



the women's centre

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Funded by Department of Communities

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 false beliefs in society that try to blame the victim for what happened and try to shift the responsibility away from the perpetrator.

Statements such as:

- She asked for it
- She was drunk
- She was out alone
- She was wearing revealing clothing can try to blame the victim.

You may begin to question yourself about these things, such as

"If only I 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 prevent yourself being raped.

It is important to remember that;

**No one deserves
to be raped**

The responsibility is that of the rapists

FREE Services

Counselling Service

Women's Health Service

Sexual Assault Support Service

Specialist Homelessness Service

Information and Referral

Shelter Referral

Ongoing Counselling

Therapeutic Groups

Workshops

Community Education

Drop in Internet and Telephone facilities

Donations - bread/clothes

No appointment needed to see the drop-in counsellor

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

Other Important Numbers

NQ Domestic Violence Resource Service (NQDVRS)

07 4721 2888

NQ Women's Legal Service

07 4772 5400

Women's Health Information Line

1800 017 676 Free Call

DVConnect Women's line

1800 811 811 - 24 Hrs Free call

Healing after Sexual Assault

***Recovery from sexual assault
can be a long journey.***

***If you have never talked about
how this has affected you,***

you may decide now

is a good time to begin.

There is hope

You can heal



NQCWS-08

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

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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 with someone

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

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, 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 own 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