

**RAPE  
CRISIS  
SCOTLAND**

**Rape**

## Rape Crisis Scotland

The **Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline** offers initial and crisis support and information on the phone and by email for anyone aged 13 or over who has been affected by sexual violence, no matter when or how it happened.

It is free and confidential.

The **helpline** supports survivors of stalking and can also put you in touch with local Rape Crisis Centres or other services for ongoing support. There is a minicom for deaf or hard of hearing people and we can arrange for language interpreters if your first language is not English.

**08088 01 03 02**

## Rape and sexual assault

Sexual violence can happen to anyone. Rape and sexual assault can happen to adults and children, it is never the fault of the person to whom it happens. Some survivors may have experienced an isolated attack, some may experience more than one attack in their life and others again may have lived with sexual violence over a long period of time.

Rape and sexual assault are serious crimes which happen when someone is made to take part in sexual acts to which they do not consent. The *Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act* came into effect on 1 Dec 2010 defining rape as: penetration without consent, of the vagina, anus or mouth, by a penis. The Act also sets out a crime of sexual assault by penetration, which involves penetration of the vagina or anus by any object, without consent. If you were raped or sexually assaulted before the 1 December 2010, the previous law, rather than the Sexual Offences Act, will apply.

Sexual assault is a broad term which applies to many forms of sexual violence ranging from unwanted touching or kissing to being forced to perform sexual acts. Sexual violence happens irrespective of age, race, religion, gender, class, sexuality, whether able bodies or disabled. No matter where you were, what you were doing, what you were wearing, if you were drunk or under the influence of drugs, you did not deserve this.

The responsibility always lies with the attacker, not you.

## Feelings

It is natural to experience a whole range of feelings following a rape or sexual assault. There is no 'normal' response. How you are feeling and how you respond to this are unique to you. At **Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline** we will always listen to you and believe your experience, we are not here to judge you.

If you were recently attacked it is possible that you may be in shock. This can mean that you are feeling numb, unemotional, can be in total disbelief, be crying, laughing or physically being sick. Many survivors feel responsible and can feel dirty and ashamed.

It is not uncommon to experience nightmares, flashbacks to what happened or panic attacks. None of these things mean that you are mad or losing control, they are natural reactions to a traumatic event.

Often these memories can be very frightening as it is as though it is happening again. It is possible to gain control over these reactions, and support from someone you trust or from a Rape Crisis worker, can be helpful.

It is normal to struggle with every day life, to be irritable, to feel worthless or depressed following a rape or sexual assault. There is no standard length of time to recover from this and you may find yourself moving between these emotions.

It is natural to struggle profoundly with what has happened despite pressure to move on or 'get over it'. It is not unusual to feel confused, to lack trust in yourself and others and to experience difficulties in relationships.

It is possible to heal from rape or sexual assault. With support and in your own time it can be helpful to talk about what has happened, how you are feeling and your responses.

**You have done nothing wrong and deserve this support.**

## Reporting to the Police

Whether the attack happened recently or a long time ago it is entirely your own decision to report it or not. The **RCS Helpline** is available to offer support and information if you are thinking about reporting or want to talk it through after you have done so.

## The legal system

The legal system is complex and **RCS Helpline** can provide you with an information leaflet which details the legal process, we can also talk this through on the helpline and offer you support if you have reported, are going to court or have previously been in court.

## Health

Your emotional health is really important, as is your physical health. If you have recently experienced sexual violence you may have injuries which require medical attention. These injuries may be internal or external, and it is natural to feel scared and daunted at seeking attention.

You may be concerned about pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.

You can take the Emergency Contraceptive Pill up to three days (72 hours) after an attack. An IUD often called a coil can be fitted up to five days (120 hours) and must remain inside you until the time of your next period. You can get Emergency Contraception from local family planning and sexual health clinics.

The **RCS Helpline** or your local **Rape Crisis Centre** can help to find your closest service. The Emergency Contraceptive Pill can also be bought from chemists for a cost of £25.

If you are pregnant and do not wish to continue with the pregnancy you can ask your GP or a doctor at a family planning clinic for a termination (abortion). It is your decision and no one has a right to tell you what you should do, it is about what is right for you.

If you are concerned about STIs you can visit your local family planning or sexual health clinic for testing. You don't need to tell them what happened unless you wish to and you don't need to give them your real name. The services are **free** and **confidential**.

If any of your tests are positive for STIs the clinic will provide you with the right treatment eg antibiotics. If you are having an HIV test it is worth considering when best to do this. This is because it takes 12 weeks for the infection to show up. You can also have these tests done by your GP but they are required to record the test and the result in your medical record.

It may be that you experienced sexual violence some time ago and have since been in poor health. It is not unusual to experience pains associated with specific injuries or more unspecific pains eg in your abdomen. The effects of sleeplessness, of depression and flashbacks can all be physical and can be associated with general ill health.

If you or someone you know has been affected by any form of sexual violence no matter when it happened please call the free and confidential

Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline on

**08088 01 03 02**

or contact our email support service on

**support@rapecrisisscotland.org.uk**

Trained female support workers are there to offer support and information, and can let you know about support in your area.

### Local Rape Crisis Centres

Aberdeen:

**01224 620 772**

Argyll & Bute:

women **0800 121 46 85**

men **0800 032 0399**

Central Scotland:

**01786 471 771**

Dumfries & Galloway:

**01387 253 113**

Dundee:

**01382 201 291**

East Ayrshire:

**01563 541 769**

Edinburgh:

**0131 556 9437**

Fife:

**01592 642 336**

Glasgow:

**0141 552 3200**

Lanarkshire:

**01698 527 003**

Perth & Kinross:

**01738 630 965**

Scottish Borders:

**0800 054 2445**

Western Isles:

**01851 709 965**