

*Girlfriend
to Girlfriend*



A Hope For Healing.Org Publication

Information Sheet:

Officer's Name: _____

Officer's Badge Number: _____

Case Number: _____

Phone Number: _____

Best Time to Call: _____

SANE Nurse : _____

Advocate: _____

Phone Number: _____

Best Time to Call: _____

Counseling: _____

Phone Number: _____

Best Time to Call: _____

Other Information:

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For survivors of sexual violence by:

Hope For Healing.Org

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15. *Should I tell my boss, friends or co-workers?*

If you are going to be out of work they will need an explanation. Again, it is up to you how much or little you share. Some people call their boss simply saying they are sick. A note can usually be provided by your doctor or nurse. Others feel the need for their boss to know and tell them or have a friend or family member take over that responsibility. Ultimately, it is your decision. You should not feel pressured to tell anyone until and unless you are ready to do so.

16. *Will I need counseling?*

Counseling is often a good idea. It's nice to have a support person you can count on. Places to check are crisis centers, women's shelters or mental health organizations. Your advocate or SANE nurse may be able to give you a referral. If so, you can write the information down in the back of this booklet.

Glossary:

Advocate: A trained volunteer who serves as a support person for a survivor. She may go with you to court.

Crime Lab: Place where police evidence is examined.

Detective: A specially trained police officer who will conduct the investigation.

District Attorney: Person responsible for prosecuting.

Prosecuting Attorney: See District Attorney.

Perpetrator: Person who committed a crime.

Rape Kit: A special box into which evidence collected during a rape exam is placed. It is then sealed and then sent to a crime lab for evaluation.

SANE nurse: A special nurse who collects forensic evidence to be used for prosecuting.

9 *What if I am pregnant?*

You have the choices as with any other pregnancy.

10. *How long will it take me to recover?*

This depends on each person.

Be sure to give yourself whatever time you need. Consider it a worthy investment in yourself.

11. *Will I be able to have children?*

In itself, being raped does not affect your ability to have children.

12. *How do I pay the extra expenses?*

Check your insurance policy. Often these are covered under your insurance. Other help may come through funds called Victim's Compensation Funds or Criminal Compensation. Laws vary. Your advocate or SANE nurse can give you more information.

13. *Do I have to tell anyone what happened?*

The decision is yours to make. You do not have to tell anyone that you were hurt. Realize however, that you may not be yourself a while. The help of someone who is supportive can be a real help.

14. *How do I tell my husband/boyfriend/parents?*

Ideally you will want to pick a quiet time that's free from distractions the same as you would for telling anyone unwelcome news. Realistically, you may need clothes or a ride home from the hospital. Try to be as calm as you can. If you feel you need help you can ask your advocate or SANE nurse for help.

Girlfriend to Girlfriend

This booklet was put together by other survivors for you. We want you to know it wasn't your fault. Things can and will get better.

You don't have to hide behind a mask pretending everything is ok when it isn't. There is a whole world of people willing to help you move beyond what happened. It's ok to reach out for support. You don't have to be alone.

No doubt you will have many questions. We did. Even though we can't be with you physically, we hope our booklet will help.

In hope and healing,

Volunteers and friends

Hope for Healing.Org

1. *Was it something I did/wore/said?*

No. It was nothing you did or said.
It was not your fault you were hurt.

2. *What if I was out late, drinking, using drugs or in a “bad” area?*

It still is not your fault. You are only responsible for your conscious actions. You cannot control anyone else. The actions of the person who hurt you belong to that person alone – not you.

3. *Do I have to report it to the police?*

While telling the police may keep someone else from being hurt by the same person, the decision of who to tell, when and how is entirely yours.

4. *I’ve seen so many people at the hospital etc. How do I keep them all straight?*

In the back, there is a short glossary and an area for you to jot down important information.

5. *Why did they keep my clothes? Why couldn’t I shower?*

Changing clothes or cleaning-up can destroy valuable evidence. The police department will have an investigator look through them to search for evidence. This is why you may have been told not to change clothes, shower or even comb your hair until instructed to do so. Every piece of evidence they find will help build a stronger case.

6. *A nurse did an exam. Then she asked if I wanted a medical exam. What’s the difference?*

A nurse called a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE for short) probably did your exam. These are specially trained nurses who look for and collect evidence useful in prosecuting. Even though she does exams and may give medications or order basic tests, she does not do a medical exam.

She will note any injuries you may have and refer you to a health care provider if she feels it necessary. Her job is strictly to collect and gather any and all evidence found. Some women want the additional reassurance of also having a medical exam. If you feel this way she will arrange it or sometimes offer to arrange it for you.

7. *Will I ever be ok again?*

Healing can be a slow process. It’s important to give yourself the space you need to heal. With time, support and counseling most women are able to lead satisfying lives again.

8. *How do I find out if I’ve been exposed to HIV or a venereal disease?*

When at the hospital you were probably offered medications. These were to lower the chances of disease or pregnancy. Your nurse or healthcare provider should give you information on follow-up testing. If you aren’t sure be sure to call back to ask.