

## Sexual Assault can happen to anyone

You are not alone; many women have experienced sexual assault. It is not your fault, no matter what the circumstances; you do not deserve to be raped.

There are many myths in society that blame the victim for what happened such as;

- She asked for it
- She was drunk
- She was out alone
- She was wearing next to nothing

Such statements can blame the victim.

You may begin to question yourself about these things such as “If I only didn’t drink too much” or “I shouldn’t have been out alone”. You may experience feelings of guilt and shame, and question yourself about things you could have done to have prevented being raped.

It is important to remember that;

**No one deserves to be raped**

**The responsibility is that of the rapists**



## The Women's Centre

1800 657 501 24 Hr Free Call  
In 07 47 Area

Ph 07 4775 7555

Fax 07 4779 2959

email: [nqcws@thewomenscentre.org.au](mailto:nqcws@thewomenscentre.org.au)

[www.thewomenscentre.org.au](http://www.thewomenscentre.org.au)

Funded by Queensland Health and Department of Communities

## FREE Services Provided

24 hour Support line  
Sexual assault support service and counselling  
Women's Health Service  
Health Promotion  
Shelter Referral  
Ongoing Counselling  
Therapeutic Groups  
Networking  
Workshops  
Donations - bread/ food packages (when available)  
Community Education  
Information and Referral  
Internet and Telephone facilities  
Feel free to come in, relax and have a cuppa

For further information please contact the  
Women's Centre 4775 7555

## Other Important Numbers

NQ Domestic Violence Resource Service (NQDVRs)  
07 4721 2888  
1800 811 811 - 24 Hrs Free Call

NQ Women's Legal Service  
07 4772 5400

Women's Health Information Line  
1800 017 676 Free Call

Police (if you are in immediate danger)  
000

Townsville Hospital  
4796 1111

NQCWS-06

**The Women's Centre acknowledges the  
traditional custodians of the land**

## The Women's Centre



**Healing  
after  
Sexual Assault**

50 - 52 Patrick Street Aitkenvale  
ph 4775 7555 Free Call 1800 657 501  
[www.thewomenscentre.org.au](http://www.thewomenscentre.org.au)

## What you may be feeling

When you have been sexually assaulted, it can be a very difficult and stressful time.

You may experience many different feelings and thoughts.

Your behaviours might change.

You may find yourself wanting to forget the assault and avoid any discussion about it.

You may make major unplanned changes to your lifestyle, or continue on as usual.

You may feel confused.

Decisions might be difficult to make.

You may feel that your life is disorganized, and that you forget things.

*Remember that you have been through a very traumatic experience*

*You need to take special care of yourself*

Some of the common effects of sexual assault:

- Feeling dirty
- Guilt
- Fear
- Depression
- Confusion
- Repressed anger and hostility
- Inability to form trusting relationships
- Nightmares and sleep disturbances
- Sexual problems
- Suicidal
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse

## Talking About it

Talking about the assault may help you to heal, but may also be really difficult.

It's common to want to avoid conversations and situations that may remind you of the assault.

You may experience just wanting to forget the assault and get on with life.

However you may need to deal with fears and feelings in order to heal and regain a sense of control over your life to move forward.

Talking with someone who you trust, a friend, family member, or counsellor, can assist in your healing journey.

## Ways to take care of yourself

- Get support from friends and family who you trust
- Set boundaries by only disclosing information that feels safe for you to reveal
- Use stress reduction techniques
- Discover your playful and creative self
- Give yourself permission to take time out to reflect and relax especially during times that you feel stressed or unsafe
- Reading can be a relaxing and healing activity
- Consider writing or keeping a journal as a way of expressing thoughts and feelings

## Recovery from sexual assault

**can be a long journey.**

**If you have never talked with anyone**

**about what happened,**

**you may decide**

**now is a good time to begin.**

## Supporting a rape survivor

**The most important help you can offer is to support a rape survivor in her chosen approach to healing.**

**Let her know clearly what it is that you can offer and what other resources are around. Be open and supportive in discussing her options, but avoid telling her what to do.**

In supporting a rape survivor, it is important to:

- believe the survivor
- recognise the trauma she's been through and its lasting effects
- reaffirm her feelings - pain, fear, anger, and shame, for example are all natural responses
- respect that her healing takes time, space and energy
- respect that she may wish to focus solely on herself and her needs for a while
- encourage her to seek a variety of resources that feel right for her
- ask her what she needs from you
- help on a practical level
- seek support for yourself (if that's okay with her)
- respect her decisions

In supporting a rape survivor, you need to avoid:

- taking charge
- ignoring or smoothing over the effects of rape
- devaluing the pain she is feeling
- blaming her
- focusing or sympathising with the offender
- insisting she give you details of the circumstances of the rape
- offering support you can't give
- expecting your reaction to be her first priority