

Even though the assault is over your friend may suffer from trauma symptoms.

People respond to sexual assault in many different ways ranging from extreme calm (numb) to extreme agitation.

Your friend may experience any or all of the following reactions:

- Shock
- Denial
- Nightmares
- Sleeplessness
- Intrusive memories about the assault
- Inability to concentrate
- Feelings of guilt and despair
- Depression
- Fear and anxiety
- Self-blame
- Anger

Some of these reactions may be short-lived; 4-6 weeks is considered a normal reaction to trauma.

Some reactions can be troubling for months or years. In either case, it is important to know that there is help available.

ON CAMPUS

Victim Empowerment Program
24-Hour Hotline.....305 348-3000
Website.....vep.fiu.edu

Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.....305 348-3939
University Police Department MMC305 348-2626
University Police Department BBC305 919-5559
Counseling & Psychological Services MMC.....305 348-2277
Counseling & Psychological Services BBC.....305 919-5305

OFF CAMPUS

Fla. Council Against Sexual Violence Information Line.....1-888-856-RAPE
Rape Treatment Center.....305 585-5185

*Services of Rape Treatment Center are free of charge to victims of sexual assault, whether or not victim wishes to report to police.

The Victim Empowerment Program is a 24-hour confidential service providing support, referral, and information for FIU students, faculty, staff, and university visitors who have been victims of actual or threatened violence.

Services are available for all types of violence, including dating/domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, hazing and hate crimes.

Our counselors are mental health professionals and are available to provide emotional support, information, resources and to accompany clients to the hospital, police, court or other appointments if desired; to help regarding emergency, medical, academic and legal procedures; to request academic accommodations; and to assist with the student conduct process.

All victims have the right to report crimes to police. However, police reports are not required to receive services.

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND WHO HAS BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

FIU | Student Affairs
Counseling and Psychological Services
Victim Empowerment Program

VEP.FIU.EDU
305-348-3000

 **@FIU_VEP**



DO'S

- Do believe your friend. People rarely lie about rape or assault.
- Do listen to your friend and concentrate on understanding her or his feelings, without giving an opinion.
- Do empower your friend to make her/his own decisions. Help your friend explore her/his opinions but do not make decisions for her/him. Among the complex decisions your friend will have to make are whether to report the assault to police and whether to press charges. Support your friend in her/his decisions.
- Do reassure your friend. For example, you might say: "I believe you" or "this is not your fault," "I'm sorry this happened to you, what can I do to help you?"
- Do offer to accompany your friend if he or she decides to seek medical attention, counseling or go to the police. Medical attention is important because there are may be internal injuries or exposure to sexually transmitted diseases. In Florida, doctors and nurses will not report rape to police unless asked by the patient.
- Do remind your friend, if she/he is seeking medical care within 72 hours of the assault, that it is important not to bathe, eat, drink, urinate or wash the clothing that was worn at the time of the assault. Any clothing worn at the time of the assault should be stored in a paper bag and taken to the hospital.
- Do remind your friend that rape is always the rapist's fault, not the victim's.

DONT'S

- Don't ask questions that imply the rape was your friend's fault, such as "Why did you go to his room?" "Why didn't you scream?" This blames the victim for the rapist's actions.
- Don't touch or hug your friend unless you are sure he/she is comfortable with contact.
- Don't act in ways that are upsetting to your friend. Avoid phrases like, "if I could find the creep, I'd kill him." Although you may be trying to be supportive, that type of comment might upset your friend even more, because of fear of retribution from the rapist and loss of control about what will happen next.
- Don't tell your friend what to do; rather, help her or him explore the options.
- In cases of date or acquaintance rape, don't be frustrated if your friend doesn't express anger right away. It may take time to come to terms with what has happened.

- Help your friend learn about, recognize, and seek treatment for signs of rape trauma.
- Staff at FIU CAPS Victim Empowerment Program can provide confidential consultation about options, and can go with the survivor to get medical care or other desired services. Urgent assistance is available 24-hours everyday. However, dial 911 for life threatening emergencies.

YOU CAN'T DO EVERYTHING

Despite your best intentions, you need to realize that there are limits to what a friend can do to help. At times, your friend may not want to deal with the rape, and, as a result, may even avoid you. If you need to express feelings your friend doesn't want to hear, find a trustworthy confidant or counselor.

Counselors at FIU CAPS Victim Empowerment Program can help with these "secondary" effects of trauma. Sometimes you will need time off from helping; when you should help your friend to find other support. No matter how much support you are able to give your friend, a counselor with expertise in treating victims of rape and sexual assault can be important to your friend's recovery.



24 Hour Emergency Hotline
305.348.3000