

Assault Care for the Survivor

- x First, remember that what happened is not your fault. You did not cause the assault, and no matter what happened, you did not deserve it.
- x Get to a safe place.
- x Try not to change anything at the location where the assault occurred.
- x Remember that eating or drinking, showering, brushing your teeth, going to the bathroom, and changing or altering your clothes could destroy physical evidence that may be helpful if you later decide to pursue legal action.
- x Consider contacting The Student Health Nurse for referral services. Reporting options will be explained and assistance can be provided for on and off-campus services that you may need.
- x Consider reporting the incident.
- x Even if you don't want to file a police report, consider receiving medical attention. A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) at the local hospital will help ensure that you are healthy, provide options to prevent pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections, and collect valuable evidence that may be useful in the future, even if you are unsure about pursuing legal action now. Physical evidence can only be collected up to 72 hours after an assault.
- x You have a right to be believed and to receive appropriate medical, emotional, and legal assistance. The first step to helping a friend or someone who has been sexually assaulted is to believe them, listen carefully to them and provide support. Your friend has taken an important step in seeking help and your response to their disclosure may determine the next step for your friend.

Although there is no universal reaction to being sexually assaulted, many victims feel guilty, often blaming themselves instead of the perpetrator. Victims sometimes feel they could or should have done something differently that would have prevented the assault. Other common feelings include fear, embarrassment and confusion. It is important that as a friend, you understand that a sexual assault is something which they had no control over happening to them. Simply telling your friend that it was not their fault can help to alleviate some of the confusion and overwhelming emotions they may be experiencing. These feelings, along with denial may be why it takes days, weeks, months or years for the victim to tell anyone.

