

Sexual assault is a crime of violence, power, and control.

It occurs when a person is forced or threatened into sexual contact against his or her will.

Commonly referred to as rape, sexual assault is the most under-reported crime in the United States. It is estimated that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men in the U.S. will be sexually assaulted sometime during their lifetime. The majority of rapes are committed by someone the victim knows – a date, a neighbor, a co-worker, a family member, a spouse.

The victim is not to blame for what happened, no matter who committed the crime.

An assault can happen to anyone. Sexual assaults can occur between married partners. Gays and lesbians may also be sexually assaulted by their partners. No matter how someone chooses to dress or act, that person is not to blame for being assaulted.

It is sexual assault if:

- You say “**no**” but are forced to have any type of sexual contact
- You are not able to say “**no**” because of alcohol, drugs, or a disability

Sexual assault by someone the victim knows is sometimes called “date” or “acquaintance” rape. It is just as violent, just as degrading, and often more traumatic than rape by a stranger. Rape or sexual assault by a victim’s husband or wife is extremely difficult for the victim. Sexual expression of love is one thing, but forced, brutalized sex is another. **No one consents to violence by marrying nor do they waive their right to protection.**

Sexual assault is never the victim’s fault!

Sexual assault includes:

- rape
- unwanted sexual touching
- incest
- sexual harassment
- statutory rape (sexual contact with minors, whether consensual or not)

Other sexual crimes includes:

- sexting / use of cell phone to send or receive sexual pictures & messages
- Voyeurism / "Peeping Tom"
- solicitation of minors over the Internet

If you are raped or sexually assaulted:

- **Get to a place that is safe.**
- **Call a friend, relative and/or a crisis line victim advocate.**
- **Seek medical attention.**
- **Call law enforcement to file a report, press charges, or get assistance.**
- **If you do report the crime, call as soon as possible. Do not wash, shower, or change clothes so that evidence can be collected.**
- **Seek emotional support. Consider counseling to help you with the trauma caused by the assault.**
- **Remember that you are not alone! Albemarle Hopeline offers free, confidential services to victims of sexual and domestic violence.**

If you have been sexually assaulted, you should consider medical attention. You may experience bruising, soreness, bladder infections, nausea and/or vomiting. Sexual assault can result in unplanned pregnancy or infection with a sexually transmitted disease, such as herpes or HIV. A doctor can treat your injuries, check to see if there is any permanent damage, and test for pregnancy and/or disease. The doctor will probably ask what happened and who did it. Different doctors and hospitals have different policies about reporting sexual violence to the police. You can choose not to speak to the police, but your report could help protect others from this terrible crime.

We can help! One of our Trauma Team members can meet you at the hospital to offer free, confidential information & support.

Albemarle Hopeline

24-Hour Crisis Line

252-338-3011