

WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Sexual violence happens in every community and affects people of all ages, genders and sexual orientations. The World Health Organization defines sexual violence as *any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence or coercion, acts to traffic a person or acts directed against a person's sexuality, regardless of the relationship to the victim*. It is any sexual activity when consent is not obtained or not giving freely. Perpetrators of sexual violence can be a stranger, but most often they are someone the victim knows, such as a friend, current or former intimate partner, coworker, neighbor, or family member.

HELP IS HERE

When sexual violence occurs many people are affected: the survivor, family members, friends, and the community. Since 1975, the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department (MNPD) has offered counseling, advocacy, and court support to survivors and others affected by violence. In 2016, two MNPD counseling and advocacy programs, the Victim Intervention Program (VIP) and Domestic Violence Counseling united to become the Family Intervention Program (FIP).

The mission of the Family Intervention Program is to provide mental health services and criminal justice system advocacy whenever individual, families, and/or the community have been affected by violent crime. All services are free, confidential, and provided in an environment which supports cultural diversity: with respect to race, religion, creed and sexual orientation. The survivor's decision to report and or prosecute does not affect eligibility for services.

"I was scared no one would believe me that he forced me to have sex. I blamed myself and felt guilty. I met with a FIP counselor; I was believed, learned coping skills, and received the support I needed to put my life back on track."

-Anne, a survivor of sexual violence

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO YOU

- **CRISIS INTERVENTION**
- **COUNSELING**
- **CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM ADVOCACY THROUGHOUT THE POLICE AND COURT PROCEEDINGS**
- **ASSISTANCE APPLYING FOR TN CRIMINAL INJURY COMPENSATION**
- **INFORMATION AND REFERRALS**

WHAT IS NORMAL FOR ME NOW?

Life is like an onion: you peel it off one layer at a time, and sometimes you weep.

Carl Sandberg

As you work your way through the crisis caused by sexual violence, you will likely move through the following phases. You may not go through these phases in exact order, and you may go back and forth between them.

SHOCK AND DENIAL

Disbelief that the event occurred and desire to numb feelings.

IMPACT

The impact of the crime is obvious and includes a feeling of loss and possibly accompanied by fear, anger, sadness, guilt, isolation, and shame.

CONFRONTATION

The survivor attempts to understand in detail what occurred and why.

REBUILDING

The survivor has been able to acknowledge, accept, and work through their feelings related to the crime creating and adjusting to a new normal in their life.

WHY COUNSELING?

Sexual violence can be destructive and devastating to the lives of survivors, their families, friends, and to communities. When anyone experiences a traumatic event, the balance that existed in their prior life is shattered. Many survivors of sexual assault want to "forget" what happened. Although this reaction is common, it is not healthy nor will any survivor "forget". Understanding the emotions and reactions you are experiencing is important. Although you may be reluctant to talk about your emotions, a FIP counselor knowledgeable of the effects of sexual violence is available to you. Counseling can teach you coping skills and to feel more in control of your life.

IT'S YOUR CALL

FIP staff strives to assist individuals and their loved ones to reclaim a sense of health and well-being in the aftermath of a crisis.

Family Intervention Program 615-862-7773

OTHER CONTACT NUMBERS

Police Sex Crimes Unit 615-862-7540
District Attorney's Office 615-862-5500
TN Criminal Injury Compensation 615-741-2734
Nashville Child Advocacy Center 615-327-9958
(Child Sexual Abuse Counseling Services)

[REFER TO BACK PANEL FOR MAP AND DIRECTIONS](#)

