

Sexual assault is

any unwanted or forced sexual act and includes:

- Rape and attempted rape
- Unwanted touching or groping
- Sexual harassment
- Unwanted showing of private parts
- Sexual exploitation
- Child sexual abuse
- Incest
- Sexually obscene communications (in person, by phone, texting, email or social networking)

One in six women

will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime. Many do not report their assault because they are threatened by their offender or they feel that it was somehow their fault. You **DID NOT** deserve to be sexually assaulted, but you **DO** deserve help and support.

RAPE CRISIS AND RECOVERY CENTERS

Allegany Family Crisis Resource Center 301-759-9244	Frederick Heartly House, Inc. 301-662-8800
Anne Arundel YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County 410-222-6800	Garrett Dove Center 301-334-9000 Toll Free 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
Baltimore City TurnAround, Inc. 443-279-0379	Harford Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center (SARC) 410-836-8430
Baltimore County TurnAround, Inc. 443-279-0379	Howard HopeWorks 410-997-2272 Toll Free 1-800-752-0191
Calvert Crisis Intervention Center 410-535-1121 / 301-855-1075	Montgomery Victim Assistance & Sexual Assault Program 240-777-4357
Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot For All Seasons, Inc. 410-820-5600, Toll Free 1-800-310-7273 Para Español 410-829-6143	Prince George's DV/SA Center, Dimensions Healthcare 301-618-3154
Carroll Rape Crisis Intervention Service, 410-857-7322	St. Mary's Walden-Sierra, Inc. 301-863-6661
Cecil The Bridge 410-996-0333	Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester Life Crisis Center, Inc. 410-749-HELP (4357)
Charles Center for Abused Persons 301-645-3336	Washington CASA, Inc. 301-739-8975

Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI)
www.mcasa.org
301-565-2277 or toll-free 1-877-496-SALI (7254)



mcasa.org | 301-328-7023 | info@mcasa.org
p.o. box 8782
silver spring, maryland 20907

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what to do

AFTER A SEXUAL ASSAULT



A sexual assault is never your fault

and it is important that you know help is always available to you. Sexual assault can happen to anyone, at any time. It doesn't matter how old you are, what you look like, what you wear, where you hang out and who you hang out with.

Offenders can be strangers, but most likely they are friends, family members or acquaintances that we think we can trust. Sexual assaults may involve a weapon, threats, coercion, alcohol or drugs, or nothing but the violent attack itself.





Victim's Rights in Maryland When Seeking Medical Attention

You have the right to:

- Be considered an emergency patient with special needs
- Speak with police and medical personnel
- A forensic medical exam even if you choose **not** to involve the police
- Be taken to a quiet, private area for a medical/forensic examination
- Be informed about and offered emergency contraception, if there is a risk of pregnancy
- Have initial and follow-up tests performed if there is a risk for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and be offered medication
- Be informed about HIV/AIDS testing and be referred to free, confidential testing
- Have all injuries treated

Options to Consider if You Have Been Sexually Assaulted

Seek out a friend or other support person.

You may feel confused, and may not know what to do. Seeking out a friend, or another person as support, may help you better understand your options. If you don't feel comfortable contacting someone you know you can always rely on your local Rape Crisis and Recovery Center.

Call your local Rape Crisis and Recovery Center.

Trained hotline staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer questions or to just listen. Your call is FREE and always confidential. Hotline staff can offer options and help identify what is best for you.

Get medical attention. Whether you have cuts and bruises or not, getting medical attention is very important. Maryland offers Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) programs at various hospitals. Visit www.mcasa.org for a list of Maryland SAFE Programs. A FREE exam can be completed even if you choose not to involve the police. Try not to shower, clean yourself, or urinate after an attack, but even if you have, don't let that stop you from getting to a hospital as soon as possible.

At the hospital, you can ask that an advocate from a Rape Crisis and Recovery Center be with you. Your advocate is there to support you and answer any questions you may have. You can also ask to have your advocate with you during the exam.

During the exam, the nurse will look for things that might identify the attacker, such as hairs, fibers and body fluids. The exam may include oral swabbing and photographs of visible injuries. An internal exam may be conducted on adolescent and adult women. You may be asked to give blood and hair samples. You may be given preventative treatment for sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs).



You may also be given emergency contraception (EC) if there is a risk of pregnancy from the assault. EC contains hormones like those found in birth control pills. They can prevent pregnancy when taken within 72 hours of sexual intercourse. EC is safe and effective in reducing the chance of pregnancy.

Consider Reporting the assault to police. Your advocate or another support person can go with you to file a report in the county where you were assaulted. Remember, whether you report or not is your decision, although for investigative purposes, the sooner you report the sexual assault the better.

Telling the police about your assault is difficult, and they will ask you some uncomfortable questions. Although, it is important that you answer them fully and honestly. Don't be afraid to ask for the time and support that you need.

What to Expect After You Have Been Sexually Assaulted

Everyone is different and there is no single reaction to being sexually assaulted, but it is important to know that you may experience:

- Nervousness and anxiety
- Fear and social isolation
- A decrease or increase in appetite
- Sleeplessness or nightmares
- Depression and withdrawal
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Relationship problems
- Flashbacks
- Physical ailments, headaches, stomach aches and other pain
- Thoughts of suicide.

Take care of yourself. When you are ready, trained counselors are available at your local Rape Crisis and Recovery Center. Many survivors find that counseling helps them to move forward and heal. In addition to counseling, there are ways that you can take care of yourself following a sexual assault:

- Talk with a supportive friend, family member or spiritual advisor
- Keep a written journal
- Express yourself through art, dance or music
- Exercise, get plenty of sleep and eat healthy
- Join a local support group
- Pray or meditate
- Realize that you are not alone nor to blame
- Be kind to yourself
- Set a path and goals for healing and reward your progress

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