



**Mount  
Sinai**

**SAVI**

Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program

## **COMMON REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT**

Sexual assault, which includes rape and sexual harassment, is a violation of one's body and sense of safety in the world. Often the assault includes overt violence or threats of violence, and is or may be experienced as, a life-threatening event. Although reactions to sexual assault vary, some common reactions are listed below. All reactions and feelings are normal.

**SHOCK:** Appearing dazed, confused, disconnected or numb.

**DISBELIEF:** Experiencing a sense of unreality, dissociation from the experience: "Did this really happen to me?"

**EMBARRASSMENT:** Reluctant to notify family or friends for fear of how they will react.

**SHAME:** Feeling dirty, unclean in the eyes of others, "damaged goods".

**SELF-BLAME:** Going over and over what they could have done differently to prevent the assault; assuming they were responsible for the assault.

**SLEEP DISTURBANCES:** Sleeplessness, nightmares, interrupted sleep or restlessness.

**EATING DISTURBANCES:** Eating too much or little to dull the pain or regain control over their body.

**GUILT:** "I must deserve this because..."

**DEPRESSION:** Feeling hopeless, fatigued, finding little interest in things previously enjoyed.

**LOSS OF CONTROL:** Feeling vulnerable, insecure, indecisive, exposed.

**POOR CONCENTRATION:** Inability to concentrate or focus on things for too long.

**DENIAL:** Blocking out the experience or aspects of the experience as if it had not occurred.

**FEAR:** Fearing recurrence, retaliation. Fear for safety and reluctance to go out.

**ANXIETY:** Nervousness, apprehension and physical symptoms such as muscle tension, sleep disturbances, nausea, and/or stomach problems.

**THOUGHTS OR ATTEMPTS OF SUICIDE:** Over 30% of survivors surveyed made at least one suicide attempt or experienced suicidal thoughts.

**ANGER:** Anger towards the perpetrator or towards those who haven't been supportive. Anger may be inhibited, redirected to the self, or displaced onto innocent others seen as safer targets.

**SEXUAL DISTURBANCE:** May temporarily lose interest in sexual activity or become hypersexual.

**SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL:** May terminate friendships or refuse to participate in social activities.

**If you need further assistance please contact SAVI at (212) 423-2140**

\*Adapted from material developed by Saint Vincent's Hospital Rape Crisis Program



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## Survivor Resources

### **Mount Sinai Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention (SAVI) Program | 212-423-2140**

Free counseling, emergency department advocacy, training and support to survivors and co-survivors

### **Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center | 212-423-3000**

Wellness care, medical treatment, counseling, etc. (ages 10-22)

### **Day One | 1-800-214-4150**

Youth-oriented community education, supportive services, legal advocacy and leadership development.

### **Planned Parenthood of NYC | 1-800-230-PLAN**

Reproductive health services for adults and adolescents; sliding-fee scale.

### **The Anti-Violence Project | 212-714-1141**

Provides in-the-moment support, safety planning and connects LGBTQ+ with resources

### **WomanKind | 1-888-888-7702**

24-hour free crisis helpline with staff fluent in 18+ Asian languages

### **Safe Horizon | 212-227-3000 (Sexual Assault)**

Patient advocacy, legal support, shelter placement

### **Emergency Departments for Medical Follow-up Care**

[www.svfreenyc.org](http://www.svfreenyc.org)

### **NYC WELL**

**(800) NYC-WELL – press 2 (English), 3 (Spanish), 4 (Mandarin)**

City-wide Multilingual and multicultural helpline for crisis intervention, Mobile crisis intervention team

### **NYPD Special Victims Hotline | (212) 267-RAPE**

Specially trained female detectives answer your hypothetical questions 24 hours/day

### **Love is Respect Hotline | 1 (866) 331-9474**

Trained peer advocates are available 24/7/365 to offer education, support and advocacy to teens and young adults who have questions or concerns about their dating relationships.

## Survivor Options

### Medical

#### **General Medical Exam**

Every survivor can choose to be examined and treated for injuries and infections.

Best Option: SAFE Centers of Excellence – visit [www.svfreenyc.org](http://www.svfreenyc.org) for a list.

#### **Medication Options**

HIV PEP: up to 36 hours after exposure

Emergency Contraception: 72 - 120 hours after the sexual assault

\*Never be afraid to ask questions of your medical team\*

### Reporting and Legal

#### **Evidence Collection & Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault Kits**

Done at the hospital up to 96 hours after the incident

Stored for 20 years

Evidence Collection does not require a Police Report

#### **Filing a Police Report**

Survivor can choose to report or not report

Can be done at any stage - tomorrow, next month, never

### How to Support a Survivor

Listen...Validate...Believe

#### **Don'ts**

victim blame, interview/quiz, force them to do anything they do not want to do at that time

#### **Do's**

give power back, remember that not all survivors will react in the same way, remind them of available resources they can choose

#### **What a survivor needs to hear...**

This is not your fault. I believe you. Help is available to you...

[www.mssm.edu/savi](http://www.mssm.edu/savi) | 212-423-2140