

---

# How Can I Help?

---

A GUIDE  
FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

---



Published March 2025

“Funding for this brochure was provided in whole or in part by  
the Illinois Department of Human Services.”



## FROM THE START ...

Sexual violence can traumatize not only the survivor, but also their family and friends. Family and friends often do not know how to help. Each person's reaction to being assaulted is individual. Each person's pain and needs will be theirs alone. This pamphlet provides guidance for those whose family member or friend has been sexually assaulted.

### LET THE SURVIVOR TAKE THE LEAD

A rape survivor has experienced a terrible loss of control over their life. The survivor needs to be in control of decisions – so don't force them to recover in the ways you think they should.

A few simple rules are:

- If the survivor wants to talk, listen.
- If you are uncomfortable listening, help the survivor find someone who can listen.
- If the survivor doesn't want to talk, don't force conversation.
- Let the survivor tell you what is needed.  
Ask, "How can I help you?"

---

### How CAN I HELP

---

## How a RAPE CRISIS CENTER CAN HELP

ICASA rape crisis center workers are specially trained to help survivors of sexual violence. Rape crisis centers:

- Answer the hotline 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, 365-days-a-year.
- Provide crisis response advocacy and counseling services.
- Provide free and confidential services for survivors and their families.

A list of centers can be found in the back of this booklet or at [www.icasa.org](http://www.icasa.org).

## REMEMBER: IT'S NOT THE SURVIVOR'S FAULT

Sexual assault is always a crime.

The offender is a criminal. Don't blame the victim.

Victims don't cause their attackers' behavior.



---

## Don't Question the Survivor's Actions

- Don't second-guess your friend's behavior.
- Don't ask why. (Why did you go there? Why did you stay? Why did you open the door?)
- Don't say "You should have" or "You shouldn't have" (You should have had locks on the windows... You shouldn't have been doing the laundry at that time of night... You should have fought... You shouldn't have fought...).

Questions like this only increases the survivor's pain and self-doubt. Don't focus on the survivor's behavior. The offender's behavior is the problem and should be blamed.

## FACE THE ISSUE

People often tell a survivor of a crisis things like: "Don't worry," "Don't cry," "Don't think about it."

This is impossible. It's not helpful to say this to someone who has been sexually assaulted. Neither the crime nor its aftermath will go away by ignoring them. If you deny or downplay what the survivor has been through, the survivor might think that you aren't concerned.

## BE READY TO LISTEN

Tell the victim they can discuss the experience with you. Some people need to process the experience by repeating details or talking about their feelings.

- Try to listen without judgement.
- Don't ask detailed questions.
- You don't need to know the details of the sexual assault.

---

## SELF-CARE

### FACE YOUR OWN FEARS

You may have feelings that affect your relationship with the survivor.

- You may be uncomfortable thinking about rape.
- You may feel angry with the victim or the offender.
- You may feel fearful.
- You may feel guilt that you could not prevent the attack.

Pay attention to your own feelings. Talk with someone other than the survivor about your feelings, so you are able to focus on the survivor's needs and concerns without judgement.

### SEEK COUNSELING IF YOU NEED IT

Rape crisis counselors are aware that sexual assault hurts those who are close to the victim. Counselors can help with your questions and concerns. ICASA rape crisis centers provide free and confidential counseling to the survivor's family and friends.



---

## WHAT MORE CAN YOU DO?

Any help, however small it seems to you, will show your concern and care. Do not offer more than you can give. If you offer to help be sure to follow through. Knowing and respecting your own limitations is important. Every survivor might need or want different support, from housing to help with daily tasks to money. Here are some things you can do:

- Offer to drive the survivor home or go with them on public transportation.
- Offer to help with routine chores.
- Help install new locks or help look for a new place to live.
- Consider letting the survivor stay in your home for a while. Or offer to temporary stay at the survivor's home. Make sure you're prepared to do this commitment offering.
- Ask if the survivor will have financial problems after being sexually assaulted. The survivor may not get paid for time lost from work. Your friend may have to pay to move to a new home, or make other lifestyle changes that increase their living expenses. Don't assume that an offer of financial help would seem insensitive.
- Make sure that your friend knows that there are rape crisis services and other community resources they can contact for support.

---

Your support will be key if the offender is caught and the prosecutor charges the rapist. If the case goes to trial, there are likely to be many hearing and trial dates. At any point throughout the court process, offer to go with the survivor or help plan for others to go.

Be patient. After the crisis seems to have passed, you may want things to get back to normal. However, your friend or relative may still be adjusting. Many survivors suffer from post traumatic stress disorder. It is important that you remain supportive for however long it takes.

## **SEXUAL INTIMACY**

Sexual assault can affect a person's feelings about sexuality. Some survivors find that sex stirs up frightening feelings which they associate with the rape experience and are more comfortable if lovemaking is limited to holding and hugging. Other people experience no difficulty in this regard, distinguishing quickly between rape and consensual sexuality, and might welcome their partner's desire for intimacy. However, a lover must recognize the possibility of a temporary change in an intimate relationship.

## **ABSTINENCE**

If your partner does not want sexual activity, you must honor their wishes. Try to talk openly about this issue even if you have never talked openly about this subject before.

Remember that even though some things may change between you and your partner for awhile, most people recover from the trauma of sexual assault and continue living full lives.



## **IN CONCLUSION ...**

Remember sexual assault is never the survivor's fault. It is important that you support and believe the survivor. This is how you can help the survivor the most. Remember, there is no set timetable for recovery. Be patient. Be supportive.

---

# RAPE CRISIS SERVICES IN ILLINOIS ...

## O NORTH

### **Addison\***

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago  
Patterson/McDaniel Family Center  
24 hrs. 888-293-2080

### **Arlington Heights**

Northwest CASA  
24 hrs. 888-802-8890  
[www.nwcasa.org](http://www.nwcasa.org)

### **Aurora**

Mutual Ground, Inc.  
24 hrs. 630-897-8383  
[www.mutualground.org](http://www.mutualground.org)

### **Belvidere\***

Rockford Sexual Assault  
Counseling, Inc.  
24 hrs. 815-636-9811

### **Berwyn\***

Fillmore Center  
Pillars Community Health  
24 hrs. 708-482-9600

### **Chicago Heights\***

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago  
South Suburban Center  
24 hrs. 888-293-2080

### **DeKalb**

Safe Passage, Inc.  
24 hrs. 815-756-5228  
[www.safepassagedv.org](http://www.safepassagedv.org)

### **Dixon\***

YWCA of the Sauk Valley  
24 hrs. 815-288-1011

### **Elgin**

Community Crisis Center  
24 hrs. 847-697-2380  
[www.crisiscenter.org](http://www.crisiscenter.org)

### **Evanston\***

Northwest CASA  
24 hrs. 888-802-8890

### **Freeport**

VOICES of Stephenson County  
24 hrs. 815-232-7200  
[www.voicesofsc.org](http://www.voicesofsc.org)

### **Galena**

Riverview Center  
24 hrs. 888-707-8155  
[www.riverviewcenter.org](http://www.riverviewcenter.org)

### **Gurnee**

Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center  
24 hrs. 847-872-7799  
[www.zcenter.org](http://www.zcenter.org)

### **Hickory Hills**

Pillars Community Health  
24 hrs. 708-482-9600  
[www.pillarscommunityhealth.org](http://www.pillarscommunityhealth.org)

### **Joliet**

Sexual Assault Service Center  
Guardian Angel Community  
Services  
24 hrs. 815-730-8984  
[www.gacsprograms.org](http://www.gacsprograms.org)

### **Kankakee**

Clove Alliance  
24 hrs. 815-932-3322  
[www.clovealliance.org](http://www.clovealliance.org)

### **McHenry\***

Northwest CASA  
TCare Center of McHenry  
County  
24 hrs. 800-892-8900

### **Morris\***

Sexual Assault Service Center  
24 hrs. 815-730-8984

### **Mount Carroll\***

Riverview Center  
24 hrs. 815-244-7772

### **LaGrange\***

Constance Morris House  
Pillars Community Health  
24 hrs. 708-482-9600

### **Oregon\***

Rockford Sexual Assault  
Counseling, Inc.  
24 hrs. 815-636-9811

### **Ottawa\***

Safe Journeys  
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

### **Peru\***

Safe Journeys  
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

### **Plainfield\***

Sexual Assault Service Center  
24 hrs. 815-730-8984

### **Pontiac\***

Safe Journeys  
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

### **Princeton**

Freedom House  
24 hrs. 800-474-6031  
[www.freedomhouseillinois.org](http://www.freedomhouseillinois.org)

### **Quad Cities**

Family Resources, Inc.  
24 hrs. 309-797-1777  
[www.famres.org](http://www.famres.org)

### **Rockford**

Rockford Sexual Assault  
Counseling, Inc.  
24 hrs. 815-636-9811  
[www.rockfordsexualassaultcounseling.org](http://www.rockfordsexualassaultcounseling.org)

### **Skokie\***

Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center  
24 hrs. 847-872-7799

### **Sterling**

YWCA of the Sauk Valley  
24 hrs. 815-626-7277  
[www.ywsauk.org](http://www.ywsauk.org)

### **Streator**

Safe Journeys  
24 hrs. 800-892-3375  
[www.safejourneysillinois.org](http://www.safejourneysillinois.org)

### **Watseka\***

Clove Alliance  
24 hrs. 815-932-3322

## O CHICAGO

### **Chicago 24-Hour Hotline**

1-888-293-2080

### **Resilience**

[www.ourresilience.org](http://www.ourresilience.org)  
• Stroger Hospital\*  
• Austin\*  
• Northside\*

### **Mujeres Latinas En Acción**

[www.mujereslatinosenaccion.org](http://www.mujereslatinosenaccion.org)  
• North Riverside\*  
• South Chicago\*

### **YWCA Metropolitan Chicago**

[www.ywcachicago.org](http://www.ywcachicago.org)  
• Cynthia B. Lafuente Center\*  
• Parks and Francis Center\*  
• Roseland Center\*  
• Medical District Center\*

---

# RAPE CRISIS SERVICES IN ILLINOIS ...

## O CENTRAL

**Bloomington**  
Stepping Stones  
Sexual Assault Services  
YWCA McLean County  
24 hrs. 309-556-7000  
[www.ywcamclean.org](http://www.ywcamclean.org)

**Charleston/Mattoon**  
Prevail Illinois  
24 hrs. 888-345-2846  
[www.sacis.org](http://www.sacis.org)  
• SACIS Main\*  
• SACIS Counseling\*

**Cuba\***  
WIRC/CAA Victim Services  
24 hrs. 309-837-5555

**Danville**  
Survivor Resource Center  
24 hrs. 866-617-3224  
[www.survivorresourcecenter.org](http://www.survivorresourcecenter.org)

**Decatur**  
Growing Strong Sexual  
Assault Center  
24 hrs. 217-428-0770  
[www.growingstrongcenter.org](http://www.growingstrongcenter.org)

**Galesburg\***  
WIRC/CAA Victim Services  
Knox County  
24 hrs. 309-837-5555

**Jacksonville\***  
Prairie Center Against  
Sexual Assault  
24 hrs. 217-753-8081

**Macomb**  
Western Illinois Regional  
Council/Community Action Agency  
Victim Services  
24 hrs. 309-837-5555  
[www.wirpc.org/victim-services](http://www.wirpc.org/victim-services)

**Mt. Sterling\***  
Quanada  
24 hrs. 800-369-2287

**Quincy**  
Quanada  
Sexual Assault Program  
24 hrs. 800-369-2287  
[www.quanada.org](http://www.quanada.org)

## **Paris\***

Survivor Resource Center  
24 hrs. 866-617-3224  
[www.survivorresourcecenter.org](http://www.survivorresourcecenter.org)

## **Peoria**

Center for Prevention of Abuse  
Sexual Assault Services  
24 hrs. 309-691-4111 or  
800-559-SAFE  
[www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org](http://www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org)

## **Pittsfield\***

Quanada Pike County  
24 hrs. 800-369-2287

## **Rushville\***

Quanada Schuyler County  
24 hrs. 800-369-2287

## **Springfield**

Prairie Center Against  
Sexual Assault  
24 hrs. 217-753-8081  
[www.prairiecasa.org](http://www.prairiecasa.org)

## **Taylorville\***

Prairie Center Against  
Sexual Assault  
24 hrs. 217-753-8081

## **Urbana/Champaign**

Rape, Advocacy, Counseling and  
Education Services  
24 hrs. 217-384-4444  
[www.cu-races.org](http://www.cu-races.org)

## O SOUTH

## **Alton\***

Metro East Every Survivor  
Counts  
24 hrs. 618-397-0975  
[www.metroeasteversurvivorcounts.org](http://www.metroeasteversurvivorcounts.org)

## **Belleville**

Metro East Every Survivor  
Counts  
24 hrs. 618-397-0975  
[www.metroeasteversurvivorcounts.org](http://www.metroeasteversurvivorcounts.org)

## **Carbondale**

Survivor Empowerment Center  
24 hrs. 800-334-2094  
[www.empoweringsurvivors.org](http://www.empoweringsurvivors.org)  
• Northeast – Eurma C. Hayes  
Community Center\*

## **Centralia\***

Sexual Assault and  
Family Emergencies  
24 hrs. 800-625-1414

## **Effingham\***

Sexual Assault and  
Family Emergencies  
24 hrs. 800-625-1414

## **Marion\***

Survivor Empowerment Center  
24 hrs. 800-334-2094

## **Mt. Vernon\***

Sexual Assault and  
Family Emergencies  
24 hrs. 800-625-1414

## **Olney\***

Counseling & Information  
for Sexual Assault/Abuse  
24 hrs. 866-288-4888

## **Robinson\***

Prevail Illinois  
24 hrs. 866-288-4888

## **Vandalia**

Sexual Assault and  
Family Emergencies  
24 hrs. 800-625-1414  
[www.safecrisiscenter.org](http://www.safecrisiscenter.org)

\*Designates satellite and  
outreach offices of main centers.

**FOR SERVICES AND INFORMATION IN YOUR  
COMMUNITY CONCERNING SEXUAL ASSAULT OR  
SEXUAL ABUSE, CONTACT:**

---

---



**100 N. 16th Street  
Springfield, IL., 62703  
(217) 753-4117 [www.icasa.org](http://www.icasa.org)**