

FACTSHEET FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS



SEXUAL ASSAULT **AWARE** **RESPECT** **SAFE** **EDUCATION**
EMPOWER **WHAT IT IS** **PRIVACY** **REPORT** **WHAT TO DO** **WHERE TO GO** **SUPPORT**



Sexual assault is **any sexual contact without consent.**

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

Sexual assault is any form of sexual activity targeted at you without your consent. It ranges from unwanted viewing, touching, or penetration. Rape is a form of sexual assault usually involving sexual forms of sexual penetration done against you without your consent. Sexual assault can happen to both males and females of any age.

If a sexual act is done on you or to you without your consent, it is a sexual violation and it is a **criminal offence**.

Sexual assault is a crime. As long as you did not consent to the act, even if you know the person who assaulted you, be it a spouse, a former intimate partner, another family member, a friend, a colleague, an authority figure, an acquaintance in any form or a stranger. Most people who are sexually assaulted, know their abuser(s).

Sexual assault is a crime even if you could not fight back or scream, you were drunk, taking drugs, given drugs or unconscious.

We advise that you report all cases of sexual assault to the police – especially rape.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE BEEN RAPED?

- First, you need to get to a safe place.
- You shouldn't feel ashamed or to blame for what has happened to you.
- If you feel you're able to, you should consider telling someone can trust to support you through the crisis.
- You may also reach out to NGOs like Global Rights which maintain a hotline to assist you and keep a dossier of other NGOs or trained personnel close to you who are able to help you through your crisis.
- Take care of yourself in a way you deem as most suitable for you:
 - You could report the crime to ensure the rapist is brought to justice and does not harm anyone else
 - You could seek medical and/or emotional care without reporting the rape as a crime.
 - You can do both.

We advise that you do both, and that you do so as early as possible.

MEDICAL

- Depending on how comfortable you are with navigating the system, you may want to go to the hospital accompanied by a confidant who is assisting you
- Global Rights has a cadre of volunteer supporters who are able to assist you through the process
- Go to a hospital emergency room to be checked, do not bathe, wash or wipe yourself up, or change your clothes, you can go with fresh clothes to change into after.
- You can call the police from the hospital, the hospital personnel may assist you to notify the police if you request for them to.
- The doctor will examine your body for internal and external injuries and collect evidence.
- The doctor will also need to do a blood test to search for diseases that can be passed through sexual intercourse. This test is routine procedure for rape survivors.
- Emergency contraception pills will be given to you and prophylactic treatment will be administered to prevent HIV and hepatitis transmission when you go to the hospital immediately.
- Doctors can also prescribe other medication for STIs, pain or stress symptoms when you get to the hospital.
- A follow up check up soon after this initial visit is recommended, for safe guard purposes.

THE POLICE

You may not want to report to the police, but sexual violence is a serious criminal offence and it is essential you report to the police to get the perpetrator prosecuted and to prevent him/her from hurting anyone else.

You can report a sexual offence to the police at any time – for example, immediately after the incident or days later. However, it's important to know that if you report the crime immediately after it has happened, the chances of the police collecting evidence and effectively investigating the crime are increased.

If a police station is close to where you are after the act occurred, go to the police station immediately. The Nigerian Police have a gender desk in their offices to respond to all your complaints and to receive your statement.

- The police will explain their procedures with you
- After receiving your statement, they will arrange for you to visit the hospital so you can get treated and also so that they can obtain evidence through procedures that will be carried out by the doctor as described above.
- Do not change clothes, do not bathe, do not wipe yourself or wash up after the act of violation occurs.
- You can go with fresh clothes to change into after all the test have been done and you have been thoroughly examined.
- Take someone with you to the police station or the hospital for support. Global Rights is able to provide you with a volunteer supporter, who is trained to assist survivors of violence to accompany you on such visits.
- Even if you do not want to pursue the case right away, you may change your mind later, it is important evidence is collected.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR SELF (SURVIVOR)

- Remember there is no right or wrong way to deal with the trauma after a sexual assault
- Survivors of sexual assault respond differently to the crime, emotions range from incapacitating depression to fear and anxiety and all the way to extreme anger. The feeling of numbness, shock, disbelief and insomnia are common occurrences.
- Find an outlet to express your emotions and feelings.
- The assault **IS NOT YOUR FAULT**, the blame lies solely with the rapist. What a person wears or how a person acts is **never** a justification for rape or other forms of sexual assault.
- You are not alone, 1 in 6 women are survivors/victims of rape and 1 in 33 men have been victims of rape.
- Give yourself time to heal, it is okay to be hurt but it is important but it is important you find a trusted friend or counselor to confide in.
- Do not keep your feelings bottled up inside.
- Recovering from rape or sexual assault is often a long complicated experience, do not feel guilty if you cannot “get over it” or “move on” easily.

HOW TO HELP SOMEONE RECOVER FROM A RAPE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT

- First, you need to encourage them to see a doctor immediately because they need medical attention and treatment after a sexual assault, they also need to seek medical care to check for STDs and injuries.
- Encourage but do not pressure them to report the crime to the police, this will ensure that the rapist is prosecuted and justice served to the victim/survivor
- A petition can also be brought before the police on behalf of the victim/survivor
- Assure your friend/ loved one that he/she is not to blame for the rape
- Remind and reassure them that no one deserves to be raped or sexually violated.

FOR PARENTS

If your child is sexually assaulted, he or she might choose not to tell you. There are some signs that might indicate sexual violence.

The child or teenager:

- Acts unusually irritable, moody or cranky
- is seen angry, frightened or confused
- feels depressed, anxious or nervous
- is especially frightened and anxious about being alone
- suddenly has troubled sleeping patterns
- experiences a drastic change in appetite
- has sudden drop in grades at school
- is unable to concentrate at school or to participate in everyday activities they previously enjoyed
- has an unusual aversion to a certain family member, friend or acquaintance.
Do not force the child to be alone with that person.

If you need help or more information to deal with sexual violence, you may contact any of the organizations listed in the resource section of this website.

You may also fill the reporting form and we will assist in referring you to an appropriate organization or response agency.