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## **Sexual Violence Resource Center**

*Dedicated to helping all survivors of sexual violence*

# **Women's Packet**



Dear Survivor,

Sexual violence can be a traumatic experience and can damage a person's sense of trust and safety. Surviving an experience such as this is not easy, but it is possible. During this time, it is common to experience complex feelings and to have many questions. For this reason, the Blue Earth County Sexual Violence Resource Center (SVRC) is here. The SVRC offers free and confidential assistance to help you through the recovery process.

Within this packet, you will find a lot of information. Please do not feel overwhelmed; this packet is meant to be read at your leisure. Please also know that you are not alone in your recovery. Annually, the Sexual Violence Resource Center works with approximately 200 victims/survivors of sexual violence. Of those, the SVRC provides services to female victims/survivors 89% of the time.

Lastly, please remember, things will get better. The Sexual Violence Resource Center is here for you to utilize and can be contacted during office hours at (507) 304-4295. You can also always call our 24-hour crisis line, otherwise known as Safeline, at 1-800-630-1425.

Sincerely,

*Jayne Jackson*

Jayne Jackson  
Program Coordinator  
Sexual Violence Resource Center  
Blue Earth County Human Services



**Women's Packet**  
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### **Life Goes On**

*. . . Please know that help is out there. You'll be surprised by how many people will join you in your anger at your abuser, join you in your healing process. Yes, getting your posse together can take time. You sometimes need great patience. But don't give up. If at first you don't get the response you are looking for from the people you tell, find others. Join a survivors' group. Talk to an aunt or a cousin or someone you know you can really trust. Call a hotline. You will find your support system.*

*All sexual abuse survivors are righteous and strong. You are beautiful. Your abuse is just a part of you, a part of your past. It does not define you. It is something that was done to you. You cannot undo it, but you can heal from it and lead a wonderful, blessed life filled with success, love, fulfillment, power, creativity, and healing. There are people out there who will help you - good people who will love you and whom you will love. Together, you will move out of the darkness of abuse into the light of life.*

**Dr. Patti Feuereisen with Carline Pineus**  
from the book, Invisible Girls: The Truth  
About Sexual Abuse



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## **Sexual Violence Statistics — You are NOT Alone**

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- In the United States, a woman is sexually assaulted or raped every two minutes.
- 1 out of every 3 women will be raped in her lifetime.
- 85% of victims know their attacker.
- In 2003, 1 in every 10 rape victims was male.
- On average, at least 50% of college students' sexual assaults are associated with alcohol use.
- Ages 12 to 34 are the highest risk years. Risk peaks in the late teens: girls 16 to 19 are four times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault.
- As many as 18% of all sexual assault victims are over the age of 60.
- It is estimated that 12,000 to 19,000 people with developmental disabilities are raped each year in North America (Canada and United States).
- About 4 out of 10 sexual assaults take place at the victim's own home. 2 in 10 take place in the home of a friend, neighbor, or relative. 1 in 10 takes place outside, away from home and about 1 in 12 takes place in a parking garage.
- More than half of all rapes/sexual assault incidents were reported by victims to have occurred within one mile of their home or at their home.
- If the rape is reported to police, there is a 50.8% chance that an arrest will be made.
- If an arrest is made, there is an 80% chance of prosecution.
- If there is a prosecution, there is a 58% chance of a felony conviction.
- If there is a felony conviction, there is a 69% chance the convict will spend time in jail.
- So, even in the 39% of attacks that are reported to police, there is only a 16.3% chance the rapist will end up in prison.
- Factoring in unreported rapes, about 6% of rapists (1 of 16) will spend a day in jail.
- 15 out of 16 will walk free.

Information provided from the following sources: probability statistics compiled by NCPA from U.S. Department of Justice Statistics; 2003 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS); Sobsey and Dwo, (1991); <http://www.oprah.com>; The Rape Crisis Center: ([www.therapeccrisiscenter.org](http://www.therapeccrisiscenter.org))



## Handling the Crisis Stage

Many survivors of sexual violence go through a period where sexual violence is all they can think about. You may feel overwhelmed by any decisions in your life. You may find yourself having flashbacks, crying all day, or being unable to work. You may have dreams about the attacker. You may be afraid to fall asleep. Powerful reactions are also likely if you are dealing with repressed memories of sexual violence.

The most important thing to remember is that the crisis stage is a normal part of the healing process. It will come to an end. Working with others during this stage will help you feel in control.

The following may help you through this difficult time:

- **Know that you are not going crazy.** What you are going through is a recognized part of the healing process.
- **Don't hurt or try to kill yourself.** You deserve to live. If you start feeling suicidal or like hurting yourself, reach out for help.
- **Find people you can talk to.** You don't have to bear it alone.
- **Get skilled professional help.**
- **Do nice things for yourself.**
- **Drop what isn't essential in your life.** Release the pressure any way you can. This means dropping unsupportive people, quitting activities, lightening your workload, getting extra child care.
- **Create a safe place.** Have at least one place where you feel safe.
- **Watch your intake of drugs and alcohol.** Repeatedly numbing your feelings will only prolong the crisis.
- **Get out of abusive situation.** If you are currently in a situation where you are being abused, get out of the situation. If you feel like there is no way out, contact a battered women's shelter for support and assistance. The local battered women's shelter crisis line is 1-800-477-0466.
- **Sit tight and ride out the storm.** Your decision-making capability may be limited right now. Except for getting out of abusive situations, the crisis stage is usually not a good time for making major life changes.
- **Remind yourself that you are brave.** This is a challenging, scary, difficult period. You do not have to do anything but survive.
- **Remember to breathe.** Stay as connected to yourself as you can.
- **Develop a belief in something greater than yourself.** Believing in a higher power can give you inspiration and strength.
- **This too shall pass.** Your experience tomorrow, next week, or next year will not be the same as it is now.
- **Journal-writing.** When you have the energy, you may want to consider writing a journal to express your feelings and record your dreams. This will also be a way for you to see your recovery.

<p><b><u>24-Hour Crisis Lines</u></b></p> <p>Yellow Ribbon 1-800-865-0606</p> <p>Immanuel-St. Joseph's 507-345-2610</p> <p>Safeline 1-800-630-1425</p>
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## **Common Feelings**

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Emotional responses of victims to an assault will vary from individual to individual. Sexual assault is extremely traumatic and life-changing. It's important to remember that your responses are not crazy; they are normal reactions to a crazy situation—rape. Persons who are victims/survivors of an attempted sexual assault may also have similar feelings.

### **Fear of People, Sense of Vulnerability**

Victims frequently fear people and feel vulnerable even when going through the regular activities of life. You may be afraid to be alone or afraid of being with lots of people. You may find yourself not knowing whom to trust. You may have lost your sense of safety in your environment which makes you feel vulnerable. You may fear it might happen again. You may notice any sexual innuendos, stray looks, whistles, or catcalls that you normally would not have noticed.

#### **Helpful Ideas**

- Try to spend time with your friends, family, and people you trust.
- Learning to trust others and learning to trust your own judgment takes time and support from others. This is particularly difficult if the assailant was someone you know. Not trusting others is temporary and is a coping mechanism. You will be able to trust when you have had a chance to heal and are feeling less vulnerable.
- Talk to trusted support people about your feelings.
- Trust your gut feelings and instincts if someone feels unsafe.
- It is okay to experience different feelings.

### **Loss of Control Over Your Own Life - Fear of the Assailant**

The assailant stepped into your life and took control. You did not have a choice and did what you needed to do to survive. You may feel unsure about yourself and may temporarily lack your normal self-confidence. Decisions that were made routinely before now feel monumental. You may feel that because of the assault you have to change your life. You also may feel that the assailant has taken away all of your control and your normal life, leaving you feeling used, dirty, or bad.

#### **Helpful Ideas**

- Your ability to make decisions will return.
- People who offer options and support your decisions unconditionally can help you regain trust.
- It is not paranoia to take precautions that will help you feel safe.
- Your fear is a result of the situation and the feeling of being out of control. Trusting only those who have earned your trust, locking doors, staying with trusted friends, taking self-defense classes, etc., are normal means to help you feel safe. They may help you regain a sense of control over your life.

### **Anxiety, Shaking, Nightmares**

You may experience these after an attack. This can begin shortly after the attack and may continue for a long period of time. Nightmares can replay the assault, be dreams of being chased, or other such nightmares. You may fear that you are losing it and that you should be over it by now.

#### **Helpful Ideas**

- These responses, as scary as they are, are normal reactions to trauma and can be the way your emotions act out the fear experienced.



- It is important to be able to talk about nightmares and fears and how they effect your life.
- Keeping a journal and writing about feelings, dreams, and fears can be a useful tool.

### **Sexual Concerns**

You may experience a variety of sexual concerns after an assault. You may want no sexual contact. You may need intimacy, like nurturing, holding, etc., or not to be sexual. You may experience some confusion about separating sex from sexual violence, particularly sexual acts that you may do with your significant other may provoke flashbacks of the attack.

#### **Helpful Ideas**

- Sexual healing takes time.
- It is okay to ask your significant other to nurture you and not ask for any sexual contact.
- A patient, gentle, intimate significant other is helpful in your healing process.
- To retreat sexually is a normal coping mechanism.
- You have a right to refuse to be sexual until you feel ready.
- Rape is not sex. Intimate consensual love-making bears no resemblance to sexual violence.

### **Guilt, Shame, Self-Blame**

Most victims feel guilty and ashamed about the assault. You question that you somehow may have provoked it or asked for it or that you should have known what was going to happen or that you shouldn't have trusted the assailant or that you should have prevented the assault. Some of these feelings are the result of society's myths about rape and sexuality. You may know what society believes and you worry about what others might think of you. Sometimes blaming yourself helps you to feel less helpless.

#### **Helpful Ideas**

- **No one deserves to be sexually assaulted. Tell yourself that many times a day. It is not your fault.**
- Being sexually assaulted does not make you a bad person. You did not choose to be sexually assaulted.
- Education about the facts surrounding sexual assault may be helpful in dispelling shame and self-blame.
- Pride yourself for having done the best you could to survive the incident.

### **Anger**

Anger is an appropriate, healthy response to sexual violence. It usually means that you are healing and have begun to look at the assailant's responsibility for the assault. People vary greatly in how readily they feel and express anger. It may especially be difficult to express anger if you have been taught that being angry is not okay. Anger can be vented but in appropriate ways. You may also turn your anger inward, which would be recognized as sadness, pain, or depression.

#### **Helpful Ideas**

- Anger can be worked out physically without harming yourself or others. Go for a walk, run, shoot baskets, bike, hit pillows, journal, etc.
- Anger needs to be directed at the assailant and not you.



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## **Rape Trauma Syndrome and Symptoms**

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Rape trauma syndrome is a pattern of physical, emotional, and behavioral stress reactions (or symptoms) that often appear after a life-threatening event such as sexual abuse or assault. These symptoms may appear, then disappear, and perhaps reappear much later. The extent to which the symptoms are present gives an indication of how well a person is coping with the experience. It is very important for you to know that these are normal responses and that they will eventually subside.

### **Reactive Depression**

- Sleeplessness, nightmares, walking in the night, early morning rise
- Nausea, loss of appetite
- Crying jags (uncontrollable, unprovoked crying); often can be controlled by allowing self to cry at "safe" times
- Depression, becoming silent and withdrawn
- Hyper self-consciousness, fear of people finding out and their reactions.

### **Specific to Sexual Assault**

- Soreness -- in the areas of the assault, aches, pains
- Fears -- of being alone, of being in crowds, of anything that reminds you of the assault or assailant; fear of the return of the assailant, general nervousness
- Phobias -- effective strategies for coping with the feelings in the aftermath of rape; feelings cannot be processed at once, and phobias take certain feelings, like fear, and attach these to certain things (for example: if raped at a mall, a victim may be afraid to go to the mall); these are coping strategies and while distressing, they will fade when no longer needed
- Strong feelings -- guilt, anger, embarrassment, mood swings
- Disruptions -- in previous ways of relating to people, including family, of sexual style, of daily routine to work or school
- Escape -- desire to move, get away, change jobs or school
- Somatizing -- diverting feelings through the body (i.e., migraines or ulcers)
- Flashbacks -- many rape survivors will literally re-experience parts of the assault; physical pain may literally be felt again; this is a normal reaction
- Washing -- taking lots of showers or baths, trying to scrub the experience away; feelings of being dirty or contaminated
- Shame -- feeling that the rape was your fault; feeling that you will be blamed if others know; these are typical reactions, rape survivors need to be reassured that the assault was not their fault
- Denial or minimizing of the assault -- particularly if the assailant was an acquaintance; may focus on the sexual nature of the crime rather than on the motives of power and control

All symptoms will run their course. Although the reactions of depression, anger, fear, guilt, shame, and sadness are normal, these feelings are painful and will be the strongest for the first six to eight weeks, with marked



improvements at six months to one year. Eighteen months and three years are also markers. The primary symptoms are typically over in 12 to 18 months, but this varies greatly for each individual.

### **Post-Rape Phases**

There are three defined and overlapping phases that occur for most rape survivors:

1. **Phase One (Acute Phase):** You are in extreme stress or shock. May express great fear and anxiety and display some of the symptoms of rape trauma syndrome listed above. Some people may become very quiet and controlled in their response. Others may be all smiles and giggly. Still others may cry and become hysterical. There is no single reaction; it depends on your usual way of responding to stress. This phase may last hours or days.
2. **Phase Two:** You may appear to accept the fact of the rape and an attitude of "I've got to live with it" begins to emerge. You want to get on with the business of living and forgetting what happened. You still may experience a lot of the above symptoms. This phase may last weeks, months, or even years.
3. **Phase Three:** You begin to think increasingly about what happened. Some of the symptoms may return and you may become depressed, anxious, or fearful. You function less well generally; feel a need to talk about the sexual assault and resulting feelings.

### **Anniversary Reactions**

The first year anniversary reaction may onset up to ten days before, symptoms may reoccur, the day or the date is the most unsettled, but 48 to 72 hours later you will usually begin to feel better. Each year the reaction will usually continue to diminish and eventually stop.

Most survivors do not develop major sexual dysfunction after rape if they were healthy and sexually active before. Those not active before the sexual assault may have more problems because they have no "normal" history. Others can discard the experience as sexually aberrant.

### **Recovery from Sexual Assault Is Possible**

It is important that you know that what you are going through is normal and that recovery from sexual assault is possible. Each victim of sexual assault will be affected differently by the crisis and will find their own path to recovery. Recovery will be at different rates and in different manners depending upon their specific personality, the support network available to them, and the reactions of those with whom they first have contact with after the assault. It is important for you to make your own decisions and to regain control over your body and your life.

Rape Trauma Syndrome and Symptoms provided by:  
Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine  
24-Hour Hotline: 1-800-313-9900  
PO Box 1371, Portland, ME 04104  
PO Box 1605, Sanford, ME 04073  
[insofars@sarsonline.org](mailto:insofars@sarsonline.org) / [www.sarsonline.org](http://www.sarsonline.org)



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## **Information You May Need to Know After a Sexual Assault**

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**Q: How soon can a pregnancy test be scheduled after a sexual assault?**

A: Generally, 10 days to 2 weeks if you are going to a clinic. If you are getting over-the-counter pregnancy test, wait until your period is late. Free pregnancy testing is done through Birthright, (507) 387-7818. Low cost pregnancy testing can also be arranged through Planned Parenthood, (507) 387-5581; MSU Health Center, (507) 389-6146 (for MSU students); Mankato Clinic, (507) 625-1811; or your private physician. Note: Planned Parenthood will do pregnancy testing for rape victims on a walk-in basis, even if they are not regular Planned Parenthood clients. The victim needs to bring in a morning urine sample for the testing.

**Q: I think I am pregnant as a result of rape. I do not have the money for an abortion. Is there any way I can get assistance for this?**

A: There are no special funds set aside for abortions. However, there is information on abortion services in the telephone book and in the enclosed resource list.

**Q: What are the chances of getting pregnant as a result of being sexually assaulted?**

A: There are no truly accurate statistics on this. The chances of pregnancy can be influenced by a woman's health, age, regularity of their period, etc. Generally, the likelihood of pregnancy from one unprotected intercourse is low, although the probability goes up if the woman is in midpoint of her period.

**Q: Does the hospital emergency room have to report sexual assault to the police?**

A: No. Emergency room personnel are mandated only to report gunshot wounds, dog bites, knife wounds, and child abuse. However, parents of victims under the age of 16 must be notified. If you do go to the emergency room, a sexual assault resource team consisting of law enforcement, an advocate, and a trained nurse will respond. If the victim chooses not to speak with any of these people, he/she may tell them at that time.

**Q: Do I have to give the emergency room people my name, address, etc., or can I remain completely anonymous?**

A: You will need to sign a consent form in order to be treated. However, the information you provide is handled separately from all other patient data. It is very confidential. The Blue Earth County Sexual Violence Resource Center will pay the cost of the sexual assault exam if the assault occurred in Blue Earth County. All other medical bills for follow-up treatment can be submitted to the Minnesota Crime Victims Fund. In order to submit expenses to the Crime Victims Fund, the victim DOES have to report the incident to law enforcement. Blue Earth County SVRC does not pay for emergency STI treatment or pregnancy test in the emergency room if the kit is not done.

**Q: How should I report this to the police when it all happened so fast and I cannot remember anything?**

A: Any and all information given can provide valuable clues and help the police to identify possible patterns of high-risk areas. Police are highly trained in interview techniques, and you may be surprised at how much information you would be able to remember.



**Q: What good does it do to report this to the police if I would prefer that the incident not go to court?**

A: Reporting provides needed information and help in identification. Also, it may help in the identification and prosecution of another case. It also alerts other woman in the community that a sexual assault has happened in the community. You also have the right to go forward with charges or not.

**Q: How often are woman sexually assaulted by someone they know?**

A: It is estimated that 90 percent of victims knew the assailant at the time of the assault.

**Q: Is it really rape if you went to the assailant's apartment willingly or if you were on a date?**

A: Yes. Sexual assault is any act that happens without you giving consent. Accepting a date, leaving a bar with a man you just met, inviting your date in for a drink, or kissing your date DOES NOT mean you have given consent to be sexually assaulted. You have the right to say no and have it respected regardless of what is going on. Minnesota also recognizes rape between married couples. No means NO and no answer means no as well. Just your actions can be enough to mean no. If you were too afraid to resist or if you said no and the assailant continued to forcibly touch you, this also constitutes criminal sexual conduct.

**Q: I have heard about the morning after pill. What is it? How does it work? Can I have it prescribed for me?**

A: The name of the morning after pill is Plan B. If Plan B is started within 72 hours of the assault, preferable within 24 hours, this treatment is usually effective in preventing pregnancy. It is not, however, 100 percent effective. If you do not have a normal menstrual period within four weeks after taking the last tablet, you should contact your physician to determine if you are pregnant. IF you are, consult with your physician regarding continuation of the pregnancy. The morning after pill is a drug used to prevent pregnancy. It is used only in an emergency. It must be taken within three days, 72 hours of the assault in order to work. The morning after pill will not cause a miscarriage if you are already pregnant, but it could harm the baby. Prescribed: Yes, you can have it prescribed to you if you contact Planned Parenthood or call your own physician or clinic. The phone numbers are enclosed in the resource packet.

**Q: I am worried about a possible pregnancy from the rape, but I do not believe in abortion. What resources are there to help me decide what to do?**

A: Catholic Charities (pregnancy services), (507) 387-5586; Planned Parenthood, (507) 387-5581; and Birthright, (507) 387-7818, are all organizations that can help with the questions you may have about abortion or alternatives.

**Q: What if the attacker continues to harass me?**

A: Call the Law Enforcement Center or 911 immediately. The police can put a tap on your phone. There is a special law relating to annoying and obscene phone calls. Depending on the circumstances, an Order for Protection, a Restraining Order, or a Harassment Order may be available. The Sexual Violence Resource Center or the Clerk of Court can help you fill out the paperwork for these orders. IF the assailant has been charged and released on his own recognizance, they can be ordered back to jail for contacting you and violating these orders. If they threaten you or further harm you, they can also be charged with making terroristic threats of physical assault.



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## Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault

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### What are date rape drugs?

These are drugs that are sometimes used to assist in a sexual assault. Sexual assault is any type of sexual activity that a person does not agree to. It can include inappropriate touching, vaginal penetration, sexual intercourse, rape, and attempted rape. Because of the effects of these drugs, victims may be physically helpless, unable to refuse sex, and can't remember what happened. The drugs often have no color, smell, or taste and are easily added to flavored drinks without the victim's knowledge.

There are at least three date rape drugs:

- **GHB** (gamma hydroxybutyric acid), street terms include: Liquid Ecstasy, Liquid X, Easy Lay, Scoop, Georgia Home Boy, Goop. GHB has become popular among teens and young adults at dance clubs and raves; referred to as a "club drug." Body builders sometimes use GHB to "bulk up."
- **Rohypnol** (flunitrazepam), street terms include: roofies, R-2, Mexican Valium, circles. Rohypnol is also a "club drug."
- **Ketamine** (ketamine hydrochloride), street terms include: Special "K", K, green, cat Valium. Ketamine is also a "club drug."

Although we use the term "date rape," most experts prefer the term "drug-facilitated sexual assault." Experts refer to "date rape drugs" as "predatory drugs." These drugs have been used to help people commit other crimes, like robbery and physical assault, and have been used on both men and women.

### What do the drugs look like?

- GHB has a few forms: a liquid with no odor or color, white powder, and pill.
- Rohypnol is a pill and dissolves in liquids. New pills turn blue when added to liquids. However, the old pills, with no color, are still available.
- Ketamine is a white powder.

### What effects do these drugs have on the body?

The drugs can affect you quickly. The length of time that the effects last varies. It depends on how much of the drug is taken and if the drug is mixed with other substances, like alcohol. Alcohol can worsen the drug's effects and can cause more health problems. Also, one drug - GHB - can be made by people in their homes, so you don't know what's in it.

**GHB** GHB can cause these problems:

- |  |                      |                   |
|--|----------------------|-------------------|
| ▪ can't remember what happened while drugged | ▪ drowsiness         | ▪ slow heart rate |
| ▪ coma                                       | ▪ nausea             | ▪ sweating        |
|  | ▪ problems breathing | ▪ tremors         |
|  | ▪ problems seeing    | ▪ unconsciousness |



- death
- dizziness
- dream-like feeling
- relaxation
- seizures
- vomiting

**Rohypnol** Rohypnol can cause these problems:

- can't remember what happened while drugged
- confusion
- difficulty with motor movements
- dizziness
- drunk feeling
- loss of consciousness
- lower blood pressure
- muscle relaxation or loss of muscle control
- nausea
- problems seeing
- problems talking
- sleepiness
- stomach problems

**Ketamine** Ketamine can cause these problems:

- aggressive or violent behavior
- convulsions
- distorted perceptions of sight and sound
- dream-like feeling
- feeling out of control
- hallucinations impaired
- motor function
- loss of coordination
- lost sense of time and identity
- memory problems
- numbness
- out of body experiences
- problems breathing
- slurred speech
- vomiting

**Are these drugs legal in the United States?**

Some of these drugs are legal, but that doesn't mean they're not going to hurt you. Even if they're legal, you should not use them unless your health care provider prescribes them.

- *Rohypnol* is NOT legal in the U.S. It is legal in Europe and Mexico and prescribed for sleep problems and as an anesthetic (medicine given during surgery so you don't feel pain). It is brought into the U.S. illegally.
- *Ketamine* is legal in the U.S. for use as an anesthetic for humans and animals. It is mostly used on animals. Veterinary clinics are often robbed for their Ketamine supply.
- *GHB* was recently made legal in the U.S. to treat problems from insomnia (a sleep problem).

**Is alcohol a date rape drug?**

While GHB, rohypnol, and ketamine are considered "date rape drugs," there are other drugs that affect judgment and behavior, and can put a person at risk for unwanted or risky sexual activity. Alcohol is one of those drugs. When a person is drinking alcohol:

- It's harder to think clearly and evaluate a potentially dangerous situation.
- It's harder to resist sexual or physical assault.
- Drinking too much alcohol can also cause black-outs and memory loss.

But remember: even if a victim of sexual assault drank alcohol, they are not at fault for being assaulted.



**How can I protect myself from being a victim?**

- Don't accept drinks from other people.
- Open containers yourself.
- Keep your drink with you at all times, even when you go to the bathroom.
- Don't share drinks.
- Don't drink from punch bowls or other large, common, open containers. They may already have drugs in them.
- Don't drink anything that tastes or smells strange. Sometimes, GHB tastes salty.
- Have a non-drinking/sober friend with you to make sure nothing happens.
- If you think that you have been drugged and raped, go to the police station or hospital right away.
- Get a urine (pee) test as soon as possible. The drugs leave your system quickly. Rohypnol leaves your body 72 hours after you take it. GHB leaves the body in 12 hours.
- Don't urinate before getting help.
- Don't douche, bathe, or change clothes before getting help. These things may give evidence of the rape.
- You also can call a crisis center or a hotline to talk with a counselor. One national hotline is the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE or 800-787-3224 (TDD). Feelings of shame, guilt, fear, and shock are normal. It is important to get counseling from a trusted professional.

*All information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (<http://www.hhs.gov>) and the Drug Enforcement Administration, DOJ (<http://www.usdoj.gov/dea>)*

For more information, Contact the National Women's Health Information Center at 1-800-994-9662 or the following organizations:

**Drug Enforcement Administration, DOJ**

Phone: (202) 307-1000  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/dea>

**National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIH, HHS**

Phone/Hotline: (800) 662-4357  
Spanish Language Hotline: (800) 662-9832  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov>

**Food and Drug Administration, OPHS, HHS**

Phone: (800) 332-4010  
Consumer Information Hotline:  
(888) 463-6332  
<http://www.fda.gov/>

**Office of National Drug Control Policy**

Phone: (800) 666-3332  
(Clearinghouse)  
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>

**Men Can Stop Rape**

Phone: (202) 265-6530  
<http://www.mencanstoprape.org>

**National Center For Victims of Crime**

Phone: (800) 394-2255  
<http://www.ncvc.org>

**Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network**

Phone: (800) 656-4673  
<http://www.rainn.org>



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## **Surviving to Thriving: Healing and Hope for Survivors of Sexual Violence**

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*By Jes, creator of [www.survivingtothriving.org](http://www.survivingtothriving.org)*

*"Each fear that I accept makes my world a bit smaller." - Thalia Zepatos*

### **Triggers, Panic Attacks, and Flashbacks**

After I was raped, I was surprised to find myself being reminded of the experience constantly. These reminders, which I soon found out were called triggers, were incredibly intrusive. A simple word sometimes can still leave me feeling anxious or sad. When I heard my rapist's very common last name spoken over a loudspeaker, I was brought back into my bedroom, screaming for Bill. Even things not related to the attack brought on panic attacks. For instance, I woke up late for work one morning and found myself in the midst of a terrifying panic attack. Simply feeling out of control had brought those feelings out in me again. It takes hard work to learn to cope with these feelings, but we are capable of understanding and mastering them.

### **Flashbacks**

Flashbacks occur when we are triggered to remember what happened. A flashback can be a terribly frightening experience, involving all of the senses. Many survivors say that they can see, hear, smell, and feel everything that had happened to them during a flashback. After a traumatic experience, it is not unusual for us to block part of the memory, banish it from consciousness. Sometimes a forgotten memory of rape or abuse will resurface in the form of a flashback, which can be particularly terrifying and confusing. Often, flashbacks have something to tell us and they present themselves to let us know that part of the trauma is waiting to be resolved. If you are having flashbacks, I urge you to find a safe place to think about them or talk about them. Counseling is an especially important option since flashbacks can be a symptom of post traumatic stress syndrome.

### **Dealing With Flashbacks**

- Recognize what triggers flashbacks for you. Our triggers are all personal. For some, drinking out of a bottle can trigger a flashback. Others say that hearing words spoken during the rape or abuse can cause a flashback. For me, hearing "Me and A Gun" can send me right into one.
- I carry a rock with me when I'm feeling triggerry and when I have a flashback, it helps to hold onto it because it provides a sense of stability.
- Try to remind yourself of your surroundings. Open your eyes and look around, telling yourself that you are safe can help.
- After the flashback is over, try to understand it. They are terrifying, but usually a sign that we are ready to remember and feel the emotions connected to what has happened to us.

### **Panic Attacks**

A panic or anxiety attack is a radical and quick acting physiological reaction the human body can have when we feel fear. As people who have known true and profound fear, we survivors are more prone to them than most. If you have them, you are not alone. Most survivors have had them.

### **Signs of a Panic Attack**

- Your heart may be beating quickly or seem to be skipping beats.
- You may have difficulty breathing or catching your breath.
- Constant shaking and/or twitching.



- You may feel like you can't think straight, like you can't make decisions or have too many thoughts bouncing around in your head.
- Your mouth may become dry and you may find it hard to swallow.
- You may feel tingling in the hands, feet, or other parts of the body (I get it in my back).
- Tense muscles, clenched jaws.

There are many more, but these are some of the major ones. Keep in mind, you don't need to have all of these to be having a panic attack. A friend of mine only has difficulty breathing, but she was diagnosed as having panic attacks. If you have some of these symptoms, I hope you'll talk to a counselor about them.

### **Thoughts on Confronting Panic Attacks**

- It's okay to be having them. It doesn't make you weird or abnormal. You'd be surprised at how many people have them.
- Many of us fear having one in public, at work or school, etc. First of all, even though you feel like you are going nuts, there are few outward symptoms. If you are scared of having one in public, give yourself permission to go to the bathroom and spend some time by yourself.
- A lot of people are terrified of having them. Look at it as practice, to gain control of them and learn techniques to deal with them, what works, what doesn't. Fearing them gives the panic reaction more power over you than it deserves.
- Putting pressure on yourself to deal with them RIGHT now is not a great idea. It makes them worse. Try and give yourself permission to have them wherever you are. Find a quiet place, go to the bathroom, go outside. Do whatever makes you comfortable.
- If you are going to be in a stressful situation and fear panicking, it may help to visualize yourself going through the experience calmly before it actually occurs.

### **If You Are Panicking**

- Take deep breaths from the stomach, not the lungs. Lie down and watch your tummy move up and down to practice these deep breaths. Someone gave the tip of lying down with a book on your stomach and watching the book.
- I try to stay focused on my breathing by counting the breaths or just thinking.
- I might inhale and think "focused," exhale and think "centered."
- Sometimes I inhale and think, "It's going to be..." Exhale... "Okay."
- Simple repetitive tasks can help. At work, I used to make flashcards for my students, which is dull but focusing. One good idea might be to organize all of the change in your pockets. Put the pennies in year order, then the nickels, then all dimes, then the quarters. Just a stupid non-thinking but focusing task. Count how many people are wearing red and how many are wearing blue and compare the numbers.
- Herbal remedies have helped me. Lavender essential oil is a very calming scent. I used to wear it constantly. In addition, I like Rescue Remedy, which is a natural solution for stressful moments. However, my doctor did prescribe medication for me and I carried it around with me for months, just in case I had an attack.

While you try these, it's important to think positively. Thinking "Why isn't this working?" or "It has to start working!" doesn't help and makes the situation worse. It may take a few minutes, it may take more. That doesn't mean that you are doing anything wrong. It just means that it's taking time. Also, getting to know your physical symptoms helps. I know that the first sign of an attack is tingling in my back and my hair standing up on end. If that happens, I start breathing right away, making tea for myself or trying a herbal remedy.



## **Sleeping and Nightmares**

After my rape, I had a lot of difficulty falling asleep and when I finally did, my sleep was sometimes interrupted by nightmares. I've found that this is really common among survivors. Most of us experience these problems at some point in time in our healing.

### **Sleeping Tips**

- Wake early to exercise. I find that going to the gym in the morning gives me enough energy to start my whole day again.
- Make sure you use your bedroom for sleeping only. If you live in a college dormitory or with your family, try to use your desk for activities like studying and reading.
- Make a bedtime ritual. I usually drink a cup of Celestial Seasoning's Sleepytime Extra. It has herbs in it to aid sleep; but since it is a ritual, I feel like it sends my body a signal saying, "Sleep is coming."
- Some people find that natural remedies, like Valerian, Kava Kava, and Melatonin, which can be found at your health food store help. Others find that melatonin, in particular, causes nightmares.
- Avoid caffeinated beverages in the afternoon.
- Alcohol might make you fall asleep, but you'll probably wake up before long, so try to avoid drinking before bed.
- Avoid exciting activities before bed. Watching exciting movies or playing competitive games doesn't put most of us in the mood for sleep.
- Lock your bedroom door if it makes you feel safer. Sometimes I'll picture people I love standing outside the door, ready to protect me. (Silly, I know, but it helps me feel safe.)
- Daydream when you get into bed. I usually daydream about being at the beach, watching the sunset, which sometimes brings me into a dream.
- Relax each muscle, starting with your feet, and working up the rest of your body.
- Sleep with a stuffed animal.
- Wear lavender oil to bed. It's a really calming scent. I dab it onto my pillowcases and there are lavender washes that you can buy to scent your sheets.
- If you have difficulty falling asleep or sometimes wake up in the middle of the night, make sure that a quiet, relaxing activity is available to you, like a rather dull book. Try doing this instead of lying in bed awake.

### **Nightmares**

After I was raped, I was often woken up by nightmares. The most common one I had was of an attacker outside of my bedroom door or standing above my bed, but I had lots of other more complex and difficult ones. Reliving the trauma through our dreams is common for all of us and is a normal part of the healing process. That doesn't make it fun though. I hope you'll find these ideas helpful.

- When you wake up, write the nightmare down.
- Alternately, you could try drawing or painting it.

Usually, when I am awoken by a bad dream, I'll try to imagine it ending differently. For instance, when I dream that there is someone outside my door, I'll look around and wake up enough to feel safe. Then I immediately put my head down and imagine that my dog is chasing the attacker out of the house. Usually this will become a dream and I'll end up falling asleep.

- At other times, I'm able to somehow consciously control my dream without ever waking up.
- Talk about them with a trusted friend or counselor. Talking about them can give them less control over us.



- Try to understand them. They are an important part of healing and usually have something to tell us about any unresolved feelings we have. Understanding our nightmares and dreams can be a step towards identifying these emotions and resolving them. You can do this just by thinking about what the nightmares meant to you or by looking at dream books to find the symbolism in them.

### **Questions**

Triggers are difficult to face because they can produce extraordinary difficult reactions in us, ranging from discomfort and anxiety to panic attacks or flashbacks. However, most of us would like to live without being triggered, which can require us to confront our triggers and really work on them. Below are questions meant to aid you in understanding and facing your triggers.

- What specifically triggers you? Our triggers are all unique. Some women find that phrases the abuser used are triggering, while others find that places, smells, or sights provoke a response.
- How are these triggers affecting you? Nightmares, flashbacks, panic attacks, anxiety, and intrusive thoughts can all be signs that we are being triggered.
- Which triggers produce the biggest response? Which triggers provoke a milder response? It may help to actually rate them.
- How do these triggers interfere with your life? Some people find that they avoid specific places where they are likely to be triggered. Others find that they do not go out often to avoid a trigger response.
- Which triggers interfere with your life the most? Which ones interfere the least?
- Which triggers are probably unsafe? Which triggers are safe to work on? For example, going out alone at night produces anxiety in some survivors and this may be very unsafe. Going to the grocery store might produce the same reaction, but it is probably safe.
- Can you evaluate your trigger? For instance, I was initially frightened to go to work, but after thinking about the worst that could happen and the likelihood of that happening, I decided that it was a safe place for me to start. This kind of evaluation process can help with all sorts of triggers.
- After thinking about your triggers, which ones can you manage to work on at the moment? It's probably not a great idea to work on the most difficult to face trigger because those are tough.
- How can you work on facing the trigger safely? Sometimes it helps to actually imagine yourself handling a situation that triggers you, like going to a crowded place, before you actually do it.
- Can you make a plan to keep yourself feeling safe while you do? I have worked on a lot of triggers with the help of a counselor or my partner, which helps me feel prepared when I am facing a trigger.
- How did you feel as you faced your trigger? It may have been uncomfortable but could you do it again? What helped? What made you feel more uncomfortable?

I hope these suggestions help you. Panic attacks, nightmares, and flashbacks feel horrible; but you can overcome them.



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## **Criminal Justice Procedures: Adult Criminal Cases**

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Sexual assault is a crime and therefore it is the responsibility of the State to prosecute the offender. The criminal justice procedures dealing with sexual assault can be a very long and confusing process; but hopefully, in the end, justice will be served. If you decide to report the assault, it is important that you know what lies ahead in the criminal justice procedures – you should know that the journey will not be easy and that the Blue Earth County Sexual Violence Resource Center is there to support you throughout the process.

Listed below are the steps of the criminal justice procedures for sexual assault. Keep in mind that each case is different as is each victim's experience with the process. However, if you have a general idea of the criminal justice procedures, you will be able to understand a hint of what lies ahead.

### **Reporting to the Police**

The sooner you report to the police, the more likely you will be successful in prosecuting. However, it is important to remember that once you report your assault, the case becomes a "state case." You may have the option to have the case dismissed at a later date if you so choose. It is ultimately the attorney's decision if the case will be prosecuted, dismissed, declined, or amended. You are now a witness in a state case prosecuted by the Blue Earth County Attorney's Office. In the initial report, the officer that answers the call will want to know a brief summary of the crime, including when and where it occurred; your name, age, address, and occupation. The officer will also ask for a description (or name) of the assailant. The officer may also ask some personal questions, not because the officer is interested, but to have enough evidence to assist in the prosecution phase.

### **The Investigation**

Once the case is assigned to an officer, he or she will want to do an in-depth interview with you. Since this is one of the more important parts of the investigation, it will be detailed and thorough. If you have any scratches, bruises, or any other signs of attack on your body, photographs will be taken. If you do not know the assailant, you may be asked to look at photographs or asked to work out a composite sketch with the police artist for identification purposes. In this interview, you will be asked to relive your assault; it is not because the officer wants to re-victimize you but to make sure all the information and evidence is collected properly and efficiently.

You may also want to have a forensic exam done at Immanuel-St. Joseph's Hospital. A trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner will conduct the exam in an attempt to find protein (DNA) to assist in the positive identification of the perpetrator. This will also assist the Blue Earth County Attorney's Office for prosecution purposes. This exam can only be performed within 72 hours of the assault and will be paid for by Blue Earth County.

### **The Arrest**

The investigator will be working on apprehending the suspect. If you do not know the assailant, you may be asked to pick the suspect out of a police lineup. The suspect may be held until he/she appears before a judge and could also be held on bail.

### **Prosecution**

**Filing Charges** The police report, along with the medical report (if applicable), will be sent to the Blue Earth County Attorney's Office where they will decide if there is enough evidence to prosecute the case. If it has been decided that there is enough evidence to prosecute, the attorney has the option, based on the police report, statements of each/all parties, and the evidence to charge or decline the case. If the Assistant County Attorney decides to charge the offender, he/she will draft a complaint formally charging the offender with a crime. This begins the court process. The offender will have many hearings prior to a court or jury trial or a plea. These



proceedings will likely take a year or more. Should the case go to a court or jury trial, the Assistant County Attorney or the Blue Earth County Victim/Witness Coordinator will explain to you the trial process, how to testify at the trial, and what the Defendant (the assailant) may use as a defense. This is done so you will be prepared for anything you might be asked at trial. There is a possibility that the County Attorney's Office will decide not to prosecute the case – this does not mean that they do not believe you. Oftentimes, it just means that they did not feel there was enough evidence to successfully try the case "beyond a reasonable doubt." Sexual assault cases are extremely difficult to prove in court without evidence. If you strongly disagree with the County Attorney's Office decision not to try the case, you can ask for reconsideration of the case; but there is no guarantee their decision will change. **YOU DO HAVE THE RIGHT TO REQUEST A COPY OF THE STATEMENT YOU PROVIDED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT.**

**Arraignment/Rule 8** The arraignment hearing is when the Defendant appears before the judge where the Defendant will be given their release conditions, decide their representation, and given their next hearing date.

**Omnibus/Contested Omnibus** Omnibus hearings will follow the arraignment hearing(s). An omnibus hearing is a court proceeding in which the Defendant, defense attorney, and the prosecuting attorney will present information to the judge regarding probable cause. A contested omnibus is a hearing where the defense attorney has legal/constitutional issues as to how the incident was investigated. Officers may be required to testify to the events that occurred on the day of the incident. The judge will hear testimony regarding the case and make a ruling as to what is and what is not admissible in the next court proceeding, which will usually result in a court or jury trial.

**Pretrial Hearing** A pretrial hearing is usually scheduled three to ten days prior to the court or jury trial. The purpose of this hearing is to go over the jury instructions, admissibility of evidence, or possibly take a plea.

**Plea Bargaining** Plea bargaining can take place between the County Attorney and the defense attorney. If an agreement is met, there will be no need for a trial. The attorney has the final say as to whether a plea will be accepted or not. You should be notified by the Blue Earth County Attorney's Office if a plea has been negotiated, accepted, or denied. **YOUR INPUT IS IMPORTANT. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE TO INFORM THEM OF YOUR FEELINGS/CONCERNS ABOUT THE PLEA AGREEMENT.**

**Trial** The defense chooses whether the trial will be held before a court judge (bench trial), at which there is no jury, or before a judge and jury of 12 people (jury trial). At a court trial, the judge listens to the case and makes a determination of guilty or not guilty. If the defense chooses a jury trial, the prosecution and the defense will pick a jury of 12 people from a pool of potential jurors. The jury will make the determination of guilty or not guilty in a jury trial. During the trial, you will be asked to testify (along with other witnesses; because of the Fifth Amendment, the Defendant does not have to testify at the trial). Once again, you will have to relive your assault. You will be subject to cross examination from the defense attorney. During the cross examination, the defense attorney will be looking for holes in your story and ways to dispute what you testify to. It is a good idea to go over your statement and speak to the Blue Earth County Victim/Witness Coordinator and/or Blue Earth County Sexual Violence Resource Center advocate before the trial so you can have some idea what to expect so the trial will not be as painful for you.

### **Post-Trial Events**

If the Defendant was found guilty or pled guilty, he or she will be sentenced. Prior to the sentencing hearing, a representative from Community Corrections will be putting together a pre-sentence investigation (PSI). The PSI will contain recommendations to the Court regarding the Defendant's criminal history, recommended sentence, and information from you. The Community Corrections agent should also inform you of your right to provide the Court with a Victim Impact Statement and an Affidavit for Restitution (see brochures in this packet).



The Defendant, if found guilty by a jury or judge, has the right to appeal the case. If the case is appealed, it will go to the Appellate Court along with arguments by the prosecutor and defense attorney.

If the Defendant is found not guilty, that does not mean that no crime was committed nor does it mean that the jury did not believe the victim. A not guilty verdict means that the jury did not hear enough evidence to be certain, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the Defendant was guilty as charged. If the verdict is not guilty, please consult with the advocate or your therapist, if you are seeing one.

### **Civil Trial**

Regardless of the verdict from the trial, you have the right to sue for damages as a result of the sexual assault. If you wish to do so, you must hire a private attorney to try the case.

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## **The Juvenile Court Process**

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### **How Juvenile Cases are Handled**

In a juvenile case, the victim does not bring charges against the accused. A crime is considered a wrong against the State. The County Attorney may file a petition against the juvenile charging him or her with a crime on behalf of the state. In some situations, when a crime has been committed a law enforcement officer will issue a ticket, also called a citation.

A delinquent act is an act committed by a juvenile that would be a crime if committed by a person over age 18. When a juvenile has been charged with a delinquent act, the legal process is significantly different from the process used for adults. In some situations minor offenses are considered juvenile petty offenses instead of delinquencies.

The juvenile justice system works to treat and rehabilitate juvenile offenders. In addition, juvenile courts generally move more quickly to resolve cases and provide the accused more privacy than adults charged with similar crimes.

### **Investigation and Charging**

A crime committed by a juvenile is investigated like any other crime. After the crime is reported, the officer conducts an investigation. If the investigation indicates a crime has occurred the case is then either referred to the County Attorney to decide if there is enough evidence to prosecute the case or the law enforcement officer may issue a citation. Next, the county attorney's staff will review the information, decide whether the evidence supports charges, and if so, file charges. If there is not enough evidence, the case may be declined or returned to the officer for additional investigation.

### **Detention**

In some situations, a juvenile may be taken into custody and detained. The police officer may release the juvenile to the custody of a parent or guardian or continue to place the juvenile in a detention facility. The law requires that a juvenile be released from detention unless certain extreme circumstances exist. Most juveniles in detention must come before the court within 36 hours for detention hearing. Most juvenile offenders are not detained. They are summoned to court by a mailed notice.

Blue Earth County also offers a Youth Diversion Program for some juvenile first time offenders ages 10-17. The Youth Diversion Program allows the juvenile to complete probationary consequences for his or her behavior and avoid going through District Court. Consequences given in the Youth Diversion program may be a



supervised probationary period, juvenile work crew, community service hours, fines, and counseling. If the juvenile offender does not complete the required tasks in the time given, he or she will be referred to court.

### **Locations of Hearings**

The hearings may take place in different locations. A juvenile offender's arraignment hearing, pretrial hearing and trial generally occur in the county where the crime was committed. The disposition hearing often takes place in the county of residence.

### **Arraignment**

At the arraignment hearing, the juvenile will appear in court and be asked to "admit" or "deny" the offense alleged in the petition. If the juvenile is charged with a delinquency offense, the court appoints an attorney to represent them at the arraignment hearing. Upon a guilty plea, the juvenile's case goes to disposition otherwise known as sentencing, either immediately or in the future. A not guilty plea leads to a pre-trial.

### **Pre-trial Hearing**

In some jurisdictions, the defense may request a contested pretrial hearing to decide issues of law before trial. Citizen witnesses are usually not called to testify at these hearings. The juvenile may enter a plea at this hearing.

### **Trial**

In most cases, juvenile trials are held before the judge. However, in some rare instances, a juvenile has a right to a jury trial. A juvenile offender otherwise has the same legal protections during trial as an adult charged with a similar crime. The judge or jury will make a determination that the petition is "proven" or "not proven". If the judge finds that the petition has been proven, the case proceeds to a disposition hearing.

### **Disposition Hearings**

If the juvenile is found guilty or enters an admission, a disposition hearing is scheduled. Disposition hearings are otherwise known as sentencing in adult court. The judge has many options including probation, restitution, juvenile work crew, community service, house arrest, foster care and out-of-home placement. There is no jail time unless the juvenile commits a felony and is tried as an adult. The disposition will depend on the seriousness of the offense, the juvenile's criminal history, availability of appropriate services and other relevant factors.

### **Crime Victims and Juvenile Hearings**

Minnesota law (Minn. Statutes Sec. 260B.163, 1(c) and 260B.163, 1(c)(2)) prohibits the public from attending juvenile hearings in most cases. However, the court can grant exceptions to this rule:

- If a person has a direct interest in the case, such as a crime victim;
- A victim has the right to attend the disposition hearing;
- If a juvenile is alleged to have committed an offense or has been proven to have committed an offense that is a felony and was at least 16 years old at the time of the offense;
- If a person has a direct involvement in the work of the court;

If you would like to attend a juvenile hearing, please contact the Sexual Violence Resource Center for information.



**Medical Expenses? Loss of Property? Counseling Expenses? Out-of-Pocket Expenses?**

Victims can request the court to order the juvenile to pay restitution if the juvenile is found to have committed the offense. The Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Board helps victims and their families ease the financial burden they face as a result of a violent crime. The Board provides financial assistance to reimburse victims for their out-of-pocket losses suffered as a direct result of the crime.

Crimes covered by the program include: homicide, assault, child abuse, sexual assault, robbery, kidnapping, domestic abuse, stalking, criminal vehicular operation and drunk driving. The incident must be a crime involving an injury or death. The program does not compensate victims of property crimes or pay for property damaged during a violent crime. The crime must also have occurred in Minnesota. The program does not provide coverage to Minnesota residents who are injured in other countries, unless the crime was an act of international terrorism.

In order to qualify for financial assistance under this program, a claim form must be sent to the Crime Victims Reparations Board within 3 years of the crime and the victim must have reported the crime to the police within 30 days (some exceptions apply). The victim must cooperate fully with the investigation and prosecution of the case. The victim cannot have been committing a crime or any misconduct that is connected to the incident.

For more information about your right or the juvenile court process, contact:

Blue Earth County Attorney's Office  
Mark A. Lindahl  
410 S. Fifth Street  
PO Box 3129  
Mankato, MN 56002  
Telephone: 507-304-4352

Blue Earth County Sexual Violence Resource Center  
Jayme Jackson  
410 S. Fifth Street  
Mankato MN 56002  
Telephone: 507-304-4295

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**The Civil Court Option**

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In addition to the fact that many sexual assaults are criminal offenses, they are also violations of civil law. This means that when an individual has been sexually assaulted, he or she may sue for damages in civil court as well as reporting to law enforcement for a criminal investigation. A big difference between criminal and civil court is that the burden for winning civil damages is lower – a preponderance of evidence – than in criminal court, which requires proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

When a person sues civilly, the purpose is to win money damages from the offender to pay for medical or counseling bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, and possibly as a means of punishing the offender by ordering payment of money. For this reason, civil attorneys will usually only sue an offender who has the ability to pay large sums of damages as the attorney's fee is based on the money damage award. Thus, only a small percentage of cases of sexual assault result in civil court proceedings as well.

**Harassment Restraining Order and Order for Protection**

Another form of civil remedy besides suing for damages is to obtain a harassment restraining order (HRO) or Order for Protection (OFP). The purpose of these documents is to have a court order that the offender has no contact with the victim/survivor, including staying away from the residence or work place. Violation of these orders is a crime with punishment depending upon whether the offender has violated similar orders in the past.



The Blue Earth County Sexual Violence Resource Center can assist you with obtaining an HRO or OFP. Either document may be used if sexual assault took place, but there are some differences. An HRO is used where there is little or no relationship between the offender and the victim/survivor. Thus, where they live in separate households or have been dating for a short time, an HRO is probably appropriate. An OFP is used where the two people live in the same household, have a child in common, or have a significant dating relationship.

**For More Information**

For more information, please contact the Blue Earth County Sexual Violence Resource Center at 507-304-4295.

*Information taken from Sexual Violence Justice Institute at [http://www.mncasa.org/svji\\_legal\\_civil.html](http://www.mncasa.org/svji_legal_civil.html).*

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## **The Crime Victim Justice Unit (CVJU): A Walk Through**

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The Crime Victim Justice Unit (CVJU) investigates complaints from crime victims who feel they have been mistreated by criminal justice personnel or victim service agencies. The following is a walk through of the investigation of a complaint submitted to the CVJU. In this process, the CVJU determines whether there has been victim mistreatment or a statutory rights violation under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 611A.

**“Hello, this is the Crime Victim Justice Unit.”**  
The majority of complaints make their first contact with the CVJU office by telephone.



**Telephone Assistance**  
CVJU staff members answer questions about the criminal justice system, connect the caller to resources, make suggestions and provide options to address the issues.  
  
Oftentimes, just by explaining the process, the CVJU staff can reassure the caller that the case is progressing in a typical and appropriate fashion.  
  
In those cases in which the caller would like to file a complaint, the CVJU sends a complaint form.



**Forms Come Into CVJU Office**  
CVJU staff review the complaint forms that come into the office. After a basic screening to ensure that the complainant is a victim of a crime, a case file is opened.



**Getting Documents**  
The first step is to request documents from the agency that is the subject of the complaint, such as a law enforcement agency or prosecutor's office. The CVJU has statutory authority to request these documents and the agency has ten business days to respond.





*The Crime Victim Justice Unit: A Walk Through continued from previous page*



**Investigative Process**  
The primary steps in an investigation include: reviewing documents from the relevant agencies, interviewing agency personnel, and interviewing the complainant and other individuals.



**Assessment**  
The CVJU makes a determination, based on the investigation, whether there was victim mistreatment or a violation of any victim rights under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 611A.



**Communicating the Findings**  
The CVJU communicates the results of the investigation in writing to the complainant and the subject agency.



**Outcomes**



**Statutory Rights Violation and/or Victim Mistreatment**  
If there has been a finding of a statutory rights violation or victim mistreatment, the CVJU sends either a formal report or a detailed letter to the subject agency explaining the finding and making recommendations for change as appropriate. The agency has 30 days to respond, after which the complainant is sent a copy of the report or letter along with a copy of the response from the agency.



**No Violation or Mistreatment**  
If there has been no finding of a statutory rights violation or victim mistreatment, the complainant is notified either by a formal report or by letter. The subject agency is sent a copy of this at the same time.



**Case File Closed**  
After all parties have been notified and have had an opportunity to respond, the case file is closed.



## **Facts About Sexual Assault and AIDS**

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Sexual assault is a terrifying experience which may leave you feeling hurt, angry, humiliated, and violated. Added to the trauma of the assault is the fear of pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and AIDS. Although the likelihood of pregnancy or contracting an infection, including AIDS, is low with only one act of forced sexual contact, the Sexual Violence Resource Center advises that you seek prompt medical attention following an assault to completely rule out the possibility.

The following data is from the San Francisco Forensic AIDS Project and provides facts about sexual assault and AIDS.

- If the emergency physician feels that there is a risk for transmission of AIDS, he may ask you to take an HIV test. It is your choice whether or not you have the test done at this time.
- The chances of contracting AIDS from one incident of forced sexual contact are very low, even if the assailant has the AIDS virus.
- There is no evidence to suggest that sexual offenders, as a group, are at any higher risk than the general population for carrying AIDS.
- The likelihood of an assailant having AIDS increases if the assailant is promiscuous or an intravenous drug user.
- Although there is only a small chance of contracting AIDS from sexual assault, it is important to seek follow-up testing. It is possible to be tested as early as three months after the assault; however, more accurate test results can be obtained by testing at six months and one year intervals after the assault.
- Factors that might make a victim somewhat more susceptible to contracting AIDS may include: menstruating at the time of the assault, forced intercourse resulting in vaginal or anal tearing, anal intercourse, or if the victim already has an STD/STI at the time of the assault.

### **AIDS/STI TESTING**

Local testing for AIDS and STIs is available at:  
Immanuel-St. Joseph's Hospital  
Open Door  
and  
Planned Parenthood

Counseling and testing for AIDS by appointment only.

Should you have any other questions, contact:  
**MN AIDS Hotline: (612) 373-AIDS or 1-800-248-AIDS**  
**CDC National AIDS Hotline: 1-800-342-2437**



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## **Examples of How a Partner Tries to Gain Power and Control**

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### **Isolation**

- Forbids you to talk with your friends
- Accuses you of cheating
- Decides the social and school activities in which you will participate
- Discredits your parents'/friends' advice
- Encourages you to turn against your parents/friends

### **Emotional Abuse**

- Puts you down or makes you feel bad about yourself
- Breaks dates or cancels plans without any reason
- Embarrasses you in front of family and friends
- Uses words or tells jokes that humiliate you
- Uses drugs or alcohol to excuse abusive behavior
- Changes moods abruptly

### **Sexual Abuse**

- Pressures you to engage in sexual activity
- Spreads rumors about your sexual behavior
- Puts down or makes fun of your sexual behavior

### **Threats**

- Threatens to hurt you if you decide to break up
- Threatens to commit suicide when you talk of breaking up
- Threatens to hurt others who talk to you
- Threatens your family and friends

### **Bossy**

- Makes all the decisions in the relationship
- Speeds or drives recklessly to scare you
- Uses a loud or intimidating tone of voice
- Calls repeatedly to check up on you or to harass you

### **Intimidation**

- Destroys your personal belongings
- Speeds or drives recklessly to scare you
- Uses a loud or intimidating tone of voice
- Calls repeatedly to check up on you or to harass you

### **Stalking**

- Frequently follows you
- Makes persistent and unwanted contacts
- Leaves messages intended to show that you are being watched

Excerpted from <http://www.wvdhhr.org/bph/trust/examples.htm>



## STI/STD Facts & Information

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### **Vaginitis**

(most common causes: Yeast infection, Trichomonas, Bacterial vaginosis)

#### **Signs and Symptoms**

##### Vaginal Symptoms for Women:

- Itching, burning, or pain in vagina
- More discharge than normal
- Discharge may have foul odor and/or looks different
- Some women have no symptoms

##### Men can acquire germs which cause vaginitis in women.

- Discharge and mild discomfort in penis
- Most have no symptoms, but still spread germs

#### **Transmission**

##### Some forms of Vaginitis can be spread by:

- Vaginal sex
- Oral sex
- Anal sex
- Men who carry germs which cause vaginitis

#### **Complications/Consequences**

##### If Vaginitis is Left Untreated:

- Uncomfortable symptoms will continue
- Men can get infections in the prostate gland and urethra
- Can be spread to other sex partners
- May contribute to pelvic inflammatory disease
- If pregnant, can lead to premature delivery

#### **Prevention**

##### Recommendations to Reduce the Spread of Vaginitis (particularly Trichomonas):

- Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of transmission of trichomoniasis
- Always use latex condoms during vaginal and anal sex
- Use a latex condom for oral sex on a vagina or anus (dental dam or condom cut in half)
- Limit the number of sexual partners
- Get a test from a doctor or other medical provider if infection suspected
- Notify sexual partners immediately if infected
- Infected sexual partners should be treated (not needed for yeast infection or bacterial vaginitis)

#### **Treatment**

##### Treatment of Vaginitis:

- Vaginitis can be cured with proper medication from a doctor
- For Trichomonas, infected partners should be treated at same time
- For Trichomonas, inform doctor if you are or may be pregnant.

##### Treatment of Yeast Infection:

- Nonprescription medication available at pharmacy should be used only by women who have had previous yeast infections diagnosed by physician



**Syphilis** ("Syph", "The Pox")  
(caused by *Treponema pallidum*, a bacteria)

### **Signs and Symptoms**

#### 1st Stage (primary syphilis)

Symptoms show up 1-12 weeks after exposure

- A painless, open sore on the mouth, sex organs or anus
- Sores can be "hidden" in the vagina or rectum; sores last 1-5 weeks
- Sores go away, but syphilis is still in the blood

#### 2nd Stage (secondary syphilis)

- Symptoms show up 6 weeks to 6 months after sore appears
- A rash anywhere on the body
- Flu-like symptoms

#### Latent Stage

- No sores or rashes, but syphilis is still in the blood and can affect the heart, brain and other organs over time (tertiary syphilis)

### **Transmission**

#### Syphilis is Spread by:

- Vaginal sex
- Oral sex
- Anal sex
- Infected mother to newborn

### **Complications/Consequences**

#### If Left Untreated, Syphilis Can Cause:

- Heart disease
- Blindness
- Brain damage

#### Syphilis During Pregnancy May Cause:

- Stillbirths (in pregnant women)
- Congenital birth defects
- Severe damage to bones, brain, lungs, liver and other organs in infected infants

### **Prevention**

#### Recommendations to Reduce the Spread of Syphilis:

- Genital ulcer diseases can occur in genital areas that are even covered or protected by a latex condom. They can also occur in areas that are not covered or protected. Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of syphilis only when the infected areas are covered or protected by the condom.
- Always use latex condoms during vaginal and anal sex
- Use a latex condom for oral sex on a penis
- Use a latex barrier for oral sex on a vagina or anus (dental dam or condom cut in half)
- Limit the number of sex partners
- Get a test from a doctor or other medical provider if infection or exposure is suspected
- Notify sex partners immediately if infected
- Ensure partners are tested and treated

### **Treatment**

#### Treatment of Syphilis:

- Syphilis can be cured with proper medication from a doctor
- Partners should be treated at same time

NOTE: A person can be reinfected after treatment.



## **Chlamydia**

(caused by Chlamydia trachomatis, a bacteria)

### **Signs and Symptoms**

#### Chlamydia Symptoms:

- Begins 7-21 days after exposure
- Many people have no symptoms

#### Chlamydia Symptoms For Women:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge
- Burning or pain during urination
- Pain in lower abdomen
- Anal discomfort

#### Chlamydia Symptoms for Men:

- Watery or thin white discharge from penis
- Burning or pain during urination
- Anal discomfort

### **Transmission**

#### Chlamydia is Spread by:

- Vaginal sex
- Oral sex
- Anal sex

### **Complications/Consequences**

#### If Left Untreated, Chlamydia can:

- Lead to ectopic (tubal) pregnancy
- Lead to pelvic inflammatory disease
- Lead to infertility in men and women
- Spread to other sex partners

#### Chlamydia and Pregnancy:

- Can be passed to newborn during childbirth and cause serious eye infection or pneumonia
- Can lead to premature delivery and low birth weight

### **Prevention**

#### Recommendations to Reduce the Spread of Chlamydia Infection:

- Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of transmission of chlamydia
- Always use latex condoms during vaginal and anal sex
- Use a latex condom for oral sex on a penis
- Use a latex barrier for oral sex on vagina or anus (dental dam or condom cut in half)
- Limit the number of sex partners
- Get a test from a doctor or other medical provider if infection is suspected
- Notify sex partners immediately if infected
- Ensure partners are tested and treated

### **Treatment**

#### Treatment of Chlamydia:

- Appropriate medication prescribed by physician, taken exactly as directed (using doxycycline incorrectly will not cure chlamydia)
- Home remedies are not effective
- Partners should be treated at same time

NOTE: A person can be reinfected again and again after treatment.



## **Gonorrhea** ("Clap")

(caused by Neisseria gonorrhoea, a bacteria)

### **Signs and Symptoms**

#### Gonorrhea Symptoms:

- Usually begin 2-7 days after exposure
- May be mild or absent, especially in women

#### Gonorrhea Symptoms for Women:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding, discharge or itching
- Burning or pain during urination or bowel movement
- More pain than usual during periods
- Cramps and pain in lower abdomen
- Anal discomfort, itching or discharge

#### Gonorrhea Symptoms for Men:

- Thick, white or yellow discharge (pus) from penis
- Burning or pain during urination or bowel movement
- Anal discomfort, itching or discharge

### **Transmission**

#### Gonorrhea is Spread by:

- Vaginal sex
- Oral sex
- Anal sex
- Infected mother to newborn

### **Complications/Consequences**

#### If Left Untreated, Gonorrhea can:

- Lead to pelvic inflammatory disease
- Lead to ectopic (tubal) pregnancy
- Lead to infertility in men and women
- Cause infection in the joints
- Spread to other sex partners

#### Gonorrhea and Pregnancy:

- Infection may be passed to newborn during childbirth
- May cause serious eye infection in newborn
- May infect other organs

### **Prevention**

#### Recommendations to Reduce the Spread of Gonorrhea:

- Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of transmission of gonorrhea
- Always use latex condoms during vaginal and anal sex
- Use a latex condom for oral sex on a penis
- Use a latex barrier for oral sex on a vagina or anus (dental dam or condom cut in half)
- Limit the number of sex partners
- Notify sex partners immediately if infected
- Make sure partners are tested and treated at same time to prevent reinfection
- Get tested regularly

### **Treatment**

#### Treatment of Gonorrhea:

- Can be cured with proper medication from a doctor
- Partners should be treated at same time

NOTE: A person can be reinfected after treatment.



## **Genital Warts/HPV**

(caused by human papillomavirus - HPV)

### **Signs and Symptoms**

#### Genital Warts Symptoms:

- Most people have no symptoms
- Develop within weeks or months after exposure, or not at all
- Soft fleshy lumps on or near sex organs or anus
- Itching or burning around sex organs
- Warts may be hidden in the vagina or anus
- The warts may go away with treatment, but the HPV infection persists

### **Transmission**

#### Genital Warts are Spread by:

- Vaginal sex
- Oral sex (rare)
- Anal sex
- Contact with infected person's warts
- Infected mother to newborn (very rare)
- Warts/HPV may be spread even if no warts are visible due to the virus present on areas not protected by a condom

### **Complications/Consequences**

#### If Left Untreated, Genital Warts can:

- Be passed to newborn during childbirth; can cause warts in infant's throat (very rare)
- Spread to other sex partners

Some virus strains lead to abnormal Pap test, increased risk of cervical, and/or penile cancer, but these strains do not cause visible warts. Sexually active women should have yearly Pap tests starting 3 years after they first had sex.

A physician may perform a special test to identify the cancer associated strains.

### **Prevention**

#### Recommendations to Reduce the Spread of Genital Warts/HPV:

- Genital ulcer diseases and HPV infections can occur in genital areas that are covered or protected by a latex condom. They can also occur in areas that are not covered or protected. Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of HPV infection only when the infected areas are covered or protected by the condom. In addition, the use of latex condoms has been associated with a reduction in risk of HPV-associated diseases, such as cervical cancer
- Always use latex condoms during vaginal and anal sex
- Use a latex condom for oral sex on penis
- Use a latex barrier for oral sex on a vagina or anus (dental dam or condom cut in half)
- Limit the number of sex partners
- Get an exam for genital warts by a doctor or other medical provider if infection is suspected

### **Treatment**

#### Treatment of Genital Warts/HPV:

- Warts can be treated, but HPV cannot be cured
- Requires medical treatment by doctor
- Drugstore treatment for other kinds of warts may be harmful if used on genital warts
- No increased cancer risk with HPV strains that cause visible genital warts. But, high risk strains may be present along with visible warts
- The body may eventually clear the virus



## **Herpes**

(caused by herpes simplex virus types 1 and 2, HSV)

### **Signs and Symptoms**

#### Genital Herpes Symptoms:

- Develop 2-30 days, or longer, or not at all
- Most may never develop symptoms or the symptoms are too mild to notice
- Small, painful fluid-filled blisters on sex organs, mouth or anus
- Blisters progress to open sores that crust over and heal within 1 to 2 weeks
- Blisters may be "hidden" in the vagina
- First episode most severe, subsequent episodes milder
- Itching or burning on skin in area where blisters are about to appear
- Initial infection often accompanied by fever, headache and swollen lymph nodes
- Blisters go away, but infection still remains in the body
- Blisters can return periodically, but usually shorter duration and less severe

### **Transmission**

#### Genital Herpes is Spread by:

- Vaginal sex
- Oral sex
- Anal sex
- Contact with infected person's lesions
- Infected mother to newborn
- Viral shedding may occur in the absence of blisters, so transmission is possible when lesions are absent
- Most transmission occurs in absence of sores

### **Complications/Consequences**

#### Genital Herpes can:

- Make infection by other germs, like HIV, easier as the blisters provide easy entry to other STD germs.
- Cause recurrent painful attacks

#### Genital Herpes and Pregnancy:

- Newborn may acquire infection from mother during delivery
- Infection in newborn may cause death, or severe damage to the brain, lungs and

liver

- Most pregnant women with recurrent genital herpes deliver normal infants
- Risk is highest for infants born to mothers who have first (primary) episode of genital herpes during pregnancy

### **Prevention**

#### Recommendations to Reduce the Spread of Genital Herpes:

- Genital ulcer diseases can occur in genital areas that are covered or protected by a latex condom. They can also occur in areas that are not covered or protected. Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of genital herpes only when the infected areas are covered or protected by the condom
- Always use latex condoms during vaginal and anal sex
- Use a latex condom for oral sex on a penis
- Use a latex barrier for oral sex on a vagina or anus (dental dam or condom cut in half)
- Limit the number of sex partners
- Get an exam for genital herpes by doctor or other medical provider if herpes infection suspected
- Notify sex partners immediately if infected
- When pregnant, inform doctor if previously infected with herpes
- Never have sex with someone who has genital herpes when sores are present

### **Treatment**

#### Treatment of Genital Herpes:

- No cure available; infection persists for life
- Recurrent episodes of blisters can be prevented by taking an antiviral medication each day
- Treatment of recurrent episodes generally does shorten the length of illness
- Comfort measures are available for recurrent episodes



## **Pubic Lice ("Crabs") and Scabies**

(caused by Phthirus pubis, the crab louse, and Scabies caused by Sarcoptes scabiei, a mite)

### **Signs and Symptoms**

#### Pubic Lice and Scabies Symptoms:

- Severe itching
- Sometimes lice can be seen in hairy parts of body

### **Transmission**

#### Pubic Lice and Scabies are Spread by:

- Sexual contact
- Close physical contact
- Infested towels, toilet seats, bedding and clothing

### **Complications/Consequences**

#### If Left Untreated:

- Pubic lice can spread from pubic hair to other hairy areas
- Scabies can spread through a family

### **Prevention**

#### Recommendations to Reduce the Spread of Pubic Lice and Scabies:

- Get a test from a doctor or other medical provider if infection suspected
- Limit the number of sex partners
- Notify sex partners immediately if infested
- Infested sex partners should be treated
- Avoid sleeping in the same bed or sharing towels or clothes with someone who is infected
- Get tested regularly

### **Treatment**

#### Treatment of Pubic Lice and Scabies:

- Can be killed with proper use of medication from doctor
- Wash all clothes, bedding in hot water
- Vacuum furniture
- Treat partners at same time

NOTE: A person can be reinfected after treatment.

## **For more information, please contact:**

### **Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Prevention, and Control Division STD and HIV Section**

#### **Minnesota Department of Health**

PO Box 9441  
Minneapolis, MN 55440-9441  
(612) 676-5414  
(612) 676-5653 TTY  
[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)

### **Minnesota Family Planning and STD Hotline**

1-800-783-2287 Voice/TTY  
[www.stdhotline.state.mn.us](http://www.stdhotline.state.mn.us)

### **CDC National STD and AIDS Hotlines**

1-800-227-8922  
1-800-243-7889 TTY  
[www.ashastd.org](http://www.ashastd.org)