that clients place in me means so much."  
— Janice Griffin