

College Campus Sexual Assaults: What You Need to Know



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What exactly is sexual assault?

A sexual assault is any unwanted physical contact or behavior without the explicit consent of the recipient. This includes rape, incest, sodomy, attempted rape, unwanted touching, voyeurism and indecent exposure. It can be committed by a total stranger or someone you know. On college campuses, the overwhelming majority of sexual assaults are committed by a friend, date, partner or casual acquaintance of the victim.



It is important to understand that sexual assault is a violent act. Often a victim fears for his or her life or physical well-being and believes they have no choice but to submit to what the attacker wants. But submission does not equal consent. A victim is never responsible for being sexually assaulted. It doesn't matter how friendly they were with the assaulter, what they wore, what they drank, how they looked.

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The statistics

If you were sexually assaulted on a college campus, you are not alone. The statistics are staggering.

- 1 in 5 women are targets of sexual assault while they are college students.
- College women are four times more likely than any other age group to face sexual assault.
- Every 21 hours there is another rape on an American college campus.
- 43% of college men admit using coercive behavior to have sex, including ignoring a woman's protest; using physical aggression; and forcing intercourse; 15% acknowledged

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they had committed acquaintance rape; 11% acknowledged using physical restraint to force a woman to have sex.

- College rape victims receive external physical injuries in over 47% of all rapes.
- Of the college women who are raped, only 25% describe it as rape.
- Of the college women who are raped, only 10% report the rape.
- One in twelve college-age men admit having fulfilled the prevailing definition of rape or attempted rape, yet virtually none of these men identify themselves as rapists.
- 34% of completed rapes and 45% of attempted rapes take place on campus. Almost 60% of the completed campus rapes that take place on campus occur in the victim's residence, 31% occur in another residence, and 10% occur in a fraternity.
- 75% of off-campus rapes and 87% of on-campus rapes involved perpetrators who were known to the victims.
- 78% of the men identified (as rapists) were an acquaintance, friend or boyfriend of the victims.

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What to do if you've just been sexual assaulted

- Get to the nearest place where you feel safe. Find a crowded area, a building where you feel safe such as a library, or reach out to someone you trust.
- Contact someone who can help you—a friend, the police (911) or campus security.
- Get to an emergency room as soon as possible. Do not wash up, change clothes or eat anything. If you have already changed but have the clothes unwashed from the attack, it is helpful to bring them with you in a paper (not plastic) bag. This helps preserve evidence, which can be important if you wish to press charges and file a civil lawsuit. A rape kit should be used, which will help provide biological and physical evidence of the assault. It is important for doctors to check for internal injuries and test for STDs. Emergency contraceptives should be discussed.
- Notify the police as well as the campus officials. Unfortunately campus officials too often do not take these cases seriously enough and do not fairly try these cases. That is why we advise to go to the local police. They will take a report and document the incident, as well as collect any evidence. It is also advisable to get an experienced sexual assault lawyer to help ensure your rights are protected. A lawyer is the only one fully on your side to fight for the justice you deserve.

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- A rape crisis hotline, such national sexual assault hotline at (800) 656-HOPE, can help provide additional resources and emotional support. Many college campuses also have hotlines and specific programs set up.

What to do to help yourself

It is normal to have a wide range of feelings and emotions, as well as physical symptoms, after being sexually assaulted:

You may feel alone or isolated.

You may feel dirty.

You might lose trust in people close to you.

You may feel shocked, embarrassed, depressed, anxious, angry and irritable. You might have difficulties in building new relationships, or difficulties in your current relationships.

You may avoid things, people, or places that feel connected to what happened. You may try to keep what happened out of your mind completely. You may be preoccupied with safety.

You may feel like you have lost control of your life. You might jump at noises, or jump when someone surprises or touches you.

You might experience panic or have trouble breathing.

You might find it difficult to eat and/or sleep.

You may experience involuntary shaking.

You might feel tired all the time.

You may have suicidal thoughts.

You may feel disconnected from yourself, or your body. Sometimes it can feel like you are floating above yourself or apart from yourself, or like you aren't real.

You might feel like you can't stop thinking about what happened. Sometimes it might seem so vivid that you fear you are experiencing it again.

You might have nightmares about it, which may keep happening again and again.

These are all very common reactions to an incredibly traumatic experience. It is important to recognize them as normal and temporary, and deal with these fears and feelings in order to regain control over your life. Many will lessen with time, but the trauma may disrupt your life for a while.

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What you can do to help yourself and get back on track

- Remember you are safe, even if you don't feel it.
- Look to family and friends for emotional support. Being the victim of a sexual assault is a truly traumatic experience. Close family and friends can help victims get through the challenging times that often follow an assault.
- There are many organizations that can help, including RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network) and Safe Horizon.
- Maintain a well-balanced diet and try to stay on a regular sleep cycle—which is not easy for any college student.
- Explore stress reduction techniques to find something that works for you—exercise, yoga, massage, meditation and music.
- Some find writing or keeping a journal helps them express thoughts and feelings.

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What to do if someone you know was sexually assaulted

If a friend discloses to you that they have been assaulted, the first thing to do is believe them. Often a victim's worst fear is that the person they tell will not believe them. Ask them if they need medical help, and if they do, take them to the nearest hospital that has a sexual assault nurse examiner present. If they do not want to go to a hospital, do not insist unless it is a medical emergency. When a person is assaulted, they can feel a loss of control over their body and their life. If you push them to tell you more than they volunteer, to report the assault, or to submit to a medical exam, you can unintentionally perpetuate that loss of control. Know the resources on your campus and help your friend connect with those resources.

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The Benefits of Obtaining Legal Support

Many victims find themselves with a pile of medical bills for doctor visits and much-needed counseling. Others may put off counseling because they cannot afford the expense. As these bills add up, many, rightly feel that these costs, as well as the tremendous pain and suffering they feel, should be paid by the attacker. In addition to pressing charges against the assailant, they choose to start a civil lawsuit. For some this action is a helpful part of their recovery, a feeling of some degree of victory and justice.

A personal injury lawyer will help you to seek financial compensation for all related costs as well as pain and suffering. You have the right to sue not only the assailant but any other party that might be partly responsible. On a college campus, this might mean an accomplice, an organization (such as a fraternity), or the college itself if they failed to take reasonable actions to keep you safe.

Our compassionate and competent lawyers have extensive experience working with sexual assault victims and we can help you find some sense of closure and justice as well as afford any counseling and other medical attention you may need.

Everything is Confidential and There Are No Out-of-Pocket Expenses

If you have any questions and want to discuss your specific case, we are here to provide legal guidance. Everything is confidential and we make every effort to put you at ease. We work on a contingency basis, which means there are no out-of-pocket expenses. You do not pay anything until you receive a judgment or settlement.

We Are Here to Help You

We are here not only for expert legal support, but have also been able to be a close confident and source of guidance, help and information for our clients. Most important, we fight to obtain maximum compensation for any physical or emotional damages that our clients suffered. We make sure to find and go after all parties that are at fault.

Contact Our Experienced Lawyers Today if you have any questions or want more information. We can be reached at 516-222-4000 or visit us online at eglaw.com. We have numerous articles and resources on our website as well as an inquiry form to submit questions.

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At Goldstein and Bashner, we have extensive experience in dealing with sexual assault cases in the New York and Long Island areas. We have helped to serve victims as both a close companion and as competent legal advisers. We have helped numerous assault victims overcome the terrible wrong doings that they have had to encounter. In doing so, we have assisted victims in recovering monetary compensation for the physical and emotional injuries that they may have sustained. If you or somebody you care for has been the victim of a sexual assault, please contact our sexual assault lawyers at 516-222-4000 for a free consultation.

Contact our lawyers at 516-222-4000 or through our website at www.eglaw.com

Helpful resources

[Safe Horizon](#): A New York-based organization to help victims of crime. They have a designated Rape & Sexual Assault New York Hotline: 212.227.3000 as well as a 24-hour National Hotline: 866.689.HELP (4357)

[RAINN](#): Rape Abuse & Incest National Network. They have a free online hotline available 24/7 and a lot of information and resources on their website. 800.656.HOPE

[NotAlone.gov](#): A government website dedicated to educating students and schools about Title IX and sexual assault.

[Know Your IX](#): Provides information for students about their Title IX rights in regards to ending sexual violence on campus.

[End Rape on Campus](#): An advocacy organization dedicated to assisting students file Title IX complaints.

[National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#): This site offers a wide variety of information relating to sexual violence including a large legal resource library.

[National Organization for Victim Assistance](#): Founded in 1975, NOVA is the oldest national victim assistance organization of its type in the United States as the recognized leader in this noble cause.

[National Online Resource Center on Violence against Women](#): VAWnet, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence hosts a resource library home of thousands of materials on violence against women and related issues, with particular attention to its intersections with various forms of oppression.

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[U.S. Department of Justice: National Sex Offender Public Website](#): NSOPW is the only U.S. government Website that links public state, territorial, and tribal sex offender registries from [one national search site](#).

Office Locations

Nassau County Office

1778 Hempstead Turnpike
East Meadow, NY 11554
Phone: (516) 595-0692
Fax: (516) 222-0034

Suffolk County

320 Carleton Avenue
Central Islip, NY 11722
Phone: (631) 851-2063
Fax: (516) 222-0034

Bohemia Office

606 Johnson Avenue Suite 30
Bohemia, NY 11716
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Fax: (516) 222-0034

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