

quickly as you or others think you should. Be patient with yourself. These feelings are normal. Everyone progresses through the process of healing at his or her own pace.

Your local sexual assault program can provide you with support and advocacy during the healing process. These programs provide free and confidential services to survivors of sexual assault all across Texas. Sexual assault programs can help by providing an advocate to go with you to the emergency room after the sexual assault and to any appointments related to the assault. These include appointments with law enforcement, the court system and medical facilities. Many sexual assault programs also offer counseling and support groups and run 24-hour crisis hotlines whose staff and volunteers are trained and prepared to listen and support you.

Family and friends in your immediate support system may also experience some of the same feelings you are having. It is important that they also participate in the healing process by talking about their feelings and fears with someone knowledgeable about sexual assault. They are also eligible to receive services from your local sexual assault program.

## PHONE NUMBERS to remember

Hospital name: \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital address: \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE): \_\_\_\_\_

Law Enforcement Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Case #: \_\_\_\_\_

Law Enforcement phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Call (800) 656-HOPE (4673) to be connected to the sexual assault program closest to you.

# WHAT IS sexual assault?

Sexual assault is defined  
in several ways. Generally,  
sexual assault is any unwanted,  
non-consensual sexual contact  
against any individual by another.

It often includes acts involving  
manipulation, physical force  
or coercion. Sexual assault  
is never the victim's fault.

## CRIME VICTIM services division

The Crime Victim Services Division consists of five sections: the Sexual Assault Prevention and Crisis Services Program, the Texas Address Confidentiality Program, Planning, Policy and Program Development, the Statewide Automated Victim Notification Program and the Crime Victims' Compensation Program.

### Sexual Assault Prevention & Crisis Services

P.O. Box 12548 MC 011-1  
Austin, Texas 78711-2548

(800) 983-9933 Statewide  
(512) 936-1270 in Austin  
(512) 936-1650 Fax

[www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/sapcs.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/sapcs.shtml)

### Crime Victims' Compensation

P.O. Box 12198 MC 011-1  
Austin, Texas 78711-2198

(800) 983-9933 Statewide  
(512) 936-1200 in Austin  
(512) 936-1800 Fax

[www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/about\\_comp.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/about_comp.shtml)

### Address Confidentiality Program

(888)832-2322 Toll-Free

[www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/acp.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/acp.shtml)

### Texas VINE

(877)TX4-VINE;  
(877)894-8463 Toll-Free

[www.texasvine.com](http://www.texasvine.com)

[www.texasattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov)

SEXUAL ASSAULT:  
INFORMATION FOR ADULT SURVIVORS



# SEXUAL ASSAULT

sexual assault

## IS NEVER THE VICTIM'S FAULT

is never the victim's fault

### THE effects

As a survivor of sexual assault, you may feel one or more of the following natural emotional reactions:

- You may question what happened
- You may feel helpless or powerless
- You may feel angry and take it out on those you love
- You may feel guilty because you think you did not do enough to fight off your attacker
- You may feel afraid that your attacker will come back
- You may feel ashamed of what has happened to you
- You may feel unclean, even after bathing

These feelings may change your behavior:

- You may have difficulty sleeping
- You may find your eating habits changing
- You may not want to be left alone, or you may want to be left alone
- You may have difficulty resuming your normal sexual relationship with the one you love
- You may have trouble concentrating and making decisions
- You may not trust easily
- You may be anxious or depressed

Each of us copes with crisis in our own unique way. It's okay to react in whatever way you are reacting. It's okay to cry. It's also okay not to cry. Remember, you are having a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.

### REPORTING THE ASSAULT and evidence collection

#### Do I have to report the assault?

It is up to you to decide what is right for you. Whether you make a report or not, you are eligible to receive the free and confidential services of your local sexual assault program. If you are not sure about reporting the assault, the local program can give you more information about the reporting process to help you make that decision. If you do not want to make a report, you may still receive the medical treatment and evidence collection you need from the local hospital or health care facility.

#### Why should I report the sexual assault?

After the sexual assault you may be embarrassed or scared; feeling this way is completely normal. These feelings may prevent you from wanting to report the assault right away. However, there are benefits to reporting the assault as soon as you can, such as being potentially eligible for crime victims' compensation.

#### What happens if I choose to make a report?

A law enforcement officer will take your statement and ask you questions about what happened. This starts the investigation process. The police will also refer you to a sexual assault program for assistance.

#### What happens if I choose not to make a report?

The decision to report or not report does NOT affect whether the victim receives medical care and treatment.

- By not reporting, a victim assumes ALL financial responsibility for the medical assessment and treatment related to the assault but NOT for the evidence collection, which is paid by law enforcement.
- Not reporting DOES make a victim ineligible for Crime Victims' Compensation, a program which may provide reimbursement for sexual assault-related medical costs and any other co-payments not covered by insurance.

#### If I make a report, will the offender be arrested?

If a suspect can be identified, the police will submit your statement and a report of the offense to the prosecutor's office, which makes the determination if an arrest warrant will be issued. Once the suspect is arrested, the prosecutor's office will file formal charges as soon as possible. After the arrest, the suspect may be released from jail on bond. If the grand jury indicts the suspect, the case will be set for trial. For more information on the legal system in your area, contact the detective assigned to your case, the prosecutor's office, or your local sexual assault program. If you receive threats of further harm after the sexual assault, you may ask a judge for a protective order for yourself and other members of your family or household.

#### Do I need medical attention?

It is very important to seek immediate medical care after a sexual assault to get treatment for any injuries you may have. Not all sexual assaults result in physical injuries

and some may not be instantly apparent. You can also ask the nurse or doctor about the possibility of pregnancy or contracting sexually transmitted diseases as a result of the sexual assault and receive appropriate care.

#### Should I also get a sexual assault exam?

A sexual assault exam is ordered by law enforcement if the crime is reported and performed by medical personnel to check for injuries and to collect and preserve evidence following a sexual assault. This is important because certain types of evidence that may be present immediately after the attack will disappear as time passes. Getting a sexual assault exam as soon as you can will increase the chances of collecting this evidence. Your immediate medical needs and referrals for follow-up care will also be addressed at the time of your visit to the hospital.

### THE PROCESS of healing

Healing from a sexual assault is personal and varies from survivor to survivor. Sometimes the first reactions are shock, disbelief and fear. You may respond with crying, shaking and agitation or with a calm and controlled outward appearance. You may or may not be able to continue your everyday activities, including eating and sleeping. You may feel the need to change your address, job or lifestyle in order to gain a sense of security.

Healing is not always a steady process. You may experience ups and downs after the sexual assault. You may start blaming yourself for sliding backward or for not getting over it as