

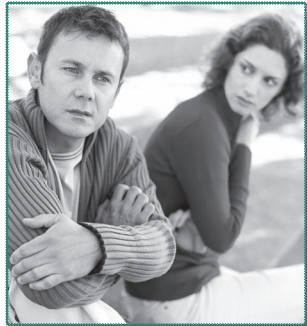
What is Rape?

Rape is an act of violence, not sexual gratification. Rape occurs when someone uses force, threats, or intimidation to get you to have sex. Rape can happen to anyone regardless of age, gender, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, or ability. If you are forced or coerced into sex, it is rape.

If you have been raped or sexually assaulted, you have experienced a frightening, life threatening trauma. This brochure is a start in gaining knowledge to assist you in healing.

It is important to remember:

- *You are not to blame. The rapist is solely responsible.*
- *Rape is a violent crime involving power, anger, and control.*
- *Manipulation and intimidation are just as powerful tools in rape as physical force. You did not have to fight back in order for it to be rape.*
- *Whatever actions or inactions you took in order to survive was the right thing to do.*
- *No one asks or deserves to be raped.*
- *You have the right to experience any and all feelings you have.*



Sex without your consent is rape. It is illegal. It is wrong.

It's not your fault...

There are many reasons why people don't fight back when they are sexually assaulted. When people are afraid, in shock or caught by surprise, their bodies respond in all kinds of ways. They freeze, laugh, they go along with it, or they may go somewhere else in their mind. Whatever you did to get out of the situation was okay.

Feeling guilty or blaming yourself is a normal response. It is an effort to gain some control over a situation that was uncontrollable. Many victims believe or are encouraged to believe that they should forget about the rape and get on with their lives. This may work on a temporary basis but seldom works long term. Eventually, feelings will surface and will have to be dealt with.



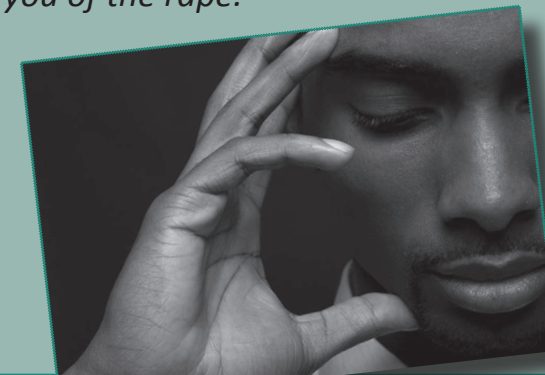
Common Reactions to Rape

There is no right or wrong way to feel after being raped. People are different: consequently, they deal with an assault in many ways.

Remember, these reactions are normal and can diminish with time.

- *Emotional - depression, guilt, shame, grief, fear, anger, mood swings*
- *Behavioral - inability to concentrate or relax, avoiding places, people, thoughts or feelings, loss of interest*
- *Physical - nausea, headaches, changes in eating or sleeping patterns, or menstrual cycle*

These reactions may be more difficult to handle on holidays, the anniversary date of the assault, or an event that reminds you of the rape.



- *Remember you don't have to go through this alone. There are rape crisis counselors available 24 hours a day.*
- *Be honest with yourself about your feelings and your thoughts.*
- *Try not to punish yourself with "If only...". The rapist chose to commit the crime, not you.*
- *Talk to people you trust.*
- *Take care of yourself - get rest, plan comforting activities, avoid (excessive) use of alcohol or drugs.*



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Sexual Assault Crisis Centers
provide:

- A 24-hour crisis hotline
- Information and referral
- Free counseling
- And more...

This document was produced using Crime Victim Assistance Program funds under subgrant # C06-8-025 from the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Criminal Justice.

*Sexual Assault:
Healing
Takes Time*

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