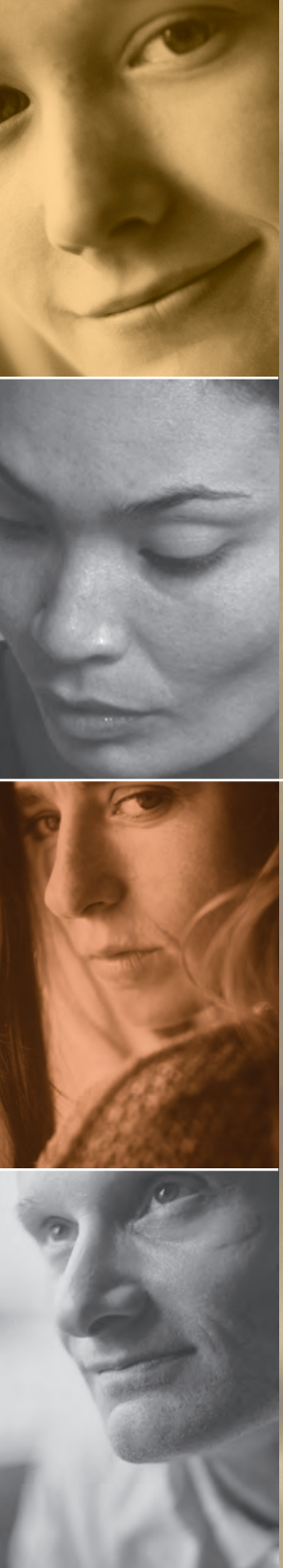

Information for victims of Sexual Assault and Their Families

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/SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT 1-3

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF ADULT AND CHILD VICTIMS/SURVIVORS 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 has information for you and your loved ones about reactions to sexual assault, what to expect at the hospital, from support services, and the criminal justice system. Although you may not want 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 advocate in a town near you. (See pages 24-25 for contact information.)

This booklet was developed by the Office of Victim Services of the Connecticut Judicial Branch and the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc., with special thanks to Laura Cordes, 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: In the back of this booklet is a Glossary section that gives definitions to words that you may or may not know. Connecticut General Statutes section numbers are shown in brackets [ ].

Section One

INFORMATION FOR ADULT AND CHILD VICTIMS/SURVIVORS 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 sexual assault victims/survivors have experienced.

IMPACT AND REACTIONS TO A SEXUAL ASSAULT

During a sexual assault, a victim/survivor 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/survivors experience are shock, disbelief, or fear. You may:

- Seem very upset or calm and in control.
- Feel numb or dazed, withdrawn or distant from other people.
- Not be sure of who to tell or what to do.
- Not be sure of how you feel.
- Want to forget about what happened.

Many victims/survivors experience intense emotions. Some victims/survivors have physical symptoms. There may be times when your thoughts and feelings are focused on 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 partner.
- Feel the need to change your job, where you live, or daily routine to attempt to gain a sense of control and safety.

Many victims/survivors know the person who assaulted them. A victim/survivor may feel vulnerable long after the assault, even if the offender is charged and prosecuted.

Because of myths about sexual assault, many victims/survivors 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 take part in the crime. These feelings may also be reinforced by the reactions of others, who may criticize a victim's/survivor's behavior. The offender is always responsible for the sexual assault. It is never the victim's/survivor's fault.

HEALING & RECOVERY

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

A sexual assault advocate can offer a safe and private place to talk about your feelings, your concerns about the assault, and offer information and support. A sexual assault advocate will not judge you or make decisions for you.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE VICTIMS/SURVIVORS

Children who are sexually abused may have the same feelings and emotional pain as adults. It's hard to predict how a child will react. Some children may seem very upset, while other children show very little reaction. Children may experience sudden or unexplained changes in behavior, such as:

- Bed or pant wetting;
- 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 (for example, fear of going to bed, fear of dark, fear of being alone).

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF ADULT AND CHILD VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

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

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

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

- Remind the victim/survivor that the assault was not her or his fault.
- Be supportive without overreacting. Victims/survivors may be sensitive to the reaction of others.
- Be aware that some sexual assault victims/survivors do not want to be touched (for example, hugged, patted).
- Try not to be awkward or to show pity. The sexual assault is only one part of a person's life; it should not overshadow everything else.
- If asked, help the victim/survivor to make decisions (for example, who to tell, whether to report the assault to the police, where to stay), without making decisions for the victim/survivor. It is important for the victim/survivor to have control over her or his life.
- Support the victim's/survivor'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/survivors 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/survivors may be angry and take out their feelings on loved ones.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

Comforting a child who has been sexually assaulted can be very difficult. Getting help is most important. Sexual assault crisis centers have sexual assault advocates specially trained to help children and non-offending parents. They can also help you work with the police, the hospital, and the legal system. Some other ways to help your child are to:

- 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.
- Give 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, or fears.
- Reassure your child that she or he is not permanently hurt.
- Avoid showing 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.
- Avoid using the phrase, "I can't believe this." Although this is a common parental response, children may think that their story is unbelievable.

NOTE: Many professionals must report child sexual abuse to the police and to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The police or a DCF employee 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 not sure about reporting the assault to the police.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I GO TO THE HOSPITAL?

You will be examined and treated for injuries and given antibiotics for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Women and adolescent girls, who are concerned about becoming pregnant, will be offered emergency contraception (EC). EC is 95 percent effective if taken within 24 hours of a sexual assault.

With your permission, a sexual assault exam and evidence collection may be done by a nurse or doctor. Because the evidence on a victim's body may deteriorate or become contaminated, evidence must be collected soon after the assault. In Connecticut, exams and evidence collection can be done 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 (for example, hair, semen) which might help the investigation of the crime and the state's criminal case against the accused. The samples may be used as evidence in court. The presence or absence of evidence does not prove whether a person has been sexually assaulted.

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

It's important to have evidence collected as soon as possible after a sexual assault, even if you have not decided to report the assault to the police. Evidence may be lost or destroyed as time passes. If you are not sure about reporting to the police, you may have the exam completed and the evidence collected will be submitted anonymously. The State of Connecticut will hold the evidence for 60 days to give you time to decide if you will report the crime to the police. If it has been more than 60 days you can still report to the police, but the evidence collected during the exam may not be usable in the investigation and trial.

FOLLOW-UP MEDICAL CARE

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

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

HIV TESTING

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

Statistics show that the risk of being infected with HIV from a one-time sexual assault is low.

At the hospital, a medical provider should give you information on HIV risks, testing, and treatment choices. HIV testing is not part of a sexual assault exam and you do not have to be tested at the hospital. 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 by the offender.

Whether the sexual assault happened recently or in the past, you should talk to a knowledgeable person for advice on testing choices. An HIV counselor or sexual assault advocate can offer support, information, and direct you to testing sites where you can get free (or very low cost) anonymous HIV testing and counseling.

Connecticut state law gives you the right, in some cases, to ask the court for the defendant to be tested for HIV. [Sections 54-102a (b) to 102c of the Connecticut General Statutes] A sexual assault advocate or an OVS victim services advocate can give you more information.

WHO PAYS FOR THE EXAM AND EVIDENCE COLLECTION?

You do not have to pay for the exam and evidence collection. The Office of Victim Services (OVS) of the Connecticut Judicial Branch reimburses hospitals for the sexual assault exam and the cost of completing the evidence collection. It is against state law for a victim/survivor to receive a bill for the sexual assault exam and evidence collection. [Section 19a- 112a (e) of the Connecticut General Statutes]

The hospital may bill you or your insurance company for the costs of treatment for other injuries (for example, x-rays or stitches).

The OVS Compensation Program may be able to help pay treatment related bills. (See page 26 for contact information.)

If you receive a hospital bill for the sexual assault exam and evidence collection, please call OVS (1-888-286-7347 or 860-263-2761) or a sexual assault advocate (See pages 24-25 for contact information.)

Section Three
CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

Many victims/survivors of sexual assault choose to report the crime to the police and take part in the criminal justice process. The hearings are difficult for many victims/survivors, but support is available.

REPORTING TO THE POLICE

Connecticut state law doesn't require an adult sexual assault victim/survivor to report the sexual assault to the police. If you choose to report, it's helpful to report the sexual assault to the police as soon as possible. In many cases, the ability to arrest and prosecute the offender depends on prompt reporting. The hospital staff or a sexual assault advocate can call the police for you or you may call the police yourself.

During your meeting with the police, you will be asked to tell them in your own words what happened to you, including a description of the offender, where the sexual assault happened, and any other information about the crime.

Tell the police about any things that might have been touched during the assault (for example, clothing, sheets) because they may be taken as evidence. If you had a sexual assault exam and evidence collected at a hospital, give the police the control number listed on the discharge instruction sheet the hospital gave you.

Sometimes arrests do not happen quickly or at all because the police do not have enough information or evidence to make an arrest. If you remember other information later, it is important to call the police to update your statement.

A victim/survivor 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. [Section 54-86j of the Connecticut General Statutes]

WHAT ROLE WILL I PLAY IN THE CRIMINAL COURT PROCESS?

During the court hearings, your information will help the prosecutor consider the strengths and weaknesses of the case to decide on the proper charges.

- Your participation in the criminal justice system helps inform all those working on the case.
- The judge and the jury, if there is a jury, consider all the information and make the final decision whether the offender is guilty or not guilty. Whatever the decision, your information is crucial but only a part of all the information considered.
- Your victim impact statement will tell the judge how the crime has affected you physically, emotionally, and financially.
- If the defendant is found guilty, you can give information to the probation officer for the pre-sentence investigation report that the judge will use to decide on a sentence.
- Your victim impact statement will tell the Board of Pardons and Paroles how you feel about the inmate's parole release or if the inmate should have any conditions with the release.
- When the offender is placed on probation, information you give to the probation officer will help in the development of a supervision plan.

DO I NEED MY OWN LAWYER?

For the Criminal Case:

The State of Connecticut has lawyers called state's attorneys or prosecutors, who represent the state and handle the criminal case. They may need you as a witness for the state's case against the defendant. You may hire your own lawyer to represent your rights as a crime victim. A sexual assault advocate or an OVS victim services advocate can also help you understand and exercise your rights.

If you decide to sue the offender:

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

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

You do not have to talk to anyone about the assault unless you have been subpoenaed to go to court or go to a deposition. A deposition is an interview where the lawyer for the defendant can ask you questions before the trial. If you are subpoenaed, you are only required to talk about the assault in court or at the deposition.

Keep in mind that anyone working for the defendant is trying to get information to help the defendant. You may decide that you do not want to talk with them or, if it is a criminal case, that you want the prosecutor to be there. You can always find out who wants to talk to you and who they are working for before you decide to talk to that person. If you have any questions, you can contact the prosecutor, a sexual assault advocate, or an OVS court-based victim services advocate.

WHAT IF THE OFFENDER IS A JUVENILE?

A case that involves a juvenile defendant (someone under the age of 17 and as of July 1, 2012, someone under the age of 18) is usually heard in the juvenile court, not in the criminal court where the cases of adult defendants are heard. While juvenile cases are like adult cases, there are also many differences.

The following information will help you better understand juvenile court:

- Juvenile cases are handled in the court that serves the juvenile's town of residence, which may not be the same town where the assault happened.
- Certain serious cases involving juveniles over the age of 14 may be transferred to the criminal court, where the juvenile will be prosecuted and, if convicted, sentenced as an adult.
- Juvenile cases are confidential. Court hearings and court records are closed to the public and the media (for example, newspapers, television).
- Victims/survivors of juvenile defendants have certain rights, including the right to be at or be represented at the hearings involving the case, to learn the identity of the juvenile, the status, and the outcome of the case. (Note: you can't give this information to anyone else without permission from the judge.)
- Juvenile defendants may be sentenced to a term in jail or prison. They may be required to live in a detention facility for juvenile defendants managed by the Department of Children and Families.
- People who were found guilty of committing a crime when they were a juvenile may petition the court to have their juvenile records erased after a period of time, if they don't commit more crimes.

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

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS?

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

If the offender is arrested, he or she may be released on bail. If you are afraid, you can contact a sexual assault advocate to discuss your fears and the options available to you. You may ask the prosecutor to request that the court issue a protective order to prohibit the defendant from contacting you or your family directly or indirectly, while the case is pending.

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

The defendant must plead guilty or not guilty. 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.

If the case goes to trial, you may be called as a witness for the prosecution. After all of the evidence and testimony is given, the judge will give the jury instructions on the law. The jury will decide if the defendant is guilty or not guilty based on the evidence presented.

If the defendant is guilty, the judge will decide on a sentence based on many facts including information given by the victim/survivor in a victim impact statement and the pre-sentence investigation.

The defendant has a right to appeal the guilty verdict to the appellate court. The appellate court may agree with the sentence, order a new trial, or may not accept the case.

You may find the criminal justice system confusing. The following charts give an overview of the different phases of the process:

ARREST

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

ARRAIGNMENT

~ Public defender is appointed or defendant is given time to hire an attorney.
~ The amount of bail is reviewed by a judge and can be kept the same, lowered, or increased.
~ The court may issue a protective order.
~ Depending on the charges, the case will stay in the Part B court (Geographical Area) or be transferred to the Part A court (Judicial District).

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 defendant enters a plea, usually not guilty.
~ A plea bargain may be negotiated.

TRIAL

~ Trials are usually in front of a jury. The selection of the jury could take several days.
~ The prosecutor and defense attorney present witnesses and evidence and have the opportunity to question the witnesses from each side.
~ The victim/survivor may testify as a witness for the prosecution.
~ The judge gives the jury instructions on the law.
~ The jury deliberates and decides on a verdict. All jurors must agree on a verdict of guilty or not guilty.
~ There is a mistrial if all of the jurors don't agree on a verdict.
~ In a mistrial, the prosecutor may decide to have another trial or drop the charges.

SENTENCING

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

APPEAL

~ The defendant can appeal the guilty verdict.
~ The appellate court may agree with the sentence, order a new trial, or not accept the case.

HOW CAN I BE NOTIFIED OF COURT DATES AND THE STATUS OF THE CRIMINAL CASE?

Connecticut Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (CT SAVIN) is a free, confidential service that notifies registered crime victims/survivors about a defendant's status in the criminal justice system. To register for notification with CT SAVIN, go to www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim or call 1-877-846-3428.

Section Four
VICTIMS' RIGHTS

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

RIGHTS OF CRIME VICTIMS

Connecticut Constitution Article First, Section 8(b)

As a crime victim, you have certain rights under the Connecticut Constitution.

You have the right to:

- Be treated with fairness and respect throughout the criminal justice process.
- Get information about the arrest, conviction, sentence, imprisonment, and release of the offender.
- Be reasonably protected from the accused throughout the criminal justice process.
- Be told of court dates.
- Talk to the prosecutor about the case.
- Have the chance to agree or disagree with any plea agreement between the offender and the prosecutor and to make a statement to the court before the court decides if it will approve the agreement.
- Attend the trial and all other court proceedings (arraignment, pre-trial, and sentencing) unless you are testifying, in which case the court may decide that you should not be allowed to attend the trial.
- Make a statement to the court at sentencing.
- Restitution for expenses or property lost because of the crime.
- Have the case completed in a fair and timely manner.

Rights to confidentiality

You have the right:

- To have your conversations with a sexual assault advocate stay confidential and not be used in court without your permission. [Section 52-146k of the Connecticut General Statutes]
- Not to have your present or prior sexual conduct brought up during the trial unless the court, after a hearing, decides that it is necessary for the trial. You may wish to speak with the prosecutor about this. [Section 54-86f of the Connecticut General Statutes]
- Not to have your address or telephone number made known in the courtroom during any hearing in the prosecution of cases involving sexual assault, injury or risk of injury to a child, or impairing the morals of a child, unless the judge finds that they are important to the case. [Section 54-86d of the Connecticut General Statutes]
- To have your name and address in the court records stay confidential from people not involved in the case and released only by an order of the court. [Section 54-86e of the Connecticut General Statutes] The accused will have access to this information through his or her attorney.

Rights to notification and to take part in the court process

You have the right:

- To be told of any court hearing (arrest, arraignment and release on bail, entry of a plea, trial or sentencing) by providing the prosecutor with a current mailing address and telephone number. [Section 51-286e of the Connecticut General Statutes]
- To tell the judge how the crime affected you by giving a victim impact statement. You may talk to the judge in court or you may give written comments to the prosecutor or OVS court-based victim services advocate who will give them to the judge. This statement can be made before the plea agreement is accepted and at a sentencing hearing. [Section 54-91c of the Connecticut General Statutes]
- To be told when the defendant applies for accelerated rehabilitation and an opportunity to tell the judge what you think about that. [Section 54-56e of the Connecticut General Statutes]
- To be told if the criminal case has been dismissed and to file an application for the name of the defendant(s) and other information from the erased records if you have filed or will file a civil action for losses or damages because of the crime. Your request must be made to the court within 2 years of the dismissal. [Section 54-142c of the Connecticut General Statutes]
- To be told 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. [Sections 54-228, 54-230 of the Connecticut General Statutes]

Rights to notification and to take part in the court process (Continued)

- To tell the Board of Pardons and Paroles in person or in writing if the inmate should be released on parole or if the inmate should have any conditions with the release. [Section 54-126a of the Connecticut General Statutes]
- To be told when the inmate is released from DOC. A request must be given to OVS or DOC. [Sections 18-81e, 54-228 and 54-230 of the Connecticut General Statutes]

To file a notification request with OVS or DOC, please fill out a Confidential Request for Notification of Status of Inmate (JD-VS-5) form. The form can be found online at www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim or by calling OVS (1-800-822-8428) or DOC (888-869-7057).

Rights to protection

You have the right:

- To attend court hearings or take part in a police investigation for a criminal case in which you are the crime victim/survivor or an immediate family member or guardian of a minor or physically disabled crime victim/survivor without being fired, harassed, or retaliated against by your employer. [Section 54-85b of the Connecticut General Statutes]
- To ask 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/survivor and your child was 12 years of age or younger at the time of the offense. [Section 54-86g of the Connecticut General Statutes]
- To ask for the arrest of the offender, to ask for a protective order from the court, and to apply for a restraining order from the court to prevent further injury. A sexual assault advocate or an OVS court-based victim services advocate can explain these orders. [Sections 46b-15, 46b-38c of the Connecticut General Statutes]

- To use your available paid sick leave for medical care and counseling, to get services from a victim services provider, to relocate, or to take part in any civil or criminal hearings because of the sexual assault if you are a service worker and your employer has 50 or more employees. [Public Act 11-52, Section 3 (a)(3), effective January 1, 2012]

Right to return of property

You have the right:

- To ask the police to 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 time. You have 6 months from the end of the criminal case to claim the property. After that, the property will be disposed of. [Sections 54-203(b) (7) (E) and 54-36a of the Connecticut General Statutes]

Right to profits

You have the right:

- To file a lawsuit seeking any profits the offender might receive from any book, movie, or dramatization of the crime if the offender is convicted. [Section 54-218 of the Connecticut General Statutes]

If you have any questions about your rights or need help with them, you may call a sexual assault advocate or the Office of Victim Services. (See pages 24-26 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
www.connsacs.org

Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS) has 9 member programs located throughout the state. Each community-based center offers free, confidential services to victims of sexual assault and their loved ones, including:

- 24-hour hotline with immediate access to certified sexual assault advocates in English or Spanish.
- Crisis intervention and short-term counseling for victims/survivors 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 or civil court systems.
- Information and referral for other needs and counseling.
- Male counselors to work with victims/survivors, family members, friends, and loved ones.
- Sexual assault advocates trained to work with child victims/survivors.
- Support groups for sexual assault victims/survivors 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)
Hotline: 203-333-2233
Office: 203-334-6154

Women's Center of Greater Danbury, Inc.
Sexual Assault Crisis Services
Hotline: 203-731-5204
Office: 203-731-5200

Women and Families Center
Sexual Assault Crisis Services
(Meriden/Middletown/New Haven)
Hotline: 203-235-4444
Office: 203-235-9297 (Meriden)
Office: 860-344-1474 (Middletown)
Office: 203-389-5010 (New Haven)

Rape Crisis Center of Milford
Hotline: 203-878-1212
Office: 203-874-8712

YWCA of New Britain
Sexual Assault Crisis Services
(New Britain/Hartford)
Hotline: 860-223-1787 (New Britain)
Office: 860-225-4681
Hotline: 860-547-1022 (Hartford)
Office: 860-241-9217

The Center for Sexual Assault Crisis Counseling and Education
(Stamford)
Hotline: 203-329-2929
Office: 203-348-9346

Susan B. Anthony Project
(Torrington)
Hotline: 860-482-7133
Office: 860-489-3798

Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury, Inc.
Hotline: 203-753-3613
Office: 203-575-0388

Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Eastern Connecticut
(Willimantic/New London)
Hotline: 860-456-2789 (Willimantic)
Office: 860-456-3595
Hotline: 860-437-7766 (New London)
Office: 860-442-0604

OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES

Victim Services Toll-Free Helpline: 1-800-822-8428
Compensation Toll-Free: 1-888-286-7347
Compensation: 860-263-2761
Administration: 860-263-2760
www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim

The Office of Victim Services (OVS), Connecticut Judicial Branch, offers information, services, and financial help to victims/survivors of violent crime and their families including:

- Financial help for eligible expenses because of the crime, such as medical, dental, counseling, and lost wages.
- Court-based help that includes advocacy during court cases and telling victims/survivors about their rights.
- Toll-free helpline for information on rights and referrals to resources.
- Notification programs that offer information to victims/survivors and other eligible persons about an offender's status in the criminal justice system, changes in an inmate's status, requests made by a convicted sex offender for changes in status on his or her registration with the Sex Offender Registry, when protective orders end, and five weeks before a restraining order ends.

CONNECTICUT STATEWIDE AUTOMATED VICTIM INFORMATION AND NOTIFICATION (CT SAVIN)

Toll-Free: 1-877-846-3428
www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim/

CT SAVIN is a free, confidential service that offers crime victims/survivors and the public access to current information and notification about an offender's status in the criminal justice system. Registration and notifications are available in English or Spanish.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION VICTIM SERVICES UNIT

Office: 888-869-7057
www.ct.gov/doc

Victims/survivors and other eligible persons may 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. Registrations and notifications are confidential.

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 hours a day, 7 days a week to take 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 about child abuse and neglect.

UNITED WAY OF CONNECTICUT (2-1-1)

Statewide 24 hour Toll-free Hotline 2-1-1 or 1-800-203-1234
www.infoline.org

United Way 2-1-1 is a free information and referral service. 2-1-1 is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

GREATER HARTFORD CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER AT ST. FRANCIS

Office: 860-714-5052
www.childabuseservicesct.org

The Greater Hartford Children's Advocacy Center at St. Francis is dedicated to helping families and children affected by child abuse or child sexual abuse and offers support, advocacy, and education to child victims/survivors of sex abuse and their parents.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF CONNECTICUT

Statewide Toll-free: 1-800-230-PLAN
Administrative Office: 203-865-5158
www.plannedparenthood.org

Planned Parenthood of Connecticut has 19 health centers across the state that offer affordable, high quality health care for women and men.

CONNECTICUT COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Statewide 24 hour Toll-free Hotline: 1-888-774-2900
Office: 860-282-7899
www.ctcadv.org

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

- 24-hour Hotline with immediate access to certified domestic violence counselors.
- Referrals.
- Family violence victim advocates.
- Shelter.

OFFICE OF THE VICTIM ADVOCATE

Statewide Toll-free: 1-888-771-3126
Office: 860-550-6632
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/survivors in Connecticut.

The OVA offers services to crime victims/survivors who believe their rights, as a crime victim/survivor, have been or are being violated or who believe that services available to crime victims/survivors in the state are being unfairly denied or not being provided.

The OVA also receives complaints from crime victims/survivors or others on behalf of crime victims/survivors and may investigate the complaints.

The identity of any person who files a complaint with the OVA is confidential and not disclosed without her or his permission.

Section Six
GLOSSARY

A

Accelerated rehabilitation (AR): a program for certain persons charged for the first time with a crime or motor vehicle violation. The person is put on probation for up to 2 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 offers victims/survivors the information and help they need to be able to act for themselves, and, if necessary, who acts on the victim's/survivor's behalf.

Anonymously: without a name.

Arraignment: the first court appearance of a person accused of a crime. The person is told 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 if a convicted offender should be released from prison on parole with or without conditions or given an absolute pardon that erases the conviction from the offender's criminal record.

Bail: also called bond; money or property given to the court for the temporary release of a defendant to make sure 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. Victims/survivors may file a lawsuit in civil court for the violation of her or his individual rights.

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

Contaminated: polluted by contact.
Conviction: to be found guilty of committing a crime.
Court-based victim services advocate: employee of the Office of Victim Services who help crime victims/survivors understand the court case, how to exercise her or his rights, and how to access resources.
Court clerk: the person who keeps the official court record of the case. The court clerk's office receives all court papers and schedules 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/survivor.

D

Defendant: in criminal cases, the person who is arrested and charged with a crime. In civil cases, the defendant or respondent is the person being sued.
Department of Correction (DOC): the statewide prison system.
Deposition: an interview where the lawyer for the defendant can ask the victim questions before the trial.
Deteriorate: to worsen or decline in value or quality.
Discharge instructions: a form completed by a doctor or nurse and given to a victim/survivor after a sexual assault exam and evidence collection. It has contact information, what tests were done, and what medications and treatment were given.
Dismissal: when the criminal case against the defendant is dropped and removed from the official record.

F

Family violence victim advocate: a certified advocate specially trained to support and help victims/survivors 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.

GLOSSARY

G

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

H

Hearing: a legal proceeding held before a judge.

HIV counselor: a counselor specially trained about HIV and AIDS, who gives information about the disease, testing options and limitations of the tests. Counselors work at testing treatment 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 kept in a correctional institution or prison.

J

Judge: a person who hears and decides cases and proper punishments for the courts.

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 17 who commits a crime . Effective July 1, 2012, a person under the age of 18 will be tried as a juvenile.

L

Lawsuit (to sue): a case filed in civil court by a person suing for money because of the actions of another person or by a person asking the court to order someone to do something or to stop doing something.

M

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

Misdemeanor: a crime that carries a maximum penalty of one year in prison with up to a $2,000 fine.

N

No contact order (NCO): a court order that tells a defendant that he or she cannot contact a victim/survivor. An NCO 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 bail or re-arrest.

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.

Nolle: also called nolle prosequi; 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 13 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 13 months, the case is removed from the official court records.

O

Offender: person who commits an offense.

P

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

Plea: the defendant'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 completed by a probation officer on the person who has been convicted of a criminal offense. Victims/survivors may give information about the effects of the crime on her or his life, as well as feelings about the defendant and the sentence.

Pretrial: in a criminal case, a meeting with the prosecutor, defense attorney, and judge where they talk about what will happen next in the case.
Probation: when a convicted offender is released by the court under supervision of a probation officer. Probation may be ordered instead of or after prison.
Prosecute: to proceed against a person in a criminal case.
Prosecutor: also called the state's attorney; an attorney who represents the state in a criminal case.
Protective order (PO): an order by the criminal court to protect a victim/survivor 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/survivor's child or dating the victim/survivor. The court can also issue a PO to protect a victim/survivor who has been stalked, harassed, or sexually assaulted by a person not known to her or him. 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/survivor 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/survivor's child, or dating the victim/survivor. A RO after a hearing lasts for 6 months from the date of the order unless the judge orders a different length of time. Violation of a RO is a crime for which the defendant may be arrested.

S

Secondary victims: family, loved ones, or friends of the victim/survivor who have also been affected by the assault.
Sentence: the punishment ordered by the judge.
Sentence Review Division: a panel that decides if a criminal sentence should be changed.

Sexual assault advocate: a certified advocate employed by a sexual assault crisis service, who is specially trained to support and help victims/survivors of sexual assault and their families.
Statement: a written or verbal statement of facts by a witness about a crime.
State's attorney: also called the prosecutor; an attorney who represents the state in criminal cases.
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 under oath by a witness or persons involved with the case.
Trial: examination and hearing of evidence before a court to decide on the charges or claims.

V

Victim Impact Statement (VIS): a written or verbal statement by the victim/survivor or family members that explains how the crime affected her or his life. This statement will be considered by the judge when deciding if to accept a plea agreement and a proper sentence and by the Board of Pardons and Paroles when deciding if a convicted offender should be released from prison on parole with or without conditions.

W

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

Y

Youthful offender: some offenders who have been arrested for a crime committed at the age of 17 and who meet other eligibility requirements are prosecuted as a youthful offender instead of as a juvenile or as an adult. The court file and proceedings are confidential and youthful offender sentences are not considered convictions. Effective July 1, 2012, persons under the age of 18 will be prosecuted as juvenile offenders.

ADA NOTICE

The Judicial Branch of the State of Connecticut complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need a reasonable accommodation under the ADA, contact OVS at 1-888-286-7347.

Office of Victim Services
State of Connecticut Judicial Branch

www.jud.ct.gov/crimevictim JDP-VS-30 Rev. 10/12