

This just happened to me.

- It is important that you find a safe place to go. This may be home, the home of a friend or family member, church, a Sexual Assault Crisis Center, or other safe place.
- Talk to someone you trust.
- Consider seeing a doctor. You can go to your regular doctor or to the emergency room to be checked for injuries. If you want to tell the police, it is better to go to the emergency room.
- If you want to talk to the police, call 911. It is important to not wash yourself or your clothing, brush your teeth, eat, drink, smoke, comb your hair, or use the restroom if you can help it.
- Call a Sexual Assault Crisis Center if you want someone to go with you to the hospital or to talk to the police.

You have the right to ask questions about what is happening to you and get answers. You also have the right to say “no” to anything you do not want to have happen.

I was assaulted in the past.

You may have memories of the assault for a long time. Or, you may remember only pieces of the assault. It is normal to feel many different things, even things that don't seem to make sense or that you never felt before.

Some people who have been sexually assaulted feel like they are better, but then feel bad again if something stressful happens in their lives.

All of these reactions are normal, but can be hard to live with. Many people who have been sexually assaulted find it helpful to talk with someone about what happened to them.

What if I know the person who hurt me?

Most people are assaulted by someone they know. It could be a friend, someone they live with, a family member, a boyfriend or girlfriend, or a person they just met.

Being sexually assaulted by someone you know is just as serious as being hurt by a stranger.

No one has the right to hurt you or make you have sexual contact that you do not want. Even people you know or love. Even if you are married or living with the person who hurt you. This is true for everyone no matter what your age, gender, race, ability, or if you are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

You deserve support.

If you do not get the answers or support that you need the first time you ask for help, please do not give up. There are people who care and can help.

Call the Virginia Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-838-8238 (v/tty) for help.

Resources:

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I didn't want it to happen...

“It's all starting to come together now... what really happened to me, and it's not only me who went through this”
—a survivor of sexual assault



It was not your fault. Nobody deserves to be sexually assaulted.

Sexual assault is any sexual act or contact that you do not want.

It may include touching, kissing, oral sex, anal sex, vaginal sex, or other sexual acts. It can happen to anyone at any time in his or her life. In Virginia, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 8 men have been sexually abused at some time in their lives. (Virginia Department of Health)

It can happen in many different ways.

People use many different ways to pressure or force someone into doing sexual things that they do not want.

They might make you scared about what might happen if you don't do what they want. They might force you by holding you down or hurting you. They might try to talk you into doing things you don't want to do. They may try other ways, too.

If you think this has happened to you or someone you care about, it may be helpful to talk to someone.



1.800.838.8238 V/TTY
Free. Confidential. 24 hours a day.

It is normal to react in many different ways.

Everyone reacts in her or his own way to being sexually assaulted. These reactions may change from day to day or minute to minute.

Being sexually assaulted can affect your body, your emotions, and your spirit. You may feel or act differently. It is okay to pay attention to what you are feeling and what you might need to feel better.

If you want to, you can ask for help from a doctor, crisis center, counselor, or others. It may take some time before you feel better.

How can a Sexual Assault Crisis Center help me?

A Sexual Assault Crisis Center is a place that helps people who have been sexually assaulted.

People with special training will talk to you in a safe place about what has happened. They listen to you and will help you find ways to help yourself feel better. They have many free services that may help you.

If you want to talk to someone, please call the Statewide Hotline at (800) 838-8238 (v/tty).

What can I do now?

Talk to someone you trust.

Many people who have been sexually assaulted never tell anyone. It might be because they are ashamed or because they fear how others might react. It can help to talk to someone you trust. That person could be:

- Friend or family
- Coworker
- Parent/Teacher
- Faith community leader
- Sexual Assault Crisis Center advocate
- Anyone you feel comfortable talking with

Give yourself time to recover.

This is an important time to take care of yourself. If you can, lower stress in other parts of your life. If you need time to yourself, it is okay to say that to your friends and family. Here are some other suggestions for taking care of yourself:

- Try to eat well
- Spend time with people who support you
- Spend less time with people who make you feel bad
- Plan time for activities that make you feel safe