

LOCATIONS

For more information about services offered at The Center for Women and Families, please call any of our locations or visit www.thecenteronline.org.

24 Hour Toll-free Crisis Line
(877) 803-7577

KENTUCKY

Joan E. Thomas, M.D. Campus

Open 24 Hours
Walk-in Services Available
927 S. 2nd Street
Louisville, KY 40201-2048
(502) 581-7200 Business
(502) 581-7222 24 Hours

West Louisville Campus

4303 West Broadway
Louisville, KY 40211-3122
(502) 775-6408

Shelby County Area

Call for location
(502) 633-7800

Bullitt County Area

Call for location
(502) 538-0212

INDIANA

Southern Indiana Campus

Open 24 Hours
P.O. Box 248
Sellersburg, IN 47172-0248
(812) 944-6743 24 Hours

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THE
CENTER
FOR
WOMEN
AND
FAMILIES

SURVIVOR'S HANDBOOK



STEPS ON YOUR PATH TO HEALING



TO THE SURVIVOR

Every 2 minutes, someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted. You are not alone.

The purpose of this booklet is to help you and your loved ones heal after experiencing a sexual assault. Even if you aren't up to reading any or all of it right away, please hold onto this because information that might not seem relevant today, you may want or need tomorrow.

No matter what, you are not to blame for what happened to you.

The perpetrator alone is responsible for his or her actions.

During a trauma, our bodies go on autopilot and we often do not make conscious choices about how to respond. Whether or not you were able to fight back in the moment, you are not to blame for the sexual assault. If you've been through an assault, it means you did what you needed to do to survive.

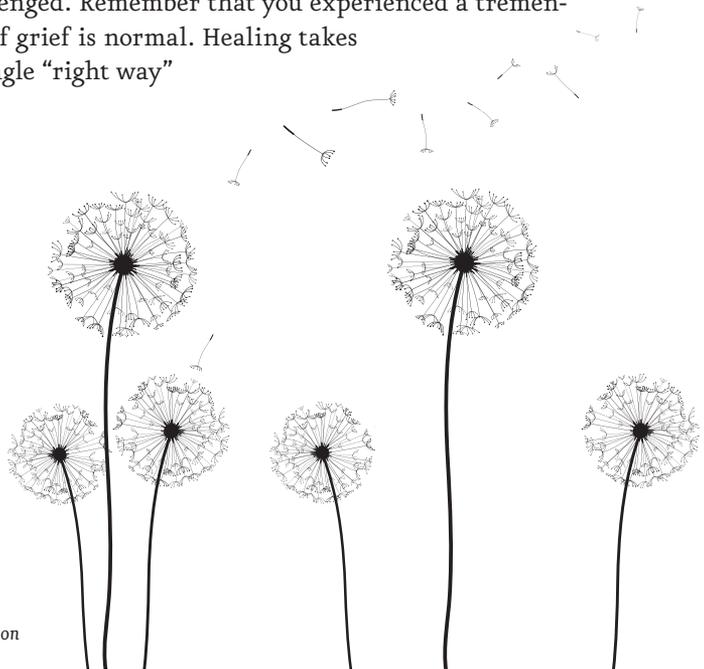
You may be experiencing any number of the reactions you will read about in this book. Or you may feel very little at all—you may feel numb. These reactions are all normal and, in most cases, temporary. Symptoms may be worse when reminded of the assault or on the anniversary date of the assault.

Your view of the world may have changed. Your relationships could be affected. Your faith may be challenged. Remember that you experienced a tremendous loss and a period of grief is normal. Healing takes time and there is no single “right way” to heal.

Please know that there are people willing to listen when you are ready.

Yours,
Staff and volunteers at
The Center for Women
and Families

Special thanks to BRCC for permission to adapt handbook content.



WAS I SEXUALLY ASSAULTED?

What if I didn't resist physically?

Just because you didn't resist physically doesn't mean it wasn't sexual assault. In fact, many victims make the conscious decision that physical resistance would cause the perpetrator to become more violent. Lack of consent can be expressed (saying "no") or it can be implied from the circumstances (for example, if you were under the age of consent, if you were temporarily incapacitated, or if you were afraid to say no because the perpetrator threatened to harm you or a loved one).

What if I used to date or I'm currently with the person who assaulted me?

Sexual assault can occur when the perpetrator and the victim have a pre-existing relationship (sometimes called "date rape" or "acquaintance rape") or even when the perpetrator is a victim's spouse. It does not matter whether the other person is an ex-lover or a complete stranger, and it doesn't matter if you've had sex in the past.

What if I don't remember the assault or if I was asleep or unconscious?

If you were asleep or unconscious, then you didn't give consent, and just because you don't remember being assaulted doesn't necessarily mean it didn't happen and that it wasn't sexual assault. You may have been given a date rape drug like GHB without your knowledge (which is a crime) or you may have had too much too drink—either way, your memory could be fuzzy. Please note: without clear memories or physical evidence, it may be more difficult to pursue prosecution. Talk to someone from The Center for Women and Families for more information.

What if I was drunk or s/he was drunk?

Alcohol and drugs are not an excuse or an alibi. The key question is still: did you consent? Regardless of whether you were drunk or sober, if sexual activity is non-consensual, it is sexual assault. If you were impaired due to drug or alcohol consumption, that means you were unable to give consent.

What if my body had a sexual response?

Our bodies are built to respond to touch. While it doesn't always happen, experiencing a sexual response during an assault is the body's natural physiological reaction. It is not an indication that you "asked for" or enjoyed the assault.

SELF-CARE

In times of crisis, it's important to find ways to take care of ourselves. Whether you do these activities with someone else or schedule time alone, you **can** take care of yourself physically, mentally and emotionally.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES | Go for a walk. Do yard work. Take a jog. Vacuum. Dance. Rake leaves. Join a Zumba class.

RELAXING ACTIVITIES | Listen to music. Take a bath or shower. Take a nap. Read a book or magazine. Join a Yoga class. Rock yourself gently. Watch a movie.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES | Draw. Paint. Write a song or poem. Bake. Use a journal. Work a puzzle. Garden. Knit or crochet. Play "make believe" with a child.

WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED TO YOUR BODY | Take deep breaths. Stand up and walk around. Turn up the lights. Ask others to talk with you.

COMMON REACTIONS FOR SURVIVORS

These are some physical, mental, emotional and social reactions common to survivors of sexual violence. If you identify with some or many of these reactions, you might find counseling helpful.

YOUR BODY | After a trauma, you body may have reactions such as:

Nausea » Headaches » Sleep difficulty » Changes in menstrual cycle » Fatigue » Change in sexual desire » Exaggerated startle response » High levels of stress

YOUR THOUGHTS | After a trauma, you may have difficulty concentrating and making decisions. You may experience:

» Flashbacks » Memory loss » Nightmares » Racing thoughts » Self-blame » Confusion » Thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else

YOUR EMOTIONS | Experiencing a trauma is likely to bring a wide range of emotional responses including:

» Depression » Guilt » Shame » Anger » Sadness » Irritability » Grief » Fear » Anxiety » Mood swings » Numbness » Emptiness » Feeling out of control

YOUR SOCIAL INTERACTIONS | Trauma can bring about changes in how you interact with those around you including:

» Isolation from friends and family » Avoiding places and people » Fear of being alone » Change in sexual behavior » Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy

SAFETY PLANNING

Sexual assault affects a person's emotional and physical safety, so establishing a safety plan helps to identify ways to increase your security. Safety plans are most effective when created with an advocate, friend or family member who has some knowledge regarding sexual violence. A typical safety plan addresses:

EMOTIONAL SAFETY | Brainstorming ways to get through some of the emotionally difficult times.

SAFETY WITHIN YOUR HOME | Coming up with ways to increase feelings of safety at home.

MEMORIES OF THE ASSAULT |

Planning for what to do when memories of the assault affect your day-to-day living.

For help creating a safety plan of your own or to find additional resources, call The Center for Women and Families 24 hours at (877) 803-7577.

SAFETY IF THERE IS STILL CON-

TACT WITH THE OFFENDER | Developing ways to ensure safety when you have to or choose to have contact with the offender.

LEGAL SAFETY | Thinking of ways to increase your sense of safety and control throughout the criminal justice system process (if applicable).

IT HAPPENED TO ME WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

- » **Be honest** with yourself about your feelings and thoughts.
- » **Honor your survival** and try not to punish yourself with “If only I had...”
- » **Talk** to people you trust.
- » **Take care of yourself**—get rest, plan comfortable activities, and avoid excessive use of alcohol or drugs.
- » **Ask for help** from family, friends, police, nurses and counselors.
- » **Remember**, you do not have to go through this alone. The Center for Women and Families is here to help. Call (877) 803-7577 to speak to a counselor 24 hours a day.

MALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

About 10% of all sexual assault victims in the U.S. are male. If you are male and you are a survivor of rape or childhood sexual abuse, The Center for Women and Families offers free and confidential counseling and advocacy services. Men who survive sexual violence may experience similar feelings, thoughts and reactions as other survivors (page 3). However, unique experiences may include:*

- » **Doubts** about masculinity
- » **Guilt and shame** for involuntary bodily responses during sexual assault
- » **Questioning** of sexual orientation
- » **Fears** that others will scrutinize or judge sexuality

Most male survivors of sexual violence were assaulted by another man. A common reaction heterosexual men feel is fear that the assault will make them gay, and gay men may feel the crime is punishment for their sexual orientation. It's important to remember that sexual assault is about one person exerting power and control over another—not sexuality.

LGBTQ SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

*RAINN | rainn.org

Survivors who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning or Queer may experience similar feelings, thoughts and reactions as heterosexual/straight/cisgender people (page 3). However, unique experiences may include:

- » **Increased isolation** from friends and family
- » **Fear** of being “outed”
- » **Internalized homophobia or transphobia**, which may increase self-blame
- » **Stereotypes** of LGBTQ survivors as hyper-sexual or deviant
- » Sexual assault **may be used by perpetrators in an attempt to “cure” or punish** LGBTQ people
- » Sexual assault **may be used as a hate crime** against LGBTQ individuals
- » **Myths** that sexual assault/abuse is normal in the LGBTQ community

MEDICAL CARE

Medical care may be necessary after a sexual assault to address injuries, prevent disease and/or pregnancy and to collect evidence. If you do not have serious injuries, the Louisville SANE Clinic at The Center for Women and Families could be your best option as The Center's services are free of charge. The Center will provide an advocate to support you during the exam whether you decide to go to a hospital or to the SANE Clinic. Call The Center's crisis counselors at (877) 803.7577 for help determining the best location to receive services.

SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAM

- » If you give your consent for an exam following a sexual assault, a trained SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) or an ER doctor will administer it.
- » The examination process may last 2-6 hours.
- » The collection of forensic evidence is best performed within 4 days of the assault. After this time, most DNA evidence is gone, but other portions of the exam may still be performed.
- » Your clothing, shoes and accessories may be collected as evidence and you will NOT get these items back.
- » You have the right to have a support person be present throughout the exam.
- » If you choose to report the assault, a police officer may meet you at the hospital.

THE EXAM ENTAILS:

- » An interview regarding details of assault
- » A complete head to toe examination to identify visible injuries
- » Collection of forensic evidence
- » Photographing injuries
- » Detailed genital exam to identify injuries and collect evidence
- » Offering medications to treat common sexually transmitted infections
- » Offering HIV preventive medications if you qualify
- » Offering Plan B (to prevent pregnancy) if the assault happened within the last 5 days

REMEMBER: You have the right to feel safe, comfortable and to refuse any or all parts of the exam.

FOLLOW-UP CARE

- » Please read discharge follow-up instructions provided by the hospital or SANE Clinic. This will detail your medication regimen and specify any additional medical care required including blood tests, testing for sexually transmitted infections, further medication, etc.
- » You may receive counseling at The Center for Women and Families. Request a referral from your advocate or call our 24 Hour Crisis Line at (877) 803.7577.



WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

At the most basic level, human trafficking is a denial of basic human rights and it is against the law. Human trafficking is forcing, tricking, or manipulating someone to work in the labor or sex industries. Sometimes perpetrators manipulate victims to make them feel there is no way out.

If you need someone to talk to or would like information about ways to leave a dangerous situation, please call The Center's 24 Hour Crisis Line at (877) 803.7577.

AM I AT RISK?

- Are you not free to leave your job or situation if you want?
- Are you not free to come and go as you please?
- Have you been threatened if you try to leave?
- Were you told you would have a legitimate job, and then later found out you must do work in a job you do not feel is legitimate?
- Are you working off a debt that never seems to go away?
- Have you been threatened that you will be turned over to police or immigration officials?
- Has anyone threatened your family?
- Have you been abused physically or sexually?
- Does someone prohibit you from socializing or attending religious services?
- Are you working in the sex industry and feel trapped?

If you checked the box next to some of these questions, you may be experiencing or you may have experienced human trafficking. There are resources available to help you available regardless of your language or immigration status.

REGIONAL RESOURCES FOR SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Catholic Charities of Louisville

Kentucky Office for Refugees

1177 East Broadway Louisville, KY 40204-1711

Phone (502) 365-4713 // **Web** www.cclou.org

Kentucky Refugee Ministries

969B Cherokee Road Louisville, KY 40204

Phone (502) 479-9180 // **Web** www.kyrm.org

FILING A POLICE REPORT

*While some survivors find filing a police report an important part of their recovery process, only **you** can decide if it's the right choice for **you**. If you have questions about the process, call The Center's 24 Hour Crisis Line at (877) 803.7577 and we can explain what to expect.*

Reasons some survivors give for filing a police report include:

- » Holding the perpetrator accountable
- » Regaining a sense of power and control
- » Documenting the crime
- » Preserving evidence of the assault

Reasons some survivors give for not filing a police report include:

- » Finding the process re-traumatizing
- » Encountering uninformed law enforcement officials
- » Knowledge that for every 100 sexual assaults committed in the U.S., only 9 are prosecuted.
- » Fear of testifying against perpetrator if case goes to trial

IF YOU CHOOSE TO FILE A POLICE REPORT

During the first interview, the police will ask very specific questions about the assault because it's important to fully document the crime. If you feel uncomfortable or are embarrassed by any of the questions, you have the right to ask your interviewer to explain why they're asking. An advocate or a friend can accompany you to provide emotional support during the interview, although they can't answer questions or talk for you.

The officers will prepare a written report using the information you give them. Review the report for accuracy before signing. You can request a copy of the report for your own records. If the perpetrator is arrested and prosecuted, your report may be used during the trial.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH POLICE IS IMPORTANT IF YOU FILE

Immediately after the assault, you may not have remembered everything that took place. Although difficulty recalling details is distressing, it is a very common reaction to a traumatic experience. You can contact the police after the interview to provide them such details as you remember.

If your contact information (including your cell phone number) changes after the assault, you'll need to call the police and notify them how you can be reached.

CAN I GET SERVICES AT THE CENTER FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES IF I DON'T FILE A POLICE REPORT?

Yes. The Center provides services to sexual assault survivors regardless of their choice to file a police report or seek medical attention.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Center for Women and Families offers peer support groups and counseling for survivors of sexual assault. Please call The Center's 24 Hour Crisis Line at (877) 803-7577 for more information.

REGIONAL RESOURCES

Crime Victims Compensation Board, Kentucky

Phone (502) 573-2290 // **Web** www.cvcb.ky.gov

Indiana Victim Compensation Division

Phone (800) 353-1484 // **Web** www.in.gov/cji/2348.htm

Kentucky's Crime Victims Compensation Board and Indiana's Victim Compensation Division assist victims of violent crime who have no other resources to pay for the medical, funeral, mental health counseling, and dental or corrective lens expenses resulting from the crime. Please note: compensation is not guaranteed.

Victim Information and Notification (V.I.N.E.) System, Kentucky

Phone (800) 511-1670 // **Web** www.vinelink.com

Indiana Statewide Automated Victim Information & Notification (SAVIN)

Phone (866) 891-0330 // **Web** www.indianasavin.in.gov

These state-wide alert systems are free, automated hotlines that provide crime victims with vital information and notification 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Services can be used to obtain offender information and to register for notification of a change in offender status, such as offender release.

Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs

Phone (866) 375-2727 // **Web** www.kasap.org

Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Phone (317) 423-0233 // **Web** www.incasa.org

NATIONAL RESOURCES

RAINN | Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network www.rainn.org

National Sexual Violence Resource Center www.nsvrc.org

Pandora's Project www.pandys.org

GLBT National Help Center www.glnh.org

Male Survivor www.malesurvivor.org

Living Well | A guide for male survivors of childhood sexual abuse or sexual assault www.livingwell.org.au

Darkness to Light | End Child Sexual Abuse www.darkness2light.org

BOOKS

Resurrection After Rape: A Guide to Transforming from Victim to Survivor

Matt Atkinson. (Free PDF copy available at www.resurrectionafterrape.org.)

The Courage to Heal and The Courage to Heal Workbook Laura Dave & Ellen Bass

The Sexual Healing Journey: A Guide for Survivors of Sexual Abuse

Wendy Maltz

I Will Survive: The African American Guide to Healing from Sexual Assault and Abuse Lori S. Robinson

