

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 four 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.

Services for sexual assault survivors are available during the COVID-19 crisis. Local rape crisis centers, MCASA, and SALI are open - we are here for you.

RAPE CRISIS AND RECOVERY CENTERS

Allegany

Family Crisis Resource Center
301-759-9244

Anne Arundel

YWCA of Annapolis & Anne
Arundel County
410-222-6800

Baltimore City

TurnAround, Inc.
443-279-0379

Baltimore County

TurnAround, Inc.
443-279-0379

Calvert

Calvert Center for Change
1-877-467-5628

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

Carroll

Rape Crisis Intervention
Service
410-857-7322

Cecil

The Bridge
410-996-0333

Charles

Center for Abused Persons
301-645-3336

Frederick

Heartly House, Inc.
301-662-8800

Frederick

Heartly House, Inc.
301-662-8800

Garrett

Dove Center
301-334-9000
Toll-free:
1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Harford

Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse
Resource Center (SARC)
410-836-8430

Howard

HopeWorks
410-997-2272
Toll-free: 1-800-752-0191

Montgomery

Victim Assistance &
Sexual Assault Program
240-777-4357

Prince George's

DV/SA Center at UM
Capital Region Medical Center
240-677-2337

St. Mary's

Southern Maryland Center for
Family Advocacy
240-925-0084

Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester

Life Crisis Center, Inc.
410-749-HELP (4357)

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)



Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault

mcasa.org | 301-328-7023 | info@mcasa.org

P.O. Box 8782

Silver Spring, Maryland 20907

Preparation of this document was supported by grant number 2009-ES-S6-0005, awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice and grant number VAWA-2010-1020, awarded by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention. Reprinting of this document was supported by grant number 15JQVW-22-GG-00893-MUMU, awarded by the office of Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice or the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention.

2/2023

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.



Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault



Victim's Rights in Maryland When Seeking Medical Attention

You have the right to:

- A forensic medical exam even if you choose **not** to involve the police
- Be considered an emergency patient
- Speak with police and medical personnel
- 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 infections (STIs), and be offered medication
- Be evaluated for HIV contraction and provided with prevention medication known as post-exposure prophylaxis (nPEP) free of cost
- Be informed of HIV treatment follow-up care and free 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 resources to you.

Get medical attention. Whether you have physical injuries or not, getting medical attention is very important. You can have a FREE Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) even if you choose not to involve the police. SAFE programs are available at many hospitals across Maryland. To find your closest SAFE program, visit **mcasa.org**. Try not to shower, clean yourself, or use the bathroom 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, urine, and hair samples. You may be given preventative treatment for sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV prevention medication, known as nPEP. In order to be provided with nPEP, the nurse will ask you a series of questions to determine your risk level for contracting HIV. You should answer these questions as honestly as possible to ensure that you are evaluated appropriately in accordance with CDC guidelines.

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.

EC and nPEP can be effective when taken within 72 hours of sexual intercourse.

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 is your decision, although for investigative purposes, the sooner you report the more opportunity you give law enforcement to collect evidence. 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

MANY SURVIVORS FIND THAT COUNSELING HELPS THEM TO MOVE FORWARD AND HEAL.