

# Know What to Do When Sexually Assaulted

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**SASH  
CLUB**

**Students Against  
Sexual Harassment**



# Content Warning

**\*\*SASH Club Power Topics may include sensitive content that may be difficult to present and may possibly be triggering to some participants.\*\***

**You may want to seek the support of an ally during this presentation, especially if you're a survivor of sexual violence.**

# What's Ahead:

- Frustration and confusion are common when reporting sexual assault
- Protecting your privacy: mandated reporters
- Calling a sexual assault resource center (7 min. video)
- What to do immediately if assaulted
- Know whom to call: helplines and websites
- Supporting survivors
- What to do if you are sexually harassed

# Frustration and confusion are common

- > Students and families across the country struggle with the devastating impact of sexual harassment and sexual assault:
  - Often victims don't realize they've been sexually harassed or assaulted because they've come to accept sexual harassment and certain types of sexual assault as normal.
  - They often blame themselves for sexual assault.



Sexual harassment and assault should never be normalized, and **the victim is never at fault—under any circumstance!**

# Frustration and confusion are common

- > Schools or organizations may use their considerable power to shut down complaints of sexual harassment or assault:
  - To avoid being sued if they failed to respond appropriately
  - To protect the institution's reputation
- > Institutions may deny the assault, blame the victim, or frustrate the victim with excessive process, hoping they will go away.

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Whether the harassment or assault occurred at school, on the Internet, or elsewhere, institutions that receive federal funding must comply with **Title IX**, a federal civil rights law guaranteeing every student an equal education free from sexual harassment and assault.

# Shock follows

- The survivor's feelings of shame, guilt, fear, and shock are normal.
- It's important to seek the support of trusted adults and a professional counselor after an assault.
- Not everyone is comfortable reaching out. That's because if the victim is under the age of 18, certain adults, called mandated reporters, must report the assault to the authorities.
- Families are confused and feel powerless when an institution denies the harassment or assault. Many survivors do not feel comfortable returning.

# Mandated reporters

- Mandated reporters usually include social workers, teachers, health care workers/medical professionals, childcare providers, law enforcement, mental health professionals, and other educators. In certain states all adult citizens are mandated reporters.
- Mandated reporters are required by law to report suspected child abuse and possibly child-on-child sexual misconduct, usually to a state child protective services hotline or to law enforcement.
- If a survivor wants confidential information without triggering a report, it is important not to give their last name. If reporting by phone they also may want to block their caller ID.

Watch “Rape victim gets confidential help”

## Video: A survivor gets help

Here we watch a teenager calling a community sexual assault response center and learning how to take care of herself after an assault. She describes common responses and fears, talks about how the assault affects her schooling and activities, learns how to take care of her health, how a victim's advocate can help her and about a program called **State Crime Victims Compensation**, which helps pay for the costs.

She also learns about people who can help her return to school safely, such as a victim's advocate and a school's Title IX Coordinator.

Stream the video at the **SASH Club YouTube channel**.

# Talk About It



- > What do you see as the biggest challenge for a survivor to:
  - Seek help?
  - Re-engage in normal activities?
- > Why is maintaining confidentiality while seeking help a concern for some survivors?
- > What in the culture contributes to victims blaming themselves?

# What to Do Immediately if Assaulted

- > Get away from the attacker to a safe place as fast as you can.
- > Then call 911 or the police.
- > Call a friend or family member you trust.
- > You can call a crisis center or hotline to talk with a counselor.
- > One hotline is **RAINN's** National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE (656-4673). They can also refer you to a sexual assault response organization (rape crisis center) in your location.

# Preserve and Collect Evidence

- > **Preserve the evidence, even if you are unsure you will report.**
  - If you collect evidence, you have more options in the future.
  
- > **Do not:**
  - Wash, comb your hair, or clean any part of your body
  - Brush your teeth
  - Change clothes, if possible, so the hospital nurse can collect evidence
  - Touch or change anything at the scene of the assault

# Seek Medical Attention

- **Seek medical attention ASAP at your nearest hospital ER:**
  - You need to be examined, treated for any injuries, checked for possible sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or pregnancy, and can receive preventative medicine.
  - The nurse or doctor will collect evidence the attacker may have left behind.
  
- **Ask hospital staff to connect you with a local rape crisis center.**

# Were drugs involved?

## > Know these signs from **Forensics for Survivors**:

- Periods of unconsciousness or lack of motor control
- Amnesia or confused state with suspicion of a sexual assault having occurred
- Amnesia or confused state after no known consumption of mind-altering substance or after a minimal consumption of alcohol
- Patient's suspicion or belief they were drugged prior to or during sexual assault
- The suspected ingestion of drugs having occurred within 96 hours prior to the exam

# These Helplines Provide More Support

- > **Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (All genders)**
  - 1-800-656-4673
- > **National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline**
  - 1-866-331-9474
- > **National Helpline for Men Who Were Sexually Abused or Assaulted**
  - At [1in6.org](http://1in6.org) **online chat** or 1-800-656-HOPE (656-4673)
- > **The Trevor Project Crisis & Suicide Prevention Lifeline for LGBTQ Youth**
  - 1-866-488-7386

# These Helplines Provide More Support

## > National Child Abuse Hotline

- 1-800-422-4453

## > National Domestic Violence Hotline

- 1-800-799-7233

## > National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- 988
- 988 (Spanish)
- 988 (Deaf and hard of hearing)

# Supporting survivors, understanding the impact of sexual assault

“In the aftermath of a sexual assault or rape, survivors can face extremely difficult and painful emotions and experiences. Every survivor responds to traumatic events in their own way. The effects of the trauma can be short-term or last long after the sexual assault or rape.” —Joyful Heart Foundation



“If a survivor’s reactions do not match common responses—such as no physical injury—it does not mean what happened was not sexual abuse or assault. No one is alone in their healing process. There are resources to help along the restorative pathway to healing.” —Joyful Heart Foundation

# Common physical responses to sexual assault

- Bruising and bleeding
- Difficulty walking
- Soreness and muscle tension
- Shaking, sweating
- Broken or dislocated bones
- Nausea/diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Changes in eating, digestion, and sleeping habits
- Weight gain or loss
- Shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy

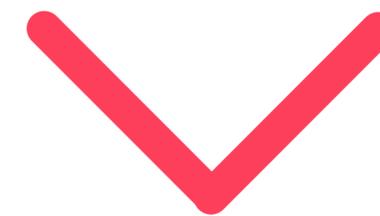
# Common mental/emotional responses after sexual assault

- Depression, sadness, feelings of hopelessness, unusual crying, loss of energy or interest in activities previously enjoyed, numbness feeling alone, worthless, guilt, dread/fear for safety, feeling dependent, vulnerable, unclean, anger, hate, rage and other emotions
- Lack of control over one's life, worry about what others think, feeling that these reactions are a sign of weakness when they are normal
- Severe anxiety, nightmares, flashbacks, uncontrolled thoughts and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Feeling unreal and not present, unable to focus on work or schoolwork

Learn more in [Sexual Harassment and Assault Happen to Males Too](#)  
Power Topic.

# Common behaviors after sexual assault

- Sudden use of drugs, tobacco, or alcohol, engaging in risky, impulsive, isolating, or unusual behaviors
- Difficulty trusting others, doubting relationships, distorted views of others
- Participating in abusive relationships or unusual sexual activities
- Suicidal thoughts or attempts, self-harm behaviors like cutting or self-destructive behavior



If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-8255.**

# Supporting survivors

- **Listen and believe the survivor.**
- Be with the survivor, listen to their pain without trying to fix it.
- Listen to what they need; empower them to take the actions they want to take.
- Brainstorm options and empower them to take the actions they want instead of acting for them. This helps survivors feel in control.

# Talk About It



- > If someone came to you for support:
  - What is the first thing you would do?
  - How would you help them secure more support?
  - Consider role playing this situation
- > Does supporting a survivor sound like something you could do? Why or why not?
- > Why is listening to survivors important?
- > Why is it so important that a survivor feel empowered to pursue care and support?
- > Why is it important to preserve evidence?

# Do more: survivor support

- > Create posters, notebook inserts, brochures or flyers with contact information:
  - For your local sexual assault response organization. Use this [interactive form](#) at RAINN to locate resources in your area. Call to see if they work with survivors under age 18.
  - Including national helplines for survivors of sexual harassment and assault
- > Share the Stop Sexual Assault in Schools (SSAIS) flyer [Know What to Do if you are Sexually Harassed or Assaulted](#) or post [this version with QR codes](#).
- > Invite a speaker to an assembly to discuss sexual assault prevention and self-care.
- > Post to your personal or SASH Club social media platforms suggestions for supporting sexual assault survivors.

# Do more: institutional practices

- Watch a Title IX Coordinator taking complaints about sexual harassment.
- Ask your institution's Title IX Coordinator share with your club the ways your school prevents sexual harassment/assault and provides services for students traumatized by sexual harassment and assault.
- Compare practices at your institution (such as how to report incidents) with best practices using the SSAIS printable guides:
  - **Investigating What Happens When a Student Reports Sexual Harassment**
  - **How to Gather Information about a School District's Title IX Policies**
  - **Fact Sheet for Teachers and Staff**

# Learn more

- > Visit [Joyful Heart Foundation](#) “Learn” website page
- > Visit [RAINN](#) (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)
- > Visit [Love is Respect](#)

# To Do Immediately if Sexually Assaulted

- > Get away from the attacker to a safe place as fast as you can.
- > Then call 911 or the police.
- > Call a friend or family member you trust.
- > You can call a crisis center or hotline to talk with a counselor.
- > One 24/7 option, for all genders, is the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE(4673).
- > RAINN will connect you with a rape crisis center in your area.
- > Visit the [Survivor Support page](#) for more helpline options and details.

# To Do Immediately if Sexually Assaulted

- > **Preserve the evidence, even if you are unsure you will report.**
- > **Do not:**
  - Wash, comb your hair, or clean any part of your body
  - Brush your teeth
  - Change clothes, if possible, so the hospital nurse can collect evidence
  - Touch or change anything at the scene of the assault
- > **Seek medical attention ASAP at your nearest hospital ER:**
  - You need to be examined, treated for any injuries, checked for possible sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or pregnancy, and can receive preventative medicine.
  - The nurse or doctor will collect evidence the attacker may have left behind.
- > **Ask hospital staff to connect you with a local rape crisis center.**

# If You are Sexually Harassed

**It isn't your fault... and you can get help to make it stop.**

- Reach out ASAP to a friend, school counselor or trusted adult for immediate safety & support to bring the issue to your Dean of Students, Principal, or Title IX Coordinator.
- Confidential National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-4673  
[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)
- Learn about your rights and how to take action on the [Stop Sexual Assault in Schools website](#)

# Feedback & Suggestions:

SASH Club welcomes your feedback and suggestions on the content of this presentation. Contact us via:

Web: [www.sashclub.org](http://www.sashclub.org)

Email: [sashclub@moash.org](mailto:sashclub@moash.org)

Instagram: [@sashclubs](https://www.instagram.com/sashclubs)

Facebook: [@sashclubs](https://www.facebook.com/sashclubs)

Twitter: [@sashclubs](https://twitter.com/sashclubs)

> Contact an adult advisor with your questions or concerns about local issues.



# THANK YOU

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