



When You Are Ready  
Feelings, fears & facts about sexual violence



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# ALL ADVOCACY SERVICES ARE FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL



(907) 276-7273  
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It was not your fault.  
You are not alone.  
You have rights.  
You deserve support.



## SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE

- 24-hour crisis line support and information
- Immediate crisis support, reporting options and knowledge of victim rights
- Medical and law enforcement accompaniment
- 1-on-1 advocacy sessions
- Support groups
- Legal Advocacy including court accompaniment
- Information and referral to community resources

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## COMMONLY REQUESTED SERVICES

- Assistance completing the Violent Crimes Compensation Board Application (VCCB) to pay for counseling, medical expenses, loss of wages, relocation, and other crime-related costs
- Assistance connecting with a pro bono attorney for family law matters
- Support and accompaniment to Grand Jury hearing, District Attorney meetings, and additional court hearings
- Assistance registering for VINE Link which notifies you in the event that an offender is released or escapes incarceration.
- Referrals to community resources for assistance with housing, employment, and counseling
- Case Management for intensive follow-up and support

# THE PROCESS OF REPORTING



A team gathers to help identify the crimes that have occurred, make certain your body is healthy, support you through reporting, and help you start on your healing journey.

The team works closely to make certain your needs are met and information is communicated. This process allows you to address immediate needs in one location.



## YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- **Stop the process at any time**
- **Take a break**
- **Ask questions about the process**
- **Know what will happen next**
- **Safety**

## What is a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)?

### YOU, THE SURVIVOR

**You** are the most important member of the team. Your role is to communicate any medical, emotional, and legal concerns you may have along the way.

### STAR ADVOCATE

The Advocate is a source of support to you through the entire process, explaining your rights, and providing emergent and long-term resources. Advocates provide legal advocacy, emergency shelter and transportation, as well as continued support weeks, months, and even years beyond the incident. Only with permission can the Advocate communicate on your behalf.

### SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER (SANE)

The job of the Nurse is to provide forensic medical care for you. During the process of the medical exam, the nurse will collect forensic evidence and photographic images of injuries you may have received.

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

A member of law enforcement will interview you, pinpointing specific crimes that may have occurred and document possible witnesses, evidence, or other aspects of the crime.

# THE ROLE OF THE FORENSIC NURSE

A forensic nurse is trained to respond to anyone reporting a sexual assault. While working with a forensic nurse, both medical and legal needs are addressed. A nurse's approach is holistic, based on individual needs and concerns.

## **The role of the nurse is to:**

- Provide a physical exam of your body
- Diagnosis and treatment of injuries
- Referrals for additional treatment
- Assess the risk of sexually transmitted infection (STI).
- Evaluate, diagnose, treat, and prevent STI's
- Assess pregnancy risks when appropriate
- Administer Emergency Contraception
- Identify, collect, and preserve forensic samples based on your report

**Nurses work with law enforcement and advocacy agencies to ensure your medical and forensic needs are met.**

## **Treatment available during exam includes:**

Emergency contraception, medication to prevent Gonorrhea, Chlamydia, and other infections on a case by case basis.

Follow-up exams may be necessary and an important part of evidence collection.



# MEDICAL FOLLOW-UP RESOURCES IN ANCHORAGE

**Alaskan AIDS Assistance  
Association (4 As)**  
FREE HIV Testing  
Testing Recommended for up  
to 3 months  
1057 W Fireweed Ln, Ste 102  
(907) 263-2050 or  
(800)478-AIDS  
[www.alaskan aids.org](http://www.alaskan aids.org)

**Anchorage Health Department**  
Sliding Scale Billing  
825 L St RM 102  
(907) 343-4623  
[www.anchoragepublichealth.com](http://www.anchoragepublichealth.com)

**Providence Family Medicine  
Center**  
Medicaid, WIC Assistance,  
Private Insurance and Sliding  
Scale Billing  
1201 E 36th Ave  
(907) 562-9229  
[www.alaska.providence.org](http://www.alaska.providence.org)

**Anchorage Neighborhood  
Health Center**  
Medicaid, Private Insurance,  
Sliding Scale Billing  
1217 E 10th Avenue  
(907) 743-7200  
[www.anhc.org](http://www.anhc.org)

**Planned Parenthood of Alaska**  
Medicaid, Private Insurance,  
Sliding Scale Billing  
4001 Lake Otis Pkwy Ste 101  
(800) 769-0075  
[www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)

## A note about strangulation:

Strangulation happens when pressure on your neck keeps blood and/or oxygen from getting to your brain. Strangulation is life threatening and a felony in Alaska. You may experience: passing out, blacking out, nausea, vomiting, pain in throat and neck, voice changes, bruising, redness of your face, cough, eye changes, trouble swallowing, shortness of breath.

Go to the emergency room if you have trouble breathing, are passing out, or are blacking out. If you were strangled during your assault and choose not to report, have someone check on you for the first 36 hours after the incident. See a doctor if you continue to have pain in your throat or changes in your voice for more than 3-4 days.

## FREE At-Home Testing

Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, &  
Trichomonas Testing  
provided by ANTHC.  
Mailed to your home, results  
within 2 weeks via telephone  
[www.iwantthekit.org](http://www.iwantthekit.org)  
(866) 575-5504

# COMMON RESPONSES TO RAPE TRAUMA

There are three phases of Rape Trauma Response:

## 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:

- **Expressed:** Survivor is openly emotional. He/she may appear agitated or hysterical, and suffer from crying spells or anxiety attacks
- **Controlled:** Survivor appears to be without emotion and acts as if "nothing happened" and "everything is fine." This appearance of calm may be shock
- **Shocked Disbelief:** Survivor reacts with a strong sense of disorientation; difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or doing everyday tasks is common

## ADJUSTMENT PHASE

During this phase the individual resumes what appears to be his/her "normal" life but inside is suffering from considerable turmoil. In this phase there are five primary coping techniques:

- **Minimization:** Pretends that "everything is fine" or that "it could have been worse"
- **Dramatization:** Cannot stop talking about it, it is defining who they are
- **Suppression:** Refuses to discuss, acts as if it did not happen
- **Explanation:** Analyzes what happened, why it happened, and the offender's thoughts
- **Flight:** Tries to escape the pain; moves, changes jobs, cuts off relationships

There are many symptoms or behaviors that appear during this phase including:

- Continuing anxiety
- Severe mood swings
- Sense of helplessness
- Persistent fear or phobia
- Depression
- Rage
- Difficulty sleeping (nightmares, insomnia, etc.)
- Eating difficulties (nausea, vomiting, compulsive eating, etc.)

- Denial
- Withdrawal from friends, family, activities
- Hyper-vigilance
- Reluctance to leave house and/or go places that remind the individual of the assault
- Sexual problems
- Difficulty concentrating
- Flashbacks

# COMMON RESPONSES TO RAPE TRAUMA, CONTINUED

## RESOLUTION PHASE

During this phase, the assault is no longer the central focus of the individual's life. Survivors recognize that they will never forget the assault; the pain and negative thoughts lessen over time. Finding strength in the challenges they have overcome can be empowering.

NOTE: This model assumes individuals will take steps forward and backwards in their healing process and while there are phases, it is not a linear progression and will be different for every person.

*This information was provided by RAINN*

## Facing the Fear of Flashbacks

- Tell yourself you are having a flashback
- Remind yourself the worst is over
- Take deep and slow breaths
- Use your senses and become aware of your surroundings
- Speak to the part of yourself that is hurting
- Get in touch with your need for boundaries
- Get support
- Give yourself time to recover
- Honor your experience
- Be patient
- Find a reputable therapist
- Join a Support Group
- Remember, you are not losing your mind, you are healing



**Everyone responds differently to stress and trauma.**

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Allow yourself time to heal and acknowledge the accomplishments that you have made.

# HEALING FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Recovery from sexual trauma can be a difficult journey, but it can be made easier if you can begin to talk about your feelings and face your F.E.A.R.S.



**F**  
**E**  
**A**  
**R**  
**S**

Find support through the strength of other survivors.

Exercise calms the body and keeps you healthy.

Affection from pets, friends, and partners helps battle isolation.

Relaxation techniques can help ease triggers and flashbacks.

Self-awareness and insight on healing is essential; talk about your struggles.

If you are a friend or family member of a survivor, do not discredit your own experience and grief. Support your friend by taking care of yourself. Not only will you demonstrate health and wellness, but you will also be a stronger support.

# TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF



Self-care is just that- learning how to care for yourself. For victims of sexual assault, this can be the most valuable method of healing. Since so many victims choose not to report or even to tell anyone, they may need to rely on themselves. Here are a few ideas to get started:



Write it  
Draw it  
Sing it  
Design it

Get your thoughts & feelings out on paper

## FIND A CREATIVE OUTLET

Journal, write poetry, compose a song, paint a picture, design a tattoo, find a way to express your feelings in a non-violent way. Create it, destroy it, keep it to look back on later.

Whatever you decide to do will be helpful if you can get those feelings out.

## PLAN SOMETHING FUN EVERY DAY

Even if it is something small, like painting your toenails or checking out a funny website. Plan it and make it happen.

## REPLACE IMAGES

Stress from healing, working, or life in general can cause reoccurring images to constantly appear in our minds. Take a moment every day to replace those images with something beautiful, inspiring, or relaxing.

## MAKE A SELF CARE BOX

Find a box, big or small, and fill it with things that give you joy. Things you can taste, smell, touch, see and hear that soothe your senses.

# SAFETY PLANNING

For many people who have been affected by sexual assault, current and long-term safety can be an ongoing concern. Safety planning is about brainstorming ways to stay safe that may also help reduce the risk of future harm. It can include planning for a future crisis, considering your options, and making decisions about your next steps. Finding ways to stay and feel safer can be an important step towards healing, and these plans and actions should not increase the risk of being hurt.



- Identify safe places where you can go in moments of crisis.
- Alert people you trust about your safety concerns.
- Make a list of people you can call when you need help.
- Be prepared to reach out by keeping your cell phone charged and have emergency contact info ready.
- Audit your online presence and edit your privacy settings to protect your safety.
- Consider filing an order of protection/restraining order.



**If you are  
in  
immediate  
physical  
danger,  
CALL 911**

## IF YOU ARE LEAVING THE PERSON HURTING YOU

- Pack an escape bag with all of your important legal documents, ID, cash, keys, a change of clothes, medication and credit cards.
- Plan a destination.
- Plan a route.
- Prepare your support network by keeping them in the loop.



STAR CRISIS LINE IS AVAILABLE 24/7  
In Anchorage: (907) 276-7273  
Statewide: (800) 478-8999