

The Rights of Sexual Assault Victims

Every victim of sexual assault should:

- ✓ Be treated with dignity and respect by institutional and legal personnel.
- ✓ Have as much credibility as a victim of any other crime.
- ✓ Be considered a victim of rape when any unwanted act of sex is forced on them through any type of coercion, violent or otherwise.
- ✓ Be asked only those questions that are relevant to a court case or to medical treatment.
- ✓ Receive medical and mental health treatment, or participate in legal procedures only after giving informed consent (information should include all possible options).
- ✓ Be treated in a manner, which does not take control from the victim, but which, enables her to determine her own needs and how to meet them.
- ✓ Not be exposed to prejudice against race, age, class, lifestyle or occupation.
- ✓ Have access to peer counseling.
- ✓ Be provided with information about her rights.
- ✓ Have the best possible collection of evidence for court.
- ✓ Not be asked questions about prior sexual experience.
- ✓ Have common reactions to the rape, such as sleeplessness, nightmares, hostility towards men, anxiety, fear, etc., and have it not be considered pathological behavior.
- ✓ Have access to a secure living situation or other measures that might help to calm fears of a future assault.
- ✓ Have their name kept out of the media.
- ✓ Be considered a victim of rape regardless of the assailant's relationship to the victim, such as the victim's spouse.
- ✓ Have deterred her assailant by any means necessary. No victim should be criminally prosecuted for harming the assailant during or immediately after the rape or for harming the assailant in the process of preventing an attempted rape.
- ✓ Have access to supportive legal advice.
- ✓ Be notified of all court proceedings involving the assault.
- ✓ Be advised of the possibility of a civil suit.