

You're not alone



Sexual assault support

If you or someone you know has been the victim of sexual assault, you need support. You need to know you're not alone.

Sexual assault refers to any type of unwanted sexual contact. It includes force, threats, manipulation or coercion.

In the United States:¹

- Someone is sexually assaulted every 73 seconds.
- 8 out of 10 sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows.
- 1 out of every 6 women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime.
- 9 out of 10 victims of rape are female.
- 1 in 33 men have been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime.

For survivors

When something like this happens, it's hard to know what to do or how to feel. But know there's help. If you're the survivor of sexual assault, keep these tips in mind:

- **Call 911 if you're in danger or injured.**
- **Ensure you're safe.** Get to a safe place, away from the perpetrator.

- **Seek medical attention.** You may feel unsure if you need medical care. But it's important to go to a hospital or medical center after an assault. You'll get medical attention and emotional support. You'll also connect with ongoing medical care and other services.
- **Reach out for support.** Sometimes it's difficult to know what to do or where to turn. Call Resources for Living (RFL) at **1-800-825-3555**. A caring team member will listen, provide immediate support and guide you to resources available to help. We can help:
 - Assess immediate needs for your safety, health and emotional well-being
 - Connect you with free in-person or televideo counseling support
 - Assist you in connecting with local, national or online resources that may be helpful
 - **Sign up with myStrength™** or digital self-help services for trauma, anxiety, depression, sleep issues and more (Access Code = Walmart)
- **Consider legal options.** Making the decision to pursue legal action may feel difficult. It can be scary, but it may give you some feelings of strength and control. It may also prevent another assault. More than half of all alleged rapists have at least one prior conviction.²
- **Engage in self-care that helps heal your body and mind.** Exercise, meditation or journaling may help release difficult emotions.

¹Scope of the Problem: Statistics. Accessed March 2021.

²Perpetrators of Sexual Violence: Statistics. Accessed March 2021

For family and friends of a survivor

It can be hard to know what to do or say when we learn someone has been assaulted. If a survivor trusts you enough to tell you about the event, you can show your support by:

- **Believing their story.** It can be so difficult for a survivor to tell their story. They may feel shame or fear. They may be suffering from trauma. Validate the courage it took for them to tell you.
- **Knowing they're not to blame and telling them it wasn't their fault.** Survivors often blame themselves. The only person to blame is the perpetrator.
- **Being there.** Let them know they aren't alone and that you'll help in any way you can. Help them get access to medical care or other resources.
- **Being patient.** There is no timeline for recovering from a trauma.
- **Learning about sexual assault and seeking help for yourself.** Being a friend or family member of a survivor can be emotionally and mentally difficult. You may know the perpetrator or feel guilt, shame, confusion, sadness, disbelief or anger. You need help too. Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at **1-800-656 HOPE (4673)** or visit rainn.org for help and resources.

Myths and facts about sexual assault

Myth: If you didn't fight back, it must have not been that bad.

Fact: Sexual assault victims may not say "no" or may not fight back for a variety of reasons. Often people freeze, comply due to fear of the assailant, or disassociate during the experience.

Myth: It's not sexual assault if you've had sex with them before, are currently in a relationship with them or were attracted to them.

Fact: You may have consented another time, but that doesn't give limitless rights to your body. Even if you were attracted to or flirted with them, that is not permission to touch you in any way.

Myth: People who are intoxicated are "asking for it."

Fact: Being under the influence may increase the victim's vulnerability. But being intoxicated does not mean the blame falls on the victim. The offender bears the blame.

Myth: People who experience a sexual assault are "asking for it" based on how they're acting or what they're wearing.

Fact: Victims of sexual assault are never to blame for the assault, regardless of their behavior or appearance. Sexual assault is a crime of opportunity. Perpetrators choose victims based on their vulnerability in that moment, not on how sexy they look or how flirtatious they are.

Other resources

- Call the National Sexual Assault (RAINN) hotline at **1-800-656-HOPE (4673)**. A trained staff member will walk you through the process of getting help at your own pace. You can also go to: online.rainn.org to chat anonymously. They can connect you with local resources and healthcare facilities.
- The **National Sexual Violence Resource Center** maintains a directory of organizations that provide support to survivors of sexual assault.

If you or someone you know has survived a sexual assault, please know confidential assistance is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We are here to help.

1-800-825-3555

rfl.com

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