

*No matter which options you choose, HOPE Center will provide you with the necessary information to make the difficult decisions and will support you throughout your healing process.*

**SAFELINE**  
**1-800-607-2330**

**Sexual assault** happens every day in our community, devastating victims' lives, relationships and families. If you or someone you know is a victim, remember that sexual assault is never the victim's fault; don't ever be afraid to ask for help or support.

**Common reactions** may include:

- Feelings and thoughts such as confusion, self-blame, shame, anger, rage, embarrassment, shock, sadness, guilt, fear, disorientation, impatience, desire to forget about it, poor concentration, emotional numbness
- Memories and nightmares
- Difficulties with intimate relationships
- Racing pulse, nausea, sleeplessness, anxiety
- Long-term physical symptoms including recurring headaches, stomachaches, and stress-related illness

**Coping strategies** may help, such as:

- Talking about your concerns
- Reminding yourself that only the perpetrator is to blame for the crime
- Asking professionals to explain procedures
- Developing an agreed-upon signal that indicates you want to stop or take a break from procedures
- Relaxation techniques: imagining a safe place, slow, deep breathing, or self talk (e.g. I am safe now; I can get through this; It will be over shortly)

**Tips for family and friends of survivors** include:

- Give a copy of this brochure to the victim/survivor.
- Listen, respect, be emotionally available and talk with the victim/survivor.
- Accept what s/he says, do not make judgments, and allow the victim/survivor to make decisions that feel the best for her or himself.

HOPE Center is dedicated to preventing sexual and domestic violence and breaking the cycle of violence in our community. Services include:

Confidential 24-Hour Safeline  
Drop-in Center  
Crisis Intervention  
Support Counseling  
Advocacy  
Confidential Support Groups  
Medical Advocacy  
Legal Advocacy and Assistance  
Safety Planning  
Resource Library  
Community Outreach  
Systems Change & Collaboration

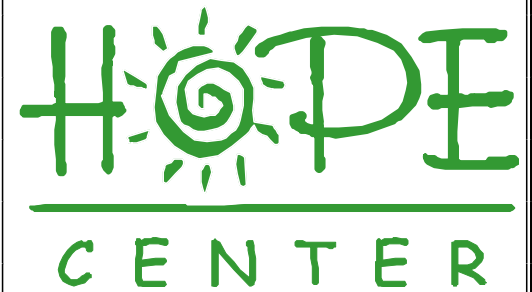


Depot Square Office Building  
303 NE 1st Avenue, Suite 365  
Faribault, MN 55021  
SAFELINE 1-800-607-2330

Phone: 507-332-0882  
Fax: 507-332-6999

Website: [www.hopecentermn.org](http://www.hopecentermn.org)

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YOU HAVE  
RIGHTS &  
OPTIONS:  
SERVICES FOR VICTIMS  
OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

**1-800-607-2330**

**SAFELINE**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
Free and Confidential

# SERVICES FOR VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT IN RICE COUNTY

**Sexual assault** is any type of sexual activity that is unwanted, performed by someone to whom you have not given your consent. It can include anything from sexual touching to rape. Anyone can be a victim, no matter your race, gender, economic background, lifestyle, appearance, sexual orientation, and no matter the circumstances. NO ONE deserves to be sexually assaulted.

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## YOUR OPTIONS:

- You can seek medical attention at a local hospital emergency room. You have the right to have an advocate present at a sexual assault exam.
- The county in which your assault occurred is responsible for paying for your sexual assault exam.
- The county will pay for the cost of the sexual assault exam, emergency room fees, STD treatment, pregnancy testing and prevention.
- The county will pay whether or not you report the assault to the police.
- You should not receive a bill for the sexual assault exam. If you receive a bill for the cost of the exam, call HOPE Center at 1-800-607-2330.
- Your insurance should not receive a bill for the sexual assault exam unless you signed a consent form at the hospital.
- The hospital may bill you or your insurance for the treatment of any injuries.
- If you receive a bill for the treatment of injuries in relation to sexual assault, HOPE Center can help you locate resources to pay that bill.
- The evidence collected during the exam will be saved for 1 year.

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**WE ARE WAITING FOR YOUR CALL**

HOPE Center advocates are trained professionals who are familiar with Rice County services for victims/survivors of sexual assault. An advocate can offer you information about your options, and will support you throughout your healing process no matter which options you choose. HOPE Center services are free and confidential.

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## YOUR OPTIONS:

- You do not need to decide to report the assault to law enforcement immediately.
- Delays in reporting make prosecution more difficult.
- If you decide to report to law enforcement, you can either have the incident documented, or you can report and request prosecution.
- Initial contact with law enforcement can give you more information to make an educated choice about whether to report and request prosecution.
- You have the right to have an advocate present during any meeting with law enforcement.
- Any questions you are asked are not intended to place blame on you, but to get information that assists in prosecuting the case.
- You can ask an officer to restate any question that you do not understand.
- It is important to be completely honest about any drug or alcohol use both before and immediately after the exam; it is still not your fault and the assault is the issue of concern.
- You should be contacted by an investigator within a week after your first report to law enforcement. If an investigator does not contact you, call HOPE Center.
- If the investigator closes your case, you have the right to a meeting with the investigator for an explanation.
- An advocate can assist you in writing a protection order for your safety.



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## YOUR OPTIONS:

- The Victim-Witness Program Coordinator will be your contact person in the County Attorney's Office.
- You have the right to have an advocate present during any meetings with prosecution or court proceedings.
- If the prosecutor decides not to press charges in your case, you have the right to meet with the prosecutor for an explanation, and you have the right to a review of your case by the supervisor.
- If the prosecutor does press charges in your case, a probation officer will contact you with information for your safety, such as a no-contact order against the perpetrator.
- Sexual assault must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. If it is not prosecuted, that does not mean that the assault did not happen, or that law enforcement and prosecution do not believe you.
- If there is a guilty verdict, you can read a statement in court, or have a statement read on your behalf, that tells the impact the assault had on your life.
- For your safety, you can request that a probation officer contact you with the whereabouts and possible release dates of the perpetrator.

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