

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO FEEL AFTER A SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Whether you are a man or a woman, a sexual assault is a traumatic experience. Individuals vary in how they react to this major stressor. Below is a list of common reactions to a sexual assault:

- **Emotional Shock:** I feel numb. How can I be so calm? Why can't I cry?
- **Disbelief and or Denial:** Did it really happen? Why me? Maybe I just imagined it. It wasn't really rape.
- **Embarrassment:** What will people think? I can't tell my family or friends.
- **Shame:** I feel completely filthy, like there's something wrong with me. I can't get clean.
- **Guilt:** I feel as if it's my fault, or I should have been able to stop it. I only I had . . .
- **Depression:** How am I going to get through the semester? I'm so tired! I feel so hopeless. Maybe I'd be better off dead.
- **Powerlessness:** Will I ever feel in control again?
- **Disorientation:** I don't even know what day it is, or what class I'm supposed to be in. I keep forgetting things.
- **Flashbacks:** I'm still re-living the assault! I keep seeing that face and feeling like it's happening all over again.
- **Fear:** I'm scared of everything. What if I have herpes or AIDS? I can't sleep because I'll have nightmares. I'm afraid to go out. I'm afraid to be alone.
- **Anxiety:** I'm having panic attacks. I can't breathe! I can't stop shaking. I feel overwhelmed.
- **Anger:** I feel like killing the person who attacked me!
- **Physical Stress:** My stomach (or head or back) aches all the time. I feel jittery and don't feel like eating.

It's important to remember that these reactions are normal and temporary reactions to an abnormal event. There is help available to deal with your feelings so you can heal and regain a sense of control over your life. During your recovery process it is important to avoid using drugs and alcohol. Seek immediate assistance from a mental health professional if you are experiencing any thought of harming yourself or others.

WHAT ARE THE COMMUNITY RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT?

- **WAUKESHA POLICE DEPARTMENT:** Call 911 or (262)524-3820 for non-emergencies.
- **WAUKESHA MEMORIAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT:** (262)928-2000.
- **THE WOMEN'S CENTER** offers a wide range of free and comprehensive services to those affected by sexual assault, including a 24 Hour Crisis Line: (262)-542-3828.
- **CAMPUS SAFETY:** 262-524-7300
- **COUNSELING SERVICES AT THE WALTER YOUNG CENTER:** Call (262)524-7335 to schedule an appointment. Services are free and confidential.

REMEMBER . . . YOU ARE NOT TO BLAME . . . EVEN IF:

- Your attacker was an acquaintance, date, friend or partner.
- You have been sexually intimate with that person or with others previously.
- You were drinking or using drugs.
- You froze and did not or could not say "no," or were unable to fight back physically.