**What is Acquaintance Rape?**

Acquaintance rape is a sexual assault crime committed by someone who knows the victim. As a sexual assault crime, acquaintance rape includes forced, manipulated or coerced sexual contact. If someone forced you to have sex, that is rape – even if you know the attacker.

* The rapist may be a date, neighbor, boss, co-worker, delivery person, repair worker, spouse, relative or anyone you know.
* It can happen to anyone regardless of gender or race.

If you are a victim of acquaintance rape, it may help if you tell someone about the assault or abuse and ask for help.

**Remember: If you have been raped,**

**it is not your fault.**

**How Do I Get Help?**

Rape Crisis Centers

You may want to call a rape crisis center about the assault. The rape crisis center will give you support and information. The workers at the center will talk to you on the phone any time of the day or night. They will also meet you at the hospital emergency room and go with you to talk with the police. The services offered by rape crisis centers include:

**Medical Advocacy:** The rape crisis center worker will help you understand what happens when you go to the hospital emergency room.

**Criminal Justice Advocacy:** The rape crisis center worker will help you talk with the law enforcement and/or the prosecutor. She will also go to court with you.

**Counseling:** The rape crisis counselor will listen to you and help you find ways to feel better. She will have information and ideas that you can try.

**24-hour hotline:**Rape crisis centers operate crisis intervention hotlines that victims may call for support at any time.

The rape crisis center is there to help you. Remember that sexual violence is a serious, violent crime. It can happen to anyone. No matter what happened to you, the sexual violence was not your fault.

**The Impact**

Rape is traumatic and affects the victim physically and

emotionally. Every victim reacts differently to being raped. Some feelings you might have include:

**Emotional Feelings:**

* + Guilt
  + Anxiety
  + Fear
  + Anger
  + Depression
  + Sadness
  + Shock
  + Denial
  + Shame

**Physical Reactions:**

* + You may not want to eat
  + You may have trouble sleeping
  + You may have nightmares
  + You may be uncomfortable around others
  + You may experience flashbacks

No matter how you feel, remember it was not your fault. You can get help. A rape crisis center can help you with the information and support.

**Your Rights In a relationship:**

* You have the right to a life without violence.
* You have the right to reject unwanted attention.
* You have the right to change your mind whenever you want.
* You have the right to be yourself without changing to please others.
* You have the right to decide whether you want physical and sexual contact.
* You have the right to change a relationship when your feelings change.
* You have the right to say “NO.”

**After a sexual assault:**

* You have the right to medical treatment at a hospital emergency room.
* You have the right to report the assault to police.
* You have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity during the medical and criminal justice processes.
* You have the right to be notified of court proceedings related to your case.
* You have the right to bring an advocate or other support person to all court proceedings.
* You have the right to restitution.

**Who can be a Victim?**

Anyone can be sexually assaulted by an acquaintance. You may be pressured or forced into unwanted sex by a friend, relative, date or other acquaintance. If this happens to you, you are entitled to the same medical care, rape crisis center services and legal remedies as any other victim.

It is important to remember that sexual assault is a crime. You are not at fault. You are entitled to support – to medical care, legal assistance and counseling. You may want to call a rape crisis center for help in getting these services.

**What About Alcohol?**

You should be able to drink or go to a party without fear of rape. This is your right. Women should not be judged differently than men for drinking or going to a party.

Unfortunately, women are more vulnerable to sexual assault when they are drinking. Alcohol is the No. 1 date rape drug.

**What About Date Rape Drugs?**

Rapists can use a variety of drugs to make someone

defenseless. These drugs are often colorless, odorless and tasteless. They can cause someone to lose mobility and even consciousness. When a person wakes up, she may not have any memory of the assault. Remember that alcohol is the most widely used date rape drug.

To protect yourself against a rapist using drugs:

* Go to parties with friends and people that you trust.
* Do not leave your drink unattended. If you do, get a new drink.
* Do not use any unfamiliar substances offered to you at a party.
* If you feel dizzy or disoriented, ask a friend for help immediately.
* If you wake up with no memory of what happened the night before, go to an emergency medical center immediately.

**The Law**

Acquaintance rape is a crime in Illinois. There is no legal difference between sexual assault by a stranger and sexual assault by an acquaintance. Under Illinois law, consent is one thing and one thing only: a clear “YES” to the sexual act in question. If the victim does not fight back or escape, the law does not presume that the victim consented. If the victim knows the offender, the law still does not presume consent.

**Medical Care**

You may want to get medical attention. The medical staff can examine you for injuries and test for infections and pregnancy. Hospital personnel can also inform you about emergency contraception. If you go to a hospital emergency room within 72 hours, the hospital can collect evidence of the assault.

**Law Enforcement**

You may want to report the crime to the police and pursue prosecution of the offender.

**If I Know A Rape Victim?**

**Support**

If you know someone who has been raped, be supportive. Do not blame the victim. Rape is a crime, and blame belongs with the person that committed the crime. Remember that it is never the victim’s fault.

**Listen and Help**

Respond to what the victim says she needs – not what you think she needs. Support the victim in calling a rape crisis center and getting medical attention. If the victim wants to report to police, offer to go with her. If the victim does not want to report, respect the decision.

**Action**

Offer to help make phone calls for the victim. Offer to drive to the hospital, police station and rape crisis center. Offer to stay with the victim during the medical examination and

interviews.