

"I DIDN'T WANT IT TO HAPPEN..."

a resource on sexual assault

IT WAS NOT YOUR FAULT. NOBODY DESERVES TO BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED.

Sexual assault is any sexual act that you do not want. It may include touching, kissing, oral sex, anal sex, vaginal sex, or other acts. It can happen to anyone at any time in their life, and is sadly common.

People can make others do sexual things by many different means. They might hurt or force you, threaten you, or try to talk you into it. Most people are assaulted by someone they know. Being sexually assaulted by someone you know is just as serious as being hurt by a stranger.

No one has the right to hurt you or make you have sexual contact that you do not want. Not even people you know or love—even if you are married or living with them.

IT'S OK TO REACT IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS.

Everyone reacts in their own way to being sexually assaulted. These reactions may change from day to day or even minute to minute. Your body, your emotions, and your spirit can be affected. You may feel or act differently. Pay attention to what you are feeling and what you might need to feel better. You can ask for help from a doctor, Crisis Center, counselor, or someone else. It may take time for you to feel better.

HOW CAN A CRISIS CENTER HELP ME?

A Sexual Assault Crisis Center is a safe place where people with special training help people who have been sexually assaulted. They will listen to you and help you find ways to make yourself feel better. They have many free services that may help you. To be connected to one, call the Virginia Statewide Hotline at 1.800.838.8238, or text at 804.793.9999.



WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

Talk to someone you trust. Many people who have been sexually assaulted never tell anyone. Talking with a supportive person helps you heal. **Give yourself time to recover.** It's important to take care of yourself during this time. If you can, lower stress in other parts of your life. You may need time to yourself. Try to eat well, get enough sleep, plan time for activities you enjoy, and spend time with people who support you, not people who make you feel bad.

THIS JUST HAPPENED TO ME

- Find a safe place to go (home, a friend's house, or other safe place).
- Consider seeing a doctor (your regular doctor or the emergency room. If you want to tell the police, it's better to go to the ER).
- If you want to talk to the police, call 911. Don't wash yourself or your clothing, brush your teeth, eat, drink, smoke, comb your hair, or use the restroom if possible, so a nurse can collect evidence from your body.
- Call a Sexual Assault Crisis Center if you want someone to go with you to the hospital or to talk to the police.

You have the right to ask questions about what is happening to you and get answers, and you have the right to say "no" to anything you do not want to happen.

I WAS ASSAULTED IN THE PAST

You may have memories of the assault for a long time. You may only remember pieces of the assault. Some people feel like they have healed or moved on, but then feel bad again if something stressful happens in their lives. All these reactions are normal, but can be hard to live with. It helps to talk with someone.

YOU DESERVE SUPPORT.

Don't give up. There are people who care and can help. Call the Virginia Statewide Hotline at 1.800.838.8238 (or text 804.793.9999).

RESOURCES: