



Sexual Assault Response Services *of Southern Maine*

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TO A LESBIAN/BISEXUAL WOMAN **WHOSE PARTNER HAS BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED**

- You will wake up in the middle of the night and realize you almost lost her. That she was almost killed. If you are lucky, and she is not in the hospital, but lying beside you, you will lean over to make sure she is breathing. You will think, perhaps she did die.
- You will imagine that you were there and that you killed him. He will bleed, scream, plea for mercy, you will have no mercy. You drag his corpse to the police station and leave it outside.
- You will want to hear all the details, and then you will not want to. You will imagine more details.
- You will wonder if she is telling you everything. You flash constantly on what he did to her.
- In the middle of conversations, of work, of socializing, you suddenly blank out. You remember that she was almost killed.
- You hate him.
- You will go numb, you will cry uncontrollably, laugh hysterically.
- You will feel terrified. Your life is worth nothing. He will come back, and murder both of you. If you weren't gay this wouldn't have happened. If you had done this or that, it wouldn't have happened. If only she had, or had not, if only, if only, if only.
- You cannot change what happened. You are glad she is alive. You are afraid the relationship is ruined. She will never laugh again. You will never have fun, go to a movie, make love...
- Every time you touch her you think of what he did. The hair, the mouth, the eyes, the skin that you love so much, that means tenderness and warmth, suddenly also means violence and death.
- You are afraid to touch her, because you will start to cry and scream.
- You're not being supportive enough, you can't meet all her needs, if it had happened to you she would act better, you should, you should, you should...
- No one understands. You feel totally alone, and you cannot depend on her support, because she is in crisis. The world has been pulled out from your feet, you are alone, and you are lost.

Help, Hope, and Healing

Remember:

- Try to think of what you need, as well as what she needs.
- If the love is strong, nothing can destroy it. He may have tried, but he couldn't take her away from you.
- You are not crazy to be upset. You are a secondary victim.
- It will get better.
- It will seem like it is getting worse.
- Try not to shut down the feelings, they will help you heal.
- Somewhere in the experience there will be a positive--you will have learned something.
- You'll realize just how strong and nurturing you are.
- You don't have to be perfect.
- You are going to make mistakes.
- It's not your fault. It's the perpetrator's fault.
- Don't expect yourself to rise to incredible heights of human endurance, you are going to be exhausted, irritable, and scared.
- You are brave to be facing this.
- You deserve help and love and support.
- You don't have to tell everyone, and you don't have to keep it to yourself.
- Share the burden--make sure others support you and her.
- Allow yourself to fall apart when you need to.
- All the anguish, pain, tears, terror, anger, guilt--all of it means that you love each other very much. The love was not killed, and it will grow. It doesn't change what you had before. You are the same two people, with a crisis through which you will get.
- Make a mental picture for yourself, and image that symbolized your love and your strength as two women, keep that picture with you. You will survive.