

# RAPE FACT SHEET

1. Approximately 10 times as many women are raped each year as report to the police. This means only 272 were reported to the police last year, while there were probably around 1500 rapes in Idaho.
2. Women do not report out of fear, shame or other social reasons. The primary reason women do not report rape is because their acquainted with the rapist.
3. Past studies by the Law Enforcement Planning Commission show that a rapist who is reported has a 1 in 40 chance of going to prison in Idaho. These numbers were collected prior to the current freeze on sending prisoners to Boise.
4. The fear women need to have of being physically injured or killed during a rape has been overstated. In  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all rapes, the victim is not physically injured in addition to being raped. Less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of all rapists kill their victim.
5. Running, yelling and fighting have been proven to be the most effective rape prevention techniques.
6. Physicians may administer high dosages of certain birth control pills immediately after the rape to prevent pregnancy.
7. Venereal disease and infections are common problems for rape victims, douching with vinegar kills some of these pathogens.
8. Rape is often not "normal" intercourse. About  $\frac{1}{3}$  of all rapists are obviously sexually dysfunctional. This is hard for victims to talk about.
9. Life in prison is the maximum Idaho penalty for rape, but most rapists who are convicted are currently receiving sentences of 120 days or less. Of those going to prison, the average sentence served is between 1 and 3 years.
10. 1 in 4 college women have either been raped or suffered attempted rape.

# Rape Trauma

## Treatment of the victim

*Based on the work of Sandra Sutherland and Donald Shert M.D.*

### **Phase 1 – Acute** *(lasts up to 2 weeks)*

**Characteristics:** anxiety, shock, numbness, disoriented, loss of control and disbelief

**Feelings of:** fear, guilt, humiliation, anger, revenge, (feelings may be expressed or controlled)

**Physical Symptoms:** soreness, headaches, loss of appetite, muscle tension, nausea, sleep disturbance, stomach pain

It is very important to encourage the victim in this phase to talk about the rape. Well meaning family and friends often discourage her from talking with the belief she will forget if she doesn't talk. The victim may interpret this as they blame her or are ashamed or embarrassed.

The victim may need help with the following: 1) medical attention 2) legal matters and police contacts 3) notification of family and friends 4) current practical concerns 5) clarify basic information and 6) emotional responses. Generally, the victim should do as much for herself as possible, turning to help as needed.

### **Phase 2 – Outward Adjustment** *(last several weeks to several years)*

**Characteristics:** denial, rationalize and minimize, often suppression of emotions. Gets on with life.

In this phase, the victim seldom seeks help. Instead, more work will be done with family and friends who now want to talk after helping her through the crisis. It is important to dispel myths they may believe about rape. Encourage victims to follow up with medical treatment. Describe feelings victim often feel in Phase 3 and assure her help is available if and when she needs it. It is counter productive to force a victim out of denial. Recognize it as an important step in restoring equilibrium.

### **Phase 3 – Integration** *(can take weeks to years)*

**Characteristics –** fear, vulnerability, loss of control, depression, anxiety, guilt, shame, embarrassment, grief, anger, sexual dysfunction, relationship issues, “why me?,” concern for the rapist, depression and difficulty sleeping.

In this phase, victims must rebuild self esteem and control. Victims can learn to cope and assimilate the rape as part of her past. Victims/Survivors need support and empathy. Counseling is often sought in this phase following a specific event which has caused stress that may or may not be related to the rape.

# Sexual Assault Survivor's Handbook

*Virginia Commonwealth University  
Sexual Assault Survivor's Handbook*

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## **How Will I Feel?**

Sexual assault is a violent or coercive invasion of personal privacy and space and can be a humiliating as well as a terrifying experience. Sometimes, victims fear for their lives. In other cases, sexual activity without consent may not have the violent overtones of stranger rape or assault by someone with a weapon, but still can radically affect the survivor in all aspects of life. In this section, some of the things you may be feeling will be discussed. Remember, no two survivors will feel the same way or have the same experience, because sexual assault affects everyone differently.

### **“I’m frightened all the time.”**

This feeling is completely normal. You might be worried not only about your safety, but also that you may be pregnant, or have a sexually transmitted disease or HIV infection. Taking control of your life again is essential, but you may not know how to do it. Counseling and regular medical follow up can help to keep you in control of physical concerns.

The first step is to examine your fears. Remember that you are not powerless, and there are things that you can do to make your surroundings feel safer. Try doing little things like: changing your locks, moving your phone by your bed, or propping something against your door at night so that it will make a loud noise if someone enters. You can always arrange for a local crime prevention unit to inspect your residence and make recommendations for maximum personal safety. Sometimes taking a self-defense class can allay some of your fears.

### **“I suddenly get angry.”**

You could find yourself getting angry suddenly at people who think it won't happen to them. You may think your friends or acquaintances are acting “careless” in situations that may be similar to your assault. People could be treating you differently, which could be very frustrating. Or, you may just want to get revenge and hurt your attacker as badly as he, she hurt you. You need to keep in mind that no matter why you're angry. The rape was not your fault. Sexual assault is never the fault of the victim, no matter what the situation. There is no need to feel responsible for the attack or to hold others responsible in similar situations.

Also, violently retaliating against your assailant only perpetuates the cycle of violence and can wind up hurting you more than healing you. Many angry survivors find solace in civil, criminal, or university prosecution.

### **“I feel so out of control!”**

The first thing to remember is that you are in control of your life and any decisions to be made about the assault are yours. It's normal to feel insecure in new situations, strange places, or around new people after an assault. Those feelings don't make you weak or crazy. If you should be feeling weak or nervous, just remember you have many resources and support available and many people are nearby who care about you and want to help you heal.

### **“I’m so ashamed. What will others think?”**

Because of all the stereotypes floating around about rape and sexual assault, you may be hesitant to talk about your feelings with people close to you for fear of rejection or condemnation. It’s perfectly OK to worry about this, but you need to keep in mind that people who care about you want to help you. Perhaps a good first step would be to write down your feelings and thoughts before sharing them with others. Don’t worry about what other people may think of this writing, just write it down for yourself.

If you’re very concerned that the people close to you won’t understand, counseling would be an excellent way to have a mediated discussion. Brochures or videos on sexual assault are also available to educate them. Share this manual. There are a variety of ways to communicate with loved ones about this issue. Remember: the attack was not your fault... no matter what. You have no need to feel ashamed of anything.

### **‘I’m tired. I’m depressed. I can’t sleep. Nothing matters.’**

Apathy and depression are common after an assault. It can be hard to get out of bed in the morning, or even to get out of bed at all. You may feel that you don’t have the energy to do anything. Even a simple thing like taking a shower can seem overwhelming. These are classic symptoms of depression.

After the attack, you may want to just “opt out” of being yourself, living your old life. This is denial, and it can be very dangerous. It’s important for you to seek counseling in this situation, or at least to talk about it to someone close to you. You must remember that, even though you feel powerless, you have choices.

Try writing down your thoughts as a first step. Talk about the assault during the day. And try to return to your old routine (or as much of it as you can) as soon as possible. Always talk to someone when you’re feeling down. Talking about what happened is a positive way to start the healing process. You may experience some or all of these symptoms, or you may feel nothing at all. Feeling numb or “blank” is a common reaction and a defense against being overwhelmed or feeling out of control. You also may have physical symptoms instead of or combined with emotional ones: nausea, panic attacks, diarrhea, muscle tensions, anxiety, trouble breathing, and feeling “dirty.” All of these are symptoms of Rape Trauma Syndrome.

### **“How long will feel this way?”**

Unfortunately, no one can answer that question for you. Because healing processes vary from person to person in sexual assault recovery, there is no set answer. The good news is that you CAN recover; in fact, reading this book and talking to people is a big step in starting the healing process. You also can seek counseling, or join an educational or activist group to channel your emotions positively.

### **“Will anyone else really understand what I’m going through?”**

Healing can be fostered by developing a network of support. Not everyone has understanding friends and family, yet there are many ways to find and build a circle of support. It may be difficult to know whom to trust or who will listen and really understand how you’re feeling. Feeling “back to your self” may take a while, but there are many people who can help you during your healing process. One way to find these people is through a sexual assault center, a women’s center like a women’s shelter or local law enforcement victim witness services.

Many survivors find it helpful to talk to a sexual assault counselor or advocate. These people are trained to listen and they understand sexual assault issues and Rape Trauma Syndrome. They can help you sort out your options and refer you to sexual assault support groups.

### **“Will I ever feel safe again? “**

Survivors of sexual assault have expressed a spectrum of fears, and have a legitimate concern for their safety. These fears are normal, and each person will need his/her own time to heal and to feel safe again.

### **Give yourself time**

Some people are afraid at home (whether or not the assault occurred there), and some may be afraid when they go out. They may fear being alone while at the same time have a need to isolate themselves. Others feel mistrustful of others; this is especially true if they know the assailant. These feelings will go away, but it will take time for them to subside. Staying with a close friend or supportive relative for a while may be helpful. Talking with a sexual assault counselor can be a vital connection that can help you through this difficult time.

### **Self-empowerment options**

There are several ways to take back your safety and feel more in control again. An empowering choice may be to enroll in a self-defense class. Another effective method for calming your fears is called systematic desensitization. With the help of a partner or close friend, make a list of the things you are afraid of doing. Put the things you fear least at the top of the list and the things you fear most at the bottom. Take a few, deep, relaxing breaths, and then imagine yourself doing the first thing on the list. Try to keep your body relaxed as you visualize successfully completing the activity. Proceed to the next activity on the list only if you feel relaxed and able to do so. Take as much time as you need to work through each item. Confronting each fearful situation at your own pace will help empower you to live without the fears and constraints that naturally occur following an assault.

### **Fear is a normal reaction**

Fear and mistrust are very normal, natural, and common reactions to a sexual assault. Many survivors look for quick solutions such as the suggestions that follow. Sometimes reading these suggestions can create a sense of guilt. You may think you could have prevented the assault. But, the responsibility for sexual assault lies with the offender.

### **Safety when out with friends:**

- \* Carry enough change to make a phone call.
- \* Confront offensive behavior and leave if you feel uncomfortable.
- \* Meet at neutral places.
- \* Be aware that the use of alcohol or other drugs impairs your ability to defend yourself.

If you feel “strange” about a situation, you have the right to leave, even if your companion has not done anything obviously wrong. That instinctive feeling is a natural form of self-protection- trust it.

### **Safety at home:**

- \* Install locks on all doors and windows. Use them.
- \* Know your neighbors, especially those who can be called in case of an emergency.
- \* Avoid places where attackers might hide (alleys, etc.).
- \* Maintain good visibility around your home.
- \* Make sure all areas are well-lighted.
- \* Install a peep-hole in your front door.
- \* Before opening the door to any worker, demand identification, and check it by phone.
- \* Teach children not to open the door to anyone or tell any phone caller where you are or when you'll be home.

### **Safety on the street:**

Research has shown that people who stand straight, walk with a firm step, look ahead rather than down and act like they know where they are going are less likely to be seen as possible victims.

- \* Keep one hand free when carrying packages.
- \* Avoid dark, empty places.
- \* Listen for footsteps. Turn around if you think you are being followed.
- \* Cross the street, and if possible, run to the nearest lighted place with people.
- \* Have door and car keys ready.
- \* Avoid walking alone if you are upset or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- \* Be especially alert in elevators, parking lots and self-service laundries.

### **Safety when traveling by car or bus:**

- \* Always check the front and back of your car, before entering.
- \* Make sure your gas tank is not empty.
- \* Keep car doors locked at all times.
- \* If you are followed, blow your horn, and drive to a public place, if possible
- \* When waiting for the bus, stand behind the bench, poised and ready for action.
- \* Keep packages, etc., tucked under your arm.
- \* Sit by the driver if unsure of the route.
- \* Stay awake in the bus.
- \* Have money for emergency calls.
- \* Notice who gets off at your stop.

### **Trust your instincts:**

If you're feeling it's unfair to have to think about these safety tips all the time, you're right. However, it's important that you keep yourself as safe as possible.

## Idaho Rape Statute

**18-6101. RAPE DEFINED.** Rape is defined as the penetration, however slight, of the oral, anal or vaginal opening with the perpetrator's penis accomplished with a female under any one (1) of the following circumstances:

(1) Where the female is under the age of sixteen (16) years and the perpetrator is eighteen (18) years of age or older.

(2) Where the female is sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) years of age and the perpetrator is three (3) years or more older than the female.

(3) Where she is incapable, through any unsoundness of mind, due to any cause including, but not limited to, mental illness, mental disability or developmental disability, whether temporary or permanent, of giving legal consent.

(4) Where she resists but her resistance is overcome by force or violence.

(5) Where she is prevented from resistance by the infliction, attempted infliction, or threatened infliction of bodily harm, accompanied by apparent power of execution; or is unable to resist due to any intoxicating, narcotic, or anaesthetic substance.

(6) Where she is at the time unconscious of the nature of the act. As used in this section, "unconscious of the nature of the act" means incapable of resisting because the victim meets one (1) of the following conditions:

(a) Was unconscious or asleep;

(b) Was not aware, knowing, perceiving, or cognizant that the act occurred.

(7) Where she submits under the belief that the person committing the act is her husband, and the belief is induced by artifice, pretense or concealment practiced by the accused, with intent to induce such belief.

(8) Where she submits under the belief, instilled by the actor, that if she does not submit, the actor will cause physical harm to some person in the future; or cause damage to property; or engage in other conduct constituting a crime; or accuse any person of a crime or cause criminal charges to be instituted against her; or expose a secret or publicize an asserted fact, whether true or false, tending to subject any person to hatred, contempt or ridicule.

The provisions of subsections (1) and (2) of this section shall not affect the age requirements in any other provision of law, unless otherwise provided in any such law. Further, for the purposes of subsection (2) of this section, in determining whether the perpetrator is three (3) years or more older than the female, the difference in age shall be measured from the date of birth of the perpetrator to the date of birth of the female.

**18-6104. PUNISHMENT FOR RAPE.** Rape is punishable by imprisonment in the state prison not less than one (1) year, and the imprisonment may be extended to life in the discretion of the District Judge, who shall pass sentence.

## **Rape - Be a True Friend**

When she needs you, be there. She will be needing someone to talk to in the middle of the night. She may need someone to drive to the courthouse or for medical appointments. Be ready either to do this or find someone who can help her each time she needs the support. She may need to help not only with transportation and child care, but also so that she doesn't have to worry about driving and that she has a supporter at her side. You don't need to talk for her.

When the victim begins to venture back into the world, help her do this in small pieces. She may first need to ride around in the car. She may need to go to her office or work place ahead of time when she first returns to work. It can be very helpful to work around and re-feel the environment with just one or two people there, not everyone she works with. When she returns to work, she can face the people, not the place and the people at once.

The victim will need to decide if she wants her employer to tell her co-workers about what happened. Today, most people are sympathetic and understanding. Having everyone already know, not details, but that you are a victim of rape can make the victim feel safer.

If the assailant has not been arrested, the victim may have a difficult time feeling safe. The local police will ordinarily do a free safety check of the victim's home at her request. It is important to have locks and lights installed that are recommended by the police. Most homes can be secured with fairly inexpensive devices.



## Rape - Assisting Significant Others

### *Segments from Idaho Advocates Manual*

The family and friends of the survivor experience significant emotional responses to the assault. These people – lovers, husbands, mothers, fathers, siblings, children, friends, co-workers, and roommates—must often deal with feelings of rage, anger, denial, hurt, disbelief, vulnerability, fear and guilt. We call these people “significant others.” Their feelings and how they cope with the rape makes a huge difference to the survivor.

But before they can deal with the survivor, they must first deal with their own feelings. Then they can think more clearly about hers.

The victim needs to talk and you need to talk. Find people to talk to that can listen without broadcasting what you say. Because rape is so shocking, most people not directly involved will be a little curious about what has happened. It is important that the victim get to choose who knows what. Again, this is part of the victims regaining control over her life.

Those close to the victim must try to control their emotions and words as they first talk to the victim. It is very important to the victim that she is heard, that the choices of reporting to the police, getting medical treatment and who will be informed of the rape – all be her decisions.

If the victim will report the crime to law enforcement and get medical help, she leaves the most options available for what she might want to do in the future about the rape. Allowing evidence to be collected and giving a statement to the police preserves her rights. Help inform her of this, but SHE MUST make the decision.

If the victim does not want to report the rape, it does not mean she wasn't really raped. Telling others what happened, telling strange men what happened may just be too hard, too intimidating. The victim can be so devastated by the abnormal sexual activity or by whom the offender was that it isn't possible to report to the criminal justice system.

The victim/survivor is likely to be stunned or in shock at first. Listen to her and do not judge her or question her feelings. She may laugh or act strangely. She is trying to cope.

The husband or father may want to kill the rapist. He couldn't protect the victim from being raped, but he could kill the rapist now. The victim DOES NOT need that problem. Let the law do its work. The victim does not need the added burden of worrying about other's actions.