



a better way

RAPE CRISIS CENTER

SUPPORT | ADVOCACY | PREVENTION

Our Mission

To reduce domestic abuse, sexual assault, suicide and homelessness through service, shelter, crisis intervention and prevention initiatives.

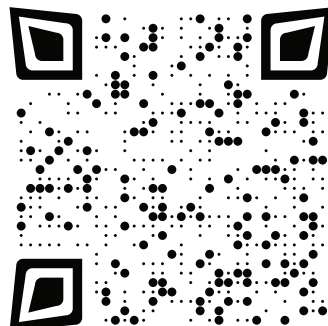
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WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

Available 24/7.

A Better Way provides services to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in Blackford, Delaware, Fayette, Henry, Jay, Randolph, Union, and Wayne counties.



SCAN ME

- ☎ Muncie: 765.747.9107
- ☎ Richmond: 765.966.0538
- ☎ Crisis Support: 765.288.4357
- ☎ 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
- @ abetterwaymuncie.org

HOW DOES A BETTER WAY HELP SURVIVORS?

RAPE CRISIS CENTER

A Better Way's rape crisis center is open 24/7 to survivors of rape or sexual assault. We provide professional, confidential emotional support and legal advocacy. We are here to listen.

SART

Our advocates respond to cases of sexual assault at the hospital and provide support to survivors throughout the entire process, including the forensic medical exam and follow-up.

CRISIS SUPPORT

A Better Way advocates are ready to take your call and provide you with immediate, confidential support. We will listen, offer encouragement, and we will believe you. You may call as often as you like.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Support Group: Our Sexual Assault Support Group meets every Monday night, except on holidays. The group is facilitated by a victim advocate and/or a sexual assault counselor. A children's group is provided during support group hours.

Individual Support: Professional counselors are available to provide compassionate trauma-informed care; emotional and behavioral services include assessment, individual counseling, and referral to higher levels of integrated care as needed.

LEGAL ADVOCACY

Our advocates provide essential sexual assault resources to victims, including accompaniment to court, assistance with protective orders, legal rights education, and overall guidance throughout the legal process.

EVERY 92 SECONDS



a sexual assault occurs in the USA.

According to The Bureau of Justice Statistics, there are roughly 321,500 survivors (ranging 12 years of age or older) of rape and sexual assault each year in the United States alone.

Sexual Assault Survivors

94%

Experience PTSD

33%

Contemplate Suicide

13%

Attempt Suicide

Supported By:



MUNCIE



WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Sexual assault can take many different forms, but one thing remains the same: it is never the survivor's fault. The term sexual assault refers to sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim. Some forms of sexual assault include:

- **Attempted rape**
- **Fondling or unwanted sexual touching**
- **Forcing a victim to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetrating the perpetrator's body**
- **Penetration of the victim's body, also known as rape!**

WHAT IS RAPE?

Rape is a form of sexual assault, but not all sexual assault is rape. The term rape is often used as a legal definition to specifically include sexual penetration without consent. For its Uniform Crime Reports, the FBI defines rape as "penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim."

Indiana code 35-42-4-1 provides a legal definition of rape as a person who knowingly or intentionally has sexual intercourse with another person or knowingly or intentionally causes another person to perform or submit to other sexual conduct when:

1.

The other person is compelled by force or imminent threat of force;

3.

The other person is so mentally disabled or deficient that consent to sexual intercourse or other sexual conduct cannot be given

2.

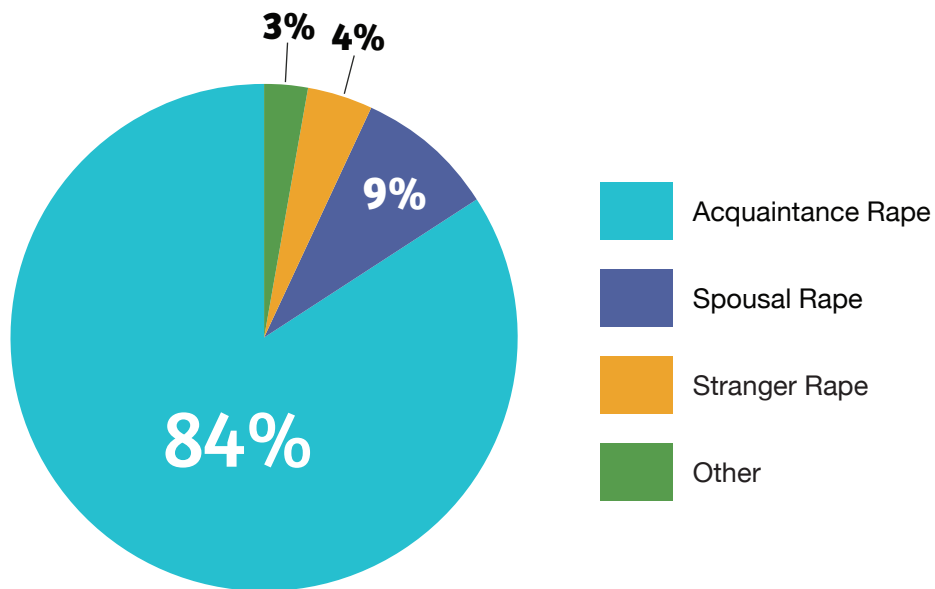
The other person is unaware that the sexual intercourse or other sexual conduct is occurring; or

WHAT IS FORCE?

Force doesn't always refer to physical pressure. Perpetrators may use emotional coercion, psychological force, or manipulation to coerce a victim into non-consensual sex. Some perpetrators will use threats to force a victim to comply, such as threatening to hurt the victim or their family or other intimidation tactics.

TYPES OF RAPE:

No matter who the survivor or perpetrator is, or when and where the rape takes place, rape should always be taken seriously - **this begins with believing the survivor.**



ACQUAINTANCE / DATE RAPE

Perpetrators of acquaintance rape might be a date, but they could also be a classmate, a neighbor, a friend's significant other, or any number of different roles.

It is important to remember that dating, instances of past intimacy, or other acts like kissing do not give someone consent for increased or continued sexual contact.

SPOUSAL RAPE

Any unwanted sexual acts by a spouse or ex-spouse, committed without the other person's consent. Such illegal sexual activity are done using force, threat of force, intimidation, or when a person is unable to consent.

STRANGER RAPE

In other instances the victim may not know the perpetrator at all. This type of sexual violence is sometimes referred to as stranger rape. Stranger rape can occur in several different ways:

Blitz Sexual Assault: when a perpetrator quickly and brutally assaults the victim with no prior contact, usually at night in a public place.

Contact Sexual Assault: when a perpetrator contacts the victim and tries to gain their trust by flirting, luring the victim to their car, or otherwise trying to coerce the victim into a situation where the sexual assault will occur.

Home Invasion Sexual Assault: when a stranger breaks into the victim's home to commit the assault.

HOW COMMON IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

- On average, there are 321,500 survivors (age 12 or older) of rape and sexual assault each year in the United States. 9 out of every 10 victims of rape are female.
- The majority of sexual assault survivors are under the age of 30.
Age 12-17 = 15% | Age 18-34 = 54% | Age 35-64 = 28% | Age 65+ = 3%
- About 3% of American men—or 1 in 33—have experienced an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime.
- Lesbian and bisexual women are 3X more likely to be sexually assaulted during their lifetime compared to heterosexual women.
- From 2009-2013, Child Protective Services agencies substantiated, or found strong evidence to indicate that, 63,000 children a year were survivors of sexual abuse.
- A majority of child survivors are 12-17 years old. Of survivors under the age of 18: 34% of survivors of sexual assault and rape are under age 12, and 66% of survivors of sexual assault and rape are age 12-17.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE VICTIMIZED EACH YEAR



INMATES: 80,600

were sexually assaulted or raped



CHILDREN: 60,000

were survivors of “substantiated or indicated” sexual abuse



GENERAL PUBLIC: 321,500

Americans 12 and older were sexually assaulted or raped



MILITARY: 18,900

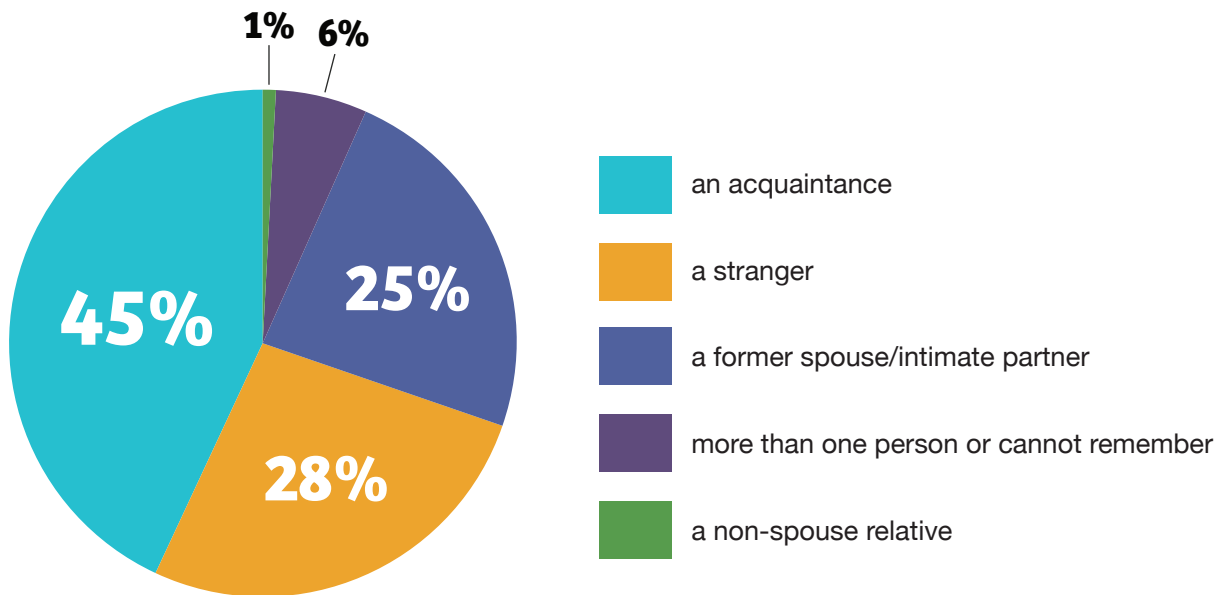
experienced unwanted sexual contact

PERPETRATORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Perpetrators of rape are often serial criminals. Out of every **1,000 suspected rape perpetrators** referred to prosecutors: **370** have at least one prior felony conviction, including **100** who have 5 or more felonies. **520** will be released while awaiting trial. **70** of the released perpetrators will be arrested for committing another crime before their case is decided.

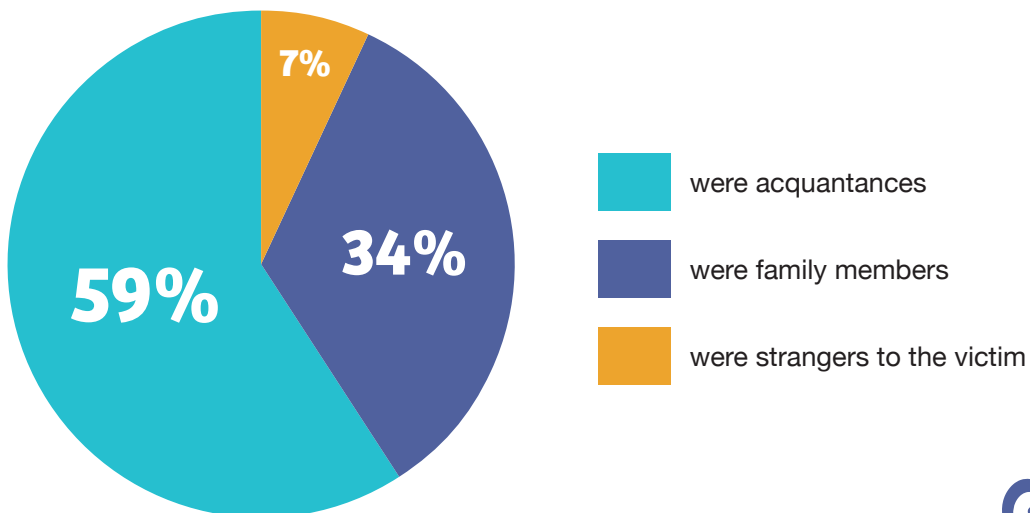
7 out of 10 rapes are committed by people the survivors know.

Of rape cases reported to law enforcement, the rapes were committed by:



93% of juvenile survivor knew the perpetrator.

The majority of children and teen survivors **know the perpetrator**. Of sexual abuse cases reported to law enforcement:



MYTHS VS FACTS:

MYTH:

Watch out for strangers behind the bushes!

FACT:

It is estimated that 93% of juvenile survivors and between 84% - 90% of adult survivors knew their perpetrators. Rapists come from all classes, races, and backgrounds. The message of “stranger danger” has been passed down with the best of intentions, but in regards to sexual assault, the notion of “stranger danger” is a harmful misconception.

MYTH:

Men cannot be raped.

FACT:

Many people believe men should be able to protect themselves, and therefore, cannot be survivors or vulnerable. This is based on dangerous gender stereotypes that don't reflect reality. Statistically, 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old. Furthermore, 1 in 16 men are sexually assaulted while in college (NSVRC).

MYTH:

If married, you cannot be raped by your spouse.

FACT:

Rape can occur in any relationship - including within marriages. Stereotypes about women and sex such as women enjoy forced sex, women say “no” when they really mean “yes,” and it's a wife's duty to have sex, continue to be reinforced in our culture, contributing to the problem.

MYTH:

If two people are dating, in a relationship, or have had sex in the past, then rape cannot occur in this relationship.

FACT:

False. Regardless of the nature or status of your relationship or the number of times you have had sex with this person, consent must be given each time two people have sex; consent given in the past cannot be used as justification to have sex with someone against their will - this is rape.

HOW TO SEEK HELP

SAFETY FIRST

- ✓ Go to a safe place - Your safety is top priority. If you are in danger or need medical care, call 911. If you need to call a trusted friend or loved one for support and comfort, do so. Both physical safety and emotional safety are important during this time.

YOU HAVE OPTIONS

1. Call the police - You may contact the police to file a police report. By filing a police report, you will be creating a formal, legal record of the crime that was committed against you. If the police are called to the scene, you are under no obligation to file a formal report.
2. Call a sexual assault service provider - If there is a sexual assault service provider in your area, they will be able to assist you and answer any questions you may have about your options. You may speak with an advocate anonymously to receive information.
3. You can call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE (4673) - Even though this call is free, it may appear on your phone bill. If you think that the person who sexually assaulted you may check your phone bill, try to call from a friend's phone or a public phone.
4. Receive medical attention - You may not think medical care is necessary if you don't have any visible injuries, but it's important that you receive care for possible internal injuries, sexually transmitted infections, or pregnancy.

By going to the hospital, you can also receive a medical forensic exam (often referred to as a "rape kit") which will aid in the collection and preservation of physical evidence as a result of the assault.
5. If you can, wait to wash, eat, drink, use the toilet, or douche because evidence could be destroyed; going straight to the hospital helps preserve evidence of the crime. Take a change of clothes with you to the hospital, if possible.

The cost of a medical forensic exam is covered by the state of Indiana through Crime Victims Compensation. It is against state and federal law (VAWA Reauthorization 2013) for a victim to pay any out-of-pocket costs for a forensic medical exam.

IMPORTANT NOTE

You can consent to a medical examination and the collection of evidence and still withhold consent to release the evidence to the police. If you later decide to file a police report and participate in the prosecution of your assailant, you can give your consent at that time to release the evidence to the police.

PROTECTING YOURSELF

For many people who have been affected by sexual assault, current and long-term safety can be an ongoing concern. Safety planning is about brainstorming ways to stay safe that may also help reduce the risk of future harm. It can include planning for a future crisis, considering your options, and making decisions about your next steps. Finding ways to stay and feel safer can be an important step towards healing, and these plans and actions should not increase the risk of being hurt.

SAFETY PLANNING

Become familiar with safe places. Learn more about safe places near you such as a local police department or a family member's house. Learn the routes and commit them to memory.

Create a code word.

It might be a code between you and your children that means "get out," or with your support network that means "I need help."

Keep computer safety in mind.

If you think someone might be monitoring your computer use, consider regularly clearing your cache, history, and cookies. You could also use a different computer at a friend's house or a public library.

Lean on a support network.

Having someone you can reach out to for support can be an important part of staying safe and recovering. Find someone you trust who could respond to a crisis if you needed their help.

Prepare an excuse.

Create several plausible reasons for leaving the house at different times or for existing situations that might become dangerous. Have these on hand in case you need to get away quickly.

Stay safe at home.

If the person hurting you is in your home, you can take steps to feel safer. Try hanging bells or a noise maker on your door to scare the person hurting you away, or sleep in public spaces like the living room. If possible, keep the doors inside your house locked or put something heavy in front of them. If you're protecting yourself from someone who does not live with you, keep all the doors locked when you're not using them, and install an outside lighting system with motion detectors. Change the locks if possible.

SAFETY FROM STALKING

Be prepared to reach out.

If possible, keep your cell phone charged and have emergency contact numbers programmed ahead of time. You may want to save these contacts under a different name. Memorize a few numbers in case you don't have access to your cell phone.

Change your routine.

Be aware of your daily routine and begin to alter it over time. Switch up the way you commute more often, taking different routes or different modes of transportation.

Tell someone you trust.

Stalking shouldn't be kept a secret. Tell your loved ones, parents or other trusted adults, or the local police to determine if a report can be made.

SAFETY WHEN LEAVING

Make an escape bag.

Pack a bag that includes all important papers and documents, such as your birth certificate, license, passport, social security card, bills, prescription drugs, and medical records. Include cash, keys, and credit cards. Hide the bag well. If it's discovered, call it a "hurricane bag" or "fire bag." If you are escaping with children, include their identifying information as well.

Plan a destination.

Locate your nearest domestic violence shelter when planning to escape a dangerous situation. If you decide to stay with a friend or relative, make sure it is a safe location for yourself or family.

Plan a route.

Then plan a backup route. If you are driving, have a tank of gas filled at all times. If you rely on public transportation, know the routes and departure times. Many public transportation systems have mobile apps that update their schedules and arrival times.

Prepare your support network.

Keep your support network in the loop. Let them know how to respond if the perpetrator contacts them.

Important Safety Note: If the dangerous situation involves a partner, go to the police.

PROTECTIVE ORDERS

It is an order issued by a judge that prohibits or restricts another person from engaging in certain conduct. Protective orders can prohibit another person from:

- threatening to commit or committing an act of violence against you;
- abusing, harassing or contacting you or a member of your household;
- entering your property or workplace;
- damaging your property.

A Better Way, Muncie: 765-747-9107

A Better Way, Richmond: 765-966-0538

Muncie Victim Advocate Office: 765-747-4777

Delaware County Prosecutors: 765-747-7801

Wayne County Prosecutor's Office: 765-973-9394

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

How do I get a PO?

Go online at public.courts.in.gov/porefsp to file a Protection Order Petition.

Civil protection orders are available for situations involving domestic or family violence, sexual assault, stalking, harassment, or child sex grooming. These types of situations can be very dangerous and even result in death.

Taking a step like filing for a protection order can offer a level of safety, but also increase your risk. There are resources available to help you take this step safely.

Although not required, you can speak with an advocate in your region, confidentially and free of charge, to help you assess your level of danger, plan for safety, and also assist you with completing the Protection Order Petition.

What if i'm in immediate danger?

A judge can grant you an emergency ex parte protection order.

This gives you immediate protection while the order is being processed. In some cases a hearing will be ordered within 30 days, when the judge may approve the protective order with terms necessary to stop the violence or threats of violence.

How do I prepare for the hearing?

To prepare for a protective order hearing, you should, if you can, bring witnesses, pictures of your injuries, police and medical reports and any other information you have about the violence.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need an attorney?

No

Can I file a PO from any court in Indiana?

No, the petition must be filed in the county in which you live, the abuser lives or in which the abuse occurred.

What should I do with the order?

Make copies. Keep one with you at all times. Keep a copy in your car, home, at work and at a friend's house. Follow up with the court to make sure the abuser is served (Indiana law requires that the abuser receive a copy of it). Your PO is valid and enforceable in every other county and state.

Is there a fee to get a PO?

No

What if abuser violates the order?

That is a crime in Indiana and the abuser can be arrested for violating it. If you don't feel safe call 911. When police arrive, show them the order; they should enforce it.

Can I keep my address secret if I move?

If you move within Indiana you can participate in the Address Confidentiality Program. It allows you to use a post office box registered to the State Attorney General as your permanent address.

HOW TO RESPOND IF SOMEONE IS PRESSURING YOU

A perpetrator of sexual violence may use tactics, such as guilt or intimidation, to pressure you into something you do not want to do. It can be upsetting, frightening, or uncomfortable if you find yourself in this situation. The following tips may help you exit the situation safely.

Remind yourself this isn't your fault.

You did not do anything wrong. It is the person who is pressuring you who is responsible.

Trust your gut.

Don't feel obligated to do anything you don't want to do. It doesn't matter why you don't want to do something. Simply not being interested is reason enough. Do only what feels right to you.

Have a code word.

Develop a code with friends or family that means "I'm uncomfortable" or "I need help." It could be a series of numbers you can text, like "311." It might be a phrase you say out loud such as, "I wish we took more vacations." This way you can communicate your concern and get help without alerting the person who is pressuring you.

It's okay to lie.

If you are concerned about angering or upsetting this person, you can lie or make an excuse to create an exit. It may feel wrong to lie, but you are never obligated to remain in a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, scared, or threatened. Some excuses you can use are: needing to take care of a friend or family member, not feeling well, or having to be somewhere else by a certain time. Even excusing yourself to use the bathroom can create an opportunity to get away or to get help. Whatever you need to say to stay safe is okay—even if it may seem embarrassing at the time.

Think of an escape route.

If you had to leave quickly, how would you do it? Locate the windows, doors, and any other means of exiting the situation. Are there people around who might be able to help you? How can you get their attention? Where can you go when you leave?

If you have to find a way out of a situation where someone is pressuring you, or if something happens that you didn't consent to, **it is not your fault.**

RECOVERING FROM SEXUAL ASSAULT

Recovering from sexual assault or abuse is a process, and that process looks different for everyone. It may take weeks, months, or years: there's no timetable for healing. Just as the recovering process varies, so do the possible effects associated with sexual assault.

COMMON EFFECTS

Flashbacks

Nightmares

Changes in Sleep

Anger/Rage

Difficulty Concentrating

Hypervigilance

Depression

Anxiety/Panic

Self-blame

Guilt/Shame

Emotional Numbing

PTSD

Substance Abuse

Suicide

Self-Harm or Injury

Stockholm Syndrome

STD/STI

Pregnancy

Eating Disorders

DEPRESSION

Depression is a mood disorder that occurs when feelings associated with sadness and hopelessness continue for long periods of time and interrupt regular thought patterns. It can affect your behavior and your relationship with other people.

Depression doesn't discriminate—it can affect anyone of any age, gender, race, ethnicity, or religion. In 2012, an estimated 16 million adults experienced depression, according to the NIH.

It's normal for survivors to have feelings of sadness, unhappiness, and hopelessness. If these feelings persist for an extended period of time, it may be an indicator of depression.

Depression is not a sign of weakness. It's a serious mental health condition and survivors can often benefit from the help of a professional.

Information provided by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

SELF-CARE AFTER TRAUMA

Self-care is about taking steps to feel healthy and comfortable. Whether it happened recently or years ago, self-care can help you cope with the short and long term effects of trauma.

EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

Emotional self-care means different things to different people. The key to emotional self-care is being in tune with yourself. Think about a time when you felt balanced and grounded. Ask yourself what you were doing, where you were, who was with you, and any other helpful, descriptive details.

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

After a trauma, it's important to keep your body healthy and strong. You may be healing from injuries or feeling emotionally drained. Good physical health can support you through this time.

SELF-CARE AND YOU:

Keep reminding yourself that your responses are normal responses to a stressful situation. Give yourself permission to do whatever you need to do to take care of yourself. Your body and mind will tell you what you need to do—your job is to listen to them. Get plenty of rest when you're tired, and use the energy you have if you experience hyperactivity at times. Don't force yourself to be active if you don't have the energy, and rest when you feel tired.

Talk to people. Reach out. You may experience a need to talk repetitively about the trauma. If you can find someone who is willing to listen, use her/him to talk to about how you are feeling. If you do not have anyone in your support network to use, consider calling a crisis line, going to a crisis center, or using other community resources—they are there to help you. Spend time with others, even if you don't feel like talking. It can be very comforting to know you're not alone. Try to find someone or someplace that feels safe and comforting to you, and spend time there.

Don't make any major life decisions or big life changes if at all possible. This is not a time to put pressure on yourself to do anything out of the ordinary. Concentrate on taking care of yourself. Do things that feel good to you—take baths, read, exercise, watch television, spend time with friends and family, fix yourself a special treat, or whatever else feels nurturing and self-caring.

Allow yourself to cry, rage, and express your feelings. Try not to numb your feelings with alcohol or drugs. This will only complicate your situation.

PRACTICING SELF-CARE

Good self-care enables you to better care for others, especially if there is someone in your life who has survived sexual violence. The principles of self-care for friends and family are similar to the self-care concepts for survivors, but there are some additional aspects to consider.

Maintain your lifestyle -

It can be difficult to stay emotionally strong if you are focusing on the sexual assault. Maintaining your lifestyle and continuing to do what you enjoy is important for your emotional wellness. If you enjoy painting, cooking, exercising, spending time with friends, or other activities, keep them up. It may seem challenging to make time to do these activities, but they can be helpful self-care strategies in the long-run.

Make Plans -

Sometimes talking about what happened can help you cope with your feelings, and other times it can make you feel stuck. Make plans that give you a break from talking or thinking about the assault. It could mean starting a new hobby or revisiting one you already enjoy. You could go to dinner with a group of friends who understand this isn't time to discuss what happened. Maybe you prefer a solo activity, like going on long walks. Let this be a time where you can take your mind off the assault.

Reach Out and Talk About It -

It's normal to have a difficult time processing the sexual assault of someone you care about. It can continue to be difficult as time goes on and the survivor begins the healing process. You can call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) or visit at [online.rainn.org](https://www.online.rainn.org) to chat with someone who understands what you're going through. You can also consider talking to someone who is trained professionally to help you deal with these thoughts and feelings, such as a mental health professional.

Take Time to Relax -

Relaxation looks different for everyone. You might consider meditation or deep breathing exercises. Maybe journaling helps you sort through your thoughts and find peace. Build time into your day for these moments of relaxation.

BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

The only person responsible for committing sexual assault is a perpetrator, but all of us have the ability to look out for each other's safety. Whether it's giving someone a safe ride home from a party or directly confronting a person who is engaging in threatening behavior, anyone can help prevent sexual violence.



A bystander is a person who is present when an event takes place but isn't directly involved. Bystanders might be present when sexual assault or abuse occurs—or they could witness the circumstances that led up to these crimes.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You may have heard the term “bystander intervention” to describe a situation where someone who isn't directly involved steps in to change the outcome. Stepping in may give the person you're concerned about a chance to get to a safe place or leave the situation. You don't have to be a hero or even stand out from the crowd to make a big difference in someone's life. Take steps to protect someone who may be at risk in a way that fits your comfort level.

Whether you're taking home a friend who has had too much to drink, explaining that a rape joke isn't funny, or getting security involved when someone is behaving aggressively, choosing to step in can affect the way those around you think about and respond to sexual violence.

YOUR ACTIONS MATTER!

It's not always easy to step in, even if you know it's the right thing to do. It's okay to have these thoughts, but it's important to realize that your actions can have a big impact. In many situations, bystanders have the opportunity to prevent crimes like sexual assault from happening in the first place.

Whether or not you were able to change the outcome of the situation, by stepping in you are helping change the way people think about their roles in preventing sexual violence. An easy way to help if you suspect someone needs assistance is to C.A.R.E.

4 STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR FRIENDS

- C**reate a distraction.
- A**sk directly.
- R**efer to an authority.
- E**nlist others for support.