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# How CAN I HELP?

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**A GUIDE  
FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY**

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ILLINOIS COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

This booklet recognizes that women are 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](http://WWW.ICASA.ORG)



## FROM THE START ...

Rape can traumatize not only the victim, but also their family and friends. Family and friends often do not know how to help. Each person's reaction to being raped is individual. Each person's pain and needs will be theirs alone. 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 terrible loss of control over their life. She/he needs to be in control of decisions – so don't force them to recover in the ways you think they should.

A few simple rules are:

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

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HOW CAN I HELP

## HOW A RAPE CRISIS CENTER CAN HELP

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

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

A list of centers can be found in the back of this booklet or at [www.icasa.org](http://www.icasa.org).

### **REMEMBER: IT'S NOT THE SURVIVOR'S 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 the Survivor's Actions

- Don't second-guess your friend's behavior.
- Don't ask 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...).

Questions like this only increases the victim's pain and self-doubt. Don't focus on the victim's behavior. The rapist's behavior is the problem and should be blamed.

## 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. It's not helpful to say this to someone who has been raped. Neither the crime nor its aftermath will go away by ignoring them. If you deny or downplay what the victim has been through, she/he might think that you aren't concerned.

## BE READY TO LISTEN

Tell the victim she can discuss the experience with you. Some people need to process the experience by repeating details or talking about their feelings.

- Try to listen without judgement.
- Don't ask detailed questions.
- You don't need to know the details of the sexual assault.

# SELF-CARE

## FACE YOUR OWN FEARS

You may have feelings that 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.



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HOW CAN I HELP

## WHAT MORE CAN YOU DO?

Any help, however small it seems to you, will show your concern and care. 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 help with daily tasks to money. Here are some things you can do:

- Offer to drive the victim home or go with her/him on public transportation.
- Offer to help with routine chores.
- Help install new locks or help look for a new place to live.
- Consider letting the victim stay in your home for a while. Or offer to temporary stay at the victim's home. Make sure you're prepared to do this commitment offering.
- Ask the victims will have financial problems after being raped. The victim may not get paid for time lost from work. Your friend 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 the prosecutor charges the rapist. If the case goes to trial, there are likely to be many hearing and trial dates. At any point throughout the court process, offer to go with the victim or help plan for others to go.

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 person'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 people 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/his wishes. Try to talk openly about this issue even if you have never talked openly about this subject before. As in other aspects of recovery from rape, your partner's needs should be of primary importance and should guide your actions.

Remember that even though some things may change between you and your partner for awhile, most people 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.

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**HOW CAN I HELP**

- 7 -

# RAPE CRISIS SERVICES IN ILLINOIS ...

## ■ NORTH

### ARLINGTON HEIGHTS

Northwest CASA  
24 hrs. 888-802-8890  
www.nwcasa.org

### AURORA

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

### BELVIDERE\*

Rockford Sexual Assault  
Counseling, Inc.  
24 hrs. 815-636-9811

### BERWYN\*

The C.A.R.E. Center  
24 hrs. 708-482-9600

### CHICAGO HEIGHTS

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

### CRYSTAL LAKE\*

Northwest CASA  
24 hrs. 888-802-8890

### DEKALB

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

### DIXON\*

YWCA of the Sauk Valley  
24 hrs. 815-288-1011

### ELGIN

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

### EVANSTON\*

Northwest CASA  
24 hrs. 888-802-8890

### FREEMONT

VOICES  
24 hrs. 815-232-7200

### GALENA

Riverview Center Inc.  
24 hrs. 888-707-8155  
www.riverviewcenter.org

### 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

### 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

### MOUNT CARROLL\*

Riverview Center  
Carroll County  
24 hrs. 877-273-7772

### OTTAWA

ADV & SAS  
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

### PONTIAC\*

ADV & SAS  
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

### 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

### ROCHELLE\*

Rockford Sexual Assault  
Counseling, Inc.  
24 hrs. 815-636-9811

### ROCKFORD

Rockford Sexual Assault  
Counseling, Inc.  
24 hrs. 815-636-9811  
www.rsaonline.org

### STERLING

YWCA of the Sauk Valley  
24 hrs. 815-626-7277  
www.ywca.org/saukvalley

### STREATOR

ADV & SAS  
24 hrs. 800-892-3375  
www.advsas.org

### WATSEKA\*

Iroquois Sexual Assault  
Services.  
24 hrs. 815-432-0420

## ■ CHICAGO

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

### RAPE VICTIM ADVOCATES

www.rapevictimadvocates.org  
○ Stroger Hospital\*  
○ Austin\* ○ Northside\*

### MUJERES LATINAS EN ACCION

www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org

### YWCA METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

www.ywcachicago.org  
○ Laura Parks and  
Mildred Francis Center\*  
○ Englewood\*  
○ Logan Square\*  
○ RISE Children's Center\*

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HOW CAN I HELP  
www.icasa.org

# RAPE CRISIS SERVICES IN ILLINOIS ...

## ■ **CENTRAL**

### **BLOOMINGTON**

Stepping Stones Sexual Assault Services  
YWCA McLean County  
24 hrs. 309-827-4005  
[www.ywcamclean.org](http://www.ywcamclean.org)

### **BROWN COUNTY\***

Quanada Sexual Assault Program  
24 hrs. 800-369-2287

### **CHARLESTON/MATTOON**

Sexual Assault Counseling & Information Service  
24 hrs. 888-345-2846  
[www.sacis.org](http://www.sacis.org)

### **DANVILLE**

Vermillion County  
Rape Crisis Center  
24 hrs. 866-617-3224  
[www.vcrapecrisiscenter.org](http://www.vcrapecrisiscenter.org)

### **DECATUR**

Growing Strong Sexual Assault Center  
24 hrs. 217-428-0770  
[www.growingstrongcenter.org](http://www.growingstrongcenter.org)

### **JACKSONVILLE\***

Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault  
24 hrs. 217-753-8081

### **MACOMB**

Western Illinois Regional Council/Community Action Agency Victim Services  
24 hrs. 309-837-5555  
[www.wirpc.org/victimservices](http://www.wirpc.org/victimservices)

### **QUINCY**

Quanada Sexual Assault Program  
24 hrs. 800-369-2287  
[www.quanada.org](http://www.quanada.org)

## **PEORIA**

The Center for the Prevention of Abuse Sexual Assault Services  
24 hrs. 309-691-4111 or  
800-559-SAFE  
[www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org](http://www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org)

### **PITTSFIELD\***

Quanada Pike County Satellite Office  
24 hrs 800-369-2287

### **ROBINSON\***

Counseling & Information for Sexual Assault/Abuse  
24 hrs. 866-288-4888

### **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](http://www.prairiecasa.org)

### **URBANA/CHAMPAIGN**

Rape, Advocacy, Counseling and Education Services  
24 hrs. 217-384-4444  
or 877-236-3727  
[www.cu-races.org](http://www.cu-races.org)

## ■ **SOUTH**

### **BELLEVILLE**

Call For Help, Inc. Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit  
24 hrs. 618-397-0975  
[www.callforhelpinc.org](http://www.callforhelpinc.org)

### **CARBONDALE**

Rape Crisis Services of The Women's Center, Inc.  
24 hrs. 618-529-2324 or  
800-334-2094  
[www.thewomensctr.org](http://www.thewomensctr.org)

### **CENTRALIA\***

Sexual Assault and Family Emergencies  
24 hrs. 800-625-1414

### **EAST ST. LOUIS\***

Call For Help, Inc. Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit  
24 hrs. 618-397-0975

### **EFFINGHAM\***

Sexual Assault and Family Emergencies  
24 hrs. 800-625-1414

### **GRANITE CITY\***

Call For Help, Inc., Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit  
24 hrs. 618-397-0975

### **MARION\***

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](http://www.safecrisiscenter.org)

*\* Shows satellite and outreach offices of main centers.*

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HOW CAN I HELP

[www.icasa.org](http://www.icasa.org)

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

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