



The MARYLAND WOMEN OF COLOR NETWORK is here to support survivors. If you are interested in giving voice to this issue and supporting the movement to end sexual violence, you can learn more by emailing info@mcasa.org.



HOW SEXUAL ASSAULT AFFECTS US

Sexual violence is a traumatic experience that can affect survivors in unique ways. Trauma responses after a sexual assault vary for every individual. Some common responses can include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Flashbacks
- Anger
- Sleep disorders
- Impacted sense of identity
- Low self-worth
- Avoidance
- Self-harm
- Loneliness
- Confusion
- Substance abuse

The effects of these trauma responses can continue on for years, and can even worsen if survivors are unable to seek or receive assistance from support services. It is important for service providers to acknowledge that the trauma experienced by a Black woman who survives sexual assault may be compounded by the traumas they may have experienced as a result of current and historical oppression and discrimination. The intersections of sexism and racism lead to even higher rates of sexual victimization for Black women. The intersections of other forms of oppression lead to even higher rates of sexual assault for Black women based on their ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, immigrant status, and religion. It is essential to recognize that sexual trauma compounded with the trauma of experiencing these additional forms of oppression can have an effect on the survivors' ability to seek help and access resources that could aid their healing process.

Resources for Survivors

Call 211 to connect to your local rape crisis center

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

Therapy for Black Girls*
<https://providers.therapyforblackgirls.com>

Ballet After Dark*
www.balletafterdark.com

*MCASA does not and will not endorse commercial offerings, including by these groups.

Additional Resources

Ujima- The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community
www.ujimacommunity.org

National Women of Color Network
www.wocninc.org

National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault
sisterslead.org

Black Women's Blueprint
www.blackwomensblueprint.org

Black Women's Health Imperative
www.bwhi.org



Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
mcasa.org | 301-328-7023
info@mcasa.org

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silver spring, maryland 20907

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BLACK WOMEN & SEXUAL ASSAULT



1 in 5 Black women are survivors of sexual assault.

National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community. (2018). Black Women and Sexual Assault. Retrieved by Ujima-Womens-Violence-Stats-v7.4-1.pdf (ujimacommunity.org)

If You've Experienced a Sexual Assault

Get Support

It may take some time to process your emotions and thoughts around the harm you experienced. It is natural for survivors to feel overwhelmed: Fear, anxiety, and anger are normal responses. Resources and support are available to you.

If you would like to talk to someone anonymously about your experience, or are seeking further assistance from nurses, attorneys, or other service providers, you can call 211 or visit MCASA's website at <https://mcasa.org/survivors/find-a-rape-crisis-center> to be connected to an advocate at a rape crisis center in your area. Rape crisis and recovery centers offer private services to adult and child victims as well as their loved ones. These services are **FREE**. Regardless of when the incident happened, it is healthy to talk to a trained individual who can assist you after experiencing sexual assault.

Mental Health Support

The trauma of experiencing sexual violence can be challenging to handle alone. Trauma-informed service providers and culturally-responsive mental health services are available and can be helpful for survivors experiencing difficulties after a traumatic experience.

Mental health professionals can provide confidential, long-term care for survivors as well as their family, friends, and partners to help build and maintain positive relationships, and use healthy coping skills to lessen the impact of trauma. You are not alone, and it will get better. For information about mental health services, visit the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) at <https://www.nami.org>

Medical Help

Medical help is available to you after a sexual assault. In Maryland, there are hospitals with special services for survivors of sexual assault. You can get your injuries treated, get tested for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy, as well as have medical evidence collected for prosecution. It is important to know that you can get medical help without reporting the rape to the police.

Consider Reporting the Sexual Assault to Law Enforcement

Telling the police about your sexual assault is difficult. You may feel hesitant about reporting the offender because you may want to protect them and your community. It is common to think that there are few options to consider when seeking justice because of widespread historical and systemic factors between law enforcement and Black communities. If you are worried about reporting or need help with learning about the reporting process, it can be helpful to speak with a sexual assault service provider.

Legal Help

Survivors have the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and sensitivity during the criminal justice process. The Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI) helps protect those rights by providing comprehensive legal services, including issues ranging from employment, housing, education and financial support to criminal justice advocacy, immigration and family law.

Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking includes the unwanted pursuit, harassment, or contact of others via electronic means. A stalker can be an intimate partner, a friend, a coworker, a neighbor or other acquaintance. A cyberstalker may use technology to engage in the following behaviors:

- Installing spyware or GPS tracking software on your computer, on your cellphone, or in your car
- Making threatening calls or sending threatening text messages
- Using social media networking sites to track or harass

If you are experiencing tech abuse, you can find resources at www.endtab.org/resources.

National & Regional Helplines

Department of Defense Safe Helpline

The Department of Defense (DOD) Safe Helpline is a crisis support service that offers assistance through live, one-on-one support for military sexual assault survivors who are seeking help outside of the chain of command. This helpline also supports and provides services for survivors' loved ones and anyone within the DOD community. The Safe Helpline is confidential and secure. This three-tier reporting system will not share names or any other personal information.

www.safehelpline.org

877-995-5247 / Text: 55247

Incarcerated Survivors

The Prison Rape and Sexual Assault Help Line is sponsored by MCASA and the Life Crisis Center. If you have experienced rape or sexual assault and would like to speak with a confidential advocate, you can call **855-971-4700**. Support staff can connect you to resources and support for victims of sexual assault and rape. They are here to help. This Help Line is a free and confidential resource for incarcerated survivors of sexual assault and rape. This is not a reporting line. Advocates can provide you with information on reporting and safety planning.

