



Sexual Assault:
You Are Not Alone

*Towson University's
Guide to Options,
Resources and Support*

Student Affairs
Towson University
8000 York Road
Towson, MD 21252-0001
www.towson.edu



Important Campus and Community Resources

Towson U. Resources

University Police

General Services Building,
Room 109, 410-704-2133.

Dowell Health Center

410-704-2466.

Counseling Center

Glen Esk Building, near
the Dowell Health Center,
410-704-2512.

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs

Administration Building,
Room 236, 410-704-2055.

Housing & Residence Life

Newell Hall, Room 18,
410-704-2516.

SAFEWALK

Towson police department
escort service that operates
7 days a week during the
hours of darkness.
410-704-SAFE (7233).

Women's Center

University Union, Room 311,
410-704-2666.

Community Resources

Baltimore County/Baltimore City Police: 911

Hospitals (GBMC/Mercy)

Both GBMC and Mercy perform forensic exams (S.A.F.E.). You can also seek care at **any** local hospital even if you think you don't want to press charges.

If the assault occurred in Baltimore County contact the Greater Baltimore Medical Center, 6701 North Charles Street, 443-849-3323.

If the assault occurred in Baltimore City contact Mercy Medical Center, 301 St. Paul Place, 410-332-9499.

Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault

1-800-983-RAPE (7273); www.mcasa.org/mcasa.htm

RAINN - Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network

National Sexual Assault 24 Hour Hotline,
1-800-656-HOPE (4673); www.rainn.org

Sexual Assault Legal Institute

Organization providing free legal services to survivors of sexual assault. 301-565-2277.

Turnaround Inc.

Nonprofit organization helping individuals and families affected by domestic violence, sexual assault and sexual abuse through counseling and advocacy programs.

401 Washington Avenue, Suite 300, Towson.
410-377-8111.

9100 Franklin Square Drive, Room 317, Rosedale.
410-391-2396.

2300 N. Charles Street, second floor, Baltimore.
410-837-7000.

24-Hour Hotline, 410-828-6390.

Safety Tips

Don't think that it can't happen to you. Just being aware that you could be at risk makes you less vulnerable.

You have the right to set sexual limits in any situation. Make sure that you clearly communicate these limits. Don't trust that your partner just "knows" what you are and are not comfortable doing.

Don't be afraid to be assertive. If someone is doing something you don't like or not respecting your limits then leave the situation. There is no need to worry about someone's feelings when that person obviously is not concerned with your feelings.

Trust your instincts. If you are uncomfortable in a situation then trust your gut reaction and get out of that situation as soon as possible.

Stay Sober. Drinking or using drugs diminishes your ability to make good decisions and makes you more vulnerable to being assaulted.

Never leave any beverage unattended or accept a drink from someone you do not know well.

Don't leave any event with someone you just met or don't know well.

Don't walk alone at night, or near secluded or wooded areas. Try to walk with others or call SAFE-WALK, the Towson University escort service, 410-704-SAFE.

Be aware of your surroundings. Know where you are going, look around to see who is around you, walk confidently and always be alert.

Always keep your home and car doors locked.

Never buzz in or let anyone you don't know well into your building.

Always make sure you know who is at the door before you open it.

Consider taking a self-defense course, such as RAD. Designed for women, the Rape Aggression Defense course focuses on risk reduction strategies, crime prevention and hands-on defense tactics. The Towson police department sponsors RAD and offers it **FREE** to female TU students.

What is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault is a broad term that refers to any unwanted sexual contact or attention achieved by force, threats, manipulation, tricks or violence. Sexual assault is defined by Towson University as forcible sexual intercourse, sexual penetration, however slight, of another person's genital or anal opening with any object, sodomy, or any unwanted touching of an unwilling person's intimate parts or forcing an unwilling person to touch another's intimate parts. Under this definition these acts must be committed either by force, threat, intimidation, or through the use of the victim's mental or physical helplessness, of which the accuser was or **should have** been aware. This includes, but is not limited to, victim helplessness resulting from **intoxication** or from ingestion of a so-called "**date-rape drug.**"

What Should I Know as a Towson Student?

Sexual Assault, including date/acquaintance rape, is of very serious concern to the University community. Towson University is strongly committed to this issue and strictly enforces its sexual assault policy. This brochure is intended to inform survivors of sexual assault, friends and family of survivors or other interested parties about resources available to them at Towson University.

Towson University Reporting Policy

The Towson University Police Department encourages anyone who is the victim of or witness to any crime to promptly report the incident to the police. Police reports are public records under state law; therefore, the Towson University Police Department cannot hold reports of a crime in confidence. Confidential reports of a crime, for the purposes of inclusion in the annual disclosure of crime statistics, can also be made to other Towson University Campus Security Authorities (CSAs). To identify who on campus is a CSA please see the University Police web site, www.towson.edu/police.

Healing is Possible!

What to Do if it Happens

If you have been assaulted or THINK you may have been assaulted, you SHOULD:

Go to a safe place and find someone to be with you who can be emotionally supportive.

Report the assault to the police if you feel you are able to do so.

The earlier you report the assault the more likely that evidence can be collected. The police can help you understand the laws regarding sexual assault if you are not sure that you have been sexually assaulted. The more that assaults are reported the more that perpetrators are arrested and convicted.

Towson University Police: 410-704-2133

Local and County Police: 911

Seek medical treatment IMMEDIATELY.

It is very important to seek medical attention as soon as possible so you can receive treatment for any physical injuries, be screened for sexually transmitted diseases/pregnancy/date rape drugs and/or to obtain emergency contraception. Seek medical care even if you think you will not report the assault.

Options for Medical Treatment:

- 1) GBMC and Mercy Hospital both have staff trained to conduct a S.A.F.E. (Sexual Assault Forensic Exam). **If you think you may want to press charges then it is essential to go as soon as possible for this exam.** S.A.F.E. focuses on evidence collection and must be authorized by the police. If authorized, the State of Maryland pays for this exam. Evidence can be collected up to 120 hours after the assault but the sooner it is done the more likely that useful evidence can be recovered.
- 2) Go to Dowell Health Center (410-704-2466). The Health Center is fully equipped to assess your injuries, test for and treat STDs, and provide emergency contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Services are **confidential**. Even if you are unsure whether you want to press charges, the Health Center staff can still provide care and assistance with your decision making.
- 3) Seek medical treatment through your general physician, nurse practitioner or your gynecologist.

How to Help a Friend

Listen. Do not ask a lot of prying questions. Let your friend take her or his time to share the details.

Believe. People rarely make up stories about being sexually assaulted. Don't express skepticism. Expect a friend in crisis to be confused. Don't criticize.

Do NOT Blame. Reinforce that your friend is not to blame. Remember that whatever your friend did to survive the attack was exactly what she or he needed to do.

Empower. Help your friend understand and consider her or his medical, legal and psychological options, but let her or him decide what action to take.

Encourage. Support your friend by encouraging her or him to get medical attention even if she or he is not going to press charges.

Share. Educate your friend about the common reactions to sexual assault in order to help normalize their experience.

Be patient. Recovery from sexual assault trauma is slow. Let the person proceed at her or his own pace.

Support. Assure your friend that you will be available to provide support throughout the process of recovery.

Know Your Limits. There are times where professional help is best. A trained therapist may be essential to helping your friend work through trauma associated with the assault and find more effective ways of coping.

Get support. You may have strong feelings about the trauma. If needed, seek counseling for yourself.

Common Reactions Following Sexual Assault

Physical: trouble sleeping, nightmares, headaches, loss of appetite, overeating, stomach problems, muscle tension.

Emotional: denial, fear, sadness, anger, guilt, shame, embarrassment, crying spells, flashbacks, irritability, depression, suicidal thoughts.

Social: fear of being in public or in social situations, withdrawing from friends, difficulty trusting others, trouble with physical intimacy in relationships.

Academic: lack of concentration, impaired memory, missing classes, lack of motivation.

* It is important to remember that any emotional response is **normal**. You may feel very upset, very calm or anything in between. Everyone reacts differently. You may also experience rapid changes in your mood, which are to be expected.

Sexual Assault Myths and Facts

Myth: It can't happen to me.

Fact: Anyone can be sexually assaulted. Studies show that sexual assault happens to people of all ages, ethnic/racial backgrounds, sexual orientations and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Myth: Rape is caused by the victim. If a woman flirts or wears sexy clothing, she is asking for it.

Fact: Rapists look for victims they perceive as vulnerable, not for women who dress in a particular way. Sexual assault is a crime of violence and control that stems from one person's desire to exercise control over another. Neither provocative dress nor promiscuous behavior are invitations for unwanted sexual activity.

Myth: Someone can only be sexually assaulted if a weapon is involved.

Fact: In many cases, a weapon is not involved. There are physical injuries in only about one-third of all reported cases of rape.

Myth: Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers.

Fact: Over 75 percent of reported rapes are between people that know each other. This includes boyfriends or partners, spouses, classmates, neighbors, relatives and coworkers.

Myth: If the assailant, the victim or both are drunk then the assailant cannot be charged with sexual assault.

Fact: Forcing sex on someone who is too drunk to give consent is rape. People who commit crimes while under the influence of alcohol or drugs are not considered free from guilt.

Myth: Only women and gay men are sexually assaulted.

Fact: The vast majority of male victims as well as their rapists are heterosexual. Males make up approximately 9 percent of all sexual assault victims.

Myth: A victim can't say "No" midway.

Fact: A victim can say "No" at ANY time.

Myth: It is not rape if it is a boyfriend or partner that does it.

Fact: Any individual has the right to decide what she or he does with her or his body at all times. If the person does not want to have sex it is her or his decision even if that individual willingly had sex with a person previously. Most states now have laws against rape in marriage.

Myth: Women report rapes to get even with men or to protect their reputations.

Fact: According to the FBI and other studies ONLY 2 percent to 4 percent of reported rapes are false, the same percentage for the false reporting of other crimes.

Myth: The best way to deal with a sexual assault is to act like it never happened.

Fact: Speaking out about the sexual assault is a big part of the healing process. The trauma, fear and guilt that may follow can cause more emotional damage later in life so speaking out to those you trust is VERY important!

It is especially important to seek medical attention **IMMEDIATELY** if you believe that you have been drugged, as date rape drugs leave your system quickly and can only be detected for a short time (24-72 hours) after the assault.

Seek professional counseling at the Counseling Center (410-704-2512) or local rape crisis center (Turnaround, 410-377-8111).

The Towson University Counseling Center can provide you with **free** and **confidential** individual or group counseling services to help you deal with the assault, as well as help you get connected to other resources in the community.

Counseling Can Help By:

- Assisting you in understanding and working through your reactions to the assault.
- Enhancing your coping skills and ability to deal with the assault.
- Providing support throughout the legal and/or campus judicial decision making process.
- Minimizing the potential long-term effects of sexual assault.

Signs That You May Have Been Given a Date Rape Drug

- If you feel a lot more intoxicated than your usual response to the amount of alcohol you consumed.
- If you wake up abnormally hung-over with memory lapses and cannot account for periods of time.
- If you remember taking a drink but cannot recall what happened for a period of time after that.
- If you feel as though someone had sex with you, but you cannot remember parts of or the entire incident.

File a report with the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (410-704-2055).

If the accused assaulter is a Towson student then a victim may initiate judicial action regardless of whether she or he has filed criminal charges. Also, a victim may request changes in on-campus living, class schedule or other accommodations related to the assault.

Discuss your feelings regarding resuming sexual relations with your partner, if he or she is not the perpetrator.

Be patient and treat yourself with kindness. Healing takes time.

What NOT to Do if it Happens

*If you think you have been assaulted—
Immediately after the assault you SHOULD NOT...*

Take a shower, wash hands or face, comb your hair, douche, change or get rid of your clothes.

Evidence of the assault can be found in the fibers of your clothes, strands of your hair or on other parts of your body, so it is important to try your best to preserve as much evidence as possible.

Apply medication or any other substance that can change your appearance.

Altering your appearance can hide bruising or lacerations that can be cited as evidence when pressing charges.

Smoke or drink anything.

Urinate or defecate, if possible.

Normal everyday behavior, such as going to the bathroom, can destroy or remove evidence of the assault.

Disturb or change the surroundings where the assault occurred.

*In the days and weeks after
the assault you SHOULD NOT...*

Blame yourself for the assault.

No matter what you were doing or wearing, you did **NOT** ask to be sexually assaulted.

Hide the fact that you have been assaulted.

Close friends and family whom you trust can be very beneficial in providing support and help you to cope.

Withdraw from your daily activities.

Pretend the assault never happened.

It is normal to want to just “forget” about the assault but this will **NOT** make your difficult feelings go away.

Question or worry about how you handled the assault.

The important thing is that you survived.

If you are confused about your experience you can contact any of the resources listed in the “should do” section. These agencies can help you figure out whether or not you have been assaulted.

You Are Not Alone

Every two minutes somewhere in America someone is sexually assaulted (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000).

In a national study, one in four college women surveyed said they had suffered an attempted or completed rape and less than 5 percent reported it to the police (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002).

In 2002, one in every eight rape victims was a man (National Crime Victimization Survey, 2002).

In any given calendar year approximately 5 percent of college women are victims of an attempted or completed rape (The National College Women Sexual Victimization Study, 2000).

Individuals aged 16 to 19-years-old are more than four times more likely to be victims of an attempted or completed sexual assault than the general population (National Crime Victimization Survey, 2000).

Among college women, nine out of ten knew their attacker (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001).