



Resource and Referral Information for Victims and Survivors of Sexual Assault

Updated 2013

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services of Whatcom County

1407 Commercial Street

Bellingham, WA 98225

Business (360) 671-5714

24-Hour Helpline (360) 715-1563 or 1-877-715-1563

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES AND CLIENT RIGHTS

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS) assists people dealing with sexual assault and/or domestic violence. Clients of DVSAS have the right to confidential, respectful, and timely services by trained and well-supervised volunteers or staff.

Clients 13 years and older can give consent for confidential services. Clients who are under 13 years of age or are considered vulnerable adults must have consent from a guardian.

Staff and volunteers of DVSAS must obtain a Release of Confidential Information signed by the client to release any client information. Staff or volunteers may break confidentiality without a release if they suspect a child or vulnerable adult has suffered abuse/neglect, in the case of suicide or threat of harm to another, or when subpoenaed by a court of law.

Clients may have access to their own file and may also ask to review agency policies regarding confidentiality and release of client information. To maintain confidentiality of current and past records, unauthorized personnel will not have access to client files. Client files will be retained for 7 years after the close of the client file.

Without a Release of Confidential Information, client records can only be accessed by non-agency personnel with court subpoenas. In the event of a subpoena, DVSAS is legally obligated to provide requested records or testimony. Staff will make every effort to contact the client to notify them of the subpoenaed request and use available resources to maintain client confidentiality.

For the purpose of monitoring and improving the quality of our services, certain client information is collected and documented including: demographic information, identified needs, and any services received. This information is kept in secured client files and a secured agency database. Non-identifying information is then used to generate statistical reports for staff, the Board of Directors, and funding sources. At times, funding agencies may review client records in order to verify data. Any person reviewing the files will sign a confidentiality agreement before being permitted to access the files.

Clients participating in agency related public appearances or activities that would require disclosure of identity as DVSAS clients will be asked to sign a waiver.

DVSAS Sexual Assault Services

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual conduct including rape, incest, sexual harassment, unwanted touching or unwanted sexual behavior of any kind.

If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted please contact us at:

24-Hour Helpline & Walk-in Advocacy Counseling

(360) 715-1563 or toll free (877) 715-1563

Walk-ins welcome Monday - Friday, 9 to 5

Our services include:

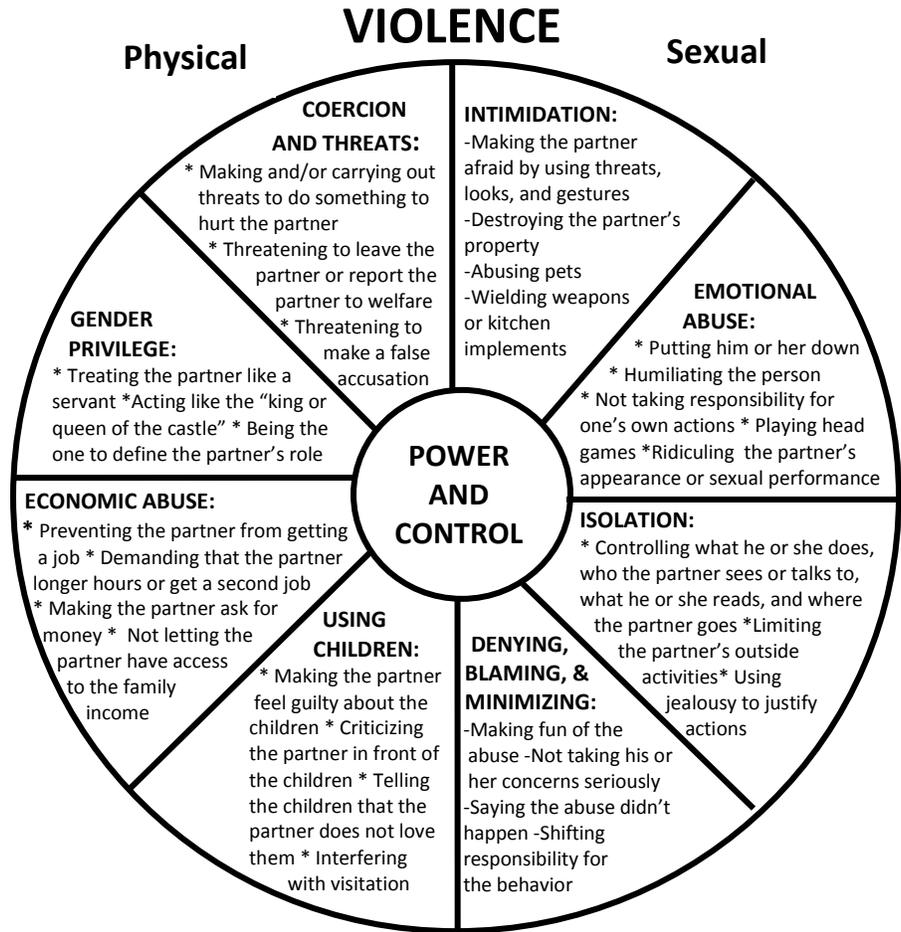
- **Individual Support**
 - 24-hour helpline
 - Advocacy counseling sessions
 - Safety planning
 - Shelter emergency referrals
 - Support during medical exams
- **Group Support**
 - Adult and teen support groups
 - Children's play groups
 - Parenting after violence classes
 - Financial empowerment classes
- **Legal Support**
 - Assistance filing protection orders
 - Court preparation and accompaniment
 - Reporting to law enforcement
 - Attorney referrals
 - Case management
- **Education and Training**
 - Teen violence prevention programs
 - Professional trainings

What are some options if you've been sexually assaulted?

- Find a safe environment — anywhere away from the attacker.
- Ask a trusted friend to stay with you for support.
- Know that what happened was not your fault and that now you should do what is best for you.
- You have the right to report the assault to police by calling 911.
- An advocate from Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services can help you understand the process of reporting assault to the police and provide support services.
 - Preserve evidence of the attack - don't bathe or brush your teeth.
 - Write down all the details you can recall about the attack & the attacker.
 - Ask the hospital to conduct a rape kit exam to preserve forensic evidence.
 - If you suspect you were drugged, ask that a urine sample be collected. The sample will need to be analyzed later on by a forensic lab.
- If you choose not to report, still consider:
 - Getting medical attention at a clinic, Planned Parenthood or the hospital. Even if there are no visible physical injuries, it is important to determine the risks of STDs and pregnancy.
 - Call the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services Hotline for free, confidential support 24-hours a day.
- Recognize that healing from sexual assault takes time. Give yourself the time you need.
- Know that it's never too late to call. Even if the attack happened years ago, Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services can still help. Many survivors do not seek help until months or years later.

What is Sexual Assault?

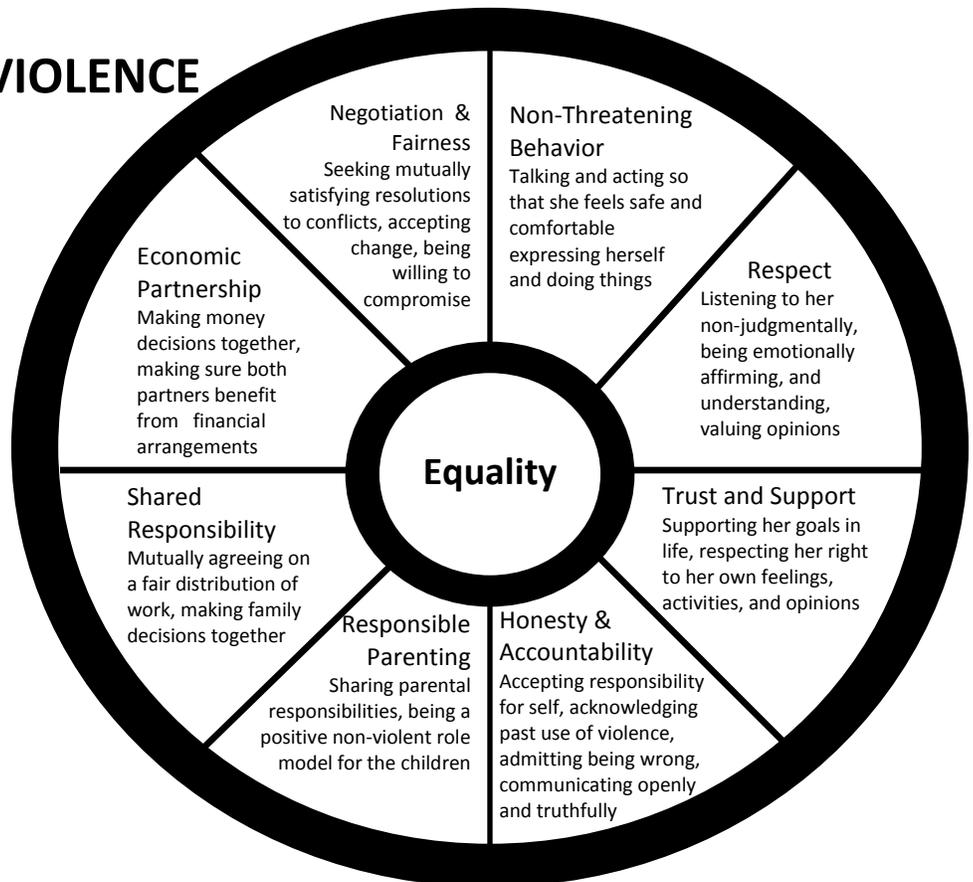
Sexual Assault is any forced, unwanted and nonconsensual sexual contact or activity. It may include unwanted touching, fondling, kissing, and intercourse—anal, vaginal, or oral. Sexual assault is a crime of violence; the purpose is gaining power and control, and/or humiliating the other person.



NON-VIOLENCE

Who's affected by Sexual Assault?

Sexual Assault affects people from all walks of life, regardless of; age, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and geographic location. Sexual Assault can affect anyone, anytime, anywhere in his or her life.



Types of Sexual Assault

Rape: Is forced sexual intercourse, including both psychological coercion and physical force. Forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal or oral penetration by the offender(s). This category includes incidents where the penetration is from a foreign object such as a bottle. This definition includes attempted rapes, male and female victims, and heterosexual and homosexual rape.

Acquaintance Rape: Is forced, unwanted sexual intercourse with a person you know. It can be someone you have just met, or dated a few times, or someone you used to date. It is a violation of your body and your trust. The force involved can come from threats or tone of voice, as well as from physical force or weapons.

Partner Rape: Is any unwanted sexual acts by an intimate partner or ex-partner, committed without consent and/or against a persons will, obtained by force or threat of force, intimidation, or when a person is unable to consent. These sexual acts include intercourse, anal or oral sex, forced sexual behavior with other individuals, or other sexual activities that are consider by the victim as degrading, humiliating, painful, and unwanted.

Stranger Rape: Any forced sexual intercourse; including both psychological coercion and physical force by someone you do not know. Forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal or oral penetration by the offender(s). This category includes incidents where the penetration is from a foreign object such as a bottle.

Gang Rape: Is when two or more attackers act together to rape the same victim. The offenders include those who actually obtain sexual relations with the victim as well as those who threaten or use force to make the victim submit but do not themselves have sexual relations.

Alcohol and Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault: Drug facilitated sexual assault occurs when the assailant uses drugs to lower the victim's resistance to the assault. After such an assault, a victim might often be woozy, disoriented, and uncertain of the events that s/he experienced. Alcohol and other drugs (including those called "Date Rape Drugs") are used in drug-facilitated sexual assault.

Child Sexual Assault: Is any sexual contact with a child or the use of a child for the sexual pleasure of someone else. This may include exposing private parts to the child or asking the child to expose him or herself, fondling of the genitals or requests for the child to do so, oral sex or attempts to enter the vagina or anus with fingers, objects or penis, although actual penetration is rarely achieved.

Sexual Assault Rape Law Summary

Sexual assault affects each survivor differently. Though the legal definitions of sexual assault may or may not describe what happened to you, that doesn't make the impact that the sexual assault had on your life any less difficult. Below is a list of different definitions as described by the law:

Rape

This offense occurs when there is sexual intercourse between persons without consent. The penetration can be in any form: Penetration of the vagina, anus or by mouth by an object or sex organ.

Consent: At the time of the act of sexual intercourse there are actual words or conduct indicating freely given agreement to have sexual intercourse.

Forcible Compulsion: Physical force, which overcomes resistance or threat, expressed or implied, that places a person in fear of death or physical injury.

Mental Incapacity: A condition that exists at the time of the offense which prevents a person from understanding the nature or consequence of the act of sexual intercourse whether that condition is produced by illness, defect, the influence of a substance or from some other cause.

Physical Helpless: A person who is unconscious or for any other reason is physically unable to communicate consent.

Rape of a Child

This offense occurs when there is sexual penetration with a person who is under the age of 16. The varying degrees of this offense depend upon the age of the child and the age of the perpetrator at the time of the offense.

Sexual Contact

This offense includes all sexual contact except penetration. The varying legal degrees of this offense depend on whether the perpetrator is a know relative of the victim, if force is used, or if the perpetrator is older than a child victim by at least three years.

Indecent Liberties

This offense occurs when the perpetrator knowingly causes another person to have sexual contact with him/her or another by forcible compulsion, or when the other person is unable to give consent, or when the victim is developmentally disabled and the perpetrator is a person who has supervisory authority over the victim.

Degrees of Rape:

1st Degree Rape: Forcible compulsion where the perpetrator or an accessory uses or threatens to use a deadly weapon, or kidnaps the victim, or inflicts serious physical injury, or feloniously enters into the building or vehicle where the victim is situated. Felony.

2nd Degree Rape: When first-degree circumstances are not met. Forcible compulsion, or when the victim is incapable of consent by reasons of being physically helpless or mentally incapacitated. Felony.

3rd Degree Rape: The victim did not consent to sexual intercourse with the perpetrator; and such lack of consent was clearly expressed by the victim's words or conduct, or where there is a threat of substantial harm to property rights of the victim. Felony.

1st Degree Incest: The victim is a known relative: ancestor, descendent, brother, sister; or stepchild, adopted child under 18. Felony.

1st Degree Rape of a Child: The victim is less than 12 years old and the offender is at least 24 months older than the victim. Felony.

2nd Degree Rape of a Child: The victim is 12 - 14 years old and the offender is at least 36 months older than the victim. Felony.

3rd Degree Rape of a Child: The victim is 14 - 16 years old and the offender is at least 48 months older than the victim. Felony.

1st Degree Sexual Misconduct with a Minor: The victim is 16 - 18 and the offender is at least 60 months older than victim. Felony.

Degrees of Sexual Contact

2nd Degree Incest: The victim is a known relative; ancestor, descendent, brother, sister; or stepchild, adopted child under 18. Felony. Indecent Liberties: Not married; and forcible compulsion, or victim incapable of consent, or in supervisory authority over developmentally disabled victim. Felony.

1st Degree Child Molestation: The victim is less than 12 and the offender is at least 36 months older than the victim. Felony.

2nd Degree Child Molestation: The victim is 12 - 14 and the offender is at least 36 months older than the victim. Felony.

3rd Degree Child Molestation: The victim is 14 -16 and the offender is at least 48 months older than the victim. Felony.

2nd Degree Sexual Misconduct with a Minor: The victim is 16 - 18 and the offender is at least 60 months older than the victim. Gross Misdemeanor.

Know the Facts about Sexual Assault

- 1. Fact:** Sexual assault is a crime of violence. Assailants seek to dominate, humiliate and punish their victims.
- 2. Fact:** Whether the victim consumed alcohol or drugs prior to the offense is irrelevant. The assault is the responsibility of the offender who chose to commit the crime.
- 3. Fact:** Sexual assault is NEVER the victim's fault. Sexual assault is a violent attack on an individual, not the spontaneous crime of sexual passion. For a victim, it is a humiliating and degrading act. No one "asks" for or deserves this type of attack regardless of what they are wearing, where they are walking, or what they are doing.
- 4. Fact:** Submitting without a struggle does not mean the victim consented to the sexual assault. Victims may submit after being threatened, hoping to reduce the chance of injury or death. Whether the victim judges it safe to resist or not, the victim is never at blame for the assault. Even in cases where there is no weapon used, the offender may threaten to hurt or kill the victim if there is resistance. The victim may also fear they or someone close to them will be hurt or killed.
- 5. Fact:** Regardless of marital status or social relationship, if a partner does not consent to sexual activity, s/he is being sexually assaulted. In fact 14% of women are victims of rape committed by their husbands.
- 6. Fact:** Men can be, and are, sexually assaulted. Current statistics indicate that 1 in 6 men are sexually assaulted in their lifetime. Sexual assault of men is greatly underreported.
- 7. Fact:** Approximately 85% of sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows or may have had contact with in the past such as a friend, partner, family member, relative, neighbor or co-worker.
- 8. Fact:** Reported sexual assaults are true, with very few exceptions. FBI crime statistics indicate that only 2% of reported rapes are false. This is the same rate of false reporting as other major crime reports.
- 9. Fact:** Sexual offenders come from all educational, occupational, racial and cultural backgrounds. They are "ordinary" and "normal" individuals who sexually assault victims to assert power and control over them and inflict violence, humiliation, and degradation.
- 10. Fact:** Heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or transgender men are equally at risk of being sexually assaulted. Being sexually assaulted does not have anything to do with your sexual orientation.
- 11. Fact:** Most men who sexually assault other men are heterosexual. The act of sexual assault revolves around power and control over another individual, and NOT lust or sexual attraction.
- 12. Fact:** Erection and ejaculation are physiological responses that may result from mere physical contact or even extreme stress. These responses do not imply that you wanted or enjoyed the assault and do not indicate anything about your sexual orientation. Some rapists are aware how erection and ejaculation can confuse a victim of sexual assault - this motivates them to manipulate their victims to the point of erection or ejaculation to increase their feelings of control and to discourage reporting of the crime.
- 13. Fact:** Men, women and children of all ages, races, religions, and economic classes can be and have been victims of sexual assault. Sexual assault occurs in rural areas, small towns and large cities. It is estimated that one in three girls and one in six boys will be sexually assaulted by the age of eighteen. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, a rape or attempted rape occurs every 5 minutes in the United States.

Sexual Assault Statistics

- ❖ An American is sexually assaulted every two and a half minutes (RAINN, 2007).
- ❖ About 44% of rape victims are under the age of 18, about 15% are under the age of 12 (RAINN, 2007).
- ❖ One in six American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape (RAINN, 2007).
- ❖ About 10% of sexual assault victims are men (RAINN, 2007).
- ❖ 77% of rapes are committed by someone who is known to the victim.
- ❖ According to the US Department of Justice [Bureau of Justice Statistics] reported that in 2005 there were an estimated 191,670 reported rape and sexual assaults for victims age 12 and over. Of those rape and sexual assaults, 34.9% involve incidences with strangers, and 65.1% involve incidences with non-strangers (US Department of Justice).
- ❖ When comparing the 2005 data to the 2001 data, the number of rapes increased an estimated 3.4 percent, but when compared to 1996 data, the number of rape offenses declined 2.4 percent during the 10-year period (Crime in the United States [CIUS], 2005).
- ❖ Of the 191,670 victims of sexual assault and rape reported in 2005, 7.9% were male, and 92.1 % were female (US Department of Justice).
- ❖ In 2005, 15.4% of the rape and sexual assaults reported from victims ages 12 and over, the offender was reported to use a weapon (US Department of Justice).
- ❖ Only 16% of rapes are ever reported to the police. (Kilpatrick et al., 1992. Rape in America: A report to the nation. National Victim Center)
- ❖ Around the world at least one woman in every three has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Most often the abuser is a member of her own family. (Population Reports: Ending Violence Against Women, 200. Population Information program, Center for Communications Programs. John Hopkins School of Public Health and center for Healthcare Gender Equity.)
- ❖ In 2011, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services served 299 primary or secondary victims of sexual assault.
- ❖ From 2000 through 2006, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services served a total of 2,949 primary or secondary victims of sexual assault.

Possible Reactions to Sexual Assault

(Things You Might Be Feeling)

Being sexually assaulted is a traumatic and frightening experience. Your sense of security and self-worth may be violated. Your feelings, relationships and activities may be seriously affected. It is important to note that each individual responds and deals with crisis in different ways. Some of those feelings might include:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| • Fear | • Depression | • Anxiety |
| • Anger | • Confusion | • Self-blame |
| • Guilt | • Revenge | • Shame |
| • Embarrassment | • Humiliation | • Sadness |

There is no right or wrong way to feel, but many survivors report these emotions. You might experience these feelings in a variety of ways:

- You might express these feelings by crying, sobbing, being restless or tense, or you may mask your feelings and present calm, composed or subdued exterior.
- You might be uncomfortable around people or around certain people, or you may not want to be alone at all.
- You may not be able to sleep, or you may sleep too much. You may have unsettling dreams.
- You may be preoccupied and have a difficult time concentrating.
- You may have minor health problems.
- You may wish to change something about your living situation.
- Trauma also affects and is affected by your relationships. Family and friends may also have some strong and uncomfortable feelings.
- It is important for you, your family and friends to understand that your feelings are normal, acceptable and important.
- You may wish to express your feelings to a trusted friend or counselor. Those close to you may need to talk about their feelings as well. Good counseling can help you settle the experience, clear the confusion and help avoid later emotional pain.
- It is normal for you to have strange and uncomfortable feelings after a traumatic experience. These feelings may subside for a period of time and then flare up again.

Feelings frequently felt by the survivor:

Being sexually assaulted can be a very traumatic experience. Feelings of violation can evoke many reactions. An individual who has experienced trauma may respond in a wide variety of ways all of which are natural responses to violent crimes.

Fear of the rapist

Because of direct threats made by a rapist or because media rape stories sensationalize rape, it is likely that a victim could fear being brutally injured or killed during a rape attack. Normal fear responses may be quite generalized or specific to the rapist. The victim's fear may be particularly strong if the rapist threatened to harm them again. This can be the case when the rapist suspects that the victim will report the incident to the police. Hypervigilance is normal, human response to fear and does not mean that the victim is paranoid or crazy. It is a coping behavior that helps the victim feel safe. Supporting a victim in exploring positive ways of coping can be reassuring and empowering.

Guilt

Many rape victims are left with the difficult feeling of guilt. This feeling can be long lasting and very painful. It is important to always believe a victim and let them know that they did nothing that made it OK for someone to violate them in this manner. Questioning a victim is not helpful, but only perpetuates the guilt they already feel. It can take a long time and a lot of support for a victim to place the blame 100% in the hands of the offender.

Loss of control

A victim of sexual assault often questions "why me?" They may have never envisioned such an act happening to them. They may think they could have stopped it, or over come the force of the rapist. Some victims wonder why the rapist chose them. What is it about them that separate them from others? These feelings arise from the common mistaken belief that rape happens to victims who "ask for it", or who in some other way made themselves noticeable. Realizing they couldn't prevent it puts into question their sense of self determination and control over their own life. A victim will benefit from a great amount of support when experiencing this sense of loss. It may be helpful to them to know that this is a common, normal feeling of victims. It will take time and a lot of patience for the victim to regain their self-worth, power, decision making skills and passion for life.

Embarrassment

The victim may be embarrassed to discuss the physical details of the assault. Our bodies and sexual activity have always been regarded as private and their privacy has been savagely stripped from them by another. Telling anyone at all, including medical and law enforcement personnel, may be painful. A victim may choose to never tell the details of the assault.

Anger

Sometimes victims do not even realize it is anger they are feeling until they get enough support and validation to really feel and express it. Victims may have confusion as to why they feel anger towards others (especially the gender of the offender) and themselves so much of the time, and find relationships difficult because of it. When they come to realize that their anger is being directed at all the wrong people , and not the offender, they can begin to understand their feelings and address it in a healthy way.

The 3 Phases of: Rape Trauma Syndrome

Definition: Stress response of victim following forced, non-consensual sexual activity.

Phase 1 - Acute Phase: This phase occurs immediately after the assault and usually lasts a few days to several weeks. In this phase individuals can have many reactions but they typically fall into three categories of reactions:

1. **Expressed:** This is when the survivor is openly emotional. The victim may appear agitated or hysterical, or may suffer from crying spells or anxiety attacks.
2. **Controlled:** This is when the survivor appears to be without emotion and acts as if “nothing happened” and “everything is fine.” This appearance of calm may be shock.
3. **Shocked Disbelief:** This is when the survivor reacts with a strong sense of disorientation. He or she may have difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or doing everyday tasks. He or she may also have poor recall of the assault.

Physical Symptoms:

- Somatic Complaints
- Eating Disturbance
- Sleep Disturbance
- Physical symptoms specific to the body

Thoughts:

- Unable to block out thoughts of assault
- How could the survivor have handled it differently
- Blocking, forgetting parts of the assault
- Conflict between emotion and intellect

Dreams and Nightmares:

- Being in a similar situation
- Mastery of the situation but still violence

- Failure to get away/out

Emotional Symptoms:

- Shock, disbelief, denial
- Fear of death
- Guilt, self-blame
- Anger, revenge
- Irritability with others
- Fear
- Humiliation, degradation
- Shame, embarrassment
- Mood swings
- Anxiety over others reactions

Phase 2 - Long-term phase: During this phase the individual resumes what appears to be his or her “normal” life but inside is suffering from considerable turmoil. In this phase there are five primary coping techniques:

1. **Minimization:** Pretends that “everything is fine” or that “it could have been worse.”
2. **Dramatization:** Cannot stop talking about the assault and it is what dominates their life and identity.
3. **Suppression:** Refuses to discuss, acts as if it did not happen.
4. **Explanation:** Analyzes what happened- what the individual did, what the rapist was thinking/feeling.
5. **Flight:** Tries to escape the pain (moving, changing jobs, changing appearance, changing relationships, etc.).

Phase 3 - The Resolution Phase: During this phase the assault is no longer the central focus of the individual’s life. While he or she may recognize that he or she will never forget the assault; the pain and negative outcomes lessen over time. Often the individual will begin to accept the rape as part of his or her life and chooses to move on.

Bill of Sexual Rights

1. I have a right to my own body.
2. I have a right to my own feelings, beliefs, opinions & perceptions.
3. I have a right to trust my own values about sexual contact.
4. I have a right to set my own sexual limits.
5. I have a right to say no.
6. I have a right to say yes.
7. I have a right to experience sexual pleasure.
8. I have a right to be sexually assertive.
9. I have a right to be the initiator in a sexual relationship.
10. I have the right to be in control of my sexual experience.
11. I have the right to have a loving partner.
12. I have the right to have a partner who respects me, understands me, & is willing to communicate with me.
13. I have a right to talk to my partner about the sexual assault.
14. I have the right to ask questions.
15. I have a right to receive accurate sexual information.

When you are by yourself, read through this Bill of Rights and make notes by each right that you feel you have not incorporated into your life.

Explore changing your thoughts to include the rights you would like to accept.

(From: *Incest & Sexuality*, By Wendy Maltz/Beverly Holman)

Further Reading Resources...

Beyond Betrayal: Taking Charge of Your Life after Boyhood Sexual Abuse

By Richard B. Gartner and William Pollack (2005)

Beyond Our Control: Restructuring Your Life after Sexual Assault

By Leila Rae Sommerfeld (2009)

The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

By Ellen Bass and Laura Davis (2008)

Date Rape: It's Not Your Fault

By Joan Meijer (2011)

Finding Sunshine after the Storm: A Workbook for Children Healing from Sexual Abuse By

Curtis Holmes PhD and Sharon McGee LMFT (2008)

Healing Sex: A Mind-Body Approach to Healing Sexual Trauma

By Staci Haines (2007)

Hush: Moving From Silence to Healing After Childhood Sexual Abuse

By Nicole Braddock Bromley (2007)

May I Kiss You? A Look at Dating, Communication, Respect, & Sexual Assault Awareness By

Michael J. Domitrz (2003)

Rid of My Disgrace: Hope and Healing for Victims of Sexual Assault

By Justin S. Holcomb and Lindsey A. Holcomb (2011)

The Sexual Healing Journey: A Guide for Survivors of Sexual Abuse

By Wendy Maltz (2012)

Victims No Longer: The Classic Guide for Men Recovering from Sexual Child Abuse

By Mike Lew (2004)

Voices of Courage: Inspiration from Survivors of Sexual Assault

By Mike Domitrz (2005)

More recommended reading can be found online at Pandora's Project:

<http://www.pandys.org/recommendedreading.html>

WEBSITES:

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services of Whatcom County
www.dvsas.org

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network
www.rainn.org

Pandora's Project: Support and resources for survivors of rape and sexual abuse
www.pandys.org

The NW Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse
www.nwnetwork.org

Washington Coalition for Sexual Assault Programs
www.wcsap.org

Family Violence Prevention Fund
www.endabuse.org

National Sexual Violence Resource Center
www.nsvrc.org

National Center for Victims of Crime
www.ncvc.org