



SEXUAL TRAUMA PREVENTION & RESPONSE

# When you Reach for a STAR

Safety, Services and Support



1057 W. Fireweed Lane  
Suite 230  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
[www.staralaska.com](http://www.staralaska.com)

Business Line  
(907) 276-7279

Crisis Line  
(907) 276-7273  
(800) 478-8999

@staralaska




# SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE

STAR focuses on education and crisis response in the Anchorage community as well as throughout the state. Information about STAR can be obtained 24 hours a day.

**If you or someone you know has recently been hurt or if the assault occurred years ago, STAR Advocates can help by providing information and support over the phone or in person.**

**Please call (907) 276-7279 for more information or to make an appointment.**

## SUPPORT SERVICES

- 24-hour crisis line providing immediate crisis intervention and options for reporting
  - Advocacy through the reporting process
  - Legal advocacy
  - Individual support sessions
  - Safety planning
  - Emergency assistance
  - Support groups
  - Trauma Counseling
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## STAR'S PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICES

- Sexual assault is crime of power and control. It is not about sex.
- Sexual assault is an unwanted sexual contact.
- Sexual assault does not discriminate; it crosses all gender, race, age, and social-economic barriers.
- Sexual assault is not "caused by" or "brought on by" the victim; it is the sole responsibility of the perpetrator.



STAR advocacy services are free, confidential and optional.

# WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

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## FIRST, LET'S TALK ABOUT CONSENT.



Consent is an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity. Consent should be clearly and freely communicated. A verbal and affirmative expression of consent can help both you and your partner to understand and respect each other's boundaries.



Consent cannot be given by individuals who are underage, intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol, or asleep or unconscious. If someone agrees to an activity under pressure of intimidation or threat, that isn't considered consent because it was not given freely. Unequal power dynamics, such as engaging in sexual activity with an employee or student, also mean that consent cannot be freely given.

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## WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), forms of sexual violence include:

- Rape or sexual assault
- Child sexual assault and incest
- Sexual assault by a person's spouse or partner
- Unwanted sexual contact/touching
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual exploitation and trafficking
- Exposing one's genitals or naked body to other(s) without consent
- Masturbating in public
- Watching someone engage in private acts without their knowledge or permission
- Nonconsensual image sharing



# SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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## WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature in the workplace or learning environment, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

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### Some forms of sexual harassment may include:

- Making conditions of employment or advancement dependent on sexual favors, either explicitly or implicitly.
- Physical acts of sexual assault.
- Requests for sexual favors.
- Verbal harassment of a sexual nature, including jokes referring to sexual acts or sexual orientation.
- Unwanted touching or physical contact.
- Unwelcome sexual advances.
- Discussing sexual relations/stories/fantasies at work, school, or in other inappropriate places.
- Feeling pressured to engage with someone sexually.
- Unwanted sexually explicit photos, emails, or text messages.



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# REPORTING A SEXUAL ASSAULT



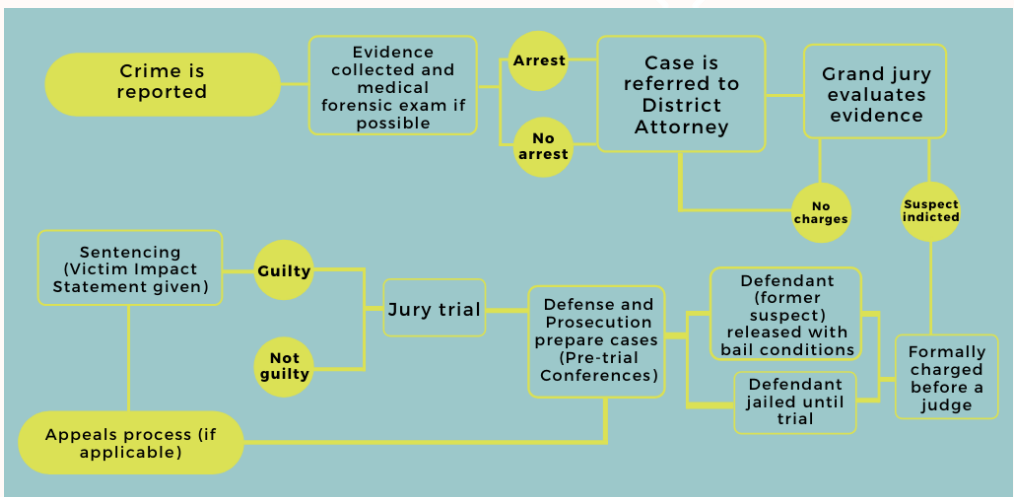
A STAR Advocate can help you understand your options along the way and support your decisions.

What might be some of my options\*?

- Report to law enforcement
- Access medical care
- Call STAR for anonymous reporting eligibility
- Speak solely with STAR
- Meet with a counselor or other mental health professionals
- Share with a friend or family member

*\*Options can vary depending on the age of the victim & perpetrator and where the crime occurred. For more detailed information, call the STAR Crisis Line at (907) 276-7273 or (800) 478-8999.*

## REPORTING PROCESS FLOW CHART



# BYSTANDER INTERVENTION



A BYSTANDER is someone who witnesses an incident (but isn't a part of it).

## Violence is all too common.

If we want to prevent violence, we need a societal shift toward:

- Violence not being tolerated
- Everyone being expected to do their part to make our communities safer

Bystander intervention training is one way to change social norms. We know that it's possible to change social/community norms (e.g. tobacco prevention, reach of social media, etc.)

This is a shift from living in a passive/disengaged community to an active/engaged community.



*Have you ever seen a situation where you thought you should get involved...and did?*

*Have you ever seen a situation where you thought you should get involved...but didn't?*

### Direct:

- Do something yourself
- Ask someone to stop what they are doing
- Check on someone you might be worried about

### Distract:

- Stop it indirectly by diffusing the situation or calming things down for a moment
- Spill a drink
- Set off car alarm
- Pretend to know the person
- Ask for directions
- Ask to borrow a phone charger

### Delegate:

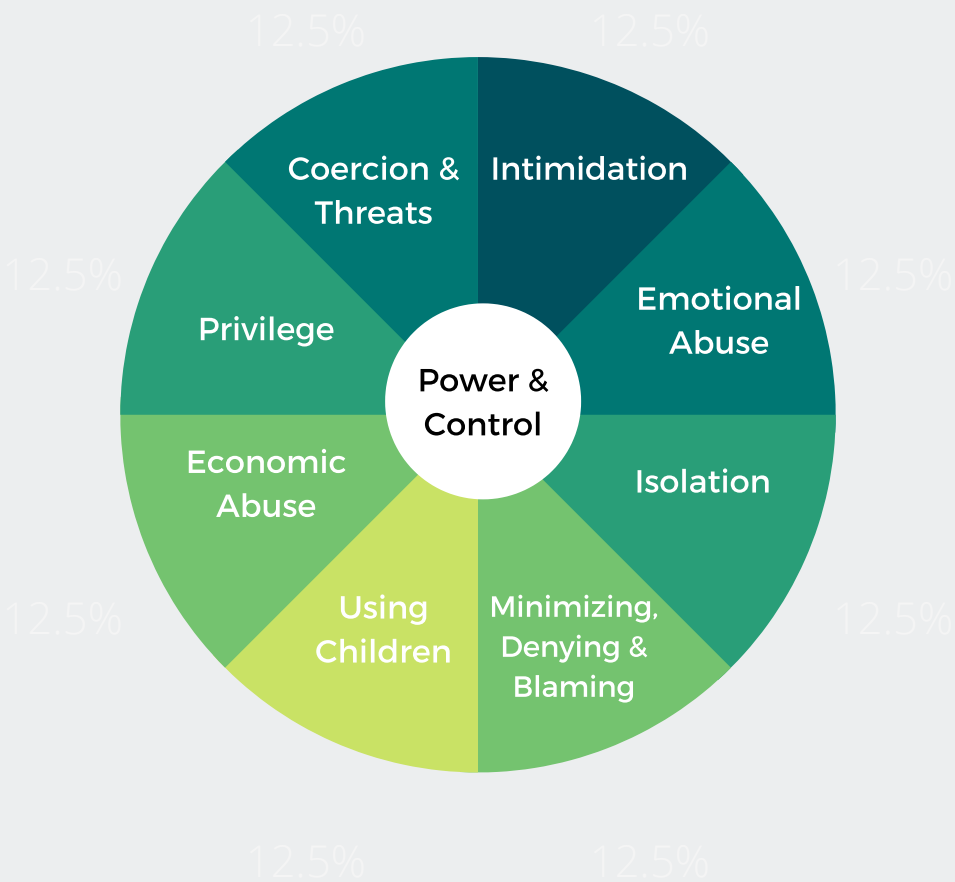
- Ask someone else for help
- Call 911 or security
- Leave an anonymous note for supervisor
- Ask their friends for help
- Talk to a trusted person (elder, spiritual leader, boss, etc.)



For more information and/or to schedule a presentation for your school or workplace, contact our Prevention & Education Team at [educator@staralaska.org](mailto:educator@staralaska.org)

# POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

The Power & Control diagram\* is a particularly helpful tool in understanding the overall pattern of abusive and violent behaviors, which are used by a batterer to establish and maintain control over his partner. Very often, one or more violent incidents are accompanied by an array of these other types of abuse. They are less easily identified, yet firmly establish a pattern of intimidation and control in the relationship.



*\*Adapted from the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence*



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# HOW TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS



## **BELIEVE**

There may be some confusion about details, but that doesn't mean the person isn't telling the truth. Abuse and assault are traumatic experiences and it is normal for the information to be out of order or unclear.



## **SAY "IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT"**

No one asks or deserves to be assaulted. Regardless of a person's behaviors, rape is never a punishment.



## **LISTEN**

Don't let your feelings get in the way of listening to the survivor's feelings.



## **VALIDATE FEELINGS**

Survivors respond in many different ways after being assaulted and all these responses should be accepted as normal. Survivors need to hear that they are not crazy or "losing it." Encourage them to call STAR to speak with trained crisis responders.



## **RESPECT THE SURVIVOR'S CONFIDENTIALITY**

The story of the sexual assault belongs to the survivor and no one else. The survivor may choose to tell others, but you never should. The only exception would be if the survivor is a child or vulnerable adult.



## **DON'T PRY OR ASK INVASIVE QUESTIONS**

Allow time and space for the survivor to share information with you. Respect this boundary and don't take it personally if they stop talking.



## **RESPECT THE SURVIVOR'S DECISIONS**

Surviving sexual trauma means reclaiming power over their physical and mental wellbeing. By making choices for them or taking away options from a survivor, you are continuing the abuse. Respect their choices and discuss alternative options if decisions seem unhealthy.

**It is okay to not know what to say.**

**Your presence and willingness to help will do the talking.**



# COMMON REACTIONS TO SEXUAL TRAUMA

- Continuing anxiety
- Severe mood swings
- Sense of helplessness
- Persistent fears
- Depression
- Rage
- Sleeping difficulties
- Eating difficulties
- Denial
- Social isolation
- Hyper vigilance
- Reluctance to leave house
- Sexual problems
- Difficulty concentrating
- Numbing behaviors



These reactions can be normal and everyone experiences them to some extent. If they begin to interfere with day-to-day life, STAR can offer strategies to encourage the healing process. Everyone responds differently to stress and trauma. Recovery is not a linear process. Some days will be better than others. Many survivors experience heightened reactions several weeks after the assault has occurred.



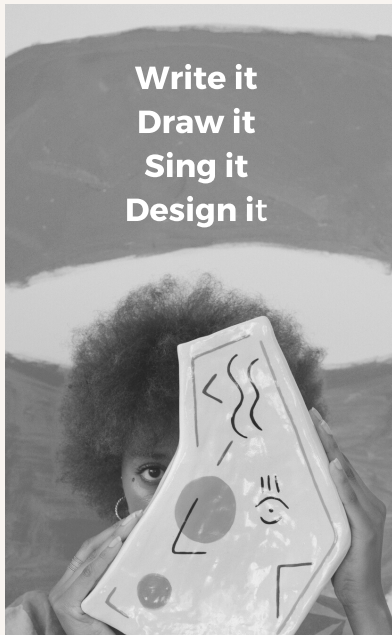
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# TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF



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, their only source of support must come from 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 a restraining or protective 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.



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