

College of the Holy Cross Survivors' Guide

Introduction

This resource guide was written for you, a College of the Holy Cross student whose life has been affected by rape, attempted rape, or any other type of sexual assault. This guide was developed to help you, female and male survivors/victims of rape or sexual assault, and your friends. Sexual assault is never the survivor's/victim's fault.

Sexual assault can cause serious trauma, even when you do not experience any physical injuries. This trauma may affect you immediately or you may experience more long-term physical and/or psychological effects.

As a college student who has been raped or sexually assaulted, this experience may be particularly difficult. The aftermath of sexual assault may interfere with your ability to study, attend class, and participate in social activities—all significant to campus life.

As a sexual assault survivor/victim, you have some important decisions, such as whether to seek medical attention, notify campus officials, file a police report, contact your parents/guardians, and/or get assistance from campus and/or community resources. Also, you probably have concerns and questions about your privacy and safety as well as communicating with your family and friends.

You will also be making decisions about whom you want to talk to. You will find that there are many people at the College who will be very helpful and supportive. At the same time, you should be aware that, depending upon a person's official status at the College, some may be required to report your incident and others may not. Those who are required by ethical considerations and the law to maintain the confidentiality of your conversation include professional staff of the Chaplain's Office, the Student Health Services, and the Counseling Center. While teaching faculty are not required to maintain the confidentiality of your conversation in the same way as the offices mentioned above, they are not required to report it either. All other employees of the college, including paraprofessionals (student employees, i.e., Residential Assistants), are required to complete a *Third Party Reporting Form* in the Office of Student Affairs, which can omit the names of assailant(s) and/or victim(s). However, the Dean of Students/Vice President for Student Affairs can require the names of those referenced. It is important to know that all members of these offices will respect your privacy to the degree they can, and provide compassionate assistance based on your needs and within the confines and expertise of their office.

The majority of the health concerns connected with rape or sexual assault can be addressed if you seek immediate medical care, counseling, and other types of emotional support. In addition, most of your questions and concerns regarding the rape or sexual assault can be resolved through talking with the appropriate people and developing a clear understanding of your rights and options.

This resource guide provides up-to-date information about what you can do and how you can find medical, legal, psychological, and spiritual help if you are a survivor/victim of rape, attempted rape, or any other type of sexual assault. The information will also help you if you are a friend of a survivor of rape or sexual assault.

Defining Rape or Sexual Assault

Sexual assault, including rape, is both a violation of the Holy Cross Community Standards and a crime in the state of Massachusetts, although the definitions that apply in each setting are slightly different. The College uses the term "Sexual Misconduct," and recognizes different classes of Sexual Misconduct based upon the nature of the conduct in question. For more information about the offense of Sexual Misconduct under the College's Community Standards, refer to the College's "Sexual Misconduct Policy" document, which is also included in Appendix A in the larger Community Standards and Judicial Procedures document.

Massachusetts state law defines rape as follows: nonconsensual sexual intercourse (penis in vagina) or the insertion of other parts of the body or objects into the vagina or rectum, fellatio or cunnilingus. For rape, there must be penetration, however slight, by force and against will. Nonconsensual and intentional physical contact of sexual nature, which does not include penetration, is classified as indecent assault and battery. Physical contact of a sexual nature may include the touching of breasts, buttocks, the pubic area or genitalia.

As defined under Massachusetts law, sexual assault is a broader term than rape. For instance, It includes various types of sexual touching as well as sexual assault includes sodomy (anal intercourse), forced oral copulation (oral-

genital contact), rape by a foreign object (including a finger), and sexual battery (the unwanted touching of an intimate part of another person for the purpose of sexual arousal).

Alcohol and Sexual Assault

Many college students have experienced sexual assault in situations that involve drinking – by the victim, the assailant, or both. It is quite common, for survivors/victims of rape/sexual assault who had been drinking and/or using drugs at the time of the assault to experience intense feelings of self-blame. They are also more likely to be unfairly judged by other people as having some fault in their assault.

A victim is never responsible for a sexual assault. The responsibility lies completely with the assailant. For example, if an assailant has sex with a person when he/she is unable to consent, it is considered rape or sexual assault if this assailant knew or reasonably should have known that the person was mentally or physically incapacitated and therefore could not give his/her consent.

What to do if you have been Raped or Sexually Assaulted?

Some of you reading this guide may have been sexually assaulted recently whereas some of you may be thinking about or dealing with a sexual assault that occurred some time ago. If you have been sexually assaulted recently, you may or may not have apparent physical injuries from the assault; friends and family may even think that you are okay. Many people do not understand the extent of trauma endured by sexual assault survivors/victims. The following are some suggestions of how to get the support you need:

- ❖ Immediately get to a safe place.
- ❖ If you want to report the assault, notify the police or Public Safety immediately. If the incident occurred off campus, contact the appropriate police jurisdiction (usually 911). If the incident occurred on campus, call 508-793-2222. Reporting the crime may help you regain a sense of personal control and can help to secure the safety of other potential victims/survivors.
- ❖ Call a friend, a family member, the Counseling Center, the Chaplain's Office, Health Services, a Relationship Peer Educator (RPE), a faculty member, a Residential or Student Life staff member, and/ or someone else you trust and ask her or him to stay with you.
- ❖ Try to keep all physical evidence of the assault. Do not shower, bathe, douche, or brush your teeth. Save all the clothing you were wearing at the time of the rape or assault. Place each item of clothing in a separate paper (not plastic) bag. Do not disturb anything in the area where the assault occurred.
- ❖ Go to your local hospital emergency room for medical assistance. Even if you think that you do not have any physical injuries, you should have a medical exam and discuss with a health care provider the risk of exposure to sexually transmitted infections and the possibility of pregnancy resulting from the sexual assault. Public Safety or the police can transport you to the nearest hospital.
- ❖ If you suspect that you were given a rape drug (e.g., Rohypnol or GHB), ask the hospital or clinic to take a urine sample. The test results of the urine sample should be preserved as evidence.
- ❖ Write down as much as you can remember about the conditions of the assault, including a description of the perpetrator(s).
- ❖ Talk with a counselor who is trained to assist sexual assault survivors about the emotional and physical impacts of the assault. You can call a hot line, the Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts, the Counseling Center, the Chaplain's Office, or the Student Health Services to find someone who understands the trauma of sexual assault and knows how to help. See resources on pages 10-13 of this document.

What to do if you were Sexually Assaulted in the Past?

If you were sexually assaulted some time ago, you are still a survivor/victim of sexual assault and there are many resources available to you. Sexual assault, no matter when it happens, can change your life. You may feel like the assault has changed how you feel about yourself and others. You may feel irritable, angry, helpless, and/or depressed. You may have difficulty concentrating. You may experience changes in your eating and sleeping patterns. You may have nightmares and flashbacks about the sexual assault. Certain sensations such as sounds, smells, etc. may prompt memories of the trauma. For some, the emotional impact of sexual assault can be immediate and short term. For others, the effects can be long lasting. Regardless of how much time has passed since the sexual assault, consider filing an informational report with the Police or Public Safety. You may want to seek emotional and/or medical support from the Counseling Center, Chaplain's Office, and/or Student Health Services. Although time may have passed, you still have a number of options such as exploring your legal and/or college judicial options.

Common Reactions to Sexual Assault

Though individuals' reactions to sexual assault are always experienced uniquely, there are common stressful, emotional reactions that can extend over a prolonged period of time.

Immediately following an assault, it is not uncommon for survivors/victims to feel shock and disbelief about what just occurred. Sometimes this is experienced as denial – a surreal sense that the incident may not have actually happened. Accompanying this sense of disbelief are often active attempts by survivors/victims to avoid people, places and circumstances that somehow remind them of the trauma. Numbness, disorientation, and social withdrawal are all possible manifestations of wanting to forget or deny the assault.

Typically following this initial phase, you might experience a flood of intrusive thoughts and feelings, and find them difficult to suppress. These can be accompanied by nightmares or flashbacks of the assault. Remembering details of the assault can elicit fear and a sense of powerlessness, similar to the feelings experienced during the actual assault.

Intense emotions and physical reactions may also occur to you in the aftermath of rape or sexual assault. These may include anxiety, anger, intense sadness and depression. Moments of extreme fear may be highly likely. Fears about your personal safety, serious bodily harm or being killed may be serious among symptoms, and tend to be universal among survivors/victims. It is also not uncommon for you to feel a number of physical symptoms including sleeplessness, headaches, stomach problems, loss of energy and loss of concentration.

Guilt and shame are also common reactions of survivors/victims and come out of a complex interaction of personal and cultural factors. Self-blame and feelings of guilt can come out of misconceptions about sexual assault, or from the sense that you were forced by the aggressor to participate in the assault. Others, because of their belief in myths about rape, may reinforce a survivor's sense of shame by holding him/her unduly at fault for the assault.

Survivors/victims can experience all or a variety of the symptoms noted above. Your own background, methods of coping with stress, the intensity of the assault, and other environmental circumstances will determine the kind, order and duration of your response to the trauma of sexual assault.

For nearly all survivors/victims of sexual assault, whether the incident just occurred or did so some time ago, speaking to someone in a confidential, therapeutic relationship almost always proves beneficial. Seeking the support of friends and family who understand can also be invaluable.

Medical Care

Medical services, on and off campus, are confidential.

It is important to seek medical care and a thorough Sexual Assault Medical Examination immediately following a sexual assault. Although you may not be aware of any physical trauma, it is important to have a doctor or nurse examine you for any internal injuries, the possibility of sexually transmitted infections (STI), and pregnancy.

You may seek medical assistance through Health Services where nurses can provide you immediate care and review options for additional care. They can arrange transportation to a local hospital and see to it that a person whom you trust to be supportive accompanies you. You may also go directly to the emergency room of a local hospital or contact the Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts.

The Sexual Assault Medical Examination also serves another purpose, which is to document any physical evidence of the assault. Because some physical evidence, such as bodily fluids, degrades and disappears over time, it is important to seek a medical examination as soon possible. Even if you have no intention of seeking an examination for the purpose of evidence collection, checking for STIs, (including HIV), pregnancy and injury is crucial to your health and safety.

In addition to insuring your well-being, during a Sexual Assault Medical Examination certified doctors or nurses will collect evidence from your body which will then be held up to six (6) months in a confidential file, identified only by an assigned number and not by your name.

Fees for the Sexual Assault Medical Examination can be paid directly or through health insurance. However, the College of the Holy Cross will arrange for payment as necessary. Arrangements for payment can be made through Health Services.

If medical help is sought weeks, months or even years after a sexual assault, a physician will perform a general internal exam for signs of lasting physical damage or trauma. A physician will often prescribe prophylactic antibiotics as a preventive treatment for a number of bacterial STIs. Though risk of contracting HIV from a sexual assault is typically low, testing and/or treatment measures should be discussed with a physician.

Counseling

Counseling and psychological services, on and off campus, are confidential.

Whether the sexual assault happened recently or some time ago, most survivors/victims find talking with a trained professional in a safe and confidential environment to be healing. Counseling helps you to cope with your emotional, psychological and interpersonal concerns.

Psychologists in the Holy Cross Counseling Center are experienced in working with survivors/victims of sexual assault. The course of treatment is determined by your needs, which may change over time. There can be many goals to treatment, including establishing safety, regaining a sense of control, and attending to any psychological or stress related physical symptoms that may result from the assault. The psychologist can also make you aware of your options and assist you in making important decisions.

The duration of counseling for any individual depends on many factors: circumstances of the assault, significant events in your life, how you choose to proceed, and social and familial supports available to you.

If you should choose to seek counseling off campus, the Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts can provide short-term counseling by phone or in person. The Center is staffed primarily by volunteer interns, often from local colleges and graduate programs. These volunteer counselors are specifically trained to provide short-term crisis counseling for sexual assault survivors/victims. Calling the rape crisis center's 24-hour hotline will allow you to remain anonymous. Should you wish to seek counseling from a counselor or psychologist in private practice, the Holy Cross Counseling Center staff could provide you with names of practitioners from its referral list.

For additional information on what to do if you have been sexually assaulted, visit www.rapetreatmentcenter.org, www.RAINN.org, or the Counseling Center web site: http://www.holycross.edu/counseling_center/help/sexual_assault

Spiritual Counseling

Spiritual or pastoral counseling, on and off campus, is confidential

Holy Cross Chaplains provide spiritual counseling for those who have been sexually assaulted. Spiritual counseling may help you to process your emotions and thoughts in the context of your religious faith. Your relationship to God is affirmed and supported, while thoughts and feelings about your faith are processed. The number of meetings you have may vary depending on the degree to which and ways you feel your faith has been affected.

If you choose to seek spiritual counseling off campus, the Worcester Pastoral Counseling Center offers psychotherapy incorporating attention to spiritual matters, and is staffed primarily by psychologists and psychotherapists.

Helping a Friend

The support and understanding of friends can be very helpful to a sexual assault survivor/victim. It is important to let your friend know, as soon as possible, that you do care and want to help. Suggestions of specific things that you can do are:

Believe your friend – It takes so much courage to talk about a sexual assault. Many survivors/victims stay silent because they feel too ashamed and/or fear that no one will believe them if they tell people about what has happened to her/him.

Listen to your friend – Listen, but don't press for the details. Your friend needs to decide how much she/he feels comfortable telling you about the assault, and the impact it has had on them.

Encourage your friend to make her/his own decision and choices – Let your friend decide if she/he wants to notify the police or campus officials, contact a sexual assault treatment or crisis center, or seek medical attention. Do what you can to assist your friend in getting help. For example, you can encourage your friend to get information about these options by calling a rape crisis center and talking with a counselor.

Provide support – Support your friend in whatever course of action she/he decides to take and whom she/he talks to. For example, you can offer to accompany your friend if she/he decides to seek medical/counseling care or go to the police.

Make it clear that you know your friend was not responsible in any way for the sexual assault. For example if your friend was intoxicated, she/he is not to blame. The responsibility for a rape or a sexual assault belongs completely to the assailant.

Be prepared to listen for as long as your friend needs your support – Understand that the trauma generally caused by sexual assault does not go away after a short period of time. Survivors/victims often have the need to talk about what happened and its impact for a long time after the assault.

Encourage your friend to talk to a trained counselor at the Counseling Center or a rape crisis center – If your friend does not want to talk with a counselor, it may be a good idea if you contact the Counseling Center or crisis center yourself. A crisis counselor can give you advice about how you can help your friend.

Encourage your friend to seek medical care – Even if your friend does not have any apparent physical injuries, and even if the assault happened a while ago, encourage her/him to get a medical examination. A health care provider can help your friend deal with the risks of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy, as well as provide an examination for evidence.

Protect your friend's privacy – Don't reveal what the survivor has told you to other people. Let your friend decide whom she/he wants to confide in. Remember, the survivor is now in control of her/his situation, try not to take this control away.

Reporting Sexual Assault or Rape: Legal and On-Campus Options

As a survivor/victim of rape or sexual assault you have several options. They are as follows:

1. You can report the assault to the police and pursue criminal charges against the assailant. If you file a police report, you may be eligible for victim compensation benefits through the state's crime victim compensation program (e.g., reimbursement for medical care, counseling expenses related to the assault). The rape crisis center or other victim assistance programs, or a lawyer can advise you on these benefits or resources.
2. You can report the assault to campus officials (see the College of the Holy Cross Sexual Misconduct Policy). The College may decide to hold a College Community Standards Board hearing to determine responsibility.
If you want additional information about all of your options, please refer to the resources listed below. (You may wish to review the information on page 1 regarding which individuals are required to maintain confidentiality, which individuals are required to disclose reports of sexual assault, and which individuals have the discretion to disclose or not to disclose.)

A. College of the Holy Cross Officials and Services:

Holy Cross Health Services

Martha Sullivan, *Director*
508.793.2276 Loyola Hall
(Monday – Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm)
In an emergency after hours contact Public Safety (508.793.2224) and request transportation to a local hospital or to be put in touch with a physician or a health services staff member.

Holy Cross Public Safety

Emergency 793.2222
O’Kane 5

Holy Cross Counseling Center

Matt Elliot, *PhD.*
508.793.3363 Hogan 207
Monday – Friday 9:00am – 12:00pm, 1:00pm – 5:00pm
Nights and weekends contact Public Safety 508.793.2224 and request to be put in touch with the psychologist-on-call.

Holy Cross Chaplain’s Office

Kim McElaney, *Director*
508.793.2448 Campion House
Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm
Nights and weekends contact Public Safety 793.2224 and request to be put in touch with a Chaplain.

Holy Cross Office of Student Affairs

Dean of Students: Jacqueline Peterson, *Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students*
508.793.2414 Hogan 109
Monday – Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm
Nights and weekends call 508.793.2224 (Public Safety)

Student Conduct: Paul Irish, *Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs*
508.793.2669

Student Life: Kristine Cyr Goodwin, *Associate Dean for Student Life*
508.792.2669

Residential Life: Ed Coolbaugh, *Director of Residence Life*
508.793.2411

Class Deans

Prof. Ron Jarret
508.793.2530

Prof Mark Freeman
508.793.2530

Prof. Esther Levine
508.793.2209

Prof. Earl Peace
508.793.2532

B. Legal:

Worcester Police Department: Sexual Assault Unit

508.799.8661 (8:00am – midnight)
508.799.8600 (midnight – 8:00am)
9-11 Lincoln Square (Exit 17 off I-290, turn left)
Worcester, MA 01610

Worcester District Attorney’s Office

508.792-0214

C. City of Worcester Services:

UMass Memorial Health Care

508.334-1000
Biotech One
365 Plantation Street
Worcester, MA 01605

Worcester Medical Center

508.363.5000
123 Summer Street
Worcester, MA 01605

Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts

508.852.7600 or 1.800.870.5905
Spanish 1.800.223.5001 TTY: 1.888.887.7130
799 West Boylston Street
Worcester, MA 01606
Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

Worcester Pastoral Counseling Center

508.757.0376
4 Caroline Street
Monday – Thursday 8:00am – 8:00pm
Friday, by appointment.
The Worcester Pastoral Counseling Center is staffed by psychologists and psychotherapists. Fees for the Worcester Pastoral Counseling Center are set on a sliding scale and are determined by financial need.