

Coping Book

*Rape Crisis Center
of the Coastal Empire*
Savannah, Georgia

Rape Crisis Center 24-hour crisis line: (912) 233-7273 or 1-888-241-7273

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Since the first edition of this book in 1986, we have had numerous requests from rape crisis centers and other agencies to copy the contents. We are pleased to share our “Coping Book” with anyone who makes that request and hope that it will continue to make a difference in the lives of those effected by the crime of sexual assault.

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INTRODUCTION

The small group of women who started the Rape Crisis Center in Savannah, Georgia in 1975 were hoping to be able to "put themselves out of business" within a few years. Unfortunately, sexual assault still happens. It touches the lives of thousands each year and brings with it much pain and confusion.

Our purpose in putting this booklet together is to have a resource available to sexual assault victims, friends, and family, which can answer questions and address specific issues of concern that are sometimes very difficult to talk about. We hope that you will find it informative and consoling.

You may find it helpful to talk about your experience and your feelings as you are working through the healing process. We encourage you to call the 24-hour Crisis Line (233-7273 or 1-888-241-7273) any time to talk with a victim advocate. You may also set up an appointment for an individual session or join a support group.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. There are people who care about you and want to help.

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

“Myths” are false beliefs that society holds about sexual assault. “Sexual assault” is a term referring to a variety of assaults – rape, attempted rape, incest, indecent exposure, child molestation, forced sexual contact and sexual harassment. All are against the law. If you have experienced sexual assault, it is normal to have many fears and anxieties about what happened, why it happened, and how it happened. Knowing the facts about sexual assault may enable you to deal more effectively with your concerns.

MYTH: Rape is primarily a crime of sex and passion.

FACT: Rape is the act of using sex as a weapon in order to be powerful and to humiliate another person. Most rapists have a sexual relationship (i.e., wife, girlfriend) and are not using rape as a sexual outlet. Even less violent sexual crimes such as harassment or stalking are also motivated by a desire for power.

MYTH: Women are “asking for it” by their dress and actions.

FACT: Sexual assault is a crime that the rapist chooses to commit, not the victim. Research shows that assailants look for available targets they perceive as vulnerable, not women who dress in certain ways. Most rapists, child molesters and sexual harassers cannot even remember what the victim was wearing.

MYTH: Women secretly want to be raped.

FACT: Women do not want to be victims of violence and brutality. They do not want to be humiliated, degraded, and terrified. No one wants to be raped.

MYTH: If a person does not “look like a rape victim”, she really has not been assaulted.

FACT: In reality, people who have been sexually assaulted do not always look injured or appear upset. People react differently and most victims are not physically injured. Even children who are sexually abused for many years may not show any visible signs.

MYTH: It won’t happen to me.

FACT: Anyone can be a victim of sexual assault. These crimes know no boundaries. The truth is, males and females of all ages, races, socio-economic groups, religious affiliations, and sexual orientations are victims of sexual assault. However, more than nine out of ten sexual assaults involve a victim and an assailant who are of the same race or culture. Unfortunately, many people hold strongly to this myth because it offers them a false sense of security.

MYTH: Most sexual assaults happen on the spur of the moment by strangers in dark alleys.

FACT: Most sexual assaults are carefully planned by the assailant and occur in the victim’s home. The perpetrator of the assault is usually a friend, acquaintance, or family member of the victim. This myth persists because it is hard to believe that someone you know and trust would assault you.

MYTH: Sexual assault happens only to young, attractive women.

FACT: Sexual assault victims range in age from four months to 99 years and are chosen by the assailant because of their vulnerability not their appearance. One out of four women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime according to FBI statistics. One out of four girls and one out of seven boys will be sexually assaulted by the time they are 18 years old. Males and females of all ages can be victims.

MYTH: Sexual assault could never happen to me because I would fight back.

FACT: This myth helps foster the false sense of security people have when they believe that they could have avoided the same situation by doing something differently. The fact is that even women who resist can be assaulted. When faced with a gun or knife, or the threat of injury, most people freeze. Many sexual assaults that do not involve weapons often involve some type of trickery. If an assailant was to threaten a family member or loved one, most people would consent to save the lives of those they love. Regardless of what the situation is or how you react to it, remember it is not your fault.

MYTH: Rape is not a violent crime.

FACT: Rape is a violent crime. Even though most victims are not physically injured, most rapists do threaten the victim with violence or death. The fear of death or injury is the most terrifying aspect of the attack for most victims.

WHY ME?

Wondering why this happened to you is not unusual. **It was not because of anything you did or said.** You did not deserve it and you did not “ask for it”. The act of sexual assault is the fault of the assailant. Sexual assault is an act of violence. It is a way to humiliate, to express rage and hatred, to gain power and control.

Be assured that there was nothing you did to invite such an attack. The assailant is responsible for the crime, not you. Whether you left the door unlocked or walked down a dimly lit street at night, the assailant is to blame. Whether you fought back unsuccessfully or were too terrified to make a sound is also beside the point – the assailant is at fault, not you.

Trying to figure out why this happened is natural. However, you may never find the answer. The most important thing is that you survived. You can cope, recover, and heal.

“I can’t believe this happened to me.”

“I feel like I’m going crazy.”

“Will I ever feel safe again?”

If you hear yourself making statements like these, you are not alone. Other survivors of sexual assault have similar feelings.

The trauma you have experienced may effect your relationship with others, your feelings about yourself, and your physical and mental health for many months, or in some cases, even years. Below is a general description of some of the reactions you may experience. There are often two types of immediate reactions following the assault.

(1) You openly demonstrate your feelings. You may express anger, fear anxiety or confusion. You may be restless or tense. You might cry hysterically.

(2) You hide your feelings. You appear very controlled. You are experiencing many feelings but you are holding them inside.

Every survivor of sexual assault reacts differently and will feel, respond and recover in various ways.

Physical reactions may include:

- Soreness all over, headaches
- Sleep disturbances, nightmares
- Appetite disturbances, nausea
- Specific complaints associated with the attack

There is a wide range of emotional reactions that are a very normal part of processing the experience. They may include:

- A variety of fears
- Humiliation, degradation
- Guilt, shame, embarrassment
- Anger, desire for revenge
- Mood swings
- Depression

There are no right or wrong feelings and you will recover at your own pace. Whatever feelings you are experiencing will lessen in intensity as time passes and you will begin to feel more in control again. Making your own decisions, regardless of how minor, can be helpful in the healing process. You are the best judge of what is right for you. It is important that you regain a sense of your own personal power.

During this time, you must remember that you did nothing to provoke the attack. You are not responsible for the actions of the assailant. Nor are you responsible for the reactions of friends, relatives, and others who may, or may not, support you. You must realize that you may never completely forget the attack. You must also realize that you can learn to live with the incident as part of your past. You have been victimized, but you are much more than just a “survivor”. You are the person that you were prior to the attack and you can become confident and self-reliant once again. The victimization will definitely effect your life, but it is important to understand that you can put the experience in a manageable light and go on with your life.

“ARE THERE STAGES I CAN EXPECT TO GO THROUGH?”

Yes, there are stages you can expect to go through. The stages are like those one experiences around death: grief, fear, anger, guilt, depression and so on. However, there is no particular order. You may work through one stage and then seemingly out of nowhere some of the old feelings may resurface. Your reactions, as disturbing as they may seem, are perfectly natural.

In working through your feelings about the assault, it is often helpful to talk about them with a friend, relative, or counselor. Having someone to listen to you who is not judgmental can provide a welcome release.

The Rape Crisis Center offers support groups. Discussing your experience with women who have suffered the same type of trauma may help you to feel less alone. The Rape Crisis Center also offers individual counseling.

A MESSAGE TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The most important thing that you can do for the person in your life who was assaulted is to listen to her when she is ready to talk and believe what she says. Be very patient with her, as it will take time for her to sort out her feelings. Reassure her that her feelings are normal responses to a traumatic event and that in sharing those feelings she is taking steps towards working them out.

Communicate to her that she is not to blame for being sexually assaulted. She needs to know that you realize that it was not her fault. Sexual assault can happen to anyone regardless of age, income, appearance, or physical strength. However, she may be blaming herself or having regrets about what she did or didn't do. Your role may be to help her see the event more realistically as well as to let her know that you still care about her.

After going through an experience in which she had no control over what happened, she may feel a general loss of control over her life. One way that she regains control is through making decisions about events that affect her life (e.g., reporting the sexual assault, moving, changing jobs, etc.) Supporting her decisions and resisting your own tendency to "take care of the situation" can help her to regain a sense of her own personal power.

Assuming some of the blame for what happened is common among friends and family members who may feel that it is their responsibility to protect the victim. Remember that there is no one who exists in a protected environment at all times. We are all vulnerable regardless of how much caution we take. The only one to blame is the assailant himself. Try not to overreact by becoming overly protective of her. This will only reinforce her view of herself as powerless.

If you are feeling a need to seek revenge against the person who did this, you are not alone. Anger is a natural reaction to what has happened, but extreme rage toward the assailant may frighten the victim and cause her to worry about your safety. Seeking out a third person to whom you can express your anger may be beneficial to all concerned.

If your relationship with the victim includes being a sexual partner, you may expect some temporary disruption in previous patterns of sexual activity. Reactions vary tremendously depending on the individual and her particular style of recovery. She may feel anxious about how you will respond to her as well as how she will respond to you. Be careful not to put pressure on her but to let her take control of sexual decision making during this time. Try to understand and be sensitive. It will help her to communicate openly about her feelings and thus overcome any difficulties.

When a sexual assault occurs, family and friends of the victim often feel that they have been victimized as well. If you are a friend or family member, you may find that you will experience some of the same reactions that are frequently expressed by the victim. Be aware that you also need support in understanding your own feelings that might seem overwhelming at times. Reach out for help when you need it.

ACQUAINTANCE RAPE

“I was assaulted by someone I know...”

Acquaintance rape happens more often than stranger rape. The assailant might be a date, co-worker, friend-of-a-friend, social contact, or a relative. It might be someone you barely recognize or someone you know well.

Many women mistakenly believe that because they agreed to meet their assailant, accepted a ride, stopped for a casual conversation, or allowed someone into their home, they are to be blamed for the assault. Being attacked by someone you know does not change the fact that you have been assaulted. It is important to remember that the assailant is to blame. It is never your fault.

If someone you know assaulted you, you may have some special concerns:

- You may doubt your judgment.
- You may find it hard to trust others.
- You may be concerned about having to see the assailant again.

These are natural concerns that survivors share. Discussing these feelings and concerns with someone who is supportive and caring will help with your healing process.

STRANGER RAPE

As the victim of stranger rape, you may experience some of the same feelings as other rape victims such as fear, self-blame, grief and anger. You may also have some concerns that are unique to your situation because the assailant was a stranger. These may include:

- Extreme fear and vulnerability.
- Concern over health issues.
- Hypersensitivity and vigilance
- Loss of control.

Not being able to identify the assailant may make the investigation of the case more difficult. However, there are many investigative tools that may assist in a positive identification. Your cooperation with law enforcement and the District Attorney's office may provide vital information in solving the case.

Since you did not know the assailant, you may wonder why he chose you as a target. He is the one who planned the attack and he is responsible for his behavior. You did not cause the attack.

In time you will gain control of your life and restore your sense of security.

SENIOR SURVIVORS

Because of your age, you may have thought that this could never happen to you, but all women are at risk. You have done nothing wrong. Even in the safest environments women can become victims of sexual assault. You may find yourself feeling more vulnerable than you have felt in a long time. The fears you are experiencing are natural.

Some special concerns of a senior survivor of assault include:

- Extra time to recover from injuries. The staff and volunteer advocates at the Rape Crisis Center would be glad to discuss the medical treatment you have received and help you find additional resources if needed.
- You may want to improve the security in your home to help you feel safer. If home security is a concern for you, the Rape Crisis Center staff can offer resources to address this issue. You may also want to enroll in a self-defense class to learn skills that women of any age and ability can use to protect themselves.
- The cost, if you are living on a fixed income, may seem overwhelming. You may qualify for assistance through the Victim's Compensation Fund and the Rape Crisis Center Victim Advocate can help you apply.

Feelings of shame and embarrassment may make this experience difficult to discuss. Finding the words to express your feelings may also be difficult. You are not alone. Please call us. We are here to help you.

SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE FOR MALE SURVIVORS

FACT: Sexual assault is committed against both men and women. Statistics reflect that one in every ten rape victims is a man. Many people believe that sexual assault is a woman's issue; therefore, the shock of the assault you have experienced may be very upsetting and difficult to accept.

FACT: The sexual orientation of victims does not "cause" their assault.

If you are a male who is a victim of a sexual assault or sodomy, you may feel alone. You have done nothing that justifies this violent attack. The assault has nothing to do with your present or future sexual orientation.

You may experience some of the same emotions and feelings that female survivors have; however, there are special issues that you may want to discuss, such as:

- Sexuality/masculinity
- Medical examination and evidence collection
- Reporting to law enforcement
- Telling others
- Finding resources and support

The pain you are experiencing is real, and you do not have to face this pain alone. It is important for you to know that the Rape Crisis Center offers support services for you as well as for women.

ADULT SURVIVORS OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ASSAULT

The Rape Crisis Center serves adults who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse and incest.

1 out of 4 females and 1 out of 7 males will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime. Fifteen percent of those, by the time they are 12 years old!

The term “childhood sexual abuse” refers to sexual contact between a child and an individual in a position of power and authority. “Incest” refers to the sexual abuse of a child by a parental figure such as a father, mother, aunt, uncle, stepparent or sibling. Childhood sexual abuse is a particularly devastating exploitation of children because it is the betrayal of a primary trust. Both men and women can be survivors of childhood sexual abuse or incest.

Some people have vivid memories and realize that they are survivors of either childhood sexual abuse or incest. Some people have never called the abuse by name or put a label on the abuse. Some adults don’t remember the abuse until many years after it happened. Counseling is most important for each of these people. Survivors of childhood sexual abuse and incest need a way to vent their feelings and emotions. They need a way to find the healing journey.

The Rape Crisis Center offers crisis intervention and support groups for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and incest. Even if you are in counseling already, you may find that you need to spend time with someone who has prior experience working with survivors of childhood sexual abuse and who is comfortable with the issues specific to your recovery process.

Many survivors of childhood sexual abuse feel that being part of a support group is an important part of their healing process. The 12 session group offered at the Rape Crisis Center is well structured, allowing for much healing to occur and is offered for both male and Female survivors.

CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULTS

Child sexual assault refers to sexual contact between a child and someone in a position of power and authority.

Hearing that a child you know and care about has been sexually assaulted is devastating news. After telling about the sexual assault, the child will look to you and other trusted adults for comfort, love, and safety. Try to stay calm and remember that however devastated you are, this child needs you now.

Here are some suggestions for how to meet this child's immediate needs:

- Believe what the child has told you.
- Assure the child that she/he is not to blame for the crime.
- Be there to listen *when* the child wants to talk.
- Do your best to protect the child.
- Reassure the child of your love for him/her.

Until people are confronted with the issue of child sexual assault they may have some misconceptions. You may be surprised to learn that:

- Sexual assault of children is common; 1:4 girls and 1:7 boys are sexually assaulted before reaching the age of 18.
- Most child sexual assault situations develop over a period of time and will be repeated unless it is stopped.
- 93 percent of child sexual assault victims know the assailant.
- 34.2 percent of assailants are family members.
- Offenders are usually males with normal sexual outlets. However, women may be offenders, too.
- Like adult rape, child sexual assault is a crime of power, not of sex.
- Children are never responsible for sexual assaults; an assault is the result of force, trickery, or coercion and the blame lies with the adult.
- Children rarely lie about sexual assault; parents and other adults must always believe their child's report of such an experience.

More than anything else, the child needs your loving support now and in the future. Rather than questioning about details of the attack, ask how the child is feeling. Gently encourage the child to talk, but also be patient if conversation is not readily forthcoming. Allow the child to pick the time for talking.

Getting the child to talk about details of the assault might hamper any investigation that might occur. Remember, your concern is for the child's day-to-day improvement. Help is available for you at the Rape Crisis Center.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In 1980, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defined sexual harassment as a form of sexual discrimination. They went on to state:

“Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.”

The 1972 Civil Rights Act Title IX, Federal Education Amendments, prohibits sexual/ racial discrimination against students and staff in education. Within the last few years, the understanding of what constitutes sexually harassing behaviors has been expanded to include the following:

- Sabotaging a person’s work/ school efforts, assignments, or reputation
- Assigning a person less challenging or responsible duties
- Unequal application of discipline, work/ school rules and performance standards, and
- Repeatedly belittling, demeaning or insulting a person

In 1986, the United States Supreme Court identified two forms of sexual harassment: “quid pro quo” and “hostile environment.”

- ***“Quid pro quo” applies when a person in a power position-a boss or supervisor-makes decisions that affect an employee’s job based on whether the employee complies with his or her sexual demands.***
- ***“Hostile environment” applies when the harassing behavior or anyone in the workplace- not only a boss or supervisor-causes the workplace to become hostile, intimidating, or offensive and unreasonably interferes with an employee’s work.***

The first two categories in the EEOC definition are called *quid pro quo* (“this for that”) harassment, meaning that an employer or supervisor is forcing the employee to provide sexual services or tolerate other forms of sexual harassment in order to get or keep a job, a promotion, or an assignment.

Most cases of abusive behavior in the workplace fall into the third category, called *hostile-environment* harassment. Not only supervisors but also coworkers and subordinates (or even clients and customers) can create a hostile environment for women that amounts to illegal sex discrimination. The law on workplace harassment has also been extended to apply to similar situations in housing and education.

Although the law does not yet address harassment in the community at large, it is clear that

harassers' behavior has the same effect in any location. Locations can be transformed into an equally "hostile environment" for women as well as men.

Sexual harassment is about power. A particular incident of harassment may or may not include any explicitly sexual behavior, but it always involves some form of abuse of power. For example, when a harasser sabotages a woman's work or slashes the tires on her car, he is not engaging in any kind of romantic sexual action. He is engaging in aggression. So is the street harasser who rates a woman's body as she walks by, the coworker who won't keep his hands off her, and the landlord who won't repair the plumbing because she hasn't been "nice enough" to him. Not one of these actions is "sexual" in an affectionate or friendly sense, although they are all forms of sexual harassment.

There are essentially three basic types of sexual harassers:

1. *Sexually predatory harassers* motive is sexual access – harassment is sexually arousing in itself, or a means to force a woman or man to provide sexual services.
2. *Dominance harassers* are looking for sexual power – female/male deference and intimidation are the goal, and actual sexual arousal or access may be only secondary.
3. *Strategic and territorial harassers* usually have an economic objective – they apply sexual harassment as a way to exclude women/men and protect their turf.

All three kinds of sexual harassment – predatory, dominance, and strategic – involve a sexual component, targeting primarily women because of their gender and using women's sexuality against them. All three involve the abuse of power, in one way or another. And all three can do substantial damage to women's civil rights and economic opportunities. (From Back Off by Martha J. Langelean, Simon & Schuster, 1993.)

What can you do? Some strategies that have worked for women are:

- Be assertive. Let the person know you want the harassment to stop.
- Seek legal advice.
- Seek help from law enforcement. Depending on what type of sexual harassment is occurring, law enforcement may be able to help.
- Seek help within your organization, school, etc. Many organizations and schools have policies against sexual harassment.
- Seek help from friends and family.
- Seek help from your local Rape Crisis Center. They may be able to help you with available resources in the community.

Some types of sexual harassment are:

- Hostile put-downs of women
- Exaggerated, mocking "courtesy"
- Public humiliation
- Obscene phone calls
- Displaying pornography in the workplace

- Insisting that workers wear revealing clothing
- Inappropriate gifts (for example, lingerie)
- Inappropriate invitations (for example, to go to a hot tub or nude beach)
- Discussion of one's partner's sexual inadequacies
- Lewd and threatening letters
- "Accidentally" brushing sexual parts of the body
- Pressing or rubbing up against the victim
- Leaning over or otherwise invading a victim's space
- Sexual sneak attacks (such as grabbing breasts or buttocks on the run)
- Indecent exposure
- Soliciting sexual services
- Demanding sexual services
- Stalking a victim
- Sexual assault
- Wolf whistles
- Leering
- Sexual innuendo
- Comments about women bodies
- Tales of sexual exploits
- Graphic descriptions of pornography
- Pressure for dates
- Hooting, sucking, lip smacking, and animal noises
- Sexually explicit gestures
- Unwelcome touching and hugging
- Excluding women from meetings
- Sabotaging women's work
- Sexist and insulting graffiti
- Demanding "Hey, baby, give me a smile"
- Sexist jokes and cartoons

(From back off by Martha J. Langelean, Simon & Schuster, 1993.)

Examples of Sexual Harassing Behaviors Reported In U.S. High Schools

- Touching (arm, breast, buttock, etc.)
- Verbal comments (about parts of the body, what type of sex the victim would be "good at", clothing, looks, etc.)
- Name-calling (from "honey" to "bitch" and worse)
- Spreading sexual rumors
- Leers and stares
- Sexual or "dirty" jokes
- Cartoons, pictures, and pornography
- Using the computer to leave sexual messages or graffiti or to play sexually offensive computer games
- Gestures with the hands and body
- Pressure for sexual activity
- Cornering, blocking, standing too close, following
- "Rating" an individual – for example, on a scale of 1 – 10
- Conversations that are too personal
- Showing R-rated movies during class
- "Snuggies" (pulling underwear up at the waist so it goes in between the buttocks)
- Sexual assault and attempted sexual assault
- Rape
- Massaging the neck, massaging the shoulder
- Touching oneself sexually in front of others
- Graffiti
- Making kissing sounds or smacking sounds; licking the lips suggestively
- Howling, catcalls, whistles

- Repeatedly asking someone out when he or she isn't interested
- "Spiking" (pulling down someone's pants)
- Facial expressions (winking, kissing, etc.)
- "Making out" in the hallway

(From Sexual Harassment and Teens by Susan Strauss, Free Spirit Publishing, 1992)

If you feel you have been a victim of sexual harassment and need to talk about your feelings or seek assistance, call the Rape Crisis Center at 233-7273 or 1-888-241-7273 or the Equal Employment Opportunity Center at 652-4234.

STALKING

Stalking is defined as a course of conduct directed at a specific person that involves repeated physical or visual proximity, nonconsensual communication, or verbal, written, or implied threats sufficient to cause fear in a reasonable person. The following information concerns the escalation of stalking behaviors:*

- Information gathering from friends, post office, internet, employer, school, etc.
- Repeated non-threatening mail, e-mail, beeper codes, and phone calls.
- Persistent physical approaches and/or requests for dates, meetings, etc.
- Notes or flowers left on your car.
- Observing/following and “coincidentally” showing up wherever you go.
- Sitting outside your home or place of employment.
- Waiting next to your car in the parking lot.
- False reports to authorities, spreading rumors, giving misinformation or secrets to family and friends.
- Vandalism or destruction of property.
- Threatening mail, e-mail, notes, phone calls, and/or beeper codes. Threats may be direct, implied, or symbolic.
- Leaving evidence that your car has been broken into.
- Breaking into your home when you are not there.
- Breaking into your home when you are there.
- Leaving dead animals in home or car.
- Physically attacking you (e.g., grabbing, hitting, pushing, etc.).
- Rape or attempted rape.
- Murder or attempted murder.

These behaviors can have severe emotional and psychological effects, especially if they persist over a long period of time.

If you have been victimized by any of these stalking behaviors, please call the Rape Crisis Center for support and information.

* Data Based on research by Melody 1996; Tjaden and Thoennes 1998; and Pathe and Mullen 1997.

OTHER SEXUAL ASSAULTS

Other sexual assaults include sexual battery, attempted sexual assault, voyeurism and peeping toms.

Definitions of these assaults are as follows:

Sexual battery: A person commits the offense of sexual battery when he intentionally makes physical contact with the intimate parts of the body of another person without consent of that person. Intimate parts can be defined as the primary genital area, anus, groin, inner thighs, or buttocks of a male or female and the breasts of a female.

Attempted sexual assault: The term “sexual assault” can include several kinds of crimes: rape, incest, sexual battery, sexual harassment, child molestation, marital rape, exposure and voyeurism. Attempted sexual assault would be the incomplete act of committing one of these crimes, as defined by the legal definition of the crime.

Voyeurism: Deriving sexual gratification from observing the sexual acts of others.

Peeping Tom: One who gets sexual pleasure from secretly watching others (i.e. having sex, undressing/dressing, bathing, or merely watching normal activities).

If you are a victim of one of these crimes, you might experience some of the same feelings as someone who was raped. These feelings might include fear, anger, guilt, shame, or others. The Rape Crisis Center offers crisis intervention services to you, as well as accompaniment throughout the court system. You may call the 24-hour crisis line and talk to an advocate or come to the Rape Crisis Center for one-on-one crisis intervention.

WHAT IF I WAS DRINKING?/ WHAT ABOUT DATE RAPE DRUGS?

Just because a person has been drinking or using drugs does not mean they deserve to be raped or assaulted. Drinking, however, can put you at risk by decreasing your awareness in dangerous situations. Studies show that 75% of all date and acquaintance rape situations involve the use of drugs and alcohol. A person who is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs or alcohol is UNABLE to consent to sexual activity. If drugged, it may look to others that the victim went willingly with perpetrators and therefore was a willing participant. Many times, the victim may have left the party/ bar with her arm around the perpetrator (which may look like she is being romantic, but really it is because the drugs often create a loss of motor coordination and balance).

Alcohol is the most widely used date rape drug. In acquaintance rapes, alcohol is used by over 70% of perpetrators and 50% of victims. Alcohol is a Central Nervous System depressant. It slows down brain activity, is quickly absorbed in the blood stream and circulates to all parts of the body and to every vital organ.

Other drugs used in drug-induced sexual assault are Rohypnol, GHB, Ketamine, and ecstasy. Common effects felt from date rape drugs are:

- Rohypnol: symptoms include, but are not limited to: confusion, drowsiness, difficulty walking, impaired judgment, decreased blood pressure, lack of inhibition, dizziness and complete or partial amnesia of events that occurred while on the drug. A person may feel dizzy, disoriented, too hot, too cold and nauseated.
- Effects felt from GHB include: confusion, drowsiness, loss of motor coordination and verbal coherence, impaired judgment, memory loss, slower and deep respiration, decreased heart rate, reduced inhibition, dizziness, seizures and coma.
- Ketamine symptoms include: hallucinations, visual distortion, impaired motor function, loss of sense of time, loss of speech and amnesia.
- Ecstasy symptoms include: confusion, sleep problems, anxiety, paranoia, dehydration, increase in heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature and depression.

To prevent becoming a target for drug induced sexual assault, be sure to set clear limits and practice the buddy system. Only take drinks from bartenders or servers in restaurants. Do not leave a drink unattended. Watch out for your friends and have them watch out for you. Be aware of your surroundings, the people you're with and what they are doing. Be alert to the behavior of friends who may appear to be unusually inebriated in relation to the amount of alcohol they have consumed.

If you think you may have been drugged or suspect that you've been involved in a drug induced rape, call 911 immediately or go immediately to the hospital to be tested. The findings of such tests can provide valuable evidence in a court of law if you wish to prosecute the case. The **Drug Induced Rape Prevention Act of 1996** creates additional penalties for perpetrators who use drugs to facilitate sexual assaults (up to twenty years can be added to their sentence).

Regardless of the situation, it was not your fault. Date rape drugs are a weapon the assailant has used against you in order to decrease your resistance.

The most common medical concerns following a sexual assault are physical injuries, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy. Treatment should be sought as soon as possible even if you decide not to report the assault.

The hospital is legally bound to notify the police of every sexual assault. However, this does not mean that you have to make a crime report. If you decide to report the assault to law enforcement, a medical exam will be required to collect physical evidence. Otherwise, the doctor will only check for injuries, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy.

In most jurisdictions, the police will automatically transport sexual assault victims to the hospital emergency room. You should be taken directly to a private room. Some general information may be taken by nursing staff such as your physical condition to make sure you do not need immediate care. The staff may also request your insurance information, however, if you decide to report the assault to law enforcement, the evidence-collecting exam will be free of charge.

You may be billed for the emergency room care. (There is a fund to help compensate for this; refer to the Financial section.) The hospital or the police will notify the Rape Crisis Center and a victim advocate will come immediately to give support and answer questions. Do not hesitate to ask about anything. The advocate will be there with you while you talk to the police and throughout the entire hospital interview process.

It is very important that you do not bathe or douche before the medical examination, because that could destroy evidence. However, if you have done these things do not let that stop you from reporting the crime.

The physical exam will be done by either an emergency room doctor or a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) and will consist of the following:

- Conducting a pelvic exam to obtain samples from the vagina, cervix, and vulva (also the rectum if anal sex was forced)
- Combing the pubic hair to obtain any foreign hairs
- Clipping fingernails for possible skin or soil samples
- Checking for bruises or any lacerations (pictures may be taken to use as evidence)
- Taking samples of dried blood or semen
- Taking a blood sample, if necessary
- Taking your clothes as evidence
- Testing for pregnancy
- Possible testing for sexually transmitted diseases

It is very important that you have a follow-up exam with the Health Department, Planned Parenthood or your private physician in two weeks to further test for sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. A second follow-up appointment should be set for six weeks after the initial emergency room exam. The follow-up exams are very important to your health and should be kept even if you do not report the assault to law enforcement. If you have any questions concerning follow-up care, please do not hesitate to call the Rape Crisis Center advocate.

LEGAL ASPECTS

As a victim of sexual assault, you may choose whether or not to report the attack to the police, and whether or not to prosecute the assailant. Understand that the legal system exists to protect you and to ensure that justice is served.

The legal system can be confusing and frightening. The Rape Crisis Center has a victim advocate who will help you through the court system. This advocate is not an attorney but is available to provide information and support every step of the way. You can reach the Rape Crisis Center advocate by calling 233-7273 or 1-888-241-7273. Remember, you do not have to go through the court process alone.

The information that follows will help you to know what happens after an attack is reported to the police.

POLICE QUESTIONING

Think about every question. Answer only those questions which you understand and to which you have clear answers. Ask the police to explain anything you do not understand.

You have the right to read over everything in the police record. You may even write your own version to be added to the police report if you are not satisfied with their version.

Even if you don't want to prosecute, it's important to tell the police all the details of the assault. The information you provide may help police to determine a repeat rapist's pattern, which may help them capture a rapist, or target a high-risk area for increased patrols.

INVESTIGATION

During the course of the police investigation, you may be asked to look at pictures of possible suspects or to look at evidence. If a suspect is detained, you may be requested to identify him in a lineup.

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND FELONY CASES

The crimes of rape, attempted rape, child molestation, and incest are classified as felony cases under Georgia law. A felony is a serious crime, usually punishable by prison for a period of more than one year. Most sexual assault cases involve the following steps through the criminal justice system:

ARREST

A warrant is the document giving police the authority to arrest the accused and must be issued by a judge. Victims may be required to obtain a copy of the police report and go to the Chatham County Courthouse for a warrant.

Within 72 hours after the accused is arrested, he is arraigned - meaning his bond is set and a preliminary hearing date is scheduled.

If the accused is able to pay bond (bail), he will be released from jail.

PRELIMINARY HEARING *

Usually within one month after the arraignment, the preliminary hearing is held. Witnesses (including the victim) are usually subpoenaed to appear at the preliminary hearing. At that time, the judge listens to the testimony to decide if there is probable cause for the case to go (get bound over) to a higher court. If the judge finds there is probable cause for the case to go to a higher court, then misdemeanors (less serious offenses) are sent to State Court, and felonies (more serious crimes) are sent to Superior Court.

GRAND JURY

After the preliminary hearing, the case is assigned to an Assistant District Attorney. The next event is a Grand Jury Hearing. This may be two months or more after the preliminary hearing depending on the county where the case is being prosecuted. At this time, twenty-three Grand Jurors hear testimony from any witness the Assistant District Attorney subpoenas to decide if there is enough evidence to indict (formally charge) the defendant. The hearing is conducted in private. Neither the defendant nor his attorney is present.

CALENDAR CALL

If the Grand Jury indicts the defendant, the next step is a calendar call. At this hearing, the defendant or his attorney appears before the judge and indicates whether he plans to plead “guilty” or ask for a jury trial. No witnesses need be subpoenaed to this hearing.

PLEAD

If the defendant chooses to plead, a plea hearing is held. If the defendant pleads “guilty” to the charge, the judge may sentence him then or at a later date. Witnesses need not be subpoenaed to the plea hearing.

PRE-TRIAL CONFERENCE

If the defendant pleads “not guilty” and requests a jury trial, a pre-trial conference is usually the final hearing before the trial. At the pre-trial conference, the two attorneys appear before the judge and decide any legal questions (motions are filed, for example) and a tentative trial date is set.

JURY TRIAL*

A jury of twelve citizens listens to testimony and determines whether the defendant is “guilty” or “not guilty.” All 12 must agree the defendant is “guilty beyond a reasonable doubt” for there to be a conviction. Witnesses are subpoenaed to jury trials. The judge may sentence immediately after conviction or may order a PSI (pre-sentencing investigation).

YOU ARE A WITNESS

Legally as a victim of crime you are considered a witness for the state. You do not need to have a lawyer. The District Attorney’s office will handle the prosecution of your assailant. The Assistant District Attorney handling your case will answer any legal questions you may have once the case has been bound over to Superior Court. It is important for you to stay in close contact with the District Attorney’s office or the Rape Crisis Center advocate so that you are informed and know when your presence is needed. Be sure to contact them if you change your address and/or phone number so they will be able to get in touch with you when needed.

*Victim may be required to be present and testify at these steps.

FINANCIAL CONCERNS

As a victim of a violent crime, you may need medical or psychological care. Georgia has a Crime Victims Compensation Program to assist you with crime related expenses if the assault is reported to the police. The program can help compensate victims for financial needs, such as medical expenses, counseling, and funeral expenses. Under certain circumstances, the program can also compensate for lost wages. The claims may be made even if the problems do not develop immediately following the sexual assault. The program does not compensate for pain and suffering or personal property stolen during the crime.

Be sure to keep copies of all bills, receipts, and canceled checks to document your claim. You will also need a copy of the initial police report. Contact the Rape Crisis Center if you have any questions about your eligibility or how to file a claim. The Victim Advocate will help you with filling out the compensation forms.

WHAT ABOUT COUNSELING?

Counseling can be an important part of the healing process for all sexual assault victims. It is never too late for counseling. Even if your sexual assault happened many years ago, you might want to consider counseling now.

It is very important that you find a counselor who has prior experience working with survivors of sexual assault. The counselor should be comfortable working with the issues specific to the recovery of a survivor. Counseling is a confidential relationship between the survivor and the counselor. Anyone can participate in counseling without anyone else knowing.

Adult survivors of all types of sexual assault are encouraged to come into the Rape Crisis Center, even if only for one or two visits. It is tremendously important that you have the chance to vent and sort out your feelings and emotions in a supportive atmosphere. Most people who use this service at the Rape Crisis Center often feel that it is very rewarding and helps ease the recovery process.

Friends and family members of sexual assault survivors might find that they need counseling too. The Rape Crisis Center offers crisis intervention for friends and family members.

*The Rape Crisis Center provides crisis intervention and support groups
for rape and childhood sexual assault survivors
both men and women!*

Even if you see a therapist on a regular basis for other issues, you might want to call the Rape Crisis Center to help you deal with the sexual assault. All services are free of charge.

WHAT ABOUT SELF PROTECTION?

Feeling an increased concern about your safety and self-protection after being attacked is a normal reaction. Many rapists threaten to return and harm the victim again; and even though very few ever do this, the threat is frightening. Detailed information on ways to improve your security at home, on the street, or in your car can be obtained through your public library, police department, or rape crisis center.

If you are thinking about weapons, keep in mind that the best weapons you have are the ones you have at all times - your hands, feet, knees, etc. We strongly recommend taking a self-defense course. Learning to react with anger instead of fear has proven many times to be a woman's best defense. Being assertive (being aware of your rights as a person) and being aware of your surroundings can help avoid or deter an attack.

As you learn more about self-protection, you may find yourself thinking, "Now, why didn't I do that?" Remember that we are all vulnerable and tend to think that rape is something that happens to someone else. You reacted the best way that you could in order to survive and that is most important.

TELEPHONE COUNSELING

24 Hour Crisis Line: 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the crisis line provides support and information to victims of sexual assault, their families and friends. The crisis line is supported by trained volunteer advocates and staff.

ADVOCACY

Report any insensitivity shown toward you by any official or agency and the Rape Crisis Center will advocate on an administrative level in order to assure better treatment.

HOSPITAL RESPONSE

Trained volunteer advocates and staff accompany victims to the hospital to offer support and information during the forensic exam process. This service is provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

S.A.N.E.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program with trained, certified nurses to collect forensic evidence for the police.

COURT ASSISTANCE

A victim advocate offers support and accompaniment to victims throughout the legal process including police interviews, appointments with the Assistant District Attorney, and court hearings.

COUNSELING

The Rape Crisis Center offers short-term crisis intervention for victims of sexual assault, their friends and families. There is no charge for this service.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Come and talk to others who have suffered sexual assault and are searching for ways to cope. This is a twelve-session program for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Request a speaker for your business, club, church, school, civic or community group to present programs on sexual assault issues.

FACULTY AND PARENT'S PROGRAMS

These programs are tailored to specific needs and/or issues that the faculty or parents wish to address. All prevention programs can be presented to faculty and parent groups.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Specialized training for any individual or organization working with sexual assault victims.

PREVENTION PROGRAMS:

Some of the prevention programs we offer are:

- Good Touch/Bad Touch, Bullying and Sexual Harassment for elementary age children
- Bullying for elementary and middle school age children.
- Sexual Harassment, Date/Acquaintance Rape, Sexual Assault Awareness, and Men's programs for teens and adults, middle and high school through college age.

SELF DEFENSE

Inquire about ongoing self-defense courses through the Rape Crisis Center office and learn basic verbal and physical techniques.

THIRD PARTY REPORTING

Allow the Rape Crisis Center to give information to police without using your name, if you do not want to report (only if you give your permission).

COMMUNITY SERVICES

(All area codes 912)

Bryan County:

Bryan County Sheriff (Pembroke) 653-3800
Richmond Hill Police..... 756-3712

Bulloch County:

Bulloch County Sheriff 764-8888
Domestic Violence Program & Shelter 764-4605
Health Department 764-3800
Georgia Southern University Law Enforcement 681-5234
Pineland Mental Health 764-4256
Statesboro Police..... 764-9911
Victim Witness..... 764-9924 or 1-888-282-4529

Chatham County

Candler Hospital Emergency Room 692-6637
Chatham County Police 652-6500
Coastal Children’s Advocacy Center..... 236-1401
District Attorney’s Office..... 652-7308
Family Counseling Center 238-2786
First Call for Help (Chatham, Effingham, Bryan)211
Gateway Community Service Board
 (Child and Adolescent Unit) 1-877-308-8787
 (Adult Counseling) 1-877-308-8787
Lifeline for Children
 (Department of Family and Children’s Services) 651-2110
Savannah Runaway Home
 (Teen Runaway Shelter) 234-4048
Memorial Medical Center
 (Emergency Room)..... 350-8990
Planned Parenthood 351-0116
Rape Crisis Center
 (24 hour Crisis Line)..... 233-7273
 (24 hour Crisis Line) (Toll Free) 1-888-241-7273
 (Office)..... 233-3000
S.A.F.E. Shelter 629-8888
Savannah Police Department
 (Non-emergency) 232-4141
 (Sex Crimes Unit) 651-6742
STD Clinic of the Health Department 356-2157

Rape Crisis Center 24-hour crisis line: (912) 233-7273 or 1-888-241-7273

Victim-Witness Assistance Program	652-7329
Witness Information Line	652-7330

Effingham County:

Effingham County Sheriff	754-3449
Rincon Police	826-5200
Springfield Police	754-3061
Effingham Hospital	754-6451
Effingham Victim Witness	754-7460

Liberty County and Ft. Stewart:

Army Community Services.....	767-6058
Victim Advocacy Coordinator.....	233-2950
Coastal Children’s Advocacy Center.....	236-1401
Department of Family and Children’s Services.....	370-2555
District Attorney’s Office	876-4151
Victim/Witness Assistance Program	
Fraser Counseling Center.....	369-2396
Ft. Stewart Military Police.....	767-2822
Gateway Mental Health	368-3344
Hinesville Police Department	368-8211
JAG Victim Witness Coordinator.....	767-2806
Liberty County Sheriff Office	876-2131
Liberty Regional Medical Center Emergency Room	369-9462
Rape Crisis Center-Hinesville Location	
(24-hour Crisis Line)	1-888-241-7273
(Office).....	369-3335
(Fax).....	369-3405
STD Clinic of the Health Department	876-5085
Tri-County Protective Agency.....	368-9200
Domestic Violence Shelter	368-8668
Winn Army Hospital Emergency Room.....	911 or 370-6666

Tattnall County:

Tattnall County Police	
City of Reidsville Police	557-4013
City of Glennville Police	654-2103
Tattnall County Sheriff	557-6777

SUGGESTED READINGS

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Lew, Mike. **Victims No Longer: Men Recovering From Incest and Other Sexual Child Abuse.**

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