

Toward Healing & Justice

A Handbook for Survivors of Sexual Assault

2010



FREEDOM FROM
SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Colorado Coalition Against
Sexual Assault (CCASA)

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THIS handbook is dedicated to the survivors of sexual violence. It is intended to provide general information and is not intended to give advice on specific medical, legal, or emotional situations. Every individual, every case, and every local region will have their own unique differences.

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"Information For the Survivor of Sexual Assault," Ozark Rape Crisis Center, Inc., Harrison, AR. 1999.

"Sexual Assault Information for Victims, Families and Friends," Nebraska Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition, 1999.

"What Everyone Should Know About Sexual Assault in Virginia," VAASA: Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault, especially the section on "Special Concerns" by Claire Kaplan, sexual education coordinator, University of Virginia.

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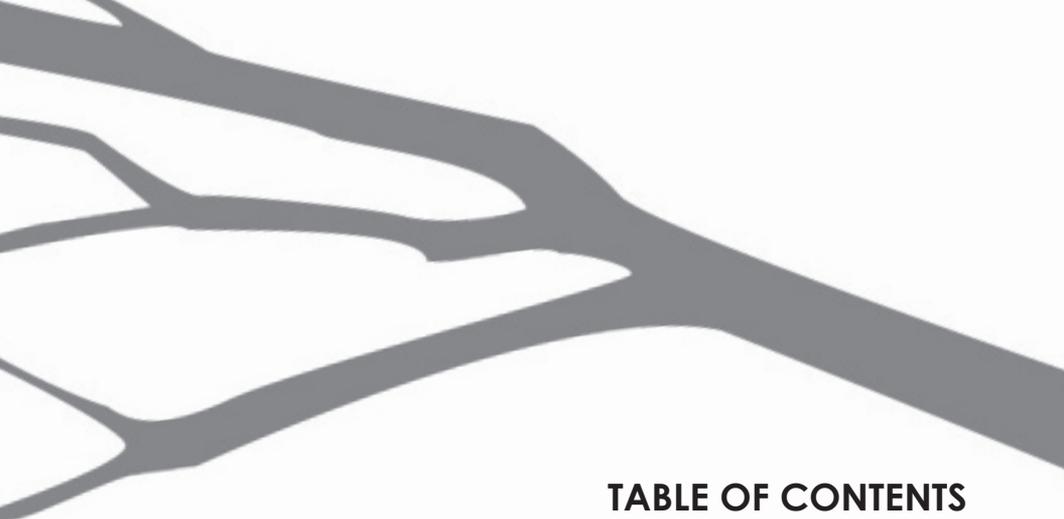


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This handbook is dedicated to survivors of sexual assault.

1. INTRODUCTION

If you have experienced unwanted sexual activity, we hope that the information in this booklet will help you know that you are not alone, provide you with information to help you make informed choices, and support your recovery.

Many people who have experienced some form of unwanted sexual activity may not think of themselves as sexual assault victims. However, sexual assault is a term that describes a wide range of unwanted sexual activities. Anyone can be a victim of sexual assault. It happens to men and women, children, teenagers, adults, and the elderly. It can happen regardless of one's race, religion, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. And it happens in every community in Colorado and across the nation, in urban and non-urban areas.

Sexual assault happens most often between two people who know each other. For example, sexual assaults may happen on a date, with a partner/spouse, or with a co-worker, friend, or family member. Through the media (television, newspapers, the internet, etc.) we hear about sexual assaults committed by strangers more than other types of sexual assault. This can be misleading. The reality is that sexual assaults committed by strangers do not happen as often as sexual assaults committed by someone the victim knows.¹ The majority of sexual assaults occur in the home of the victim, a friend, relative, or neighbor. It doesn't matter if the two people know each other, are on a date, or are married; a sexual assault can still happen.

Non-stranger sexual assaults are some of the most under-reported crimes. They are often difficult to discuss. Regardless of the victim's relationship with the perpetrator, sexual assault is always a crime and only the perpetrator is responsible.

Sexual assault is an emotional shock and a trauma. Power and

control were taken away from the victim. This type of trauma can cause people who are victims to experience a mixture of uncomfortable feelings and thoughts. Common feelings often include a combination of emotions, such as shock, confusion, fear, anger, helplessness, self-blame, guilt, embarrassment, shame, numbness, and disbelief.

Everyone who has been sexually assaulted has dealt with it differently. There is no "right way" of dealing with this crime. Each individual needs to do what seems right for him or her at the time. With support, self-understanding, and self-compassion, the difficult or painful emotions you may be having will lessen over time.

Whether the assault was recent or long ago, we sincerely wish it had not happened. Please know that whatever you did to survive the assault was the right action. No matter what the circumstances, no one deserves to be victimized. It was not your fault. The responsibility belongs to the person who assaulted you. That person committed an act of violence, which is a criminal offense.

Sexual assault causes a great deal of confusion in our lives. Allow yourself the time and assistance you may need to heal. Be gentle and patient with yourself. Honor yourself by acknowledging the reality of what happened. Allow yourself to have whatever feelings may come. Use as many resources (family, friends, counselors, rape crisis programs) as you need. You do not have to recover from this trauma alone.

It is important to try to find people who:

- Believe you and believe in you.
- Listen, listen, listen.
- Manage whatever feelings arise in themselves and are okay with whatever feelings you share with them.
- Are willing to let you make your own decisions about next steps.

Family and friends are also encouraged to read this handbook, because the impact of sexual assault affects those close to the survivor. This booklet has important information and insights that can help family and friends provide the best support possible during this difficult time.

You are a survivor, and...

You are not alone.

One in four Colorado women and one in seventeen Colorado men have experienced a completed or attempted sexual assault at some point in their lifetime.² Sadly, in the United States there is approximately 1 sexual assault every 127 seconds, or about 1 sexual assault every 2 minutes.³

YOU DID NOT CONSENT

Even if you didn't fight back or say "no," it is still sexual assault. Feeling like you had to "give in" to be physically or emotionally safe is not the same as consent. If you didn't freely say "yes" then you did not consent. Nonconsensual sexual activity is sexual assault.

You Are Not Going Crazy, Even Though It May Feel That Way

The thoughts and feelings you might experience after a sexual assault are related to the trauma of the assault. Survivors often experience shock, guilt, fears, anxiety, shame, and feelings of disorganization. Common physical reactions may include: nightmares, difficulty sleeping or wanting to sleep all the time, changes in eating, and many other reactions. Your ability to enjoy your daily life may change, even to the point of depression and thoughts of suicide. If you experience thoughts of suicide, please call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 1-800-799-4TTY (4889) if you are deaf or hard of hearing. Trained hotline counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The trauma of sexual assault might also affect certain beliefs, such as your ability to feel safe in the world, trust other people, or have control over what happens to you. When these beliefs get tested, confusing thoughts and feelings may occur. You are reacting normally to a severely abnormal and traumatic situation.

It Wasn't Because of How You Dressed or Acted

Sexual assault is an act of violence, anger, manipulation, coercion, power, and control by the perpetrator. Sex becomes a target for the purpose of taking away power and control in the most violating and humiliating way possible. Anyone can be a victim of sexual violence. Victims of sexual assault are female and male, children and older adults, gay and straight, rich or poor. Although perpetrators frequently try to blame the victim ("She asked for it," "She led me on," etc.), the responsibility always lies with the perpetrator and that person is always at fault.

You Kept Yourself Alive

In this booklet we will use the term survivor to acknowledge that as a victim of sexual assault, you survived. Whatever you did to stay alive or get through the situation was exactly the right thing to do. In a physically threatening situation, survival instincts take over. Even if there was no strong physical force, perpetrators often use coercion, pressure, threats, or weapons to take control. The fact is, above all, you survived. Many people submit to assault to keep from being hurt, killed or because they were afraid. "Over two-thirds of rape victims fearing injury or death, do not resist an attack and therefore may not sustain any bruises, marks or other visible injuries."⁴ "Freezing" is a well-documented biological response to trauma. It is a common and logical reaction.

This May Have Happened Before

If you have been sexually assaulted before, you may be having a very difficult time coping with the recent assault. The effect of a new assault can bring back problems from other experiences. Many survivors of multiple assaults feel like it is something about them that makes this happen, or that they deserve the assaults for some reason. Please try to remember that no matter how many times you have been assaulted and no matter what the perpetrator(s) may have told you, you do not deserve what has happened. NO ONE deserves to be the victim of an assault. Counseling can be especially helpful if you have experienced more than one sexual assault.

People who perpetrate sexual violence are manipulative and deceptive; they exploit people's trust, good nature, and vulnerabilities. Perpetrators will try to blame their victims and avoid responsibility, but the perpetrator is the one responsible and must be held accountable.



SOME THINGS THAT MAY BE HELPFUL FOR YOU TO KNOW:⁵

These points will be discussed in greater detail in other chapters of this handbook.

1. Sexual assault is a crime that reduces the victim's ability to have power and control in a sexual situation. You can begin to reclaim your power by making your own choices about how to move forward after an assault.
2. A sexual assault counselor or a victim advocate from a rape crisis center can provide emotional support by being an objective listener (someone who is not directly involved in your situation who can listen without biases). This person can help you make informed choices by providing information about common reactions to the trauma of sexual violence, medical considerations, law enforcement procedures, and other legal issues. You have the right to learn this information without feeling like you have to file a police report, talk to a counselor, or see a doctor (as you will read, this may not be the case if you are under the age of 18). These are your personal decisions to make as you begin to understand your feelings and options.
3. You are not to blame. The person who assaulted you is responsible. You deserve to be believed and treated with respect and compassion.
4. It may be important to seek medical attention for possible injuries and to be screened and treated for the possibility of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.
5. If you are over 18 years of age, you are free to choose whether or not you would like to work with law enforcement. If you are under the age of 18 or indicate that a current minor is in danger, the Department of Social Services and/or law enforcement will need to be notified of the crime.

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6. You may be able to get Crime Victim's Compensation to help you pay for medical care, counseling, and other expenses if you do report to police.
 7. You have the choice to pursue prosecution of the perpetrator by making a report to the police. However, law enforcement or the District Attorney's office—not the survivor—make the final decision about whether or not to prosecute. You can also learn about civil lawsuit options.
 8. It may be helpful to seek counseling to help you heal from the trauma of sexual violence. Although many survivors simply want to forget about it and move on with their lives, sometimes unsettled feelings can make it hard to move forward with your life.
 9. It is never too late to talk about past sexual violence and begin the healing process.





2. WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

SEXUAL violence occurs any time a person does not consent to a sexual act. There are many different kinds of sexual violence. Sexual penetration or intrusion without consent is sexual violence and considered sexual assault under the law.

Other examples include violations of personal space and safety, such as exhibitionism or “being flashed,” voyeurism or secretly being watched, obscene phone calls or text messages, nonconsensual pornography, forced undressing, and sexual harassment at work or school. Many people are unaware that these are also forms of sexual violence and are considered criminal acts. Sexual abuse takes many forms and it may or may not involve physical contact.

Sexual Assault is both a legal term and a general term. Sexual violence involves both Sexual Assault and other forms of Unwanted Sexual Contact. Understanding sexual violence and legally criminal sexual behavior can help survivors understand why they feel the way they do. It can also help individuals recognize behaviors that are against the law.

COLORADO’S SEXUAL ASSAULT LAWS

Under Colorado law, Sexual Assault is an act of sexual penetration or intrusion without a person’s consent. Rape is a term that people commonly use to describe acts of unwanted penetration, although the term “rape” is not a legal term in Colorado. Sexual penetration or intrusion can be vaginal, oral, or anal by any body part or object.⁶ Under Colorado law, forms of sexual assault include rape and attempted rape by anyone, regardless of whether it’s an acquaintance, boyfriend or girlfriend, spouse, stranger, or group of perpetrators.

Fondling and touching without consent are also recognized as crimes in Colorado and are called “Unlawful Sexual Contact.”⁷ This can involve touching of the genitals, buttocks, anus, or breasts, whether it is under or on top of clothing.

Sexual Assault on a Child or “Statutory Rape” involves subjecting a person under 15 years old to any sexual contact if the perpetrator is 4 or more years older than the victim (for example, a 14-year-old and an 18-year-old); or having sexual contact with someone under 17 years old if the perpetrator is at least 10 years older than the victim (such as a 16-year-old and a 26-year-old).⁸

In addition, sexual contact with anyone under the age of 18 by a person in a position of power or trust is considered Sexual Assault on a Child. Examples include sexual contact by a teacher, coach, religious leader, doctor, parent, stepparent, or anyone responsible for the care of a child. These laws apply to minors even if they think they consented to the sexual contact.

An unwanted sexual contact can be intrusive, violating, and degrading. It is common to think that acts that involve penetration are the “most serious,” but often people feel violated, degraded, and frightened by less invasive forms of unwanted sexual contact. Trust your own reactions and get the support that would be most helpful to you. Regardless of the extent of the activity, if it was unwanted sexual activity it is a crime and a personal violation.

CONSENT – WHAT DOES IT MEAN IN COLORADO?

According to Colorado law, consent means “cooperation in act or attitude pursuant to an exercise of free will and with knowledge of the nature of the act.” That means that permission is given freely and with cooperation for the activity, and that the person giving consent fully understands the nature of the act. Having a current or previous relationship with the perpetrator does not automatically equal consent. Giving in to an act out of fear is SUBMISSION, not consent. The fear may have been generated by intimidation or isolation, verbal or nonverbal threats, physical violence, or a weapon.

Consent is also considered absent in situations of “Sexual Assault on a Child” (see above under “Colorado’s Sexual Assault Laws”). This is an abuse of authority by a person in a position of power or trust, and it is a criminal act.

According to Colorado Law, situations implying a lack of consent include:

- The victim is physically helpless and has not consented.
- The perpetrator knows that the victim is unable to understand the consequences of his or her own behavior/ actions.

- The victim is physically helpless and has not consented.
- The perpetrator has in some way (through alcohol, drugs, etc.) substantially impaired the victim's power to understand or control the situation for the purpose of causing submission.
- A person is drunk, unconscious, asleep, or otherwise unable to indicate a willingness to participate.



For complete Colorado legal definitions of sexual assault, and other unlawful sexual behavior, see Colorado Revised Statutes, at www.colorado.gov or contact the Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault at 303-839-9999.



Although survivors often feel that they are responsible for what occurred, it is important to know that without voluntary consent, the responsibility belongs to the perpetrator. The perpetrator ignored what you wanted or did not want and is responsible and should be held accountable for his/her actions.

IS SEXUAL ASSAULT REALLY A PROBLEM?

Unfortunately, sexual assault is all too common.

- In Colorado, one in four women and one in seventeen men have experienced an attempted or completed sexual assault.⁹
- Most sexual assaults are committed by someone the person knows.¹⁰
- At least 50 percent of college student sexual assaults are associated with alcohol use.¹¹
- Sexual assault is one of the most under reported crimes, with 60% still being left unreported.¹²
- 61% of all rapes occurred before victims reached the age of eighteen years old.¹³
- Victims of sexual assault are three times more likely to suffer from depression and six times more likely to experience post-traumatic stress disorder. This increases their risk for serious alcohol and drug abuse problems.¹⁴

WHAT ARE COMMON MYTHS ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Sexual violence is committed in many situations and may occur in various relationships. There are many “myths” (untrue beliefs) about sexual violence and assault. An example of one of these myths is that sexual assault typically occurs at night, on a dark street, by a stranger. This example describes a sexual assault scenario that in reality represents a minority of situations in which sexual violence occurs. The following situations are some examples of the various circumstances in which sexual violence can occur. It is not all-inclusive.

Acquaintance Sexual Assault

Acquaintance sexual assault can include sexual assault by a date or by anyone that is known to the victim. Common examples may include a friend, doctor, teacher, neighbor, someone from a party, etc. The shock and betrayal from being assaulted by someone you know and trust can be very painful. Unfortunately, these are the most common types of sexual assault. Remember, being coerced or forced into sexual activity is sexual assault, regardless of the nature of the relationship.

A survivor of this type of sexual assault may question his or her ability to judge and trust others. Mutual friends and family may react with disbelief and possibly rejection, which can make one feel even more alone. It is important to seek out those who can and will provide support; either family, or friends, or by finding a sexual assault services provider.

Partner Sexual Abuse/Assault

It is important to know that a long-term partnership or marriage license does not give anyone permission to demand or force sexual activity. Sexual abuse within marriage occurs when one of the spouses/partners has not given his or her consent for a sexual act. Everyone has times when physical or sexual closeness is unwanted and, even within intimate relationships, that choice should be respected.

Sexual violence in marriages or long-term relationships often occurs along with other forms of violence and abuse. It is a way for a partner to exert control or power over the other. Domestic abuse refers to mental, physical, emotional, financial, and sexual abuse occurring within a family or close relationship. Domestic violence is an act used to gain power and control over the partner or family member. It is a serious and often life-threatening pattern of violence.



Minors and Teenagers

15% of sexual assault and rape victims are under age 12. Girls ages 16-19 are 4 times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault. 93% of juvenile sexual assault victims know their attacker. ¹⁵

It is important for teens to know that any forced sexual activity is not okay and it is against the law. If the person is an adult or much older, it may be a crime even if the teen believes that he or she had given consent.

A teen survivor may be in a situation that makes it more difficult to tell someone about the assault. They may feel a lot of self-blame and fear of not being believed. They may also understandably fear the reaction of friends and family. There may be a fear of consequences if the assault occurred while doing something illegal or against the family or school rules. In addition, teenagers may fear that if they report the assault, their parents may try to limit activities and freedom. However parents of teen survivors should make sure that the teen is not hurt and is safe. Teenagers and children deserve to get medical attention and emotional support. Nobody should have to recover from an act of sexual violence alone, without concerned and supportive adult help.

If the sexual assault was perpetrated by a friend, neighbor, family member, or someone else trusted by the family, teens are often afraid that they will not be believed. It is especially important that teens and minors can identify even one adult in their life who will believe them, will not blame them, and who will help them to make some decisions about what to do after the assault.

Mandatory Reporting

Survivors of all ages are to be believed. All survivors deserve help in dealing with the trauma. It can really help to talk to someone who is trustworthy. It is important to know that in certain cases—for example, if the incest or abuse is still occurring—certain people such as teachers, school counselors, or doctors are required to

report it to police or child protective services. We have mandatory reporting requirements because our society recognizes that abuse should NEVER happen to any child, and minors need to be protected.

If there are concerns about the possibility that a report may have to be made, the survivor or second party can talk anonymously, without giving the name of the victim or identifying information. In the back of this booklet, you will see a list of Colorado agencies by region. This list can help you locate an organization in your area.

Incest

Sexual contact between family members is incest. The perpetrator can be male or female, a parent, stepparent, aunt or uncle, sibling, or any other family member. Both females and males can be victims of incest. It can occur in any family.

Incest survivors often feel very alone and it may be very difficult to talk about this sexual assault. Incest survivors may experience feelings of loneliness both at the time of the sexual assault and into adulthood. They often feel as if they are/were responsible for what happened. Again, it is important to remember that only the perpetrator is responsible. Our society's response to childhood sexual assault has changed over the years. Survivors can get help, even years after the abuse.

In many cases there are concerns that the truth would be very painful for other family members. However, it is very important for the incest survivor to be able to get help sorting through the abuse. They were not to blame for what happened; the perpetrator of the activity is responsible for his or her actions.

Male Survivors

Sexual contact without consent is sexual violence, regardless of the victim's gender. Men often don't think this could happen to them, but it can and unfortunately does. Male children are frequently targets of sexual abuse by those in a position of power or trust. Sexual assault is extremely difficult for all victims, male as well as female.

Because the majority of sexual assaults on men are by other men, male survivors often experience questions or confusion about their sexuality or sexual identity. Many survivors, male as well as female, feel like their body has betrayed them by responding in some way to the sexual activity. It is not unusual for there to be confusion because physical responses did not match emotional

reactions during the assault. This does not mean that the assault was enjoyable or that the victim was in any way responsible for what happened. An assault also does not mean that the survivor's sexual identity has changed.

Men often feel extremely embarrassed by what happened and may hesitate to talk to anyone or report it to law enforcement out of fear of ridicule or that they won't be believed. Men deserve to have legal and emotional support just as do women. No one has the right to control and violate another's body.

MEN may need special support. There are several ways to get help:

- Call a crisis line/sexual assault services center anonymously, and request a male counselor or advocate if this is more comfortable.
- If going to a hospital, a male nurse or doctor can be requested (if this is more comfortable).
- Some areas may have a support group of male survivors to help with the healing process. Unfortunately this may not be available in all regions. See Chapter 8: Survivor Resources for more information.

Alcohol and Drugs

Alcohol and drugs can be used to weaken a person for a period of time and cause memory loss. Alcohol is the number one "drug" used with sexual assault. It is sometimes used to "loosen up" a date or a friend to make them submit to sexual advances. Besides alcohol, there are other drugs that can make someone vulnerable to a sexual assault. These drugs may be slipped into a drink or the perpetrator may choose to assault someone who has taken drugs for fun.

One common myth (untrue belief) is that if someone was drinking alcohol and then was sexually assaulted, the victim is to blame for the assault. Unfortunately some police, medical staff, or even loved ones may still believe this myth. Remember, drinking alcohol does not give anyone the right to commit sexual assault.

While alcohol is the most common drug used by perpetrators to facilitate sexual assault, other drugs may also be used. Some drugs have no taste, color, or smell. They may easily dissolve in liquid or be in liquid form. The effects of these drugs can occur very fast. The drugs described below are often called "date rape drugs"

because they quickly increase a person's vulnerability to sexual assault.

Commonly used drugs and their effects

- **GHB:** Found in clear liquid or white powder form. The liquid has a slight salty taste. It causes intense drowsiness, disorientation, and coma.
- **Ketamine:** Used as a liquid veterinary and human anesthetic. The street form may be liquid or powder. It can produce vivid hallucinations, paranoia, sensory distortions, muscle rigidity, and loss of pain perception. Other name: Special K.
- **Rohypnol:** Found as a small white or a long dark green pill, it causes light colored drinks to turn blue. It's 10 times stronger than Valium. It causes sleepiness, decreases in blood pressure and breathing, and memory loss. Other name: Roofy.

According to medical professionals in Colorado, over-the-counter medications like antihistamines (allergy medicines) can be used to facilitate sexual assault. Commonly prescribed drugs like Valium, Ambien, and Xanax (anti-anxiety medication) can cause extreme sleepiness and make someone more vulnerable to sexual assault.

Remember that choosing to drink alcohol or use drugs does not mean there was consent to have sex. Legally, a person who is drunk, unconscious, asleep, or otherwise unable to indicate willingness to participate cannot give consent to sexual activity. Therefore, any sexual activity carried out with a person in this physical state is unlawful sexual contact or sexual assault.¹⁶

When drugs and/or alcohol are involved in a sexual assault, additional concerns come up for survivors. Because memory loss may leave them wondering exactly what did and did not happen, they may have increased feelings of vulnerability and loss of control.

It is not unusual for sexual assault victims to blame themselves for what happened if drugs or alcohol were used voluntarily. It is important to know that drugs and alcohol do not cause rape. The rapist made a decision to assault a person who was vulnerable. In fact, Colorado law considers that a perpetrator who uses drugs to help sexually assault someone has committed a more serious criminal offense.

If there is a possibility that drugs were involved, urine or blood can be tested if the test occurs within approximately 72 hours (although many of these drugs will leave the system within 8-48

hours). The test could provide important evidence toward a legal case. It is important to know that some drug screens may show all drugs that are in the system. A test may also show no signs of drugs, but the victim may still suspect that they were drugged. The negative test may mean that the drugs left the victim's system quickly. It is important to still work through feelings that come up when someone feels like they've been drugged and assaulted.

People who are Disabled or Elderly

Perpetrators of sexual assault tend to look for vulnerable people. Past research shows that persons with a disability had an age-adjusted rate of rape or sexual assault that was more than twice the rate for persons without a disability.¹⁷ Older adults and seniors can also be assaulted. Studies show that only 30% of rape/sexual assault victims age 65 or older reported to the police.¹⁸ As with other types of sexual assault, the perpetrator is typically someone known to the victim, such as a family member, caretaker, neighbor, or friend. Unfortunately, these types of assault are not rare.

A senior or an individual with disabilities has the right to be treated with respect, as well as the right to take action and seek resources. Emotional support and other kinds of assistance may be available from local agencies that advocate for persons who are elderly and/or have disabilities. It may be helpful to ask if there is a staff member experienced in working with sexual assault issues.

Gang Rape

Gang rape is when two or more people commit a sexual assault. This can be especially terrifying and often involves physical as well as sexual violence. As with any other sexual assault, the intention is aggression and domination. It may also be an initiation ritual to "bond" the members of a group.

Survivors of gang rape are more likely to sustain physical injuries and may have heightened fears of retaliation or punishment if they report the sexual assault to the police. It is important that they are offered resources that address both emotional and physical safety concerns.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, or Intersex (LGBTQQI) Survivors

While the LGBTQQI community is at approximately the same risk as heterosexuals of being sexually assaulted by someone they know, homophobia and transphobia put the LGBTQQI population at a greater risk of being a victim of violence. Perpetrators may use sexual violence to “punish” and humiliate someone for their sexual orientation or gender identity. Male perpetrators who think they can “change” a person’s sexual orientation may also target gay and bisexual women. It may be helpful for an LGBTQQI survivor to ask for staff who understand these concerns when they contact a counselor or rape crisis advocate in their community.

Prison Rape

Inmates in detention facilities are vulnerable to sexual assault. The trauma of a rape can be incredibly devastating to someone who already feels isolated and without power and choices. The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was passed in 2003. The main goal of this federal law is to reduce, eliminate, and prevent rape within correctional facilities. If you are a survivor of prison rape, please know that nobody deserves to be raped. You are not to blame for your victimization. It is not a part of your punishment, and you may seek medical and counseling services during your incarceration. To request support and assistance send a letter to:

Office of the Inspector General
PREA Manager
2862 South Circle Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

You can also call the Confidential DOC Tips-line at 877-362-8477 (outside DOC) or 877-362-8477-0, inside DOC or private prisons.





3. HEALTH AND MEDICAL CONCERNS

YOU may have many health or medical concerns following a sexual assault. Although sexual assault is a violent crime, the degree of physical injury is different for every person.

It is possible for survivors to have little or no physical injury from a sexual assault. *Even if you think you don't have any physical injuries, it is recommended that you seek medical attention if you feel comfortable doing so.* You may have been exposed to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or be at risk for pregnancy.

If you choose to report the sexual assault to law enforcement, a trained medical professional should collect evidence for prosecuting the case. This is different than receiving medical care and is called a forensic medical exam. Often signs of injury (such as bruising or soreness) don't show up immediately. Injuries can be important evidence for successful prosecution (go to Chapter 4 "Law Enforcement Response" for more information about the decision to report and evidence collection). If you do not wish to cooperate with law enforcement, you can still receive a forensic medical exam at no cost to you. Law enforcement will be notified, but you do not have to cooperate with an investigation. The State of Colorado – Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) will pay only the cost of the forensic exam.¹⁹ Unfortunately, you will be responsible for any additional medical expenses.

There are many emotional effects of sexual assault. Understanding the emotional effects may help with the healing process (go to Chapter 6 "Healing and Recovery" for more information).

Seeking care may be your first step toward reclaiming control over your body and your life.

CHOOSING TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL

Following a sexual assault, there are options for you to consider when seeking treatment or deciding to go to the hospital. Your safety is the most important consideration. We recommend that in a medical emergency you go directly to the hospital. The hospital can provide emergency medical care and an exam. If you do not wish to report the case to law enforcement (if you are 18 or older) you can still receive medical care. You may also still have evidence collected. If that's what you choose to do, inform the healthcare providers at the hospital or clinical facility that you want to have evidence collected, but do not wish to report to law enforcement.

Under Colorado law, medical personnel still have to report the crime to a law enforcement agency. However, you do not have to cooperate or agree to open an investigation. It is important to know that your name will be provided to law enforcement. Under federal law, a victim of a sexual assault crime who does not want to cooperate with law enforcement can receive the exam (at no cost) without being required to participate in the criminal justice system or cooperate with law enforcement. In this instance, medical care will be provided and an evidentiary exam can be completed. Local law enforcement is responsible for storing the sex assault kit for up to 2 years. The hospital will directly bill the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice for the forensic examination. Because of both federal and Colorado law you do not have to submit any payment for your forensic exam. Again, you will still be responsible for paying for any additional medical care, prescriptions, etc.

If you would like to report the assault to law enforcement then it is important to get to the hospital as soon as possible after the assault. As time passes, evidence is lost. Physical evidence and documentation of injuries can be collected through a forensic medical exam for several days following an assault. In addition, medication to prevent pregnancy can be taken up to 5 days following possible exposure to pregnancy.

If you choose to go to the hospital, do not change your clothes or shower (if possible) in order to preserve any remaining evidence. It's alright if you have already changed clothes or showered; it makes sense to do those things after an assault. You can still receive a forensic exam and access medical assistance at the hospital. Medical assistance involves treating injuries and screening



for possible sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. Also an advocate or counselor may be available for emotional support and information.

If you decide to report to law enforcement, physical evidence may be collected through a forensic evidence collection exam. In sexual assault cases, physical evidence may include clothing, bedding, and bodily fluids such as semen and saliva. Collection of forensic evidence may improve the chances of successfully convicting the perpetrator.

The forensic evidence collection process (often called a “rape kit”) can be a long, invasive and embarrassing experience. A sexual assault victim advocate or counselor can provide information and help you sort through your feelings to assist you in making an informed decision.

The choice to have the forensic exam is yours. It may feel like the last thing you want to do immediately after a sexual assault. However, if you choose (even later on) to pursue criminal justice, the forensic medical exam may contain some of the most important evidence towards obtaining a conviction of the perpetrator.



AT THE HOSPITAL

- You may have to wait at the hospital before being seen.
- You have a right to confidential care in the healthcare environment.
- You have the right to privacy. Your interview and examination should occur in a private interview area and/or examination room. If this does not seem to be happening, ask that you be allowed to provide information in private.
- You may request to be attended by a female doctor/nurse and the hospital may provide this if they can accommodate the request.
- Law enforcement officers should not be in the examination room during the exam; however before or after the exam they may interview you. They are responsible for beginning the investigation and securing the evidence after it is collected. If you do not want to talk to them about your case, you do not have to provide law enforcement with information.
- A hospital cannot refuse to treat sexual assault victims if they decline to report to law enforcement.

- The patient has the right to stop the forensic exam (or refuse any part of the exam) at any time.
- If you receive a bill from the healthcare facility for other medical costs, in most cases there are funds available through Crime Victim Compensation (through your county district attorney's office); or through the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA). Victim Compensation may cover other medical expenses, such as tests for pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, emergency contraception ("the morning after pill"), etc. Please see Section 8: Survivor Resources for referral information.
- If possible, for your comfort, have a friend or advocate with you. You do not have to go through this alone. You may want to ask if there are specially trained sexual assault victim advocates available through the hospital, the law enforcement agency, or through a local community-based sexual assault services agency. Their role is to provide support for you. They can help explain the process, assist you to find helpful resources, and help you to understand your feelings.
- It is helpful to bring an extra set of clothes with you to the hospital, as the ones you are wearing may be taken as evidence. Some facilities may have extra clothing (sweat suits, underwear) available.
- Healthcare personnel should be able to provide you with resources for follow-up care, for both medical and emotional needs.

FORENSIC EVIDENCE COLLECTION

Some communities in Colorado have Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) who are registered nurses specially educated and trained to provide comprehensive care for the victims of sexual assault. If your community does not have a SANE program, then other healthcare personnel will conduct the exam.

The Forensic Evidence Collection Exam

This exam can take 2-4 hours. Usually the information you provide to healthcare providers about the assault is documented as evidence. Alcohol and drug screens are NOT routine, and should only be done if there is concern that the perpetrator drugged you; or took advantage of you if you had too much alcohol; and/or your medical condition or history warrants a toxicology screen for the purpose of giving you the best medical care.

The person conducting the exam will:

1. Obtain a history of: the assault, including dates, time and location; events leading up to and after the assault; use of force or threats; which orifices were assaulted (mouth, anus, and/or vagina), and with what (penis, finger, object); whether or not a condom was used; whether and where the perpetrator may have ejaculated; physical injuries or pain; and what you did after the assault (changed clothes, brushed teeth, etc.). These questions may be uncomfortable and difficult; however it is important to tell the examiner as much detail as you can remember.
2. Obtain a medical and sexual history, which may include: medications; contraceptive use; allergies; past medical history; date of last menstrual period (to evaluate possibility of pregnancy) and date of last voluntary sexual intercourse (necessary for evaluating DNA evidence).
3. Conduct a pelvic examination. A specialized piece of equipment called a colposcope may be utilized to help see genital injuries, which may be important for evidence. Photographs of external and internal injuries may be taken. They may also be important for evidence. The use of the colposcope is not invasive or painful and the nurse examiner will review the photos, as well as any injury seen, with you.
4. Collect physical evidence (head hair & possibly pubic hair samples; clothing; swabbing of skin and mouth).

Following the medical-forensic examination, the doctor or nurse should evaluate the potential exposure to a sexually transmitted infection and explain courses of action available for dealing with this risk. You should be offered medication to prevent sexually transmitted infection and pregnancy. A urine or blood test for pregnancy may be done prior to the administration of any medication.

You should be instructed to follow up in 10-14 days for a re-check exam with your primary healthcare provider, Planned Parenthood, or the local Health Department for STI screening and evaluation for Hepatitis and HIV exposure. It is very important to have the follow-up tests even if you have no symptoms. Baseline HIV testing

and counseling regarding medication to prevent HIV can be obtained at the local Health Department. For information about health care facilities in your area, please see Chapter 8: Survivor Resources.

If you are working with law enforcement and additional bruises or body surface injuries appear in the days following the exam, let the police know as these may provide additional evidence. Do receive additional medical treatment as necessary. Be sure to save receipts for follow-up treatment and medications as Victim Compensation may cover them.

AGAIN, it is important that you not change your clothes or shower following the sexual assault, if possible. Those actions can affect the ability to collect evidence.





4. LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE

THE Criminal Justice system's goal (which begins with the report to Law Enforcement) is to hold people accountable for their criminal activity and to punish according to the law.

It is important to know that reporting an assault to Law Enforcement and the Criminal Justice systems are different from filing a lawsuit for a civil court case.

A civil court lawsuit is for the purpose of recovering monetary compensation for damages done. You may wish to explore either or both courses of action. More information about civil court lawsuits will follow in the next chapter.

THE DECISION TO REPORT

Reporting a sexual assault to law enforcement is a very personal decision. A person's choice about whether or not to report may be affected by personal, cultural or other reasons. Reporting will require that you remember and tell the details of the assault, which can be emotionally difficult.

People choose to report for many reasons including: to regain some sense of control by taking some legal action, to attempt to hold the perpetrator accountable for the assault, and/or to help to protect others by getting a sexual offender off the streets. People also choose **NOT** to report for many reasons including: privacy concerns, fear of law enforcement, safety concerns, and feeling emotionally unable to move forward with an investigation at that time.





Each person's experience is unique and the decision to report is up to the individual. There is not one way that is "right" for every victim. While making your decision about reporting, it might help you to discuss your options with someone who is knowledgeable about the laws, like a lawyer or victim's advocate (see Legal Resources in Chapter 8).



If you choose not to report, please still do take care of yourself by getting any necessary medical attention and counseling.

Anyone over the age of 18 can decide whether or not to report a sexual assault to the police. Sexual assaults that involve minors will have to be reported by people called "mandatory reporters." Mandatory reporters include hotline advocates, doctors, teachers, counselors and other professionals who work with youth. They are people who are obligated by law to report any form of abuse on children including sexual assault and sexual abuse. These people must report if a young person has been sexually abused or assaulted in order to provide protection to the minor. These reporting laws are important. They demonstrate that the safety and well being of young people is of utmost value.



If you are under 18, and have been or currently are the victim of sexual violence or abuse, you should not have to continue to live in fear of the next incident or emotional pain from previous incidents. There are people who may be able to help find a way to make the abuse stop.



Although a report legally may need to be made, you can still get emotional support for yourself even if you choose to not speak with Law Enforcement. There may be phone hotlines available so that you can talk about your situation anonymously first and make informed choices. You may wish to call your local sexual assault hotline (see the list in the back of this

booklet) and ask, without giving your name, if your confidentiality can be maintained, regardless of your age.



The most important thing is your physical and emotional well-being. Find someone you can trust to talk with about what is happening in your life.

STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS (TIME LIMITS FOR REPORTING)

There are different time limits for reporting sexual assault cases. Those time limits may change, depending on whether it is a criminal, civil, or federal case. The Statute of Limitations also varies, depending on the age of the victim (and perpetrator) and if the case is a felony or a misdemeanor. Statutes of Limitations should be interpreted by a lawyer, on a case-by-case basis. If you would like to speak with an attorney regarding Statute of Limitations, contact CCASA for a referral.

Remember, you don't have to go through any of these steps alone.

Most communities have sexual assault/abuse service providers or victim-witness programs connected with law enforcement agencies. Some areas also have community-based advocates, who are not employed by law enforcement agencies. These entities can provide a Victim Advocate for you.

You may have many other concerns and questions about what to expect, and your rights during the law enforcement investigation and the criminal justice process. Don't be afraid to ask questions of the investigator, prosecutor, or Victim's Advocate (see below).

- Victim's Advocates are trained and have experience with the criminal justice system; they can support and guide you through the process.
- Confidentiality means that what you tell someone can be kept private. It is important for you to know the extent of your right of confidentiality. There are different types of advocates and confidentiality laws protect some, but not all. Law Enforcement personnel, including Victim's Advocates from

Law Enforcement agencies cannot hold back information that you share with them that is relevant to the case even if you wish it to remain confidential.

- There are sexual assault/abuse community programs, which have specially trained victim's advocates who **DO** have the ability to hold your disclosures about the assault in confidence. (Please see the list of Colorado agencies in the back of this booklet).
- Many licensed mental health providers and counselors also have the ability to maintain your privacy, except in the case of sexual assault or abuse against a child or minor.

MAKING A REPORT TO THE POLICE

The following is an explanation of the process of reporting a sexual assault to the police, and some common police procedures that may be helpful for you to understand. When you call the police to report a sexual assault, an officer or detective will respond to the location of your call. The responding officer will ask for some basic information regarding the sexual assault and then a decision will be made regarding going to the hospital for a forensic evidence collection examination.

If you have injuries requiring medical attention, get to a hospital for treatment. (See Chapter 3: Health and Medical Concerns for more information).

If you do not require immediate medical attention, the officer will ask you several detailed questions about the sexual assault. For example, the officer may ask you the location, what happened, a description of the person that committed the assault, etc. The officer will ask you these questions while the details are fresh in your mind. Under both federal law and Colorado law, law enforcement is not allowed to ask or require you to take a polygraph examination (a lie detector test).²⁰

It can be helpful to write down whatever you remember as soon as possible after the assault. You can then return back to these notes and add additional information as you remember over the following days. It is not unusual for some survivors to remember only bits and pieces at first, and with the passage of time s/he may remember more information.

Some of the questions the police will ask will be very personal, but a detailed recount of the assault is very important to the investigation. You may be asked to go step-by-step through everything that happened. It is important to give as much detail as possible, even if it seems unimportant or embarrassing. They may also ask you to use very precise language, including proper names for body parts. This is often uncomfortable because we are not used to saying these words, especially to someone we don't know very well. However, this can be important information.

If you were drinking or taking drugs prior to the assault, it is important to inform law enforcement. The police are not there to approve or disapprove of you, but it is very important that the officer understands exactly what happened so that they know how to conduct the investigation. In Colorado, it is a crime to have sex with a person who is not able to give consent because of alcohol or drugs.

EVIDENCE COLLECTION

You may be asked by the officer and/or a detective to help locate the scene of the crime. Then the crime scene may be sealed off and searched for evidence. Law Enforcement may need to obtain a warrant before doing any search.

Your body and clothing is a valuable source of evidence. The police will need to take the clothing you wore before, during and/or after the sexual assault as it may contain evidence such as fibers, hairs, or seminal fluid critical to the investigation. This evidence can be used to connect the suspect to the crime.

The police will keep your clothing throughout the investigation. There are new laws in Colorado regarding the return of evidence in cases where DNA evidence is obtained. Depending on the outcome of the case, you may be allowed to re-claim your property after the court case is completed, if you wish. However, this may not be true in every case. You will need to check with the Law Enforcement agency or the District Attorney to find out if your property is available for release. If you do have your property returned, remember that it may be damaged (holes cut in it to remove an important piece containing evidence, etc). If you choose to have your property returned, you may want to prepare for its return. Often survivors have mixed feelings when they receive their personal items. It can re-trigger memories of the assault. Sometimes your property is returned by mail. If you would like to

be notified about this or would not like your property returned, talk to a victim advocate or the law enforcement officer in charge of the case to find out how to have your wishes respected.

In addition to collecting evidence from your body and clothing, the police may take fingerprints (using a black powder that can be messy) and photographs, especially of any injuries or marks.

THE FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION

A detective will be assigned to investigate your case. Sometimes it is necessary for the detective to re-interview you in detail about the sexual assault. Remember that the more details you are able to provide, the more information the detective will be able to include in the investigation. The detective may also ask you for a medical release, if you went to a medical facility because of the assault.

The detective may want to photograph any visible injuries. If you do not know the suspect's name, you may be asked to look at several photographs of possible suspects, in either a "mug-shot" book or a "photo line-up." A police artist may assist you in doing a composite drawing of an unknown suspect.

At any time, you may contact the detective with questions regarding the investigation or with any additional information you remember. Again, additional bits of information may come with time.

THE ARREST

It is impossible to make any general statements about the length of time it takes to make an arrest. It differs with each case. An arrest may not ever be made because the police do not identify or find a suspect; or there may not be enough evidence to provide "probable cause" that the suspect committed the crime. This does not mean that the police do not believe you, just that there is not enough evidence to make an arrest.

If there is enough evidence and the suspect can be located, the suspect will be arrested and taken to jail. A bail amount will be set and the suspect may be able to post bail (sometimes called posting bond) and get out of jail. The bond is usually a large sum of money that is held to make sure the suspect shows up at trial.



You have the right to contact the jail by phone or in writing and ask to be notified if the suspect is released. Usually, a condition of bail is that the suspect must not have any contact with the victim. If the suspect attempts to contact you, call the police immediately.

If an arrest is made, then you will become involved with another part of the legal process, the court system and the Office of the District Attorney.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A CRIME VICTIM²¹:

- To be treated with fairness, respect and dignity and to have a swift case resolution.
- To be informed of and be present at all critical stages of the criminal justice process.
- To be present and heard in court for any bond reduction, amendment of charges, disposition, sentencing, continuances.
- To have a safe waiting area near the courtroom.
- To confer with the District Attorney's Office before the case is resolved or goes to trial and to be informed of the outcome.
- To prepare a Victim Impact Statement and to be heard at sentencing.
- To have restitution ordered.
- To pursue a civil judgment against anyone who has committed a crime against you.
- To be informed of post conviction release or modification hearings.
- To get your property back quickly when it is no longer needed for prosecution.
- To apply for Victim Compensation for crime-related losses such as therapy and medical expenses.
- To be free from intimidation, harassment, or abuse and informed about what steps can be taken if he or she is subjected to intimidation, harassment, or abuse.
- To be provided with appropriate employer intercession services regarding court appearances and meetings with criminal justice officials.



- To be notified of any change in the status or the release from custody of the accused.
- To be informed of the filing of a petition to cease sex offender registration.
- To be informed of the results of any court-ordered HIV testing.
- To prevent any party of any court proceeding from compelling testimony regarding a victim's address, telephone number, place of employment or other locating information.
- To be informed of the availability of community resources and financial assistance.
- To be informed of the process for enforcing the Victim Rights Act.

AS the victim of a crime, you may be eligible for Crime Victim's Compensation.

These funds are available to assist victims of violent crimes with losses sustained as a result of the crime. Victim's Compensation may pay for counseling costs, medical expenses, property damage and lost wages as a result of the crime. Contact your local Office of the District Attorney for more information and an application. A Victim Advocate can assist you in this process.





5. THE COURT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

SEXUAL Assault, like other crimes, is viewed legally as a crime against the State rather than against the person. It is the responsibility of the Office of the District Attorney to file the charges against the suspect. For this reason, in a criminal case, you do not have to hire an attorney as you would in a civil case.

As a victim, you are viewed as a victim/witness to a crime committed against the State. The Office of the District Attorney (DA) makes the decision to prosecute based on the strength of the evidence and witnesses. If they decide they are not taking your case to court, it is your right to know the reason for this decision. Again, this does not mean that the DA doesn't believe you.

If the Office of the District Attorney files charges in your sexual assault case, the State provides someone called a Prosecutor (a District Attorney or Deputy/Assistant) as the lawyer in your case. You will be notified of the name of the Prosecutor assigned to your case. Under the federal Victims' Rights Act, you have the right to meet with the Prosecutor before you testify in court.

When your case is filed with the Office of the District Attorney, an advocate from the District Attorney's Victim/Witness Office should be assigned to your case. The advocate's role is to explain the legal process, and provide support to you. He/she can answer your questions, give information, ensure that your input is considered in the case, and act as your main point of contact with the Prosecutor in the case.²¹

In most jurisdictions, cases begin with the filing of a criminal complaint. Criminal complaints are filed in County Court. The bond hearing, filing of charges and preliminary hearing are conducted in County Court. Once a preliminary hearing is

conducted and a judge finds probable cause, or a defendant waives the preliminary hearing, the case goes to District Court.

THE DEFENSE

The Defense Attorney is the lawyer who represents the “defendant” in court. The “defendant” is the person accused of the crime, also called the perpetrator. The Defense Attorney may want to talk with you before you testify in court. It is your decision whether or not you speak with the Defense Attorney. It is strongly recommended that you tell the Prosecutor (District Attorney) about any contact you have with the Defense Attorney prior to the contact. Remember that the Defense Attorney will try to prove that the defendant is innocent of the crime and your words could be used in their defense. If you decide to speak with the Defense Attorney, you may notify the Prosecutor and request that he or she be present during the interview.

THE COURT

Appearing in a court of law can seem like being in a foreign land, as there are specific rules, language, and protocols. Most people are not familiar with courtrooms and court procedures. Having to publicly discuss details of a sexual assault in a courtroom may be very difficult.

The advocate from the District Attorney's Victim/Witness Office can be very valuable in helping you to understand the court system. Tell him or her your needs and ask any questions you have about procedures and the process. The Victim Advocate is there to help you with the process.

The criminal justice process may seem very difficult because of the personal and emotional needs following a sexual trauma. You will not have control of the days and times of the hearings. There may be last minute postponements (or delays) causing you to “prepare” over and over again (emotionally and mentally) for a court appearance. You may have to talk about the assault many times. You may have to see the perpetrator in the courtroom and you won't be able to control the verdict.

There may be a lot of stress involved with pursuing your sexual assault case through this system. That is why having supportive people who care about you during this time can be so important. See 8: Survivor Resources for community-based support services in your area. Some survivors find that the emotional healing doesn't seem to begin until after the court process is finished.



COURT HEARINGS

Advisement: Once the case moves to the District Attorney's Office, the perpetrator will be referred to as "the defendant." The defendant is advised of the charges on which he/she was arrested and the possible penalties for the crime. If the defendant is still in jail, the judge may do this through closed-circuit television. Bond will also be set at the time of the advisement or at the filing of charges. Under most circumstances a defendant is entitled to have a bond set. If the defendant is able to post the bond, often with the help of a bail bondsman, they will be released pending trial.

Preliminary Hearing: This hearing is a "probable cause" hearing, in which the judge hears testimony and determines if there is enough evidence to take the case to trial. The defendant has a right to attend this hearing but can also waive his/her right to attend. If the defendant does not attend the preliminary hearing, the case will not be immediately set for trial. If the judge determines that there is enough evidence to take the case, then the case is "bound over" for trial. [At this time, the judge should order the defendant to have an HIV test with the results released to you, if you wish.] This is the first time you may be subpoenaed (given notice that you are required to appear) in court to testify. If you receive a subpoena, call the Prosecutor to arrange a meeting or phone conversation before your testimony.

Arraignment: During this time, the defendant will enter a plea of guilty or not guilty before the judge. This is done after the case is "bound over" for trial at the preliminary hearing in District Court.

Pre Trial Motions Hearing: This is a hearing where the Prosecution and Defense Attorney present arguments to the judge as to what evidence or information will be used at the trial. You may or may not be asked to testify at this hearing.

Plea Negotiations: Many cases are settled without having to go to trial by negotiations between the Prosecutor and the Defense Attorney. A plea bargain is when the defendant pleads guilty to the crime or a lesser crime for less of the sentence.

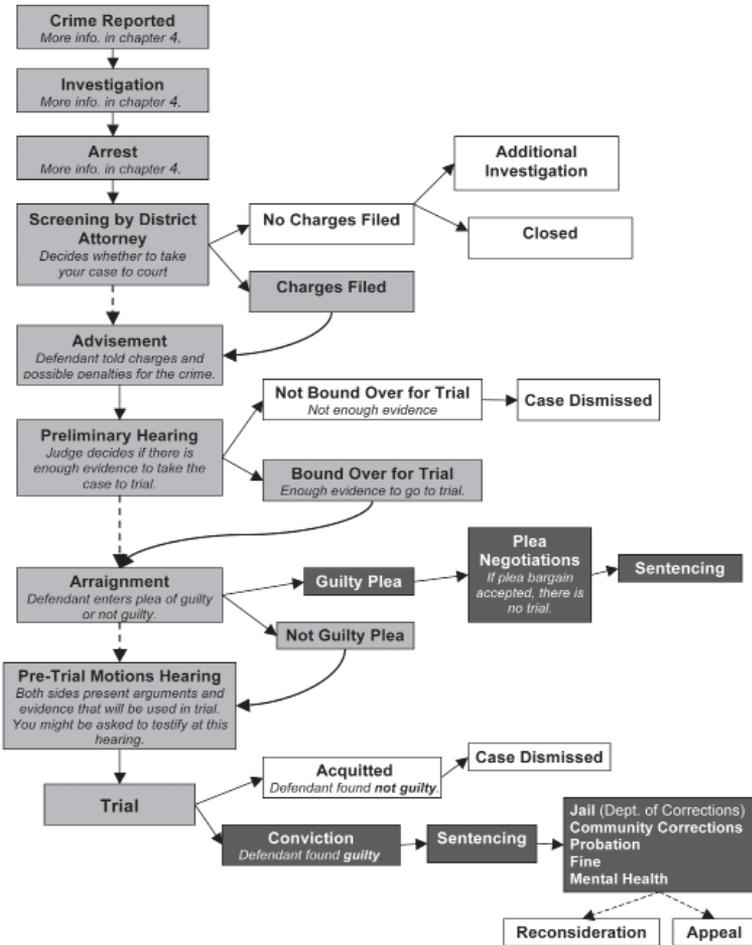
The Prosecutor will discuss plea negotiations with you, and you should express your feelings about it. However, it is up to the Prosecutor to decide whether to take the terms of the plea bargain to the judge. If a plea bargain is accepted, there will be no trial. It is not unusual for survivors to have mixed feelings about a plea agreement. You may feel relief at not having to testify and at having a quicker ending to the case. You may also feel disappointment or anger about the lesser charge.

Trial: The District Attorney's office prosecutes a case by presenting witnesses and evidence to the jury. They must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant committed the crime. The jury makes the final decision (verdict) as to whether the state has proven the case beyond a reasonable doubt. If proven, the verdict will be guilty. If not proven, the verdict will be not guilty. A not guilty verdict does not mean that you were not believed, but rather that the state failed to meet its burden of proof.

Continuances: Sometimes a hearing or the trial is "continued." This means that the hearing or trial will be set for a later date. You will be told of the new date.

Sentencing: If the defendant is found guilty at the trial or pleads guilty in a plea bargain, the judge will give the sentence. The Probation Office investigates the defendant's background and makes a sentencing recommendation to the judge. You have the right to speak at sentencing or write a letter to inform the judge of the impact of the assault on you and your feelings regarding the sentence. These "Victim Impact Statements" can be important and useful, to both the court and also as a part of your healing and recovery.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE FLOW CHART



(Adapted from "The Criminal Justice Process" flow chart in "If Someone You Know is a Victim of Assault," Jennifer Graham author, ChildSafe, City of Fort Collins, et al.)

If you have further questions about your rights under the Victim Rights Act, you can contact the Colorado Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice Office for Victims' Programs, toll free at 1-888-282-1080 or <http://dcj.state.co.us/ovp>.

CIVIL LAWSUIT

In addition to criminal prosecution, you can hire a private attorney and sue the assailant or a third party for personal injury in civil court. If you win this lawsuit, the defendant will be ordered to pay money for damages caused, including medical expenses, loss of income, and pain and suffering. Punitive damages may also be ordered, to punish the offender. If the offender is found guilty in criminal court, you are more likely to win the civil court case.

You may feel much more in control over a civil lawsuit. The rules and procedures are different than in criminal court. However, this type of action needs to be considered realistically. If the perpetrator owns little of value and has no income, a civil suit could result in a judgment that is impossible to collect. Most lawyers will not even consider taking a case if collecting monetary compensation is not realistic (that is, the defendant has no money). For additional information a consultation with an attorney is recommended.²²





6. HEALING AND RECOVERY

REAL HEALING IS POSSIBLE...IT IS A PROCESS

“I WON’T be a victim forever. I will always remember; but ultimately, I’ll move on...soothed by the fact that my soul is strong and my spirit unbreakable.”

In the best of worlds, at the best of times, there would be no violence. Unfortunately, sexual violence occurs all too often in our world, and it can happen to anyone.

If you have been a victim of sexual violence and/or abuse either recently or in the past, you have probably been left with many confusing thoughts or feelings about what happened. These thoughts and emotions are a normal reaction to a physically and/or psychologically traumatic event. There are many responses that we each may have. As we are all different and unique individuals, so we all will heal and recover in our own unique way.

It is important to know that uncomfortable and even painful thoughts and feelings that you may have experienced or are experiencing are a part of the healing process. One of the kindest and most helpful things that you can do for yourself is to find a supportive person or people with whom you can just be yourself. It can really help to talk about the thoughts and feelings with people who are kind and supportive.

*Asking for help is not weakness,
it is actually strength; and help is
available for you somewhere in
your world. Seek it out.*

THE HEALING PROCESS

Survivors progress through stages of healing in different ways, which makes recovery unique for each individual. However, there are some reactions to trauma, and sexual assault in particular, that are common and normal. We hope that this chapter can help you to better understand what you may be experiencing.

Right after an assault, feelings may include: confusion, anger, fear, guilt, shame, embarrassment, depression, loss of control, numbness or shock. You may have a hard time concentrating. Your thoughts may race. You may find yourself reviewing and re-living what occurred, or asking unending questions such as “why me?” Not being able to sleep, nightmares, and flashbacks of the assault are also common.

Physical symptoms can include soreness, muscle tension, headaches, stomach problems, tiredness, and gynecological problems. It may seem like your whole life has been disrupted and is focused on the assault, especially if you are interacting with law enforcement during the first stages of the investigation. Although these are normal reactions to trauma, they can be very upsetting. Be gentle and patient with yourself, and do whatever you need to at this time to reclaim your life and feel safer.

After a few days or weeks, you may feel as though you need to appear as if everything is fine. You may not want to talk about what happened and want to “just forget” that it happened. This can serve a useful purpose for a while. It can be a way to cope, allowing you to function in your life. Unfortunately, the reality is that we don’t usually really “forget.” The discomfort may appear to be gone, but can come back in unusual ways.

Some people have a hard time stopping thoughts about the assault. Feeling overwhelmed or not feeling anything at all are not uncommon following a traumatic event. Again, taking small steps to return to “normal” life and focusing on self-care will promote recovery.

Other problems may appear that seem to be unrelated to the assault, such as alcohol/drug problems, relationship problems, or depression.



You may notice that you experience unusual thoughts, feelings and/or behaviors, and that you may not be acting “like yourself.” Some of these experiences may include:

- Increased alcohol and/or drug use;
- Keeping to yourself, isolating or staying away from friends and loved ones;
- Increased fears (of leaving your home or being at home alone, of people, or of certain places);
- Avoiding work or over-working;
- Increased irritability;
- Engaging in risky behaviors;
- Suicidal thoughts;
- Change in eating habits (not eating or over-eating);
- Changes in sleep habits (unable to sleep or sleeping too much);
- Having nightmares and/or flashbacks.

All of these reactions can be responses to trauma. It can be helpful to recognize that you are reacting to an abnormal and serious event (an assault). Notice when you are not acting “like yourself” and then try to remind yourself that it may be related to what happened. Remember, you can seek out support and resources, which can assist you to take positive and helpful action. **You do not have to deal with the pain all alone.**

Have Patience with Yourself

It can take weeks, months and even years to recover from what has happened. There is no one “right” timeline. Eventually, as you move through the process of healing, the assault will change from being the central focus in your life to being something painful that happened in the past.

There may be times when thoughts and feelings related to the assault return. These can be “triggered” by such events as seeing a TV show about sexual assault, seeing a person who reminds you of the perpetrator, or being near the assault location. You may have thought you were “over it” only to



be faced with the challenges of re-experiencing some of the effects of the trauma.

Remember to be kind and gentle with yourself. Think about how you would like your best friend to be there for you at this time and then try to become your own best friend. Seek out helping and caring resources. It may be difficult, but possible.

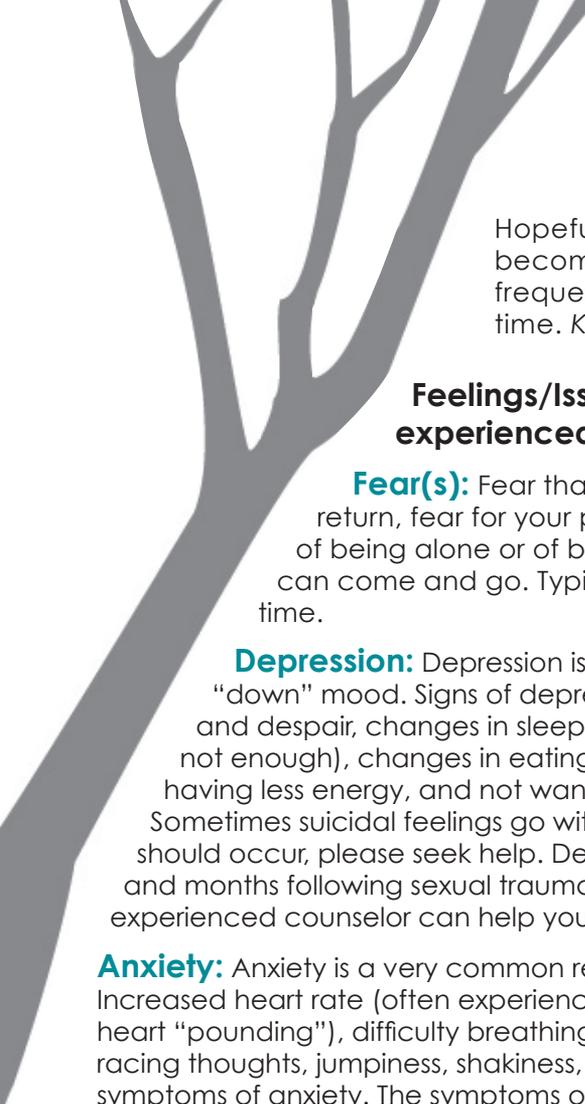
Will I Ever Get Over This? Why Can't I Just Forget?

Remember, recovery from sexual assault or violence is a process that is different for every person, and there are no hard and fast time-lines or schedules for recovery.

It is common to simply want to forget the assault and push it behind you. At times you may need to do this in order to get through your daily life. However, trying to "push it all away" and acting like "nothing happened" is a lot to expect. You have been through an experience that can shatter basic thoughts that we all take for granted, including what we have learned about trust, safety, and our ability to control our world.

It may be helpful to know that you don't have to face it all at once. You can take a middle road, allowing yourself to deal with the thoughts and feelings about what happened in small pieces, at a pace that you control.

A counselor who has special training and experience working with sexual trauma can be very helpful. Many of these services are available at no cost or a low cost to survivors. You don't have to do this alone. Talking with a supportive person(s) may help you to understand and cope with the feelings and thoughts you are having. Some survivors find it helpful to share with others who have been through a similar experience. Check the back of this booklet for sexual assault services agencies that are in your area. Or call the **Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault at 303-839-9999** for help finding resources. Be very gentle with yourself and try not to expect too much too quickly. You may not feel completely like yourself as fast as you would like, and may have times of emotional pain.



Hopefully these feelings will become shorter and less frequent with the passage of time. *Know that you CAN heal.*

Feelings/Issues commonly experienced:

Fear(s): Fear that the perpetrator may return, fear for your personal safety, and fear of being alone or of being with strangers. Fears can come and go. Typically these will lessen with time.

Depression: Depression is more than “sadness” or a “down” mood. Signs of depression can include sadness and despair, changes in sleep habits (either too much or not enough), changes in eating, inability to concentrate, having less energy, and not wanting to be around people. Sometimes suicidal feelings go with depression. If these should occur, please seek help. Depression during the weeks and months following sexual trauma can come and go. An experienced counselor can help you to deal with depression.

Anxiety: Anxiety is a very common reaction to trauma. Increased heart rate (often experienced as sensations of the heart “pounding”), difficulty breathing, extreme alertness, racing thoughts, jumpiness, shakiness, and panic are all symptoms of anxiety. The symptoms of anxiety are extremely uncomfortable and may even cause you to feel as if you are “going crazy.” If you are experiencing these reactions, you are not going crazy; you are experiencing an extreme stress reaction to a very stressful event.

A balanced routine of rest, activity, meals, and exercise can go a long way toward helping with your ability to respond to stress. Working with your breathing (learning how to breathe deeply and slowly), and being aware of your thoughts are also useful coping skills for anxious moments.

IT can be helpful to create an “Emergency Kit” to use during anxious or panic-filled times.

Things to include in your “Emergency Kit”:

- List of phone numbers of helpful people to call when you are feeling anxious.
- List of healthy activities that soothe and calm you, e.g. music, a bath, a walk, spending time with a pet.
- Sayings, songs, poems, and prayers that give you strength and make you feel calmer.
- Pictures of people you love and who love you and places that are relaxing.
- A stress ball or something to play with in your hands.
- Instructions for deep breathing.

Practices such as deep relaxation, meditation and yoga are proven methods for reducing anxiety.

Flashbacks, Nightmares and Intrusive Memories: A possible reaction to trauma is to experience intense memories or even to “re-live” what happened. This reaction is related to how our bodies and minds process traumatic events.

Working intentionally and in a controlled way (small pieces at a time) with the thoughts and feelings related to the violence is one of the best ways of lessening the occurrence of these reactions. Many of the methods for coping with anxiety are also effective for dealing with flashbacks and intrusive memories. A counselor trained in trauma can be especially helpful.

Deep breathing may be a helpful coping skill.

For example:

1. Breathe in through your nose for a count of four.
2. Hold your breath for a count of four.
3. Breathe out through your mouth for a count of four.
4. Hold your breath out for a count of four.
5. Repeat until your heart slows to normal and the feeling of panic eases.
6. You may prefer to come up with a simple, calming phrase to repeat instead of counting.

Guilt and Self-Blame: You may struggle with thinking that if you had done something differently then this wouldn't have happened. You may experience a loss of trust in your own judgment. Know that *even if you did have a lapse in judgment, you absolutely did not deserve to be victimized.*

Sexual violence is NOT a punishment for a moment of poor judgment. People who perpetrate sexual violence tend to be very manipulative and controlling, doing or saying whatever they think will help them to achieve the assault. They will wrongly try to place responsibility on their victims by saying that s/he wanted it, or that the victim was in some way to blame for what happened. It is not your fault.

Work with getting back your sense of self-trust by learning about sexual violence. It can also be helpful to do some reading about sexual assault and recovery. We have included a reading list at the end of this handbook.

Anger: It is natural to feel anger when our ability to control what happens to us is removed. You may feel angry because of the unnecessary life disruption caused by the assault. You may feel anger not only towards the perpetrator, but also towards others and yourself for "letting it happen." You may feel angry with God that this was allowed to happen to you.

Know that you have a right to your anger. Also know that anger can be destructive if you use it unskillfully or direct it towards yourself. Try to be clear about who is responsible for the violence (the perpetrator), and if necessary seek help to gain this clarity. The perpetrator of violence and/or abuse is always responsible for his or her actions.

Try to find constructive outlets for the anger. Physical activity, sharing feelings with supportive others, journaling or writing, can all be helpful. If you have a spiritual or religious connection, it can help to talk with a spiritual leader who knows about sexual assault. Find what will work for you to express your anger in a healthy way.

Trust: You may feel that your ability to trust people and the world has been taken from you. You may also wonder if you can trust yourself and your ability to judge others or assess danger. You may find yourself reacting to others with increased fear, caution and guardedness. The re-building of trust in yourself and in others will require time. It is also important to know that no one has perfect judgment or can always know how others will behave in the future.²³

Powerlessness: You may feel as though you have lost the ability to control anything in your life. You may feel victimized by the assault, by the reactions of others, and even by “the system” (medical, law enforcement, etc.). It is common (although extremely uncomfortable) to feel out of control and unsure of yourself.

Safety: You may wonder if you will ever feel safe again. Heightened awareness and fears of danger are fairly common after an assault. Allow yourself to think of options for helping yourself to feel safer. Some examples may include: having a friend stay with you for awhile, installing new locks for your home, installing motion detector lights, taking a self-defense course, and/or installing “caller ID” so you can see from what number a person is calling you before you pick up the phone. Let yourself know that the ability to feel safe again can return, in its own time, by taking small steps.

Sexual Intimacy: It may take awhile for your normal levels of sexual desire and response to return. You may wonder if you will ever desire and enjoy sexual intimacy again. You may have fears about what your partner thinks about you or if he or she still finds you desirable.

You may avoid sex out of fear of being “triggered” and having a flashback of the attack. Or you may use sex as a means of coping. These and other reactions are common concerns among survivors of sexual violence. Allow yourself to find your own pace for rediscovering the joys of physical intimacy. Clearly communicate your concerns and needs about sexual contact or touching with your partner. It will be helpful if your partner will follow your cues regarding physical intimacy for a while. A counselor experienced in sexual trauma recovery for couples may be helpful.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROMOTING HEALING IN THE AFTERMATH OF A SEXUAL ASSAULT

Let go of Self-Blame.

Often people wonder “why me?” and blame themselves for the assault. These feelings often arise from a common, mistaken belief that sexual violence happens to individuals who “ask for it” in some way.

The truth is that anyone can be a victim of sexual violence. The perpetrator is responsible for the assault. Even if you feel you used poor judgment, it is critical to understand that violence should never be “punishment.”

NO ONE DESERVES TO BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED.

Expect that you may be bothered by uncomfortable thoughts and emotions. Remember, these thoughts and emotions are normal reactions to a physically and/or psychologically traumatic event. Remind yourself that post-trauma reactions are normal as the body, mind, and spirit recover from what has happened. Give yourself time and space to work with these thoughts and feelings. With healthy and supportive coping skills, these post-trauma reactions will lessen and fade away over time.

Work with stress levels. Dealing with the emotions and also the legal process following an assault can be stressful and very tiring. Promote your own natural healing abilities by taking especially good care of yourself: get enough rest, eat nourishing food, and engage in healthful stress-reducing activities. Self-care is extremely important now.

Spend time with loved ones and others who care about you. Be with people who love you and want to support you in healthy ways. Seek out comfortable friends, those with whom you can safely “be yourself,” even if “yourself” feels awful. Stay connected with people who care about you. Resist isolating yourself and always wanting to be alone.

If possible, avoid the overuse of alcohol or other mind-altering substances to numb post-trauma effects. It really won’t make the pain go away for long, and may produce more problems than solutions. Alcohol and drugs can actually decrease the



quality of your sleep. Good quality sleep (which is different than “passing out” from alcohol or drugs) promotes healing. Our bodies and minds have an amazing natural ability to heal. We promote this natural healing by healthful self-care. Again, try to accept that you will probably be experiencing some uncomfortable thoughts and feelings for a while.

It is OK to ask for help. Talking with supportive people such as friends, family, victims' advocates and counseling professionals will help you in your recovery. Find people who are concerned, trustworthy, understanding, and encouraging.

It can be especially helpful to talk with others who have been in similar situations. Agencies and counselors may offer special groups for survivors. Talking about your feelings might be difficult, but it can be a key to healing, no matter how long ago the violence occurred. Many survivors find that they feel better if they have the opportunity to freely and confidentially discuss any problems or emotions they are experiencing. Seek medical assistance if physical symptoms persist.

Your family and friends may struggle with similar feelings as you. They may mistakenly blame you or themselves for the assault. They may believe not talking about it will make the feelings go away.

If the person with whom you choose to talk is not supportive, seek out someone else. If the unsupportive person is a spouse/partner, family member, or close friend, education may be helpful. Sharing literature about sexual assault or inviting family members to accompany you to a counseling session may help. Invite them to read the next chapter, “For Family and Friends.”

It is often the case that survivors don't seek help for many years after the violence, for lots of valid reasons. It is never too late to heal from a sexual assault. Individuals who seek help even many years later can experience a lot of relief from depression, anxiety, and fears.





7. FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

SEXUAL assault can have a big impact on those who are in any type of close relationship with a survivor. The assault can produce confusion and many emotions for loved ones. It is painful to think about someone we love being harmed in this way.

If someone you love has been the victim of sexual violence, there are a number of things you can do to help with the healing process. Although you may naturally tend to focus on the survivor, it is also important that you deal with your own thoughts and feelings about sexual violence so that you can be supportive. You may experience intense reactions due to your caring for the survivor. Just as the survivor's greatest task is self-care at this time, you will also need to find ways to take care of yourself.

To be truly supportive to the survivor, you will need to respond to the feelings that the assault raises for you. It is important to be willing to face your own fears and prejudices about sexual violence and to have accurate information. Our culture holds a lot of myths about sexual assault that can greatly hold back the healing and recovery of both the survivor and their loved ones. Reading other parts of this booklet may help.

HOW TO BE HELPFUL

Sometimes people believe that the best way to deal with a crisis is to deny it. You may find yourself telling your loved one, "don't worry/don't cry/don't think about it." Such reactions can make the survivor feel unheard, and denial may not be a helpful response for many reasons. Sexual violence is very stressful. To imply that it isn't or shouldn't be a very difficult time is disrespectful and discounting to the survivor. This attitude can create more problems than it solves. Allow your loved one to have her/his emotional reactions.

Sometimes the most supportive thing you can do is to simply LISTEN. You do not have to (and probably cannot) “fix it.” This can be difficult as it is never easy to witness the pain of a loved one. Yet being a supportive witness to that pain can often help empower the survivor. Simply listening and being present shows that you accept and love them, even with their reactions.

It is important for you to recognize your own limitations. If it is too much for you, seek help from someone trained in counseling survivors of sexual violence. This is not a failure on your part. Many of the agencies listed in Chapter 8: Survivor Resources offer services or referrals for family members and loved ones.

If the survivor becomes actively suicidal or physically self-destructive, seek professional help immediately to keep them safe.

WE ALL REACT DIFFERENTLY

Men and women often react differently to the assault of a loved one. Husbands, fathers, brothers, and boyfriends may react initially with anger and a desire for revenge. They may blame themselves, out of the desire to have been a “better protector,” and to defend against their own feelings of helplessness. Acting on these reactions may not be helpful to the survivor. The survivor needs you to be safe, reasonable, and supportive so you can help her/him take the steps necessary to heal and recover.

Female friends and family members may have their own strong reactions of fear and vulnerability when hearing about the violence. They may consciously or subconsciously send the survivor the message to “not talk about it.” It is important to be aware of your own reactions. It is also important that the survivor, as much as possible, has the power to make his or her own decisions after the assault.

The survivor may react towards you in confusing ways. They may seem very “unlike” themselves for awhile. The individual that you love has been deeply affected by this experience, and it will take a while for your loved one to sort through her/his thoughts and emotions.

Being the victim of sexual violence can lead us to have many questions about our ability to trust others and ourselves. This struggle with being able to trust can impact many of our

relationships. Reading the other sections of this booklet may help you understand the trauma and aftermath of sexual victimization; and be more helpful to your loved one.

Someone who has been sexually assaulted has experienced the ultimate loss of power.

Helping your loved one to regain a sense of control over his or her life can be very important. It is common for survivors to struggle with making even small decisions after an assault. Give your ideas, but allow your loved one to make her or his own decisions even if she/he struggles. It is an important step towards healing from violence. It also is important that the survivor believes that you trust him or her to make his or her own decisions.

It is especially important that the survivor makes her or his own decision about whether or not to report the assault to law enforcement. You can provide your thoughts about this and

then let her or him choose the path.

Going through the law enforcement investigation and the Criminal Justice system can take a long time, be very stressful, and

ultimately may not result in a conviction. The system is not perfect. The survivor must be the one to decide what is right for him or her.

No matter what, it wasn't their fault.

Sexual assaults can occur under circumstances where the survivor may have been involved in activities or behaviors that others may question or even disapprove of (use of alcohol or drugs, going to unknown places, not locking the doors, fighting back, not fighting back, etc.). Please

remember that a decision to participate in any of these behaviors is never the “cause” of a sexual assault. Violent, abusive behavior is always the responsibility of the perpetrator.

Poor judgment or risky behavior does not justify becoming a victim of violence, or give someone else the right to rape. Remember that breaking rules and testing boundaries are common behaviors, especially for teenagers. Often, trying to place the “cause” of the assault on something the victim did or didn't do is our attempt to maintain the illusion that we can be in total control over our lives. We like to believe that as long as we never make a poor judgment, we will always be safe.

Certainly, trying to be aware and careful can often help with safety, but sexual violence is never an appropriate consequence for making a mistake. The perpetrator chose to commit an act of great physical and psychological harm towards another human being in the most violating and degrading way possible. That is the responsibility of the perpetrator, and only that person needs to be held accountable.

It may take a long time to heal.

Being the victim of violence (or a witness to violence) is a significant life stressor. All large stressors require that people change and adapt so they can regain balance in their lives. The changes you see in your loved one and in your relationship may be difficult. It may seem that it takes a long time for the survivor and the people in his or her life to find a new, comfortable balance. Have patience and know that you and your loved one do not have to do this without some guidance. You are not alone. Thousands of survivors and their families heal and recover from sexual violence, and there are skilled supportive services available. You will find referral sources at the back of this booklet (see Chapter 8: Survivor Resources).

ABOUT SEXUAL INTIMACY

Being a victim of sexual violence may affect feelings about sexual intimacy for some time after the incident. Sexual contact can stir up feelings and reactions for victims, which are related to the violence.

If you are the sexual partner of the survivor, try to have patience. The survivor may desire little or no physical contact for a while or may wish to limit contact strictly to affection. Remember, the survivor lost the power to control what happened to her or him during the sexual assault. The survivor needs to regain confidence in the ability to have physical control over her/his body.

It is important to recognize the possibility of temporary change in an intimate relationship caused by the effects of the assault. This is often a part of the healing process following a sexual assault. Remember that although some things may change for your partner and your relationship for a while, most survivors recover from the trauma of sexual violence and re-establish loving intimate relationships.

Some important things you can do:

- Believe her or him.
- Be yourself – treat the survivor just as you normally do. Try to avoid being overly protective.
- Express your caring and concern for the survivor.
- Allow the survivor to have her or his feelings.
- Reassure the survivor that confusing and painful feelings are normal.
- Let the survivor know that the assault was not her or his fault. Do not blame or judge the survivor or her/his actions.
- Remember that feelings of powerlessness can be a big issue. You may provide support and guidance to the survivor, but let the survivor have control of her or his own life. S/he should make her/his own decisions about how to proceed.

- Encourage, but do not force the survivor to talk. Listen in a caring way, but don't try to "fix it."
- Help the survivor understand the importance of getting medical attention. Gently encourage seeking help from those with expertise in sexual violence (refer to Chapter 8: Survivor Resources).
- Find healthy ways to deal with your anger, rage, and fears without further traumatizing the survivor.
- Respect the confidentiality of the survivor.
- **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.** Make sure YOU have emotional support, if necessary.





8. SURVIVOR RESOURCES

THIS section provides a variety of resources in Colorado for survivors and their loved ones. If you are unsure about the type of services you need, it might be helpful for you to contact CCASA or one of the national 24-hour hotlines listed below for a referral.

They can help you decide what services you need and then locate the agencies nearest you to help you through this difficult time.

If you are worried about confidentiality, before you share any information, be sure to ask the agency or hotline advocate if you can speak confidentially. Different agencies have different confidentiality policies.

Community-based rape crisis centers often provide crisis intervention, short and long-term counseling, and support groups. Their advocates can also often go with you to the hospital and/or court.

In this section:

- CCASA — Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- National Rape Crisis Hotlines and Support Organizations
- Colorado Agencies by Region
- Campus Resources
- Military Resources
- Colorado Rape Centers and Support Organizations by Alphabetical Order
- Services for Children and Youth
- Colorado Legal Resources

CCASA — COLORADO COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

1120 Lincoln Street, Suite 700
Denver, CO 80203
phone: 303-839-9999
www.ccasa.org

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

1-800-656-HOPE

RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline. This nationwide partnership of more than 1,100 local rape treatment hotlines provides victims of sexual assault with free, confidential services around the clock. This number will route you to the nearest rape crisis hotline based on where you are calling.
www.rainn.org

1 in 6

"One in Six" is a national resource for male survivors of sexual assault. Their mission is to help men who have had unwanted or abusive sexual experiences in childhood live healthier, happier lives.

www.1in6.org

Just Detention International (JDI)

JDI works to ensure government accountability for prisoner rape; to transform ill-informed public attitudes about sexual violence in detention; and to promote access to resources for those who have survived this form of abuse.

www.justdetention.org

If you are incarcerated, please feel free to communicate with JDI using legal mail, addressing your correspondence to:

Ms. Melissa Rothstein, Esq.
3325 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 340
Los Angeles, CA 90010

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or TTY 1-800-787-3224

Links individuals to help in their area using a nationwide database that includes detailed information on domestic violence shelters, other emergency shelters, legal advocacy and assistance programs, and social service programs.

www.ndvh.org

Stalking Resource Center

1-800-FYI-CALL, M-F 8:30 AM - 8:30 PM EST, or email

gethelp@ncvc.org

www.ncvc.org/src

COLORADO AGENCIES BY REGION

Denver Metro

Arc of Aurora

Denver Center for Crime Victims

Denver Indian Family Resource Center

Domestic Violence Initiative for Women with Disabilities

DOVE, Advocacy Services for Abused Deaf Women and Children

Healing from the Heart

Mary's Hope

Moving to End Sexual Assault (MESA)

Muslim Family Services of Colorado

The Phoenix Center at Auraria

Project PAVE

Rape Assistance and Awareness Program (RAAP)

Regis University

Servicios de la Raza

University of Colorado at Boulder

University of Colorado at Denver

Victim Outreach Information

Southwest

Advocates of Lake County

Archuleta County Victim Assistance Program

Fort Lewis College

Gunnison County Law Enforcement Victim Assistance Project

Our Sister's Keeper

Rape Intervention Team

Renew, Inc.

San Miguel Resource Center

Sexual Assault Services Organization (SASO)

Tri-County Resource Center

Tu Casa

Violence Prevention Coalition of SW Colorado

Northeast

Alternatives to Violence, Inc.

Assault Survivors Advocacy Program, UNC

Child Advocacy Resource and Education, Inc.

Colorado State University

Estes Valley Victim Advocates

High Plains Sexual Assault Center

Kit Carson County Victim Assistance
Sexual Assault Response Advocates (SARA) Inc
Sexual Assault Survivors, Inc.
SAVA Center
South Weld Victim Services

Southeast

Arkansas Valley Resource Center
Association in Women's Care
Children's Advocacy for the Pikes Peak Region
Colorado College
Colorado National Guard and Buckley Air Force Base Sexual
Assault Response Team
Finding our Voices
Pueblo Rape Crisis Services
TESSA
Victim/Witness Services

Northwest

Advocate Safehouse Project
Advocates for Victims of Assault, Inc.
Advocates-Crisis Support Services
Advocates Building Peaceful Communities
Advocates for a Violence-Free Community
Bright Future Foundation for Eagle County
Clear Creek County Advocates
Eagle County Sheriff's Office Victim Advocacy
Latimer House Counseling and Advocacy
Resource Center of Eagle County
Response

Statewide

Asian Pacific Development Center
Boulder Valley Women's Health
Coalition for Children, Inc.
Colorado Anti-Violence Program
Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA)
Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking (CoNeht)
Mary's Hope
Mothers of an Incested Child
Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains
Voices of Victims
WINGS Foundation, Inc.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Assault Survivors Advocacy Program

UNC Greeley

Hotline: 970-351-4040

www.unco.edu/ASAP/

Colorado College

Colorado Springs

719-227-8101

[http://www.coloradocollege.edu/resources/pathfinder/](http://www.coloradocollege.edu/resources/pathfinder/SexualMisconduct.asp)

[SexualMisconduct.asp](http://www.coloradocollege.edu/resources/pathfinder/SexualMisconduct.asp)

Colorado State University

Victim Assistance Team

Fort Collins

970-491-7111

<http://www.wps.colostate.edu/victim-assistance-team.aspx>

Fort Lewis College

Durango

970-247-7153

www.fortlewis.edu/cub/prevention

The Phoenix Center at Auraria

(Metro State College, Community College of Denver, University of Colorado Denver)

303-556-CALL (2255)

www.thepca.org

Regis University

Office of Counseling and Personal Development

Denver

303-458-3507

www.regis.edu/ocpd

University of Colorado at Boulder

Helpline: 303-492-8855

<http://cuvictimassistance.com/>

University of Denver (DU)

Hotline: 303-871-3456

http://www.du.edu/studentlife/sexual_assault/

MILITARY RESOURCES

Colorado National Guard and Buckley Airforce Base

Sexual Assault Response Hotline:

720-847-SARC (7272)

US Army: Fort Carson

(719) 577-3171

http://community.carson.army.mil/ACS/programs_solFamRdi_print.html

COLORADO RAPE CRISIS CENTERS AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Advocate Safehouse Project

Glenwood Springs (serves Garfield County)

Hotline: 970-285-0209

www.advocatesafehouse.org

*Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Advocates Building Peaceful Communities

(formerly Advocates Against Battering and Abuse)

Steamboat Springs (serves Routt County)

Hotline: 970-879-8888

If you are in Moffat County, call 824-2400 for the Crisis Hotline.

* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Advocates-Crisis Support Services

Craig (serves Moffit County)

Hotline: 970-824-2400

*Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Advocates for Victims of Assault, Inc.

Frisco (serves Summit County)

Hotline: 970-668-3906

www.summitadvocates.org

*Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Advocates of Lake County

Leadville (serves Lake County)

Hotline: 719-486-1249

*Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Advocates for a Violence-Free Community

Hot Sulphur Springs (serves Granby (Metro), Grand County,

Hot Sulphur Springs)

Hotline: 970-725-3412

<http://www.gcadvocates.org/>

*Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Alternatives to Violence, Inc

Loveland (serves the cities of Loveland and Berthoud and southern Larimer County)

Hotline: 970-667-2151

www.alternativestoviolence.org

* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Arc of Aurora

Aurora (serves people who live in Aurora and who have a developmental disability)

(720) 213-1420

www.thearcofaurora.org

* Advocacy for people with developmental disabilities

Archuleta County Victim Assistance Program

Pagosa Springs (serves Archuleta County)

Emergencies: 970-264-2131

Weekdays: 970-264-9075

www.acvap.org

* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Arkansas Valley Resource Center

La Junta (serves Otero, Bent and Crowley Counties)

Hotline: 719-384-7764

* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Asian Pacific Development Center

Denver-based (Statewide agency)

303-365-2959

www.apdc.org

* Culturally appropriate health, mental health, and related services

Bright Future Foundation for Eagle County

Avon (serves Eagle County)

Hotline: (970) 949-7086

www.bff-ec.org

* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Clear Creek County Advocates

Georgetown (serves Clear Creek County)

Hotline: 303-569-3126

www.colorado.clear-creek.co.us

*all victims of crime

Colorado Anti-Violence Program

Statewide Agency

Hotline: 303-852-5094

Toll Free: 1-888-557-4441

www.coavp.org

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer Survivors

Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Denver-based (statewide agency)

303-831-9632

Toll Free: 1-888-778-7091

www.ccadv.org

Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking (CoNEHT), a project of COVA

Statewide agency

Toll Free Hotline: 1-866-455-5075

www.CoNEHT.org

* Network of service providers for victims of human trafficking.

Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA)

Denver-based (statewide agency)

303-861-1160

Toll Free: 1-800-261-2682

www.coloradocrimevictims.org

Denver Center for Crime Victims

Denver (serves the Denver Metro region)

Hotline: 303-894-8000

TTY: 303-860-9555

www.denervictims.org

* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Denver Indian Family Resource Center

Denver

303-871-8035

www.difrc.org

Domestic Violence Initiative for Women with Disabilities

Denver (serves Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, and Jefferson Counties)

Hotline/TTY: 303-839-5510

Toll Free: 877-839-5510

www.dviforwomen.org

* For victims who have a disability, become disabled due to crime or have a child with a disability. Focus areas: Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, stalking, and caregiver abuse.

DOVE, Advocacy Services for Abused Deaf Women and Children

Denver (serves Denver Metro Area)

Hotline/TTY: 303-831-7874

www.deafdove.org

Estes Valley Victim Advocates

Estes Park (serves the Estes Valley area in Larimer County)

Hotline: 970-586-4000

www.estesvalleyvictimadvocates.org

* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Finding Our Voices

Colorado Springs

719-636-5065

www.fovcosprings.org

* Healing art activities for survivors of sexual assault.

Gunnison County Law Enforcement Victim Assistance

Gunnison (serves Gunnison County)

Hotline: 970-641-8000

* Law enforcement based victim's advocacy

Harambee Family Services

Denver Metro Area

303-371-3337

www.harambeefamilyservices.org

* Culturally specific services to Black African Americans

Healing from the Heart

Denver (serves Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, and Jefferson Counties)

303-733-1176

www.healingfromtheheart.org

High Plains Sexual Assault Center

Sterling (serves Logan, Sedgwick, Phillips, Yuma, Washington, Morgan, and Kit Carson Counties)

Hotline: 1-800-522-6484

www.hpsac.com

Kit Carson County Victim Assistance

Burlington (serves Kit Carson County)

719-346-8876

* Law enforcement based victim's advocacy

Latimer House Counseling and Advocacy

Grand Junction (serves Mesa County)

Hotline: 970-241-6704

www.htop.org

* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Mary's Hope

Denver

303-377-0293

www.maryshope.org

* Spiritual healing and recovery for child sexual abuse

Moving to End Sexual Assault (MESA)

Serves Boulder and Broomfield Counties

Hotline: 303-443-7300

www.movingtoendsexualassault.org

Muslim Family Services of Colorado

Denver

303-755-5228

* Provides services while honoring Islamic models and Islamic teaching.

Our Sister's Keeper Coalition

Durango (serves La Plata, San Juan, Archuleta, Montezuma and S. Ute Tribal Counties)

Hotline: 970-247-7888

www.oursisterskeeper.org

* Native American survivors of sexual assault and/or domestic violence

Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains

Denver (statewide locations)

Hotline: 1-200-322-1020

Toll Free: 1-800-230-PLAN

www.plannedparenthood.org/rocky-mountains

* STI and pregnancy counseling only

Pueblo Rape Crisis Services

Pueblo (serves Pueblo County)

Hotline: 719-549-0549

www.pueblorcs.org

Rape Assistance and Awareness Program (RAAP)

Denver-based (serves Denver, Jefferson, Douglas, Elbert, Lincoln, Arapahoe, Adams, Broomfield, and Gilpin Counties)

Hotline: 303-322-7273

Spanish: 303-329-0031

TDD: 303-329-0023

www.raap.org

Renew

Cortez (serves Dolores and Montezuma Counties)

Hotline: 970-565-2100

<http://renew-inc.org/>

* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Resource Center of Eagle County

Avon (serves Eagle County)

Hotline: 970-949-7086

* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Response

Aspen (serves Pitkin and western Eagle Counties)

Hotline: 970-925-7233

www.responsehelps.com

* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

San Miguel Resource Center

Telluride (serves San Miguel County and West end of Montrose County)

Hotline: 970-728-5660

www.sanmiguelresourcecenter.org

* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Servicios de la Raza

Denver

Hotline: 303-953-5930

www.serviciosdelaraza.org

* Comprehensive culturally relevant human services primarily, but not limited to the Spanish speaking population.

Sexual Assault Response Advocates (SARA) Inc

Fort Morgan (serves Morgan County)

970-867-2121

www.sarainc.org

*Rape crisis center and child advocacy center

Sexual Assault Services Organization (SASO)

Durango (serves La Plata, San Juan and Archuleta Counties)

Hotline: 970-247-5400

www.durangosaso.org

Sexual Assault Victim Advocate (SAVA) Center

Fort Collins (serves Larimer, Jackson and Weld Counties)

Hotline: (970) 472-4200

www.savacenter.org

Tri-County Resource Center

Montrose (serves Delta, Montrose and Ouray Counties)
Hotline: 970-249-2486

TESSA

Colorado Springs (serves El Paso and Teller Counties)
Hotline: 719-633-3819
www.tessacs.org
* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Tu Casa

Alamosa (serves the San Luis Valley)
Hotline: 719-589-2465
www.slv Tucasa.net
* Sexual Assault and/or Domestic Violence

Victim Outreach Information

Golden (serves Arvada, Wheatridge, Golden, Mountain View, Lakeside, Colorado School of Mines, Edgewater)
303-202-2196
www.victimoutreach.org
* Law Enforcement based victim advocacy for all victims of crime

Voices of Victims

Denver-based, but serves clients across Colorado
303-777-0112
www.voicesofvictims.org
* Post-sentencing support to all victims of violent crime and advocacy services

WINGS Foundation, Inc.

Lakewood (statewide agency)
1-800-373-8671
www.wingsfound.org
* Support groups and counseling for adult survivors of child sexual abuse

Women's Health Boulder Valley (statewide agency)

303-442-5160
www.bvwvhc.org
www.teenclinic.org
*STI and pregnancy counseling only

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

A Kid's Place

Greeley (serves Weld County)
(970) 353-5970
www.akidsplace.org

Blue Sky Bridge

Boulder (serves Boulder County)
(303) 444-1388
www.blueskybridge.org

CARE- Child Advocacy Resource and Education, Inc.

Evans (serves Weld and some Boulder/Larimer Counties)
970-356-6751
www.careweld.org

ChildSafe

Larimer County and surrounding areas
970-472-4133
www.childsafecolorado.org

Children's Advocacy and Family Resources, Inc. (Sungate)

Denver (serves Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert and Lincoln Counties)
(303) 368-1065
sungatekids.nationalchildrensalliance.org

Children's Advocacy for the Pikes Peak Region

Colorado Springs (serves El Paso and Teller Counties)
719-636-2460

Coalition for Children, Inc.

Denver (statewide agency)
303-320-6321
www.safechild.org

Denver Children's Advocacy Center

Serving the Denver community
(303) 825-3850

Four Corners Child Advocacy Center

Serving the Four Corners area
(970) 565-8155

Kempe Children's Center

Serving the Denver area
(303) 864-5252
www.kempe.org

Larimer County Child Advocacy Center

Serving Larimer County
(970) 407-9739
www.larimercac.org

Project PAVE

Denver County and surrounding areas
303-322-2382
www.projectpave.org
*Counseling, therapy and education for children and adolescents

Pueblo Child Advocacy Center

Serving Pueblo, Fremont, Otero and Bent Counties
(719) 583-6332

Ralston House

Arvada (serves Jefferson, Gilpin and Clear Creek Counties)
(720) 898-6741
www.ralstonhouse.net

Sexual Assault Response Advocates (SARA) Inc

Fort Morgan (serves Morgan County)
970-867-2121
www.sarainc.org
*Rape crisis center and child advocacy center

Western Slope Center for Children

Serving Mesa County and the Western Slope
Phone: (970) 245-3788
Email: office@wscchildren.org
www.wscchildren.org

COLORADO LEGAL RESOURCES

Arapahoe Pro Se Resource Center

Englewood
303-645-1755

Bringing Justice Home Project

Larimer, Routt, Grand, Moffat, Weld, and Jackson Counties
970-224-2966
www.crossroadssafehouse.org/bjh/index.html

Colorado Legal Services

Serves Arapahoe, Denver, Douglas, and Elbert Counties
303-837-1313
www.coloradolegalservices.org
* Visit their website for comprehensive list of statewide legal clinics.

Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Clinic

Denver Metro Area
303-839-5198, ext. 6
www.MileHighMin.org

The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People

Offices in Denver and Grand Junction; serve clients across Colorado
303-722-0300

Metro Volunteer Lawyers

Denver
303-830-8210
*MUST first call Colorado Legal Services for an intake interview.

Mi Casa Resource Center

Hosts Denver area legal clinic (Spanish-speaking attorneys are available)
(303) 573-1302
www.micasadenver.org

Project Safeguard

Denver, Arapahoe, Adams Counties
303-863-7416
www.psghelps.org

Rocky Mountain Victim Law Center

Denver-based (serves clients statewide)
303-295-2001
www.rmvictimlaw.org

SLV Immigrant Resource Center

Alamosa (serves clients statewide)
719-587-3225
www.slvirc.org

* Assists immigrants who have suffered abuse from a US citizen or legal resident. Under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), victims may apply for legal status on their own.

9 to 5 Colorado

Denver-based (serves clients statewide)
303-628-0295 or 1-800-522-0925
* Hosts monthly workshops with an employment attorney for cases of workplace sexual harassment.



9. RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Aranow, Vicki & Lang, Monique (2000). *Journey to Wholeness: Healing from the Trauma of Rape*. Learning Publications; ISBN: 1556911475.

Easteal, Patricia (2006). *Real Rape, Real Pain: Help for Women Sexually Assaulted by Male Partners*. Hybrid Publishers; ISBN: 187646234.

Francisco, Patricia Weaver (2000). *Telling: A Memoir of Rape and Recovery*. Cliff Street Books; ISBN 0060930764.

Gartner, Richard (2005). *Beyond Betrayal: Taking Charge of Your Life After Boyhood Sexual Abuse*. Wiley; ISBN 0471619108.

Haines, Staci (1999). *The Survivor's Guide to Sex: How to Have an Empowered Sex Life After Child Sexual Abuse*. Cleis Press; ISBN: 1573440795.

Lew, Mike (2004). *Victims No Longer: The Classic Guide for Men Recovering from Sexual Child Abuse*. Harper Paperbacks; ISBN: 006053026X.

Maltz, Wendy (2001). *The Sexual Healing Journey*. Quil; ISBN: 0060959649.

Matsakis, Aphrodite (2003). *The Rape Recovery Handbook: Step-By-Step Help for Survivors of Sexual Assault*. New Harbinger Publications; ISBN: 1572243376.

McCall, Catherine (2009). *When the Piano Stops: A Memoir of Healing from Sexual Abuse*. Seal Press; ISBN: 1580052673.

Pierce-Baker, Charlotte (2000). *Surviving the Silence: Black Women's Stories of Rape*. W.W. Norton & Company; ISBN: 0393320456.

Raine, Venable (1999). *After Silence; Rape and My journey Back*. Three Rivers Press; ISBN: 0060959649.

Robinson, Lori S. (2003). *I Will Survive: The African American Guide to Healing from Sexual Assault and Abuse*. Seal Press; ISBN: 1580050808.

Ryerson, Marjorie (2010). *The Journey of Healing: Wisdom from Survivors of Sexual Abuse*. Safer Society Press; ISBN: 1884444865.

Stern, Jessica (2010). *Denial: A Memoir of Terror*. Ecco; ISBN: 0061626651.

Vanzant, Iyanla (2000). *Yesterday I Cried*. Fireside; ISBN: 0684867486.

Warshaw, Robin (1994). *I Never Called It Rape: the Ms. Report on Recognizing, Fighting, and Surviving Date and Acquaintance Rape*. Harper Perennial; ISBN: 0060925728.

Weaver Francisco, Rachel (2000). *Telling: A Memoir of Rape and Recovery*. Harper Paperbacks; ISBN: 0060930764.

Kids/Young Adult

Akers, Ellery (2009). *Sarah's Waterfall: A Healing Story About Sexual Abuse*. Safer Society; ISBN: 1884444792.
(Recommended for girls ages 7-12)

Lehman, Carolyn (2005). *Strong at the Heart: How It Feels to Heal from Sexual Abuse*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux; ISBN: 0374372829. (young adult reading level)

Mather, Cynthia L. (2004). *How Long Does It Hurt: A Guide to Recovering from Incest and Sexual Abuse for Teenagers, Their Friends, and Their Families*. Jossey-Bass; ISBN: 0787975699.
(Recommended for both teenagers and adults)



10. END NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ U.S. Department of Justice. 2005 National Crime Victimization Study. 2005.

² Sexual Assault in Colorado: Results of a 1998 Statewide Survey, July 1999. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment & Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

³ U.S. Department of Justice. 2007 National Crime Victimization Survey. 2007.

⁴ National Victim Assistance Academy Textbook. 2002.

⁵ Information For the Survivor of Sexual Assault Ozark Rape Crisis Center, Inc. Harrison, AR, 1999.

⁶ Colorado Revised Statutes, 18-3-402: Sexual Assault.

⁷ Colorado Revised Statutes, 18-3-404: Unlawful Sexual Contact.

⁸ Colorado Revised Statutes, 18-3-405: Sexual Assault on a Child.

⁹ Sexual Assault in Colorado: Results of a 1998 Statewide Survey, July 1999. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment & Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Justice. 2005 National Crime Victimization Study. 2005.

¹¹ What Happened? Information About Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault (Date Rape Drugs). Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault. 2010.

¹² U.S. Department of Justice. 2005 National Crime Victimization Study. 2005.

¹³ U.S. Department of Justice, Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Rape Victimization: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey. 2006.

¹⁴ World Health Organization. 2002.

¹⁵ U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2000 Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement. 2000.

¹⁶ Colorado Revised Statutes, 18-3-404: Unlawful Sexual Contact.

¹⁷ Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. Rand and Harrell. Crime Against People with Disabilities, 2007.

¹⁸ Klaus, Patsy A. Crimes Against Persons Age 65 or Older, 1992-97. January 2000. U.S. Department of Justice. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

¹⁹ Colorado Revised Statutes, 18-3-407.5: Victim Evidence.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ If You or Someone You Know is a Victim of Assault, a handbook cooperatively provided by: ChildSafe; Poudre Valley Hospital S.A.N.E. Program; Fort Collins Police Department, Victim Services Team; Eighth Judicial District Attorney's Victim/Witness Unit.

²² Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault, CCASA Manual, p.10-1.

²³ Ibid. p. 10-19.

²⁴ Cognitive Processing Therapy for Rape Victims, A Treatment Manual. Patricia A. Resick, Monica K. Schnicke, 1993, p.99.

²⁵ Ibid. p.106.