
How CAN I HELP?

**A GUIDE
FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY**



Published 2020

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

WWW.ICASA.ORG



FROM THE START ...

Sexual violence can traumatize not only the victim, 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 VICTIM TAKE THE LEAD

A rape victim has experienced a terrible loss of control over their life. The victim 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 victim wants to talk, listen.
- If you are uncomfortable listening, help the victim find someone who can listen.
- If the victim doesn't want to talk, don't force conversation.
- Let the victim 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 victims 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 victims and their families.

A list of centers can be found in the back of this booklet or at 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 victim's pain and self-doubt. Don't focus on the victim's behavior. The offender's behavior is the problem and should be blamed.

FACE THE ISSUE

People often tell a victim 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 victim has been through, the victim 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 victim.

- 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 victim about your feelings, so you are able to focus on the victim'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 victim'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 victim 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 victim 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 victim stay in your home for a while. Or offer to temporary stay at the victim's home. Make sure you're prepared to do this commitment offering.
- Ask if the victim will have financial problems after being sexually assaulted. The victim 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 victim 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 victims 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 victims 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 victim's fault. It is important that you support and believe the victim. This is how you can help the victim the most. Remember, there is no set timetable for recovery. Be patient. Be supportive.

RAPE CRISIS SERVICES IN ILLINOIS ...

○ 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

Aurora

Mutual Ground, Inc.
24 hrs. 630-897-8383
www.mutualground.org

Belvidere*

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

Berwyn*

CARE Center
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

Dixon*

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

Elgin

Community Crisis Center
24 hrs. 847-697-2380
www.crisiscenter.org

Evanston*

Northwest CASA
at the Evanston Civic Center
24 hrs. 888-802-8890

Freeport

VOICES of Stephenson County
24 hrs. 815-232-7200
www.voicesofsc.org

Galena

Riverview Center
24 hrs. 888-707-8155
www.riverviewcenter.org

Gurnee

Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center
24 hrs. (847) 872-7799
www.zcenter.org

Hickory Hills

Pillars Community Health
24 hrs. 708-482-9600
www.pillarscommunityhealth.org

Joliet

Sexual Assault Service Center
Guardian Angel Community
Services
24 hrs. 815-730-8984
www.gacsprograms.org

Kankakee

Kankakee County Center
Against Sexual Assault
24 hrs. 815-932-3322
www.kc-casa.org

Kewanee*

Freedom House
24 hrs. 800-474-6031

McHenry*

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

Morris*

Sexual Assault Service Center
Guardian Angel Community
Services
24 hrs. 815-730-8984

Mount Carroll*

Riverview Center
24 hrs. 815-244-7772

Oregon*

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

Ottawa*

Safe Journeys
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

Peru*

ADV & SAS
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

Plainfield*

Sexual Assault Service Center
Guardian Angel Community
Services
24 hrs. 815-730-8984

Pontiac*

ADV & SAS
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

Princeton

Freedom House
24 hrs. 800-474-6031
www.freedomhouseillinois.org

Quad Cities

Family Resources, Inc.
24 hrs. 866-921-3354
www.famres.org

Rockford

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

Streator

Safe Journeys
24 hrs. 800-892-3375
www.safejourneysillinois.org

Watseka*

Iroquois Sexual Assault Services
24 hrs. 815-432-0420

CHICAGO

Chicago 24-Hour Hotline

1-888-293-2080

Resilience

www.ourresilience.org
• Stroger Hospital*
• Austin*
• Northside*

Mujeres Latinas En Acción

www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org
• North Riverside*
• South Chicago*

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

www.ywcachicago.org
• Cynthia B. Lafuente Center*
• Englewood*
• Laura Parks and Mildred
Francis Center*
• RISE Children's Center*

RAPE CRISIS SERVICES IN ILLINOIS ...

○ CENTRAL

Bloomington

Stepping Stones
Sexual Assault Services
YWCA McLean County
24 hrs. 309-556-7000
www.ywcamclean.org

Charleston/Mattoon

Sexual Assault Counseling
& Information Service
24 hrs. 888-345-2846
www.sacis.org
• SACIS Main*
• SACIS Counseling*

Cuba*

WIRC/CAA Victim Services
24 hrs. 309-837-5555
www.wirpc.org/victim-services

Danville

Survivor Resource Center
24 hrs. 866-617-3224
www.survivorresourcecenter.org

Decatur

Growing Strong Sexual
Assault Center
24 hrs. 217-428-0770
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

Mt. Sterling*

Quanada
24 hrs. 800-369-2287

Quincy

Quanada
Sexual Assault Program
24 hrs. 800-369-2287
www.quanada.org

Peoria

Center for Prevention of Abuse
Sexual Assault Services
24 hrs. 309-691-4111 or
800-559-SAFE
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

Taylorville*

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

Urbana/Champaign

Rape, Advocacy, Counseling and
Education Services
24 hrs. 217-384-4444
or 877-236-3727
www.cu-races.org

○ SOUTH

Alton*

Call for Help, Inc.
Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975

Belleville

Call for Help, Inc.
Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975
www.callforhelpinc.org

Carbondale

Rape Crisis Services of
The Women's Center, Inc.
24 hrs. 618-529-2324 or
800-334-2094
www.thewomensctr.org
• Northeast – Eurma C. Hayes
Community Center*

Centralia*

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

East St. Louis*

Call for Help, Inc.
Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975

Effingham*

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

Harrisburg*

Rape Crisis Services of
The Women's Center, Inc.
24 hrs. 800-334-2094

Marion*

Rape Crisis Services of
The Women's Center, Inc.
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*

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

Troy*

Call for Help, Inc.
Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975

Vandalia

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

Waterloo*

Call for Help, Inc.,
Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975

**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**