

ASCEND

A Zine for teen
survivors of sexual
assault
and friends.



A 2019
Publication by:

**COLORADO
COALITION
AGAINST
SEXUAL
ASSAULT**



FREEDOM FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE

AUTHORS:

Ruthie Isoz

Art and graphics by Claudia Campero

This project was supported by a grant from the Verizon Foundation and by grant no. 2016-VW-18-013570-00, awarded by the Colorado Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice - administering office for the S.T.O.P. Formula Grant Program. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Verizon Foundation, the state or the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

Additionally, we are grateful to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Sexual Violence Prevention Program, for financial assistance with printing.

This publication would not be possible without the thoughtful input of youth across Colorado. Their willingness to share with their experiences, thoughts, concerns, and honest feedback is appreciated. We have tried to combine their input.

The purpose of this zine is

(1) To support you, young people who are survivors of sexual assault, as you search for resources, understanding, and a path toward healing. You are not alone. You are not to blame. You are not broken. you are not too much. If you do not know who to go to right now, this zine gives you some ideas of where you can go for understanding and support.

(2) To guide you, the friends of young people who are survivors of sexual assault, as you learn the basics of how to care for someone who is hurt while also making sure that they are staying healthy. Victims of sexual assault are more likely to go to a close friend for help before they go to law enforcement, counselors, adults, and people in authority. Thank your for being that friend. Than you for being safe. You are an important part of the healing process.

Zines (pronounced “zeen”) have been used for a long time to give a voice and expression to survivors and those without power. Because they are usually self-published on a photocopier, they are a way for marginalized populations who usually are not presented by media to create their own media to inspire, educate, and start a movement. Several of the references in this zine are other zines that have been written by survivors of sexual assault.

This zine includes the voices and feedback of many diverse individuals. However, time, funds, and perspectives are not infinite. So, you will likely read parts of this zine that are not a perfect fit. You may find that it does not use the words you would have used or the words you needed to hear. We apologize for when that happens. And we would like to hear your continued feedback to better meet the needs of other survivors and friends in the future. Please continue the conversation

Contact Info:

info@ccasa.org

www.ccasa.org

Also, thank you to previous writings by CCASA that laid the groundwork for this publication. For more information to all survivors of sexual assault, see *Toward Healing and Justice: A Handbook for Survivors of Sexual Violence, Fifth Edition: 2018*.

WARNING TO SURVIVORS

THERE ARE NO EXPLICIT DESCRIPTIONS OF SEXUAL ASSAULTS IN THIS ZINE; HOWEVER, IT IS STILL AN ENTIRE ZINE ON THE SUBJECT OF SEXUAL TRAUMA WHICH MAYBE TRIGGERING AND/OR DIFFICULT IF YOU ARE A SURVIVOR. ADDITIONALLY, MANY PEOPLE HAVE CHALLENGING FEELINGS WHEN THEY READ ABOUT THE EFFECT OF TRAUMA + RECOGNIZE THE SYMPTOMS IN THEMSELVES. THIS IS VERY UNDERSTANDABLE & NORMAL. IF YOU ARE OVERWHELMED, YOU CAN STOP READING & CHECK YOUR BODY, MIND + SOUL FOR WAYS TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF & YOUR EMOTIONS. YOU CAN ALSO REACH OUT TO SOMEONE IN YOUR LIFE WITH WHOM YOU CAN FIND SUPPORT OR CALL ONE OF THE RESOURCES LISTED IN THE RESOURCES SECTION SO THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO NAVIGATE YOUR EXPERIENCE ALONE.

!!!



trauma
is real.
listen to
your body.
it's OKAY!

Sometimes, people feel that unwanted touching is "less serious" than acts of penetration. Any unwanted sexual contact can feel intrusive, violating, degrading, or frightening. Trust your reactions and feelings so that you can get the support you need. Regardless of the extent of the activity, if it was unwanted intimate touch, it is a crime and a person violation.



SEXUAL ASSAULT

While society and media often portray sexual assault or sexual violence as a violent attack by a stranger, sexual assault and sexual violence are large umbrella terms that include all unwanted sexual activities, touches, and approaches. Any time someone experiences something sexual that they did not want, that is sexual assault.

Even if it wasn't in-person but online. It is also a form of sexual violence if a person has a sexual photo sent to them that they did not want, if they are forced or coerced into sending a sexual photo to someone, or if their sexual photo is shared with people without their permission

EVEN IF THEY DIDN'T FIGHT BACK OR SAY "no".

Even if it was from someone they are dating or even someone who is a sexual partner.

Even if it didn't involve a specific sexual act.

Even if the person says "they didn't mean to"

Even if it was from a friend

Even if it was from someone they

Know.

Even if it was from someone who is considered "a nice person" or respected or popular or attractive.

Even if it wasn't in-person but online.

Everyone has the right to say who interacts with their body and how.

Sexual assault is a
trauma in which one
person does ^{NOT}
have the
power to say
what their
sexual



You are not alone!



experience
WAS
like...

NOTES:

Consent

• is the opposite of Sexual Assault
It is a sober + excited "yes!" for any form of sexual interaction. A person cannot consent if they have had any drugs or alcohol, including marijuana. A person is not consenting if they are not excited when they say "yes". If they are feeling pushed, manipulated & coerced or like they owe the other person sex, they are not consenting.

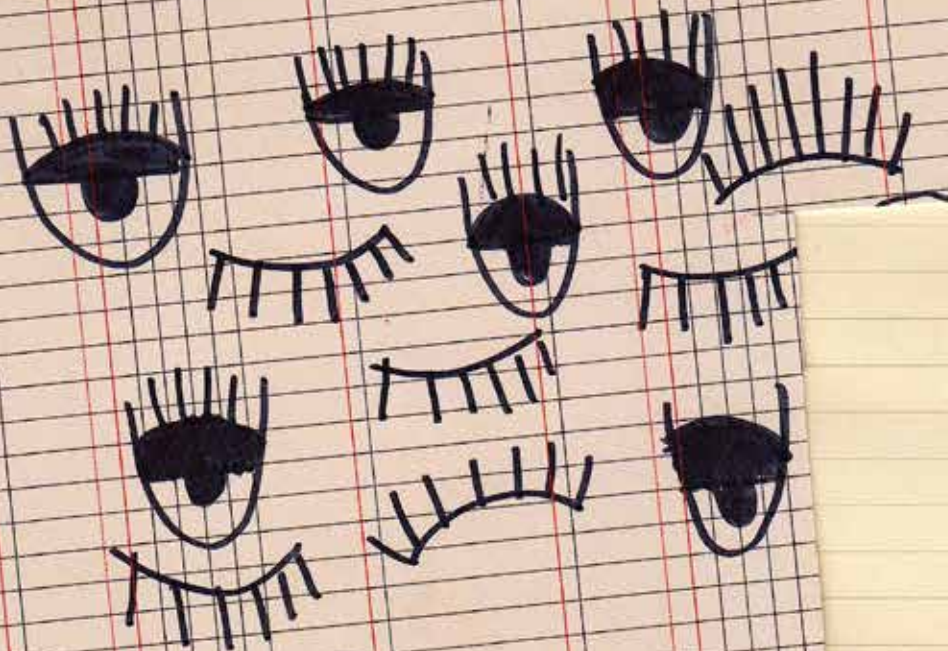
x Consent is permission

↳ it is making sure that all people have equal power to decide + participate in sexual situations.



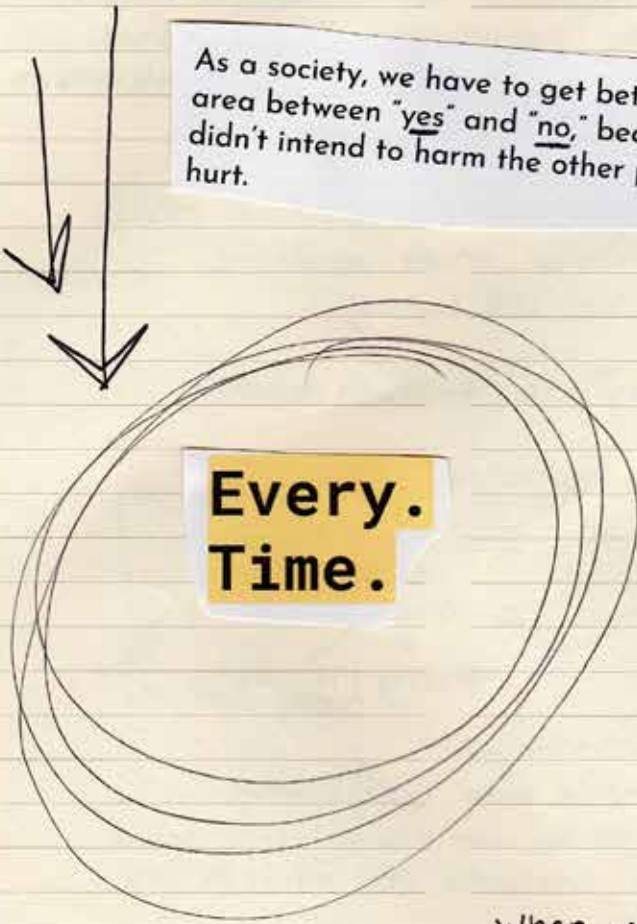
Legally, in the state of Colorado, "sexual assault" as a crime is "an act of sexual penetration or intrusion without a person's consent which can be vaginal, oral, or anal by any body part or object." (reference) Under Colorado law, sexual assault include completed acts or attempts by anyone, regardless of whether it's an acquaintance, boyfriend or girlfriend, spouse, stranger, or a group of perpetrators.

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



Therefore, consent isn't about making sure that you are legally ok while getting what you want out of a sexual partner. Consent is about making sure everyone is fulfilled and happy about what is happening.

As a society, we have to get better about talking about the middle ground, the blurry area between "yes" and "no," because a lot of harm is done here. Even if someone didn't intend to harm the other person, it doesn't really matter, the other person is still hurt.



NO YES!
no consent (BLURRY AREA) consent!
Gold Standard!!

CONSENT IS
A SOBER +
EXCITED

YES!

When we are interacting w/ someone else's sexuality, we have a lot of power, and we have to be careful that everyone in sexual interactions have equal power & stay in the situation so that it is good for everyone!

For example, what if I were putting on my backpack, not seeing someone standing behind me and just swung it over my shoulder, smacking the other person in the face and breaking their nose? I didn't *intend* to hurt them. But I did still break their nose. I would not only apologize for having hurt them, I would also help them get to the hospital, check in on their recovery, and pay for their medical costs. When I am picking up my backpack, I have power over something heavy, and I am responsible for whatever it hits.

Sex is similar. When we are interacting with someone else's sexuality, we have a lot of power, and we have to be careful that everyone in sexual interactions has equal power and say in the situation so that it is good for everyone. We can't rely on body language or what has been done before or what we think they want or what we think we can get away with.

When we continue to check in and talk about what makes everyone happy and comfortable, then we have good experiences AND we have consent.



Isn't it better
to know that the
other person
is totally into it?
Doesn't that mean
you're actually
a really good
sexual partner?

Very often, people think of consent as "no means no." Which is true, to an extent. If a person says "no", that is DEFINITELY not consent. But using "no means no" to define consent isn't enough. There are too many situations that are in-between, the blurry region where someone has not or cannot say "no," but also hasn't given permission for what is happening - is this really what they want?

BECAUSE SEXUALITY IS A FORM OF POWER, WE MUST ADDRESS AUTHORITY + PRIVILEGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT. MINORITY POPULATIONS SUCH AS LGBTQIA+ folk; PEOPLE OF COLOR; OR PEOPLE WHO ARE YOUNG, ELDERLY, OR HAVE A DISABILITY; ETC. HAVE LESS POWER & VOICE IN SOCIETY AND EXPERIENCE SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT HIGHER RATES THAN PEOPLE WHO HOLD POWER + PRIVILEGE. THIS IS NOT BECAUSE THESE POPULATIONS HAVE ANYTHING WRONG WITH THEM; IT IS BECAUSE OUR CULTURE DOES A POOR JOB OF HAVING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT PRIVILEGE & LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF THOSE WHO HAVE LESS POWER.

Often, we get power without asking for it, and giving power away can feel counterintuitive because it's something we're not taught to do and have almost no models for. Mostly people who have power and privilege don't necessarily feel like they do. So if coercion is generally about power and most people that have power don't feel like they do, then where does that leave us when we're trying to negotiate sex? When we're talking about consent; how to say yes and no? How do we know when we have the power? How do we figure out how to shift power dynamics and what do we do when we use our power in fucked up ways? How do we hear and respond when someone says they're not feeling heard or that they feel like their lines have been crossed? How do we honor what an amazing thing it is that someone is even able to say that at all?

- Cindy Crabb

if by this definition of consent, you find that you have had experiences that were non-consensual, whatever you feel about those experiences is valid and ok. You deserve to say who interacts with you sexually and how. It is not your fault that someone did not listen to your voice and took away your power.

POWER to the people

- Must be handled carefully
- everyone in a sexual interaction should have equal powers

POWER against the people

- Less power and voice is given to

★ - LGBTQIA+ folks;

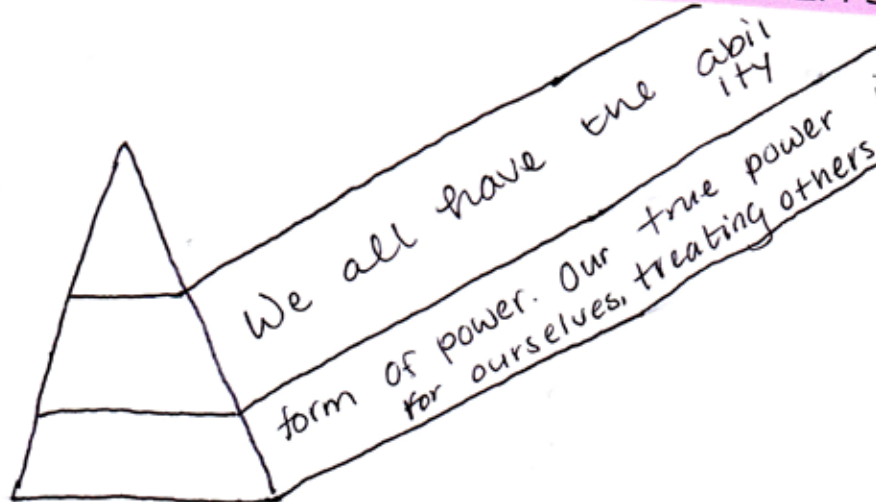
★ - people of color;

★ - or people who are young, elderly, or have a disability

to hold some

responsibility

for advocating



• x • x • x • x • x •

Sexting & the law

In 2014, research was published on a survey of young adults found that 29% of them sent sexually explicit photos while underage (~~research~~). This survey, while recent, was

conducted before Snapchat was popular. Therefore, that percentage of current teens who share explicit photos with other teens is presumably higher. Under federal law, juveniles who send or possess nude photos of themselves or a partner can be charged with the felony of distribution or possession of child pornography. Furthermore, teens who were victims of "revenge porn" (where a partner shares your explicit photos with your social circle as a means of revenge or bullying) had no recourse because if they reported the behavior, they could be charged with a felony as both the victim and perpetrator of the same crime.

Due to these concerns, Colorado has recently passed a new bill that changes the penalties for juvenile sexting, depending on the severity of the behavior. The Juvenile Sexting bill is also meant to better protect youth who have had their photos shared while penalizing teens who are sharing photos as a form of bullying.

SCENARIO PART 1:



Suppose these two people are partners. One person asks their partner for a nude photo, and their partner happily sends one. In this scenario both people are

sharing explicit photos. They could be charged \$50 along with a civil infraction and possibly given mandatory education. This charge would not go on their record, and they could not be arrested for not paying the fine or attending the education.



• Suppose someone sends the original nude photo from scenario one (w/o the other person's consent) to their friends. In this scenario the person to share the photo to their friends can be charged w/ a misdemeanor for distributing the photo.

The recipients could be charged w/ a petty offense for keeping the photo. Minors

who receive the photo have 72 hrs to delete or report photo in order to avoid being charged w/ a petty offense.

• The person who created the photo can still be charged w/ a civil infraction for having the photo.

Scenario part 2



- X Suppose you receive a nude photo that you didn't want.
- X The person who sent it to you could be charged with a misdemeanor for sending an explicit photo without consent.
- X If you are the recipient you have 3 days to delete or report the photo.

SCENARIO NO. 4



Okay, so...let's say you decide to post a photo online. This isn't cool. This might be seen as intending to distribute child pornography since ya'll are underage. This could lead to a felony. The creator of the photo can still ~~be~~ charged with a civil infraction.

PART

0214

for *Survivors*

SO, SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED;

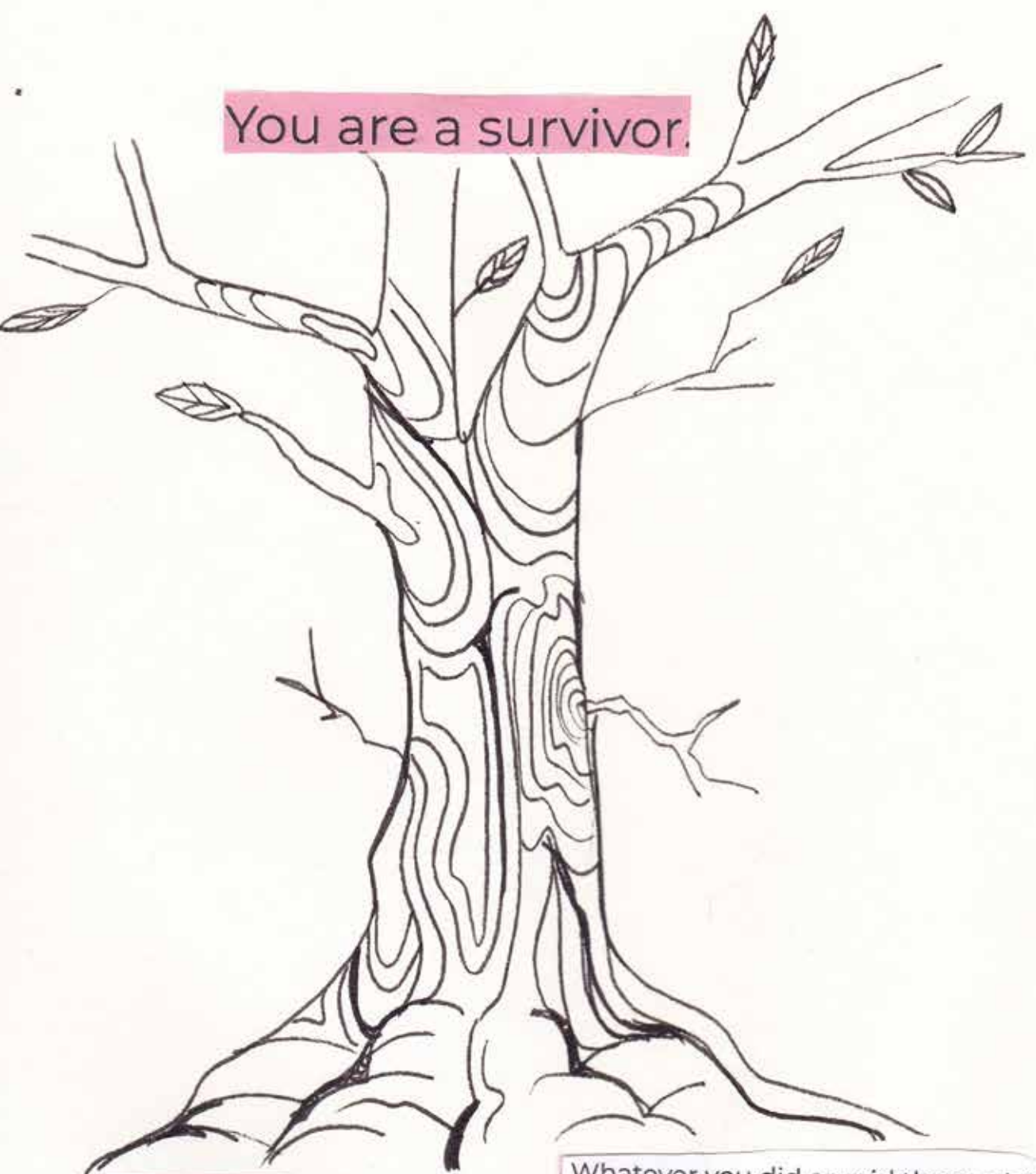
WHAT?
NOW

You did not deserve to be a victim. It wasn't because of how you dressed. It wasn't because of how you acted. It wasn't because you were drinking. It is not your fault. The responsibility lies solely in the hands of the person who hurt you.




Sometimes, people have these experiences following unwanted sexual contact. You may find that some of these descriptions are familiar to you, and you may have other feelings as well.

IT'S OKAY TO FEEL
...



You are a survivor.

Whatever you did or said that assisted you to survive the assault was the right thing to do. You stayed alive, and you got through. It is very common for victims to feel unable to resist the assault or to freeze in the situation. Often perpetrators also use mental tactics such as coercion, threats, or manipulation instead of physical force to take control. That is absolutely not ok. Whatever the situation and whatever your reaction, your body, mind, and soul took over with your survival instincts and did whatever you needed to do to survive.



YOU ARE
NOT ALONE



For one, there are many other survivors of sexual assault with whom you can speak and find solace and understanding. In Colorado, **20.5%** of women have experienced completed or attempted rape, and **17.6%** of men have experienced some form of contact sexual violence.

Additionally, there are people to support you. I hope you have trusted friends, family, or adults in your community who will walk alongside you, but there are also professional services, advocacy groups, and anonymous phone lines where you can find people who will listen and understand. (Read the section on "Who To Talk To"). Reach out to as many people as you need to support you as you need. You are not a burden to them, and you do not have to face recovery from trauma alone.

SELF-BLAME

NIGHTMARES

Guilt

social anxiety

fear

Numbness

Anger

Self-blame

depression

Geophobia (fear of groups of people)

DIFFICULTY CONCENTRATING

Shame

Difficulty trusting oneself or others

Loneliness

RATIONALIZATION

Moodswings

Denial

Anxiety

flashbacks

Whatever you feel, trauma is real and can cause confusion in multiple areas of life, not just those directly related to the assault. If your ability to enjoy the rest of life or feel safe in the world has changed, that is a normal and ok. You can ask for support from friends to help keep you safe and you rebuild your trust. Sometimes, people experience extreme depression or even thoughts of suicide. If you experience suicidal thoughts, please talk with a safe adult in your life or call the



National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or if you are deaf or hard of hearing, call 1-800-799-4889. Trained suicide counsellors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Healing is a process that involves time, so be gentle and caring to yourself as you would with a friend experiencing a trauma; find people who support you with strength and kindness. You can honor yourself and give yourself compassion by acknowledging the reality of what happened and allowing yourself to have whatever feelings arise.

Every person and their experience is different; there is **no "right way"** for you to feel and there is **no "right way"** to deal with life after sexual assault. Whatever you need to do to positively take care of yourself right now, you have permission to do that.



HEALING 1/3 RECOVERY

If you have been a victim of sexual violence and/or abuse whether it is recent or in the distant past, you probably have many confusing thoughts and feelings about what happened to you. These jumbled thoughts and feelings are a common response to a physically and emotionally traumatic event. Each person and situation is unique, so you will heal in your own unique way.

The uncomfortable & painful thoughts + feelings you are experiencing are a part of the healing process.

While healing is unique to each individual, there are some common reactions to trauma and to sexual assault in particular.

Healing is Possible
& it is a Process

Sexual assault is a crime that removes a victim's power and control during sexual contact. You can begin to reclaim your power by making your own choices on how to take care of yourself to move forward.

1. YOU ARE NOT TO BLAME. THE PERSON WHO ASSAULTED YOU IS RESPONSIBLE. YOU DESERVE TO BE BELIEVED AND TREATED WITH RESPECT AND COMPASSION.
2. THERE ARE MANY RESOURCES YOU CAN ACCESS FOR SUPPORT. IF YOU ARE UNDER 18 AND ARE NOT READY TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION, BE AWARE THAT SOME PROFESSIONALS (SUCH AS TEACHERS, COUNSELLORS, COACHES, ETC.) ARE MANDATORY REPORTERS (PEOPLE WHO MUST TELL POLICE IF THEY KNOW OF ASSAULT THAT HAS HAPPENED TO PEOPLE UNDER 18). YOU CAN CHOOSE TO BEGIN PROCESSING WITH SOMEONE WHO IS NOT A MANDATORY REPORTER OR THROUGH AN ANONYMOUS PHONE LINE UNTIL YOU ARE READY TO MOVE FORWARD LEGALLY.
3. A SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM ADVOCATE FROM A RAPE CRISIS CENTER, A CENTER ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS, OR A MILITARY BASE CAN PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT BY BEING AN UNBIASED LISTENER. THEY ARE MANDATORY REPORTERS, BUT THEY CAN ALSO HELP YOU MAKE INFORMED CHOICES BY PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT COMMON REACTIONS TO THE TRAUMA OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE, MEDICAL CONCERNS, REPORTING OPTIONS, CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS, AND OTHER LEGAL ISSUES.
4. IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT PHYSICAL INJURY, SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIS) AND/OR PREGNANCY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION TO KEEP YOURSELF PHYSICALLY WELL.
5. THE LEGAL SYSTEM IS COMPLEX, BUT THERE IS A BASIC PROCESS SEXUAL ASSAULT CASES FOLLOW.
6. IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO SEEK COUNSELING OR THERAPY TO HELP YOU HEAL FROM THE TRAUMA OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE. ALTHOUGH MANY SURVIVORS SIMPLY WANT TO FORGET ABOUT IT AND MOVE ON, THE FEELINGS AND EFFECTS OF TRAUMA MAKE IT HARD TO MOVE FORWARD WITHOUT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT.
7. IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO TALK ABOUT PAST SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND BEGIN TO HEAL. EVEN IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO YOU A WHILE AGO, IT WILL LIKELY STILL AFFECT YOU, AND YOU CAN CHOOSE TO BEGIN THE HEALING PROCESS.

RIGHT AFTER AN EXPERIENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

feelings
may include:

guilt,

Confusion,

anger,

fear,

You may also
physically experience

Tiredness,

headaches,

Soreness,

You may have a hard time concentrating. You may have racing thoughts. You may find yourself reviewing and reliving what occurred or asking yourself questions like "why me?" Nightmares, eating problems, and flashbacks of the assault are also common.

shame

Embarrassment

depression,

loss of control,

numbness

shock.

muscle tension,

Gynecological problems.

stomach problems,

It may feel like all of your life has suddenly been taken over and is focused on the assault. You have permission to do whatever you need to move to reclaim your life and feel safer.

After a little while, you may feel like you need to just "get over" it and appear as if everything is fine. You may not want to talk about what happened or just forget it. This can be useful as a form of coping and part of the grieving process, but unfortunately trauma cannot be forgotten long-term. Forcing trauma out of your thoughts will last for a short time, but in the future the pain will resurface again in unexpected and surprising ways.

YOU CAN SEEK OUT SUPPORT AND RESOURCES WHICH CAN HELP YOU TAKE CONTROL BY FINDING POSITIVE AND HELPFUL ACTIONS TOWARD HEALING. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE PAIN ALONE.

You may find that you are experiencing depression, have unusual thoughts, or that you can't quite "act like yourself". For example, you may have

- X increased irritability
- X Suicidal Thoughts
- X changed eating habits (not eating or overeating)
- X changed Sleep (unable to sleep or sleeping a lot)
- X having nightmares

- X increased alcohol /drug use
- X keeping to yourself, isolating, staying away from friends + family
- X increased fears (of leaving home or being alone, of people, or of certain locations)
- X Avoiding work or working too much

All of these are understandable responses to trauma. It may help to realize that these actions are reactions to the assault. They do not define who you are. Use of substances, altering one's eating, sleeping, and socialization are ways to try to create control and safety. Your power was taken from you, and that's not your fault. You now have the opportunity to figure out what are safe ways to regain your own power and balance. Figure out how you can feel in control of your mind, body, and thoughts that aren't possibly harmful coping strategies. Some examples of unhealthy coping strategies include: using alcohol, food, sexual acts, or any number of ideas or substances to numb yourself out from your triggers and feelings. This is completely normal as your brain is trying to continue to keep you safe from the experience of trauma and fear. You are safe now, and you don't have to keep running from the feelings. Try to find coping strategies that allow you to be comforted but not completely disregard how you are feeling. Some helpful coping strategies include: running, riding a bike, talking to a friend, cooking or making something, reading a book, taking a bath.

It will take months and even years to recover from what has happened. Eventually, your assault(s) will no longer be the central focus of your life and thoughts. It will be something that happened in your past.



Triggers— You thought you were over it, and suddenly, you are thrown into re-experiencing some of the effects of trauma all over again, like a disappointing relapse in the healing process.

X— seeing someone who reminds you of the perpetrator or smelling or hearing something that reminds you of the incident.

X— There may be times when thoughts or feelings from the experience will return suddenly.

X— You may be reminded by a scene in a TV show



■ In these moments, think of how you would assist your best friend. And then, be kind and gentle as you take care of yourself and find people to support you.

▶ Whatever your process looks like, it can be extremely helpful to work with a counsellor or therapist who is familiar with trauma. Often, there are services available at reduced or no cost rate to survivors. You don't have to be alone. Talking with a trained supportive person may help you understand and cope with the feelings and thoughts you have as you move through the healing process.

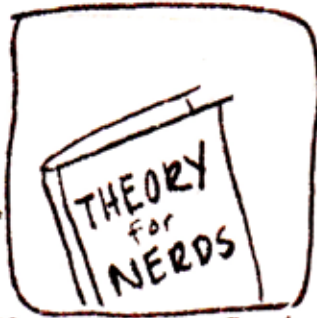
All of this talk of responses to trauma may lead you to believe that you are broken or damaged. This is not true. At all. Your mind, body, and soul are strong

and capable. They are doing their best to protect you and lead you to healing.

Self-Care...

Self Care is a common word in the world these days, but sometimes what is suggested doesn't really fit who you are and what you need. When you STOP, BREATHE + THINK about what really feels comforting to you, whatever you think of is the right self-care for you. And you have permission to do what moves you toward feeling whole again. Here are some self-care ideas.

Check in with yourself; In this moment, what nurtures me?



Reading a Book



SINGING LOUDLY IN THE SHOWER



A LONG DRIVE



A HAND TO SQUEEZE



A STUFFED ANIMAL TO HOLD CLOSE



BEING ALONE



EATING A DELICIOUS MEAL



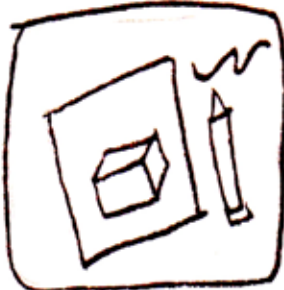
WRITING OR JOURNALING



SOMEONE RUBBING YOUR BACK



SCRAP BOOKING



CREATING A COLLAGE DRAWING



A LONG RUN



PUNCHING BAG



TAKING A WALK



A CALL W/ A FRIEND



A MOVIE OR A TV SHOW



MEDITATION



LOUD MUSIC



A HUG / CUDDLE



A GOOD LAUGH



BAKING SOMETHING



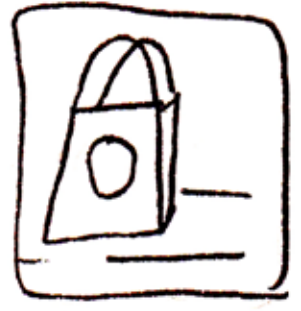
TAKING A NAP



TAKING A BATH



BEING GOOFY W/ A FRIEND



TREAT YO SELF

Trauma & Triggers

def.

A trigger is an automatic response connected to the past trauma that suddenly rushes into the present unexpectedly. They can come in many forms, including an internal sense that something is wrong, or it can be external such as a color, smell, taste, etc.

Triggers produce sensations in the body that remind you of when the traumatic harm occurred - through sensations, emotions, images, moods or memories, making it difficult to distinguish between the past and the present.

- Chanelle Gallant
+ Marti Khor



When people have experienced
a traumatic event, their bodies
go into **FIGHT**
FLIGHT

OR
FREEZE

this response helps to protect
ourselves and stay safe. and sometimes
the responses stay long after the
danger is past. You can find comforting
objects or people who regularly
remind you that you're safe now
and the event is no longer happening.
You don't need to protect or keep
yourself safe any longer. These
symptoms + feelings of danger + fear are
normal.

You may find yourself experiencing some of the following:

1. **hypervigilance** - a sense that there is continued danger in the world and you must be prepared to protect yourself.
2. **dissociation** - a detached calm so that you are outside yourself and don't feel what is happening to you.
3. **repetition compulsion** - your mind continues to replay traumatic events, perhaps in an effort to change the result or gain new mastery over what happened.
4. **flashbacks** - when you mentally return to and relive the event.
5. **collapse** - the inability to respond at all. This is self-protection through freezing when you feel powerless.
6. **anxiety** - a stress reaction that can include increased heart rate or "pounding," difficulty breathing, extreme alertness, racing thoughts, jumpiness, shakiness, and panic.

TRIGGERED REACTIONS VARY IN INTENSITY, BUT OVERALL THEY ARE GENERALLY DEFINED AS WHEN YOUR RESPONSE TO THE MOMENT IS EXTRA INTENSE BECAUSE IT IS TAPPING INTO THE EXPERIENCES OF YOUR PAST. YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN WHAT IS OCCURRING NOW + WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU BEFORE.

WHILE A COUNSELLOR OR THERAPIST WILL DO THE BEST JOB OF HELPING YOU LEARN HOW TO NAVIGATE + HEAL TRIGGERS, HERE ARE SOME INITIAL IDEAS OF WAYS TO RESPOND TO TRIGGERS.

Create an Emergency Kit for when you feel overwhelmed

- List of phone numbers of helpful people to call - supportive friends, family, or a therapist
- List of activities that soothe and calm you - music, a bath, a walk, spending time with a pet, yoga, meditation, hard exercise, etc.
- Sayings, songs, poems, and prayers that give you strength and help you connect to calm
- Picture of people you love and who love you or places that are comforting and relaxing
- A recording of the voice of someone who you trust talking or singing
- A stress ball or something to play with in your hands
- Instructions for deep breathing.

GROUNDING for when you are re-living or are overtaken by traumatic memories and need to come back to the present time.

Look around you and find

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

Other grounding ideas

- holding an ice cube in your hand
- drinking an ice cold drink
- sitting in a chair with your feet on the ground with no shoes or only socks and rubbing your palms firmly into your knees to push your feet into the ground to create a sensation that brings you and your body into the present.

Deep breathing for calming your nervous system

1. Breathe in through your nose while mentally recite a calming phrase like "I am safe and whole"
2. Hold your breath while repeating the calming phrase
3. Breathe out through your mouth while reciting the phrase
4. Hold your breath while repeating your phrase.
5. Repeat until your heart slows to normal and the feeling of panic is lessened.

Resourcing for when you are feeling triggers in your body

Notice where you have pleasant sensations in your body and focus on those feelings that are safe - tingling in your hands or feet, a place on your body that feels capable or strong. You can practice experiencing the safe feelings.

TRIGGER TRACKER

CHECK-IN WITH YOURSELF

DATE	TIME
x six things	x before
x i did	x i felt
x today	x triggered
LIST	THREE SYMPTOMS

x	x
x	x
x	x

x	x
x	x
x	x

x	x
x	x
x	x

x	x
x	x
x	x

x	x
x	x
x	x

Who do you talk to?

I hope there are at least a couple of people in your life who are safe and caring for you to use as support. Having people in your life so that you do not feel alone can make all the difference. Consider the following criteria as you create your web of support: try to find people who:

- X Believe you AND believe in you
- X LISTEN • LISTEN • Listen
- X ARE ABLE TO MANAGE WHATEVER FEELINGS ARISE IN THEMSELVES AND ARE OKAY WITH WHATEVER FEELINGS YOU SHARE WITH THEM
- X are willing to let you make your own decisions about next steps

While all of these responses have simple descriptions, I acknowledge that they can be very challenging to practice when your system is overloaded with a trigger response. Furthermore, it can even be difficult to notice when you are triggered, particularly if you dissociate. That is normal and ok. How would you see and show up for a friend who was experiencing these same challenges? Can you give yourself the same grace and kindness for the process you are in? You are learning and healing, which is not easy.



If none of these work for you, there are many other methods of coping with or moving through a triggering moment that you can learn from professionals who know how to help people through trauma recovery. You have the opportunity to listen to your body, mind, and soul and learn the best strategy for yourself. You may empower yourself by choosing how you respond when triggered.

The people you find who are trustworthy champions may not be the first people that come to mind. Your parents or guardians or family members may be perfect resources, but they also may not end up being the ones who are able to walk with you supportively. Who are the people in your life who you know have your back, no matter what? You may find that you have a more supportive connection

with someone in your religious community, a friend's parent, or an unexpected math teacher.

- friends
- Adults
- Mandated Reporters
- Resources
- Organizations

Friends

Friends can be lovely, caring, and unexpected people to have in your life as you process what has happened to you. However, other people your own age may not have the experience or know-how to show up for someone who is processing trauma. You may need to consider which of your friends is emotionally mature and responsive enough to respond in the ways that will be helpful to you. Additionally, you are allowed to tell people what you need. It is ok to tell friends in your life "I need you to just listen; please don't try to respond or fix things right now" or "What I really need is someone to walk me to my car late at night" or "Remind me that this is not my fault." They will learn how to be the friend you need.



ADULTS

When considering adults, you can go to, it is important to know that there are some adults who can keep the information you share confidential - like family members, friends' parents, members of your religious community, and other adult friends. Often, these adults can be great resources because they know and care about you. However, their ability may be limited because they may not have knowledge on trauma. They may have some learning to do along with you.



MANDATED REPORTERS

People who are professionals are mandated reporters. These people, by law, must communicate the suspicion of abuse or neglect of someone under 18 to law enforcement in an attempt to keep young people safe. On the one hand, professionals can be very helpful in the healing process because they have skills and knowledge of helping someone who has experienced trauma. On the other hand, if you talk with someone who is a mandated reporter and you have not yet disclosed your sexual assault to authorities, these people will have to report what you tell them. If you are wanting to begin an investigation, these people can support you in the process. But if you are wanting to keep confidentiality, you can find opportunities to talk with some people anonymously or choose adults who are not mandated reporters.

Professionals that are mandated reporters include teachers, coaches, nurses, doctors, counsellors, therapists, pastors, priests, rabbis, etc.

CASE REPORT

Resources

If you are wanting to talk to a professional adult, there are many resources for survivors and their loved ones.

If you are wanting to remain confidential, before you share any information, be sure to ask the agency or hotline if you can speak confidentially. Then, make sure to keep any identifying information out of the conversation including

- YOUR NAME
- THE NAME OF THE PERPETRATOR
- A HOME OR PHYSICAL ADDRESS
- CONTACT INFO

* POSTAL, E-MAIL, IP, Phone #

- SSN #, PASSPORT, DRIVERS LICENSE #, STUDENT ID #

- ANY ~~OTHER~~ OTHER INFO

* DOB, RACIAL/ETHNIC BACKGROUND, RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION ETC.

Community-based rape crisis centers, campus, and military programs 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.

COLORADO ORGANIZATIONS ↴

CCASA - Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Can connect you to Colorado-specific sexual assault resources visit www.ccasas.org for a list of Colorado agencies.

Rocky Mountain Victim Law Center (RMVLC)

RMVLC is a nonprofit organization that provides free legal representation for victims of sexual assault and other violent crimes throughout the criminal justice process. www.rmvlc.org

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ↴

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

1-800-656-HOPE

National Sexual Health Assault Hotline that works with more than 1,100 local hotlines to provide victims with free, confidential services 24 hours a day. www.rainn.org

1 in 6

National resource for male survivors of sexual assault. Offers a free library of resources to help men (and their friends and families). www.1in6.org

Jail Detention International (JDI)

JDI is a health and human rights organization that seeks to end sexual abuse in all forms of detention. www.jaildetention.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

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

This hotline will link individuals who are victims of family or partner sexual violence to help such as domestic violence shelters, other emergency shelters, legal advocacy and assistance programs, and social service programs in their area using a national database.

Anti-Violence Project

212-754-1141 24-hour bilingual hotline

A network of groups that empowers LGBTQIAA and HIV-affected communities and allies to end all forms of violence. www.avproject.org

Self-advocacy

Setting boundaries & expectations for the people in your life.

Often, people around you are learning what you need as you navigate life, just as you are. You have the opportunity to check in with yourself, take control, and tell people exactly what you need. You do not have to be shy; you are not asking too much. These people want to support you! They just may need some help learning how.

First of all, if you find this zine helpful, you can direct them to it to help them understand some of your feelings and experience. The second part of the zine is devoted to helping them know how to show up for you!

Secondly, you can tell them what you need. Consider filling out this worksheet for yourself and even practice saying it to close friends so that you know how to speak up for what you are needing before you are in a moment that is challenging and/or triggering. You can use this with teachers, health professionals, family members....anyone.

Heck, you don't even have to say anything. You can just hand them the form and let it speak for itself.

PLEASE USE THE NAME _____ WHEN SPEAKING TO ME OR ABOUT ME.

- I USE THE PRONOUNS _____
- I FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE WHEN _____
- I FEEL SAFE WHEN _____
- I LIKE TO HEAR _____ WHEN I AM AFRAID.
- I LIKE TO HEAR _____ WHEN I AM SAD.
- I LIKE TO HEAR _____ WHEN I AM ANGRY.
- I LIKE TO HEAR _____ WHEN I AM _____

WHEN I AM EMOTIONAL,

- ☐ I like to have my hand held softly/hard
- ☐ I like to be hugged soft/hard
- ☐ I like for someone to stroke my hair
- ☐ I like for someone to rub my back
- ☐ I want a blanket
- ☐ I need something to do w/ my hands
- ☐ I would like a comforting drink - tea / hot choc.
- ☐ I don't want to be touched, just heard
- ☐ Something else. _____

Self Care Cont.

SOME THINGS THAT PEOPLE SOMETIMES NEED TO HEAR
INCLUDE

- IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT.
- YOU ARE SAFE HERE.
- I'M HERE TO LISTEN. I DO NOT JUDGE YOU.
- I BELIEVE YOU.
- I AM SORRY THIS HAPPENED. THIS SHOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU.

YOU MAY HAVE OTHER THINGS YOU ARE NEEDING TO HEAR.
IT IS OK TO ASK FOR THOSE, TOO.

REPORTING AND POLICE-INVOLVEMENT WHEN THERE ARE UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE IN YOUR FAMILY

Undocumented youth are highly vulnerable to sexual abuse, and detection and reporting are difficult because of their noncitizen status. It is important to understand the dynamics that take place when immigration status of the young person or the immigration status of a close family member is unknown. Sexual abuse is difficult to identify because it often goes unreported and unseen. It's a taboo topic within many families and therefore isn't openly discussed.

Youth in general face many barriers when reporting sexual abuse, but there also are unique barriers that affect the ability of teens in undocumented populations to report the abuse. Depending on the length of time that they have been living in the US, language may be one barrier for those in need of child protection services. Additional obstacles to reporting abuse include social and cultural barriers, a limited understanding of the legal system, and limited access to public facilities where reporting may take place, such as medical facilities and schools.

The fear of deportation is another barrier that keeps many undocumented immigrant families from seeking the protections and services they need and can be a deterrent to reporting child sexual abuse. Youth had been told by their abuser that their parents, siblings, aunts, and uncles all would be deported if the child told anyone about the abuse. These threats can be effective in protecting the abuser because the child may fear the negative consequences for the entire family if he or she reports the sexual abuse.

According to a bilingual advocate at The Hotline, a national domestic violence resource, "Prior to taking action, it can be helpful to always know your rights, seek counsel from a lawyer who specializes in the type of immigration assistance that you are needing, and research how your university and/or local law enforcement agency have handled cases involving undocumented victims of crime in the past." (May 9, 2018).

No person should fear that reporting a crime or going to court will put them at risk of deportation - Michael Kaufman, ACLU.

There are some legal protections that may be available to victims of sexual assault which are not always easy to obtain. The survivor does not need any assistance from the abuser to apply for immigration benefits and assistance. Victims must establish that they:

- X—Have or had a qualifying relationship with the abuser spouse, or, are the parent or child of the abuser.
- X—Reside or resided with the abuser.
- X—Have good moral character, and have been victims of battery or extreme cruelty.

U Nonimmigrant Status (or U Visa) offers protection to victims who are supporting investigations of criminal activity. Victims are not required to be in legal immigration status, but they must:

- Be a victim of qualifying criminal activity and have suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of the crime, (sexual assault and rape are both qualifying criminal activity)
- Possess credible and reliable information about the qualifying criminal activity,
- Be, have been, or are likely to be helpful to the investigation and/or prosecution of that qualifying criminal activity, and
- Be a victim of criminal activity that violated a U.S. law.

T Nonimmigrant Status (or T Visa) offers protection to victims of human trafficking. Human trafficking is a form of slavery in which people are often lured by the promise of good jobs, more opportunities, and better lives and then forced to work under brutal and inhumane circumstances. Victims are not required to be in legal immigration status, but they must:

- Be a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons,
- Be physically present in the United States on account of the trafficking,
- Comply with any reasonable requests for assistance in the investigation or prosecution (or be under the age of 18), and
- Suffer extreme hardship involving unusual and severe harm if removed from the United States.

Currently a limit of 10,000 U-Visas and T-Visas are issued per year which does not meet the demands. If an applicant successfully makes their case for a U or T visa but there is no visa currently available due to the statutory cap, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (U.S.C.I.S.) will provide the applicant with a letter expressing an intent to grant a U or T visa and will permit the applicant to file for work authorization while the applicant waits for a U or T visa to become available.

Part 2

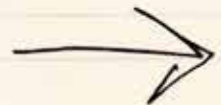
friends of survivors

THANK YOU FOR BEING A TRUSTED PERSON AND CARING ABOUT YOUR FRIEND. HERE ARE SOME THOUGHTS ON HOW TO CONTINUE TO SHOW UP FOR YOUR FRIEND NOW.

FIRST OF ALL, THE ONLY WAY THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO BE THERE FOR YOUR FRIEND IS IF YOU ARE AWARE OF HOW YOU'RE RESPONDING AND MAKE SURE YOU ARE TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF. IF YOU TRY TO BE A "SAVIOR" OR SACRIFICE YOURSELF AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH FOR YOUR FRIEND, YOU WILL END UP UNABLE TO COPE AND SEE YOUR FRIEND THROUGH. TO TRULY BE SUPPORTIVE TO THE SURVIVOR, YOU WILL NEED TO RESPOND TO FEELINGS THAT THE ASSAULT RAISES FOR YOU AND SEEK SUPPORT WHEN YOU ARE OVERWHELMED. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO BE WILLING TO FACE YOUR FEARS AND PREJUDICES ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND TO HAVE ACCURATE INFORMATION.

IT MAY ALSO BE HELPFUL TO READ THE SECTION FOR VICTIMS TO BETTER EMPATHIZE WITH THEIR EXPERIENCE.

HERE ARE A FEW MORE TIPS ON HOW YOU CAN SHOW UP FOR SOMEONE.



LISTEN·LISTEN·LISTEN!

Often, when something hard is happening to someone you care about, you may have the inclination to try to fix it or assume that they are feeling how you would feel. You may find yourself saying things like

- "That's just awful!" You don't know how your friend is feeling or what stage of grief they are in. Instead of telling them how you think they must feel, ask them "how are you feeling?" and reflect back to them what you hear them saying.
- "I can't believe that happened!" You may be in shock that something serious has happened to your friend, but it is very important that you communicate to them that you believe them, even if you know the perpetrator as a nice, popular person. To overcome sexual violence in our culture, we have to always listen and believe people. Telling someone that "you are not taking sides" is ultimately taking sides and harmful to the victim because it communicates that their experience is not real and they should not be hurt. Tell them "I believe you, and I am here for you" instead.
- "Don't worry/don't cry/don't think about it" Denial may seem like the easiest way to deal with a crisis, but it can make a survivor feel unheard. Sexual violence is very stressful. To imply that it isn't or shouldn't be a difficult time is disrespectful and discounts the survivor. Allow your friend to have emotions and tell them "it's ok if you need to cry, yell, worry, or talk about it if that helps".
- "Here's what I'm going to do..." You cannot fix what has happened. The best thing you can do is listen and ask "is there something you would like me to do to support you?"

HOW TO SHOW UP FOR A PERSON

recommend reading pages #34 - 37 where "being triggered" is defined and tips are given to survivors to help them navigate triggers. When you are showing up for a person who is in the process of being triggered, the key to remember is that their nervous system is being overtaken by the fight-or-flight response from what has happened to them in the past. They are having a hard time being here in the present. You are wanting to help them reconnect with the fact that they are there with you, in the present, and safe. You may lead them through some of the activities described in the section on trigger responses for survivors. You may reassure them that they are safe and describe to them why. Ask them if they want to be

touched or held and how. If your friend experiences trauma triggers often, you may find it helpful to discuss a plan to navigate triggers with them.

WHO IS TRIGGERED ↗

Assure Your Friend

THAT IT'S NOT THEIR FAULT...

Sometimes sexual assaults happen when a victim was in a risky or illegal situation – underage drinking, drug usage, going to unknown locations, etc. Participating in any of these is never the cause of the assault; risky behavior does not justify being victimized by violence. Sexual violence is always the fault of the perpetrator. The perpetrator decided to harm another person, and only they can be held responsible.

Give Survivors The opportunity to choose what happens next for themselves

Someone who has been sexually assaulted has experienced a huge loss of power. Helping your friend regain a sense of control is important. It is common for survivors to struggle with making even small decisions following an assault. Give your ideas, but allow your friend to make decisions about what happens next. Regaining a sense of control over one's life is an important step towards healing from violence.

Respect the confidentiality of the Survivor

You are the survivor's confidant. Make sure that it is ok with the survivor if you are talking to someone about the assault in a way that will identify them. If you are seeking support for yourself, keep the identity of the survivor confidential when talking to others.

Your friend is dealing with a lot while taking care of themselves. You can respond to what they tell you with human emotions, but they should not have to emotionally care for you. You will need to find your own resources and healthy outlets to express and process your feelings about what has happened.



• find healthy ways to deal with your

- anger
- Rage
- fears

w/o further damaging the Survivor

HOW TO GET YOURSELF SUPPORT – SECONDARY TRAUMA & KNOWING YOUR LIMITS.

Secondary trauma is being affected by hearing and internalizing the trauma that has happened to someone else. This is real! If it is too much for you, seek help from someone trained in counseling survivors of sexual violence. You are not failing if you need help! The organizations listed in the Who To Talk To section for survivors (page #45, 54 & 55) can refer you to programs that offer services for family members and friends. Remember to keep the victim's confidentiality as you are speaking about them if they have not decided to report the incident yet.

IF THE SURVIVOR BECOMES SUICIDAL OR PHYSICALLY SELF-DESTRUCTIVE, SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP IMMEDIATELY TO KEEP THEM SAFE.

1. "Colorado Revised Statutes, 18-3-402: Sexual Assault"
2. "Colorado Revised Statutes, 18-3-404: Unlawful Sexual Contact"
3. Crabb, Cindy. *Learning Good Consent: On Healthy Relationships and Survivor Support*. AK Press, 2016.
4. Strohmaier, H., Murphy, M., DeMatteo, D. "Youth Sexting: Prevalence Rates, Driving Motivations, and the Deterrent Effect of Legal Consequences". Springer, 2014.
5. Colorado House Bill, 17-1302 "Concerning matters related to sexually explicit images of a child", 2018.
- 6.

STATE RESOURCES COLORADO

9TO25

www.co9to25.org

Colorado 9to25 is about creating the space for youth and adults to connect, share ideas and feedback, and ensure that all Colorado youth are safe, healthy, educated, connected, and contributing.

COLORADO SCHOOL SAFETY RESOURCE CENTER (CSSRC)

www.colorado.gov/cssrc

The CSSRC assists educators, emergency responders, community organizations, school mental health professionals, parents and students to create safe, positive and successful school environments for Colorado students in all pre K-12 and higher education schools.

NATIONAL RESOURCES

ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH

www.advocatesforyouth.org

Advocate for Youth champions efforts that help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health.

BREAK THE CYCLE

www.breakthecycle.org

Break the Cycle inspires and supports young people 12 -24 to build healthy relationships and create a culture without abuse.

CENTER FOR YOUNG WOMEN'S HEALTH

www.youngwomenshealth.org

The Center for Young Women's Health is a website for teen girls and young women featuring up-to date health information.

GLSEN

www.glsen.org

GLSEN works to ensure that LGBTQ students are able to learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment.

HEALTHY TEEN NETWORK

www.healthyteennetwork.org

Healthy Teen Network provides capacity-building assistance for professionals and organizations in the adolescent and young adult health fields.

I WANNA KNOW

www.iwannaknow.org/teens/sexualhealth.html

iwannaknow.org offers information on sexual health for teens and young adults.

LOVE IS RESPECT

www.loveisrespect.org

Loveisrespect's purpose is to engage, educate and empower young people to prevent and end abusive relationships.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD – TEENWIRE

www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/teens

Information for teens on sex, relationships, their bodies, and more.

SEX, ETC.

www.sexetc.org

Sex, Etc. is published by Answer, a national organization that provides and promotes unfettered access to comprehensive sexuality education for young people and the adults who teach them.

START STRONG: BUILDING HEALTHY TEEN RELATIONSHIPS

startstrong.futureswithoutviolence.org

Start Strong is a national program aimed at promoting healthy relationships among 11 to 14-year-olds and identifying promising ways to prevent teen dating violence.

THAT'S NOT COOL

www.futureswithoutviolence.org/children-youth-teens/thats-not-cool

www.thatsnotcool.com

That's Not Cool partners with young people to help raise awareness and bring education and organizing tools to communities to address dating violence, unhealthy relationships, and digital abuse.

YOUNG MEN'S HEALTH

www.youngmenshealthsite.org

Young Men's Health is a website for teen guys and young men featuring up-to-date health information.

- (1) "Colorado Revised Statutes, 18-3-402: Sexual Assault"
- (2) "Colorado Revised Statutes, 18-3-404: Unlawful Sexual Contact"
- (3) Crabb, Cindy. Learning Good Consent: On Healthy Relationships and Survivor Support. AK Press, 2016.
- (4) Strohmaier, H., Murphy, M., DeMatteo, D. "Youth Sexting: Prevalence Rates, Driving Motivations, and the Deterrent Effect of Legal Consequences". Springer, 2014.
- (5) Colorado House Bill, 17-1302 "Concerning matters related to sexually explicit images of a child", 2018.
- (6) Smith, S.G., Chen, J., K.C., Gilber, L.K., Merrick, M.T., Patel, N., Walling, M., & Jain, A. (2017). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report. Atlanta, BA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and PRevention.
- (7) Gallant, Chanelle and Khor, Masti. Kink and Trauma. Femmeboyant Designs, 2017.
- (8) Haines, Staci. Healing Sex: A Mind-Body Approach to Healing Sexual Trauma. Cleis Press, 2007.
- (9) The Doula Project. DIY Doula: Self-Care for Before, During, & After Your Abortion. Eberhardt Press, 2018.

