



Sexual Assault

Rape/sexual assault is any form of sexual activity where consent is not willingly given. It includes anything from touching to penetration.

Consent is intelligent, knowing, and voluntary and does not include coerced submission. Failure by the victim to offer physical resistance to the offender does not mean consent was given.

Rape is a crime:

- Even if the individual knows the offender, including family, friends, co-workers, and intimate partners.
- Even if the survivor does not fight back or is threatened or coerced into participating.
- Even if the survivor is unconscious or under the influence of drugs or alcohol (illegal, underage, or otherwise).

Anyone can be raped, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, age, etc.

Rape is a traumatic event, and the survivor may experience a wide array of emotions, including fear, shock, confusion, disbelief, embarrassment, shame, guilt, and a tremendous sense of loss. These are all **common reactions** to what has happened.

Getting Help

The single most important step a survivor of rape may take is **telling someone and getting help**, which could include talking with a family member, friend, partner, advocate, counselor, healthcare provider, or law enforcement officer. **An advocate may be contacted immediately after an assault, with or without reporting to the police.**

An advocate can provide:

- All the **options** available to meet the needs of each unique individual, to include reporting or not reporting to the police, participating in a reporting or non-reporting forensic exam, reporting to student conduct, and other resources and services.
- **Crisis intervention**, to include safety planning and emotional support.
- **Education** about the traumatic experience and common reactions to victimization.

Center for Prevention & Advocacy

Emergency: 911 ❤️ 24/7 Advocacy & Support: (504) 286-5289
6801 Press Dr. Suite 242 - Social Work Bldg. ❤️ pacenter@suno.edu
<https://www.suno.edu/page/center-for-prevention-advocacy>

Reporting Options

A survivor of sexual assault can choose whether or not to file a police report. Either way, an advocate can always be reached by calling the **Center for Prevention & Advocacy** at (504) 286-5289. After a brief message, the caller will be connected directly to the on-call advocate who can provide immediate assistance and support.

A survivor can decide to complete a forensic exam, with or without a report to the police. The most important time for obtaining or collecting evidence is the first 72 hours, but a forensic exam can be conducted up to six days after a sexual assault.

If a survivor chooses to complete a forensic exam, this list of suggestions may help with the collection of valuable DNA and other forensic evidence:

- Seek immediate medical attention for serious injuries.
- Do not shower, bathe, douche, or clean any area(s) of the body where there may be DNA or other forensic evidence, including saliva, hair, and other bodily fluids.
- Do not eat, drink, or use the bathroom to avoid losing DNA or other forensic evidence.
- If transported to an emergency room, inform hospital staff that you are the victim of a sexual battery. They should then call a specially trained nurse (called a SANE nurse or Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) to the emergency room to complete a reporting or non-reporting forensic evidence collection kit.
- If immediate medical attention is not needed, an advocate can support and assist with transportation to a certified rape crisis center (Sexual Assault Treatment Center) for the completion of a reporting or non-reporting forensic evidence collection kit.
- If a survivor elects a non-reporting forensic evidence collection kit, the decision to report to the police can be made at a later time, as the kit will be safely stored for a minimum of one year from the date of completion.

If a survivor chooses not to complete a forensic exam, it is still important to obtain medical attention to be examined for injuries, prescribed appropriate medication(s), and scheduled for necessary follow-up screenings. An advocate can assist with emergency medical appointments on-campus in the event a survivor chooses not to complete a forensic exam.