

Options for Survivors of Sexual Assault

For many people, the time immediately after experiencing a sexual assault can be very confusing. It can be difficult to know what to do and where to turn. The following information may be of help when considering the options that are available. It is important to recognize that some people will not choose any of the options provided below. Doing nothing is also an option. Since every person's experience and recovery process is unique, only you know what is right for you.

- **Consider Telling Someone You Trust.** Consider talking to someone whom you feel would be a safe person to talk to - perhaps a friend, family member or teacher. Although it is not often easy to talk about the experience, especially when disclosing for the first time, talking to a trusted friend or other support person may lessen feelings of isolation and provide some emotional comfort. Remember, you are not to blame for what was done to you. Your local Sexual Assault Centre can offer confidential, empathetic support and the information you need to be able to make the decisions that are right for you. The Edmonton area has three Sexual Assault Centres to choose from: The University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre, The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton, and SAFFRON Centre Ltd. (For further information on services and contact information please refer to the end of this document)

- **Consider Seeking Medical Attention.** If the sexual assault experience was recent and you concerned about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pregnancy or possible injuries, it is important to consider seeking medical attention. Although a physical exam after a sexual assault can be very difficult, there are services in Edmonton such as SART, the STD Clinic and OPTIONS Sexual Health Association that make the process less difficult.
 - **SART** (Sexual Assault Response Team) is a team of nurses who examine and treat survivors of sexual assault who seek medical attention through local hospital emergency rooms. This is a no-fee, confidential service available to anyone who has been sexually assaulted within the past 7 days. If survivors contact SART within 72 hours of the sexual assault, the nurses can collect medical evidence for police if the survivor wishes to report now or wishes to consider it later. Medical evidence is not necessary for reporting. SART is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the Emergency Department of the Royal Alexandra, University of Alberta, Misericordia, Grey Nuns, Sturgeon and Leduc hospitals along with the North East Community Health Centre. Survivors whose assault happened more than 7 days ago who are concerned about STI's or pregnancy may want to consider the STD Center or OPTIONS Sexual Health Association.
 - **STD Center.** For those concerned about sexually transmitted infections, the STD Center in Edmonton provides free, confidential and anonymous testing and treatment (no health care card required). The clinic is located at 11111 Jasper Avenue and is open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5:00pm. Anyone can drop by, or make an appointment by phoning 780-413-5156.
 - **OPTIONS Sexual Health Association.** If pregnancy is a concern, OPTIONS provides free, confidential pregnancy testing as well as non-judgmental information, counselling and referrals. OPTIONS is located at #50 9912-106 Street. Call 780-423-3737.

- **Consider Your Reporting Options.**
 - **Local Police Department.** Consider reporting the incident to the police by calling or going to the nearest police station to file a complaint. After reporting to the police, should they decide to press charges, you can choose to act as a witness or decide not to act as a witness. Some people find it helpful to report in that it allows for the collection of accurate information should they decide to follow through the a complaint at a some point in the future. As there is no statute of limitations on reporting, non-recent assaults can also be reported to local police departments. For further information on the reporting process, contact your local Sexual Assault Centre.
 - **University of Alberta Protective Services (formerly Campus Security Services).** If the incident happened on the University of Alberta campus including in any campus residence or at a campus affiliated event, involving U of A Protective Services is another reporting option. They can be reached by calling 780-492-5050 or by visiting them in the south, west corner of the U of A Education Car Park at 11390 – 87 Avenue, Edmonton. The U of A Sexual Assault Centre can provide further information or accompaniment services for those reporting to U of A Protective Services.
 - **Third Party Reporting.** Another reporting option to consider is Third Party Reporting. Third party reporting allows you to provide police with information regarding your sexual assault experience, anonymously, and without a criminal investigation. For more information on Third Party Reporting contact the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton or the U of A Sexual Assault Centre.

- **Take the Time to Recover.** The process of recovery from a sexual assault takes time, and is different for each individual. Talking with a counsellor who is non-judgmental and knowledgeable about the issue of sexual assault can be helpful as individuals make sense of their experience and move through the healing process. Free or low-cost support in the local Edmonton area include:
 - **University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre** provides free, confidential, and anonymous support and information to U of A students and staff who are affected by sexual assault. The Centre offers a drop in service at 2-705 Students' Union Building or can be reached by phone 780-492-9771, email sexualassaultcentre@ualberta.ca, or on line at www.ualberta.ca/sac.
 - **Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton** provides free support, information and referrals as well as individual and group counselling. Located in Suite #205, 14964-121 Avenue, they can be reached by phone at 780-423-4121, email info@sace.ab.ca, or on line at www.sace.ab.ca.
 - **SAFFRON Centre Ltd.** Located in Sherwood Park, AB at #44 – 48 Brentwood Blvd. SAFFRON offers individual and group counselling and can be reached by phone 780-449-0900, by email at info@saffron-ssac.com or on line at www.saffron-ssac.com.
 - **University of Alberta Mental Health Centre:** Located in 2-600 Students' Union Building, U of A SCS offers free counselling services to University of Alberta students. Visit www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/counselling or phone 780-492-5205.
 - **University of Alberta Faculty of Education Clinical Services:** Offering low cost counselling services for all individuals, couples, or families. Located in 1-135 Education North Building 112 St & 87 Avenue, Edmonton. Phone: 780-492-3746 or visit www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/edpsychology/clinicalservices.cfm .