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YOURS, MINE AND OURS. How To Blend Two Households And Stay Sane In The Process

By Monica Ricci

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How exciting, to be getting married! How joyous the occasion! How much extra "stuff" you'll now have! Gone are the days when a girl had a hope chest where she saved the things she'd eventually need for marriage. These days, people are getting married later in life, which means they often come into the marriage with a full house. Suddenly, you're the proud owner of two of everything and not sure what to do.

Here are a few tips to help make blending your lives easier and help others in the process:

1. Go through each house together, and identify which items are duplicates. Talk about each item honestly. This is the time to decide whose wine rack you'll keep, whose kitchen table you'll keep, and so on. If you can legitimately use two of something in your new life, such as televisions or stereos, go ahead and keep both.

Try not to be too attached to something simply because it's yours and realize that the more you streamline now, the easier your move will be. If your kitchen table is circa 1971 and your partner's is only two years old, be realistic about which to keep. The idea is to choose the things that will blend well to best furnish your new place, not to fight to keep everything that is yours.

2. For things such as silverware and kitchen items, cookware, and other small items, do the same evaluation process as for the larger items.

3. As you decide which things to keep, tag the things you are letting go with brightly colored sticky notes.

4. If it's not winter where you live, pull your tagged items outside and have a yard or garage sale. Don't be greedy. Remember, you want this stuff to sell quickly so you don't have to move it.
5. Everything that doesn't sell, donate to an organization that can use it, such as your church or synagogue, The Metro Atlanta Furniture Bank (404-355-8530), a homeless or day shelter, or the Salvation Army.

Presto! You're down to one set of furnishings and you've donated things to people who can use them. When blending your personal files from two separate households, remember, it's not necessary to keep all your files in the same file cabinet. You don't have to combine your household files if you aren't comfortable doing so. Just be sure that your filing system is easy to navigate in case your partner needs to retrieve any of your filed information.

If you do elect to combine your household files, be sure keep files of the same type together, in a truly integrated filing system. For example, keep both your auto insurance information under the same category, instead of filing yours under CAR and your partner's under INSURANCE. Also, don't keep all the paperwork for any given subject in one folder. Divide it into two folders, one labeled with your name and one with your partner's. You can successfully blend two households if you take the time to set it up right in the beginning.

Monica Ricci has been an organizing specialist since 1999, and her motivational presentations teach effective organizing and simplifying techniques for home and work. She also offers free email tips and ideas on how to make life simpler and more organized. Her topics include clutter control, paper management, time management, organizing space and procrastination. Contact Monica at 770-569-2642 or [Monica@CatalystOrganizing.com](mailto:Monica@CatalystOrganizing.com).

## **The Role Of The SANE – The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner**

**By Larry Ford**

Studies have shown that less than half of the victims of sexual assault treated in emergency rooms get basic help with information about the risk of pregnancy or emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy.

They have to wait for sometimes up to six hours for treatment, and during this wait, they're told not to eat, drink, or even use the bathroom before they're examined because it might destroy evidence.

By the time of the examination, victims often feel "re-raped" from the treatment by the staff of the emergency room. For this reason, emergency rooms are realizing a need for SANE programs.

SANE's are registered nurses who have specialized training in examining victims of sexual assault. They provide much needed emotional support for victims as well as testify in trials as expert witnesses in the victim's perpetrator's trials.

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They have extensive training in forensic evidence collection, expert witness testimony, STD treatment, and pregnancy evaluation. 75% of SANE programs are hospital based, housed in the emergency rooms while 25% are in the community setting at rape crisis centers or health clinics.

The first SANE programs started in the mid 1970's but it wasn't until the late 1980's that the programs got a major growth spurt as they grew more rapidly in the 1990's when localities started to see the benefits of what these SANE programs have to offer. And by 1996, there were approximately 70 programs in existence.

Now, there are at least 280 SANE programs throughout the United States. Nearly all of these SANE programs serve adolescents and adults, and around half serve pediatric patients.

The programs are staffed by RN's and nurse practitioners that conduct forensic exams of victims of sexual assault. They are required by law to report to local law enforcement sexual assaults that may have caused the victim injury.

On the other hand, the victim has the right to decide to have evidence collected and cooperate with law enforcement by providing them with information. After a SANE program is established, most emergency room personnel are relieved by the service that SANE's provide.

Many municipalities are starting to see the need in these much needed programs. They offer a great service to victims by quickly processing forensic evidence and giving emotional support while making their time to wait for examination as short as possible.

As SANE programs get more and more popular, we'll start to see many more of these programs as time goes on and this can only help the victims of sexual violence and help put their perpetrators behind bars so they won't have a chance to hurt anyone else.

Larry Ford runs a website about forensic nursing. You can find it at



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