



# You Too

A resource handbook on  
sexual assault for survivors,  
friends and the community.

Our Mission: To empower those victimized by violent crime through  
education, advocacy, and understanding.

You Have the Power ... Know How to Use It, Inc.

Last updated July 2020





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***IMPORTANT:***

*This resource guide focuses on sexual assault involving adult victims. For information on sexual assault involving children, we recommend reviewing Our Children, our resource guide on child sexual abuse.*

## A Message from Our Founder

Dear Reader,

You Have the Power...Know How to Use It, Inc., is a non-profit agency founded in 1993 in Nashville, Tennessee. Our mission is to advocate for victims and educate the community to prevent violent crime.

We provide training to professionals and the general public on topics related to domestic and sexual violence. In addition, we have a library of video documentaries that are available for purchase.

This book addresses the issue of sexual assault. It is a tool that can help prevent this crime and provide support and resources to those who have been victimized. If you would like more information on this topic or about our organization, please contact us through our website at [www.yhtp.org](http://www.yhtp.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Conte". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrea Conte  
President  
You Have the Power

## What Is Sexual Assault?

This seems like a question with an obvious answer, but it's more complicated than it first appears.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines rape as "penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim."(1)

But sexual assault can also include:

- Attempting rape without actual penetration
- Forcing someone to perform sexual acts, like oral sex or penetrating the perpetrator's body
- Fondling, groping, or other unwanted sexual touching

The common factor here is that this behavior happens **without the explicit consent** of the other person. (2)

**For details on consent  
--what it is and what it isn't--  
see pages 8-11 of this booklet.**

# The Facts about Sexual Assault



## 8 OUT OF 10

rapes are committed by someone known to the victim. (4)

91%

of victims of rape and sexual assault are female. (6)



## OVER 30%

of survivors of sexual assault never disclose the experience to anyone. (5)

## 12 - 34 YEARS OF AGE

is the highest risk age range for sexual assault victims with a majority of sexual assault victims being under the age of 30. (4)



## EVERY 92 SECONDS

someone in America is sexually assaulted. (4)

## 1 IN 3 AND 1 IN 6

women and men (respectively) experience some form of contact sexual violence in their lifetime. (5)



## \$127 BILLION

is what sexual assault costs the economy in medical expenses, sick days, and lost work. (6)

## FIRST SEXUAL EXPERIENCE

of 1 in 16 women occurs as a result of rape or sexual assault. (11)

# 1

## Speaking Out

Sexual assault used to be considered a stranger-on-stranger crime. But as women and men spoke out about forced, non-consensual sex by someone they knew and trusted, people began acknowledging sexual assault as a significant health and safety problem.

People affected by sexual assault often have difficulty telling authorities, talking about it to friends and family, or even admitting it to themselves. Below are some of the barriers that sexual assault survivors and advocates encounter.

**Reporting:** Survivors of sexual assault are often reluctant to report the crime for fear of judgment and a belief that others will doubt that the sexual act was non-consensual, especially if alcohol or drugs were involved. Sexual assault happens to people of all genders, and male victims are even **less likely** to report than females.

**Alcohol/Drugs:** Sexual assaults sometimes happen in or near parties, nightclubs, etc., where someone ingested alcohol or drugs--sometimes willingly, but possibly without their knowledge. Sometimes the victim didn't know a predator was targeting them to get them drunk or high. Regardless, people are unwilling to come forward because they fear judgment for using drugs or alcohol.

**Memory:** After a traumatic event, memory does not necessarily return in a clear and logical stream. People may experience gaps in memory and unanswered questions of who was involved or other details. If the victim was unconscious, they may not remember the assault at all, only piecing it together later.

**Self-Blame:** Various circumstances of the attack may give the survivor a false sense of being complicit simply because they were there or "should have known better." Rapists commonly use this as a defense to rationalize or justify their aggressive and violent behavior.

**Sense of futility:** Survivors may believe law enforcement or other authorities won't thoroughly investigate or prosecute the incident. They may worry about being humiliated and re-victimized by the criminal justice system.

#MeToo

#MeToo

#MeToo

#MeToo

#MeToo

#MeToo

*#MeToo*

#MeToo

#MeToo

#YoTambién

#MeToo

#MeToo

#我也是

*#MeToo*

#ЯТоже

#MeToo

*#MeToo*

#MeToo

#أنا\_كما

#גם\_אנחנו

*#MeToo*

#MeToo

#MeToo

#MeToo

The social activist Tarana Burke coined the phrase "Me Too" as a response to sexual assault and harassment in 2006, but it exploded into popular use after actress Alyssa Milano transformed it into a Twitter hashtag following the sexual abuse allegations against film producer Harvey Weinstein, encouraging victims to share their stories (3).

Since then, people (mostly women, but many men) in industries from entertainment to politics to academics to the military have invoked the phrase to document the prevalence of sexual assault and its devastating effects. Survivors and activists are also claiming the phrase, and in doing so claiming their stories.

We want you, the reader of this book, to know that...

**You too, as a survivor of sexual assault,** have the right to tell your story when you're ready, to report your experiences without fear of retaliation, to demand justice for yourself and consequences for your attacker, and to expect support from your friends and family.

**You too, as a bystander,** must intervene in a sexual assault/harassment situation if you can do so safely.

# CONSENT

IT'S SIMPLE AS TEA

Screen capture from Blue Seat Studios. "Tea Consent (Clean)." YouTube video, 2:49. May 13, 2015. <https://youtu.be/fGoWLWS4-kU>.

This video is well-regarded for its concise metaphorical description of sexual consent.

Copyright ©2015 Emmeline May and Blue Seat Studios.

At the heart of preventing, reporting, and prosecuting sexual assault is an understanding of the legal definition of **consent**.

**Consent** means both parties understand and agree to the act.

Consent is **not** given if:

- One party threatens the other.
- One party forces the other.
- One party exerts the power of their position or rank to coerce the other.
- The victim is unconscious.

**Non-consensual sex is rape. The person responsible for the crime of rape is a rapist. The victim is not at fault. A perpetrator's ignorance of the law or their casual dismissal of criminal behavior neither justifies nor excuses an intentional criminal act.**

Rapists may dismiss their actions as conquests or minimize the seriousness of the crime. They may claim the victim meant "yes," or was too drunk or high to remember, or "deserved" to be raped because of their attire or behavior. They may use any number of tactics to violate someone's consent. They include:

## **Force**

- The perpetrator may use **physical force** to overpower or surprise the victim.
- They may use **physical or verbal threats**. The victim, feeling afraid, helpless, or trapped, may freeze or feel paralyzed, unable to cry out or resist.
- The perpetrator may use **emotional, psychological, or verbal force** to manipulate the victim into non-consensual sex. For example, if the target is lonely, socially awkward, lacks confidence, wants to fit in, or is away from home for the first time, someone may exploit that vulnerability. A rapist may initially shower the intended target with

excessive attention and compliments to gain trust, and then lure the victim to a more private setting.

- The rapist may render the victim helpless by providing **alcohol or drugs** or threaten the victim with reputation-damaging rumors if they resist.

Keep in mind that emotional force can be as terrifying as physical force, leaving the victim fearing for life and safety. Also, perpetrators, authorities, and even the victim themselves may mistake this kind of sexual assault for consent since the victim did not physically resist.

If one of the partners uses a power imbalance to coerce the other into sexual behavior, this is also a consent issue relating to force.

**Statutory rape** as defined by Tennessee state law (Tenn. Code Ann. § 39-13-504ff):

- Rape of a child: sexual penetration if the victim is 4-12 years old.
- Aggravated rape of a child: sexual penetration if the victim is 3 years old or under.
- Mitigated statutory rape: sexual penetration of a minor 15-17 years old by someone 4-5 years older.
- Statutory rape: sexual penetration of a minor 13-14 years old by someone 4-9 years older, or of a minor 15-17 years old by someone 5-9 years older.
- Aggravated statutory rape: sexual penetration of a minor 13-17 years old by someone at least 10 years older.
- Aggravated sexual battery: unlawful sexual contact when the victim is under 13 years old.

Note that people under the age of 13 **cannot** legally consent to sex, even if they believe they are in love and do not resist.

**Authority:** Sex cannot be a condition of employment, raises, promotion, good grades, special privileges, favorable judicial rulings or other similar power-imbalance situations. Some examples of authority relationships are a supervisor and employee, a teacher and student, or a minister and church member.

Some rapists may use their elevated status in the community to force or deceive people into sexual activity, and then silence them afterward. Examples could include a local celebrity, an elected official, a person of wealth and influence, or a star athlete.

## Consent (continued)

### Cognitive and/or mental impairment

**Cognitive impairment:** Someone who is intoxicated, drugged, or unconscious cannot consent to sex. This is true whether the victim knowingly or unknowingly ingested alcohol or drugs.

**Mental impairment:** People who are cognitively delayed or mentally impaired cannot legally provide consent, regardless of age.

# So what does consent look like?

Consent is freely given, without using force or intimidation.

Consent is coherent, given by someone who is sober and completely awake.

Consent is clear, with no ambiguity that all parties involved are willing and eager participants.

Consent is reversible, with the people involved being able to slow down or stop if they want to.

Consent is conditional. with all parties agreeing where, when, and how sex happens.

Consent includes the decision whether to use contraception--condoms, the Pill, etc.--and not removing or sabotaging them. It also covers sexting and nude photos... i.e., not pressuring someone to send nudes, not forwarding them to other people, etc.

This section adapted from Smith, Erika W. "What College Students Should Know About Consent." Last modified Aug. 21, 2019, <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/what-is-sexual-consent-college-rules>

**NO  
MEANS  
NO**

**No means no**, whether spoken or indicated by gestures such as pulling away from physical contact, trying to get away, etc.

**No means no** regardless of the activity leading up to the present encounter and regardless of past consensual sex.

**No means no** regardless of how long the relationship has lasted, or how much money was spent on a date or during the course of a relationship.

**NO  
MEANS  
NO**

**Non-consensual sex is a crime  
and subject to prosecution.**

## Acquaintance Rape

In this case, an acquaintance may be someone the victim knows only slightly, such as a classmate, a friend of a friend, or a colleague. It could be someone the victim knows and trusts, like a neighbor, family member, friend of the family, or even a spouse. There is no stereotypical perpetrator or victim.

While sexual assault can happen anywhere to anyone, females ages 16-24 are the most vulnerable demographic group. Hence, college campuses are frequent locations of sexual assaults.

Because acquaintance rape is often associated with a social setting, there are some ways you can reduce your risk.

**Have a code word with friends and family** so you can call them and communicate your discomfort without the other people you are with finding out. Your friends and family can come to get you or make up an excuse for you to leave.

**Guard your drink in social situations.** Keep your drink with you at all times. If you set your drink down and leave it unattended while talking, dancing, using the restroom, or making a phone call, throw it away or leave it sitting where you placed it.

**Open cans or bottles yourself,** or make sure you can watch the person preparing your mixed beverage. Avoid accepting drinks from punch bowls or shared containers.

While many so-called “date rape” drugs lack odor or taste, the amount of alcohol or drugs in a drink could have an unusual taste or smell. If you think it smells or tastes funny, don’t drink it!

**Attend social events with friends you trust.** Select a designated driver or one person in the group who will stay sober. If you start feeling funny, tell your friends. If one of your friends spaces out, appears way too drunk for the amount of alcohol they had, or starts acting out of character, see if they’re okay. If you don’t think they are, get them to a safe place at once.

**Don't get separated.** Sexual predators often try to isolate or remove a target to someplace private, possibly offering them a ride home or taking them somewhere else.

**If you think someone drugged you or a friend, call 911 or the police.** If a doctor or nurse examines you, be upfront with what drugs or alcohol you believe you ingested so they can give you the correct tests (you'll need a urine sample and probably some others).

**Most importantly, trust your instincts.** If you feel like something is wrong, it probably is. Avoid being alone with someone you don't know well or someone who makes you feel uncomfortable. If the people or the situation feels wrong to you, do whatever you can to get somewhere safe.

If someone is pressuring you to do something you don't want to do:

**Be true to yourself.** If you or the other person have been drinking, you can say that you would rather wait until you both have your full judgment before doing something you might regret. If you don't want to hurt someone's feelings, lie and make up a reason to leave (needing to take care of a friend or family member, not feeling well, needing to be somewhere else, etc.). But remember: "I don't want to" is always a good reason. You don't have to be polite to someone who is trying to force you to do something you don't want to sexually.

**Find an escape route.** How would you try to get out of the room or the house? Where are the doors and windows? Who is nearby that could help you? Is there an emergency phone nearby?

Finally, **remember that this situation is not your fault.** You didn't do anything wrong; it's the person making you feel uncomfortable who is to blame.

The independent Education Advisory Board conducted a survey at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, in which they found that 156 of 1,651 students said they had been victims of sexual assault, fondling, or unwanted kissing during the 2014-15 school year. In a separate survey by EverFi, 140 of 1,402 students reported sexual contact or attempted unwanted sexual contact, some of which included physical force.

Jed Rubinfeld, Professor of Criminal Law at Yale Law School, said in the article [Mishandling Rape](#) (NYT, 11/16/14), "research suggests that more than 90% of campus rapes are committed by a small percentage of college men—possibly as few as 4%—who rape repeatedly, averaging 6 victims each."

## Stranger Rape

In 80 to 90% of sexual assault cases, the victim and assailant know each other. But attacks by strangers can still happen.

Stranger rape can occur in several different ways. A perpetrator may attack the victim suddenly and brutally with no prior contact--usually at night in a public place or by breaking into the victim's home. Alternately, the perpetrator may approach the victim and gain their trust by flirting, luring the victim to their car, or otherwise trying to coerce the victim into a situation where the sexual assault will occur. (4)

Here are some ways to reduce your risk:

- Be aware of your surroundings—knowing where you are and who around might help you get out of a bad situation.
- If you are on a college campus or somewhere else with emergency telephones, find out where they are.
- Try to avoid isolated areas where help may be difficult to find.
- Walk with purpose. Act like you know where you are going, even if you don't.
- Try not to load yourself down with packages or bags as this can make you look vulnerable.
- Make sure your cell phone is with you and charged, and that you have money for a cab or ride-share.
- Avoid putting headphones or earbuds in both ears so you can stay aware of your surroundings, especially if you are walking alone. Avoid using your cellphone while walking.
- Don't let yourself be alone with someone you don't know or trust.
- **Above all, trust your instincts.** Again, if a place or situation feels unsafe, it probably is.

**Remember: sexual assault is not the victim's fault,  
no matter where they were or what they were doing at the time.**

## The Male Victim

Men and boys who experience sexual assault face additional challenges because of gender stereotypes. They may feel inadequate if they didn't or couldn't fight off the attacker. They may question their sexual identity or orientation because of involuntary bodily reactions (erection, ejaculation, etc.) during the assault.



Perpetrators might use physical force or take advantage of a power imbalance (see pages 9-10). They could be any sexual orientation or gender identity.

For gay, bisexual, and trans men, the effects can be particularly severe because of existing prejudice and discrimination. corresponding stress and low-self esteem, and a relative lack of resources for victims of same-sex domestic abuse and sexual assault.

Historically, most discussions about sexual assault invoked the concept of a female victim and a male perpetrator. But both advocates and survivors are changing the conversation, providing male victims with resources tailored specifically to their needs and concerns:

- [Jimhopper.com](http://Jimhopper.com) features articles explaining how sexual abuse as boys affects adult men and the people around them.
- [1in6 \(1in6.org\)](http://1in6.org) offers a free helpline with trained advocates, online support groups, and information for both survivors and professionals.
- [Malesurvivor.org](http://Malesurvivor.org) features similar information, along with a search function that helps survivors locate counselors who specialize in helping male survivors of sexual abuse and assault. (7)

“It is important to focus on the language used to describe sexual assault and how that impacts survivors. A narrow definition of rape disenfranchises many survivors.”  
N.N., male survivor

## The Role of the Bystander (The 5 D's)

A bystander is a someone who sees something happening and has the chance to prevent it--in this case, a sexual assault. Research shows that the presence of a potential bystander reduces the potential for rape and sexual assault by as much as 44%. (8)

You might not feel comfortable getting involved, especially if you don't know the would-be victim or perpetrator. But what if the person at risk was a friend or a loved one? You'd want someone to step up.

The first step to becoming a bystander is to pay attention to your surroundings. Watch for unwanted touching, hostile or demeaning language, or someone getting extremely intoxicated after one drink or in a short amount of time. Get a second opinion if you think something doesn't look right but aren't sure.

Once you know you need to step in, figure out how. Use the **5 Ds** to intervene.

### Distract!

Spill your drink, or bring out fresh snacks. Ask one of the people involved for the time. Pull up something funny on your phone, or ask to borrow someone else's. Suggest leaving to go somewhere else. Start a dance-off. Do anything you can think of to interrupt the situation peacefully so that the person at risk can get to safety.

### Delay!

Check with the person you think needs help. Do they feel safe? Help them figure out how to get to a safe location or at least get away from the person or people bothering them.

Are they losing consciousness, unable to speak or breathe, or stumbling when they walk? They might need medical attention. Don't be afraid to call 911 if you think they need it.

# Delegate!

If you don't feel confident intervening on your own, get someone to help you. Ask someone who knows the person at risk to come with you, or tell them what's going on. Talk to the person hosting the party, a bartender, an employee at the club, a security guard, or an RA.

# be Direct!

If you think you can do so safely, you may want to speak directly to the person or people causing the problem. Call them out: tell them what they're doing is not okay. You might be able to make them leave, by telling them to leave or back off. Again, you should try this only if it won't put you in danger. Ideally, you should try one of the other Ds before resorting to this one.

# Document!

If you have your phone or some other device on you, record the incident from a safe distance. Include details like street signs or posters that help identify the location, and clearly state the date and time.

(This tactic should only be used if someone else is intervening. If not, you should use one of the other D's.)

Once the target is safe, make sure to ask them what they want you to do with the footage. Don't post it or use it without their permission. You don't want to embarrass or traumatize the person further by putting the incident online without their permission.



You may need to use more than one of the D's at once. For example, you can **delay** by getting someone else to **distract** the person causing trouble. Or you can **delegate** someone else to be **direct** and kick them out of the venue. (9)

Again, do whatever you have to do and whatever you can do, safely. It's better to spend a few minutes in an awkward encounter or conversation than for someone to suffer the rest of their life because of a sexual assault.

# First things first: it's NOT your fault.

Victims of sexual assault often experience guilt, shame, confusion, disbelief, and embarrassment. Many people go to a friend or someone else they trust before talking to law enforcement, trying to sort out what happened.

Survivors of acquaintance rape may lose confidence in their judgment and their trust in other people. They might not want to make new friends or start new relationships, restrict their interaction to a small circle of friends or family. Male victims may question their sexual identity because of their body's reaction during the assault.

But remember this: it is not your fault. No matter what you did or what you didn't do, you did not deserve what happened to you. What you deserve is safety, understanding, and justice.

Sharing the traumatic experience with professional counselors or trusted friends is the first step to a survivor's **safety, reporting, and recovery**.

## **Safety**

If your spouse, partner, or someone else you live with assaulted you, get to a safe place like the home of a friend or someone else you trust, or a domestic violence shelter.\*

The main thing is to find someone who you trust, someone who won't blame you for what happened or ask invasive questions that make you feel even worse.

You can also contact the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673), which offers trained counselors who will listen to your story and connect you to a local sexual assault center. (There's also a list of sexual assault centers in Tennessee on pages 25-31 of this booklet.) They can also provide you with advice on reporting the crime to law enforcement.

\*Check our YHTP's resource guide *When Violence Hits Home* for a list of shelters and other domestic violence services in your area.

## **Reporting**

While you don't have to go to the hospital or a sexual assault center, it's usually your best option. You can get treatment for any injuries you suffered or get tested for pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. They can help you complete a rape kit, a type of forensic exam that can be used to collect DNA, blood samples and other evidence.

If you decide to go, do it as soon as you can--preferably within 72 hours of the incident. If possible, avoid showering, fixing your hair, using the restroom, or changing your clothes before you get there to preserve physical evidence. (If you think you were drugged, consider collecting your urine in a clean container for testing.)

Don't let the cost of these procedures keep you from getting the care you need. If you report the crime to law enforcement within 48 hours, the State of Tennessee's Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund can reimburse you for some of your medical bills, along with mental health counseling, compensation for pain and suffering, and other expenses not covered by insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare. Visit the fund's website at <https://treasury.tn.gov/Services/Claims-and-Risk-Management/Criminal-Injuries-Compensation> or call 615-741-2956 for more details.

## **Recovery**

Recovering from the trauma of a sexual assault is an ongoing process, and that process is different from one person to the next.

Therapy can help you deal with the powerful emotions you are experiencing, helping to restore your sense of order and confidence. If you don't want to try counseling, you can share your experiences with a friend or someone else you trust.

The decision to file charges and prosecute your attacker may also be part of your process. But keep in mind that the criminal justice process is not always quick or easy, and it doesn't always get you the results you want. YHTP's *Crime Survivors Guide* can provide you with a victim's perspective of "the system" and what you can do to get the best possible outcome.

Some survivors find that speaking out about their experience helps. It's an opportunity to tell the story in your own words while raising awareness about the problem of sexual assault. But you shouldn't feel compelled to talk publicly about your ordeal unless you are reasonably comfortable doing so.

(10)

## Supporting Victims of Sexual Assault



Regardless of whether the assault happened just yesterday or years ago, every survivor deserves to be heard and supported. The conversation about sexual assault and abuse is changing—people are more willing to speak out, and to listen. Here's how you can help.

### Learn the facts about sexual assault.

- Sexual assault is often more about power and control than just sex.
- Sexual assault may be committed by someone the victim knows and trusts.
- The trauma associated with sexual assault can be lifelong. The person affected may lose the ability to trust other people. They may develop post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, or depression.

### **Understand and acknowledge the survivor's fears and concerns.**

- Rapists rely on social stigma and victim-blaming to ensure they will never be caught or punished for their crimes. Sometimes the things people say, intentionally or not, make it harder for people to speak out about what happened to them. Avoid asking too many prying questions that would make the survivor relive the incident.
- Survivors of sexual assault may feel ashamed of what happened. They may blame themselves for the incident. They may worry that no one will believe them. You need to help your loved one understand that you do believe them, that they did not deserve this, and that you are there to help them as much as you can.
- The process of reporting a sexual assault and following it through to a possible conviction can be long and difficult. Still, you should encourage someone who has been assaulted to go to the police as soon as possible. Again, you may find the *Crime Survivors Guide* published by YHTP (and available on our website) a helpful guide to the victim's role in crime reporting and prosecution.

### **Listen to the survivor, and make sure they get the help they need.**

- When they need someone to talk to, be that person for as long as it takes. Healing is not linear—things can happen to people that reopen old wounds and bring back bad memories.
- Encourage them to seek counseling, preferably with a therapist who specializes in helping victims of sexual trauma.
- You don't have to be a victim to call the National Sexual Assault Hotline (see page 19). The hotline can provide you with information and guidance on helping your loved one recover from their experience.

Sexual assault can ruin someone's life... but it doesn't have to. More importantly, **it shouldn't**. With your help and understanding, you can make sure that sexual assault survivors can find the strength to heal.

## The Problem of Rape Culture

Survivors and activists are speaking out against media and popular culture that treats women as objects, or that excuses and trivializes sexual violence. These media create a society that disregards women's rights and safety while pressuring men to fit a hypermasculine ideal that encourages sexual assault.

Examples of rape culture include (but are not limited to):

- Blaming the victim ("She asked for it!" "What did she expect wearing a skirt that short?" "She went home with him. What did she think was going to happen?")
- Trivializing sexual assault ("Boys will be boys!")
- Jokes about sexual assault
- Trivializing (or flippantly using) the word "rape" ("Our team totally got raped by the ref during that game" or "I got raped by that quiz")
- Tolerating sexual harassment
- Inflating statistics about false rape reports
- Scrutinizing an assault survivor's dress, mental state, motives, and history
- Gratuitous gendered violence in mass media
- Unconditionally supporting athletes and celebrities accused of sexual assault while dismissing the accusers ("She just wants his money!" or "She's trying to destroy his career!")
- Defining "manhood" as dominant and sexually aggressive
- Defining "womanhood" as submissive and sexually passive
- Pressuring men and boys to "score"
- Pressuring women and girls to not appear "cold"
- Assuming that only promiscuous women get raped
- Assuming that men don't get raped or that only "weak" men get raped
- Refusing to take rape accusations seriously or outright dismissing the accusers as lying
- Teaching women to avoid sexual assault without teaching men about consent

This section was adapted from Marshall University Women's Center. "Rape Culture." Accessed August 29, 2019, <https://www.marshall.edu/wcenter/sexual-assault/rape-culture>. Also see Ridgway, Shannon. "25 Everyday Examples of Rape Culture." Last updated March 10, 2014, <https://everydayfeminism.com/2014/03/examples-of-rape-culture>

**You have the power** to change the culture.

- Avoid using language that objectifies or degrades women.
- Speak out if you hear someone else making comments or jokes trivializing sexual assault.
- Think critically about the media's messages about women, men, relationships, and violence.
- Respect other people's physical space, even in casual situations.
- Let survivors know that it is not their fault and that they can talk to you.
- Hold abusers accountable for their actions. Don't let them make excuses like blaming the victim, alcohol, or drugs for their behavior.
- Always communicate clearly with sexual partners... and do not assume consent.
- Decide for yourself what it means to be a man or a woman. Don't let other people's stereotypes or ideas about how a man or woman acts shape your actions.



Richard Potts, Creative Commons

The Tennessee Department of Health's Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) program is a federally funded program that focuses on preventing sexual violence. It has programs and strategies focusing on female-identified athletes, men and boys' groups, students, bar/restaurant owners and staff. For more information, see <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/fhw/vipp/rape-prevention-education.html>

## Resources and Information

### **National**

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network \_\_\_\_\_ 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)  
[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

America's largest anti-sexual violence organization, RAINN works to help survivors, educate the public, and improve public policy. Operators of the National Sexual Assault Hotline. Website includes live chat with trained counselors.

National Domestic Violence Hotline \_\_\_\_\_ 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
[thehotline.org](http://thehotline.org)

A 24-hour confidential service for survivors, victims and those effected by domestic violence, intimate partner violence and relationship abuse. Website includes live chat with trained counselors.

VictimConnect Resource Center \_\_\_\_\_ 1-855-4-VICTIM (484-2846)  
[victimconnect.org](http://victimconnect.org)

A referral helpline where crime victims can learn about their options confidentially and compassionately. Offers a hotline, online chat, and web-based information and service referrals. A program of the National Center for Victims of Crime.

Men Can Stop Rape \_\_\_\_\_ 202-265-6530  
[mcsr.org](http://mcsr.org)

Nationally regarded non-profit that educates boys and young men about sexual assault, consent, and bystander intervention. Check out the "Ways to Help" section for downloadable handouts to start conversations and guidance on developing awareness efforts for your school and community.

VAWnet \_\_\_\_\_ [vawnet.org](http://vawnet.org)

An online resource library on gender-based violence, including sexual assault. A project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline \_\_\_\_\_ 1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Provided here as a general resource in recognition of the anxiety and trauma associated with sexual assault, which can lead to suicidal impulses and behavior. Website includes live chat with trained counselors.

Crisis Text Line \_\_\_\_\_ text TN to 741741

Free, 24/7 crisis support for people dealing with mental health issues, bullying, abuse, body issues, grief, substance abuse, and LGBTQ issues.

## **Tennessee**

Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence

[tncoalition.org](http://tncoalition.org) \_\_\_\_\_ 615-386-9406 or 1-800-289-9018

Find agencies across Tennessee that can help with emergency housing, legal advocacy, counseling, and other services for survivors of violence.

Tennessee Domestic Violence Helpline \_\_\_\_\_ 1-800-356-6767

Counselors are available 24/7 to help with referrals and supportive listening, and help with safety planning.

Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program \_\_\_\_\_ 615-253-3043

[sos.tn.gov/SafeAtHome](http://sos.tn.gov/SafeAtHome)

Safe at Home protects the confidentiality of a victim's address on public records and provides an official substitute address. It keeps victims of domestic abuse, stalking, human trafficking, or sexual offenses safe from abusers and offenders who might try to track them down. Ask an advocate at your local Family Safety Center or Sexual Assault Center to help you with the application and qualification process.

## **Local Listings by County**

All of these agencies provide services and resources for victims of sexual assault and abuse.

If you attend a college or university, you may also find help at its women's center or student health center.

### **Anderson County**

Sexual Assault Center of East Tennessee: 865-522-7273

### **Bedford County**

Haven of Hope: 931-680-3011 or 800-435-7739

### **Benton County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

### **Bledsoe County**

Avalon Center: 931-456-0747

### **Blount County**

Sexual Assault Center of East Tennessee: 865-522-7273

## Resources and Information (continued)

### **Bradley County**

Family Resource Agency: 423-476-9339

### **Campbell County**

Sexual Assault Center of East Tennessee: 865-522-7273

### **Cannon County**

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Center: 615-494-9262

### **Carroll County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

### **Carter County**

The Crisis Center: 276-466-2312

### **Chester County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

### **Clay County**

Genesis House: 931-525-1637

### **Cocke County**

Sexual Assault Center of East Tennessee: 865-522-7273

### **Coffee County**

Haven of Hope: 931-680-3011 or 800-435-7739

### **Cheatham County**

Sexual Assault Center, Clarksville office: 931-241-4143

### **Crockett County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

### **Cumberland County**

Avalon Center: 931-456-0747

### **Davidson County**

Sexual Assault Center, Nashville office: 615-259-9055

### **Decatur County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

**Dekalb County**

Genesis House: 931-525-1637

**Dickson County**

Sexual Assault Center, Clarksville office: 931-241-4143

**Dyer County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

**Fentress County**

Avalon Center: 931-456-0747

**Franklin County**

Haven of Hope: 931-680-3011 or 800-435-7739

**Gibson County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

**Giles County**

Center of Hope: 931-381-8580

**Greene County**

The Crisis Center: 276-466-2312

**Hamilton County**

Partnership for Families, Children and Adults: 423-755-2822

**Hancock County**

The Crisis Center: 276-466-2312

**Hardeman County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

**Hardin County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

**Hawkins County**

The Crisis Center: 276-466-2312

**Haywood County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

## Resources and Information (continued)

### Henderson County

WRAP: 731-668-0411

### Henry County

WRAP: 731-668-0411

### Hickman County

Center of Hope: 931-381-8580

### Houston County

Sexual Assault Center, Clarksville office: 931-241-4143

### Jackson County

Genesis House: 931-525-1637

### Jefferson County

Sexual Assault Center of East Tennessee: 865-522-7273

### Johnson County

The Crisis Center: 276-466-2312

### Knox County

Sexual Assault Center of East Tennessee: 865-522-7273

### Lake County

WRAP: 731-668-0411

### Lauderdale County

WRAP: 731-668-0411

### Lawrence County

Center of Hope: 931-381-8580

### Lewis County

Center of Hope: 931-381-8580

### Lincoln County

Haven of Hope: 931-680-3011 or 800-435-7739

### Loudon County

Sexual Assault Center of East Tennessee: 865-522-7273

**Macon County**

Genesis House: 931-525-1637

**Madison County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

**Marion County**

Partnership for Families, Children and Adults: 423-755-2822

**Marshall County**

Center of Hope: 931-381-8580

Haven of Hope: 931-680-3011 or 800-435-7739

**Maury County**

Center of Hope: 931-381-8580

**McMinn County**

The HOPE Center: 423-745-5298

**McNairy County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

**Meigs County**

The HOPE Center: 423-745-5298

**Monroe County**

The HOPE Center: 423-745-5298

Sexual Assault Center of East Tennessee: 865-522-7273

**Montgomery County**

Sexual Assault Center, Nashville office: 615-259-9055

**Moore County**

Haven of Hope: 931-680-3011 or 800-435-7739

**Morgan County**

Avalon Center: 931-456-0747

**Obion County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

## Resources and Information (continued)

### Overton County

Genesis House: 931-525-1637

### Perry County

Center of Hope: 931-381-8580

### Pickett County

Genesis House: 931-525-1637

### Polk County

Family Resource Agency: 423-476-9339

### Putnam County

Genesis House: 800-707-5197

### Rhea County

Family Resource Agency: 423-476-9339

### Roane County

Sexual Assault Center of East Tennessee: 865-522-7273

### Robertson County

Sexual Assault Center, Nashville office: 615-259-9055

### Rutherford County

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Center: 615-494-9262

Sexual Assault Center, Nashville office: 615-259-9055

### Sevier County

Sexual Assault Center of East Tennessee: 865-522-7273

### Shelby County

Shelby County Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center: 901-222-4350

### Smith County

Genesis House: 800-707-5197

### Stewart County

Sexual Assault Center, Clarksville office: 800-879-1999

### Sullivan County

The Crisis Center: 276-466-2312

**Sumner County**

Sexual Assault Center, Nashville office: 615-259-9055

**Tipton County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

**Trousdale County**

Sexual Assault Center, Nashville office: 615-259-9055

**Van Buren County**

Avalon Center: 931-456-0747

**Washington County**

The Crisis Center: 276-466-2312

**Wayne County**

Center of Hope: 931-381-8580

**Weakley County**

WRAP: 731-668-0411

**White County**

Genesis House: 931-525-1637

**Wilson County**

Sexual Assault Center, Nashville office: 615-259-9055

**Williamson County**

Center of Hope: 931-381-8580

Sexual Assault Center, Nashville office: 615-259-9055

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