



Sugati Publications Product 7--Booklet
Coping with Sexual Assault, For Professionals/Volunteers (44 pgs)

A guide for professionals and volunteers who work with victims of sexual assault

Table of Contents

Some important things you should know

- Understanding more about sexual assault survivors
- Some of the different types of sexual victimization

Working with someone who was recently sexually assaulted

- Talking about their options: What to do and who to tell
- Some common reactions after a sexual assault
- The impact on relationships with friends and family

Information that might be helpful for you to know: Common medical concerns

- Medical treatment options
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy
- Alcohol and other drugs in sexual assault and date rape drugs

More information that might be helpful for you to know: The Criminal Justice Process

- Reporting what happened
- The police interview and evidence collection
- Polygraph and voice stress tests

Overview of the court process

- Testifying in court
- Victims' rights

If it has been awhile since the sexual assault

- Some common reactions and changes
- Concerns about relationships, dating and sex
- Helping family and friends to understand better

Other issues to consider when working with sexual assault victims

- Reporting requirements
- Working with minors
- Dating violence
- Domestic violence or marital rape
- Mental health and physical warning signs
- Ethical and boundary considerations

Working with parents, loved ones or friends of someone who was raped

- A message to parents if your teen was abused
- How to help a friend or loved one

When the day is over: Taking care of yourself

- Where to go for more information or assistance
- National and state resources by phone and on the Internet

A few final tips for working with sexual assault victims

Excerpts from the book

A few final tips for working with sexual assault victims

Note: These tips and all other information in this booklet about rape victims apply to men as well as women, and to heterosexuals, homosexuals, and victims of all ages, races and abilities.

Remember, you may be the first (or only) person the victim talks to about the sexual assault. How you respond will be significant in her recovery. Let her know you are there to support her with whatever her decisions may be regarding criminal charges, medical care or counseling.

Genuinely listen to what she has to say. Be patient, it may take time for her to respond. Let her start where she needs to start when she tells you about what happened. Ask what she needs, especially if it was a recent sexual assault.

Allow her to express whatever feelings she may be experiencing: anger, sadness, hurt, fear, shame, numbness. Tell her it is normal to have any of these feelings after a sexual assault.

Don't ever tell a rape victim that you need to know all of the details of what happened or that they need to talk about the rape experience in order to heal. Some rape victims don't want to re-tell the details of the trauma they endured; yet others may need to do so as a way of healing themselves. The only people who need to know the details of the incident are law enforcement and the prosecutors (unless the case goes to trial and the victim will have to testify in court). However, if the victim wants or needs to tell you the details of what happened, be open to hearing what she has to say.

Don't make judgments about what she did or did not do during the sexual assault. Empower her to take her life back to be in charge of all of her decisions.

Know your own limits. This is hard work and it can be very difficult to work so closely with someone who has been victimized in this way. Seek support when you need it.

Treat all rape victims the way you would want your loved one to be treated if it happened to them— with respect, compassion and dignity.

-
- ❖ Your suggestions, reviews or feedback for improving the next edition of this booklet are welcome and appreciated. Please send comments to the author via e-mail or T.S. Nelson, Sugati Publications, P.O. Box 136 , Oxford , OH 45056.
 - ❖ To share comments about the personal or professional impact of vicarious trauma among helping professionals and volunteers for a future publication, please contact the author by e-mail. All queries will remain confidential or anonymous, if you prefer. Thank you!

Copyright © Sugati Publications. All rights reserved.

www.sugati.org