

# COPING WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT: A GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



## About the authors

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## About the Havens

The Haven Paddington, at St Mary's Hospital, is one of three Havens in London. The others are at the Royal London Hospital and King's College Hospital. All are jointly funded by London Primary Care Trusts and the Metropolitan Police Service. The Havens provide specialist forensic, medical and aftercare services for women, men and children who have been sexually assaulted or raped. The forensic service can be accessed 24 hours a day and follow up care such as the young persons support clinic, sexual health check ups and psychotherapy/ counselling services are available from 9am to 5pm on weekdays. For more information check [www.thehavens.org.uk](http://www.thehavens.org.uk)

## Acknowledgments

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# COPING WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT:

## INTRODUCTION

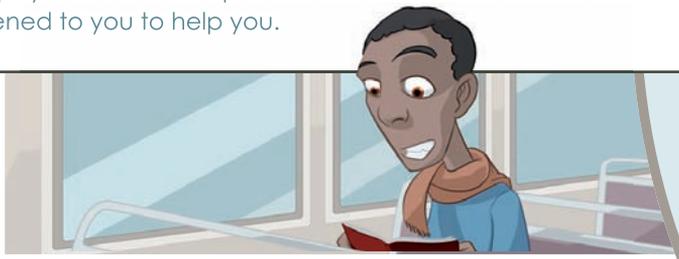
This booklet has been written for young people aged 13 to 16 who have been raped or sexually assaulted. If this has happened to you, perhaps you are struggling to cope? Do you think that no-one understands what you have gone through and how it makes you feel? Maybe you think you are losing your mind? Do you try to do everything possible not to talk or think about what has happened?

In our experience people who understand their reactions after an assault are better at coping with them and so are able to recover more quickly. As such the focus of this booklet is on common thoughts, feelings and behaviour following an assault as well as offering practical tips on how to cope. Topics like the law, myths about rape and sexual assault and who you can contact if you have been assaulted are also covered.

### Tips to help you use this booklet

This booklet might be difficult to use if you're coming to terms with being raped or sexually assaulted. You might find that concentrating on it for any length of time is difficult and that some of the things you read are upsetting. To help you make the most of this booklet, here are a few tips on how to use it.

- Reading the whole booklet from beginning to end in one go might be difficult for you right now, so perhaps you could read it in small chunks and for a few minutes at a time.
- If there are parts that upset you it might be because they remind you of what has happened. These feelings are normal and will pass with time.
- If there are parts of the booklet that you don't understand perhaps you could ask a parent or friend who knows what has happened to you to help you.





### THE LAW

**Rape** is when a man forces his penis into the vagina, anus or mouth of another person **when that person doesn't want him to do so**; the law calls this 'without consent'.

**Sexual Assault** is a crime that can be committed by both men and women against men or women. Different types of sexual assault include:

- Objects or parts of the body (e.g. a finger) being put into someone's vagina or anus when that person doesn't want it to happen.
- Someone being touched in a sexual way that makes him or her feel uncomfortable or frightened. This could be through their clothes like bottom pinching.
- Someone being made to sexually stimulate themselves using their hands or fingers (known as masturbation) or putting objects into their vagina or anus, when they don't want to do it.

**Don't worry if this sounds confusing. The most important bit to remember is that being pressurised or forced to have sex when you don't want to is a crime!**

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### WHO SHOULD I TELL?

Firstly, it is important that you tell someone as soon as possible and don't keep it to yourself. Telling someone what has happened means that you can get the support you need. The person you talk to should be someone that you trust and feel comfortable with. You have a number of choices as to who you can tell: a friend, parent, GP or a school teacher.

You can also speak to the police. Most police forces have specially trained police officers. You can contact the police immediately by dialling 999.

When you talk to the police you will need to give them as much information about the assault as possible, such as what happened, where and when. If you know who they are and how you know them. What you tell the police will be recorded in writing or on video and might be used as evidence if your case goes to court. The police understand how distressing it can be to talk about an assault and will take things slowly. An adult that you trust and feel comfortable with can also support you whilst you are talking to the police. If English is not your first language then the police will arrange for an interpreter.

If you can't face anyone at the moment then there are plenty of helplines who will not only listen but offer you advice on where you can go and get help when you are ready to do so. Telephone numbers for these helplines are at the back of this booklet.



### is everything confidential?

This depends on who you have told and what you have told them. As a young person you do have the right to confidentiality, but if the professional person you have spoken to is worried about your safety they might need to speak to a doctor, psychologist or a social worker. Before they do this they will discuss this with you so you will have the chance to say how you feel. You can discuss any worries that you might have about this and the person you have spoken to has to take your concerns seriously. Usually when someone does pass on private information about you it is because they are worried about you and want to make sure that you are getting the right support.



### what's a sexual assault referral centre?

You might be given the option to go to a sexual assault referral centre, or SARC (details of SARC locations are given at the back of this booklet). Specialist doctors will ask you about what happened and then examine your body to try and find evidence of what happened to you. Before you go for the examination, try not to shower, wash your clothes, go to the loo (although this may be difficult) or have a drink. Doing so could get rid of evidence, which might be helpful in a police investigation.

The most important thing they do at a SARC is to make sure that you are okay. They will advise you about how to deal with a possible pregnancy, check you for sexually transmitted infections, and sort out treatment if you have caught anything. They can also arrange for you to get support from local services. The police will talk to you about how a criminal charge can be brought against the person who assaulted you and how they will try and get your case to court.

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### MYTHS AND FACTS

People have different ideas and views about rape and sexual assault but what are the facts? Have a read of the myths and facts below and see what you think.

**Myth:**  
rape very rarely happens and it will never happen to me

**Fact:**  
1 in 4 women and 1 in 8 men will be the victim of a sexual assault or rape in their lifetimes. That's a lot, so not as rare as you might think!

**Myth:**  
only good-looking girls in tight clothes or 'sluts' get raped

**Fact:**  
Rapists often choose to attack people they think are easy to get at, not because of how people dress or if they have a reputation. People who are assaulted can be of any age, sex, religion, come from any culture or background and be gay, straight or bisexual. However, we know that women aged 16-24 are at a greater risk of being raped than any other group. And let's sort out the "slut" thing. Women have a right to dress any way they want. It is the rapist who makes the choice to rape them.

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**Myth:**  
when it comes  
to sex girls say  
'no' but they  
really mean  
'yes'

**Fact:**  
It's simple - no means  
no! If two people want  
to have sex with each  
other it should be  
something that they  
both agree to.

**Myth:**  
A rapist is more  
likely to be a mad  
stranger, who can't  
control what  
he does

**Fact:**  
This is not true. Most rapists  
are men with no history of mental  
illness and most people who are  
raped know who attacked them.  
Rapists often think carefully about  
who they are targeting, where  
they will commit the crime and  
what they will do, which shows  
they are planning ahead  
and are in control of  
their actions.

**Myth:**  
Alcohol and  
drugs turn  
people into  
rapists

**Fact:**  
Drugs and alcohol  
are never the cause of  
rape or sexual assault. It  
is the attacker who is  
committing the crime  
not the drugs and/or  
alcohol.

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**Myth:**  
People often  
lie about being  
raped

**Fact:**

Only a very small number (1-2%) of reported rapes is false. This is the same percentage of false reports as for all other crimes. Most people who have been raped or sexually assaulted tell the truth. In fact most people do not tell anyone that they have been raped because they feel too ashamed and scared.

**Myth:**  
Men who  
rape men  
are gay

**Fact:**

Most men who sexually assault other men think of themselves as straight. Sexual assault is more about violence, anger, domination and control over another person, than being attracted to someone or wanting sex.

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**Myth:**  
rape is just  
rough  
sex

**Fact:**

Rape is an act of violence and is something that the other person has not agreed to. People like to have sex in lots of different ways but if one of them does not agree to sex then that is called rape or sexual assault.

**Myth:**  
rape is  
only rape if  
you have  
injuries

**Fact:**

In some cases people who have been raped have injuries outside or inside their bodies, but not always. Just because someone hasn't got any injuries doesn't mean they weren't raped. The hidden damage is emotional - this kind of injury can cause suffering for a long time after the attack.

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### HOW WILL I FEEL AND HOW DO I COPE?

Being assaulted is often very frightening and it is not surprising that most people feel upset and find it difficult to cope. If you have been assaulted, you might notice a number of changes in how you think, feel and behave. These changes are **very normal** and for many people they only last a few weeks. This section will help you understand the most common reactions experienced after an assault and will give you practical tips on how to cope.

#### Traumatic stress reactions

Anyone can be involved in a traumatic experience. Examples of traumatic experiences are: train, plane or car crashes (man-made disasters); earthquakes, floods or volcano eruptions (natural disasters); stabbings, shootings, bombings, war, rape and sexual assault (acts of violence). These events are frightening and therefore it's normal for most people to be upset by them. How people feel, think and behave afterwards are often called 'traumatic stress reactions'.

You might find that your mind keeps replaying what happened, a bit like a DVD that you can't stop. This is because your brain is trying to make sense of what happened. You may find that:

- You can't stop upsetting thoughts or images popping up in your head
- At times it feels like the attack is happening all over again
- You have bad dreams
- You become very frightened or upset by things that remind you of what happened

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You might find that you try and push these thoughts and images away as they are upsetting. In the short term it might be helpful but after a while the number of thoughts and images you have might increase.

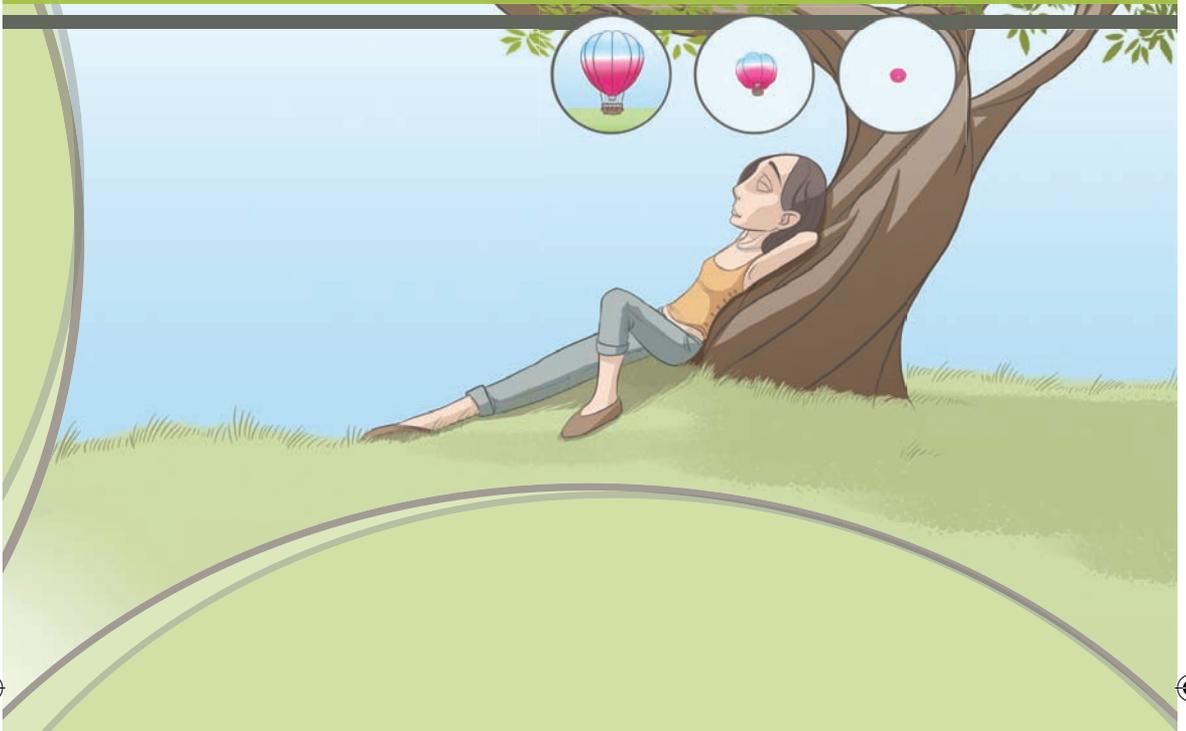
These problems are often caused by something that has reminded you of the assault. It could be something you have seen (a person who looks like the one who attacked you, going by the place where the assault took place or watching a TV programme about rape), a sound, a smell, being touched in a particular way or being made to talk about what happened. This can be very upsetting so you might try and deal with it by keeping out of the way of *any* person, place or thing that might be a reminder of what happened.

When we are faced with danger, our bodies pump out adrenaline (a chemical in your body) to help us get the extra energy we need to survive. This 'red alert' system helps us to run away, fight or freeze (a bit like a rabbit when it comes face to face with the headlights of a car). After an assault, sometimes this system gets stuck, and so messages are constantly sent to our brain to tell us that *everything* is dangerous even when this is not true. This can cause us to over-react to everything. You might find that:

- You constantly feel that you are in danger
- Feel 'jumpy' and 'on edge'
- It's difficult to sleep at night because of all the thoughts and images in your head
- You feel angry or irritable with friends and family
- You can't concentrate on anything



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### Dealing with upsetting images in your head

Sometimes it's hard to stop distressing pictures racing around in your head. They are often about what has happened to you and they might make you feel, sad, angry or somehow to blame. When you are alone and not very busy or if you are reminded of what happened, this is often the time that they come to mind.

You can learn to control these pictures and the upsetting thoughts and feelings that go with them by doing this simple exercise:

*Imagine you are standing in a field watching a bright red hot air balloon slowly go up into the air. You watch it go up and up high into the sky until all you can see is a small red dot far away. You can think of the pictures in your head in the same way. Just let them float through your mind until they are a distant pinpoint. Acknowledge that they are happening, but do not try to stop them in any way. Remember that trying not to think of something makes it more likely to come to mind.*

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### Tackling night times

Night times can be really difficult. You might find that you wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep. This is often a time when thoughts about the assault seem to happen most or you are woken by a bad dream. You could:

- Try and be really active during the day and avoid naps, so that when you go to bed you are really sleepy
- Have a warm bath and a hot milky drink before you go to bed
- Avoid drinks with caffeine in them like tea, coffee and soft drinks. Caffeine puts your body on 'red alert' and you don't need any more of it at the moment!
- If you wake up in the middle of the night, don't try and go back to sleep until you actually feel sleepy again, otherwise you are likely to toss and turn. You could go into another room and listen to your favourite music or try reading a book or a magazine
- Have a night-light or bedside lamp on so that when you wake up you can see the room
- Remember nightmares are just dreams and that they are not real.

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### Learning to relax

Sometimes you might become very frightened or upset by things that remind you of what happened and learning to relax might help you to feel better. Try this relaxation exercise:

*Create a calming picture in your head - it could be somewhere you have been or a place you dream about. Try to make the picture as real as you can by imagining what you can hear, see, smell, feel and touch. For example, if you are imagining a beach, can you feel the sun on your face, can you hear the waves crashing on the shore, and can you feel the sand between your toes?*

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### Depression

Feeling fed up or unhappy is common after an assault. These feelings might come and go but sometimes you just can't shift them. Depression can happen because you feel unattractive, think things will never get better or because you feel you have no-one to talk to and that no-one understands you. You might notice that you:

- Can't stop crying
- Have trouble falling asleep at night
- Feel constantly tired and lacking in energy
- Eating loads of junk food or are not eating at all
- Have problems concentrating
- Have stopped doing things you used to enjoy
- Go out less often and just want to be on your own
- Feel life is not worth living

### Getting rid of depression

- Write how you feel and what you are thinking about in a diary
- Listen to music
- Do some exercise like swimming, dancing or jogging
- Go for a walk and get some fresh air
- Eat regularly and as healthily as you can

Should your depression get worse, especially if you have thoughts about hurting or killing yourself, then you should speak to your GP. You could see your GP on your own, confidentially, or go with a relative or friend if you prefer. Your GP may suggest medication that will help you cope with these difficult thoughts and feelings, may also recommend that you speak to a counsellor and can refer you to local services.

### shame, guilt and self-blame

People who have been assaulted often feel ashamed, guilty or blame themselves for what happened. Shame means that you see yourself in the way you think other people see you, which might be 'bad' 'dirty' or 'ugly'. Although these thoughts are not true, at times this might make you want to hide or escape from your family or friends. Guilt and self blame means that you **think** in some way that the assault was your fault. You think you should have been able to predict, stop or reduce the harm done to you. For example, you might believe that you should have fought back, even though it was dangerous to do so. It's important to remember that you could not know what was going to happen and it was totally beyond your control. You are not superhuman!

### Talk about your feelings

Feelings of guilt or shame might make it difficult for you to talk with other people about what has happened. This isn't always helpful and, although it might be hard, it is often good to share your thoughts and feelings with someone you trust. Talking to someone else can help you see things in a different way and make you realise that you're not so bad after all.

## COPING WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT:

### Anger

At times you might think things like: everyone is getting on your nerves that life is unfair because it happened to you or that you should just be getting over it. These thoughts are common after an assault and often lead to feelings of anger. When you're angry you might notice that you:

- **Can't think clearly**
- **Feel hot, sweaty, tense and uptight**
- **Clench your teeth, make fists and shake**
- **Shout, swear or threaten people**
- **Shove, push or hit people**
- **Throw or break things**
- **Wind people up**



Sometimes we might turn our angry feelings in on ourselves and this can lead to eating problems, feeling low, getting into trouble or refusing to go to school.

When you are angry you might not be able to think of anything else apart from how angry you are. This will wind you up even more. Below are some tips to help you avoid getting in this state.

### stopping Anger

- Recognise the first signs that tell you when you're getting worked up, for example clenched teeth and fists, tense muscles, a fast beating heart and stomach turns. When you notice these signs, think of a set of traffic lights and do the following:



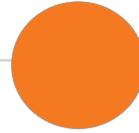
## DANGER!

- Shout out or imagine hearing the word **STOP**
- Stand still
- Turn away



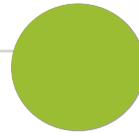
## CALM DOWN

- Take regular deep breaths
- Think of calming thoughts such as:
  - “Chill out!”
  - “They’re not worth bothering about”
  - “I won’t let it get to me”
  - “It’s not fair, but losing my temper will just make things worse”



## LEAVE THE SITUATION

- Listen to music
- Go for a walk
- Get into a good book or computer game



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### self-injury

To cope with upsetting thoughts and feelings, you might try to block them out by doing (or think about doing) things that are harmful to you. You might try and hide what you are doing rather than draw attention to it; maybe you feel ashamed, afraid or worried about how other people will react. You might notice that you:

- Scratch, pick, cut or burn your skin
- Hit yourself or objects, like banging your head against the wall
- Take a drug overdose
- Swallow or put things inside your body
- Drink lots of alcohol or use street drugs

The reasons for hurting yourself might be that it:

- Helps release upsetting feelings
- Distracts you from upsetting thoughts and feelings
- Helps to show somebody else how you are feeling
- Brings you comfort or helps you get to sleep
- Is a way of punishing yourself



### coping with self-injury

- Rather than hurt yourself, try something less harmful like marking your body with a red coloured pen or snapping a rubber band on the area of arm or leg that you usually focus on
- Visualise a pleasant relaxing scene like being on a beach
- Get moving – walk, run, swim or any other activity that you can manage
- Get creative – write about how you feel and what you are thinking or draw, paint or make a model
- Play or listen to music
- Distract yourself from your thoughts by watching TV, stroking a pet, cleaning up your room or playing a game

Whether you are hurting yourself by self injury, drugs or alcohol it would be a good idea for you to seek professional help. Useful contact numbers are given at the back of this booklet.

## COPING WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT:

### IMPACT ON SCHOOL, HOME, FRIENDSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

#### school

For some people, going back to school soon after an assault is important. This is because their friends are there and they are back into a familiar routine, which helps to keep their mind off frightening and unsettling feelings and emotions.

But what if this isn't how you feel and the last thing you want to do is go back to school? This might be because:

#### you were assaulted at school

Going back to where you were assaulted is an extremely difficult and frightening thing to do. If you cannot face going back, there is a possibility that your school will allow you to work from home. It would be a good idea if your parents could meet with the school to discuss this.

#### The person who assaulted you goes to the same school

If going back to school puts your safety and wellbeing at risk then you can't be expected to return. Think about speaking to your parents or even the police officers involved in your case. Again, the school may arrange for you to work from home. There may also be other protective measures that could be put in place by the police or by your school.



### **other students are talking about what happened to you**

Sometimes gossip and rumours spread around school and if it is about you, it can make you feel awful. You could tell a teacher (schools have a duty to tackle bullying) or your parents. You could also let your friends know or check out ChildLine's website where they have lots of tips on how to deal with bullying.

### **you are too frightened to walk or take the bus to school**

It's not unusual for someone who has been assaulted to feel scared and unsafe when they are doing normal, everyday things. Maybe you could ask your friends or your brother or sister to accompany you to school. If possible, your parents could drive you to school or walk with you. If you continue to feel very scared then someone like a counsellor may be able to help you cope with your fears.

### **you can't focus or concentrate on your school work**

If you are late with your homework or your grades are not as good as they normally are, your teachers are far more likely to be supportive if they know what has happened to you. Don't be afraid to tell them that you are struggling! No one should expect you to continue working in the same way you were before you were assaulted.

## COPING WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT:

### HOME

Life at home can also change after you have experienced a rape or sexual assault. It can bring some families closer together and you may feel very comfortable and safe talking to your family about how you are feeling. However, some parents find it extremely hard to cope when their child has been assaulted. Parents might:

#### blame you for being assaulted or don't even believe you at all

When your parents behave like this it can be really upsetting and can leave you feeling very alone, confused and abandoned. It can be very hard to tell your parents that they are wrong and that they have hurt you with their comments. If you can't talk to your parents then you could call a helpline.

#### worry about the family's reputation in the community and blame you for giving them a 'bad name'

It is not fair for your family to make you feel bad for what someone else has done to you. If this situation is familiar to you, again you could call a helpline or speak to an adult that you trust either at school or at a youth project. It is important that someone else knows what is going on at home.



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### **Always ask whether you are okay and if you want to talk**

Sometimes concern from your parents can make you feel like they are just being nosy! Your parents are probably just worried about you and you could try explaining to them that that if you need any help you will talk to them.

### **Be more controlling when you go out**

Again, your parents are probably just worried about your safety. Sometimes parents can become over-protective because they do not want anyone to hurt you again, but this can be frustrating for you. Depending on what your parents are worried about, you could suggest compromises such as your parents picking you up when you are ready to come home, letting them meet your friends or you could ask your friends to spend an evening at your house.

### **And you might feel that you need to protect them from hearing about what happened**

Normally, being sensitive to the feelings of others is a good thing. But if this means that you end up bottling up your own feelings then you will not get the support that you need. Knowing what has happened to you may upset your parents but usually they want to know and want to help you. Your parents can also get support for themselves from counsellors, helplines and specialist services for parents.

It is really important that you feel supported and cared for and if this is not happening at home then there are people who can help you. If the situation at home is harmful to you then agencies like social services may want to speak to you and your parents to find out how they can support you and to make sure that you are safe.

## COPING WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT:

### Friendships

**Like family, friends can be a great source of support. They can listen to your problems; make you laugh and keep you company when you are bored! Having close friends around you when you are feeling upset and depressed can be really helpful and can help to lift your mood. However, there might be reasons why you don't feel like spending time with them:**

#### **You're not sure if you want your friends to know what happened**

The decision to tell your friends is down to you. It is a good idea for you to think about whether you want to tell all of them or perhaps just the ones that you are closest to. You might also want to think about who you can trust with such personal information. It is very upsetting if a friend goes behind your back and tells other people about your private life. If a friend does this you could ask them why they told other people. They may simply have made a mistake but if they deliberately wanted to upset and embarrass you then you might want consider whether they are worth having as a friend.

#### **Your friends avoid talking about the assault**

Sometimes your friends do not know what to say or how to act if you have been assaulted. Friends can be worried that they will upset you by mentioning the assault and so they decide not to say anything. You may want to speak to your closest friend and explain that there will be times when you need support from your friends. If you are able to, you could tell them what they could do to support you. If you feel that your friends are not supportive, think about other sources of support like a counsellor, a helpline, a parent or an older brother or sister.



### **Your friends are blaming you for the assault**

Listening to this type of criticism can be very upsetting. Sometimes your friends will believe the myths mentioned in this booklet and so they will not be as supportive as they could be. You could try telling your friends how hurtful and unhelpful you have found their comments. If you have a support worker or a youth worker maybe they could also meet with your friends to actually give them the facts about rape and sexual assault. If this does not change their behaviour then perhaps these are not the types of friends that you need to have around you during this time.

### **You don't feel like going out with your friends**

It might be difficult for you to enjoy the things you used to do with your friends. You could tell your friends that there are some things you do not feel like doing yet. If they are good friends then they will be patient until you begin to feel better. Remember there are lots of different activities that you can do with your friends that you may feel safer and more comfortable doing.

Although talking to friends can make you feel much better, sometimes they might feel worried about what you have told them and tell an adult. You might feel betrayed but the chances are that your situation will improve if someone like a teacher, counsellor or a social worker is involved.

## COPING WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT:

### Relationships

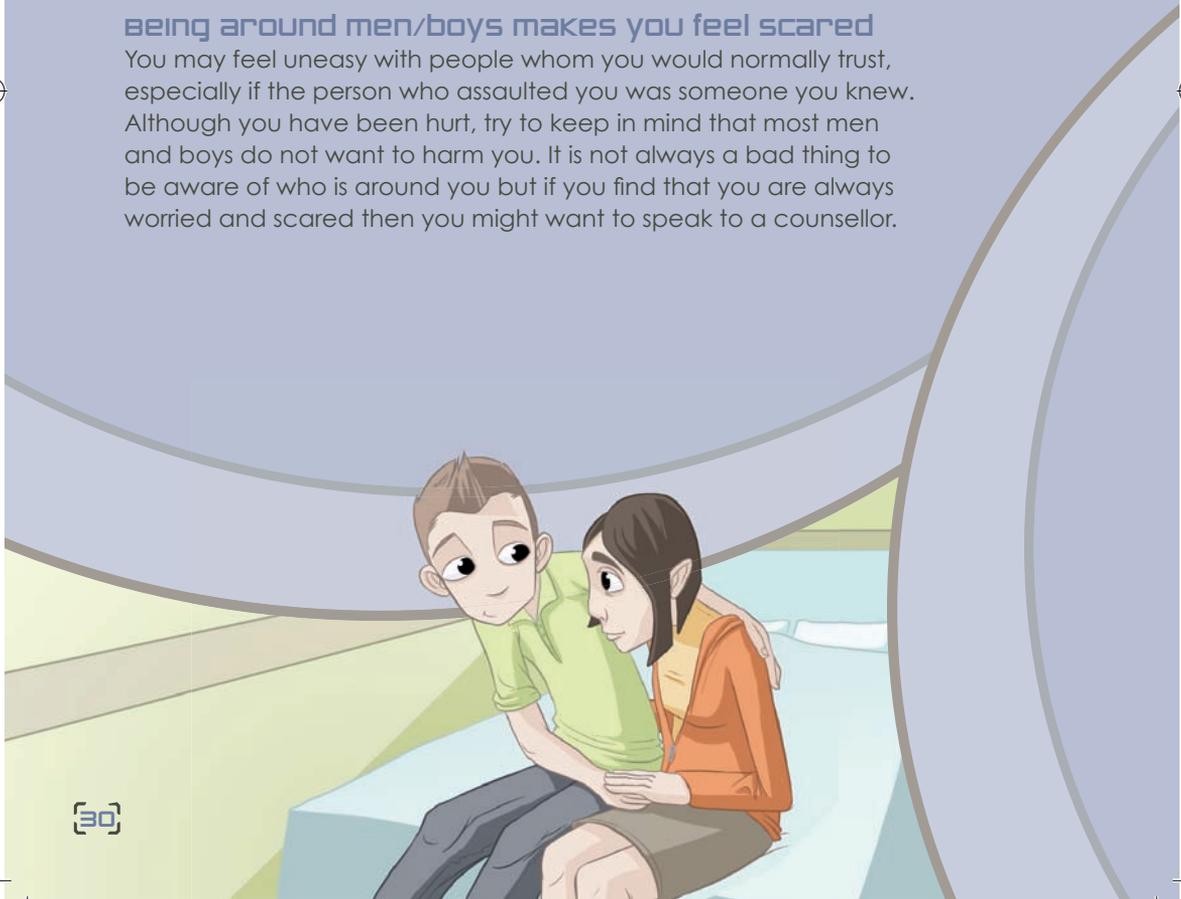
**A boyfriend or girlfriend can be an important source of support and comfort. It is likely that this person knows you very well and you may want to tell them what has happened and how you have been feeling. They might cuddle you or kiss you to make you feel better. You might feel safe and reassured by this but it could also leave you feeling uncomfortable. This might be because:**

#### **BEING TOUCHED BRINGS BACK MEMORIES OF THE ASSAULT**

If the last person to touch you in a personal way was the person who assaulted you, then it is natural for you to associate this type of touching with the assault. If you feel like this, then it is absolutely okay to say that you do not want to be kissed, cuddled or touched. Remember that you are in charge of your own body and only you should decide when you feel ready to be physically close to someone again.

#### **BEING AROUND MEN/BOYS MAKES YOU FEEL SCARED**

You may feel uneasy with people whom you would normally trust, especially if the person who assaulted you was someone you knew. Although you have been hurt, try to keep in mind that most men and boys do not want to harm you. It is not always a bad thing to be aware of who is around you but if you find that you are always worried and scared then you might want to speak to a counsellor.



### WHO ELSE CAN HELP?

For some people their problems never seem to get better, feel too big to sort out alone, happen a lot or affect everything they do. Speaking to family and friends is just not enough. If this sounds like you then you should get advice from a professional.

Telling a psychologist, psychiatrist, psychotherapist or counsellor what has happened can be useful. They are trained in listening to and understanding people with all sorts of problems. It gives you a chance to talk about how you are feeling and they can teach you the skills to manage better. Going to see one of these people does not mean that you are mad!

The kind of therapy offered will depend on what you need, but more importantly what you want. You could be seen alone, or in a group of other young people who have similar thoughts and feelings. Sometimes families find it helpful to talk to a professional together.

There are lots of places that offer this kind of help. You could contact a youth counselling service, like Youth Access (see Helplines section below) who can tell you which service is nearest to you. Your doctor, school nurse or social worker should be able to give you advice on where you can get support locally.

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### Telephone helplines

#### childLine

ChildLine is for children and young people. It provides a confidential telephone counselling service for any problem that you might have.

Freephone: 0800 1111 (24 hours)  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

#### National self-harm network

This service provides information and support to people who self harm. It also has an online message forum open for young people to voice questions or concerns.

Freephone: 0800 622 6000 (7pm-11pm)  
Email: [info@nshn.co.uk](mailto:info@nshn.co.uk)  
[www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk)

#### Youth 2 Youth

This confidential helpline is run by young people for young people up to age 19 years of age who need emotional support.

Helpline: 020 8896 3675 (Mon-Thurs 6.30-9.30pm)  
[www.youth2youth.co.uk](http://www.youth2youth.co.uk)

#### samaritans

Confidential 24 hour emotional support service for any person in distress, crisis or at risk of suicide.

UK Helplines: 08457 90 90 90 (24 hours)  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

#### BROOK

This service provides sexual health information, support and signposting for all under 25s anywhere in the UK.

Freephone: 0808 802 1234 (Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm)  
They also offer an online enquiry service and interactive message service – check [www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk) for details.

## A GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

### FRANK

Confidential information and advice for anyone concerned about their own or someone else's drug or solvent misuse Freephone: 0800 77 66 00 (24 hour services. If you call from a landline the call is free and won't show upon your phone bill. Also provides translation service for non-English speakers.

Textphone: 0800 917 8765 (24 hours)

Email: [frank@talktofrank.com](mailto:frank@talktofrank.com)

[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

### get connected

Free and confidential helpline that gives young people in difficult situations the support and information they need to decide what they want to do next.

Freephone: 0808 808 4994 (7 days a week 1-11pm)

Email: [help@getconnected.org.uk](mailto:help@getconnected.org.uk)

[www.getconnected.org.uk](http://www.getconnected.org.uk)

### NSPCC child protection helpline

Runs a child protection helpline for any child or adults concerned about a child at risk of neglect, sexual, emotional or physical abuse.

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (24 Hours)

Textphone: 0800 056 0566 (24 hours)

NSPCC Cymru/Wales Child Protection Helpline

Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### YOUTH ACCESS

Provides information on advice and counselling services for children and young people aged 11-25 and their carers. They do not provide direct advice.

Tel: 020 8772 9900 (9.30am to 1pm and 2pm to 5.30 pm)

Email: [admin@youthaccess.org.uk](mailto:admin@youthaccess.org.uk)

[www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk) (a directory of services is available online)

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### The Suzy Lamplugh Trust:

Information and tips on how to keep yourself safe when you are going out: [www.suzylamplugh.org](http://www.suzylamplugh.org)

Tel: 020 7091 0014 (9.00am to 5.00pm)

### Galop

[www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk). Helpline : 0207704 2040 Textphone: 18001 020 7704 2040. London based service for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people who have been sexually abused or assaulted. This is not a national service but they will give you details of local support services if you live outside of London.

## websites

### children's Legal centre

This website is designed for young people, parents and carers and contains frequently asked questions on legal issues affecting children

[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

### Teenage health freak

This website provides information to young people on bullying, body changes, alcohol, drugs, moods and sex. You can also send an email via the website if you have particular problems that you want help with.

[www.teenagehealthfreak.org](http://www.teenagehealthfreak.org)

### Young Minds

This website offers information to young people about emotional well-being.

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

### Metropolitan Police service

This website offers information on a range of issues such as crimes, staying safe, travel, drugs, bullying, internet safety, groups and gangs.

[www.safe.met.police.uk](http://www.safe.met.police.uk)

### Rape Crisis

These websites give information on rape and sexual assault as well as helpline and local centres' contact details.

[www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

[www.rapecrisislondon.org](http://www.rapecrisislondon.org)

### sexual assault referral centres

To find out the location of the closest referral centre to you contact your local Rape Crisis centre, Victim Support service or the police. For anyone living in London the Havens will be able to offer you help and they can be contacted at:

#### The Haven (Camberwell)

King's College Hospital  
Denmark Hill  
London SE5 9RS

020 3299 1599 (9am-5pm Monday to Friday)  
020 3299 9000 (all other times)

#### The Haven (Paddington)

St. Mary's Hospital  
Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

020 3312 1101 (9am-5pm Monday to Friday)  
020 3312 6666 (all other times)

#### The Haven (Whitechapel)

The Royal London Hospital  
Whitechapel  
London E1 5BD

020 7247 4787 (at any time)

For more information on the Havens, click on [www.thehavens.co.uk](http://www.thehavens.co.uk)

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**Home Office**

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