

What Can I do to Feel Good Again?

It is normal to feel pain and anger after an assault. However, if you see yourself capable of recovering, the pain and anger will not last as long. Reporting the incidents to law enforcement may help you gain a sense of empowerment. Here are some other suggestions to help you recover:

- ◆ Be open to **reaching out** to your family, friends, sexual assault advocate, therapist, and any other helping professionals for information and support.
- ◆ **Ask** directly for the support you need; it is difficult for others to guess what you need.
- ◆ Take **care** of yourself - Physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.
- ◆ **Acknowledge** that your feelings are real and normal; not crazy or irrational.
- ◆ Learn to **relax** when you are feeling tense and frightened.
- ◆ Take **pride** in the steps you are taking to help yourself.
- ◆ Give yourself **time** to feel better.
- ◆ **Share** your feelings with others to ease the pain.
- ◆ Return to your daily routine as soon as possible.
- ◆ Tell yourself over and over: "***I did nothing wrong.***" "***I did not deserve to be sexually assaulted.***" "***It was not my fault.***"

You do not have to face this alone.

A sexual violence advocate can give you options, information, and emotional support as your needs arise.

Available Services:

Crisis Intervention ~ Ongoing Support
Assistance in obtaining Protection Orders
~ Information ~ Referrals ~
Support Groups ~ Follow-up Assistance



Itasca County Office:

1325 4th Street NW
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
218.326.5008 • 866.747.5008

Aitkin County Office:

204 2nd Street NW
Aitkin, MN 56431
218.927.6266 • 866.747.5008

Funding Sources:



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OTTO BREMER FOUNDATION



Am I Doing Okay?

Dealing with the
Impact of
Sexual Violence.



SAFEZONE
Show your colors.

Sexual violence is a painful experience...

Emotionally and Physically

Regardless of how painful, **people do heal**. Sexual violence in all its forms, is a traumatic event which raises many self doubts and confused emotions. You are likely to feel sad, angry, and confused.

You can recover!

Be **Gentle** and **Patient** with yourself and **allow** yourself as much time as you need to **heal**.

Sexual Violence is a frightening experience...

You may feel shocked, confused, overwhelmed, or unprepared to deal with the many thoughts and emotions that arise. Sometimes you may feel detached from your body - as if you are watching over it. You may be trying to understand why the assault occurred.

These are all normal feelings !

What is Happening to Me?

Most incidents of sexual violence happens without warning. Some victims become angry and fearful; others appear calm and in control.

The period immediately following the trauma is often marked by considerable disorganization. However, your response to this trauma will naturally progress through *two phases*.



Phase 1: Acute Phase

In this phase you may experience the following:

Agitation ~ Anger ~ Fear ~ Flashbacks ~ Self-blame ~
Change in eating habits ~ Nightmares ~
Mood swings ~ General achiness.

This phase may last anywhere from
a few days to a few weeks.

Phase 2: Period of Adjustment or Reorganization

In this phase you will work on
"picking up the pieces"
while still experiencing many of the
symptoms of the acute phase. The length of this
phase is determined by the kind and amount of
support you receive, your relationship to the
assailant, and other life experiences.

Why Did This Happen to Me?

Asking yourself this question is a normal reaction. You may continually review the sequence of events and wonder how you might have handled the situation differently. One of the oldest and most persistent misunderstandings about sexual violence is that the victim was in some way responsible or could have stopped the assault.

You may have been walking home, getting out of your car, or sleeping in your own bed--and been the victim of a random attack.

Whatever the situation, it is important to remember that you are **NOT** to blame. It wasn't your fault.

Sexual violence has nothing to do with the way you dress or behave. You are not able to control the actions of other people. Without question, the person responsible for the assault is the assailant. When you and your supporters understand this, recovery from sexual violence trauma progresses at a more accelerated pace.

When Will I Feel Like Myself Again?

May factors affect recovery from sexual assault. It is impossible to estimate how long it will take before you feel like yourself again. Usually the most acute crisis reactions diminish in six to eight weeks.

The trauma of sexual violence is something that can be resolved and put into perspective, but may be difficult to forget.

After the initial crisis is over, there may be flashbacks of the incident(s) or feelings may resurface overtime. This is a normal part of the healing process and should not be seen as a set back.