

# SURVIVING SEXUAL ASSAULT

*The following information was provided by the  
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## **The Truth about Rape**

Rape is generally defined as forced sexual intercourse. It is a crime of violence where the victim is often overpowered by the use of force or threat. In the following, the term “rape” is used to refer to any type of sexual assault, such as attempted rape, oral copulation, sodomy and sexual battery. All types of sexual assault are against the law.

- 1 out of every 4 women and 1 of every 6 men will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime.
- Rape can happen to anyone – teens, grandmothers, babies, working women, boys, mothers and men.
- A rapist can be anyone – neighbor, classmate, delivery person, family member, stranger or trusted friend.
- Rape is an act of violence, using sex to hurt, humiliate, degrade and control. It is a violent, brutal, terrifying experience.
- No one “asks to be raped.” If you are raped, it is NOT YOUR FAULT.
- Date and/or acquaintance rape accounts for over 50% of all rapes.
- Date/acquaintance rape occurs when another person forces you to have unwanted sex, such as sexual touches, penetration, or forcing or tricking you into posing for sexually explicit photographs.

## **PREVENTION TIPS**

BE AWARE of what’s happening around you. Look to your sides and in back of you, not just in front of you.

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS. If you feel isn’t right or don’t feel safe, so something about it – get out of the area or situation. Call someone to be with you.

## **Common Sense Indoors**

- Make sure all doors and windows have deadbolt locks and use them.
- Keep entrances well lighted. A peephole in the door is a good safety measure.

- Never open your door to a stranger. If a person says that they need to make an emergency phone call, have the person wait outside while you make the call.
- Check the identification of sales and service persons before letting them into the house. Have them wait outside while you call their office to verify their identity.
- Use an initial and last name on your mail boxes. This makes it less obvious that you are a female and live alone.
- Be careful in isolated spots like apartment laundry rooms when they are empty and you are alone.
- If you find a door or window open or broken when you come home, don't go in. The intruder could still be inside.

### **Common Sense Outdoors**

- Avoid walking or jogging alone, especially at night. Stay in well traveled, well lighted areas.
- Wear clothes and shoes that give you freedom of movement. You may be in a situation where you need to run.
- Be careful of anyone in a car who asks you for directions – if you answer, keep your distance so you can't be pulled into the car.
- Have your key ready before you reach the door – home, work or car. Fumbling in your purse with your head down puts you in a vulnerable position.
- If you think someone is following you, don't be embarrassed to turn around and check. Then do whatever you need to do – run; scream; cross the street; get to an area with lights and people around.

### **Car Sense**

- Always lock your car – when you get in and when you get out. Look around you and in the back seat before you get in.
- Park in areas that will be well lighted and well traveled at the time you will return to your car.
- If your car breaks down, lift the hood, get back inside, lock the doors and turn on your flasher lights. Use a call banner or flares if you have them. If someone stops and offers to help, roll down the window slightly, ask the person to call the police, a friend, or a tow service for you and stay inside your car.

## **FOR THE SURVIVOR**

### **If You Are Raped**

- Get support from a friend, family member, counselor or call the local rape crisis hotline. It's important and helpful for you to talk with someone about what happened.
- Consider calling a law enforcement agency.
- Get to a place that is safe.
- Take care of yourself by seeking medical attention.
- If you get medical attention, you should know that California law requires that the incident be reported to law enforcement.
- If you choose to report the assault, remember that showering, bathing or douching could destroy valuable evidence that could be used in courtroom proceedings.
- Consider getting counseling to help you deal with the trauma caused by the rape.

## **START YOUR OWN HEALING...**

### **BE A SURVIVOR**

Deciding what to do after an assault can be very difficult. It is normal for you to feel very confused at this time. Your local rape crisis center can provide you with information and support during this difficult time. They can also give you more detailed information about your options and discuss them with you. They're there to listen to you, to be with you and to help.

### **NEED MORE INFORMATION?**

Contact your local rape crisis center. They provide crisis intervention, counseling and many other services which are available to you.

The State Office of Criminal Justice Planning funds rape crisis centers throughout the state and can assist you in finding help. Call the Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Branch at (916) 324-9120.