



# **Sexual Assault Response Services** *of Southern Maine*

P.O. Box 1371  
Portland, ME 04104

P.O. Box 1605  
Sanford, ME 04073

**24-Hour Hotline: 1-800-313-9900**

infosars@sarsonline.org  
www.sarsonline.org

## **WHY CONSIDER A SUPPORT GROUP?**

We, at Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine, offer many resources to callers on the hotline. We have the ability to refer people to therapists, legal aid, shelter and countless other resources. In most cases, our advocates will mention the option of attending a support group to a caller, which is free through SARS. Sometimes our callers wonder why this might be a useful resource. Sometimes our callers cringe at the thought of talking to a group of virtual strangers about some very personal experiences. Sometimes our callers simply wonder about what ‘happens’ at those meetings.

In response to these very good questions, we’ve developed this informational handout. This handout is based on the feedback we have received from past group participants. They have expressed the following:

- It helps to know you are not alone with these sensitive issues.
- It helps you to get positive support from people with common experiences.
- The group is safe.
- The group is an appropriate place to have your feelings validated.
- You’re never judged.
- Being able to come to the realization that what happened was not your fault.
- It is okay to feel.
- I have learned how to better take control of my life.
- I am not a failure.
- I have a new sense of hopefulness, previously not there.
- “This group is the best thing I have ever done for myself. I thought that counseling was good, but this group was far superior at getting to the heart of the issues.”

Whether or not you are interested in attending a support group, know that all of **the people on SARS’ hotline care about your experiences**. You will never be pressured into making any decisions regarding your healing. The advocates, who staff the hotline, are there to listen to you and help you make informed decisions. Please call the hotline if you want to explore options about your recovery or if you just want someone to listen.

**Call toll free 1-800-313-9900, 24 hours a day.  
There are people who care.**

***Help, Hope, and Healing***