

## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER THE ASSAULT

Survivors of sexual assault experience a wide range of reactions. Some indicate that after the assault, emotions go from one extreme to another. There is no standard response to a sexual assault.

- Nightmares and/or sleeplessness
- Inability to express emotions
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Shame and guilt
- Denial
- Fear
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Suicidal thoughts
- Sexual dysfunction
- Lack of concentration
- Unpredictable agitation
- Feelings of grief and despair
- Appetite loss or overeating
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Unexplained and unexpected mood swings
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions

You may experience a few, none or all of these emotions.

## IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS BEEN ASSAULTED

- Believe what you hear. Provide comfort and support.
- Listen without judging.
- Encourage your friend to talk.  
Try not to interrupt or ask a lot of questions.
- Let your friend make his/her own decisions.
- Offer to go with your friend to the hospital emergency room for help. Even days or weeks after an assault, a medical exam is important.
- Give your friend the number of the rape crisis help center in your area.
- Do not tell others what happened without your friend's permission.
- Tell your friend no one deserves to be raped. It was not his/her fault, no matter what.

CALL  
US.

SOMEONE IS WAITING TO LISTEN AND TO HELP.

FOR  
MORE  
INFORMATION  
CONTACT THE  
CENTER  
IN YOUR  
AREA.

**CONTACT Huntington Rape Crisis Counseling**  
Huntington  
304-399-1111

**Family Refuge Center**  
Lewisburg  
304-645-6334

**Family Service REACH Program**  
Charleston  
304-340-3676

**Hope, Inc.**  
Fairmont  
304-367-1100

**Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center**  
Morgantown  
304-292-5100

**Sexual Assault Help Center**  
Wheeling  
304-234-8519

**Shenandoah Women's Center**  
Martinsburg  
304-263-8292

**Women's Aid In Crisis**  
Elkins  
1-800-339-1185

**Women's Resource Center**  
Beckley  
304-255-2559

Or

**The National Sexual Assault Hotline**  
1-800-656-HOPE



West Virginia Foundation for  
Rape Information and Services, Inc.  
112 Braddock Street, Fairmont, WV 26554  
304-366-9500 FAX 304-366-9501

RAPE AND  
SEXUAL  
ASSAULT

Information  
for Victims,  
Families and  
Friends



West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services, Inc.

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# RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

## SEXUAL ASSAULT IS A CRIME

that happens when you are forced, threatened or manipulated into sexual contact against your will.

Sex without consent is rape, whether the offender is a stranger or someone you know.

## DID YOU KNOW...

- Eighty percent of all rapes are committed by someone known to the victim ~ a date, a neighbor, a co-worker, a boyfriend or a family member.
- Rape can happen to anyone ~ at any age, at any place, at any time.
- The way a person dresses or behaves doesn't cause rape. Few convicted rapists remember how the victim was dressed or what the victim looked like.
- Rape is a crime of violence, power and control. No one "asks" or "deserves" to be raped.
- Females between the ages of 15–24 are most likely to be the target of acquaintance rape.
- Even if you were drinking or taking drugs, sex without consent is rape.

## PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS

**Sexual assault is never the victim's fault. These tips may reduce your risk of being sexually assaulted, but the ability to prevent rape lies with the offender.**

- Trust your feelings. Leave if you feel uncomfortable.
- Set your own limits. Decide what you are willing to do sexually. Never assume that others know how you feel.
- Be assertive. Say "no" and "stop" firmly if someone is trying to intimidate or pressure you.
- Be aware of people who are disrespectful to you. This includes someone who tries to make you feel guilty for saying "no", doesn't respect your limits, tries to get you drunk or give you drugs.

## LOWER YOUR RISK OF RAPE

- Let someone know where you are going.
- Initially go out with a group of friends. Find out as much as possible about the person before going out on a date.
- Meet at a public place.
- Carry money for a phone call, your own dinner or a cab ride home.
- Take a cell phone.
- Be aware of what you drink, how much you drink and the effects of alcohol or other drugs.
- Don't accept drinks from anyone you don't know well and trust.
- Don't leave your drink unattended.

## IF YOU ARE RAPED OR SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

- 1** **Go to a safe place. Get help immediately.**
  - Call 911.
- 2** **Tell someone.**
  - Talk to a trusted friend, spouse, parent or relative.
  - Call the local rape crisis help center. A victim advocate is trained to help you understand your medical and legal options and provide emotional support.
- 3** **Go to a hospital emergency room.**
  - Get a medical exam. You may have suffered internal injuries, contracted a sexually transmitted disease or become pregnant.
- 4** **Do not bathe, change your clothes, comb your hair, wipe after urination or douche.**
  - Valuable DNA evidence on your body or clothing may help identify the rapist.
  - If you feel you may have been drugged prior to the assault, it is important to save your first urine in a clean container. Take it with you to the hospital for drug testing.

## REMEMBER

Sex without consent is rape, whether the offender is a stranger or someone you know.