If You Are a Victim of Sexual Violence

• Your immediate safety is important. Go to a safe place such as a friend or family member’s home.
• Get support. Local sexual assault programs can provide free and confidential support and advocacy for you and your friends and family.
• Protect your health. You may have a range of health concerns as a result of the sexual violence. It is best to seek medical care as soon as possible. This can be done through seeing your regular doctor, going to the emergency room or with a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE).
• Reporting the violence is your choice. Depending on the type of sexual violence you’ve experienced, you may consider reporting to law enforcement, an employer, a school official, or other person. Many factors may weigh into your decision to report or not to report the violence. There is no right way to handle the effects of sexual violence. If you decide to report the violence to someone, it is important to explore the potential effects of the report on your work, school, career, and all areas of your life. A local sexual assault program advocate will be able to help you understand the process in your area and to support you through it. If you decide not to report to anyone, you are still fully entitled to advocacy services and medical care.

When Someone You Know Is a Victim of Sexual Violence

Listen and Believe
Listen without judgment, believe what the victim tells you, and acknowledge feelings. Confusion, anger, sadness, guilt, numbness, helplessness, hopelessness, and self-blame are all normal reactions to trauma.

Offer Your Support
Let the victim know you are there for support now and in the future.

Make a Referral
Refer to 1-888-END-ABUSE (1-888-363-2287) and the sexual assault program in your area (see map).

Speak Out
Speak out when you hear someone blaming the victim for the violence. Victim blaming can take many forms, most often referencing the victim’s clothing or behavior. Remind others that the responsibility for the violence lies with the offender and nobody deserves to be sexually violated.

Advocacy Support Services
Getting in touch with an advocacy program can provide a victim of sexual violence with the support and assistance they need in the healing process. These programs offer services 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Their services include crisis hotlines, safety planning, information and referrals, criminal justice advocacy, civil court advocacy, hospital advocacy, personal advocacy, assistance with transportation, assistance with crime victims’ compensation, assistance with protection orders, and more.

All of these services are free and confidential. Any information shared with an advocacy program is private and cannot be shared with anyone outside the organization, unless:
• The program is required to disclose the information by law.
• The victim signs an informed, written, time-limited release allowing them to disclose the information.

For support, contact the following:
The sexual violence program nearest you (see map)

Kansas Crisis Hotline
1-888-END-ABUSE (1-888-363-2287)

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What is Sexual Violence?
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, sexual violence is any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone’s will. Sexual violence encompasses a range of offenses, including a completed nonconsensual sex act (i.e., rape), an attempted nonconsensual sex act, abusive sexual contact (i.e., unwanted touching), and non-contact sexual abuse (e.g., threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal sexual harassment). All types involve victims who do not consent, or who are unable to consent or refuse to allow the act. Sexual violence can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, age, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or ability.

Sex offenders use many methods to intimidate the victim. They might use trickery, manipulation, coercion, bribery, blackmail, or threats. Offenders often take advantage of people they perceive as vulnerable or less powerful.

Effects of Sexual Violence
In the United States, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men have reported being raped in their lifetime. Nearly 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men experienced sexual violence victimization other than rape at some point in their lives. Many other people have survived other types of sexual violence, as well. The experience of sexual violence has different meanings for each person, therefore everyone responds differently to being sexually assaulted. There is no “right” way to act after experiencing sexual violence. After the violence, some victims are very emotional and some are numb initially. However, sexual assault advocates have found that many people experience sexual violence as a severe emotional and physical violation. The effects of that violation can be seen in victims directly after or many days to even months later. Trauma can cause feelings of helplessness and powerlessness, as well as physical symptoms such as breathing problems, vomiting, nightmares, and the inability to remember events.

Sexual Violence in Kansas
• In 2014, one rape was reported to Kansas law enforcement every eight hours and 18 minutes.
• In 80 percent of law enforcement reported cases of rape in Kansas, victims know the rapist.
• Sexual violence happens in every community in Kansas.