

What is sexual assault?

Sexual assault (or rape) occurs when one person compels, coerces and/or forces another person to engage in a sexual act against their will. Sexual assault is a crime that is typically used to exert power over another person and is not motivated by sexual desire or deprivation. Sexual assault can be perpetrated by anyone - a friend, family member, lover, partner, acquaintance or stranger. If a person is sexually assaulted based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, this is a hate crime in addition to a sexual assault.

Individuals of any gender identity and any sexual orientation can be victims or perpetrators of sexual assault.

Common reactions survivors of sexual assault often experience include:

- Depression
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Eating disorders
- Difficulty in interpersonal relationships
- Low self-esteem



National Resources

National Sexual Assault Online Hotline
www.rainn.org/ohl-bridge.php

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
www.ncavp.org
Phone: 212-714-1184
Fax: 212-714-2627

Gay and Lesbian National Hotline
www.glnh.org
1-888-THE-GLNH (1-888-843-4564)


National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
www.thetaskforce.org

FORGE
www.forge-forward.org
414-559-2123

**TAASA**
Texas Association Against Sexual Assault
6200 La Calma
Suite 110
Austin, Texas 78752
www.taasa.org

LGBTQI Survivors of Sexual Assault



 *The voice of sexual violence survivors in Texas.*

National Sexual Assault Hotline
Free. Confidential. 24/7.

1-800-656-HOPE

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Survivors of Sexual Assault

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) survivors of sexual assault are not fundamentally different than other survivors, but you may face additional barriers to disclosing a sexual assault and/or receiving related services. As an LGBTQI individual, you stand a very real chance of facing homophobia and transphobia in the various systems you encounter after disclosing a sexual assault, and this may make you more afraid to report it. These fears are justified and understandable.

Since many LGBTQI communities tend to be close-knit, you may fear losing friends or facing exclusion from



the community if you report the assault. If the perpetrator was your partner or an acquaintance of the same gender, then disclosing the assault may also mean “outing” yourself to friends, family, law enforcement and/or victim advocates. This can be further traumatizing if you are not ready to disclose your sexual orientation. For a transgender survivor, reporting a sexual assault and undergoing a forensic exam may mean facing additional discrimination if your anatomy and/or appearance are not consistent with predominant gender norms.

The sexual violence you experienced is not your fault; it is never the victim’s fault, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or history. Some sexual assault survivors experience guilt following the assault for many different reasons. Internalized

oppression is when a person starts to believe society’s negative attitudes and stereotypes about a social group (race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, class) to which they belong. This can lead you to feel as though you deserved the sexual assault or to fear that others in your life will believe the assault was justified because of your sexual orientation or gender identity, providing an additional barrier to both reporting and heal-

ing. It is not unusual to feel this way, but you are not at fault. Only the perpetrator is to blame for the assault.

Though all of these concerns and fears about reporting the assault and seeking help are valid, there are services and people available to help you navigate the systems and heal after the assault.

What to Do if You Are Sexually Assaulted

- Go to a safe place.
- If needed or desired, seek medical treatment for injuries, exposure to STDs or possible pregnancy.
- If you may want to seek legal remedy, you should have a sexual assault exam performed to collect evidence. You have up to 96 hours following the assault to get the exam. If avoidable, do not douche, bathe, shower, eat or drink anything, smoke, or change clothes before you have a sexual assault exam performed, because this can make it more difficult to collect evidence.
- You may want to go to a friend’s house or somewhere you can receive emotional support.
- Consider seeking counseling. Even if you don’t report the sexual assault or press charges, you can contact your nearest sexual assault crisis center for information about counseling for yourself, as well as friends or family members. You can seek help even if you were assaulted months or years ago. The services are free and confidential. Call 1-800-656-HOPE to be connected to the closest sexual assault crisis center or go to www.taasa.org for more information.

You have the right to:

- Refuse to have evidence collected
- Request that someone accompany you in the examination room
- Determine whether to report the crime to the police
- Ask for a male or female police officer if you choose to report
- Locate an attorney to represent you (the prosecutor is not your attorney)
- Sue the rapist in civil court for money
- Be considered a sexual assault victim/survivor regardless of the rapist’s relationship to you

