

AFTER SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault is a trauma that threatens our sense of safety in the world. There are a range of responses that survivors have, and these can cause survivors to fear that they are going crazy. There is nothing wrong with you; these are normal responses to abnormal situations.

No matter when the sexual assault happened, you may question why your reactions are still strong, or may have been told you should be "over it" by now. There is no time limit on the trauma caused by sexual assault- no matter when or how it occurs!

Reaching out for help may help "normalize" the effects and reduce any isolation that you may feel, as well as, be a source of suggestions for coping and healing.

At 2nd Chance, you will be heard and believed.

SUGGESTED READING:

Recovering From Rape by Linda Ledray

I Can't Get Over It: A Handbook for Trauma Survivors by Aphrodite Matsakis

The Courage to Heal by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis

HELPFUL WEBSITES:

www.2ndChanceInc.org

www.rainn.org

www.pandys.org

2ND CHANCE PROVIDES 24-HOUR CRISIS INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN CALHOUN, CLEBURNE, CHEROKEE, ETOWAH, RANDOLPH, AND TALLADEGA COUNTIES.

2ND CHANCE

P.O. Box 2714

ANNISTON, AL 36202

256-236-7381

24-HOUR CRISIS HOTLINES:
256-236-7233 OR 800-656-4673

WWW.2NDCHANCEINC.ORG

SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS:

24-HOUR CRISIS RESPONSE

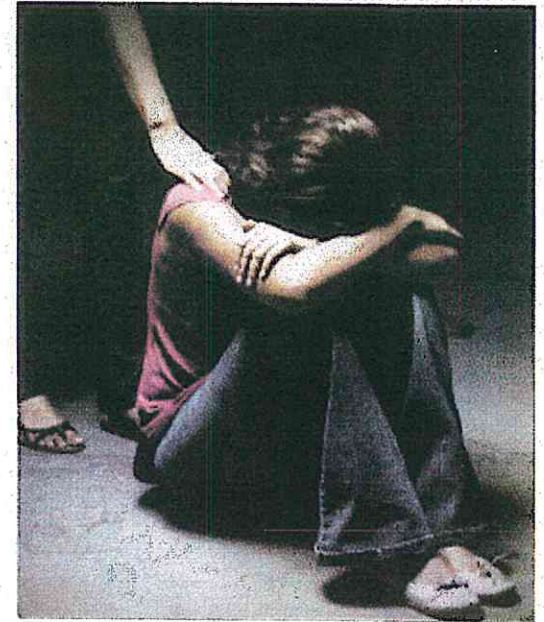
FORENSIC EXAM ADVOCACY

FREE COUNSELING &
SUPPORT GROUPS

COURT ADVOCACY

EMERGENCY SHELTER

COMMON FEELINGS AFTER SEXUAL ASSAULT



FOR SURVIVORS

2nd Chance

24-hour local crisis line

256-236-7233

You are not alone.

SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT MAY EXPERIENCE SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Nightmares about the sexual assault, or that contain the same feelings of dread and powerlessness
- Flashbacks or mental pictures, emotions, smells, or physical feelings associated with the assault
- Triggers where situations, words, objects, or others remind them of the sexual assault and may cause them to feel as if it's happening again
- A sense that they will never be clean again
- Fear and mistrust of individuals that remind them of the perpetrator
- A range of physical symptoms, such as headaches, nausea, or back pain
- Sexual dysfunction
- Eating disorders such as Anorexia or Bulimia
- A sense of powerlessness and helplessness
- Feelings of self-blame for "allowing" the assault to happen



CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE

Childhood sexual abuse is a sadly common phenomenon. No matter if it happened only once or happened many times, some survivors feel the effects for many years. These effects may include:

- A feeling of being childlike
- Fear of telling- even if the abuse happened a long time ago, the abuser's threats about telling can still feel very real
- A feeling that abuse is a necessary cost of being loved, if an abuser cloaks the abuse in affection
- A feeling that sex is all they are good for, and that they are not deserving of a healthy sexual relationship
- A feeling of worthlessness if they were not protected
- Teenage pregnancy
- Teenage drug and alcohol addiction as a way of distancing themselves from the pain caused by the assault
- Overwhelming grief and a sense of betrayal if they loved the abuser
- Difficulty setting boundaries

MALE RAPE

Despite myths that deny the problem of sexual assault against men, one out of six boys will be sexually assaulted by the time they reach 18. Male survivors of child sexual abuse or adult rape may have specific responses such as:

- Shame as a result of society's wrong expectations that boys and men "should" be able to protect themselves
- Isolation due to myths that sexual assault doesn't happen to boys or men
- Fear of ridicule and disbelief if the abuser was a woman
- Aggressive "acting out" as a way of proving that they are "real men"

MARITAL RAPE

Survivors of partner rape may experience any of the following:

- Entrapment- for example, they may be financially dependent on their partner, or may feel that it is unsafe to leave
- Shame for loving their perpetrator
- Intense fear that the sexual assault may happen again
- Anger and betrayal