
SEXUAL ASSAULT OR RAPE

Sexual assault is any forced or coerced sexual act. Sexual assault, rape, or the attempt to do either is a crime. The rapist can be anyone...a neighbor, a date, a friend, someone you do not know, or even a relative.

Most sexual assaults involve someone the victim knows.

**You have the right to say NO
to any unwanted sexual contact
or sexual intercourse.**

**If the person will not leave you alone,
try to get away as soon as possible.
Seek help from a trusted adult
such as a teacher, friend, or police officer.**

Here are some tips to help protect yourself against sexual assault:

- **TRUST YOUR INSTINCT!** If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.
- **No means NO!** If someone tells you "No" to sex, you must stop!
- Be cautious inviting someone into your home or going to someone else's home. Three out of five sexual assaults occur in the victim's home or the home of the acquaintance.
- Communicate your intentions directly with your partner. Do not assume what body language might mean. Talk it over and ASK!
- Be assertive. Respect yourself enough not to do anything you don't want to do. Your opinions matter and when you say "No," your partner should stop.
- Be aware of date rape drugs. Don't accept beverages from open containers and don't leave your drink unattended.
- Don't be afraid to CALL OUT FOR HELP if the situation looks dangerous.

Sexual assault is an act of violence and it is a crime. It is motivated by a need to control, humiliate, and harm. It is not motivated by sexual desire. A rapist chooses victims who may appear vulnerable, not because of what they might say, do or wear. **If you have been raped, it is NOT your fault. You are the victim, not the criminal.**

Talking to someone--a friend, your doctor, teacher, parent, or someone else you trust--is not easy, but it can help. Reaching out is an important step. When you're ready, there is always someone who will listen at:

**The Women's Community(715) 842-5663 8am-4:30pm
or, 24 hours a day(715) 842-7323**

Long-distance callers may call toll-free. . .(888) 665-1234

Or, access their website at: <http://womenscommunity.org>

Offers Sexual Assault Victim Services (SAVS) for people who are victims of rape or sexual assault, and their families and friends, free of charge.

There is also online support for people who aren't ready to talk to someone personally:

National Sexual Assault Online Hotline www.rainn.org

Provides live, secure, anonymous crisis support for victims of sexual assault, their friends, and families, free of charge, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

If you or someone you know are a victim of rape or sexual assault, it is important to seek medical attention immediately. Someone from The Women's Community is available to go with you to Aspirus Wausau Hospital or to Saint Clare's Hospital to be your Advocate and to support you anytime, day or night.

If you are under 18, be aware that teachers, school counselors and health care workers are "mandated reporters." That means they're obligated to report to Social Services whenever they know a minor has been abused, assaulted or raped. SAVS Advocates are also obligated to report to Social Services, if they know you are under 18, and if you have revealed who you are. However, you do not have to reveal who you are when you call SAVS at The Women's Community. It is possible to call them for anonymous (no names asked) advice, even if you decide not to report.

If you go to the emergency room at Aspirus Wausau Hospital or Saint Clare's Hospital, staff there will call an Advocate to come help you. For people over 18, going to the emergency room to see a doctor does not mean you have to involve the authorities. Your Advocate can help you decide what to do next.

No matter how old you are, Advocates are available to support you during police reports and during the legal process. Advocates can't serve as your lawyer, but they can help you with continued support so you won't be alone.

See also SEXUAL ASSAULT LAWS, page 26.

See also VIOLENCE/ABUSE, page 66.