

AFTER SEXUAL ASSAULT



HOW CAN I HELP

A GUIDE FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

This booklet focuses on women, the most common victims of rape. However, men can also be victims of sexual assault. The reactions, feelings and needs of sexual assault victims, whether male or female, are very similar. The information and suggestions made in this booklet are equally relevant and helpful to the friends and family of male sexual assault victims.



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WWW.ICASA.ORG



FROM THE START ...

Rape can traumatize not only the victim, but also her family and friends. One of the greatest hardships is not knowing how to help. Each woman's reaction to being raped is individual. Her pain and her needs will be unique. This pamphlet provides guidance for those whose family member or friend has been raped.

LET THE VICTIM TAKE THE LEAD

A rape victim has experienced a devastating loss of control over her life. She needs to be in control of her decisions – so don't push her in any way.

A few simple rules are:

- If she wants to talk, listen.
- If you are uncomfortable listening, help her find someone who can listen.
- If she doesn't want to talk, don't force her.
- Let her tell you what she wants to do. Ask her, "How can I help you?"

HOW CAN I HELP

HOW A RAPE CRISIS CENTER CAN HELP

ICASA rape crisis centers are experts in helping victims of sexual violence. Rape crisis center workers are specially trained to help victims of sexual violence. Rape crisis centers:

- Provide free and confidential services for victims, their families and friends of victims.
- Provide advocacy and counseling services.
- Answer the hotline 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, 365-days-a-year.

A list of centers can be found in the back of this booklet or at www.icasa.org.

IT'S NOT HER FAULT

**Rape is always a crime. The rapist is a criminal.
Don't blame the victim.
Victims don't cause their attackers' behavior.**

Don't Question Her Actions

- Don't second-guess your friend's behavior.
- Don't ask her why. (Why did you go there? Why did you stay? Why did you open the door?)
- Don't say "You should have" or "You shouldn't have" (You should have had locks on the windows... You shouldn't have been doing the laundry at that time of night... You should have fought... You shouldn't have fought...).



Questioning the victim's actions only increases her pain and self-doubt. Don't focus on the victim's behavior. The rapist's behavior is the problem and should be condemned.

HOW CAN I HELP

FACE THE ISSUE

People often tell a victim of a crisis things like: “Don’t worry,” “Don’t cry,” “Don’t think about it.” This is impossible. And it’s not helpful for someone who has been raped. Neither the crime nor its aftermath will go away by ignoring them. Telling her to deny or downplay the experience she’s just been through might suggest to her that you aren’t concerned.

BE READY TO LISTEN

Tell her she can discuss her experience with you. Some women need to process the experience by repeating details or talking about their feelings. Try to listen without judgement. Don’t ask specific questions. You don’t need to satisfy your curiosity about the details of the sexual assault.

SELF-CARE

FACE YOUR OWN FEARS

There are a number of other feelings you may have that may affect your relationship with the victim.

- You may be uncomfortable thinking about rape.
- You may feel angry with the victim or the offender.
- You may feel fearful.
- You may feel guilt that you could not prevent the attack.

Pay attention to your own feelings. Talk with someone other than the victim about your feelings, so you are able to focus on the victim’s needs and concerns without judgement.

SEEK COUNSELING IF YOU NEED IT

Rape crisis counselors are aware that sexual assault hurts those who are close to the victim. Counselors can help with your questions and concerns. ICASA rape crisis centers provide free and confidential counseling to the victim's family and friends.

WHAT MORE CAN YOU DO?

Any assistance, however small it seems to you, will show your concern and care. If you want to help your friend or relative reach out to them. Do not offer more than you can give. If you offer to help be sure to follow through. Knowing and respecting your own limitations is important. Every victim might need or want different support, from housing to daily routine to money. Here are some things you can do:

- Offer to drive her home or go with her on public transportation.
- Offer to help with routine chores.
- Help her install new locks or help her look for a new place to live.
- Consider letting her stay in your home for a while. Or offer to stay with her at her home. Make sure you're prepared to do this commitment before offering.
- Ask if there are financial problems for her after being raped. The victim may not get paid for time lost from work. She may have to pay to move to a new home, or make other lifestyle changes that increase her living expenses. Don't assume that an offer of financial help would seem insensitive.

- Make sure that your friend knows that there are rape crisis services and other community resources she can contact for support.

Your support will be key if the rapist is caught and your friend wants to prosecute the rapist. If the prosecutor charges the rapist and the case goes to trial, there are likely to be many hearing and trial dates. At any point throughout the court process, offer to accompany her or help organize a shift of others to accompany her.

Be patient, after the crisis seems to have passed, you may want things to get back to normal. However, your friend or relative may still be adjusting. Many victims suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder. It is important that you remain supportive for however long it takes.

SEXUAL INTIMACY

Rape can affect a woman's feelings about sexuality. Some victims find that sex stirs up frightening feelings which they associate with the rape experience and are more comfortable if lovemaking is limited to holding and hugging. Other women experience no difficulty in this regard, distinguishing quickly between rape and consensual sexuality, and might welcome their partner's desire for intimacy. However, a lover must recognize the possibility of temporary change in an intimate relationship.

ABSTINENCE

If your partner does not want sexual activity, you must honor her wishes. Try to talk openly about this issue even if you have never talked openly about this subject before. As in other aspects of her recovery from rape, your partner's needs should be of primary importance and should guide your actions.

Remember that even though some things change between you and your partner for awhile, most women recover from the trauma of rape and continue loving and full lives.

IN CONCLUSION ...

Remember rape is never the victim's fault. It is important that you support and believe the victim. This is how you can help the victim the most. Remember also that there is no set timetable for recovery. Be patient. Be supportive.



HOW CAN I HELP

ICASA RAPE CRISIS CENTERS ...

■ NORTH

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS

Northwest CASA
24 hrs. 888-802-8890
www.nwcasa.org
Outreach Office: *Evanston*

Northwest CASA
24 hrs. 888-802-8890

AURORA

Mutual Ground, Inc.
24 hrs. 630-897-8383
www.mutualgroundinc.com

CHICAGO HEIGHTS

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
South Suburban Center Sexual
Violence and Support Services
24 hrs. 708-748-5672
www.ywcachicago.org

DEKALB

Safe Passage, Inc.
24 hrs. 815-756-5228
www.safepassagedv.org

ELGIN

Community Crisis Center
24 hrs. 847-697-2380
www.crisiscenter.org

GALENA

Riverview Center Inc.
Sexual Assault Prevention
& Intervention Services
24 hrs. 888-707-8155
www.riverviewcenter.org
Satellite Office:

Mount Carroll

Riverview Center Inc.
SAP&IS Carroll County
24 hrs. 877-273-7772

GLENDALE HEIGHTS

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
Patterson and McDaniel
Family Center
24 hrs. 630-971-3927
www.ywcachicago.org

GURNEE

Zacharias Sexual
Abuse Center
24 hrs. 847-872-7799
www.zcenter.org

HICKORY HILLS

The Pillars Community
Services
24 hrs. 708-482-9600
www.pillarscommunity.org
Satellite Office: *Berwyn*
The C.A.R.E. Center
24 hrs. 708-482-9600

JOLIET

Sexual Assault Service Center
Guardian Angel Community
Services
24 hrs. 815-730-8984
www.gacsprograms.org

KANKAKEE

Kankakee County Center
Against Sexual Assault
24 hrs. 815-932-3322
www.kc-casa.org
Outreach Office: *Watseka*
Iroquois Sexual Assault
Services.
24 hrs. 815-432-0420

PRINCETON

Freedom House, Inc.
24 hrs. 800-474-6031
www.freedomhouseillinois.com

QUAD CITIES

Rape/Sexual Assault
Counseling Program
Family Resources, Inc.
24 hrs. 309-797-1777
www.famres.org

ROCKFORD

Rockford Sexual Assault
Counseling, Inc.
24 hrs. 815-636-9811
www.rsaonline.org
Satellite Office: *Belvidere*
Rockford Sexual Assault
Counseling, Inc.
24 hrs. 815-636-9811
Satellite Office: *Rochelle*
Rockford Sexual Assault
Counseling, Inc.
24 hrs. 815-636-9811
Outreach Office: *Rockford*
Prevention Office
24 hrs. 815-636-9811

STERLING

YWCA of the Sauk Valley
24 hrs. 815-626-7277
www.ywca.org/saukvalley
Satellite Office: *Dixon*
YWCA of the Sauk Valley
24 hrs. 815-288-1011

STREATOR

ADV & SAS
24 hrs. 800-892-3375
www.advsas.org
Satellite Office: *Pontiac*
ADV & SAS
24 hrs. 800-892-3375
Outreach Office: *Ottawa*
ADV & SAS
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

■ CHICAGO

Chicago 24-Hour Hotline
1-888-293-2080

RAPE VICTIM ADVOCATES

www.rapevictimagadvocates.org
Satellite Office: *Chicago*
RVA - Stroger Hospital of
Cook County
Satellite Office: *Chicago*
Austin Community Satellite
Satellite Office: *Chicago*
Northside Chicago

MUJERES LATINAS EN ACCION

www.mujeerlatinasenaccion.org

HOW CAN I HELP

ICASA RAPE CRISIS CENTERS ...

YWCA METROPOLITAN

CHICAGO SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

www.ywcachicago.org
Satellite Office: Chicago
YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
Laura Parks and
Mildred Francis Center
Satellite Office: Chicago
YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
Englewood
Satellite Office: Chicago
YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
Logan Square
Outreach Office: Chicago
YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
RISE Children's Center

■ CENTRAL

BLOOMINGTON

Stepping Stones Sexual
Assault Services
YWCA of McLean County
24 hrs. 309-827-4005
www.ywcamclean.org

CHARLESTON/MATTOON

Sexual Assault Counseling
& Information Service
24 hrs. 888-345-2846
www.sacis.org
Satellite Office: Robinson
Counseling & Information
for Sexual Assault/Abuse
24 hrs. 866-288-4888

DANVILLE

Vermillion County
Rape Crisis Center
24 hrs. 866-617-3224
www.vcrapecrisiscenter.org

DECATUR

Growing Strong Sexual
Assault Center
24 hrs. 217-428-0770
www.growingstrongcenter.org

MACOMB

Western Illinois Regional
Council/Community Action
Agency Victim Services
24 hrs. 309-837-5555
www.wirpc.org/victimservices

PEORIA

The Center for the
Prevention of Abuse
Sexual Assault Services
24 hrs. 309-691-4111 or
800-559-SAFE
www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org

QUINCY

Quanada Sexual
Assault Program
24 hrs. 800-369-2287
www.quanada.org
Satellite Office: Pittsfield
Pike County Satellite Office
24 hrs 800-369-2287
Outreach Office: Brown
County
Quanada Sexual Assault
Program
24 hrs. 800-369-2287
Outreach Office: Schuyler
County
Quanada Sexual Assault
Program
24 hrs. 800-369-2287

SPRINGFIELD

Prairie Center Against
Sexual Assault
24 hrs. 217-753-8081
www.prairiecasa.org
Satellite Office: Jacksonville
Prairie Center Against
Sexual Assault
24 hrs. 217-753-8081

URBANA/CHAMPAIGN

Rape, Advocacy, Counseling
and Education Services
24 hrs. 217-384-4444
or 877-236-3727
www.cu-races.org

■ SOUTH

BELLEVILLE

Call For Help, Inc. Sexual
Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975
www.callforhelpinc.org
Satellite Office:
East St. Louis
Call For Help, Inc. Sexual
Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975
Satellite Office: Granite City
Call For Help, Inc., Sexual
Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975

CARBONDALE

Rape Crisis Services of
The Women's Center, Inc.
24 hrs. 618-529-2324 or
800-334-2094
www.thewomensctr.org
Satellite Office: Marion
Rape Crisis Services of
The Women's Center, Inc.
24 hrs. 800-334-2094
Outreach Office:
Northeast Carbondale
Rape Crisis Services of
The Women's Center, Inc.
24 hrs. 800-334-2094

VANDALIA

Sexual Assault and
Family Emergencies
24 hrs. 800-625-1414
www.safecrisiscenter.org
Satellite Office: Centralia
Sexual Assault and
Family Emergencies
24 hrs. 800-625-1414
Outreach Office:
Effingham
Sexual Assault and
Family Emergencies
24 hrs. 800-625-1414

HOW CAN I HELP

- www.icasa.org -

**FOR SERVICES AND INFORMATION IN YOUR
COMMUNITY CONCERNING SEXUAL ASSAULT OR
SEXUAL ABUSE, CONTACT:**



**100 N. 16th Street
Springfield, IL., 62703
(217) 753-4117 www.icasa.org**