

My Important Numbers

Trusted Friend: _____
Trusted Friend: _____
Supervisor: _____
Doctor's Office: _____
Neighbor: _____
School: _____
School: _____
Local Shelter: _____
Local Hospital: _____
Other: _____
Other: _____

My Important Notes

**An Information Guide for
Survivors of Sexual Assault**



24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 419-422-4766
Office Number: 419-420-9261
<https://openarmsfindlay.com/>

Open Arms Mission

Serving individuals affected by domestic violence and sexual assault through crisis intervention, emergency shelter, outreach, advocacy, prevention and education.

Ways Open Arms Can Help

- Accompaniment while receiving medical treatment and/or legal services
- Emergency shelter
- Individual and/or support group
- Support for the family and friends of survivors
- 24/7 crisis hotline -419-422-4766
- Education
- Accompaniment to make police reports or detective interviews
- Civil Sexually Oriented Offense Protection Orders
- Keeping you informed of criminal proceedings
- Accompaniment to criminal and civil hearings

Reference Page

The following references were used when compiling information for this booklet.

Page 4: Safe Horizon, www.safehorizon.org

Page 5: Safe Horizon, www.safehorizon.org

Page 7: Safe Horizon, www.safehorizon.org

Page 8: Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Assault, www.oaesv.org

Page 9: Hancock County Common Pleas Court, <http://cp.co.hancock.oh.us/forms/civil-protection-order-cpo/>

Page 11: Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, www.rainn.org

Page 14: Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Assault, www.oaesv.org

Page 16: Safe Horizon, www.safehorizon.org

Survivor's Measure of Growth

Use the checklist below to measure your recovery and to help you develop your own list of goals.

- I acknowledge that something terrible happened to me.
- I am beginning to deal with my feelings about the assault.
- I am angry about what was done to me but recognize that my anger is not a constant part of my feelings. It intrudes into other parts of my life in a negative way.
- I can talk about the assault experience with an advocate or counselor.
- I am beginning to understand my feelings about the assault.
- I can give responsibility for the assault to the person who attacked me. The responsibility is not mine to accept.
- I could not have prevented the assault, and I recognize that I did the best I could to get through it.
- I am developing a sense of my own self-value and am increasing my self-esteem.
- I am comfortable with the choices I make for myself.
- I recognize I have the right to regain control.

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You Have Survived a Trauma

Rape and sexual assault are traumatic experiences that may interrupt your life at home, at work, and at school, affecting your relationships with friends, family, and co-workers.

This guide can help you to begin sorting out your emotions and concerns and to understand the facts surrounding sexual assault.

You have survived, and now you can begin to recover. Although this process is often slow and confusing, with understanding and persistence you can accomplish a great deal. You have control over how you recover.

The reassurance and support of friends, family, or significant others is very important during this time, but their reaction to your experience may not be what you anticipate or would like it to be. People in your life will react in different ways; some may express blame, others may give you their full support. If you feel ready, you should allow those who offer their support to help you through this period— it will aid you in your recovery process. The decision to talk about your experience is a personal choice. You do not have to share your experience with anyone until you feel ready.

Ideas for Healing

So where do you begin when you decide to regain control? Emotions and feelings will run together, feelings may become overwhelming and begin to seem overpowering. Every time you feel that things are becoming out of control, try to follow these steps:

- Make a list of all the feelings which you can identify.
- Put feelings in order, so you can easily see the strongest or most overwhelming.
- Take one feeling at a time.
- Tell yourself that you have the right to feel that feeling.
- Think about the source of that feeling.
- Create a plan of action to help you work through the feeling.

The above steps can help with any feeling. The important steps include identifying one feeling at a time and brainstorming many different plans of action (coping mechanisms). Some such coping mechanisms include:

- spending time with someone you really love*
- baking*
- treating yourself to your favorite meal*
- singing*
- going for a walk*
- going to church/temple*
- working in the garden*
- taking a long bath*
- exercising*
- doing a puzzle*
- taking up a new hobby*
- calling a crisis hotline*
- keeping a journal*
- reading*
- painting or drawing*
- having a good cry*

Counseling

Sexual assault can change your feelings about yourself and those around you. You may not feel the way you did before the assault— physically, emotionally, socially, or sexually. Counseling can help you deal with these issues and aid you in your recovery. Admitting you need help does not mean you are weak, it means that you are taking control back in your life.

Open Arms offers support, education and advocacy. Open Arms does not offer counseling. If you feel like you would like to talk to an advocate before considering counseling that is perfectly fine. Advocates can also help you look for counselors that may be right for you.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

PTSD (Post traumatic Stress Disorder) is a mental health condition suffered by many individuals who have experienced one or more traumatic events. Not everyone who has experienced a traumatic event develops PTSD. Whether or not an individual will develop PTSD depends on factors specific to the traumatic event, such as the intensity of the event, amount of control over circumstances during the event, and physical harm. Regardless of the circumstances, if a survivor develops PTSD, it is not a sign of weakness, nor does it mean that he/she is “crazy.” PTSD is a serious, recognizable, and treatable condition in the aftermath of trauma.

Survivors with PTSD might encounter:

- Intrusive flashbacks, dreams, dwelling on the assault
- Persistent or intense distress, anxiety, panic attacks, stress, sleep disturbance, irritability, fear, including anger, apprehension, indecision, difficulty in concentrating, being easily startled, heightened awareness, and sensitivity
- Feelings of detachment, feeling like you are a different person now
- Uncertainty about the future
- Depression
- Reliving the event as if it were still occurring

Findlay and Hancock County Resources

Important Resource Numbers

DIAL 911 IN AN EMERGENCY

Open Arms	419-422-4766
BV Emergency Room	419-423-5206
Center for Safe & Healthy Children	419-425-1475
University of Findlay Health Center	419-434-4550
Findlay Police Department	419-424-7150
Hancock County Sheriff	419-422-2424
Family Resource Center Crisis Hotline	1-888-936-7116
Hancock County Prosecutors Office	419-424-7287
Legal Aid	1-888-534-1432

HIV Testing

Findlay City Health Department	419-424-7105
-Free and confidential HIV Testing	
Blanchard Valley Women and Children’s Center	419-424-0180
-HIV and Hepatitis C testing	

Counseling

Lighthouse Counseling	419-423-9133
Lutheran Social Services	419-422-7917
University of Findlay Counseling	419-434-4526
Family Resource Center	419-422-8616

Survivor's Bill of Rights

You have the right to be believed.

You have the right to be given the same credibility as any other crime victim.

You have the right to seek and receive help.

You have the right to courteous, efficient treatment.

You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, without prejudice against race, class, lifestyle, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or occupation.

You have the right to accurate information, presented in a way that you understand.

You have the right to ask questions.

You have the right to make your own decisions.

You have the right to change your mind.

You have the right to get help and support from others.

You have the right to heal.

Safety Planning

Safety in Your Own Home:

- Change the locks on your doors
- Buy additional locks
- Buy locks to secure windows
- Increase outdoor lighting
- Inform people you trust that you want to be kept away from the offender
- Keep car doors locked, even in your own driveway

Safety in Public:

- Decide who to inform of your situation and provide a photo of the offender, if possible
- Walk with others when possible
- Carry a cell phone and have emergency numbers in your contacts, have important numbers memorized in case your phone dies or is taken from you
- Tell friends/family where you are going and when you plan on returning
- Consider getting a Civil Sexually Oriented Offense Protection Order and call the police if the offender is violating the order

How to Anticipate and Respond to a Perpetrator's Actions:

- Be conscious of places the perpetrator frequents (work, favorite places to go, school, etc.)
- Plan what you would say and do if you came into contact with him or her

Safety and Emotional Health:

- Keep in contact with people/organizations who are helping you and who you trust
- Seek counseling if you are having trouble processing all of the events.
- Be aware of your routine and try to alter it sometimes, if possible

Emotions a Survivor May Go Through

Recovering from any trauma, including sexual violence takes time. The recovery process is as unique as each individual survivor and is impacted by countless factors. There is no right or wrong way to feel, and there is no established timeline to follow. The following describes *general* physical and emotional symptoms in which many survivors experience.

- **PHYSICAL:** Body aches/pains, fatigue, upset stomach/bowels, changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- **EMOTIONAL SHOCK:** I feel so numb. Why am I so calm? Why can't I cry?
- **DISBELIEF:** Did it really happen? Why me?
- **EMBARRASSMENT:** What will people think? No, I can't tell my family.
- **SHAME:** I feel so dirty, like there is something wrong with me now.
- **GUILT:** I feel as if I did something to make this happen to me. If only I had.....
- **DEPRESSION:** How am I going to go on? I feel so tired and hopeless.
- **POWERLESSNESS:** Will I ever feel in control again?
- **RE-TRIGGERING:** I keep having flashbacks. I wish they would stop.
- **ANXIETY:** I'm a nervous wreck! I have trouble breathing. (Anxiety is often expressed in physical symptoms, like difficulty breathing, muscle tension, sleep disturbances, changes in eating habits, nausea, stomach problems, nightmares, and bedwetting.)

Facts about Sexual Assault

“Sexual assault” is a general term that includes: rape, sexual harassment, sodomy, sexual abuse, voyeurism, and indecent exposure.

Sexual assault is a violent act committed primarily by a perpetrator who needs to feel powerful and in control by forcing someone else to participate in unwanted sexual activity.

Often a survivor fears for his or her life or physical well-being and feels that there is no choice but to do what the attacker wants. Submission does not equal consent. If you submit, it does not mean that you agreed to or accepted the situation. A survivor is never responsible for being sexually assaulted. The responsibility for the assault lies with the attacker.

Legal Rights

One of the most important decisions you may struggle with is whether or not to report the crime to the police. When the crime of sexual violence occurs, the role of the criminal justice system is to investigate and, if warranted, prosecute the crime. It is the only avenue by which a perpetrator can be held criminally accountable. Civil Law, on the other hand, has the capacity to address numerous ancillary issues related to the crime of sexual violence, including privacy, safety, employment, education, housing, immigration and financial concerns stemming from the victimization.

Whether or not you decide to press charges in a criminal matter, you deserve support and should know about the range of services available to you. You may report the crime and still decide not to prosecute. You have the right to be notified of judicial proceedings against the accused if you decide to prosecute, and you may submit a victim impact statement when the offender is sentenced.

Civil Sexually Oriented Offense Protection Order Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Civil Sexually Oriented Offense Protection Order ?

A Civil Sexually Oriented Offense Protection Order is a court order to protect individuals who have experienced a recent form of sexual assault. There only has to be one instance of sexual assault in order for a survivor to request a protection order . This court order is meant to direct an individual not to have contact with and to stay away from another person.

How Do I get a Civil Sexually Oriented Offense Protection Order ?

The process starts with an individual (called the Petitioner) filing a written document called a petition with the Clerk of Courts asking the Court to order another person (called the Respondent) to stay away. The case is set for a prompt Court decision called an ex-parte hearing. If the Petitioner can prove an order is legally proper, the Court will issue an ex-parte protection order directing the Respondent to stay away. This can occur before the Respondent has notice of the Court case.

My protection order has been violated. What should I do?

You should contact law enforcement, as violation of the order may result in criminal charges against the Respondent.

Will the Respondent be arrested if the Petitioner is granted the order at the full hearing?

No. A protection order hearing is a civil matter, not criminal. No one is arrested at the hearing no matter what the evidence. However, a later violation of the protection order by the Respondent can result in arrest and criminal prosecution.