

Why Me?

Dealing with sexual assault

The DOVES Program
24 Hour Hotline: 308-436-HELP
866-95-DOVES (36837)
www.dovesprogram.com

Sexual assault can happen to anyone, anywhere at anytime. Perpetrators groom their victims, catch them off guard and trick them. They also take advantage of normal vulnerabilities, lie and seem trustworthy. You did not cause the assault to happen. Know in your heart that you were tricked. If you could have avoided it, you would have.

You are not to blame.

Some facts about sexual assault

Rape is not a spontaneous act nor is it an uncontrollable sexual urge. It is a deliberate action used to make another person feel helpless, humiliated, and degraded, and in turn, make the rapist feel powerful.

Sexual assault can happen to anyone at anytime, in any place. Women, men & children of all ages, races, income levels, levels of education, and who live in all types of neighborhoods are victimized.

- 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men has experienced a rape or attempted rape as a child and/or adult.*
- Approximately 84% of sexual assault victims know their rapist in some way (“acquaintance rape”).**
- Only 16% of rapes are reported to police.**

After an assault: Medical Care

It is important to get medical care as soon as possible after a sexual assault. You can be examined for injuries, given antibiotics to prevent some sexually transmitted infections and receive medication to protect against pregnancy. Base line tests can be given for other sexually transmitted diseases.

You can seek care at the hospital or in a clinic. **If you tell the medical staff that you have been raped, they are required by law to call the police.** However, **the decision to make a formal police report is still yours.**

If you are considering telling the police about the rape, a forensic exam can be conducted to collect evidence from your body. This is only done at the hospital. **Advocates are available to discuss the details of the forensic exam and explain your rights.**

* “National Violence Against Women Study” 1996 National Institute of Justice and the Center for Disease Control.

** “Rape in America: A Report to the Nation: 1992 National Center for Victims of Crime.

Common Reactions to Sexual Assault

- Thinking or talking about the assault constantly
- Not wanting to think or talk about it at all
- Re-living the experience through nightmares and flashbacks
- Trying to forget and live life as if it never happened
- Not being able to concentrate
- Being easily startled or jittery
- Not sleeping—or sleeping too much
- Not eating—or eating too much
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- Suicidal thoughts
- Anxiousness or having anxiety attacks
- Depression
- Feeling isolated and different from everyone else
- Grieving
- Feeling guilty or responsible
- Trying to figure out how it could have been stopped or prevented

Help is Available

The DOVES Program can help in a variety of ways.

- Discuss your options
- Discuss your rights if you choose to report the assault to Law Enforcement
- Discuss your safety
- Accompany you to make a report to Law Enforcement (if you want to)
- Accompany you to the hospital or clinic for medical or forensic exams.
- Accompany you to court if needed
- Provide Counselor Referrals
- Provide Financial Assistance

All services are free and confidential.

**Support is available 24 hours a day at
436-HELP or 1-866-95-DOVES (36837)**

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** *“Rape in America: A Report to the Nation: 1992 National Center for Victims of Crime.*