

Rape Trauma Syndrome

Everyone copes with crisis differently. Any reaction to rape should be accepted as a normal reaction. Survivors of sexual assault, however, consistently describe certain symptoms and reactions which have been named rape trauma syndrome. Survivors may experience any number of these symptoms at any point in time during recovery from an assault.

Some of these reactions are physical and may include body soreness and pain, difficulty eating and sleeping, and general fatigue.

Other reactions are emotional. These may include feelings of shock, fear, shame, guilt, isolation, grief, depression, anger and embarrassment. Emotional scars generally take longer to heal than physical injuries.

Getting back to normal can take a long time. Frequently, survivors may try to block out painful memories and feelings. It is best, however, to talk about the fears and feelings associated with the experience. Healing can begin by sharing the pain.

Many survivors find it helpful to talk with a Rape Care Counselor. They are trained to listen, understand and help deal with painful feelings. Call the Rape Care Program for counseling, referrals and support.

1.888.264.RAPE



1 Bethany Road
Building 3, Suite 42
Hazlet, NJ 07730

Tel **732.264.4111**
Fax **732.264.8655**
www.180nj.org

**TOLL FREE 24-HOUR
CRISIS HOTLINES**

1.888.264.RAPE
or 732.264.RAPE

Office Hours: 9am - 5pm

- Evening hours by appointment
- Insurance accepted
- Sliding Scale fee for Outpatient Counseling
- All services are confidential

Services

- Hotline for survivors, their families and friends, available 24 hours per day.
- Medical, police and court accompaniment.
- Individual and group counseling for survivors and significant others.
- Information and referrals.
- Community education and trainings for schools, professionals and community groups.
- Volunteer advocate program.
Call for information about volunteering.

Services are confidential and available regardless of when the assault occurred or whether or not charges have been pressed.

*rape
care
program*



turning lives around

turning lives around

TOLL FREE 24-HOUR CRISIS HOTLINES

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Sexual assault is...

...any sexual contact that is forced or without consent. It may take the form of being touched, being forced to touch someone else or to watch them touch themselves.

...not about “uncontrollable” sexual urges. Over 70% of sexual assaults are planned.

...motivated by the need to overpower, control, degrade and humiliate another. The violation of body parts is the means by which this is accomplished.

...a method of expressing anger and aggression by persons who have never learned to develop healthy outlets for their negative emotions.

...committed by strangers as well as people we know and trust. Over 80% of sexual assaults are committed by acquaintances, dates, husbands and family members.

...not the result of the dress or behavior of the victim. Attitude and decisions of the perpetrator are the sole cause of sexual assault.

...something that can happen to you!

Any man, woman or child can be sexually victimized regardless of age, race, economic status or sexual orientation.

If it happens to you...

Find a safe place and consider notifying the police.

Call 180's Rape Care Program at **732-264-RAPE (7273)** or Toll-free Hotline **1-888-264-RAPE (7273)** for support and accompaniment through medical and police proceedings and for counseling services.

Do not shower, bathe, douche, eat, drink, smoke, urinate or change clothing if possible as crime evidence may be destroyed. If you have changed, place each piece of clothing in a separate paper bag.

Get immediate medical attention for possible injuries, sexually transmitted disease and pregnancy.

Things to remember:

- Sexual assault is a violent crime
- Sexual assault is not an act of lust
- Sexual assault is never the victim's fault

There is no one “right” way to respond to a rape. You lived through the attack, therefore you are a survivor.

If it happens to someone you know...

When someone has been sexually assaulted, there is a tremendous feeling of vulnerability and loss of control over one's body and very existence. Survivors need to regain a sense of control. Allow the survivor to make her (his) own decisions. You may help by offering information and options.

Assure the survivor that you believe in her (him). Remind the survivor that the assault was not her (his) fault. Do not blame or suggest blame. Do not judge or criticize. Avoid showing strong emotion of any kind.

Sometimes survival requires involuntary cooperation. Recognize that whatever choice of action was used to get through the ordeal was obviously effective since the victim survived. Be supportive.

Allow the victim space and time to talk or not to talk. It is common for sexual assault survivors to choose to protect those to whom they are close by not sharing details.

Much of the survivor's recovery may depend on your reactions and responses. Call the Rape Care Program Hotline for support for yourself.