



INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS
OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AND
THEIR FAMILIES

Help is available for all victims of crime



OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES

Focusing on a brighter future

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section One		
INFORMATION FOR ADULT AND CHILD VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT		1-3
INFORMATION FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF ADULT AND CHILD VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT		4-5
Section Two		
MEDICAL CARE		6-9
Section Three		
CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS		10-17
Section Four		
VICTIMS' RIGHTS		18-22
Section Five		
WHERE TO GET HELP AND INFORMATION		23-30
Section Six		
GLOSSARY		31-36

INTRODUCTION

This booklet contains information for you and your loved ones about reactions to sexual assault, what to expect from the hospital process, support services, and the criminal justice system.

Although you may not wish to read the entire booklet now, you may find the information helpful in the future.

If you have any questions about the information in this booklet, you may call a sexual assault counselor/advocate in a town near you. (See pages 23-25 for contact information.)

This edition of this booklet was a collaborative project with the Office of Victim Services, Connecticut Judicial Branch, the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc., with special thanks to Laura Cordes and the members of the Victim/Survivor Advisory Council, and the State of Connecticut Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations.

Note: This booklet contains a Glossary section that provides definitions to certain words that may or may not be familiar to you. Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) section numbers are shown in brackets [].

Section One

INFORMATION FOR ADULT AND CHILD VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

The trauma caused by sexual assault often results in emotional stress that may be long lasting. Each person reacts differently to stress. There is no right or wrong way to act. It may be helpful for you to know some of the most common responses many sexual assault victims have experienced.

IMPACT AND REACTIONS TO A SEXUAL ASSAULT

During a sexual assault a victim may feel powerless or terrified of being seriously injured or killed. Fears about personal safety are a very common response to a sexual assault.

The first reactions that many sexual assault victims experience may be shock, disbelief, or fear. You may:

- ☞ Respond by appearing very upset or by appearing calm and in control.
- ☞ Feel numb or dazed, withdrawn or distant from other people.
- ☞ Be unsure of who to tell or what to do.
- ☞ Be unsure of how you feel.
- ☞ Want to forget about what happened.

Many victims experience intense emotions and some victims have physical symptoms. There may be periods when you are preoccupied with thoughts and feelings about the assault.

You may:

- ☞ Feel angry; other times you may feel anxious or depressed.
- ☞ Be unable to sleep or you may have unwanted memories, flashbacks, or nightmares.
- ☞ Experience changes in your eating habits.
- ☞ Be afraid to be left alone or you may want to be left alone.
- ☞ Avoid other people or situations that remind you of the assault.

- ☞ Have trouble concentrating or making decisions.
- ☞ Experience a change in your relationship with your sexual partner.
- ☞ Feel the need to change your job, where you live, or daily routine in order to gain a sense of control and safety.

Many victims know the person who assaulted them. Even if the offender is charged and prosecuted, a victim may feel vulnerable long after the assault.

Because of the cultural misconceptions about sexual assault, many victims/survivors may feel shame, self-blame, and guilt. Many victims/survivors also feel devalued or humiliated. Sometimes these feelings are a reaction to being forced by the offender to participate in the crime. These feelings may also be reinforced by the reactions of others, who may criticize a victim's behavior. Victims of sexual assault are never to blame for the actions of the offender. The responsibility for the crime is solely that of the offender.

HEALING & RECOVERY

Healing from a sexual assault is a process that is different for each person. It may help to talk to a sexual assault counselor/advocate who has experience in helping victims/survivors.

A sexual assault counselor/advocate can provide a safe and private place to talk about your feelings and discuss concerns you may have related to the assault. A sexual assault counselor/advocate will provide information and support. They will not judge you or make decisions for you.

INFORMATION FOR ADULT AND CHILD VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Often family, friends, and co-workers want to help but aren't sure how. It is okay to tell them what you need or do not need. You may also want to share the information in this booklet with them.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE VICTIMS

Children who are sexually abused have many of the same feelings and suffer the same emotional pain as adults. It is hard to predict how a child will react. Many children appear very upset, while other children show very little reaction. The following are common reactions children may experience:

- ⌘ Sudden or unexplained changes in behavior
- ⌘ Fear of going to bed
- ⌘ Bed or pant wetting
- ⌘ Development of problems in school
- ⌘ Sexual play with friends or toys
- ⌘ Low self-esteem
- ⌘ Inability to sleep
- ⌘ Withdrawal from people
- ⌘ Change in bathroom habits
- ⌘ Fussiness
- ⌘ Increased quietness
- ⌘ Depression
- ⌘ Anxiety
- ⌘ Risk taking or destructive behavior
- ⌘ Obsessively good behavior
- ⌘ Anger or aggression
- ⌘ Loss of appetite
- ⌘ Nightmares
- ⌘ Development of new fears (fear of dark, fear of being alone, etc.)

INFORMATION FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF ADULT AND CHILD VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

HOW CAN I HELP MY LOVED ONE, FRIEND, OR CO-WORKER?

Although there is no "right" way to respond to a victim, if you are a loved one, friend, or co-worker you can:

- ⌘ Remind the victim that the assault was not her or his fault.
- ⌘ Be supportive without overreacting. Victims may be sensitive to the reaction of others.
- ⌘ Be sensitive to the fact that some sexual assault victims do not want to be touched (hugged, patted, etc.).
- ⌘ Try not to be awkward or to show pity. The sexual assault experience is only one part of a person's life; it should not overshadow everything else.
- ⌘ If asked, help the victim to make decisions (who to tell, whether to report the assault to the police, where to stay, etc.), without making decisions for the victim. It is important for the victim to have control over her or his life.
- ⌘ Support the victim's decisions even if they may be different from what you would choose.
- ⌘ Show interest but do not pry.
- ⌘ Be helpful and supportive without being overly protective or attentive. Victims often want to be near others to feel safe and to keep busy, but they may not want to be the center of attention.
- ⌘ Be understanding. Sometimes victims may be angry and take out their feelings on loved ones.

Section One (CONTINUED)

INFORMATION FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF ADULT AND CHILD VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

Comforting a child who has been sexually assaulted can be very difficult. Some ways to help your child are:

- ∞ Getting help is most important. Sexual assault crisis centers have sexual assault counselor/advocates specially trained to help children and non-offending parents. Advocates can also help you work with the police, the hospital, and the legal system.
- ∞ Reassure your child that she or he is safe.
- ∞ Let your child know that what happened was not her or his fault.
- ∞ Reassure your child that the assault did not happen because she or he did something wrong.
- ∞ Provide care and love.
- ∞ Let your child talk about the assault if she or he wants. Ask a counselor how you can help your child talk about her or his worries, questions, and fears.
- ∞ Reassure your child that she or he is not permanently hurt.
- ∞ Try not to show anger around your child. Your child may confuse your anger at the offender as anger at her or him.
- ∞ Help your child return to her or his normal routine as quickly as possible.
- ∞ Try to avoid using the phrase, "I can't believe this." Although this is a common parental response, children may think that their story is literally unbelievable.

NOTE: Many professionals are required to report child sexual abuse to the police and to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The police or a DCF worker may also ask to talk to you and your child.

Section Two

MEDICAL CARE

Because of the violent and invasive nature of sexual assault, it is important for you to receive medical treatment, even if you are unsure about reporting the assault to the police.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I GO TO THE HOSPITAL?

A sexual assault exam and evidence collection kit may be administered by a nurse or doctor at any hospital emergency department in the state. Patients are examined and treated for injuries and given antibiotics for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Women and adolescent girls, who are concerned about becoming pregnant as a result of the sexual assault, will be offered emergency contraception (EC). If taken within 24 hours of unprotected sex, EC is 95 percent effective.

Both the exam and evidence collection require a patient's consent. Because the evidence that is on a victim's body will deteriorate or become contaminated, evidence must be collected quickly after the assault. In Connecticut, exams and evidence collection kits can be administered up to 72 hours after the assault. If you consent to the exam and evidence collection, the nurse or doctor will collect samples from your body (i.e. hair or semen) which might help the state's criminal case against the offender. The samples may be used as supportive physical evidence in court. The presence or absence of physical evidence does not prove whether a person has been sexually assaulted.

MEDICAL CARE

SHOULD I HAVE THE EVIDENCE COLLECTED IF I AM NOT SURE ABOUT REPORTING TO THE POLICE?

It is important to have the collection of evidence completed as soon as possible after a sexual assault, even if you have not decided whether to report the assault to the police. Crucial evidence may be lost or destroyed as time passes. If you are unsure about reporting to the police, you may have the exam and evidence collection kit completed anonymously. The State of Connecticut, Department of Public Safety, Forensic Science Laboratory will hold the evidence collection kit for 60 days to allow you time to decide if you will report the crime to the police.

FOLLOW-UP MEDICAL CARE

At the hospital you may be tested for STDs and pregnancy. These tests will only tell if you were pregnant or had an STD before the sexual assault. Even if you were given medication to treat possible STDs and pregnancy, it is very important that you are retested in 2 weeks. This follow-up medical care can be done by your own doctor or at a clinic.

The discharge instructions form given to you when you leave the hospital contains very important information. Bring that document with you to any follow-up appointments.

HIV TESTING

Many victims who have been sexually assaulted are concerned about contracting the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. HIV is the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

The risk of becoming HIV infected due to being sexually assaulted once is low. Whether the sexual assault happened recently or in the past, you should talk to a knowledgeable person for advice on testing options. An HIV counselor or sexual assault counselor/advocate can provide support and information and can direct you to testing sites where you can receive free (or very low cost) anonymous HIV testing and counseling.

Because of the emotional trauma of the sexual assault, it is better to wait at least 24 to 48 hours after the assault to have an HIV test. There is no reason why this test should be given to you at the hospital as part of the sexual assault exam. Waiting will give you a chance to talk to a counselor and to think about your choices in order to make the best decision for you.

A test given shortly after the assault will only tell if you were infected before the assault. It may take up to 6 months to know if you have been infected as a result of the sexual assault. Therefore, it is recommended that you are retested again in 6 months.

Connecticut state law gives you the right, in some cases, to ask for the accused to be tested for HIV. [C.G.S. §§ 54-102a (b) - 102c] A sexual assault counselor/advocate or a court-based victim services advocate can provide you with more information. However, if you are concerned about HIV infection, you should be tested.

WHO PAYS FOR THE EXAM AND EVIDENCE COLLECTION KIT?

You do not have to pay for the exam and evidence collection kit. The Judicial Branch, Office of Victim Services (OVS) reimburses hospitals for the sexual assault exam and the cost of completing the evidence collection kit. It is against state law for a victim to receive a bill for the sexual assault exam and evidence collection. [C.G.S. § 19a- 112a (e)]

The hospital may bill you for the costs of treatment for additional injuries (for example x-rays or stitches).

The Office of Victim Services' Compensation Program may be able to help pay treatment related bills. (See page 26 for contact information.)

If you have questions about a bill you received for the sexual assault exam and evidence collection, you may call OVS (1-888-286-7347 or 860-263-2761) or a sexual assault counselor/advocate.

Many victims of sexual assault choose to report the crime to law enforcement and participate in the criminal justice process. The proceedings are difficult for many victims, but support is available.

REPORTING TO THE POLICE

Connecticut state law does not require that an adult sexual assault victim report a sexual assault to the police. If you choose to report, it is helpful to report a sexual assault to the police as soon as possible. In many cases, the ability to arrest and prosecute the offender depends upon timely reporting. The hospital staff or a sexual assault counselor/advocate can contact the police for you or you may contact the police yourself.

A sexual assault victim who reports the sexual assault to the police cannot be asked or required to take a lie detector test by a police officer, prosecutor, or investigator. [C.G.S. § 54-86j]

After you contact the police, you will be asked to give them a statement in your own words about what happened to you, including a description of the offender, the location of the attack, and any other information about the crime. You must sign the statement.

If you remember other information at a later time, it is important to call the police to amend your statement.

Tell the police about other items related to the assault (e.g. clothing, sheets) as they may be used as evidence.

Sometimes arrests do not happen quickly. Sometimes police do not have enough information to make an arrest.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS?

You always have the right to ask questions about your case. If the offender is arrested, someone from the prosecutor's office (a prosecutor or an investigator) may contact you. You may also be contacted by a court-based victim services advocate who is available to assist you during the criminal justice proceedings. A sexual assault counselor/advocate can also support and help you through the criminal justice process.

If the offender is arrested, they may be released on bond/bail. If you are afraid, you can contact a sexual assault counselor/advocate to discuss your fears and options. You may ask the prosecutor to request that the court issue a no contact order or protective order to prohibit the defendant from contacting you or your family, either directly or indirectly, while the case is pending.

If the offender contacts you in any way you can tell the police and the prosecutor. As a result of the contact, the offender's bond/bail may be increased, the offender's release on bond/bail may be revoked or new charges may be brought against the offender. You may ask the prosecutor, sexual assault counselor/advocate, or court-based victim services advocate to explain these changes to you.

The defendant will be required to enter a plea. In most cases the plea is not guilty. This will protect the defendant's right to a trial, even if there is a plea agreement reached at a later time.

You may find the criminal justice system confusing. The following chart provides an overview of the various phases of the process:

ARREST

- ~ The accused is arrested (either by arrest warrant or without a warrant)
- ~ The accused is told of the charges
- ~ Bond is set and a no contact order may be ordered
- ~ If bond is posted, the accused is released pending the next court date

ARRAIGNMENT

- ~ Public defender is appointed or accused is given time to hire a private attorney
- ~ The amount of the bond may be argued for either a lower or higher amount
- ~ Depending on the charges, the case will be transferred to the Part A court (Judicial District court) or stay in the Part B court (Geographical Area court)

PRE-TRIAL HEARINGS

- ~ There will probably be several hearings over a period of time (could be one year or longer)
- ~ The hearings involve conversations between the attorneys and sometimes the judge
- ~ The accused enters a plea, usually not guilty
- ~ A plea bargain may be negotiated at this stage

TRIAL

- ~ Trials are usually conducted in front of a jury. The selection of the jury could take several days
- ~ Each side presents witnesses and evidence and has the opportunity to question the witnesses for the other side
- ~ The victim may testify as a witness for the prosecution
- ~ The judge gives the jury instructions regarding the law
- ~ The jury deliberates and decides on a verdict. All jurors must agree on the decision
- ~ Possible outcomes include; guilty, not-guilty, or mistrial

SENTENCING

- ~ If the defendant is found guilty, sentencing will take place at a later date
- ~ The judge determines the sentence based on many factors, including the pre-sentence investigation (PSI) and information provided by the victim through the victim impact statement

APPEAL

- ~ The defendant can appeal the guilty verdict
- ~ The appellate court will affirm the sentence or order a new trial

DO I NEED MY OWN LAWYER FOR THE CRIMINAL CASE?

No. The State of Connecticut has lawyers, called state's attorneys or prosecutors, who represent the state's interest and handle the criminal case. They will need you as a witness for the state's case against the accused. You may hire your own lawyer to represent your interests.

WHAT IF THE DEFENDANT'S LAWYER OR INVESTIGATOR CONTACTS ME?

You do not have to talk to anyone about the incident unless you have been subpoenaed to appear in court. If you are subpoenaed, you are only required to talk about the incident in court.

Keep in mind that anyone working for the defendant is trying to get information for the defendant's benefit. You may decide that you do not want to speak with them or that you want the prosecutor to be present. You can always find out who wants to talk to you and who they are working for before you decide whether or not to speak to that person. If you have any questions, you can contact the prosecutor, court-based victim services advocate, or sexual assault counselor/advocate.

WHAT ROLE WILL I PLAY IN THE CRIMINAL COURT PROCESS?

During the criminal justice proceedings, your information will help the prosecutor weigh the strengths and weaknesses of the case in order to seek the appropriate charges.

- ∞ Your testimony about what happened will help the jury decide whether to convict the defendant.
- ∞ Your victim impact statement will help the judge to decide a proper punishment for the defendant.
- ∞ You can provide information to the preparer of the pre-sentence investigation that will be given to the judge.
- ∞ Your victim impact statement will help the Board of Pardons and Paroles decide whether to grant the convicted offender's request for early release.
- ∞ When the offender is placed on probation, information you provide to the probation officer will assist in the development of an appropriate supervision plan.

WHAT IF THE OFFENDER IS A JUVENILE?

A case that involves a juvenile offender (someone under the age of 16) is usually heard in the juvenile court, not in the criminal court where the cases of adult defendants are heard. While juvenile proceedings are similar to adult proceedings, there are also many differences.

The following information will help you better understand juvenile proceedings:

- ∞ Juvenile cases are handled in the court that serves the juvenile's town of residence, which may not be the same town where the crime happened.
- ∞ Certain serious cases involving juvenile offenders over the age of fourteen may be transferred to the criminal court, where the juvenile will be prosecuted and, if convicted, sentenced as an adult.
- ∞ Juvenile proceedings are confidential. Court proceedings and court records are closed to the public and the media (newspapers, television, etc.).
- ∞ Victims of juvenile offenders have certain rights, including the right to be present or represented at the hearings involving their case and to learn the identity of the offender, the pending status, and outcome of the case. (Note: you cannot give this information to anyone else without permission from the judge.)
- ∞ Convicted juvenile offenders are not sentenced to a term in jail or prison. They can be required to live in a facility for juvenile offenders managed by the Department of Children and Families.
- ∞ Juvenile offenders may petition the court to have their juvenile records erased after a period of time if they do not commit additional crimes.

Section Three (CONTINUED) CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

For more information about juvenile court or about your rights as a victim of a juvenile offender, contact the juvenile court prosecutor or the juvenile probation officer assigned to the case at the court where the case is being heard. For a listing of juvenile probation offices and juvenile courts go to www.jud.ct.gov/directories.htm.

DO I NEED MY OWN LAWYER IF I DECIDE TO SUE THE OFFENDER?

You will need to hire a lawyer if you decide to file a lawsuit against the offender in civil court. A sexual assault counselor/advocate can help you find a lawyer who specializes in helping victims in civil proceedings.

Section Four VICTIMS' RIGHTS

Victims of crime in Connecticut have rights that are protected by state law. A summary of these rights are outlined in this section.

CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT Article XXIX – Rights of Victims of Crime

In all criminal prosecutions, a victim, as the general assembly may define by law, shall have the following rights:

- ∞ The right to be treated with fairness and respect throughout the criminal justice process;
- ∞ The right to timely disposition of the case following arrest of the accused, provided no right of the accused is abridged;
- ∞ The right to be reasonably protected from the accused throughout the criminal justice process;
- ∞ The right to notification of court proceedings;
- ∞ The right to attend the trial and all other court proceedings the accused has the right to attend, unless such person is to testify and the court determines that such person's testimony would be materially affected if such person hears other testimony;
- ∞ The right to communicate with the prosecution;
- ∞ The right to object to or support any plea agreement entered into by the accused and the prosecution and to make a statement to the court prior to the acceptance by the court of the plea of guilty or nolo contendere by the accused;
- ∞ The right to make a statement to the court at sentencing;
- ∞ The right to restitution which shall be enforceable in the same manner as any other cause of action or as otherwise provided by law; and
- ∞ The right to information about the arrest, conviction, sentence, imprisonment and release of the accused.

VICTIMS' RIGHTS

The general assembly shall provide by law for the enforcement of this subsection. Nothing in this subsection or in any law enacted pursuant to this subsection shall be construed as creating a basis for vacating a conviction or ground for appellate relief in any criminal case.

Rights to confidentiality

You have the right:

- ∞ To have your conversations with a sexual assault counselor/advocate remain confidential and not be used in court without your permission. [C.G.S. § 52-146k]
- ∞ Not to have your present or prior sexual conduct brought up during the trial unless the court, after a hearing, decides that it is strongly related to the trial. You may wish to speak with the prosecutor about this. [C.G.S. § 54-86f]
- ∞ Not to have your address or telephone number disclosed in the courtroom during any proceeding in the prosecution of cases involving sexual assault, injury or risk of injury to a child, or impairing the morals of a child, providing the judge finds that they are not material to the proceeding. [C.G.S. § 54-86d]
- ∞ To have your name and address in the court records remain confidential from people not involved in the case and released only by an order of the court. [C.G.S. § 54-86e] The accused will have access to this information through his or her attorney.

Rights to notification and participation in court process

You have the right:

- ∞ To be informed of any court proceeding (arrest, arraignment and release on bond, entry of a plea, trial, or sentencing) by providing the prosecutor with a current mailing address and telephone number. [C.G.S. § 51-286e]
- ∞ To tell the judge how the crime affected you by presenting a victim impact statement. You may speak to the judge in court or you may give written comments to the prosecutor or court-based victim services advocate who will forward them to the judge. This statement can be made before the acceptance of a plea agreement and at a sentencing hearing. [C.G.S. § 54-91c]
- ∞ To notification when the accused applies for accelerated rehabilitation and an opportunity to tell the judge what you think about that. [C.G.S. § 54-56e]
- ∞ To be told when the criminal case has been dismissed. You can check with the court clerk about this. Your request must be made within two years of the dismissal. [C.G.S. § 54-142c]
- ∞ To notification when the inmate has applied to the Board of Pardons and Paroles, Department of Correction (DOC), sentencing judge or Sentence Review Division. You must file a request with OVS or DOC. The form may be obtained from a court-based victim services advocate, online at www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim or by calling OVS or DOC. [C.G.S. §§ 54-228, 54-230]
- ∞ To appear before the Board of Pardons and Paroles or to give written comments as to whether the inmate should be released or if the inmate has to have any conditions related to the release. [C.G.S. § 54-126a]

VICTIMS' RIGHTS

- ∞ To notification when the inmate is released from DOC. You must file a request with OVS or DOC. [C.G.S. §§ 18-81e, 54-228 and 54-230]

Rights to protection

You have the right:

- ∞ To appear under subpoena as a witness in any criminal proceeding without being fired, harassed, or otherwise retaliated against by your employer. [C.G.S. § 54-85b]
- ∞ To request that special considerations be taken during your child's testimony, in or out of court, if you are the parent of a sexual assault or abuse victim and your child was 12 years of age or younger at the time of the offense. [C.G.S. § 54-86g]
- ∞ To request the arrest of the offender, to request a protective order from the court, and to apply for a restraining order from the court in order to prevent further injury. A sexual assault counselor/advocate or court-based victim services advocate can explain these orders. [C.G.S. §§ 46b-15, 46b-38c]

Right to return of property

You have the right:

- ∞ To request the police return any personal property taken for the investigation or prosecution of the crime. The property will be returned within 30 days of the request unless the court orders it held for a longer period. You have 6 months from the disposition of the criminal case to claim the property. After that, the property will be disposed of. [C.G.S. § 54-203(b) (7) (E)]

Right to profits

You have the right:

- ∞ To file a lawsuit seeking any profits the accused might receive from any book, movie, or dramatization of the crime if the accused is convicted. [C.G.S. § 54-218]

If you have any questions about your rights or need help to exercise them, you may call a sexual assault counselor/advocate, the Office of Victim Services, or the Office of the Victim Advocate. (See pages 23-30 for agency contact information.)

CONNECTICUT SEXUAL ASSAULT CRISIS SERVICES

Statewide 24 hour toll free Hotlines

1-888-999-5545 English

1-888-568-8332 Spanish

Office: 860-282-9881

Fax: 860-291-9335

www.connsacs.org

Support and Advocacy Services for Victims and Survivors of Sexual Assault

Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS) has 9 centers located throughout the state. Each community-based center provides free, confidential services for past and present victims of sexual assault and their loved ones, including:

- ∞ 24-hour hotline with immediate access to certified sexual assault counselor/advocates, available in English or Spanish.
- ∞ Crisis intervention and short-term counseling for victims and secondary victims.
- ∞ Someone to be with you and to help you at the hospital and with the police.
- ∞ Someone to be with you and help you through the criminal and civil court systems.
- ∞ Information and referral for other needs and additional counseling.
- ∞ Male counselors to work with male victims, family members, friends, and loved ones.
- ∞ Sexual assault counselor/advocates trained to work with child victims.
- ∞ Support groups for sexual assault victims of all ages. Support groups for friends, family members, and loved ones.

CONNSACS MEMBER PROGRAMS

Center for Women and Families of Eastern Fairfield County, Inc.

Rape Crisis Services

(Bridgeport)

Office: 203-334-6154

Hotline: 203-333-2233

Women's Center of Greater Danbury, Inc.

Sexual Assault Crisis Services

Office: 203-731-5200

Hotline: 203-731-5204

Women and Families Center

Sexual Assault Crisis Services

(Middletown/Meriden/New Haven)

Office: 203-235-9297 (Meriden)

Hotline: 203-235-4444

Office: 860-344-1474 (Middletown)

Hotline: 860-635-4424

Office: 203-624-4576 (New Haven)

Hotline: 203-624-4577

Rape Crisis Center of Milford

Office: 203-874-8712

Hotline: 203-878-1212

YWCA of New Britain, Inc.

Sexual Assault Crisis Services

Office: 860-225-4681 (New Britain)

Hotline: 860-223-1787

Office: 860-241-9217 (Hartford)

Hotline: 860-547-1022

Sexual Assault Crisis and Education Center

(Stamford)

Office: 203-348-9346

Hotline: 203-329-2929

Susan B. Anthony Project, Inc.

(Torrington)

Office: 860-489-3798

Hotline: 860-482-7133

Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury, Inc.

Office: 203-753-3613

Hotline: 203-753-3613

Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Eastern Connecticut

Office: 860-456-3595 (Willimantic)

Office: 860-423-7673

Hotline: 860-456-2789

Office: 860-442-0604 (New London)

Hotline: 860-437-7766

OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES

Administration: 860-263-2760

Compensation: 860-263-2761

Compensation Toll-Free: 1-888-286-7347

Victim Services Toll-Free: 1-800-822-8428

www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim

The Office of Victim Services (OVS), a unit of the Connecticut Judicial Branch is the state's lead agency dedicated to providing services to victims of violent crime.

Connecticut state law defines OVS's purpose and scope, which includes providing information, services, and financial assistance to victims of violent crime and their families.

These services include:

- ☞ Financial help for reimbursable expenses related to the crime, such as medical, dental, counseling, and lost wages.
- ☞ Court-based assistance that includes advocacy during court proceedings and notifying victims of their rights.
- ☞ Toll-free helpline for information on rights and referrals to resources.
- ☞ Notification programs that provide information to victims and other eligible persons about changes in inmate status, requests made by a convicted sex offender for changes in status regarding registration with the Sex Offender Registry, and termination and expiration of orders of protection.

OVS has the ability to consider a sexual assault victims' consent to the exam and evidence collection to fulfill the law enforcement reporting requirement when filing for compensation.

WHERE TO GET HELP AND INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION VICTIM SERVICES UNIT

Office: 1-888-869-7057

Fax: 860-297-6585

www.ct.gov/doc

A victim of crime, their survivor, or representative may confidentially register with the DOC Victim Services Unit, to request notification when an inmate is released, escapes, or scheduled for a sentence review or parole hearing.

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline

Statewide 24 hour toll free Hotline

1-800-842-2288

The Department of Children and Families Hotline is available 24 hrs/7 days a week to receive calls from people with questions, concerns, and reports of child abuse and neglect. The Hotline also provides evening, weekend, and holiday investigation responses to immediate situations concerning abuse and neglect of children.

2-1-1

Statewide 24 hour toll free Hotline

2-1-1 or 1-800-203-1234

www.infoline.org

2-1-1 is a free community service administered by the United Way of Connecticut. You may call 2-1-1 to get information or to seek help in a crisis. 2-1-1 is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

AETNA FOUNDATION CHILDREN'S CENTER

Office: 860-714-5052

www.saintfrancisdoctors.com/childrencenter

The Aetna Foundation Children's Center is an organization dedicated to assisting families and children affected by child abuse. The center uses a multidisciplinary approach to the investigation, management, and prevention of child abuse to minimize trauma and promote a healthy response.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF CONNECTICUT

Statewide: 1-800-230-PLAN

Administrative Office: 203-865-5158

www.plannedparenthood.org

Planned Parenthood of Connecticut has 18 health centers across the state that delivers affordable, high quality health care for over 58,000 women and men each year.

CONNECTICUT COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Statewide 24 hour toll free Hotline

1-888-774-2900

Office: 860-282-7899

Fax: 860-282-7892

www.ctcadv.org

Support and Advocacy Services for Victims and Survivors of Domestic Violence

Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Inc. (CCADV) has 18 member programs located throughout the state. Each community-based center provides free, confidential services for past and present victims of domestic violence, including:

- ∞ 24-hour hotline with immediate access to certified domestic violence counselors
- ∞ Referral
- ∞ Shelter
- ∞ Family Violence Victim Advocates

OFFICE OF THE VICTIM ADVOCATE

Office: 860-550-6632

Toll free (in CT): 1-888-771-3126

www.ct.gov/ova

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) is an independent state agency that works to protect and promote the constitutional rights of crime victims in Connecticut. The OVA:

- ∞ Monitors and evaluates the provision of services to crime victims and works to advance policies throughout the state that promote the fair and just treatment of crime victims throughout the criminal justice system.
- ∞ Remains committed to ensuring that the voices of crime victims play a central role in Connecticut's response to violence and to those victimized by crime.
- ∞ Is dedicated to promoting awareness to Connecticut citizens as to the services available to crime victims through outreach, education, and public service events.
- ∞ Provides services to crime victims who believe their rights, as a crime victim, have been or are being violated or who believe that services available to crime victims in the state are being unfairly denied or not being adequately provided.
- ∞ Receives complaints from crime victims or others on behalf of crime victims and may investigate such complaints.

The identity of any person who files a complaint with the OVA is confidential and not disclosed without the consent of such person.

A

Accelerated rehabilitation (AR): a program that gives persons charged with a crime or motor vehicle violation for the first time a second chance. The person is placed on probation for up to two years. If probation is completed successfully, the charges are dismissed.

Accused: person who has been arrested for or formally charged with a crime: the defendant in a criminal case.

Advocate: someone who provides victims with the information and assistance they need to be able to act for themselves, and, if necessary, who acts on the victim's behalf.

Anonymously: without a name.

Arraignment: the first court appearance of a person accused of a crime. The person is advised of his or her rights by a judge and may respond to the criminal charges by entering a plea. Usually this happens the morning after a person is arrested.

Arrest: when a person is taken into custody by a police officer and charged with a crime.

B

Board of Pardons and Paroles: a panel that decides whether a convicted offender should be released, either fully or conditionally, from the sentence and possibly from all consequences of the conviction.

Bond or bail: money or property given to the court for the temporary release of a defendant, to ensure that the defendant will return to court.

C

Case: lawsuit or action in a court.

Charge: formal accusation of a crime.

Civil court: the court that decides matters involving the rights of individuals. Lawsuits, such as those seeking money damages, are decided in civil court.

Complaint: a formal report made to police about a crime.

Contaminated: polluted by contact or mixture

Conviction: to be found guilty of committing a crime.

Court-based victim services advocate: employee of the Office of Victim Services who assesses a victim's needs and helps the victim understand the court case, how to exercise her or his rights, and how to access resources.

Court clerk: the person who maintains the official court record of the case. The court clerk's office receives all court papers and assigns hearing dates.

Criminal court: the court that decides matters involving crimes. All criminal violations, including sexual assaults, are legally considered crimes against the state, not the victim. (Victims may be able to file a lawsuit in civil court for the violation of his or her individual rights.)

D

Defendant: in criminal cases, the person who is arrested and charged with a crime. In civil cases, the person who is given court papers is also called the respondent.

Department of Correction (DOC): the statewide prison system.

Deteriorate: to worsen or decline in value or quality.

Discharge instructions: a form completed by a doctor or nurse and given to a victim after a sexual assault exam. It contains important contact information, what tests were done and what medications and treatment were given.

Dismissal: when the criminal case against the offender is dropped and removed from the official record.

F

Family violence victim advocate: a counselor specially trained to support and assist victims of domestic violence and their families, generally employed by a domestic violence agency.

Felony: Any criminal offense for which a person may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of more than one year.

G

Geographical Area (GA): the court location where most criminal and motor vehicle cases are heard. Court location where all arraignments occur.

H

HIV counselor: a counselor specially trained about HIV and AIDS, who provides information about the disease, testing options and limitations. Counselors work at sites throughout the state.

I

Investigator: someone who investigates the facts of a case for a lawyer. Prosecutors and defense attorneys use investigators. Prosecutors also use investigators who are called inspectors.

Inmate: person confined in an institution (as a prison or hospital).

J

Judicial District (JD): the court where the more serious criminal cases and most civil and family matters are heard.

Juvenile offender: a person under the age of 16 who commits a criminal act.

L

Lawsuit (to sue): a civil court proceeding by which an individual seeks a remedy, such as money damages.

M

Marshal: a Judicial Marshal is a person responsible for courthouse security, including the metal detectors at the entrance of each courthouse and maintaining order in each courtroom. A State Marshal is a person who gives copies of legal papers to the other person named in a lawsuit.

Misdemeanor: a crime that carries a maximum penalty of one year and/or a \$2,000 fine.

N

No contact order (NCO): a court order that prohibits contact by a defendant with a victim and can be ordered by a judge, a bail commissioner, a probation officer, or a parole officer. Violation of an NCO may result in an increase in bond or bail or revocation of release on bond.

No contest: a plea in a criminal case that allows the defendant to be convicted without admitting guilt for the crime charged (also called nolo contendere). Although a finding of guilty is entered on the criminal court record, the defendant can deny the charges in a civil action based on the same actions.

Nolle: a disposition in a criminal or motor vehicle case where the prosecutor agrees to drop the case against the defendant but keeps the right to reopen the case and prosecute at any time during the next thirteen months. The nolle is entered on the court record and the defendant is released from custody. If the defendant stays out of trouble during the next thirteen months, the case is removed from the official court records.

O

Offender: person who commits an offense.

P

Parole: release from incarceration after serving part of a sentence.

Plea: the accused's response to the criminal charges (usually guilty, not guilty, or no contest).

Plea agreement: an agreement between the prosecutor and the defendant about the charges, plea, and sentence. If a plea agreement is reached and accepted by the court there is no trial.

Pre-sentence investigation report (PSI): a background investigation conducted by a probation officer on the person who has been convicted of a criminal offense. Victims may provide information about the effects of the crime on her or his life, as well as feelings about the individual and the sentence.

Pretrial: in a criminal case, a conference with the prosecutor, defense attorney, and judge to discuss the case status and what will happen next.

Probation: a procedure where a convicted offender found guilty of a crime is released by the court, subject to certain conditions, under supervision of a probation officer. Probation may be ordered instead of or following imprisonment.

Prosecute: to proceed against a person in a criminal case.

Prosecutor: a government attorney representing the public against persons accused of crimes.

Protective order (PO): an order by the criminal court to protect a victim from threats, harassment, or violence and often any contact by a defendant who is or was a family or household member, parent of the victim's child or dating the victim. The court can also issue a PO to protect a victim who has been stalked, harassed, or sexually assaulted by a stranger. A PO is requested by the prosecutor and usually ends when the case ends. Violation of a PO is an additional crime for which the defendant may be arrested.

R

Restraining order (RO): a civil court order that protects a victim from threats, harassment, or violence and often any contact by a defendant who is or was a family or household member, parent of the victim's child, or dating the victim. An RO after a hearing remains effective for 6 months from the date of the order unless otherwise ordered by the court. Violation of an RO is a crime for which the defendant may be arrested.

S

Secondary victims: family, loved ones, or friends of the victim who have also been affected by the assault.

Sentence: the punishment ordered by the judge.

Sentencing judge: the judge that decides and announces the terms of punishment.

Sentence Review Division: a panel that decides whether a criminal sentence should be changed.

Sexual assault counselor/advocate: a counselor specially trained to support and assist victims of sexual assault and their families, generally employed by a sexual assault crisis service.

Statement: declaration of facts by a witness about a crime.

State's attorney: an attorney who represents the state in criminal cases; the prosecutor.

Subpoena: a written order by a judge or lawyer requiring that a specific person appear in court on a specific date. Documents can also be subpoenaed.

T

Testimony: statements made by a witness or party under oath.

Trial: examination and hearing of evidence before a court to decide the issue of specified charges or claims.

V

Victim impact statement (VIS): a written or verbal statement by the victim or family members prior to the acceptance by the court of a plea agreement and at the sentencing hearing, telling the judge how the crime affected his or her life. The judge will consider this statement when deciding whether to accept a plea agreement and what constitutes an appropriate sentence.

W

Witness: a person who testifies to what they saw, heard, or did.

Y

Youthful offender: a legal status available to persons who have been arrested for a crime committed when they were between the ages of 16 and 18 and who meet other eligibility requirements. The court file and proceedings are confidential and youthful offender adjudications are not deemed convictions.



Office of Victim Services
State of Connecticut Judicial Branch

www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim JDP-VS-30 Rev. 3/10