



**Developmental
Disabilities
Planning Council**

Easy Read Edition

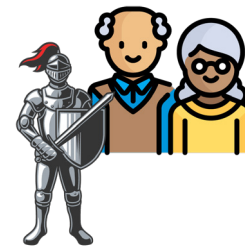
What Do I Need to Know About Sexual Assault?

Words to Know



accommodations

Changes that help people with disabilities get the same things as people without disabilities. (Part 7)



Adult Protective Services

The part of the government that looks into cases where an older adult or adult with disabilities might be getting abused. (Parts 7, 8)



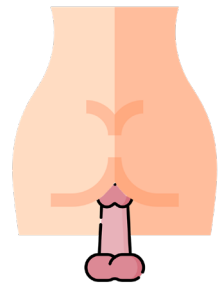
advocate

Someone who helps people who have been sexually assaulted find and get services. Advocates are trained in how to help people who have been sexually assaulted. (Parts 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11)



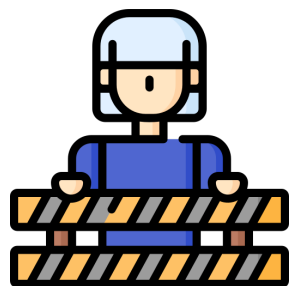
age of consent

The youngest a person can be and still consent to sex. (Part 3)



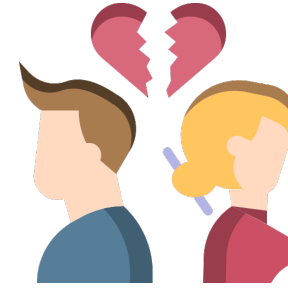
anal sex

When a person puts their penis or a sex toy inside someone else's anus (butt). (Parts 2, 4)



boundaries

Rules about what you are and are not comfortable with. (Parts 4, 8, 9)



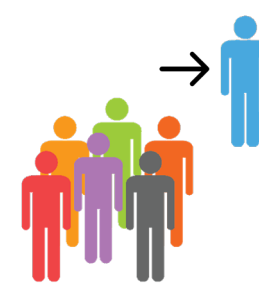
breaking up

Ending a relationship with someone. (Part 9)



bystander intervention

When a bystander takes steps to change how an event happens or to stop an event from happening. (Part 11)



bystander

Someone who is near, but not directly taking part in, something. (Part 11)



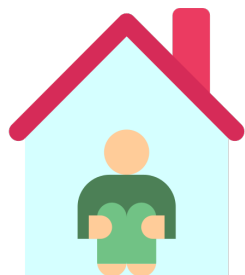
caregiver abuse

Abuse of people with disabilities by the people who help us with everyday activities. (Part 6)



consent

Saying yes to something. (Parts 1, 3, 4, 5, 11)



domestic violence/ emergency shelters

Places where people who have been abused or sexually assaulted can stay. (Parts 8, 10)



domestic violence

Abuse that happens within close relationships. (Parts 1, 6, 8, 10)



evidence

Facts, reports, or materials showing something. (Part 8)



guardianship

When a judge takes away someone's right to make their own choices. (Parts 6, 7)



home and community based services (HCBS)

Services that help people with disabilities live our everyday lives in our communities. (Parts 8, 9, 11)



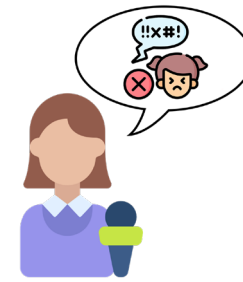
institutional abuse

Abuse that happens in institutions, group homes, or assisted living facilities. (Parts 8, 11)



institutions

Places where a lot of disabled people live. People living in institutions usually do not get to leave when they want to. People living in institutions usually do not have a lot of control over their lives. (Parts 5, 8, 10, 11)



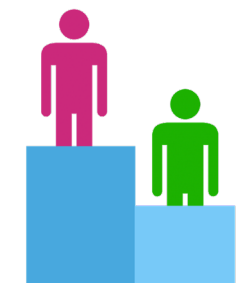
mandated reporters

people who have to tell the government if a child, older adult, or person with a disability is being abused. (Parts 7, 8)



oral sex

When someone puts their mouth on someone's genitals (sexual body parts), like their penis or vagina. (Parts 2, 4)



power imbalance

When one person has a lot more power than the other. (Part 3)



prevent

To stop something before it happens.
(Parts 9, 11)



Protection and Advocacy (P&A)

Legal groups that help people with
disabilities fight for our rights. (Parts 8, 9)



restraining order/protective order

A legal document that tells someone not
to do certain things. (Part 9)



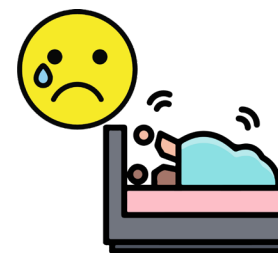
safety plan

A list of steps you can take to make the
risk of sexual assault or other abuse
smaller. (Parts 7, 8, 9)



sex

Different sexual activities that people can
do together. (Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11)



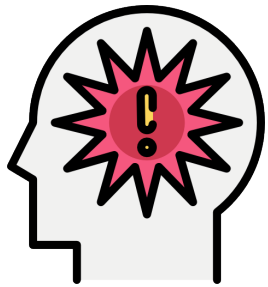
sexual assault

Having sex with someone without their
consent. (Parts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)



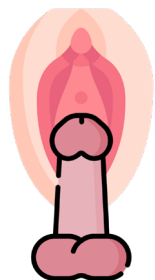
sexual education

Learning about topics that have to do with sex. (Parts 5, 11)



trauma

When someone feels very afraid or on-edge after going through a scary event. (Parts 7, 9, 11)



vaginal sex

When someone puts their penis or a sex toy inside someone else's vagina. (Parts 2, 4)



Part 1: To Start

This is a toolkit about sex, consent, and sexual assault.

This toolkit will answer questions like:



- What is sex?



- What is consent?



- How can people give consent?



- What is sexual assault?



- What are other kinds of sexual abuse?



- What resources are available for people who have been sexually assaulted?



- How can people recover and heal from sexual assault?



Content note

This toolkit is about sexual assault.



This toolkit can be really difficult to read.



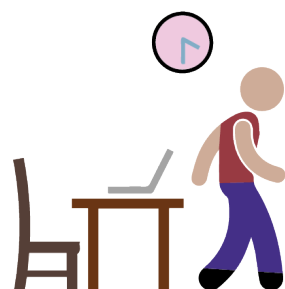
This toolkit will talk about some things that can be upsetting.



It will talk about things like sexual assault, abuse, and violence against people with IDD.



We talk about abuse and violence in the sections “What is consent?” and “What is sexual assault?”



It is okay to take a break if you need to.



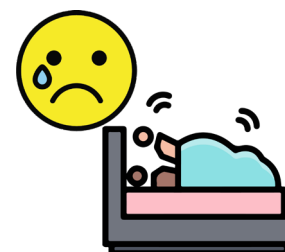
It is okay to skip these sections or not read this toolkit if you need to.



A lot of people with disabilities have experiences with sexual assault.



A lot of us know other people who have been sexually assaulted.



A lot of us have been sexually assaulted ourselves.



Some of us may have been sexually assaulted and not realized it until much later.



You may be reading this toolkit and realize that you have been sexually assaulted.



We know that reading this toolkit can be upsetting to many people.



We have designed this toolkit with “safety features” to help you.

Here are the “safety features” we designed:

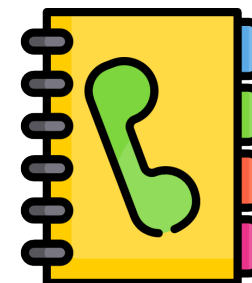


Hotline information in every part of this toolkit

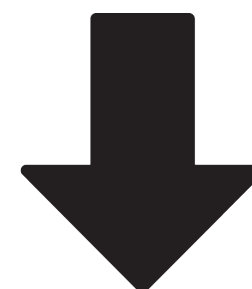
We have included the contact information for the RAINN hotline in every part of this toolkit.



RAINN is a national group that helps people who have been sexually assaulted.



We have included the contact information for the RAINN hotline at the end of every part.



If you need to contact RAINN, you can scroll down to the end of the part you are reading.

Name of the toolkit file

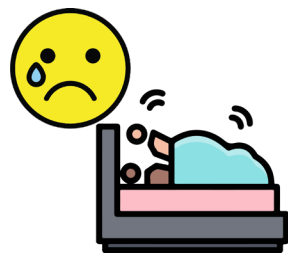


We have given the files for this toolkit names that do not tell you what the toolkit is about.



This is so people can download the files without others being able to tell what the files are.

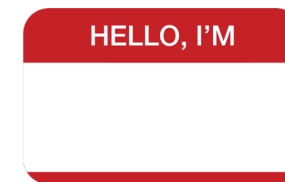
For example:



Hanna was sexually assaulted by her boyfriend, Jim.



Hanna wants to read this toolkit, but is worried about Jim finding it on her computer.



Hanna sees that the toolkit file is called "ASAN SA Toolkit."



This makes Hanna less worried about downloading the toolkit.



She is less worried that Jim will know what the toolkit is about if he finds it on her computer.

Color-coding for examples that could be really triggering



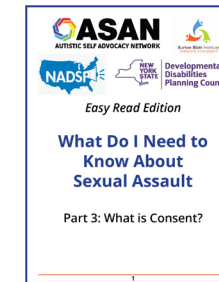
We know that this entire toolkit can be tough for some people to read.



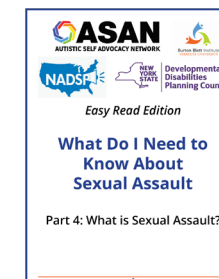
But, certain examples in this toolkit might be even harder to read.



These examples talk about what sexual assault can look like in.



These examples are in the section “Things you should never do to get consent” in Part 3: What is Consent?



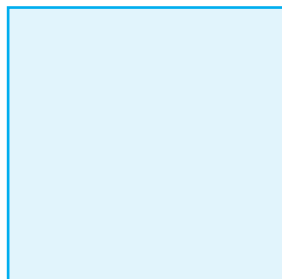
These examples are also in the section “What can sexual assault look like?” in Part 4: What is Sexual Assault?



We want people to be able to skip these examples if they want.



So, we have color-coded the pages that the examples are on.



Pages with these examples are color-coded with blue boxes.



In the Easy Read version of this toolkit, we have also used symbols to show the beginning and end of these examples.



We use a yellow warning sign at the beginning of each of these examples.



We use a red stop sign at the end of each of these examples.

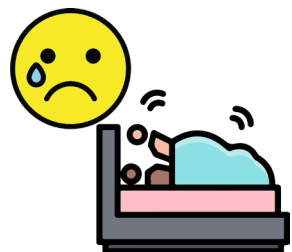
Plain language option



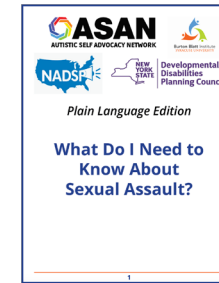
The Easy Read version of this toolkit has symbols in it.



Some of these symbols can be graphic.



Some of these symbols show sexual assault.



If you do not want to or cannot deal with the symbols, you can read the plain language version of this toolkit.



The [plain language version](#) of this toolkit does not include the symbols.



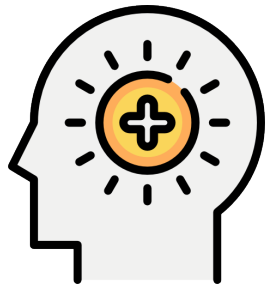
Self-care

Self-care is taking care of your own needs.

Self-care can help with:



- Physical health.



- Mental health.



- Managing your emotions.



It is really important to take care of yourself when you read this toolkit.

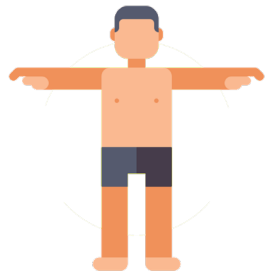


This toolkit can be really hard to read.

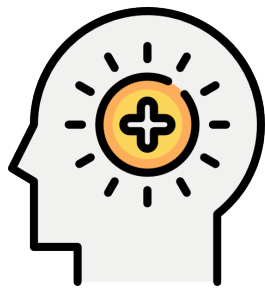


Think about what you need when you read this toolkit.

Think about things like:



- How your body feels (for example, are you really tense? Are you crying?)



- How you feel mentally (for example, do you feel “on edge”? Do you feel like you are not in your own body?)



- How you feel emotionally (for example, do you feel really sad? Do you feel angry?)

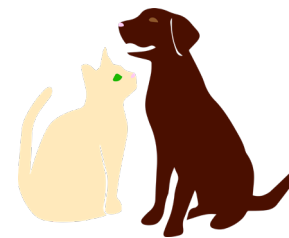
Here are some ways you can take care of yourself while reading this toolkit:



- Making art



- Writing about how you feel



- Playing with pets



- Watching TV shows and movies



- Taking a nap



- Punching a pillow



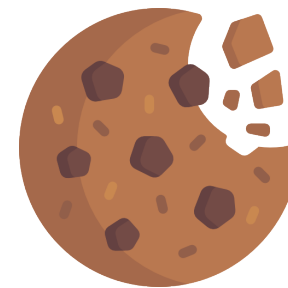
- Doing intense exercise, like running



- Eating comfort foods



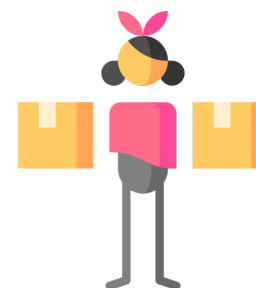
- Calling or texting a friend



- Buying yourself a small treat



- Taking a bubble bath



- Decluttering your room



- Turning off your phone for a day



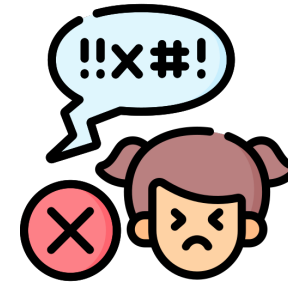
- Swinging on a swingset



If you want to talk to a trained advocate or counselor, you can call or text a hotline.



There is a list of hotlines in the section “Resources for people who have been sexually assaulted.”



A note on technology and safety

Sometimes, people we are in relationships with abuse us.

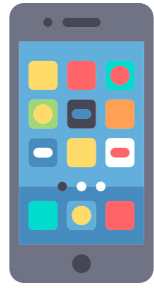


Part of this abuse can be spying on how we use the computer, phone, or internet.

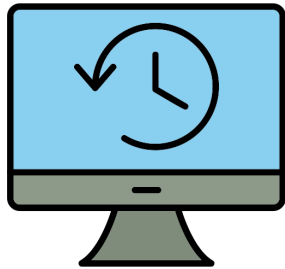
People can spy on how we use the computer or internet by:



- Putting software on our computers that tracks how we use the computer or what websites we visit (also called spyware).



- Putting apps on our phones that track our locations or which phone numbers we call



- Checking our computers after we use them to see what we did.



- Checking our internet history to see what websites we looked at.



- Forcing us to share our passwords for the computer or websites with them so they can log into our accounts.



There are many websites and phone numbers that can help us if someone is abusing us.



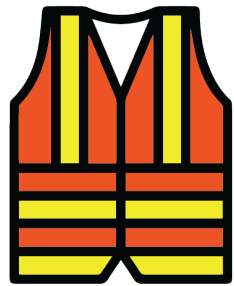
For example, many groups that help people being abused have websites and phone numbers we can go to for help.



But there is always a risk the person who is abusing us could find out if we access these websites or phone numbers.



If someone is abusing you, it is a good idea to assume they are also tracking how you use your computer or phone.



It is a good idea to take steps to keep yourself safer when you use the computer or your phone.

You can find resources on how to do that from:

- The Safety Net Project's [Technology Safety & Privacy](#) toolkit.
- Cornell University's [Clinic to End Tech Abuse](#).

- The National Domestic Violence Hotline's [Internet Safety for Survivors](#) page.

- Day One Services' [Be Safe](#) page.

- The National Network to End Domestic Violence's [Internet and Computer Safety](#) page.

Need support? You can contact RAINN

RAINN

[The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) is one resource for people who have been sexually assaulted.



RAINN has a phone hotline you can call.



The RAINN hotline number is 1-800-656-4673.



You can also contact RAINN through their [online chat](#).



RAINN can help you find sexual assault resources in your state or area.



Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).



Part 2: What is Sex?

“Sex” can mean different things to different people.

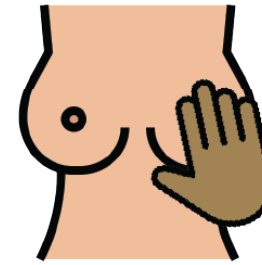


In this toolkit, when we say “**sex**” or “have sex,” we mean sexual activities people can do together.

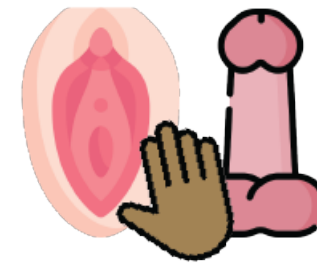
Some of these sexual activities are:



- Kissing



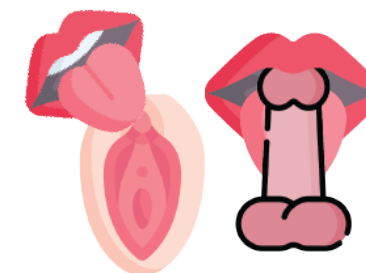
- Touching someone’s chest or breasts



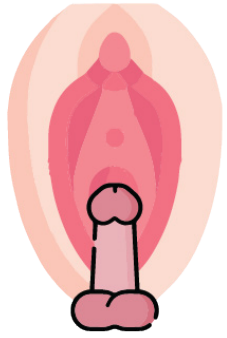
- Touching someone else’s genitals (sexual body parts), like their penis or vagina, with your fingers



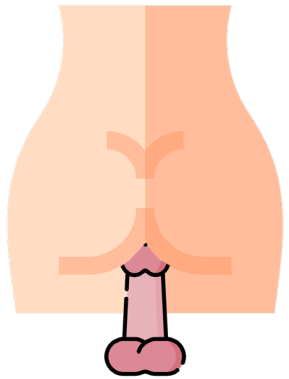
- Using sex toys with someone else



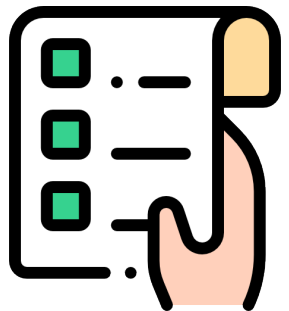
- Someone putting their mouth on someone else’s genitals (sexual body parts), like their penis or vagina. (This is called **oral sex**.)



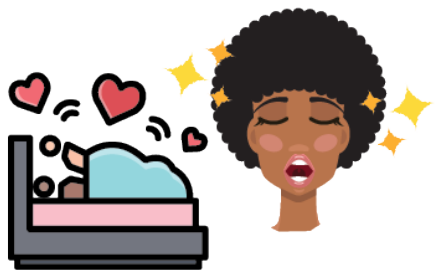
- Someone putting their penis or a sex toy inside someone else's vagina (This is called **vaginal sex**.)



- Someone putting their penis or a sex toy inside someone else's anus (butt). (This is called **anal sex**.)



People have sex for many reasons.



People have sex because it feels good.



People have sex because it can make them closer to their sexual partner or partners.



People have sex because they want to get pregnant, or get someone else pregnant.

Need support? You can contact RAINN

RAINN

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RAINN has a phone hotline you can call.



The RAINN hotline number is 1-800-656-4673.



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Part 3: What is Consent?



Consent is about saying yes to something.



Consent can happen in a lot of cases.



For example, if you were to get surgery, you might have to sign a form saying that you want to have the surgery.



When you sign that form, you are giving consent to have the surgery.

Consent is really important when you have sex with someone. You need to make sure of two things:



- That the person is able to give consent



- That the person does give consent freely

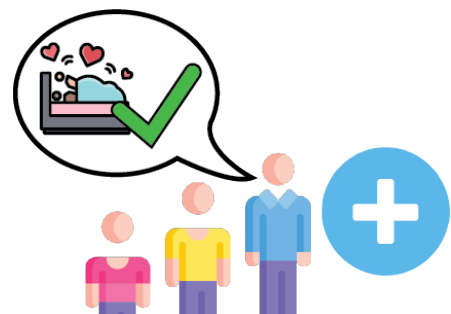
These things are both really important to give consent. We will go over each of them separately.

Ability to give consent



Before you ask someone if they want to have sex, you need to make sure they can consent to sex.

In order to be able to consent, the person needs to be:



1. Older than the age of consent.



The **age of consent** is the youngest a person can be and still consent to sex.



People who are younger than the age of consent cannot consent to sex.



In some states, the age of consent is 16 years old.

In some states, the age of consent is 17 years old.

In some states, the age of consent is 18 years old.

People who have young sexual partners need to know the age of consent where they live, where their partners live, and where they want to have sex.

If someone has sex with a person who is younger than the age of consent in any of these places, there can be serious legal problems.



2. Awake and alert.



People who are asleep or drowsy cannot consent to sex.

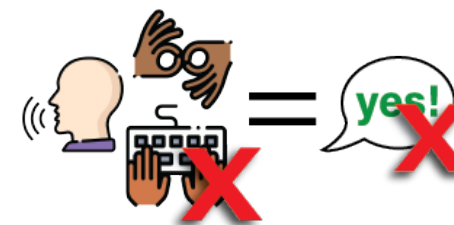


3. Sober (not drunk or high).

People who are drunk or high from using drugs cannot consent to sex.



4. Able to communicate what they want and do not want to happen during sex.



People who cannot communicate what they want during sex cannot consent to sex.



This does not mean a person who cannot speak is always unable to consent to sex.



That person could consent by nodding their head, pointing to what they want, or by using an AAC system.



But in order to consent, a person needs to be able to communicate what they do and do not want.



If the person meets all four of these points, they may be able to consent to sex.



Power and consent

Sometimes, a person might meet all four of these points.



But they still might not be able to consent because of a power imbalance.



A **power imbalance** is when one person has a lot more power than the other.



When one person has a lot more power than the other person, the person without much power might feel like they must say yes to the person who has a lot of power.



They might feel like if they do not say yes, they will get in trouble.

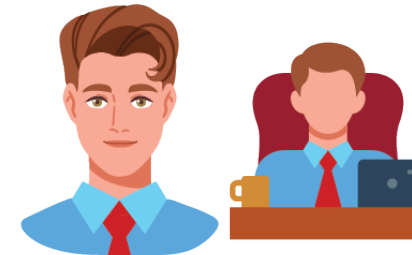


In these cases, the power imbalance means that the person without as much power cannot freely say no.

For example:



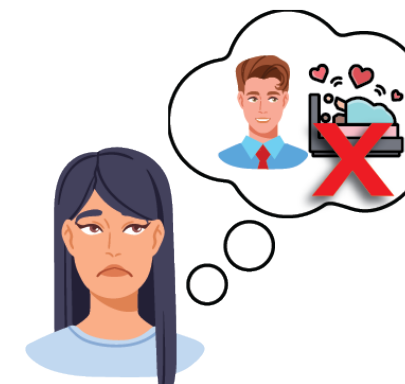
Jessica works in an office.



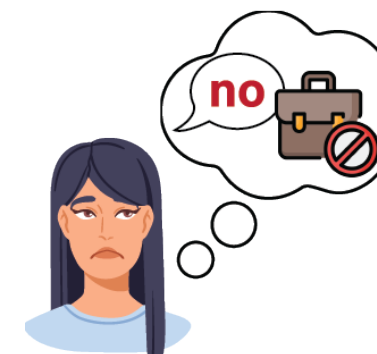
Lukas is her boss.



Lukas asks Jessica if she will have sex with him.



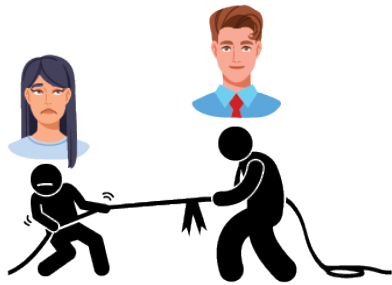
Jessica does not want to have sex with Lukas.



But Jessica feels like if she says no, Lukas will make her lose her job.



In this situation, Jessica cannot freely say no to sex with Lukas.



Lukas has too much power over Jessica.



Here is another example:



Manuel has a disability.



He goes to physical therapy.



Manuel's physical therapist, Laura, asks if Manuel will go on a date with her.



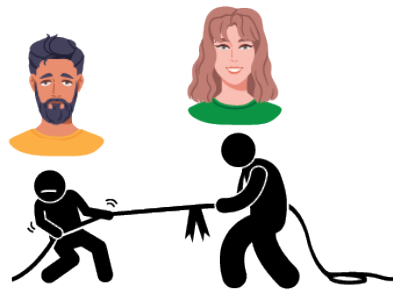
Manuel does not want to go on a date with Laura.



But Manuel feels like if he says no to Laura, he will not be able to come back to physical therapy.



In this situation, Manuel cannot freely say no to going on a date with Laura.



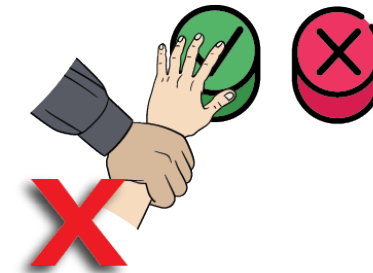
Laura has too much power over Manuel.



Giving consent freely



People have the right to choose whether they have sex. They have to be able to choose for themselves whether they say yes or no.



No one should try to make another person say yes to sex.



No one should try to stop consenting adults who want to have sex.



The legal definition of consent will be different from state-to-state.



It is important for people to know what the legal definition of consent is in their state.



But consent should not just be about what is legal to do.



Consent should also be about what is moral and right to do.



Consent should be about respecting yourself and your partner or partners.



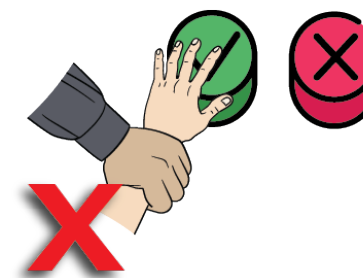
One way to make sure you are respecting your partner or partners is to follow the FRIES acronym.

FRIES stands for:

Freely given



When you give consent, you choose for yourself whether you want to consent.

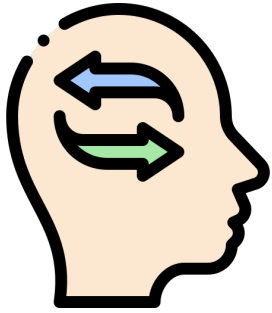


Nobody else should choose for you.



Nobody else should pressure you into making a choice.

Reversible



You can always change your mind about consent.

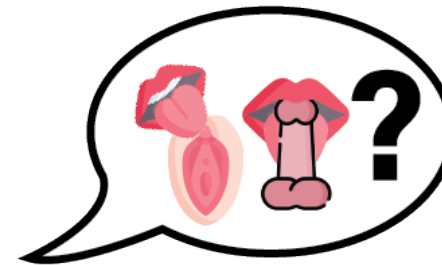


If someone has already said yes, they can always say no and stop whatever they are doing.

Informed



You have to know what you are consenting to.



For example, if your partner wants to have oral sex, they should ask you if you want to do oral sex.



Informed also means knowing the risks of having sex and how to make those risks smaller.



For example, if pregnancy is a risk of having sex and you do not want to get pregnant, you could use condoms or birth control to make the risk smaller.

Enthusiastic



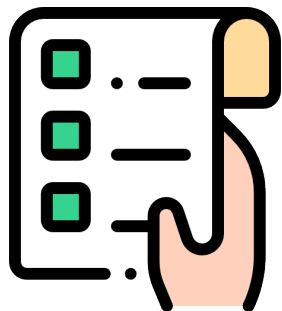
You should only consent to things you really want to do.



If you do not want to do something or are not sure you want to do it, you do not have to consent.



Someone not saying "no" with mouth words does not mean they say "yes."



People can say or mean "no" in a lot of different ways.

Some ways a person could say or show that they do not consent are:



- Saying "no" or "I do not want to" with their mouth or with AAC.



- Signing or gesturing "no," like shaking their head.



- Freezing up or going quiet if they had been talking before



- Saying or signing “I am uncomfortable.”



Only “yes” means “yes” when it comes to consent.

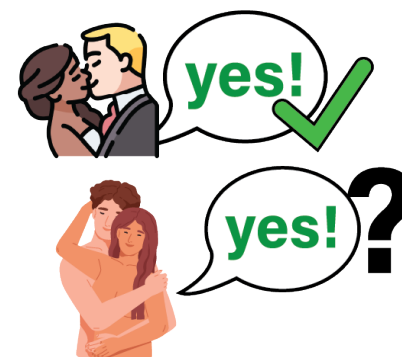
Specific



You should give (and get) consent for each specific sexual act that you do.



For example, your partner might give consent to kiss you.



But if you want to move on to touching each other naked, you need to ask for consent again.



The FRIES model of consent was adapted from [Planned Parenthood](https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sexual-consent).



Consent is not only asking yes or no questions.



Consent is making sure you know your partner’s needs and they know yours.



For example, while you are touching your partner's genitals, you might ask them if they want you to go faster or slower.



Think of consent as a conversation between the people having sex.



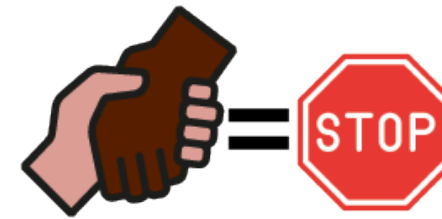
A conversation does not have to just be yes or no questions.



A conversation can also have other kinds of questions and other details.



You can also use nonverbal signals to tell your partners your needs.



For example, before you start having sex you might agree that squeezing each other's hand is a signal to stop and check in with each other.

To make sure a person consents, you need to make sure of two things:



- That the person said “yes”

F ☒
R ☒
I ☒
E ☒
S ☒

- That the person’s “yes” followed all the parts of the FRIES acronym. The person’s “yes” must be freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic, and specific.

Things you should never do to get consent



There are some things you should never do to get consent from someone.



The next examples in this section can be really hard to read.



They can especially be hard to read if you have been sexually assaulted (forced to have sex without consent) in the past.



We are including these examples because we want people to know what they should never do to get consent.



But you do not have to read these examples if you do not want to.



You can always skip the examples.



You can always take a break and come back to this section.

You should never lie to someone to get their consent

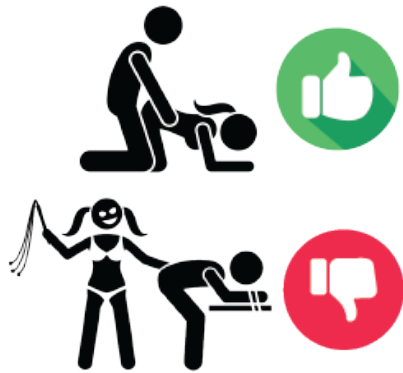


You need to tell the truth about what kinds of sex you want to have with the other person or people.

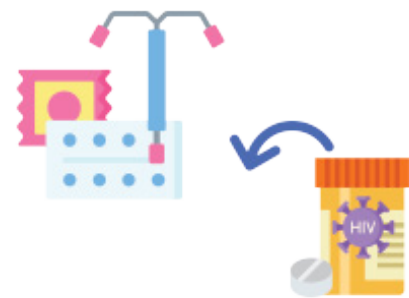


You need to make sure the other person or people know what kinds of sex they are agreeing to have.

You and your sexual partner or partners need to tell the truth about things like:



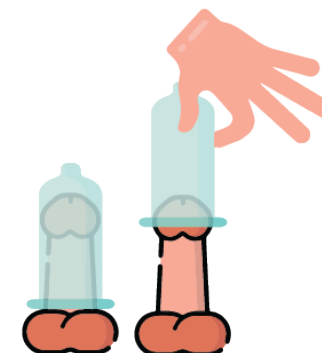
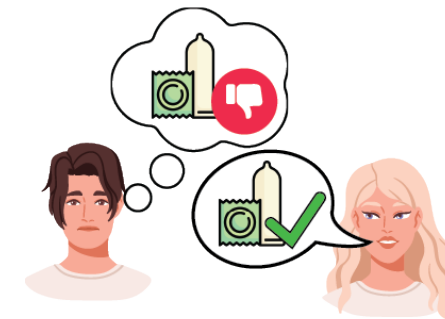
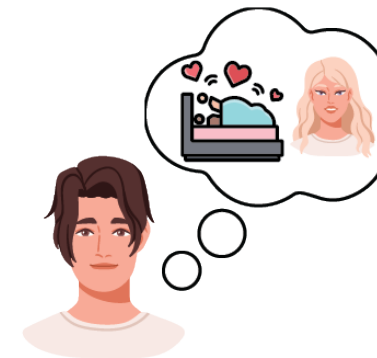
- What kinds of sex you want to have



- What kinds of things you will do to have safer sex, like whether you are on birth control or PrEP. Or, whether you will wear a condom during sex.



- Whether you have any STIs that you could give to your partner or partners through sex.



For example:

James wants to have sex with his girlfriend, Matilda.

James does not like wearing condoms while they have sex, but Matilda wants him to.

So James lies and says he will wear a condom.

Then, while they are having sex, he takes the condom off.



This is not okay!



James lied to get Matilda's consent.



Matilda thought she was consenting to having sex with James wearing a condom.



You should never threaten someone to get them to have sex with you



Threatening someone means telling them you will hurt them if they do not do something.



It is not okay to threaten people ever.



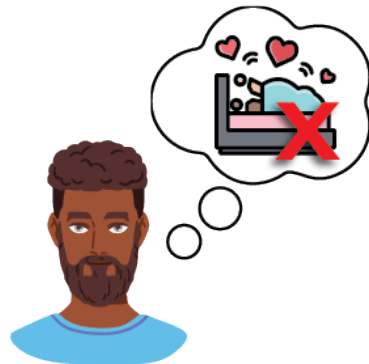
But it is especially not okay to threaten someone to get them to have sex with you.



For example:



Larry wants to have sex with his boyfriend, Sal.



But Sal does not want to have sex.



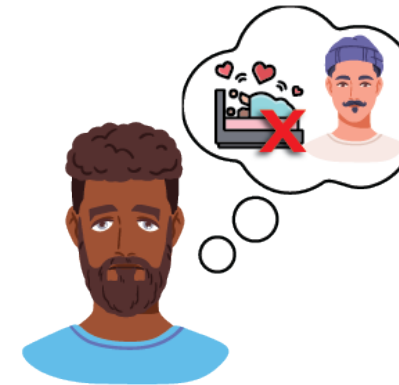
So Larry says, "If you do not have sex with me, I will hit you."



Sal has sex with Larry even though he does not want to because Sal is afraid of being hit.



This is not okay! Larry threatened Sal into having sex.



Sal did not want to have sex with Larry.



You should never pressure someone into having sex



Pressuring someone means annoying or bothering them until they do what you want.



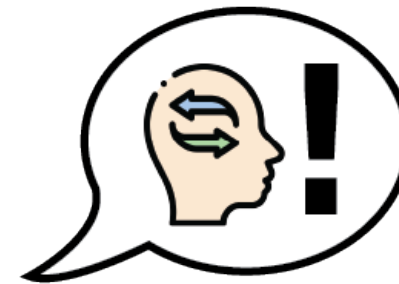
Sometimes, people will pressure their partners to say "yes" to sex after the partner has said "no."



This is not okay.



If someone says no to sex, you need to respect that.



You should not try to get them to change their mind.



For example:



Lucia wants to have sex with her girlfriend, Isabel.



But Isabel does not want to have sex with Lucia.



So Lucia tries to pressure Isabel into having sex by saying "Come on, please, just this once, it will be okay."



Isabel gets tired of hearing Lucia pressure her, so she agrees to have sex with Lucia.



This is not okay!



Lucia was pressuring and bothering Isabel until she said yes to having sex.



Even though Isabel said yes to having sex, it was not really consent.



You should never insult or call someone names to get them to have sex with you



Insulting someone means making mean comments about who they are.



You should not insult people in general.



Insulting people is mean and rude.



But it is especially not okay to insult someone to get them to have sex with you.



For example:



Kai wants to have sex with their partner, Taylor.



But Taylor does not want to have sex with Kai.



So Kai makes fun of Taylor by calling Taylor a "big baby who needs to grow up."



Taylor gets tired of Kai calling them names, so they agree to have sex with Kai.



This is not okay!



Kai was insulting Taylor and calling them names until they said yes to having sex.



Even though Taylor said yes to having sex, it was not really consent.



You should never bribe someone into having sex with you.



Bribing someone means offering them a reward to get them to do something they do not want to do.



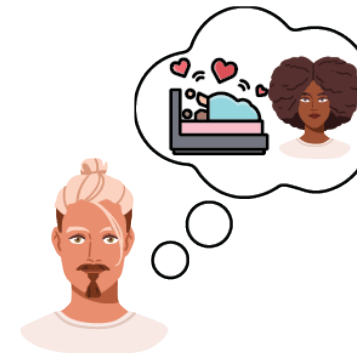
Bribing someone is generally a bad thing.



But bribing someone to have sex with you is always a bad thing.



For example:



Noah wants to have sex with his girlfriend, Pricilla.



But Pricilla does not want to have sex with Noah.



So Noah says "if you have sex with me, I will buy you a nice dinner tonight."



Pricilla agrees to have sex with Noah because she wants the dinner, even though she does not really want to have sex.



This is not okay!



Noah bribed Pricilla into having sex by offering her dinner.



Even though Pricilla said yes to having sex, it was not really consent.



You should never force someone to have sex with you



You should never use physical force to make someone have sex with you.

Physical force can be things like:



- Pushing someone down



- Holding someone down



- Hitting or kicking someone if they try to get away from you



For example:



Norman wants to have sex with his partner, Sarah.



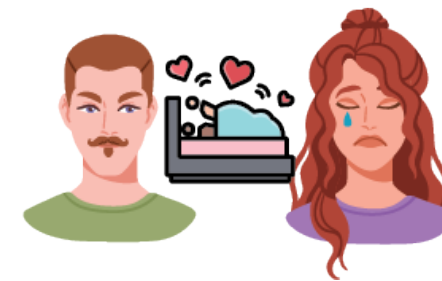
But Sarah does not want to have sex with Norman.



So Norman pushes Sarah down on the bed.



He takes her clothes off.



Then he has sex with her.



This is not okay!



Sarah did not consent to having sex with Norman.



Norman forced Sarah to have sex with him.





If you do any of these things to get someone to have sex with you, it is not consent.



Sex without consent is called sexual assault.

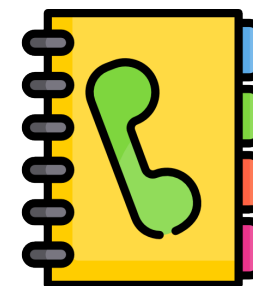
Need support? You can contact RAINN

RAINN

[The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) is one resource for people who have been sexually assaulted.



RAINN has a phone hotline you can call.



The RAINN hotline number is 1-800-656-4673.



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RAINN can help you find sexual assault resources in your state or area.



Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).

Part 4: What is Sexual Assault?



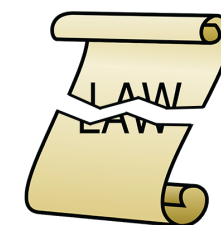
Having sex with someone without their consent is wrong.



Having sex with someone without their consent is called **sexual assault**.



Some types of sexual assault are also called rape.



Many types of sexual assault are against the law.



But **all** sexual assault is morally wrong.



All sexual assault go against respecting your partner or partners.



Even if a type of sexual assault is not legally wrong, it is still wrong to sexually assault someone.



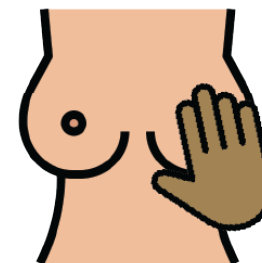
What can sexual assault look like?

Sexual assault is any kind of sexual activity done without consent.

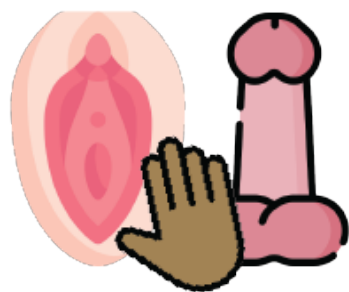
Remember, sexual activities can include:



- Kissing



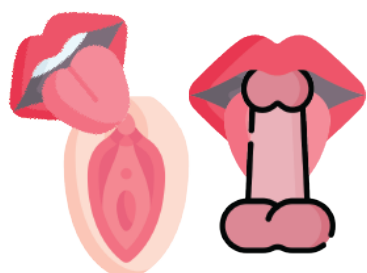
- Touching someone's chest or breasts



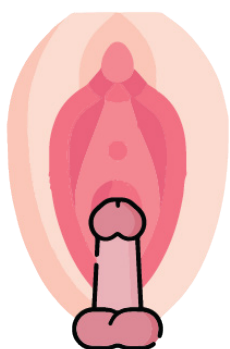
- Touching someone else's genitals (sexual body parts), like their penis or vagina, with your fingers



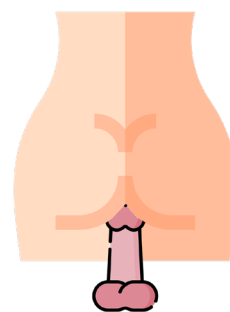
- Using sex toys with someone else



- Someone putting their mouth on someone else's genitals (sexual body parts), like their penis or vagina. (This is called oral sex.)



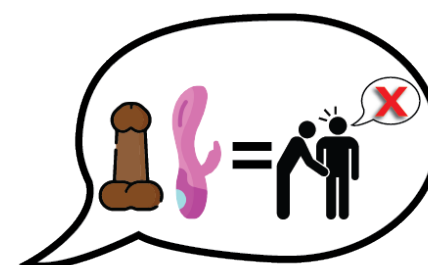
- Someone putting their penis or a sex toy inside someone else's vagina (This is called vaginal sex.)



- Someone putting their penis or a sex toy inside someone else's anus (butt). (This is called anal sex.)



Any of these things can be sexual assault, if someone does them to you without your consent.



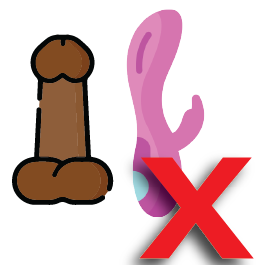
Some people say it is only sexual assault if someone else puts their penis or a sex toy in you without your consent.



This is **wrong**.



Sexual assault is any sexual activity a person does without consent.



Sexual assault does not have to involve a penis or a sex toy.



The next few examples can be really hard to read.



They can especially be hard to read if you have been sexually assaulted in the past.



We are including these examples because we want people to know what sexual assault can look like.



But you do not have to read these examples if you do not want to.



You can always skip the examples.



You can always take a break and come back to this section.

Here are some examples of sexual assault:



Example 1: William and Janice



Janice went to a party and fell asleep on the couch.



While Janice was asleep, William sat on the couch next to her.



William put his hands up Janice's shirt and touched her breasts.



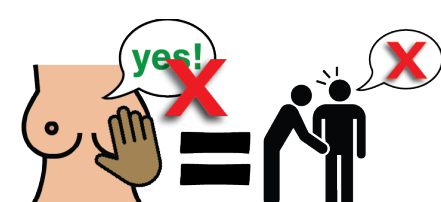
William opened Janice's mouth and put his penis inside Janice's mouth.



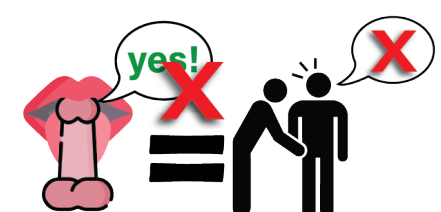
This is sexual assault.



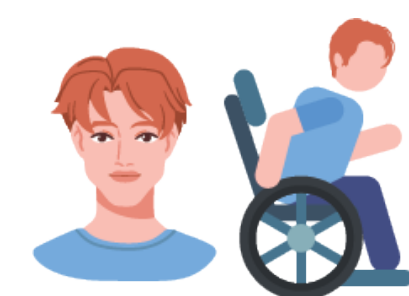
Janice could not consent because she was asleep.



William sexually assaulted Janice when he touched her breasts without consent.



William sexually assaulted Janice when he put his penis in her mouth without consent.



Example 2: Nathaniel and Toby

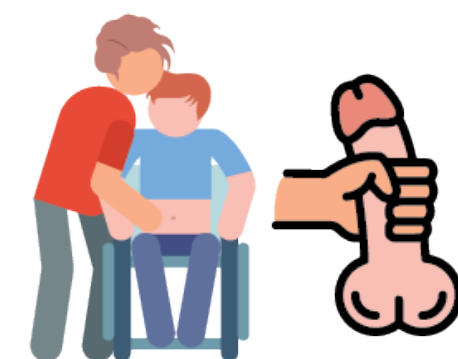
Toby has a physical disability.



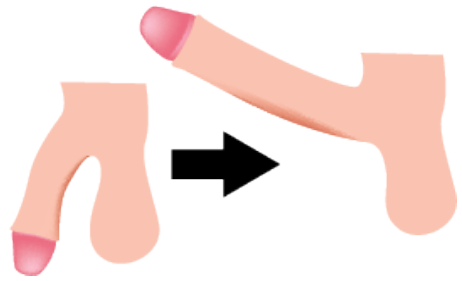
Toby's disability makes it hard for him to get dressed on his own.



Toby's support worker, Nathaniel, helps Toby get dressed.



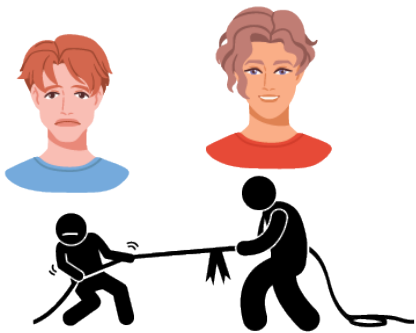
One day, when Nathaniel was helping Toby get dressed, Nathaniel grabbed Toby's penis.



Nathaniel touched Toby's penis until it got hard and stiff.



Nathaniel did not ask Toby if he could touch Toby's penis.



And Nathaniel is Toby's support worker.
Nathaniel has power over Toby.



This is sexual assault.



Toby did not consent to Nathaniel touching his penis.



Toby couldn't consent to Nathaniel touching his penis.

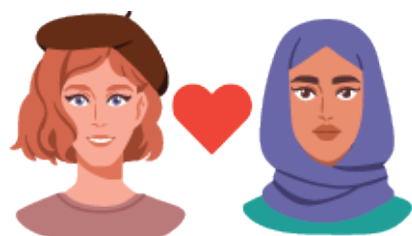


Nathaniel sexually assaulted Toby when he touched Toby's penis without consent.





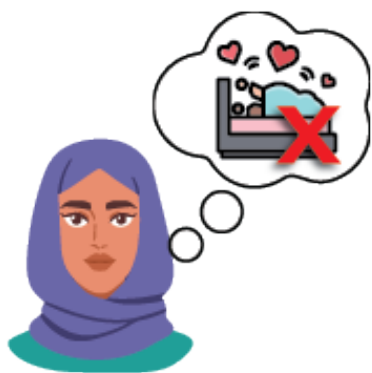
Example 3: Greta and Fatima



Greta and Fatima are girlfriends.



Greta wanted to have sex with Fatima.



But Fatima did not want to have sex.



Fatima told Greta "no, I do not want to have sex with you."



So Greta forced Fatima to have sex with her.



Greta forced Fatima to lick Greta's vulva.



Greta put her hand on Fatima's head to force Fatima to keep licking her vulva.



This is sexual assault.



Fatima did not consent to sex with Greta.



Fatima told Greta "No, I do not want to have sex with you."



Greta sexually assaulted Fatima when she made Fatima lick her vulva without consent.



Example 4: Molly and Quentin

Molly and Quentin are dating.



Molly wanted to have sex with Quentin.



Quentin did not want to have sex with Molly.



Quentin got really scared.



He couldn't talk or say anything to stop Molly.



Quentin's penis got hard and stiff because he was scared.



Molly saw this.



She still wanted to have sex with Quentin.



So Molly pushed Quentin down on the bed.



She took his pants and underpants off.



Then she sat down on his penis and put it in her vagina.



This is sexual assault.



Quentin did not consent to having sex with Molly.



Molly sexually assaulted Quentin when she put his penis in her vagina without his consent.





What can other kinds of sexual abuse look like?

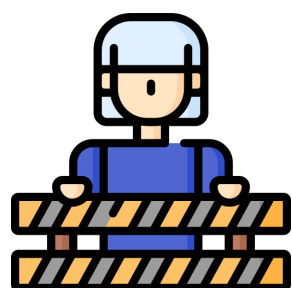
Another type of sexual abuse is sexual harassment.



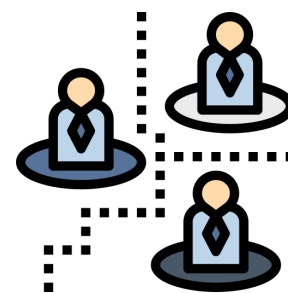
Sexual harassment is a form of sexual abuse where someone uses words and touch to make us uncomfortable.



Sexual harassment can violate your boundaries around sex.



Boundaries are rules about what you are and are not comfortable with.



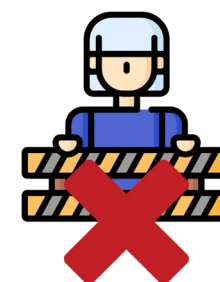
You may have different boundaries for different people.



For example, you might be okay with some of your friends telling you about their sex lives.

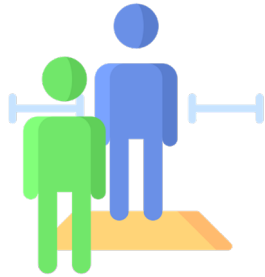


But you might be upset if a therapist or support worker told you about their sex life.



If a therapist or support worker told you about their sex life after you told them to stop, that is crossing a boundary.

Sexual harassment includes:



- Someone invading our personal space in ways meant to make us uncomfortable (for example, a coworker choosing to stand right behind you so they are pressed against your back)



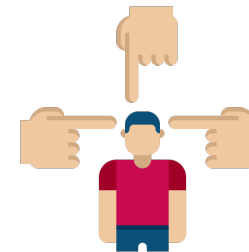
- Someone commenting on our clothing or bodies in sexual ways



- Someone telling us sexual things without our permission



- Someone asking us about our sex lives when that information is not relevant to our relationship to them without our permission



- Someone accusing us of attempting to seduce them or having sexual thoughts about them

Example 1:



Hannah is a lesbian with a disability.



Hannah has a support worker.



Hannah's support worker is a straight woman.



Hannah's support worker knows Hannah is a lesbian.



Hannah's support worker constantly tells Hannah that she is not interested in Hannah.



Hannah's support worker constantly tells Hannah "I do not want to have sex with you."



Hannah's support worker constantly tells Hannah "I hope you do not think about me when you masturbate."



This is sexual harassment.



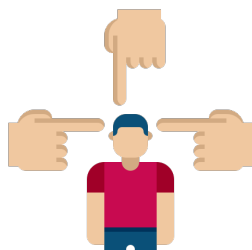
Hannah did not say she was attracted to her support worker.



Hannah did not say she wanted to have sex with her support worker.



Hannah did not say anything about masturbating.

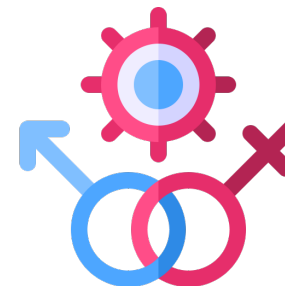


Her support worker accusing Hannah of doing these things is sexual harassment.

Example 2:



Drew has a doctor appointment.



Drew is getting tested for STIs (germs you can get from having sex).



Drew's doctor asks Drew if Drew has had sex with a new partner in the last 6 months.



This is an okay question to ask.



Drew's doctor needs to know if Drew had new sexual partners so the doctor can order the right STI tests.



This is not sexual harassment.



The next week, Drew goes to the dentist.



During Drew's dental cleaning, the dentist asks Drew if Drew has had sex recently.



This is not an okay thing for the dentist to ask.



Drew having sex has nothing to do with getting his teeth cleaned!



This is sexual harassment.



Drew's dentist is sexually harassing Drew by asking inappropriate questions about Drew's sex life.



Need support? You can contact RAINN

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Part 5: Why are People with Disabilities More Likely to be Sexually Assaulted?



A lot of people with disabilities have been sexually assaulted.



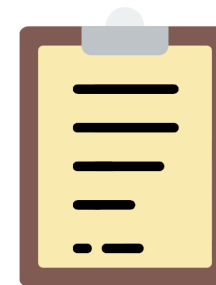
People with disabilities are more likely to be sexually assaulted than people without disabilities.



This is especially true for people with intellectual disabilities.



One article found that people with intellectual disabilities are seven times more likely to be sexually assaulted than people without disabilities.



Here are some reasons why people with disabilities are more likely to be sexually assaulted than people without disabilities.

Other people assume we are “easy targets”



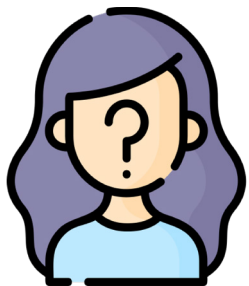
People with disabilities are more likely to be sexually assaulted because other people assume we are “easy targets.”



We may not have a lot of close friends or people we can tell if we are sexually assaulted.



We may not know how to tell people if we are sexually assaulted.

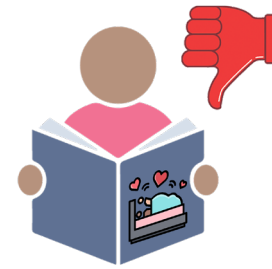


We may not know who to tell.



We may not have anyone we can tell.

We do not get good sexual education



A lot of people with disabilities do not get good sexual education.



Sexual education means classes that teach you about sex, sexuality, gender, and sexual and reproductive health care.



A lot of us never got these classes in school.



And a lot of sexual education classes do not teach about what consent and sexual assault are.



So we may never get the chance to learn what sexual assault looks like.



We may not know that we were sexually assaulted.

Other people believe our helpers could not possibly hurt us



A lot of people with disabilities have a lot of people in our lives who are supposed to help us.



For example, support workers, doctors, and therapists.



Other people assume that since these people are there to help us, they couldn't possibly hurt us.

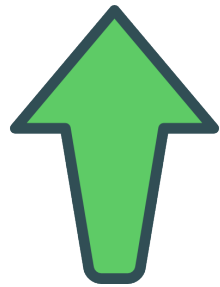


So if the people who are supposed to help us do hurt us, like by sexually assaulting us, other people might not believe the sexual assault really happened.

We are taught to do what we are told by helpers



A lot of people with disabilities are taught that if someone is helping us, we have to do what they say.



People who are supposed to help us might take advantage of this.



They might ask us to do something we do not feel comfortable doing.



But we might feel like we have to do what they say because they are a helper.

Some of us live in institutions



Some people with disabilities live in institutions.



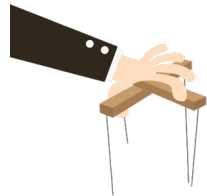
Institutions are places where a lot of disabled people live.



People living in institutions usually do not get to leave when they want to.



People living in institutions usually do not have a lot of control over their lives.



People who work at the institution have a lot of control over the lives of people who live in the institution.

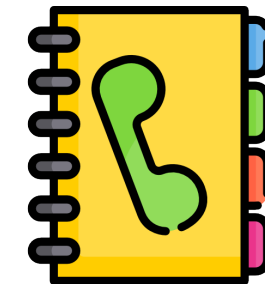


That makes it really easy for someone working at the institution to sexually assault someone living in the institution.



Sexual assault resources may not be accessible to us.

There are resources for people who have been sexually assaulted.



For example, there are phone numbers and online chats run by advocates for people who have been sexually assaulted.



But a lot of these resources are not accessible for people with disabilities.



We may not be able to make a phone call or use a computer.



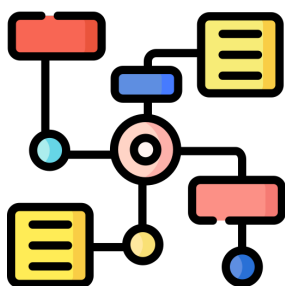
The resources might be written with words that are too hard for us to understand.



There might be in-person resources, like therapy or support groups.

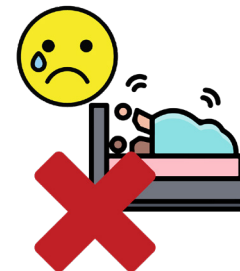


But we might not be able to get to these resources if they are far away.



Or these resources might say we cannot use them because our cases are “too complicated.”

None of these things make sexual assault okay!



None of these things mean people with disabilities do anything to “deserve” sexual assault.



It is never someone's fault that they were sexually assaulted.

Need support? You can contact RAINN

RAINN

[The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) is one resource for people who have been sexually assaulted.



RAINN has a phone hotline you can call.



The RAINN hotline number is 1-800-656-4673.



You can also contact RAINN through their [online chat](#).



RAINN can help you find sexual assault resources in your state or area.

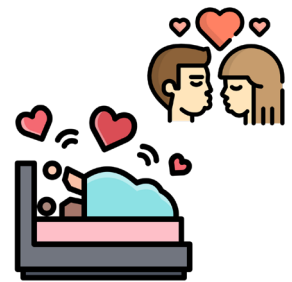


Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).

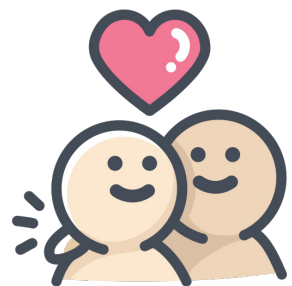


Part 6: What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is abuse that happens within close relationships.



Domestic violence can happen within romantic and sexual relationships.



But domestic violence can also happen in other kinds of relationships.



Domestic violence can happen between:

- Family members, such as a parent abusing a child.



- Caregivers and the people they support, such as a support worker abusing a person with disabilities.



- People who live together, such as a person abusing their roommate.



- Close friends.



Domestic violence can look like a lot of different forms of abuse.

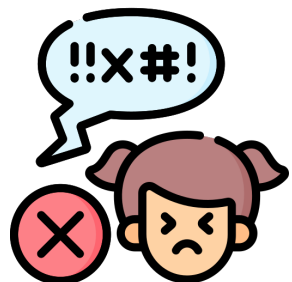
Some examples of domestic violence are:



- Sexual assault.



- Physical abuse, like hitting and kicking someone.



- Emotional abuse, like shouting at someone or calling them mean names.



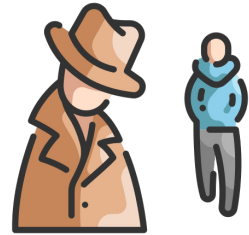
- Neglect, like ignoring someone's needs or not paying attention to someone when they need help.



- Threats, like threatening to end the relationship or threatening to put someone under guardianship if they do not do what the person wants.



- Financial (money) abuse, like trying to control how someone spends their own money.



- Stalking, or following someone around for no good reason.



- Using technology, like a computer or social media, to threaten or abuse someone.



This toolkit will not talk much about domestic violence besides sexual assault.



But the advice in this toolkit can apply to other kinds of domestic violence.

A note on sexual assault and domestic violence against people with disabilities.

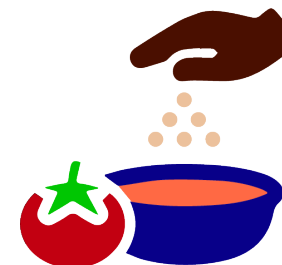


Many people with disabilities rely on other people to help us do everyday activities.

We may rely on other people to help us with things like:



- Getting out of bed and getting dressed in the morning.



- Cooking and eating food.



- Running errands, like going shopping.



- Managing our money and benefits.



- Doing household chores, like washing dishes.



- Communicating, like talking on the phone.



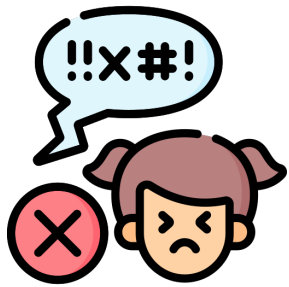
- Working at a job.



- Getting medical care.



Sometimes, the people who help us with everyday activities sexually assault us.



Sometimes, the people who help us with everyday activities abuse us in other ways.



This is called **caregiver abuse**.



Caregiver abuse is never okay.



But it happens.



Other people might say that caregiver abuse is “no big deal.”



Other people might say that caregiver abuse is a “natural reaction” to the people who help us being stressed.

Other people might blame caregiver abuse on things like:



- Low pay for caregivers



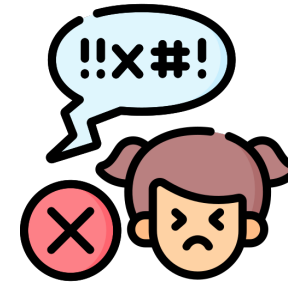
- Not enough services to give caregivers time off



- People with disabilities being “hard to handle” or “a lot of work.”



None of this is okay.



We need to make sure people know that caregiver abuse is a form of abuse, too.



We need to make sure that when people talk about abuse, they also talk about caregiver abuse.



We need to speak up about caregiver abuse and let people know that caregiver abuse is never okay.



Need support? You can contact RAINN

[The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) is one resource for people who have been sexually assaulted.



RAINN has a phone hotline you can call.



The RAINN hotline number is 1-800-656-4673.



You can also contact RAINN through their [online chat](#).



RAINN can help you find sexual assault resources in your state or area.



Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).

Part 7: What if I Have Been Sexually Assaulted?



If you have been sexually assaulted, remember that it is **never** your fault.



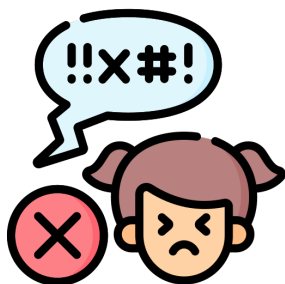
You did **not** deserve this.



You did **not** do anything to “encourage” the person who sexually assaulted you.



You did **not** do anything wrong.



The only person who did something wrong was the person who sexually assaulted you.



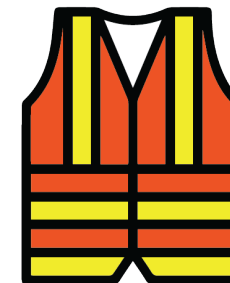
Parts 8 and 9 talk about what to do after a sexual assault.

Part 8 is called “Right After the Assault.”



This part talks about what you can do in the hours and days after you were sexually assaulted.

This part talks about things like:



- Taking care of immediate safety needs, if needed



- Going to the hospital to have an exam, if you want



- Reporting to the police or other authority, if you want



- Finding support in the short-term



- Safety planning

Part 9 is called “Long-term Planning and Support.”



This part talks about what you can do in the days, weeks, months, and years after you were sexually assaulted.

This part talks about:



- Getting out of an abusive relationship



- Getting a court order, if you want



- Finding long-term support (like from friends, or from a counselor or therapist)



- Making and finding community



- Healing from trauma

A note on sexual assault, gender, sexuality, and getting help



For a long time, people believed that only men could sexually assault someone.



For a long time, people believed that only women could be sexually assaulted.



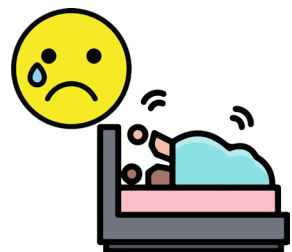
Some people still believe this.



But this is not true!



Anyone can sexually assault someone else.



Anyone can be sexually assaulted.



It is true that most people who are sexually assaulted are women.



It is true that most people who sexually assault others are men.



Because of this, a lot of services for people who have been sexually assaulted are designed for women who have been sexually assaulted by men.



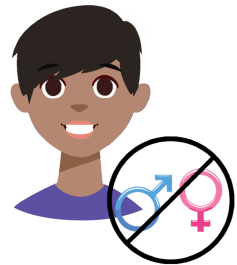
Some services are *only* for women who have been sexually assaulted by men.



This can be hard for LGBTQ+ people.



We may have been sexually assaulted by a person of our same gender.



We may be nonbinary and not be a woman or a man.



It can be hard to find sexual assault resources that talk about our specific situations.



It can be even harder when we are LGBTQ+ people with disabilities.



Here are some questions that you can ask of a sexual assault resource if you are trying to get help from them.

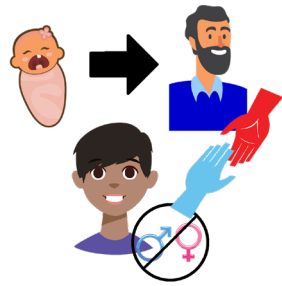
You can ask these questions to see if the resource can help you.



- Do you help LGBTQ+ people?



- Do you help people who are not women?



- Do you help transgender and nonbinary people?



- Do you help people who have been sexually assaulted by someone of their same gender?



- Do you help people with disabilities?



You can also ask about accommodations.

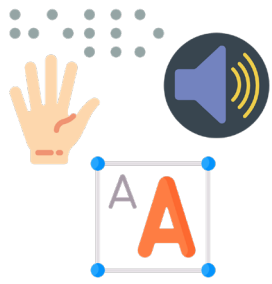


Accommodations are changes that help people with disabilities get the same things as people without disabilities.

Here are some examples of accommodations:



- Holding a support group in a wheelchair accessible space



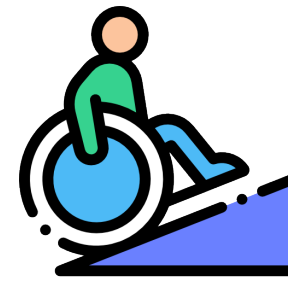
- Producing large print, audio, or Braille versions of print resources



- Making plain language or Easy Read versions of materials



- Hiring a sign language interpreter to interpret for someone at a meeting



In the US, most businesses and groups have to provide accommodations to people with disabilities.



This includes groups that provide services to people who have been sexually assaulted.



If you need accommodations to be part of an activity or event a group holds, let the group know.



Groups cannot charge money for accommodations.

A note on mandated reporters, police, and Adult Protective Services



There are many people who can help you if you are sexually assaulted.



Sometimes these people are people we know casually, like friends or family.



Sometimes these people are professionals.

Some types of professionals can include:



- Disability services professionals, like support workers, case managers, or therapists.



- Doctors and nurses.



- Mental health workers, like therapists, counselors, or psychologists.



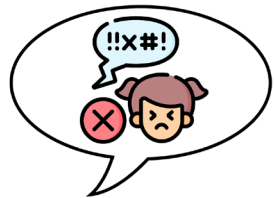
- Teachers and mentors.



- Advocates for people who have survived sexual assault.



Sometimes, these professionals are mandated reporters.



Mandated reporters are people who have to tell the government if a “vulnerable person” is being abused.

The term “vulnerable person” usually includes:



- Children



- Older adults (usually over age 65).



- Adults with disabilities.

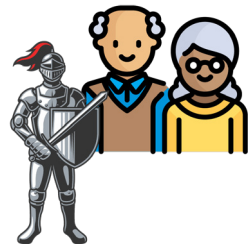


We will focus on what mandated reporters have to do when they learn an adult with a disability is being abused.

When a mandated reporter learns that an adult with a disability is being abused, the mandated reporter has to tell:



- The police and/or



- Adult Protective Services.



The mandated reporter has to do this even if the person being abused does not want them to.



A lot of people with disabilities have had bad experiences with police.

This is especially true of:



- disabled Black people.



- disabled Indigenous people.



- other disabled people of color.



Having the police called on us can be scary, even if the police are supposed to help us.



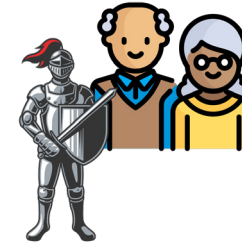
We may not want to talk to the police.



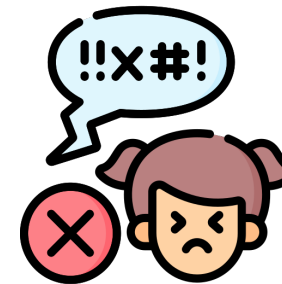
We may be scared that the police will hurt us.



We may be scared that the police will say being sexually assaulted was our fault.



Adult Protective Services is a part of the government.



Adult Protective Services looks into cases where an older adult or an adult with a disability is being abused.



Adult Protective Services can help older adults and adults with disabilities get out of abusive situations.



But Adult Protective Services can also act in ways that hurt the people they are supposed to protect.



Adult Protective Services might try to put you under guardianship.



Guardianship is when a judge takes away someone's right to make their own decisions.



Guardianship takes away rights from people with disabilities.



Guardianship is bad.



Adult Protective Services may also send the police to your house.



This may make the situation worse.



The police are not usually trained in helping people get out of abusive situations.



If you are wondering if a professional is a mandated reporter, you can always ask them.



Need support? You can contact RAINN

[The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) is one resource for people who have been sexually assaulted.



RAINN has a phone hotline you can call.



The RAINN hotline number is 1-800-656-4673.



You can also contact RAINN through their [online chat](#).



RAINN can help you find sexual assault resources in your state or area.



Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).

Part 8: Right After the Assault

Immediate safety needs

First, think:



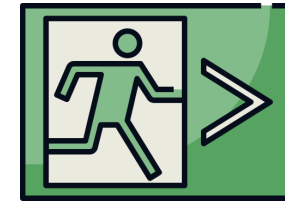
- ☐ Are you in danger right now?



- ☐ Are you injured? Do you need medical help for your injuries?



- ☐ Do you need a person you can trust with you?



- ☐ Can you get away from the person who hurt you?



- ☐ Do you need help for things like:



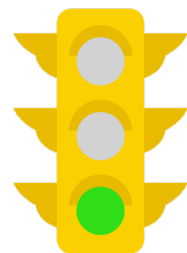
- ☐ Going to the hospital, if you want to?



- ☐ Calling or talking to the police, if you want to?



- ☐ Finding a safe place to stay?



If you need to get away from the person who assaulted you, go.



Do not worry about being rude or making a scene.



Say or do whatever you need to in order to get out of the situation.



If you can, leave the situation and get to a safe place.

A safe place could be:



- A friend or family member's house



- A neighbor you know well's house



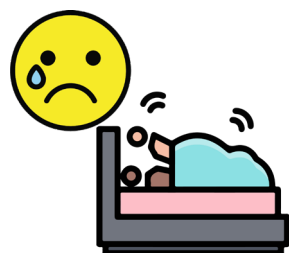
- A hospital



- If you cannot leave the place where you were assaulted, a room you can be alone in and lock the door of



Sexual assault can be violent.



Someone sexually assaulting you can really hurt you.



Someone who sexually assaults you may hurt you in other ways, too.



For example, they may hit you or kick you.



This is called physical abuse.



If you have just been sexually assaulted, you may be hurt badly.

Check for things like:



- Severe bleeding, especially in the part of your body where you were sexually assaulted



- Broken bones



- Passing out or fainting



- Bruising on your neck, chest, or abdomen (stomach)



If you need to go to the hospital or emergency room because of your injuries, you should go.



If you need to call an ambulance to take you to the hospital or emergency room, you should call.



You can go to the hospital or emergency room for your injuries even if you do not want to get a sexual assault exam.



We will talk more about sexual assault exams in the next section.



You can call an advocate before you go to the hospital.



An **advocate** in this context is someone who helps people who have been sexually assaulted find and get services.



Advocates are trained in how to help people who have been sexually assaulted.



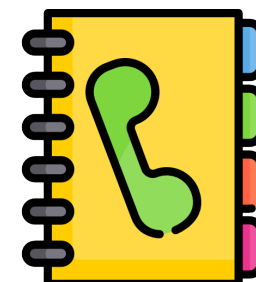
To connect with an advocate, you can call or chat with RAINN.



RAINN is a group that helps people who have been sexually assaulted.



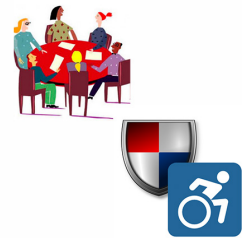
RAINN has a phone hotline you can call.



The RAINN hotline number is 1-800-656-4673.



You can also contact RAINN through their online chat.



If you contact RAINN, they will connect you with an advocate group in your area.



That advocate group can then send an advocate to go with you to the hospital.



Going to the hospital for an exam

If you were sexually assaulted, you can go to the hospital to get an exam to collect evidence of the assault.



Evidence is facts, reports, or materials that show something.



You must go to the hospital to get this exam within 3 days of being sexually assaulted.



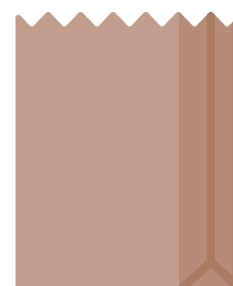
You should not take a bath or shower before going to the hospital.



If you wait more than 3 days, or take a bath or shower before going, the exam may not work.



If you go to the hospital, bring the clothes you were assaulted in with you.



If you are not still wearing the clothes you were assaulted in, put the clothes in a paper bag.



Do not wash the clothes first.



Do not put the clothes in a plastic bag.



People who want to report a sexual assault have the right to bring a support person to the hospital.

Your support person could be:



- A friend



- A family member



- A support worker



- An advocate



At the hospital, a nurse will do the exam.



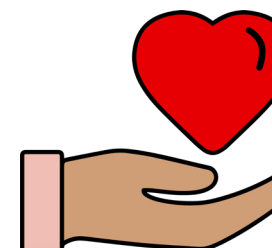
The nurse will collect evidence that you were sexually assaulted.



Nurses who do these exams are called sexual assault nurse examiners.



Sexual assault nurse examiners are trained in how to collect evidence after sexual assault.



They are trained in caring for people who have been sexually assaulted.

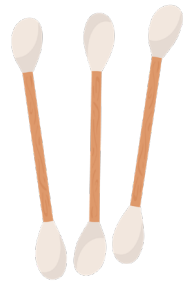
During your exam the nurse will likely:



- Take the clothes you were sexually assaulted in as evidence.



- Ask you questions about what happened and what you can remember about the person that sexually assaulted you.

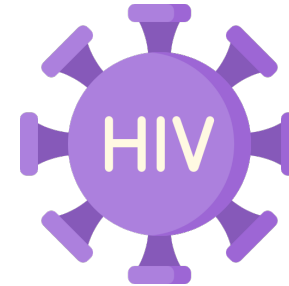


- Swab down parts of your body, including your mouth and genitals.



- Run tests to see if you were exposed to any STIs.

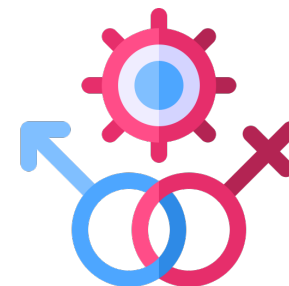
The nurse may also prescribe you medicines. These can include:



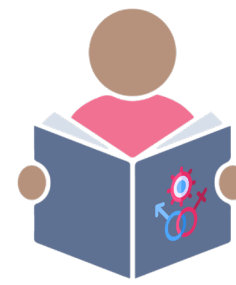
- PEP for HIV.



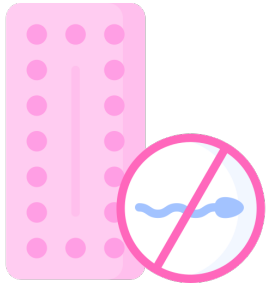
You can read more about HIV and PEP in our toolkit on sexual health.



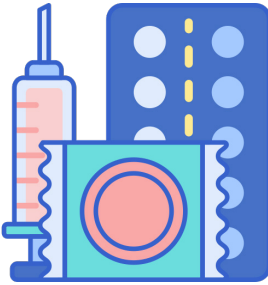
- Antibiotics for certain STIs.



You can read more about STIs in [our toolkit on sexual health](#).



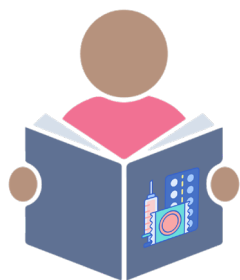
- Emergency contraception.



Emergency contraception is a kind of birth control.



It can stop you from getting pregnant.



You can read more about birth control in [our toolkit on sexual health](#).



If you want to tell the police that you were sexually assaulted, you can have the nurse call the police.



You can also call the police or go to the police station yourself, if you want.



People who have been sexually assaulted do not have to talk to police.



People do not have to report bad things that have happened to police unless they want to.



A lot of people who talk to police bring a support person with them.

This person could be:



- A friend.



- A family member.



- A support worker.



- An advocate.



When the police officers come to the hospital they may ask you questions about your assault right there.



If you have injuries, the police officers may take pictures of your body where you are hurt.



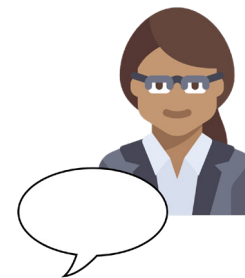
You may want to call the hospital before you go to make sure they can do the exam.



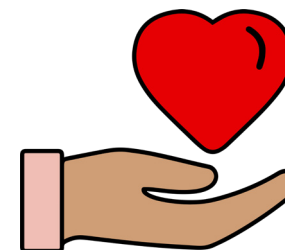
People who do not want the exam to collect evidence can still go to the hospital.



People who can make their own legal decisions do not have to have an evidence collection exam done if they do not want it.



People who have guardians should try to talk to a lawyer if they do not think their guardian will support what they want to do.



People who do not want an evidence collection exam can still get care at a hospital



Some hospital staff are mandated reporters.



This may include sexual assault nurse examiners.



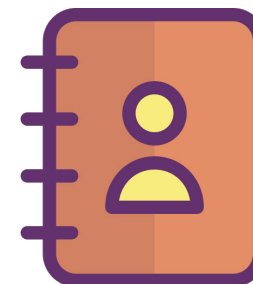
A mandated reporter has to call Adult Protective Services or the police if they find out that a person with a disability was sexually assaulted.



But people who do not want to talk to the police can decide not to answer their questions.



If you have any questions about the laws around Adult Protective services or the police in your state, call an advocate group before you go to the hospital.



You can find out more about how to contact an advocate group in your area at the end of the section "Immediate Safety Needs."

Reporting to police



Many types of sexual assault are against the law.



Many types of sexual assault are crimes.



If you have been sexually assaulted, you can tell the police about it.



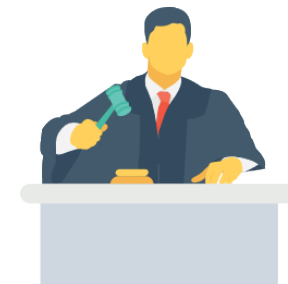
If the police think there is enough proof that a crime happened, they may arrest the person who sexually assaulted you.



Once the person who sexually assaulted you is arrested, they can be charged with a crime.



They will have to go to court.



Then, people in the court, like the judge and the jury, will decide if the person is guilty of the crime.



If the person is found guilty, they might go to jail or prison.



The person who got assaulted gets to decide if they want to talk to the police or not.



No one can make that choice for them.



But someone who knows about a sexual assault can report it to police.



The person can report to the police even if the person who was sexually assaulted does not want that to happen.



People like guardians and mandated reporters can call the police.

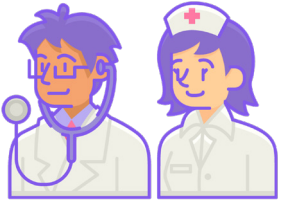


They can call the police even if the person who was assaulted does not want them to.

Remember, mandated reporters can include (but are not just limited to):



- Disability services professionals, like support workers, case managers, or therapists.



- Doctors and nurses.



- Mental health workers, like therapists, counselors, or psychologists.



- Teachers and mentors.



A lot of people bring a support person any time they talk to police.



This can be someone like a friend or family member



A lot of people bring someone with them to talk to the police about a sexual assault..



Some sexual assault resource centers will also provide you with an advocate who will be with you when you talk to the police.



The advocate can also be with you for other parts of the legal process, like going to court or talking to lawyers.



There are some things you should know if you are thinking of reporting of reporting your sexual assault to the police.



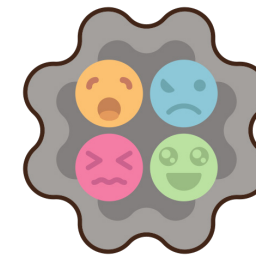
Many people with disabilities have had bad experiences with police or the legal system.



We may be scared to talk to the police.



Or, we may not want to deal with the legal system.



We also may have complicated feelings about the person who sexually assaulted us.



We may think they did a bad thing when they sexually assaulted us, but that they do not deserve to go to jail or prison.



The police and the criminal legal system can also be really hard on people who have been sexually assaulted.



The police may not believe us when we say we were sexually assaulted.



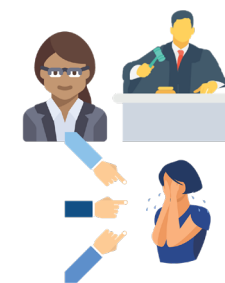
They may not believe us even if we have proof we were sexually assaulted.



The police might also blame us for our sexual assault, even though being sexually assaulted is never our fault.



The criminal legal system can also be bad about believing people who were sexually assaulted.



If we go to court to talk about the sexual assault, the judge or lawyers might blame us for being sexually assaulted.



The criminal legal system also may not punish the person who sexually assaulted you very hard or at all.



The police may choose not to arrest the person, even if there is evidence the person committed a crime.



The people working in the court system might choose not to charge the person with a crime.



The judge and jury in the trial might find the person not guilty of a crime.



Some people who are found guilty of sexual assault go to jail or prison for a long time.



But others only go to jail or prison for a short time.



Others do not even go to jail or prison at all!



There is no guarantee that the criminal legal system will punish the person who sexually assaulted you.



You still should report your sexual assault to the police if you want to!



Everyone who has been sexually assaulted has the right to report to the police.

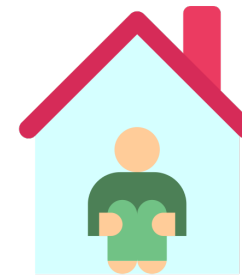


People with disabilities have the right to fair treatment by the police and the legal system.



Finding somewhere to stay

You might feel unsafe going back to the place where you were sexually assaulted.



If you were sexually assaulted in your home, or in a place you stay often, you might need to find somewhere else to stay.



It can be scary if you need to stay somewhere else to be safe.



It can feel like you have nowhere to go.



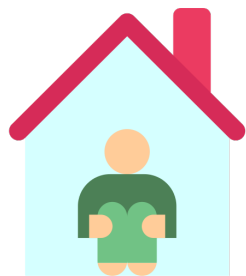
But you have options.



You could stay with someone you trust, like a good friend or family member.



You could stay in a hotel or motel room.



You could stay in a domestic violence or emergency shelter.



We will talk about each of these.

Staying with someone you trust



If you have been sexually assaulted and need to find somewhere else to stay, you could stay with someone you trust.

This could be:



- A good friend.



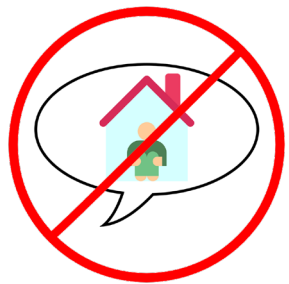
- A family member.



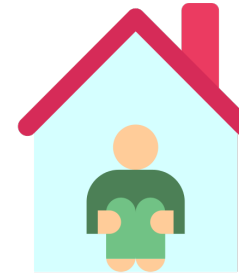
- Anyone else you know who you trust to support you.



If you stay with someone else, try to make sure they will not tell the person who sexually assaulted you.



Do not tell the person who sexually assaulted you where you are staying, either.



Staying at a hotel or motel

If you have been sexually assaulted and need to find somewhere else to stay, you could stay at a hotel or motel.



You have to pay to stay at a hotel or motel.



But if you have no trusted people to stay with, you could stay at a hotel or motel.



If you stay at a hotel or motel, you can ask the people working there to not tell anyone you are there.

This could look like:



- Asking the staff not to allow people to call you on your room's telephone

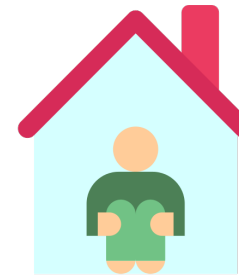


- Asking the staff not to tell anyone who comes to the hotel or motel that you are there.



- If you stay at a hotel or motel, do not tell the person who sexually assaulted you where you are staying.

Staying at a domestic violence or emergency shelter



Domestic violence or emergency shelters are places where people who have been abused or sexually assaulted can stay.



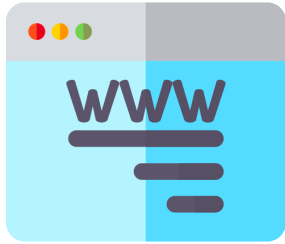
Most domestic violence or emergency shelters offer short-term places to stay.



That means you can only stay there for a few days to a week.



But a domestic violence or emergency shelter can help you find other places to stay long-term.



You can use the website domesticshelters.org to find a shelter near you.



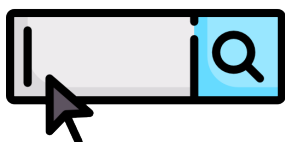
The website will give you a list of resources and shelters near you.



Type your city or ZIP code in the box that says "Enter your zip or city."



If you want, you can filter the list to find resources and shelters that are more likely to help you.



Click "Search."



Click the purple "Filter" button.

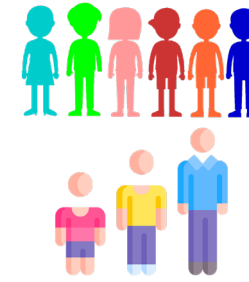
You can filter by:



- Language(s) the resource or shelter staff know



- Groups the resource or shelter serves (for example, people with developmental disabilities, LGBTQ+ people, Deaf people)



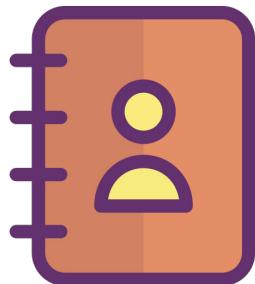
- Gender(s) and age(s) of people the resource or shelter serves (for example, women, men, non-binary people, children, older people)



- Services the resource or shelter provides (for example, emergency housing, legal services, counseling/therapy, children's services)



Most domestic violence or emergency shelters do not list their address publicly.



You will probably need to contact the shelter to get their address.



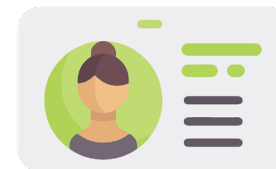
If you go to a domestic violence or emergency shelter, do not tell anyone outside the shelter where you are staying.

What to pack if you need to leave



If you need to leave your home after a sexual assault, try to pack what you will need to live somewhere else for a week.

This can include:



- Identification, like your driver's license, state ID card, Medicaid card, and passport



- Cash and credit cards



- Food and water



- Technology, like your phone or computer.



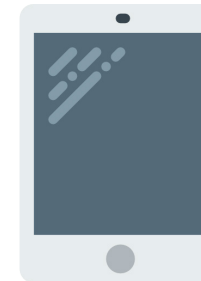
- Clothes for a few days



- Transportation cards, like a bus pass



- Medicine if you need it



- Anything you need to communicate, like an iPad or letterboard



- Any proof you may have that you were sexually assaulted (such as photographs of your injuries, or a police report)



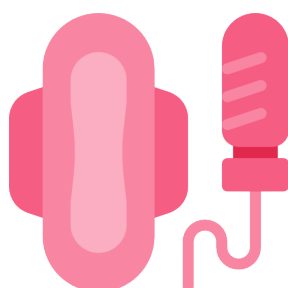
- Car registration and driver's insurance if you have a car



- Health records and health insurance cards



- Records of your housing, such as lease or mortgage documents



- Hygiene products like menstrual pads or tampons

What if I cannot leave?



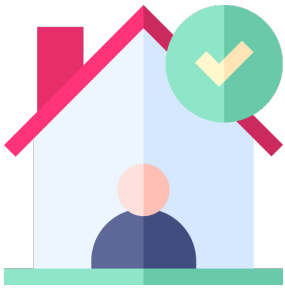
Sometimes you may not be able to leave an abusive situation.



You may not have the money to leave yet.



You may not have the support you need to leave.



Sometimes you may want to stay.



Maybe this place has been your home and you have a right to be there.



Maybe you want to work through things with the person who hurt you.



Maybe you want to give the person a chance to acknowledge the hurtful things they have done.



Maybe you want the person to not hurt you again but you do not want to leave them.

If you cannot leave right away but want to in the future:



Look at the list of things to pack at the beginning of this section.



Start keeping and packing the things on that list.



Try to store them in a safe place where the person who sexually assaulted you will not find them.

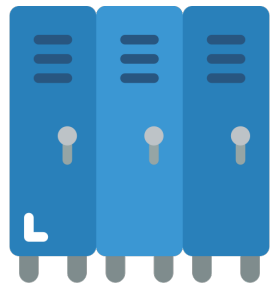
If you need to store these things away from where you live, here are some suggestions:



- Store them at a family member or friend's house.



- Store them at a place you visit regularly, like your work.



- Rent a storage unit or locker. This costs money.

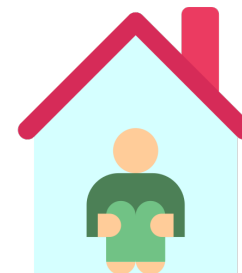


Start looking for services that can help you leave.

This can be services like:



- Advocate groups for people who have been sexually assaulted.



- Domestic violence or emergency shelters.



- Legal services, such as getting a court order.



Do this slowly and carefully.



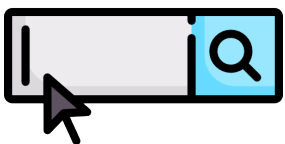
Try to cover up what you are doing so that the person who sexually assaulted you does not find out.



If you are worried about the person who assaulted you spying on your computer or phone, find other ways to look up the services.



You could go to the library or an internet cafe and use the computers there.

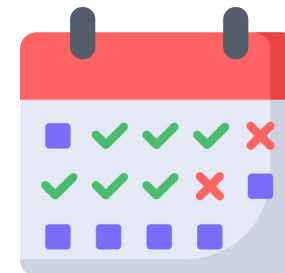


That way, you do not have to look up services on your own computer or phone.

If you want to access care or services while still living with the person who assaulted you:



Think about how you could access care or services without the person who assaulted you finding out.



Look for places in your usual schedule where you could “fit in” care or service appointments.



Think about friends or family who could say that you are with them during your care appointments.

For example:



Sarita is trying to fit therapy appointments into her schedule after a sexual assault.



She does not want the person who sexually assaulted her finding out about her therapy.



Sarita goes to a sports class for adults with disabilities every Wednesday afternoon.



Sarita decides to schedule therapy for after her sports class.



She says she is "going out with friends for dinner" after her class on Wednesdays.



But she is really going to therapy instead.



Sarita gets her friend Robert to cover for her and say they are going out to dinner together.

Safety planning when you do not leave

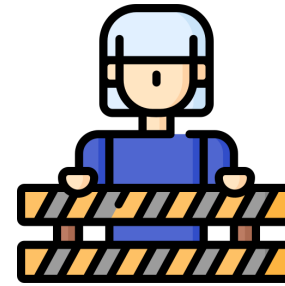


If you do not want to leave the person who sexually assaulted you, you can still make a safety plan.



A **safety plan** is a list of steps you can take to make the risk of sexual assault or other abuse smaller.

Here are some tips about keeping yourself safe when you live with the person who assaulted you:



Set and keep boundaries

Set boundaries about the person who sexually assaulted you.

1. =
2. =

Boundaries are rules about what you are and are not comfortable with.



The person who assaulted you may not care about respecting your boundaries.



So you will have to change what you do in order to make your boundaries clear.

For example:



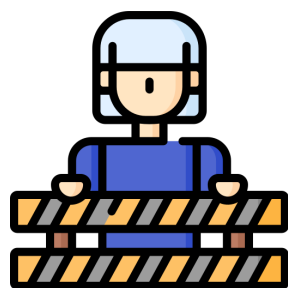
Marta was sexually assaulted by their partner, Beatrix.



Beatrix keeps talking about the assault and how it was not "that bad."



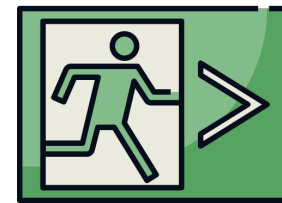
Beatrix keeps telling Marta that Marta is "being a wimp and needs to grow up."



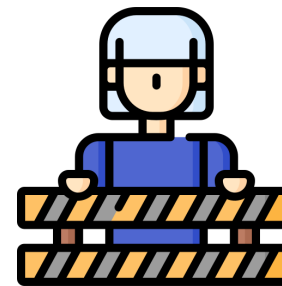
So Marta sets a boundary.



Marta tells Beatrix, "I am not going to talk to you about the assault anymore."



Marta tells Beatrix, "If you try to talk to me about the assault, I will leave the room."



Then, Marta sticks to their boundary.



They do not let Beatrix talk to them about the assault anymore.



Limit time alone with the person

Try to limit how much time you spend alone with the person who sexually assaulted you.



You can ask other people for help with this.

You can ask for help from:



- Other people you live with



- Friends



- Family members



- Support workers.

For example:



Julius was sexually assaulted by his boyfriend, Lu.



Julius still lives with Lu.



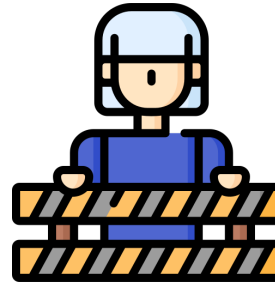
Julius and Lu live with a housemate, Steven.



Julius sets the boundary "I am not going to be alone in the house with Lu unless Steven is also home."



Julius tells Steven about his boundary.



Then, Julius and Steven work to put the boundary into action.



Julius starts to stay at work late until he knows Steven is home.



Julius only comes home when he knows Steven is also home.

Stay out of the house, if you can



If you can, find ways to stay out of the house so you are not alone with the person who sexually assaulted you.

Some of these ways could be:



Getting a job where you need to go to work somewhere else.



Volunteering at a place away from home



Visiting friends or family



Going to visit places, like the mall or museums, by yourself or with a safe person



The less time you spend with the person who sexually assaulted you, the better.

For example:



Dino was sexually assaulted by his partner, Lianna.



Dino does not feel safe being in the house with Lianna anymore.



So Dino starts volunteering at a local food bank.



Dino volunteers at the food bank for a few hours every afternoon.



This gets Dino out of the house and away from Lianna.

If you live in an institution, group home, or assisted living facility



Some people with disabilities live in institutions.



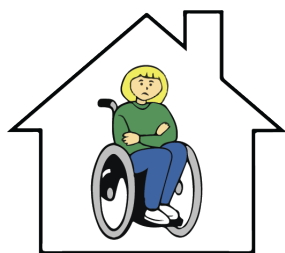
Institutions are places where a lot of disabled people live.



People living in institutions usually did not decide to live there.



They were put there by someone else.



Institutions are not run by the people who live there.



They are run by the people who work there.



People living in institutions usually cannot leave when they want to.



They usually cannot spend their free time how they want to.

Some examples of institutions are:



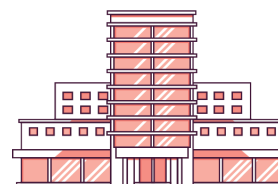
- Hospitals



- Psychiatric/mental health hospitals



- Nursing homes



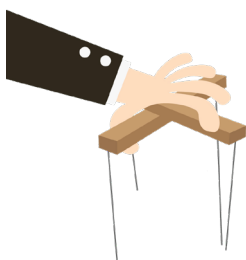
- Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs)



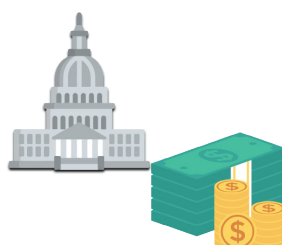
Some people with disabilities live in group homes and assisted living facilities.



Group homes and assisted living facilities can be a lot like institutions.



Group homes and assisted living facilities can control people's lives like institutions do.



But group homes and assisted living facilities can get certain kinds of money from the government that institutions cannot.



Group homes and assisted living facilities can get money for **home and community based services (HCBS)**.



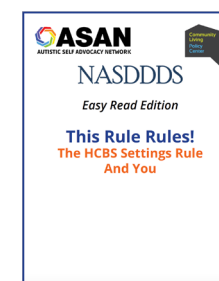
HCBS are services that help people with disabilities live our everyday lives in our communities.



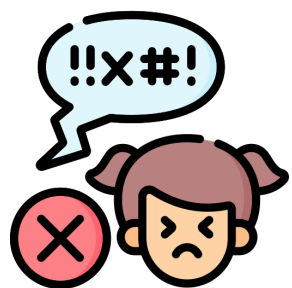
Institutions cannot get HCBS money.



We will talk more in a little bit about why this difference matters.



For more on HCBS and HCBS funding, you can read our [This Rule Rules](#) toolkit.



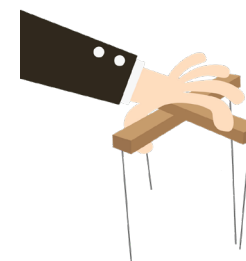
A lot of people with disabilities who live in institutions, group homes, or assisted living facilities end up getting abused.



Abuse that happens in institutions, group homes, or assisted living facilities is called **institutional abuse**. Sometimes institutional abuse includes sexual assault.



People living in institutions, group homes, or assisted living facilities do not have a lot of control over their lives.



The staff that work in those places have a lot of control over the lives of people living there.



This makes institutional abuse a lot more likely.



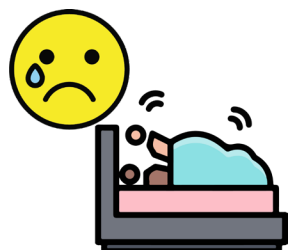
It can be really hard to go through institutional abuse.



There are not a lot of resources available to people who have gone through institutional abuse.



And, if you cannot leave the institution, it can be hard to escape institutional abuse.



But there are still things you can do if you are sexually assaulted in an institution, group home, or assisted living facility.



Tell other people

You can tell other people in the institution, group home, or assisted living facility.



This can be other people who live in the institution, group home, or assisted living facility.



It can also be staff who work in the institution, group home, or assisted living facility.

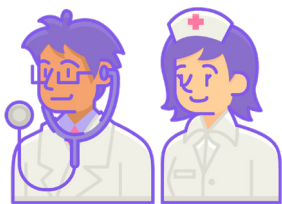


You can tell people outside of the institution, group home, or assisted living facility, too.

This could be people like:



- Friends or family members



- Doctors or other health care professionals.



- Your case manager, if you have one.



- Your guardian, if you have one.



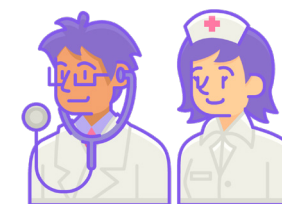
Keep telling people until someone listens and agrees to help you.



Keep in mind that some of these people may be mandated reporters.



Staff who work at the institution, group home, or assisted living facility will probably be mandated reporters.



Doctors and other health care professionals will probably be mandated reporters.



Case managers will probably be mandated reporters.



Guardians may be mandated reporters.



Mandated reporters have to tell the police or Adult Protective Services if they think you are being abused.



You can read more about mandated reporters in the section “A note on mandated reporters, police, and Adult Protective Services” in Part 7: What if I have been sexually assaulted?



When you tell other people, be clear about what you want.



- Do you want to tell the police that you were sexually assaulted?



- Do you want to stop having to live around the person who sexually assaulted you?



- Do you want to try to move out of the institution, group home, or assisted living facility?



If you are clear about what you want to happen, it is less likely that things you do not want will happen.



Tell your state's P&A

You can tell your state's **protection and advocacy group (P&A)**.



P&As are legal groups that help people with disabilities fight for our rights.



P&As can help people who are being abused in institutions, group homes, or assisted living facilities.



You can find your state's P&A on the National Disability Rights Network's [member agencies page](#).

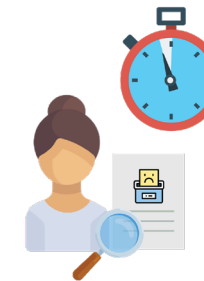


Call the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

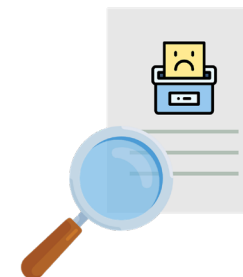
An ombudsman is a person who looks into complaints people make.



An ombudsman also helps people resolve problems or disputes they have with others.



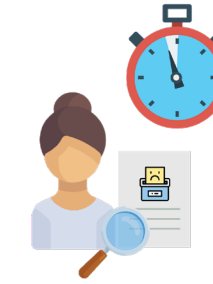
A Long-Term Care Ombudsman is a state government official.



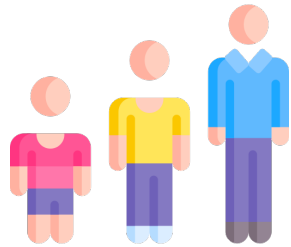
They look into grievances people make about institutions, group homes, and assisted living facilities.



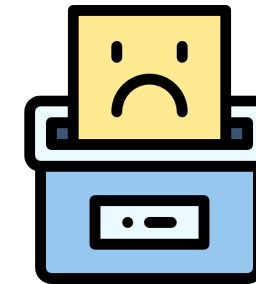
Long-Term Care Ombudsmen mostly look at places that older adults live in, like nursing homes and assisted living facilities.



You can talk to your state's Long Term Care Ombudsman about being sexually assaulted.



But people with disabilities of all ages can live in these places, too.



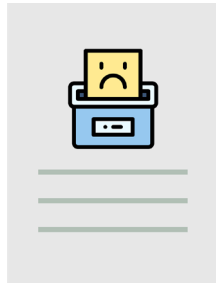
You can file a complaint with your state's Long Term Care Ombudsman.



And Long-Term Care Ombudsmen can also look at places that mostly serve people with disabilities, like group homes.



You can find your state's Long Term Care Ombudsman on the Consumer Voice's [Long Term Care Ombudsman page](#).

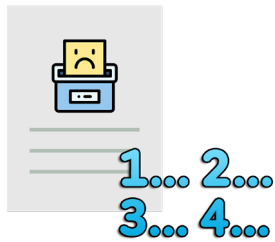


File an official complaint or grievance

A grievance is a type of official complaint.



You can also ask your case manager, if you have one.



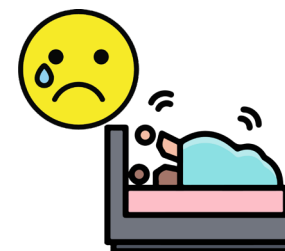
If you live in an institution, group home, or assisted living facility, there should be a process for filing grievances.



And, your state's P&A should be able to help you file a grievance.



You can ask the staff at the institution, group home, or assisted living facility what the process is.



Once you know the process for filing a grievance, you can file a grievance about the sexual assault.

Accessing or changing your HCBS



If you live in a group home or assisted living facility, you may be on an HCBS waiver.



An HCBS waiver is a document that says you want to live and get services in the community, not in an institution.



If you have an HCBS waiver, you do not have to live in a group home or assisted living facility.



You can choose to live somewhere else, like living in your own apartment with a roommate.



If you have an HCBS waiver, you should have a case manager.



A case manager is someone who helps you manage your services.



You can tell your case manager that you do not want to live in the group home or assisted living facility anymore.



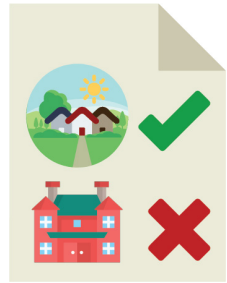
You do not have to tell your case manager that you were sexually assaulted.



Your case manager needs to help you move somewhere that is not a group home or assisted living facility.



If you are on an HCBS waiver and live in a group home or assisted living facility, you also have rights.



The HCBS Settings Rule gives you these rights.



The HCBS Settings Rule is a government rule that says people who get HCBS have certain rights.

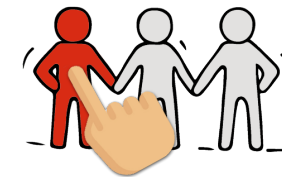
Some of these rights are:



- The right to privacy and respect from staff or support workers.



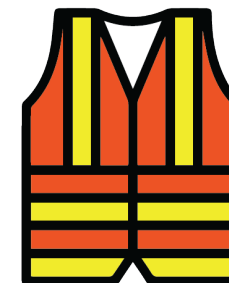
- The right to be able to lock your door if you live in a group home or assisted living facility.



- The right to be able to pick your roommate if you live in a group home or assisted living facility.



- The right to be able to change where you live.



These rights can help you stay safer after being sexually assaulted.



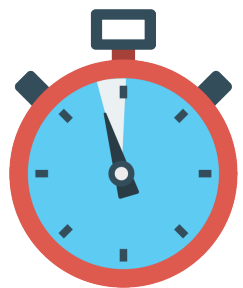
If you do not have an HCBS waiver, you can apply for one.



This is true if you live in a group home, assisted living facility, or institution.



Most states have programs that help people living in institutions move into the community.



It can take a while to get on an HCBS waiver.



But, if you live in an institution, you may be able to get on an HCBS waiver faster.



If you have been abused in an institution, you may be able to get on an HCBS waiver faster.



Once you are on an HCBS waiver, you can move out of the institution.

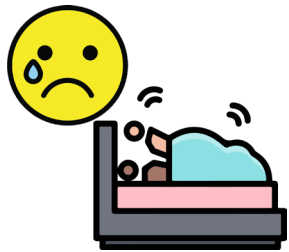


An HCBS waiver can help you move into your own home.

Short-term support



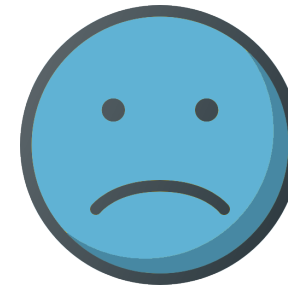
In the days and weeks after a sexual assault, you may feel many different emotions.



It is okay to feel whatever you are feeling after a sexual assault.



It is okay to feel angry.



It is okay to feel sad.



It is okay to feel confused.



It is okay to feel nothing at all.



This section will talk about safety and mental health in the days and weeks after a sexual assault.

This section will talk about:



Safety planning



Putting the safety plan into action to keep yourself safe



Finding mental health care

Safety planning

What is a safety plan?



A **safety plan** is a list of steps you can take to make the risk of sexual assault or other abuse smaller.



A safety plan includes information about your life.



A safety plan includes information about the places you go regularly, such as work or school.



A safety plan may also include a plan for how to get out of an abusive relationship.

How can I make a safety plan?



There are different tools online for making a safety plan.



The National Domestic Violence Hotline has a guide to making a safety plan.



This guide will ask you questions.

The questions are about things like:



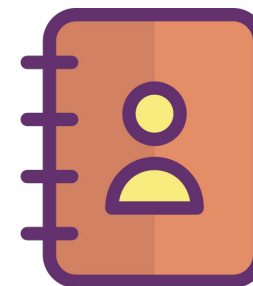
- Who are safe people you can talk to about being sexually assaulted or otherwise abused?



- Where are safe places you can go if you need to leave your home?



- If you had to pack up and move out of your home quickly, what would you take?



- If you needed someone to come get you out of a bad situation quickly, who would you contact? How would you contact them?



- What can you do to avoid seeing the person who assaulted or abused you?



- Does the person who assaulted or abused you have access to your technology? This can include your cell phone, computer, or assistive technology you use.



- Has the person who assaulted or abused you threatened to share personal or embarrassing information about you?

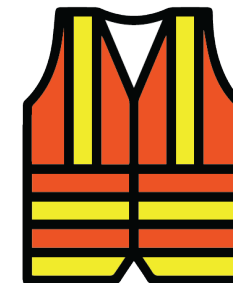


Once you have answered the questions, the website will create a safety plan for you.

Putting the safety plan into action: Keeping yourself safe



Once you have your safety plan, think about how you can put it into action.



Think about how you will keep yourself safe from the person who sexually assaulted you.



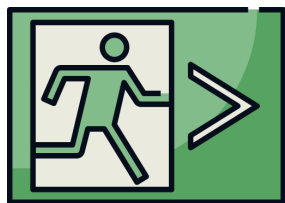
We have already talked about this in the section “What if I cannot leave?”



That section talks about safety planning if you cannot leave.



This section talks about safety planning if you have left.



If you have left, you may not have taken much with you.



You may want or need to go back to pick up things you left behind.



Do not go back to the person who sexually assaulted you alone.



Take someone else with you, like a friend or family member.

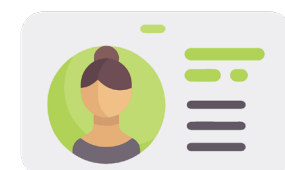


Make a list of the things you want to pick up ahead of time.



You may not be able to take everything you want or need.

Focus on things like:



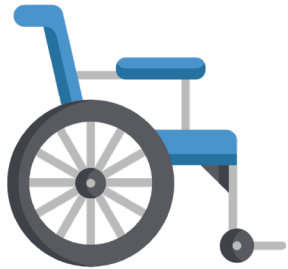
- Important documents, like identification



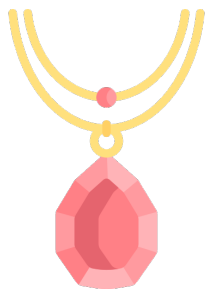
- Clothes



- Technology, like computers or phones



- Assistive devices, like wheelchairs, canes, or AAC devices



- Small items that have a lot of personal value to you, like family heirloom items



Only stay as long as it takes you to pick up and move the things you left behind.



Another option is to have the person who sexually assaulted you meet with you in public to drop off the things you left behind.



If you do this, you should still go with someone else, like a friend or family member, to meet the person.



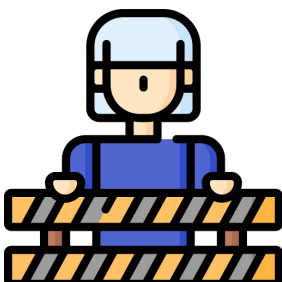
Once you are away from the person who sexually assaulted you, try to stay away.



Do not go back to their home.



Do not call or text them unless you absolutely have to.



If you do have to call or text them, make your boundaries clear.

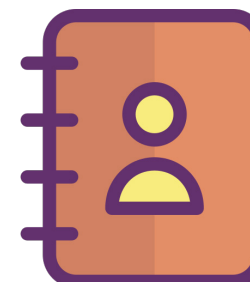


Some examples of clear boundaries are:

- “I do not want you calling or texting me unless I call or text you first and leave a message.”

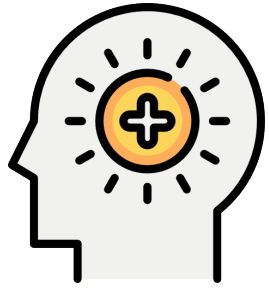


- “I do not want you calling or texting me. You can contact [other person] and ask them to give me a message if you need to reach me.”



- “You can contact me only about [specific topic]. do not call or text me about anything else.”

Mental health, trauma, and getting help



Sexual assault can be hard on your mental health.



You might feel all sorts of emotions after a sexual assault.



You might feel like you get angry quicker or are more likely to have a meltdown or shutdown.



You might feel tired or depressed all the time.



You might feel physically ill or sick.



All these things are normal to feel after a sexual assault.



It is a good idea to speak to a therapist or counselor after a sexual assault.



If you already see a therapist or counselor, consider telling them about what happened.

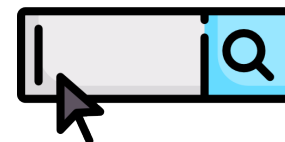


(Keep in mind that therapists and counselors are usually mandated reporters.)



If you do not have a therapist or counselor, there are a few ways you can find one:

- Contact an advocate group near you and ask them for recommendations.

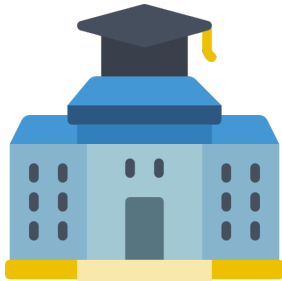


- Do a web search for “trauma therapist [your area].”



- Use Psychology Today’s therapist finder.

For college and university students



If you are in college or university (including TPSID programs), you can talk to your school's Title IX coordinator.



Title IX (pronounced "title nine") is a law in the US.



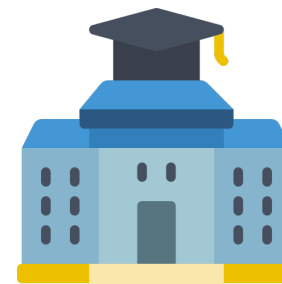
It says that schools have to make sure students of all genders have equal rights at school.



Title IX gives you certain rights if you are sexually assaulted while at school.



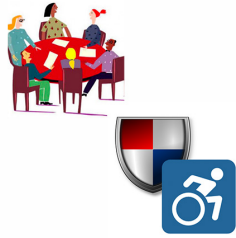
Every student has rights under Title IX, no matter their gender, age, sexuality, or what program they are in.



All colleges and universities that get money from the United States government have to have a Title IX coordinator.



A Title IX coordinator can help you access services for people who have been sexually assaulted.



Your campus may also have a center or group of advocates who support people who have been sexually assaulted.

This center or group of advocates can:



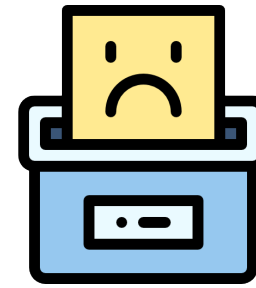
- Find resources on your school's campus for people who have been sexually assaulted for you



- Go with you to the hospital or to other medical appointments related to the sexual assault



- Go with you to report the sexual assault to the police



- Support you if you want to file a formal complaint against the person who sexually assaulted you. A formal complaint is when you tell the school that someone sexually assaulted you and ask the school to take action against the person who sexually assaulted you. A formal complaint is different from filing a police report.



Need support? You can contact RAINN

[The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) is one resource for people who have been sexually assaulted.



RAINN has a phone hotline you can call.



The RAINN hotline number is 1-800-656-4673.



You can also contact RAINN through their [online chat](#).



RAINN can help you find sexual assault resources in your state or area.



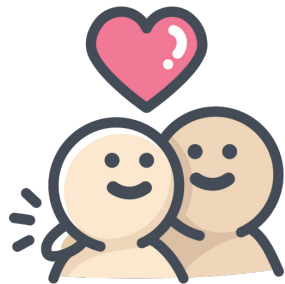
Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).

Part 9: Long-Term Planning and Support

Getting out of an abusive relationship



Sometimes, the people we love and depend on sexually assault us.



This can be someone like a romantic partner, a support person, or a family member.



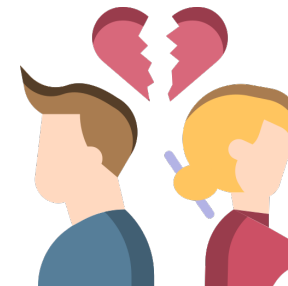
It is never our fault when this happens.



It is only the fault of the person who sexually assaulted us.



In these cases, we may need to end the relationship for our own safety.



Ending a relationship with someone is called **breaking up**.

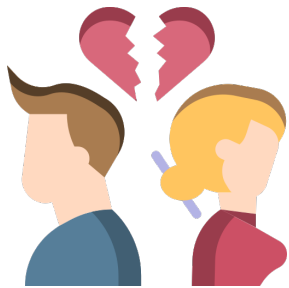


Depending on the situation, the way you break up will be different.

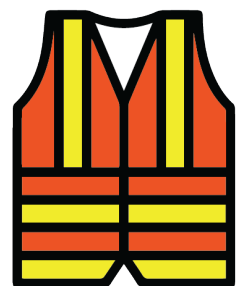


But if you are breaking up with someone because they sexually assaulted you, here are some tips on keeping yourself safe when you break up.

Tell someone outside of the relationship about what happened.



Tell this person that you plan to break up with the person who sexually assaulted you.

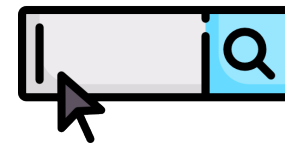


Talk to the person outside of the relationship about how they can help keep you safe.

Contact a local sexual assault resource center or hotline.



Sexual assault resource centers and hotlines can help you find resources to help you before, during, and after the breakup.



You can do a web search for “sexual assault resource center [your city or area]” or “rape crisis center [your city or area].”

RAINN

You can also contact RAINN.



RAINN is a national group that helps people who were sexually assaulted.

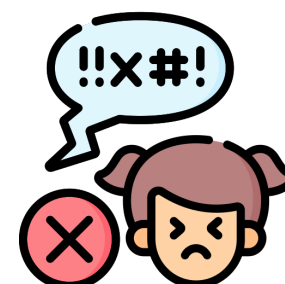


You can contact RAINN by calling 1-800-656-4673 or by [going to their website](#).

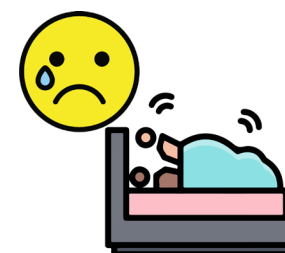
Look at ASAN's Autism and Safety Toolkit.



You can find the toolkit [on ASAN's website](#).



You should particularly look at the section on Abuse and Neglect.



This toolkit has advice on what to do if you need to leave a relationship because of sexual assault or abuse.



It has advice on what to pack if you are leaving a relationship and moving to a safe place.

Make a plan for what you will do.

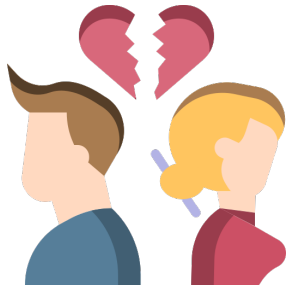


Figure out what you will do once you break up with the person.

Think about questions like:



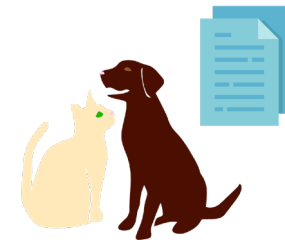
- What will I do if the person gets angry or violent?



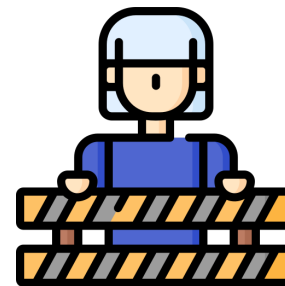
- If I live with this person, where will I go once I break up with them?



- If there are other people involved in the situation (like children or family members), what can I do to keep them safe?



- If there are animals or things I care about, like pets or important documents, what can I do to make sure they are safe?



- How can I set firm boundaries between myself and the person I am breaking up with?

1.=
2.=

- Remember, boundaries are rules you make about what you are and are not comfortable with.



- An example of a boundary after a breakup would be “do not call or text me.”



- Who can I rely on to help me break up with this person?



- For example, friends, family members, people from my self-advocacy group.



You can look at your safety plan to help you make a plan for breaking up.

When you are ready to break up with the person, choose a public place to do it.



You do not know how the person will react.



It is a good idea to expect the worst.



So you should break up in a public place where there will be other people who can watch and help you if needed.



Also think about whether you want someone there to support you, like a friend or family member.



Having someone there to support you and back up what you say can help protect you when you break up.



You can also break up with someone over phone call, text message, or email.



This can be a good idea if you are worried about the person getting angry or violent with you.



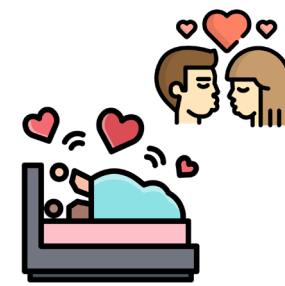
Some of these tips were adapted from Elevatus Training's "Sexual Education for People with Developmental Disabilities" curriculum.

What if I depend on the person who sexually assaulted me for care?



Sometimes, the people we depend on for everyday care sexually assault us.

This can be people like:



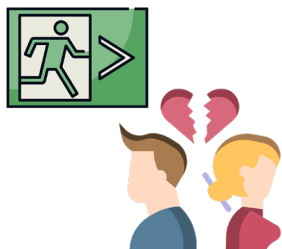
- Romantic or sexual partners who provide our everyday care



- Family members who provide our everyday care



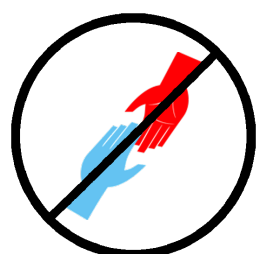
- Support workers



You may want to leave or break up with the person who sexually assaulted you.



If you cannot break up because you depend on the person for care, you can read the section “What if I cannot Leave?” in Part 8: Right After the Assault.



But you might not have anyone else who can help you with everyday needs.



There is information in that section about how to keep yourself safe if you cannot safely leave the person.



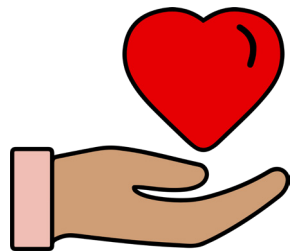
This can be really difficult.



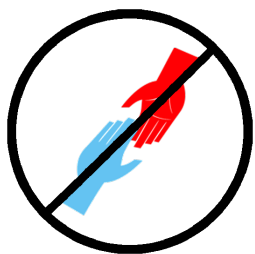
Then, think about what you want to happen next.



- Do you want to get the person who sexually assaulted you completely out of your life?



- Do you want someone else to provide care for you instead of the person who assaulted you?



- Do you only want the person who assaulted you to not help you with things like dressing, bathing, or toileting?



The answers to these questions can help you figure out what you want to do next.



If you are on an HCBS waiver, you can get a different care provider through your waiver.



Talk to your case manager about getting a different care provider.



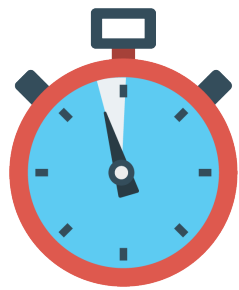
Then, if you have a different care provider, it can be easier to leave the person who sexually assaulted you.



For more information about getting a different HCBS care provider, you can read our guide "[Who can I talk to if someone is not respecting my rights?](#)"



If you are not on an HCBS waiver, you can try to apply for a waiver.



Getting on an HCBS waiver can take a really long time.



But you can sometimes get on a waiver faster if you have been abused and need to get out of an abusive situation.

Court orders



NOTE: In this section, we use the word “abuser” to mean “person who abused someone else.”



A court order is a legal document.



A court order tells a person that they legally must do or not do something.



People who are in danger because of someone else can apply for a court order called a **restraining order** or **protective order**.



These court orders are called different things in different places.

Restraining orders and protective orders can say an abuser must:



- Stop abusing, hurting, or threatening the person they abused.



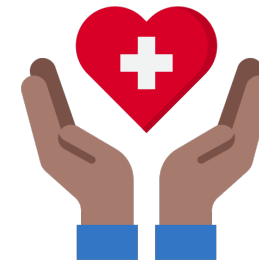
- Stay away from the person they abused.



- Not contact the person they abused (for example, not calling, texting, sending letters or packages, or contacting other people to try and talk to the person they abused).



- Pay money for things like child support or their portion of rent or a mortgage payment.



- Pay for medical care you need as a result of the sexual assault.



- Get treatment or therapy designed for people who sexually assault others.

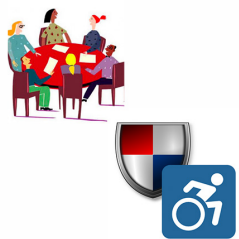


(This information was adapted from the site [WomensLaw.org](https://www.womenslaw.org). Women's Law is a website that provides legal resources for abuse survivors of all genders, not just women.)



You may want to talk to a lawyer or legal aid group if you want to get a restraining order or protective order.

Some groups that can help you find a lawyer are:



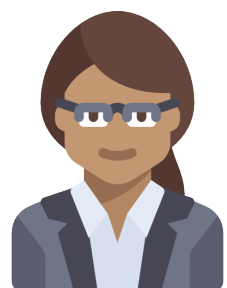
- An advocate group in your area.



- The [Legal Services Corporation](#) website and [LawHelp.org](#).



- Your state's [Protection and Advocacy group \(P&A\)](#).



- Women's Law, which has a [resource on finding a lawyer](#), and state-by-state resources.



Finding long-term support

You may need long-term support to heal from a sexual assault.

You may need support with things like:



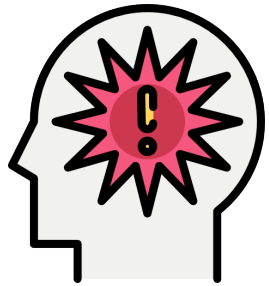
- Housing, health care, disability services, and food



- Keeping yourself safe long-term



- Going to court and through the legal process, if you choose



- Healing from trauma



- Making and finding community after the assault

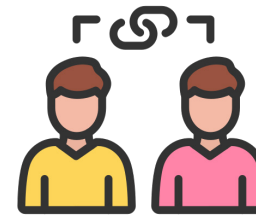


We will talk about each of these below.

Resources for housing, health care, disability services, and food



If you have left an abusive relationship, you may be starting over without a lot of resources.



You may have been dependent on the person who abused or assaulted you for a lot.



This is common in abusive relationships.



It is not your fault.



You may have temporary (short-term) support for housing, health care, disability services, and food.



For example, you may be staying with friends for a few months while you look for long-term solutions.



But often, these short-term solutions have an end date.



So you will need to look for longer-term solutions.



One good place to start when looking for resources on housing, health care, disability services, and food is 211.



211 is a service that links people to resources in their community.

211 can help you find resources on:



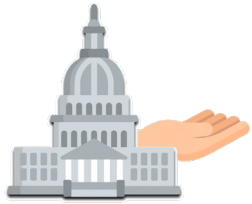
- Housing



- Health care (including mental health care and medical equipment)



- Disability services, like HCBS



- Government benefits, like SSI/SSDI or SNAP (food stamps)



- Food



- Transportation



- Clothing



- Finances and money management



- Getting a job



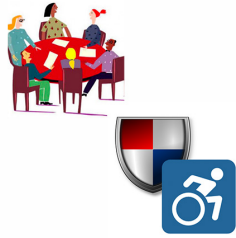
There are chapters of 211 all over the United States.



To reach 211, call 2-1-1 on your phone.



Or, go to [211.org](https://www.211.org).



An advocate group for people who have been sexually assaulted can help you get resources.



Some advocate groups offer longer-term housing for people who have been sexually assaulted.



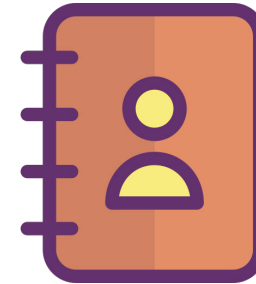
Some advocate groups offer clothing closets or food banks for people who have been sexually assaulted.



Some advocate groups offer help with transportation, like rideshares or bus passes, for people who have been sexually assaulted.



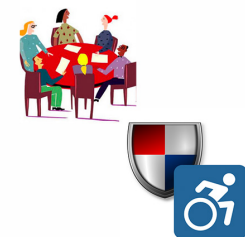
If you are already working with an advocate group, ask the group if they can help you with these resources.



If you are not already working with an advocate group, you can find an advocate group by contacting RAINN.

RAINN

RAINN is a national group that helps people who have been sexually assaulted.



RAINN can put you in touch with an advocate group in your area.



You can contact RAINN by phone at 1-800-656-4673.



You can also contact RAINN through their [online chat](#).



RAINN can help you find sexual assault resources in your state or area.



If you are on an HCBS waiver or get disability services, talk to your case manager.



Your case manager can help you adjust your HCBS or disability services to work better for you.

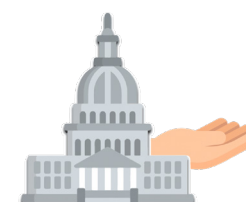
Your case manager can also help you look for resources around:



- Housing.



- Health care.



- Government benefits.



- Food.



- Transportation.



- Clothing.



- Finances and money management.



- Getting a job.

Keeping yourself safe long-term



Once you have broken up with the person who sexually assaulted you, you may feel safer.



But you still need to think about your safety long-term.



Make plans for how you are going to keep yourself safe.

Think about things like:



- Do you want to block the person who assaulted you on social media, like Facebook or Twitter?



This can be a good way of preventing the person from contacting you on social media.



- Do you want to change your phone number, email address, or social media usernames and passwords?



This can be a good way of preventing the person from contacting you on those platforms.



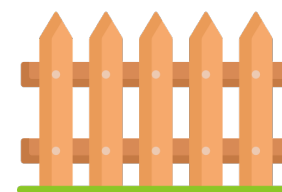
- If you have moved house, who absolutely needs to know where you are living now?



- Are there other things you can do to keep yourself safer?



Make sure you only tell people you trust where you live.



For example, putting up a fence around your house or changing how you go to work everyday.

Going to court and through the legal process (if you choose to)



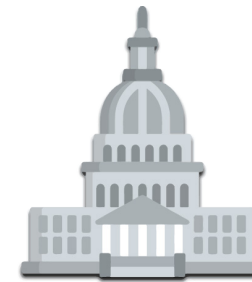
You may choose to go through the criminal legal process for your sexual assault.



For example, when someone has to go to court because they sexually assaulted another person, the person they assaulted may be asked to testify against them.



Someone who is called to testify will have to answer the questions of different lawyers.

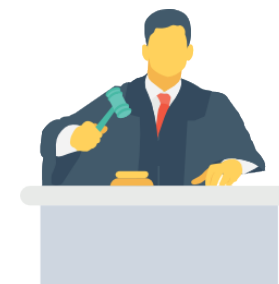


These lawyers can be:

- A lawyer for the government



- A lawyer for the person who is accused of sexual assault.



Often, this will happen in front of a judge. Sometimes, there will also be a jury.



The lawyer for the person who is on trial for the sexual assault may be allowed to ask harsh questions to the person who says they were assaulted.



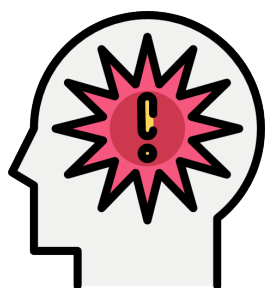
The lawyer may try to make the person who says they were assaulted look bad or not reliable.



This can be very hard on the person who says they were assaulted.



It can create more trauma around the sexual assault for the person.



We talk more about trauma in the next section.



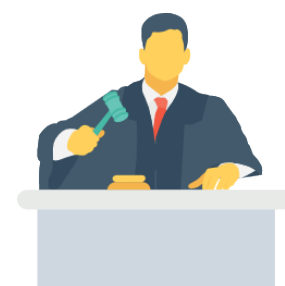
Or, you may choose to try to get a protective order or restraining order against the person who assaulted you.



(We talk more about this in the section on court orders.)



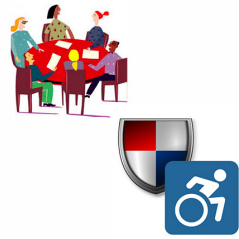
A protective order or restraining order has to come from a court.



When someone is asking for a protective or restraining order, a judge will usually want to know the reason why.



Going to court and through legal processes can be very stressful.



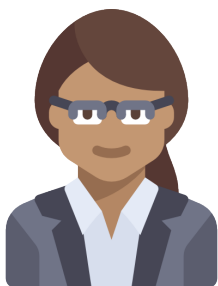
You may want to talk to an advocate group for people who have been sexually assaulted.



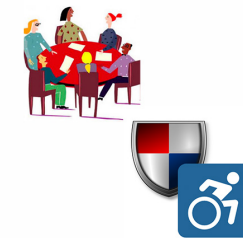
The advocate group can give you an advocate who can go to court with you.



The advocate can help you go through legal processes.



You may also want to talk to a lawyer or legal aid group



Some groups that can help you find a lawyer are:

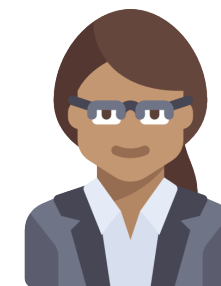


- An advocate group in your area.



- The [Legal Services Corporation](#) website and [LawHelp.org](#).

- Your state's [Protection and Advocacy group \(P&A\)](#).

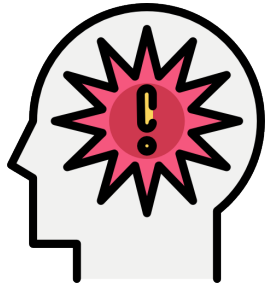


- Women's Law, which has a [resource on finding a lawyer](#), and state-by-state resources.

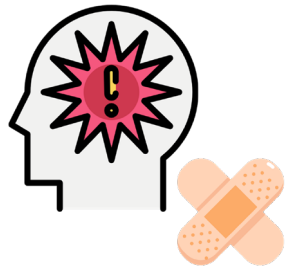
Healing from trauma



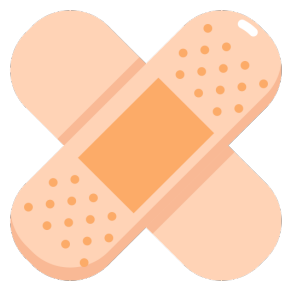
Sexual assault can cause a lot of trauma.



Trauma is when someone feels very afraid or on-edge after going through a scary event.



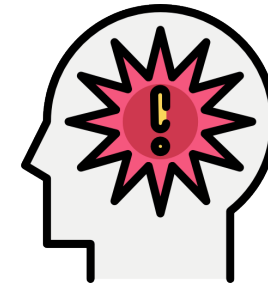
Healing from trauma is not the same as healing from a cut.



Once a cut heals, it will not reopen again, even if it leaves a scar.



But people can feel the pain of trauma even years after being hurt.



Trauma can affect people in different ways.



Some people who go through trauma feel numb, like they do not have any emotions at all.



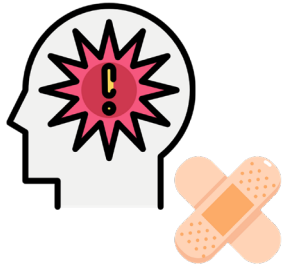
Some people who go through trauma feel sad or hopeless.



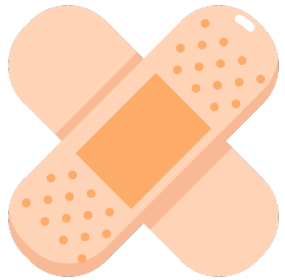
Some people who go through trauma feel angry or upset.



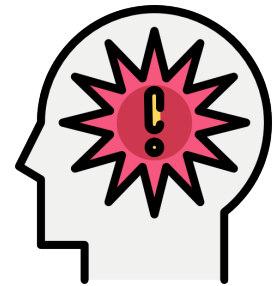
Most people who go through trauma feel a lot of different emotions at different times.



Healing from trauma is not a straight line from “lots of trauma” to “no trauma at all.”



You might feel like you have mostly healed from your trauma.



But then something might remind you of that trauma.

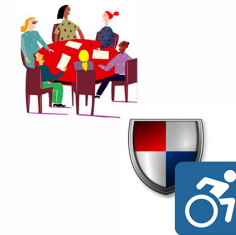


Then, you might feel like the event that caused the trauma is happening all over again.

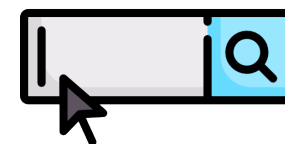


If you are dealing with trauma from a sexual assault, it might be a good idea to talk to a therapist or counselor.

If you do not have a therapist or counselor, there are a few ways you can find one:



- Contact an advocate group near you and ask them for recommendations.



- Do a web search for “trauma therapist [your area].”



- Use Psychology Today's therapist finder.



- A therapist or counselor can help you deal with the long-term effects of sexual assault trauma.



Remember to take care of yourself.



Remember to take care of your physical and mental health.



Try to make sure you get enough to eat and drink.



Try to make sure you get enough sleep at night.



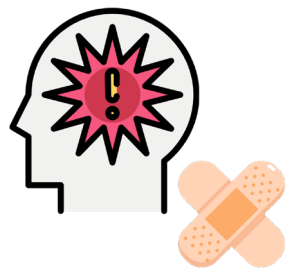
Try to make sure you exercise as regularly as you can.



Take care of yourself.



Healing from trauma can be really, really hard.

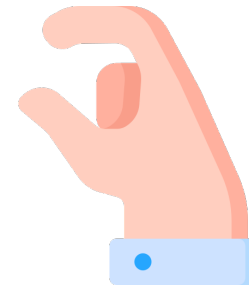


But it is possible to heal from trauma.

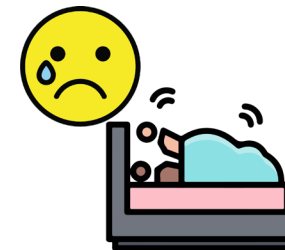


It is possible to feel better and safe again.

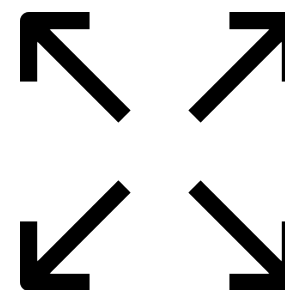
Making and finding community



Trauma can make your world feel really small.



Trauma can make it feel like everything reminds you of your sexual assault.



Getting out into the community can help make your world feel bigger.

Here are some examples of things you can do:



- Take community education classes on things you enjoy. For example, art classes or exercise classes.



- Go to places in the community you have not been before. For example, museums or parks.



- Make new friends.



You can also join groups that help people who have been sexually assaulted.

These can be groups like:



- Therapy support groups for people who have been sexually assaulted.



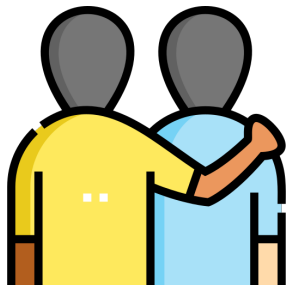
- Advocate groups that help people who have been sexually assaulted find resources and services.



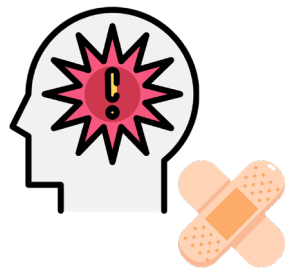
- Groups that advocate for better laws, policies, services, and resources around sexual assault.



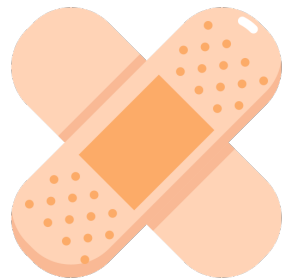
You can share your experiences with others.



This can let other people with disabilities who have been sexually assaulted know that they are not alone.



You can talk about how you heal from trauma.



You can tell others that it is possible to heal and have a good life after sexual assault.

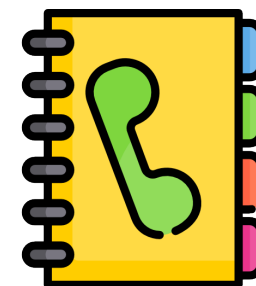
Need support? You can contact RAINN



[The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) is one resource for people who have been sexually assaulted.



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RAINN can help you find sexual assault resources in your state or area.



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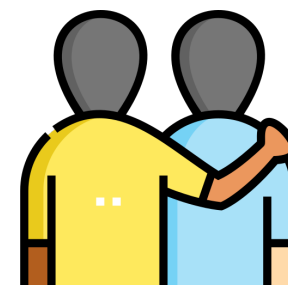
Part 10: Supporting People After Sexual Assault



Someone you care about might tell you that they were sexually assaulted.



The best thing you can do in this situation is to tell the person you believe them.



The other best thing you can do is stay with the person and be there for them.



Here are some other tips for supporting people who have been sexually assaulted.

RAINN

RAINN's TALK method

RAINN is a national organization that helps people who have been sexually assaulted.



RAINN has a method for supporting people who have been sexually assaulted.

TALK

The method is called TALK.

TALK stands for:



- Thank them for telling you



- Ask how you can help



- Listen without judging them



- Keep supporting them



We will talk about each of these points in more detail

Thank them for telling you



Tell the person you are glad they told you.



Tell them that you are glad they trust you enough to tell you.



Tell them that you are sorry that they were sexually assaulted.

You could say things like:



- “Thank you for telling me this. It means a lot to me that you feel you can share this with me.”



- “You are very brave to be able to talk about that. I am so sorry that happened to you.”



- “Thank you for sharing. I know it must be hard to talk about this.”

Ask how you can help

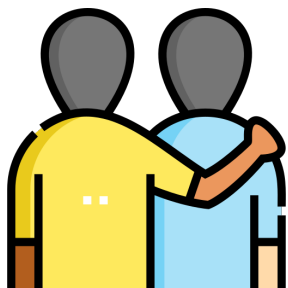


Ask the person what they need right now.



Ask if there is anything you can help them with.

You can say things like:



- “I am here and I am not going anywhere. Is there anything I can help you with right now?”



- “This is not your fault. You did not do anything wrong. How can I support you?”



- “Do you want help reporting the assault to someone else? I can go with you if you want.”



Do not try to tell the person what to do.



Do not tell the person they have to do a specific thing, like report the assault to the police.



Do not say "If I were you, I would" or "Most people would do ... so you should, too."



If you want to offer advice, ask first.

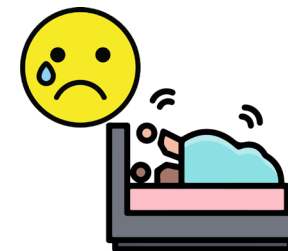
For example:



Janie is talking to her friend Lula.



Lula has just told Janie about being sexually assaulted.



Janie has also been sexually assaulted in the past.



Janie remembers what she did after her assault.



Janie wants to give Lula advice on what Lula could do.



So Janie asks Lula, "Would you like to hear some ideas of what you could do next?"

Listen without judging them



Give the person your full attention.



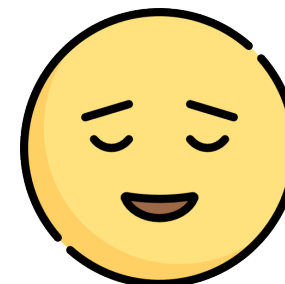
Do not try to do other things while listening to them.



If you are doing something else when they tell you, try to end whatever it is you are doing.



Focus on the person's feelings.



Try to keep yourself calm, even if you are feeling strong emotions.

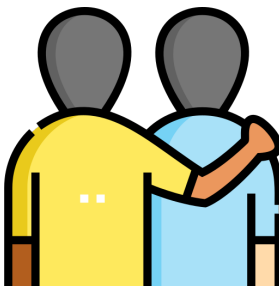
Use phrases that show you support the person. This can be phrases like:



- "I am sorry this happened to you."



- "I believe you."



- "You are not alone."



- "It is not your fault."



Do not ask the person if they are sure they were sexually assaulted.



Do not say that the sexual assault "does not sound that bad" or that it "does not really sound like sexual assault."



This can make it sound like you do not believe the person.



Do not ask the person for details.



Do not ask the person if they knew the person who sexually assaulted them.



Do not ask the person what they were wearing when they were assaulted.



Do not ask the person if they were drunk or high when they were assaulted.



Those details do not matter.



Asking these questions can make it sound like you think it was the person's fault they were sexually assaulted.



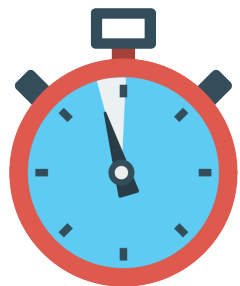
It is never someone's fault that they were sexually assaulted.



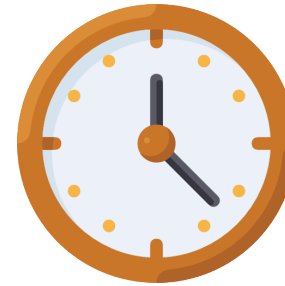
Do not tell the person they “should have gotten over the assault by now.”



People recover from sexual assault in different ways.



Some people will take longer than others and that is okay.



Keep supporting them

Healing from a sexual assault takes time.



Keep giving the person support over time.

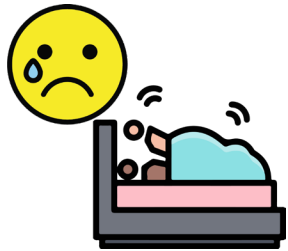


People who have been sexually assaulted often feel like their assault “changes everything.”

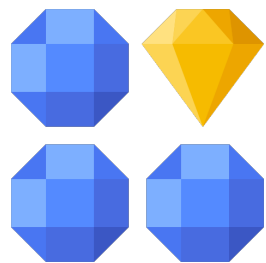


You can help the person by offering to do the things you have always done with them.

For example:



Matthew learns that his friend Sean has been sexually assaulted.



Sean feels like "everything is different now."



Matthew and Sean usually go to the movies every Saturday afternoon.



So Matthew offers to keep going to the movies with Sean.

Behavior as communication



Some people with disabilities do not have a good way of communicating besides their behavior.



They may not speak or use a sign language.



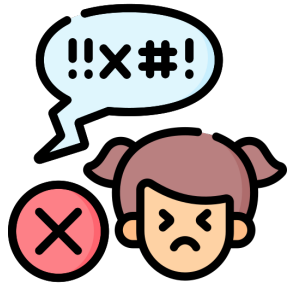
They may not have access to an AAC device like a letterboard or a text-to-speech app.



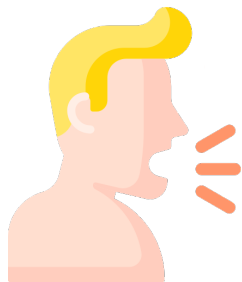
They may use their behavior to communicate with others.



For example, they may hit their head with their hands to show that they are angry or frustrated.



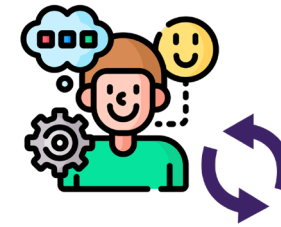
If someone who communicates with their behavior starts acting very differently with no obvious reason why, they may have been abused.



People who communicate with behavior may react to abuse by “acting out.”



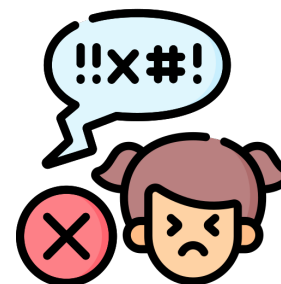
Or, they may react to abuse by becoming more quiet and less social.



It is important to ask whether abuse may be the cause of someone's behavior change.

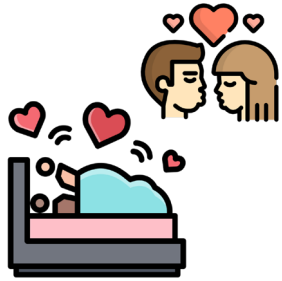


This is especially true if the person lives in an institution.

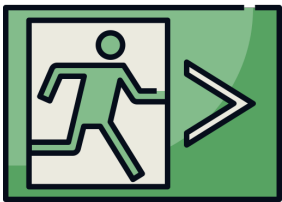


People living in institutions are more likely to be abused.

Why do they not leave?



Sexual assault can happen in intimate relationships, like sexual or romantic relationships.



In these situations, you might want to ask “well, why do not they just leave the person who assaulted them?”



But leaving someone who assaulted you is not always simple.

Here are some reasons why:

Not knowing.



The person might not know what happened to them was sexual assault.



They might know what happened was bad.



But they might think that “stuff like that happens to everyone.”

Lack of resources.



The person may not have the resources they need in order to leave.



They might not have a lot of money.



They might not have a stable place to live besides with the person who assaulted them.

Nobody to help.



The person might feel like there is nobody who can help them leave.



They may not know about resources like domestic violence shelters.

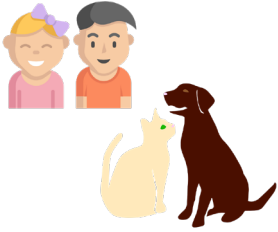


They may not trust authority figures, like the police, to believe them.



They may not have friends or family they trust to help them through the process of leaving.

Kids and pets.

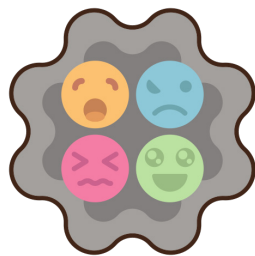


The person might have children, pets, or other family members they need to think about when leaving.

Still loving and caring.

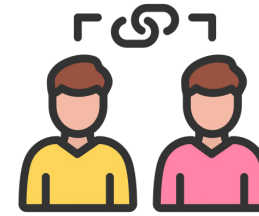


The person might still love and care for the person who sexually assaulted them.



The person might have really complicated feelings about what happened to them.

Depending on help.



The person might depend on the person who sexually assaulted them for care and help.



This is especially true for people with disabilities.



If someone is not ready to leave yet, you can still support them.

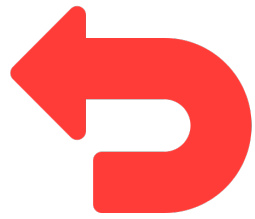


You can still listen to what they have to say.



You can still help them find resources for when they want to leave.

Needing to step back



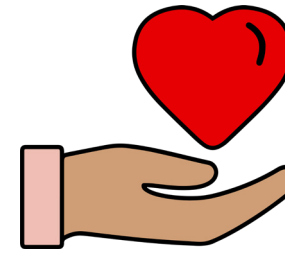
Sometimes, you may need to step back from supporting someone.



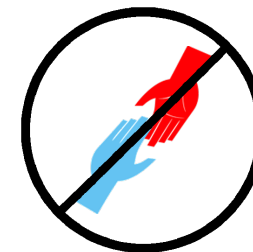
Maybe supporting the person triggers your own memories or experiences of sexual assault.



Maybe the person needs kinds of support you cannot provide, like legal or medical help.



Take care of yourself first.



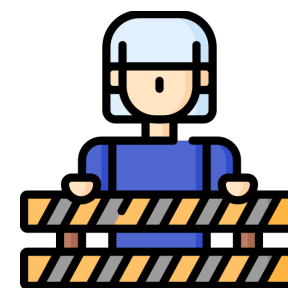
If you are overwhelmed, triggered, or not sure what to do, you will not be as much help to the person.



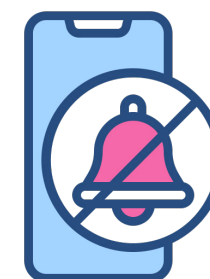
You can read the section about self care in Part 1: To Start for more information on taking care of yourself.



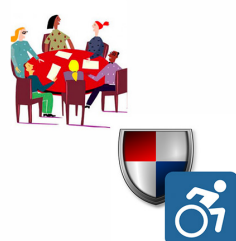
Be clear with the person what you can and cannot help with.



Set boundaries with yourself and others.



For example, you might put your phone on Do Not Disturb at night so you will not get message notifications.



For example, you could say “I cannot help you with legal issues, because I am not a lawyer. But I can help you find an advocacy group who can help you find a lawyer.”



Or, you could tell the person, “I am willing to sit and talk with you in-person or over video, but I cannot do conversations over text message.”



Need support? You can contact RAINN

[The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) is one resource for people who have been sexually assaulted.



RAINN has a phone hotline you can call.



The RAINN hotline number is 1-800-656-4673.



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Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).

Part 11: Preventing Sexual Assault



Preventing sexual assault means stopping sexual assault before it happens.



When you **prevent** something, you stop it before it happens.



There are many ways to prevent sexual assault.

We will talk about three ways here:



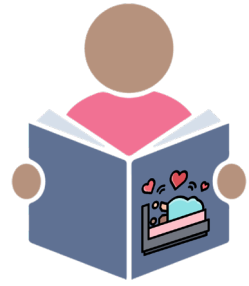
- Sexual education.



- Bystander intervention.



- Fighting for policy changes



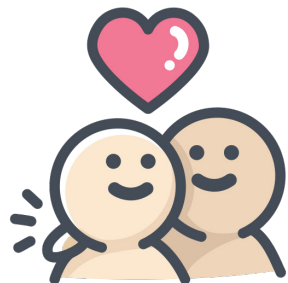
Sexual education

Sexual education is learning about topics that have to do with sex.

Some topics that sexual education often teaches are:



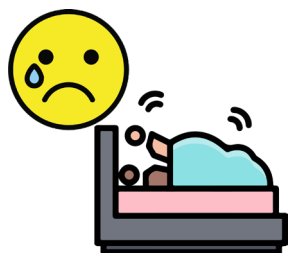
- What sex (as in sexual activity) is.



- What different kinds of relationships are.



- What consent is and how to ask for or give consent.



- What sexual assault is.



Sexual education is really important!



Sexual education should teach about consent and sexual assault.



If people know how to ask for consent, they are more likely to ask for consent.



If people know what sexual assault is, they are less likely to sexually assault others.



Some people get sexual education as classes when they are in school.



But not everyone does.



Not everyone lives in a place where schools teach sexual education.



Not everyone goes to a school that teaches sexual education.



All schools should teach sexual education.



But some schools do not.



Also, not all schools teach about consent and sexual assault when they teach sexual education.



There is another problem for people with disabilities.



In many places, schools have to teach students without disabilities sexual education.



But in some of these places, schools do not have to teach students with disabilities sexual education.



So even if we went to a school that teaches sexual education, we may not have been taught sexual education.



It is really important that everyone has access to sexual education.



It is really important that every student learns about sexual education in school.

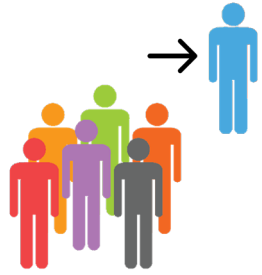


And, it is really important that people who are not in school learn sexual education too.



You can read more about policies and laws that support good sexual education in the section "Fighting for Policy and Community Changes."

Bystander intervention

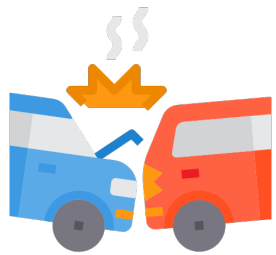


A **bystander** is someone who is near, but not directly taking part in, something.

For example:



Miguel is standing on the street corner, waiting to cross the street.



While Miguel is waiting, two cars get into an accident in front of him.



Miguel is a bystander to the car accident.

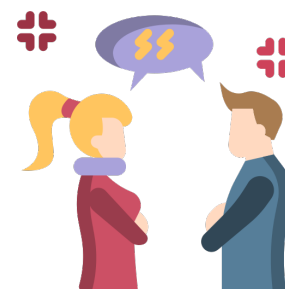


Bystander intervention is when a bystander takes steps to change how an event happens or to stop an event from happening.

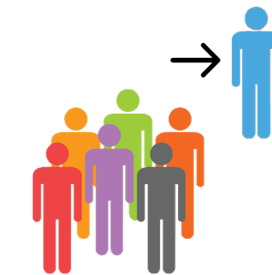
For example:



Hannah is at a party.



She sees Jasper and Michelle having an argument.



This makes Hannah a bystander to Jasper and Michelle's argument



She sees Jasper raise a fist like he is going to hit Michelle.



Hannah does not want Jasper to hit Michelle.



So she goes over and asks Michelle if Michelle would like to go outside with her.



Hannah is doing bystander intervention when she interrupts the argument and asks Michelle to go outside with her.



Bystander intervention can be really powerful in preventing sexual assault.



Bystander intervention can make the difference between someone being sexually assaulted or not.

Here are some tips for doing bystander intervention around sexual assault:

Think about your own safety first



Bystander intervention is important!

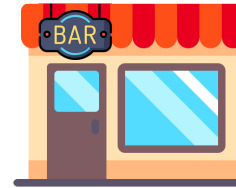


But you need to make sure you will not get hurt if you intervene.

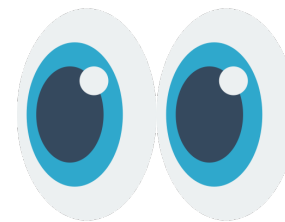


If you think you may get hurt, you should ask someone else for help.

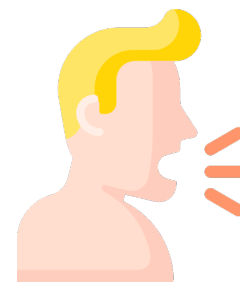
For example:



Lindie is at a bar.



She sees Jack take Farrah into a dark corner.



Lindie hears Jack yelling at Farrah.



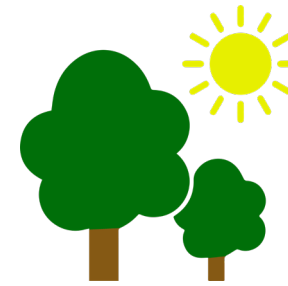
Lindie is scared that if she goes up to Jack, he will hurt her.



So Lindie finds one of Jack's friends, Paul.



Lindie knows Jack will listen to Paul.



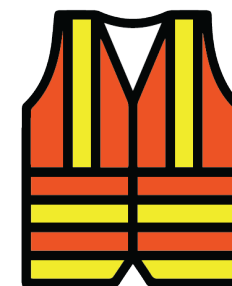
Lindie asks Paul to go tell Jack to go outside to cool off.



Paul agrees to do this.



Paul and Lindie are doing bystander intervention.



Lindie is keeping herself safe.

Do not worry about being awkward



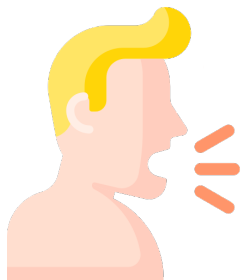
The goal of bystander intervention is to keep people out of danger of being sexually assaulted.



If this means being a little awkward, that is okay.



It is okay to be annoying.



It is okay to “cause a scene.”



What matters is getting the person in danger of being sexually assaulted out of danger.

For example:



Naomi is at a party.



She is drinking a cup of water.



Naomi sees Angeline and Connor talking.



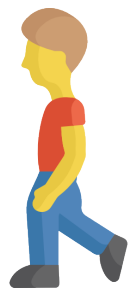
Angeline keeps putting her hands on Connor's chest and on his pants.



Connor looks really uncomfortable.



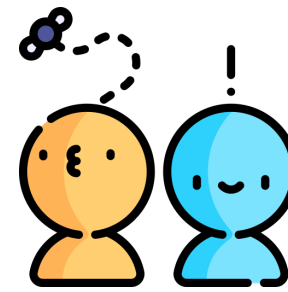
Naomi is worried that Angeline will sexually assault Connor.



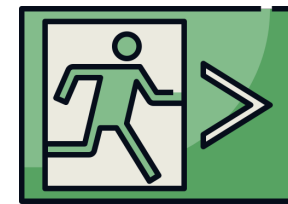
Naomi walks over to where Angeline and Connor are.



While she is walking past them, she “accidentally” spills her water on Angeline’s shirt.



This distracts Angeline.



While Naomi is saying sorry to Angeline, Connor walks away quickly.

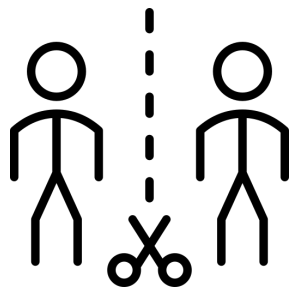


Naomi did bystander intervention.



Even though it was awkward, it worked!

Split the two people up



One way to do bystander intervention is to split the two people up.

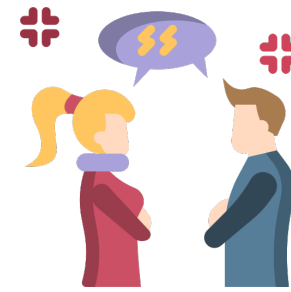


This works best when you make it look like you are trying to get someone's attention for reasons not about potential abuse.

For example:



Marco is at a train station waiting for a train.



He sees a man and a woman having an argument.



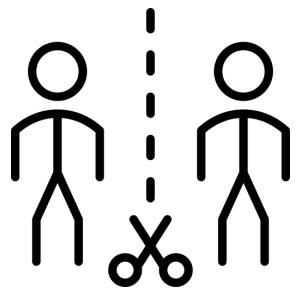
The man looks like he is going to hit the woman.



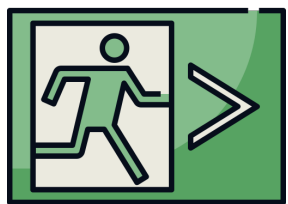
So Marco goes up to the man.



Marco asks the man, "Do you know when the next train is coming?"



This splits the two people up.

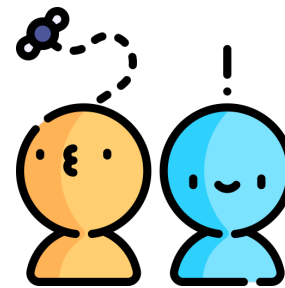


It means the woman can get away quickly.



Cause a distraction

Another way to do bystander intervention is to cause a distraction.

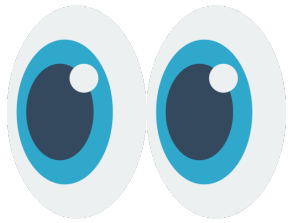


A distraction is something that gets people's attention.

For example:



Shelly is at a party.



Shelly sees her roommate, Paola.



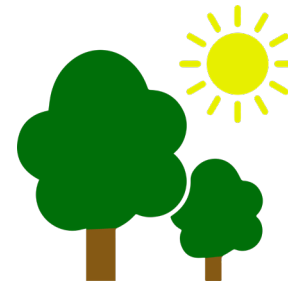
Paola is talking to Matt.



But Paola looks really uncomfortable.



Matt keeps putting his hands on Paola's body.



So Shelly goes outside.



She makes a phone call to Paola.



Shelly tells Paola, "I am at home and there is a huge spider on the wall! Can you come help me get it outside?"



This gets Paola's attention.



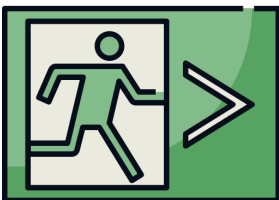
Paola leaves the party.



Shelly is not really at home.



There is not really a spider.



But Shelly got Paola out of the party.



That is what matters.

Get help from others



You can ask other people for help doing bystander intervention.



This can be a good idea if you are worried about your own safety.

For example:



Kayla is in her apartment.



Kayla hears her neighbors fighting.



Kayla hears one of her neighbors threaten to sexually assault the other.



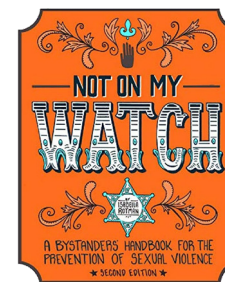
Kayla wants to intervene but does not feel safe doing so on her own.



So Kayla goes down to the apartment building's front office.



She asks the staff at the front office to go check on her neighbors.



Parts of this section were adapted from "Not On My Watch" by Isabella Rotman.

Fighting for policy and community changes



A policy is an official rule the government or another group makes.



Policies can include laws.

1.=
2.=

They can also include rules about how the government or other groups put a law into action.

Here are some examples of policies that you can fight for.

More money, training, and standards for sexual education.



Sexual education is one way to prevent sexual assault.



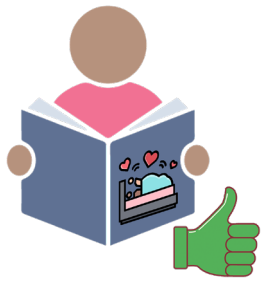
If people learn about what safe, healthy sex looks like, they are less likely to sexually assault someone.



If people learn about what safe, healthy sex looks like, they are less likely to be sexually assaulted.



You can read more about sexual education in the section on sexual education above.



We can make sexual education better.



We can make sexual education accessible to more people.



We can especially make sexual education accessible to more people with disabilities.



We can fight for more money for sexual education programs.



We need to fight for both in-school and out-of-school sexual education programs.




Sexual education classes in schools can be great!



But not everyone is in school.



So we need to make sure that there are out-of-school sexual education programs, too.

1.=
2.= 

We also need to make sure there are better standards for sexual education programs.

1.=
2.=

Standards are rules and guidelines about what sexual education programs should teach.



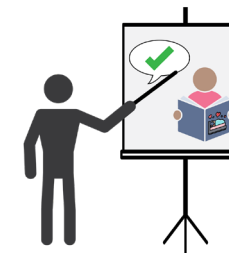
Some sexual education programs say they teach sexual education.



But these programs do not teach about things like consent or sexual assault.



These programs only teach people that they should not have sex.

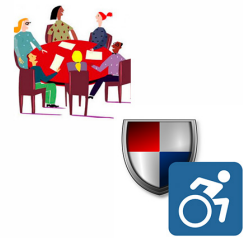


We need to fight for programs that also teach about consent and sexual education.



We need to fight for standards that say sexual education must teach about consent and sexual assault.

More money and training for advocate services



Advocate services help people who have been sexually assaulted.

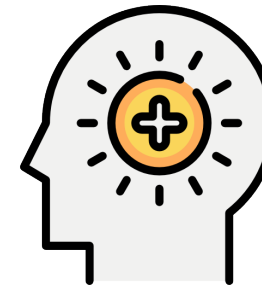
Advocate services can help people with things like:



- Getting medical care after a sexual assault.



- Reporting a sexual assault to the police or other authorities.



- Getting mental health care after a sexual assault.



- Getting out of abusive relationships.



- Going to court or legal processes after a sexual assault.



Advocate services can help many people who have been sexually assaulted.



But advocate services often do not have a lot of money.



Advocate services often cannot help as many people as they need to because they do not have enough money.



Advocate services also often do not have the training they need to help people in different groups.



This makes it less likely that the advocate services can help the people in those different groups.

For example:



People with disabilities are more likely to be sexually assaulted than people without disabilities.



We are more likely to need advocate services after a sexual assault.



But many advocate groups do not get good training in how to work with people with disabilities.



Some advocate groups do not get training in working with people with disabilities at all.



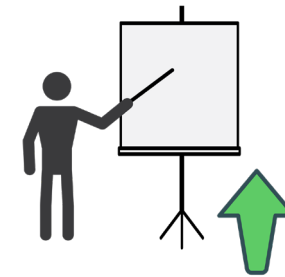
Other advocate groups only get training in working with people with disabilities that is old and outdated.



This can make it hard for the advocate groups to help people with disabilities who have been sexually assaulted.



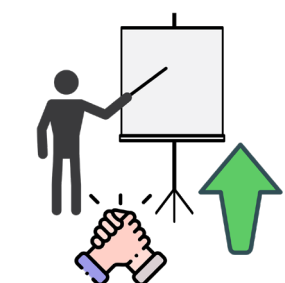
Advocate services need more money to help all the people they need to help.



Advocate services need more training to help all the people they need to help.



We can support policies that give advocate services more money.



We can support policies that give advocate services more training.

From police to community-led crisis supports



We can fight for moving from police to community-led crisis supports.



Right now, the police are often who show up when you are in crisis.



But a lot of people have had bad experiences with the police.



The police often hurt or kill Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color.



The police often hurt or kill people with disabilities.



These are forms of police violence, or ways police hurt people.



The police also often send people to jail, prison, or institutions.



Sending people to jail, prison, or institutions also hurts people.



Sending people to jail, prison, or institutions is another form of police violence.

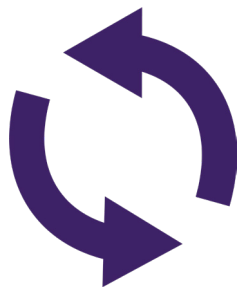


We can fight for policies that keep police out of most crisis situations.



We can fight for policies that make police showing up to a crisis situation less risky.

For example:



One policy we can fight for is changing who shows up when someone is having a mental health crisis.



This policy would say that police should not be the first ones to show up when someone is having a mental health crisis.



Instead, people like paramedics or social workers would be the first ones to show up.



Most police are not trained in how to help someone having a mental health crisis.



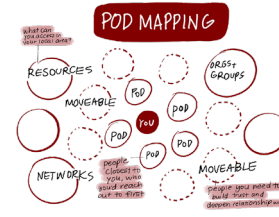
But paramedics and social workers are trained in how to help someone having a mental health crisis.



This policy would reduce the risk that people having a mental health crisis would be hurt or killed by police.



This policy would reduce the risk that people having a mental health crisis end up in jail, prison, or an institution.



One example of community-led crisis supports is the idea of podmapping.



Podmapping comes from the activist Mia Mingus and the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective (BATJC).



Podmapping is a way of listing the people around you who you can trust.

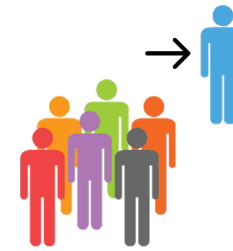
Podmapping is a way of listing people around you who could:



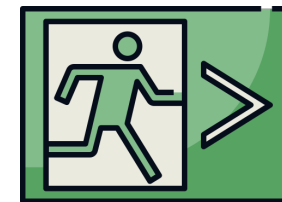
- Help you if you were hurt by someone else (for example, if you were sexually assaulted).



- Hold you accountable if you hurt someone else (for example, helping you figure out how to apologize if you hurt someone).



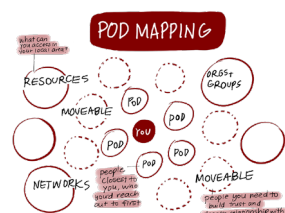
- Help you if you saw or experienced violence happening to someone else (for example, if you were a bystander to abuse).



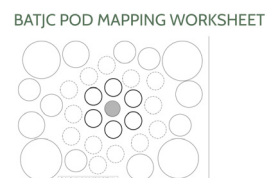
- Help you if someone you loved was being hurt or abused (for example, if you were trying to help someone leave an abusive relationship).



These people are “in your pod.”



You can read more about podmapping at the [BATJC's page on podmapping](#).



At the bottom of the page is a worksheet you can fill out to show who is in your pod.

Better HCBS for all people with disabilities



We can fight for better HCBS for all people with disabilities.

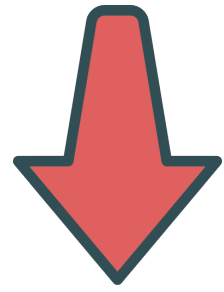
This can be fighting for things like:



- Policies that let people keep their HCBS even if they have a job.



- Policies that let people keep their HCBS even if they have a lot of money.



- Fewer barriers to people getting HCBS in the first place.



- For example, getting rid of waitlists to get HCBS.



- Policies that give people more choice in how they get HCBS.



- Closing institutions and getting people HCBS after they leave institutions.



It might seem like these things have nothing to do with sexual assault.



But these things all have to do with preventing sexual assault.

Here is how:



- Policies that say people cannot get HCBS if they have a job or a lot of money trap people in poverty.



Poverty is when someone does not have enough money to get the basic things they need.



People who live in poverty need help affording things like housing and food.



If people live in poverty, they are more likely to stay in abusive relationships.



This is because if they leave, they will not be able to afford things like housing or food.



People with disabilities should not have to live in poverty to get HCBS.



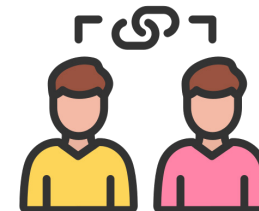
We should not have to stay in abusive relationships because of poverty.



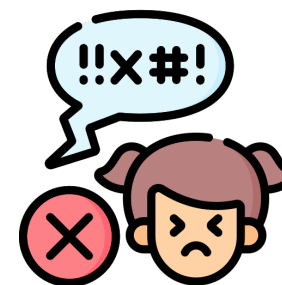
- Right now, getting HCBS in the first place can take a long time.



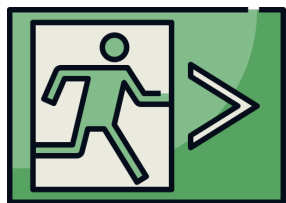
Some people with disabilities wait years and years on waiting lists to get HCBS.



While people wait to get HCBS, they often have to depend on partners or family to care for them.



This can trap people in abusive relationships because they depend on the person abusing them for care.



If it was easier for them to start HCBS, they might be more able to leave the abusive relationship.



- Some people with disabilities get HCBS, but they do not have a lot of choice in how they get HCBS.



They might be assigned a caregiver or support person who abuses or assaults them.



It might be very difficult for them to get a new caregiver or support person who does not abuse them.



If it were easier for people to change their HCBS or caregiver, they might be less likely to stay in abusive relationships.



- Institutional abuse is abuse that happens in institutions, like ICFs or nursing homes.



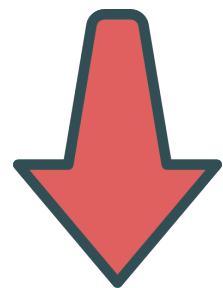
Institutional abuse can also happen in group homes or assisted living facilities.



A lot of people with disabilities living in institutions go through institutional abuse.



A lot of people stay in institutions because they cannot get HCBS.

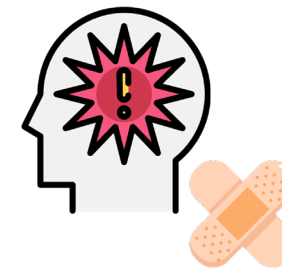


If we close institutions and get people HCBS instead, they will be less likely to experience institutional abuse.



More money and training for mental health services

Mental health services can help people who have been sexually assaulted.



Mental health services can help people heal from trauma after being sexually assaulted.



But a lot of mental health services do not have the money they need to help all the people they need to help.



This is especially true of mental health services that help people who do not have a lot of money.



People who do not have a lot of money cannot pay much money for mental health services.



So mental health services that help those people need to find other ways of getting money.



Mental health services also often do not have the training they need to help people in different groups.

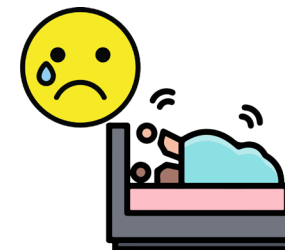


This makes it less likely that the mental health services can help the people in those different groups.

For example:



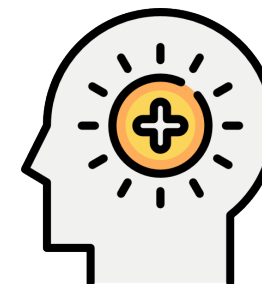
A lot of people with disabilities have trauma.



This can be trauma from sexual assault.



Or it can be trauma from other experiences.



We may want to get mental health services to help with our trauma.



But mental health services may not be trained in working with people with disabilities.



The mental health services may believe that people with disabilities cannot have trauma.



Or, the mental health services may believe that people with disabilities cannot benefit from mental health services.



Both these things are wrong!



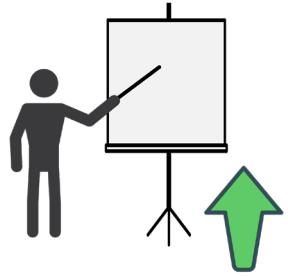
But some people who work in mental health services believe them.



These beliefs can make it hard for people with disabilities to get mental health services.



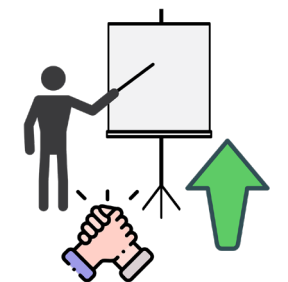
Mental health services need more money to help all the people they need to help.



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We can support policies that give mental health services more money.



We can support policies that give mental health services more training.

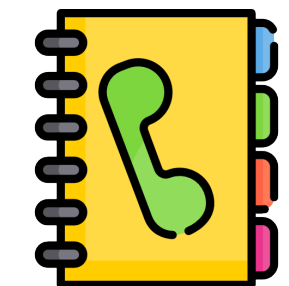
Need support? You can contact RAINN



[The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) is one resource for people who have been sexually assaulted.



RAINN has a phone hotline you can call.



The RAINN hotline number is 1-800-656-4673.



You can also contact RAINN through their [online chat](#).



RAINN can help you find sexual assault resources in your state or area.

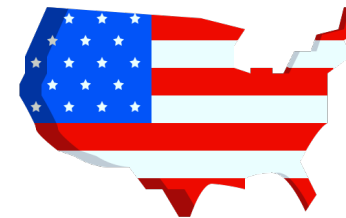


Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).

Resources for people who have been sexually assaulted



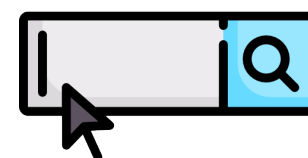
Here are some resources that can help you if you have been sexually assaulted.



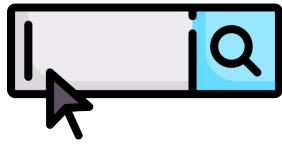
Most of these resources are national, meaning they serve the whole United States.



But you can also look for resources within your state or area.



You can do a web search to find resources in your state or area.



Some terms you can search for are:

- “[your state name] coalition against sexual assault”
- “[your city or area] sexual assault resource center”
- “[your city or area] rape crisis center”
- “[your city or area] domestic violence shelter”

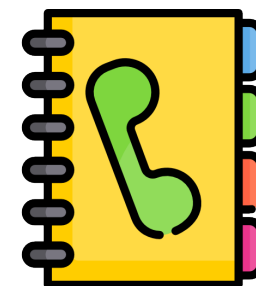
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Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).



National Domestic Violence Hotline

[The National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) is another resource for people who have been sexually assaulted by a romantic partner.



Domestic violence is abuse that happens within close relationships, like romantic or intimate relationships.



Domestic violence includes sexual assault.

But domestic violence can also include:



- Physical abuse, like hitting and kicking you



- Emotional abuse, like shouting at you or calling you mean names



- Neglect, like ignoring your needs or not paying attention to you when you need help



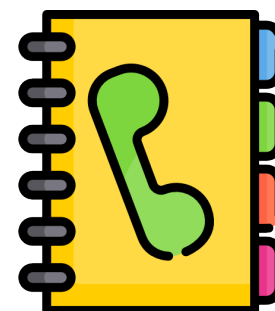
- Threats, like threatening to leave you or threatening to put you under guardianship if you do not do what they want



- Financial (money) abuse, like saying that they need to control your money or them taking your paycheck or benefits check



The National Domestic Violence Hotline has a phone hotline you can call.



The National Domestic Violence Hotline number is 1-800-799-7233 (TTY 1-800-787-3224).



You can also contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline through [their online chat](#). (Scroll down on the homepage until you see the button labeled “Chat live now.”)



Or, you can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline by texting START to 88788.



The National Domestic Violence Hotline can help you find domestic violence resources in your state or area.



Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).

Love is Respect



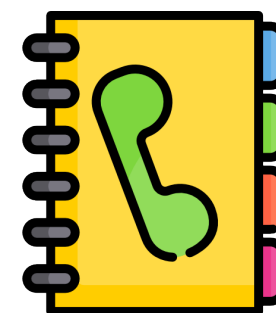
[Love is Respect](#) is another resource for people who have been sexually assaulted by a romantic partner or been through domestic violence.

13-26

Love is Respect is for young people ages 13 to 26.



Love is Respect has a phone hotline you can call.



The Love is Respect hotline number is 1-866-331-9474 (TTY 1-800-787-3224).



You can also contact Love is Respect through [their online chat](#). (Scroll down on the homepage until you see the button labeled “Chat live now.”)



Or, you can contact Love is Respect by texting LOVEIS to 22522.



Love is Respect can help you find domestic violence resources in your state or area.



Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).

Scarleteen



[Scarleteen](#) is another resource for people who have been sexually assaulted.

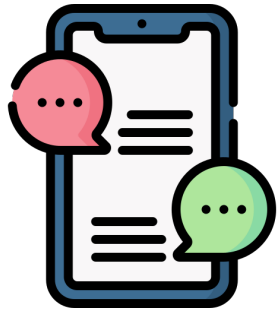


Scarleteen is a website about sex education and resources about sex.

Scarleteen has:



- [Message boards](#).



- [A texting service.](#)



- [A live chat option.](#)



All of these services can help you find resources around sexual assault.



Note 1: Scarleteen's resources are not hotlines.



You may not have your question answered right away if you contact Scarleteen.



It is best to contact Scarleteen if you have a question that can wait a day or two for an answer.

1-30

Note 2: Scarleteen is mostly aimed at people who are 30 years old or younger.

National Deaf Domestic Violence Hotline

THE DEAF HOTLINE

[The National Deaf Domestic Violence Hotline](#) (NDDVH) is another resource for Deaf and DeafBlind people who have been sexually assaulted or experienced domestic violence.



The NDDVH has an American Sign Language videophone hotline you can call.



The NDDVH videophone number is 1-855-812-1001 (voice callers will be connected through an interpreter).



Or, you can contact the NDDVH by email at NationalDeafHotline@adwas.org.



The NDDVH can help you find Deaf and DeafBlind-friendly sexual assault resources in your state or area.

The Network/La Red



The Network/La Red is another resource for LGBTQ+ people who have been sexually assaulted or experienced domestic violence.



The Network/La Red has a phone hotline you can call. The Network/La Red phone hotline number is 1-800-832-1901.



The Network/La Red can help you find LGBTQ+-friendly sexual assault resources in your state or area.



Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).

LGBT National Help Center



[The LGBT National Help Center](#) is another resource for LGBTQ+ people.



The LGBT National Help Center is not just for LGBTQ+ people who have been sexually assaulted.



It is for all LGBTQ+ people.

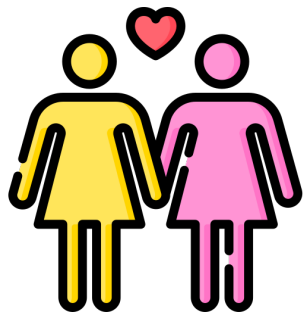


But the LGBT National Help Center can help LGBTQ+ people who have been sexually assaulted.

The LGBT National Help Center can also help if you are worried about things like:



- Coming out issues



- Gender and sexuality identities



- Relationship problems



- Bullying and bad treatment



- Workplace issues



- HIV/AIDS and STI anxiety



- Safer sex information



- Suicide



The LGBT National Help Center has a few different hotlines.

These are:



LGBT National Hotline

The [LGBT National Hotline](#) is a resource for LGBTQ+ people of all ages.

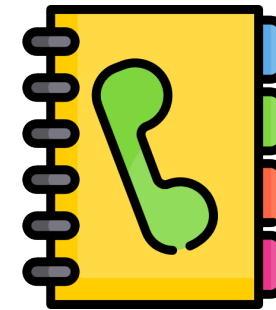


The phone number for the LGBT National Hotline is 1-888-843-4564.



LGBT National Youth Talkline

The [LGBT National Youth Talkline](#) is a resource for LGBTQ+ people aged 25 or younger.

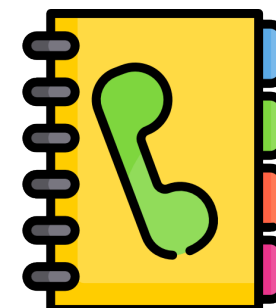


The phone number for the LGBT National Youth Talkline is 1-800-246-7743.



LGBT National Senior Hotline

The [LGBT National Senior Hotline](#) is a resource for LGBTQ+ people aged 50 and older.



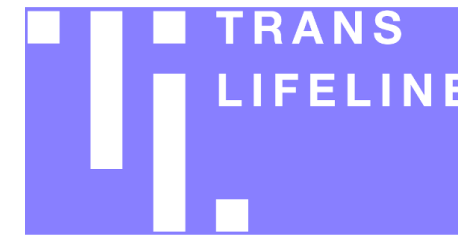
The phone number for the LGBT National Senior Hotline is 1-888-234-7243.



1-on-1 Online Peer-Support Chat

The LGBT National Help Center also offers [an online chat service](#).

Trans Lifeline



[Trans Lifeline](#) is another resource for transgender and nonbinary people.



Trans Lifeline is not just for transgender and nonbinary people who have been sexually assaulted.



It is for all transgender and nonbinary people.

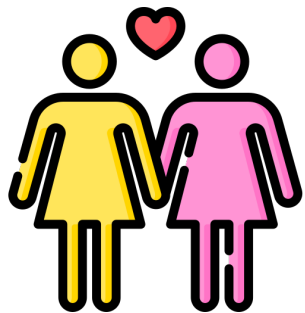


But Trans Lifeline can help transgender and nonbinary people who have been sexually assaulted.

Trans Lifeline can also help if you are worried about things like:



- Coming out issues



- Gender and sexuality identities



- Relationship problems



- Bullying and bad treatment



- Workplace issues



- HIV/AIDS and STI anxiety



- Safer sex information



- Suicide



The Trans Lifeline phone number is 1-877-565-8860.



Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).

Trevor Project



[The Trevor Project](#) is another resource for LGBTQ+ young people ages 13-24.



The Trevor Project is not just for LGBTQ+ young people ages 13-24 who have been sexually assaulted.



13-24

It is for all LGBTQ+ young people ages 13-24.

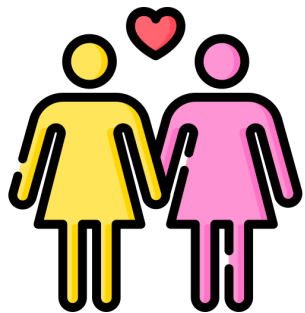


But the Trevor Project can help LGBTQ+ young people ages 13-24 who have been sexually assaulted.

The Trevor Project can also help if you are worried about things like:



- Coming out issues



- Gender and sexuality identities



- Relationship problems



- Bullying and bad treatment



- School or workplace issues



- HIV/AIDS and STI anxiety



- Safer sex information



- Suicide



The Trevor Project hotline phone number is 1-866-488-7386.



You can also contact the Trevor Project through [their online chat](#).



Or, you can contact the Trevor Project by texting START to 678-678.

211



[211](#) is a service that helps people find resources in their communities.



211 does not just help people find resources around sexual assault.

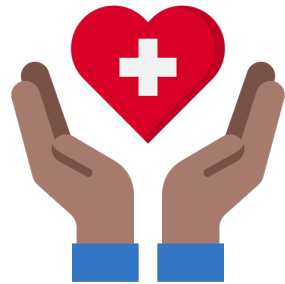


211 helps people find all sorts of resources.

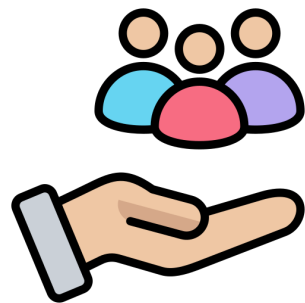


But 211 can also help you find resources around sexual assault.

211 can also help you find resources around things like:



- Health care



- Social services, including disability services



- Food



- Transportation



- Legal services



To connect with your local 211 program, call 211 from your phone.



If you cannot use the phone, you can look up your local 211 program [on the 211 website](#).



The website tool will tell you how else you can contact your local 211.



Los recursos y servicios también están disponibles [en español](#).



Resources and services are also available in other languages through an interpreter.

To Learn More

General information on sex and sex education

Organization for Autism Research: Sex Ed for Self Advocates: <https://researchautism.org/self-advocates/sex-ed-for-self-advocates/>

Scarleteen: Sex Ed for the Real World: <https://www.scarleteen.com/>

UCSF ODPC: Our Sexuality, Our Health: A Disabled Advocate's Guide to Relationships, Romance, Sexuality and Sexual Health <https://odpc.ucsf.edu/advocacy/sexuality-sexual-health/our-sexuality-our-health-a-disabled-advocates-guide-to>

ASAN and Autism NOW: Relationships & Sexuality: A Handbook for Autistic People: <https://autismnow.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Relationships-and-Sexuality-Tool.pdf>

Advocates for Youth: Rights, Respect, Responsibility (3Rs) Curriculum: <https://www.3rs.org/>

UMN ICI: Feature Issue on Sexuality and People with Intellectual, Developmental and Other Disabilities: <https://publications.ici.umn.edu/impact/23-2/cover>

Amaze: <https://amaze.org/>

BISH: A Guide to Love, Sex, and You: <https://www.bishuk.com/>

NCIL: Sex Ed for People with Disabilities: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ6T8wrqjAE&list=PLuEvYNNQ-dHeVhbyeJHx9s8oqsvBk621v>

Scarleteen: Innies & Outies: The Vagina, Clitoris, Uterus and More: https://www.scarleteen.com/article/bodies/innies_outies_the_vagina_clitoris_uterus_and_more

Scarleteen: Innies & Outies: The Penis, Testes and More: https://www.scarleteen.com/article/bodies/innies_outies_the_penis_testes_and_more

Consent

OAR: Sex Ed for Self-Advocates: What is Consent: <https://researchautism.org/self-advocates/sex-ed-for-self-advocates/consent>

Scarleteen: Driver's Ed for the Sexual Superhighway: Navigating Consent: https://www.scarleteen.com/article/abuse_assault/drivers_ed_for_the_sexual_superhighway_navigating_consent

Scarleteen: A Brief Guide to Consenting with a Nonverbal Partner: https://www.scarleteen.com/article/disability_relationships_sexuality/a_brief_guide_to_consenting_with_a_nonverbal_partner

Amaze: Consent: <https://amaze.org/video/consent/>

Love is Respect: Understand Consent: <https://www.loveisrespect.org/everyone-deserves-a-healthy-relationship/understand-consent/>

Love is Respect: How Consent Works: <https://www.loveisrespect.org/resources/how-consent-works/>

Love Is Respect: What Consent Does—and Doesn't—Look Like: <https://www.loveisrespect.org/resources/what-consent-does-and-doesnt-look-like/>

Can We Talk About Consent? book by Justin Hancock: <https://www.bishuk.com/can-we-talk-about-consent/>

Scarleteen: A Disabled Person's Guide to Talking with Your Partner(s) About Sex: https://www.scarleteen.com/article/disability/a_disabled_persons_guide_to_talking_with_your_partners_about_sex

Scarleteen: The Importance of Consent in Everyday Situations: https://www.scarleteen.com/blog/cara/2010/04/20/the_importance_of_consent_in_everyday_situations

Scarleteen: Consent Is Sexy: Sexual Autonomy and Disability: https://www.scarleteen.com/consent_is_sexy_sexual_autonomy_and_disability

Scarleteen: Yes, No, Maybe So: A Sexual Inventory Stocklist: https://www.scarleteen.com/article/advice/yes_no_maybe_so_a_sexual_inventory_stocklist

RAINN: What Consent Looks Like: <https://www.rainn.org/articles/what-is-consent>

Planned Parenthood: Sexual Consent: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/relationships/sexual-consent>

Sexual assault

Resources for people who have been sexually assaulted

RAINN Resources and Hotline: <https://www.rainn.org/>

The National Domestic Violence Hotline: <https://www.thehotline.org/>

Love is Respect Resources and Hotline: <https://www.loveisrespect.org/>

Scarleteen Resources and Direct Services: <https://www.scarleteen.com/>

The National Deaf Domestic Violence Hotline: <https://www.adwas.org/hotline/national/>

National LGBT Help Center Resources and Hotlines: <https://www.lgbthotline.org/>

Trans Lifeline Resources and Hotline: <https://translifeline.org/>

The Trevor Project Resources and Hotline: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/explore/>

211 Resources: <https://www.211.org/>

About sexual assault

Office on Women's Health: Relationships and Safety: <https://www.womenshealth.gov/relationships-and-safety> (NOTE: This resource is aimed at women. But anyone can read it to learn more about sexual assault and domestic violence.)

Stop Relationship Abuse: Get Educated: <https://stoprelationshipabuse.org/educated/> (NOTE: This resource talks mostly about women. But anyone can read it to learn more about sexual assault and domestic violence.)

RAINN: Sexual Assault: <https://www.rainn.org/articles/sexual-assault>

NSVRC: About Sexual Assault: <https://www.nsvrc.org/about-sexual-assault>

Planned Parenthood: Sexual Assault and Harassment: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/newsroom/campaigns/sexual-assault-and-harassment>

YWCA of Northeastern Massachusetts: About Sexual Assault/Violence: <https://ywcansrcc.org/programs-services/about-sexual-assaultviolence/>

Sexual assault and people with disabilities

SARTAC: Starting the Conversation: A toolkit for self-advocates to talk about sexual violence in their community: <https://www.selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/starting-the-conversation-a-toolkit-for-self-advocates-to-talk-about-sexual-violence-in-their-community/>

Vera Institute of Justice: Classes on Sexual Violence: <https://www.selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/domestic-violence-classes-participant-workbook/>

CDC: Sexual Violence and Intimate Partner Violence Among People with Disabilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/svandipv.html>

NPR: Abused and Betrayed: <https://www.npr.org/series/575502633/abused-and-betrayed> (About sexual assault of people with intellectual disabilities)

The Arc: People with Intellectual Disabilities and Sexual Violence: <http://www.thearc.org/wp-content/uploads/forchapters/Sexual%20Violence.pdf>

YWCA: Survivors with Disabilities Facts: <https://www.ywca.org/wp-content/uploads/Survivors-w-Disabilities-Fact-Sheet.pdf> (NOTE: This resource talks mostly about women. But anyone can read it to learn more about sexual assault and domestic violence.)

NOW: The Disability Community and Sexual Violence: <https://now.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Disabled-Women-Sexual-Violence-4.pdf> (NOTE: This resource talks mostly about women. But anyone can read it to learn more about sexual assault and domestic violence.)

CAP: Sexual Violence and the Disability Community: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/sexual-violence-disability-community/>

About domestic violence and caregiver abuse

Green Mountain Self Advocates: A Peer to Peer Guide on Domestic and Sexual Violence: <https://www.selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/peer-peer-guide-domestic-sexual-violence/>

Vera Institute of Justice: Classes on Domestic Violence: <https://www.selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/classes-about-domestic-violence-leader-trainer-manual/>

Center for Family Justice: What is Domestic Violence?: <https://centerforfamilyjustice.org/faq/domestic-violence/>

SAFE: People with Disabilities in Partner Relationships Power and Control Wheel:
<http://safeaustin.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2017-SAFE-Power-and-Control-Wheel.pdf>

Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence: Abuse of People with Developmental Disabilities by a Caregiver Power and Control and Equity Wheels:
<http://s3-us-east-2.amazonaws.com/ncall/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/05153514/>

About supporting people who have been sexually assaulted

RAINN: How to Support a Loved One:
<https://www.rainn.org/TALK>

RAINN: Friends and Family Toolkit for Supporting a Loved One After Sexual Violence: https://www.rainn.org/sites/default/files/Toolkit_0.pdf

The National Domestic Violence Hotline: Support Others: <https://www.thehotline.org/support-others/>

The National Domestic Violence Hotline:
Ways to Support: <https://www.thehotline.org/support-others/ways-to-support-a-domestic-violence-survivor/>

The National Domestic Violence Hotline:
50 Obstacles to Leaving: <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/get-help-50-obstacles-to-leaving/>

Communication boards and AAC resources for talking about abuse

Speak Up and Be Safe: Speak up and be Safe from Abuse Communication board – general vocabulary: [https://www.speakupandbesafe.com.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/Communication%20boards_v2%20\(PDF%20-%201,964KB\).pdf](https://www.speakupandbesafe.com.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/Communication%20boards_v2%20(PDF%20-%201,964KB).pdf)

Speak Up and Be Safe: Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse Communication board Actions: https://www.speakupandbesafe.com.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/Actions%20Communication%20boards%20%28PDF%20-%201%2C855KB%29_1.pdf

University of Pretoria: Abuse boards (in multiple languages): <https://www.up.ac.za/centre-for-augmentative-alternative-communication/article/56165/abuse-boards>

About safety planning

The National Domestic Violence Hotline:
Creating a Safety Plan: <https://www.thehotline.org/plan-for-safety/create-a-safety-plan/>

Safety First Initiative: Safety Planning for Persons with Disabilities: <https://www.calcasa.org/wp-content/uploads/files/angie-blumel-advocate-guide-safety-planning-final-printer.pdf> (NOTE: This guide is mostly aimed at advocates for people who have been sexually assaulted. But Chapters 3 and 4 contain good information and questions that anyone can use.)

Scarleteen: The Scarleteen Safety Plan: https://www.scarleteen.com/article/abuse_assault/the_scarleteen_safety_plan

About prevention and bystander intervention

RAINN: Your Role in Preventing Sexual Assault: <https://www.rainn.org/articles/your-role-preventing-sexual-assault>

RAINN: Practicing Active Bystander Intervention: <https://www.rainn.org/articles/practicing-active-bystander-intervention>

National Sexual Violence Resource Center: Bystander Intervention Tips and Strategies: https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/publications_nsvrc_tip-sheet_bystander-intervention-tips-and-strategies_1.pdf

Teen Vogue: Bystander Intervention Can
Stop Sexual Assault Before It Happens:

[https://www.teenvogue.com/story/
bystander-intervention-guide-sexual-
assault](https://www.teenvogue.com/story/bystander-intervention-guide-sexual-assault)