

## Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)

DC's SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) is a partnership of public and private agencies that work to coordinate a high-quality, multidisciplinary victim/survivor-centered response to sexual assault cases. This partnership allows for better communications among all those involved in responding to the victim. It improves the process for reporting and prosecuting cases. Members include: Metropolitan Police (MPD), DC Office of Victim Services, WHC Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE), Network for Victim Recovery of DC (NVRDC), DC Rape Crisis Center, and the US Attorney's Office.

## Resources to Help You

Being a victim of a sexually violent attack is not something you must endure alone. These local and national organizations help victims of sexual abuse and violence.

- » **National Sexual Violence Center**  
Toll free hotline..... (877) 739-3895  
Website ..... [nsvrc.org](http://nsvrc.org)
- » **RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network)**  
Toll free hotline..... (800) 656-HOPE  
Website ..... [rainn.org](http://rainn.org)
- » **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence**  
National Domestic Violence Hotline ..... (800) 799-SAFE  
Website ..... <http://ncadv.org/learn-more/get-help>
- » **National Center for Victims of Crime**  
24-hour DC Victim Hotline..... (844) 443-5732  
Web and email..... [ncvc.org](http://ncvc.org) or [gethelp@ncvc.org](mailto:gethelp@ncvc.org)
- » **Men Can Stop Rape**  
Hotline..... (202) 265-6530
- » **DC Rape Crisis Center**  
Hotline..... (202) 333-RAPE (7273)
- » **DASH (District Alliance for Safe Housing)**  
Hotline..... (202) 462-3274
- » **DC Crime Victims Compensation Program**  
Hotline..... (202) 879-4216
- » **NVRDC (Network for Victim Recovery of DC)**  
Hotline..... (202) 742-1727

## Get More Safety Tips

For tips on other ways to stay safe from crime in your daily life, see the other brochures in this series, available from our Website at [www.mpdcc.dc.gov/safety](http://www.mpdcc.dc.gov/safety). Or visit your local police district. To find the one nearest you, see [www.mpdcc.dc.gov/districts](http://www.mpdcc.dc.gov/districts).

## About the Victim Specialists Unit

The Victim Specialists Unit of the Metropolitan Police Department is committed to providing support, information, and referrals during the investigative process for victims/survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Victim Specialists act as a support system for the victim/survivor with the hope of empowering them to participate in the criminal proceedings of their case.



For more information, please call us at (202) 724-4339 or visit us Monday through Friday, 8:15 AM–4:45 PM.

### Victim Specialists Unit

300 Indiana Avenue, NW, Room 3121  
Washington, DC 20001

(202) 724-4339 office  
(202) 727-6491 fax

## Know Something About a Crime? Don't Keep It a Secret

If you have important information to share with the police, the Anonymous Crime Tip Line and Text Tip Line enables you to give MPD vital information anonymously. Just dial (202) 727-9099 or text to 50411 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Your name will not be used, only the information you provide. Your information could lead to a cash reward. For more details, see [www.mpdcc.dc.gov/tipline](http://www.mpdcc.dc.gov/tipline).

**GIVE 5-0**  
  
**THE 4-1-1**

Have information for police?  
**CALL (202) 727-9099**  
**TEXT TO 50411**



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Metropolitan Police Department  
300 Indiana Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

May 2017

# FOR YOUR SAFETY



# Sexual Assault



# A sexual assault is about power, anger, and control.

It is an act of violence and an attempt to degrade someone using sex as a weapon.

Above all, sexual assault is a crime.

## What is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault is any involuntary sexual act in which a person is threatened, coerced or forced to engage against their will, or any sexual touching of a person who has not consented. This includes rape (such as forced vaginal, anal, or oral penetration), inappropriate touching, forced kissing, or the torture of a victim in a sexual manner.

Above all, sexual assault is a crime.

## How You Can Protect Yourself

- » Be alert! Walk with confidence and purpose.
- » Be aware of your surroundings — know who's out there and what's going on.
- » Don't let alcohol or other drugs cloud your judgment.
- » Trust your instincts! If a situation or place makes you feel uncomfortable or uneasy, leave!

## When You're Indoors

- » Make sure all doors (don't forget sliding glass doors) and windows have sturdy, well-installed locks, and use them! Install a wide-angle peephole in the door. Keep entrances well-lit.
- » Never open your door to strangers. Offer to make an emergency call while someone waits outside. Check the identification of sales or service people before letting them in. Don't be embarrassed to phone for verification.
- » Be wary of isolated spots — apartment laundry rooms, underground garages, parking lots, offices after business hours. Walk with a friend, co-worker, or security guard, particularly at night.
- » Know your neighbors, so you have someone to call or go to if you're uncomfortable or frightened.
- » If you come home and see a door or window open, or broken, don't go in. Call the police from a cell phone, public phone or a neighbor's phone.

## When You're Outdoors

- » Avoid walking or jogging alone, especially at night. Stay in well-traveled, well-lit areas.
- » If you do go jogging always keep at least one head phone out, to be aware of your surroundings
- » Be assertive- don't let anyone violate your personal space at anytime
- » Wear clothes and shoes that give you freedom of movement.
- » Be careful if anyone in a car asks you for directions — if you answer, keep your distance from the car.
- » Have your key ready before you reach the door — home, car or office.
- » If you think you're being followed, change direction and head for open stores, restaurants, theaters, or a house with its lights on.

## When You Go Out At Night

- » Go to social gatherings with friends, arrive together, check in with each other, and leave together; always know where you are and who is around you.
- » Never leave your drink unattended — if you do at any point, always get a new one.
- » Don't accept drinks from people you don't know or trust. If you choose to accept a drink, go with the person to the bar, watch it being poured, and carry it yourself. At parties, do not drink from the punch bowls or large common open containers.

## When You're in Your Car

- » Park in areas that will be well-lit and well-traveled when you return.
- » Always lock your car — when you get in and when you get out.
- » Look around and under your car and in the back seat before you get in.
- » If your car breaks down, lift the hood, lock the doors, and turn on your flashers. Call police on a cell phone, or use a "Call Police" banner or flares. If someone stops, roll

the window down slightly and ask the person to call the police or a tow service.

- » Don't hitchhike, ever. Don't ever pick up a hitchhiker.

## If the Unthinkable Happens

How does one handle a sexual assault? It really depends on a number of factors, such as your physical and emotional state, the situation, and the rapist's personality. Just remember, there are no hard and fast rules, no right or wrong answers. Remember — surviving is the goal.

- » Try to escape. **SCREAM**. Be rude. Make noise to discourage your attacker from following.
- » Use a whistle to alert others if you are threatened.
- » Talk, stall for time, and assess your options.
- » If the assailant has a weapon, you may have no choice but to submit. Do whatever it takes to survive.
- » If you decide to fight back, you must be quick, determined and effective. Target the eyes or groin.

## Surviving a Sexual Assault

Remember, **sexual assault is not your fault**. Do not accept blame for being an innocent victim.

- » Go to a hospital emergency room or your own doctor for medical care **IMMEDIATELY**. The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program at Washington Hospital Center is available at 110 Irving Street, NW. What this means for a victim of a sexual assault (over the age of 17) is that you while you are waiting to be seen you will be in a private examination room, your wait will not be more than one hour, and you will be examined by someone specially trained in this area. SANE nurses are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To learn more, visit <http://dcsane.org>.
- » Don't go alone. Ask a friend or family member to go with you, or call a rape crisis center or school counselor. The DC Rape Crisis Center (**202-333-7273**) has a hotline staffed with caring, concerned individuals who can help.
- » Preserve all physical evidence. **DON'T** shower, bathe, change clothes, douche, or throw any clothing away until the police or counselor say it's okay.
- » Get counseling to help deal with feelings of anger, helplessness, fear, and shame caused by rape. It helps to talk to someone about the assault, whether it happened last night, last week, or years ago.
- » You have been the victim of a crime and you should call the police. The sooner you tell, the greater the chances the rapist will be caught. But if you are uncomfortable about calling the police, contact a rape crisis center.