

ACT'S SERVICES

Abuse Counseling and Treatment, Inc. provides the following services to victims of domestic violence and their children, as well as survivors of sexual assault and their families.



All services are provided free of charge:

- 24-hour hotline
- Medical-forensic exams (Adults only)
- Documentation of injuries
- Follow-up medical care
- Immediate crisis intervention and telephone counseling
- Help with filing of victim's compensation forms
- Aid in preparing for court and courtroom testimony with SANE Nurses in regard to evidence finding
- Safety awareness plan
- Emergency shelter
- Information and referrals
- One-on-one confidential counseling
- Male, female, and senior support groups
- Advocacy
- Rape support groups
- Support groups for families of sexual assault survivors
- Children's program
- Information and assistance in obtaining injunctions for protection
- Support through the judicial system and accompaniment to court
- 24-hour on-call counseling and support at all local hospital emergency rooms
- Community education programs

SEXUAL ASSAULT FACTS:

Experiencing sexual violence transforms people and changes their lives, forever.

- A sexual assault occurs every 1.8 minutes in the U.S.
- Survivors in Florida range from 2 months to 94 years old
- 75% of sexual assault survivors know their assailant, at least by sight
- Approximately 1 in 4 women will be raped in their lifetime
- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 7 boys are sexually assaulted by the age of 13
- Nearly one third of all rape survivors develop Rape-Related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

**Cooperation DOES NOT mean consent.
Rape is NEVER the victim's fault.**



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Abuse Counseling & Treatment, Inc.

A Comprehensive Rape Crisis Center



A Guide for Survivors of Sexual Assault

Abuse Counseling and Treatment, Inc.
(ACT)

201 4th St.

Ft. Myers, FL 33907

24-Hour Hotline/TDD: 239.939.3112

Admin./Appointments: 239.939.2553

ACT's Court Advocacy Unit: 239.533.1080

Fax: 239.939.4741

Email: act@actabuse.com

Website: actabuse.com

Florida Helpline: 888.956.7273

National Hotline: 800.656.HOPE (4673)

Abuse Counseling and Treatment, Inc. will not discriminate against any individual because of race, color or creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, affectional preference, disability, age (40-over), pregnancy, marital status, military status, disability, genetic information or status with regard to public assistance.

The Center will provide accommodations, including American Sign Language interpreters, assistive listening devices, alternative formats of printed materials and real-time captioning upon request for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or are living with disabilities. To ensure accommodations, please make your request at least 7 days prior to the event.

SEXUAL ASSAULT IS A CRIME OF VIOLENCE, NOT SEX. SEXUAL ASSAULT IS ABOUT POWER AND CONTROL, SEX IS THE WEAPON.

It is a violent, unexpected, traumatic, and sometimes life threatening experience. Sexual assaults are committed against people of all genders and ages.

Assaults include any type of unwanted sexual activity expressed by one person to another, either overtly or in a subtle manner. If you have experienced this type of assault, it is important for you to remember that...

Cooperation is *not* consent!

Perpetrators sometimes use threats of physical harm, physical force or the use of a weapon. The fear of harm or even death may have prompted you to cooperate with the assailant. This does not in any way mean that you consented to the assault.

Since rape can feel like... and can often be a life-threatening situation, whatever measure you took to survive was EXACTLY the right thing to do. This makes you...

A Survivor

As a survivor of sexual assault, you will most likely have many questions and concerns. There are emotional and psychological reactions to the trauma you have experienced. You may want clarification on medical and legal questions. This brochure will provide some of that information for you.

Following the assault, you may find many thoughts and feelings that will be confusing and disturbing. That's normal.



RAPE TRAUMA SYNDROME

Rape survivors usually feel a sort of emotional numbing or shock immediately following the assault. It is normal to have the tendency to deny what happened. This is called Rape Trauma Syndrome.

Rape Trauma Syndrome is a term that covers the wide range of emotions and reactions that are common to rape survivors. Some of these reactions include fear, grief, disbelief, guilt, shame, anger, sadness, betrayal, and rage.



Rape is a terrifying assault. It is normal for you to feel fear, anxiety, distrust, anger or any other emotion you may have. It is also normal to experience sleeplessness, lack of appetite, and/or increase in appetite, and to have less interest in your normal routine and activities.

Flashbacks and nightmares are also common symptoms of Rape Trauma Syndrome. You may be blaming yourself for what happened. **IT WAS NOT YOUR FAULT.** Regardless of what a victim does or doesn't do, **no one deserves to be raped.**

You are not alone

ACT is certified by the State of Florida as a provider of services for sexual assault survivors. Our sensitive, professional staff has provided services, support, information and referrals to rape survivors for over 27 years. The services are strictly confidential.

Our advocates will lead you through the legal process should you decide to prosecute.

Our counselors are there to listen and you can choose a one-on-one counseling session or join a support group for additional support. You are not alone. Often significant others and family members do not know how to respond to what's happened to you. In order to help them understand what you are going through, our counselors can meet them as well, if you so desire.

We care about you

ACT provides confidential services to survivors of date/acquaintance rape, stranger rape, attempted rape, gang rape, marital rape, same sex rape, and males who have been raped.

MEDICAL ATTENTION

Immediately following the assault you will probably be in a state of intense psychological distress, and you may forget the necessity of immediate medical attention.

ACT offers a 24-hour, 7 days a week collaborative service of forensically trained sexual assault nurse examiners, law enforcement (when requested), prosecutors, crisis intervention specialists and victim advocates to provide first response care to survivors of sexual assault. In an effort to give back dignity and control to rape survivors, this program is located in a confidential and caring setting tailored specifically to the survivor's needs.

You will need a medical-forensic examination to assess any physical injuries as well as testing for possible pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. You will also be offered HIV testing. A survivor can shower and receive personal care items, as well as clothing, after the medical exam. If there are physical injuries, you will be referred to a local hospital for proper care for those injuries.

In addition to medical attention, there is another important consideration to make. It is that of...

REPORTING THE CRIME

The role of law enforcement is multi-faceted. One of the expectations of officers is to solve reported crime by apprehending and arresting the suspect. Rape is a crime.

If you choose to report the rape, law enforcement will encourage you to have a forensic exam. This is the collection of any evidence available for use by the prosecution should the rape proceed to trial. The exam includes the collection of clothing, semen, blood, hair, and other forensic evidence which will be packaged and labeled according to strict evidence procedures.

An forensic exam must be done within 120 hours of the assault in order to be introduced as evidence. While you may be encouraged by victim advocates, law enforcement, and medical personnel to have an forensic exam, *the decision to do so is entirely up to you.*