



Sexual Assault Response Services

of Southern Maine

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HELP FOR MEN WHO'S FEMALE PARTNERS HAVE BEEN RAPED

What does it feel like to be the male partner of a woman who has been raped? You may experience the following feelings:

- ✓ Anger and resentment toward the victim, a feeling that she was responsible for the rape.
- ✓ Doubting the victim's accounting of the rape incident
- ✓ Wondering whether she enjoyed the experience
- ✓ Feeling personally wronged by the attack of "your woman", seeing "your property devalued, damaged merchandise"
- ✓ Feeling a need to "get even", a feeling which may be protecting you from feelings of utter helplessness and rage

How can you deal with these feelings?

- ✓ Talk with a trained professional about your feelings
- ✓ Understand that the victim was not responsible for the rape, the fact that it was an act of violence and not an act of passion (she did not enjoy it)
- ✓ Understand that your need for revenge, retribution or desire to "get even" will only add to her anxiety and will not help her recovery
- ✓ Learn about the nature of the crisis she is experiencing, what the experience of rape means
- ✓ Understand the symptoms of rape trauma syndrome so that you might be better prepared for her future emotional and physical responses.

How can you support your partner's recovery?

- ✓ Talk with a trained professional about what the experience of rape actually means to the victim
- ✓ Learn about the nature of the crisis the victim is experiencing, and likely emotional responses to the trauma (rape trauma syndrome, etc.)
- ✓ Understand that the victim need not be permanently debilitated by this trauma, that the sense of pain and loss will pass
- ✓ Help the victim mobilize her own best coping skills by encouraging (but not forcing) the open expression of her feelings, reinforcing her return to normal functioning in the future, hearing her feelings without condemnation or criticism.

How can you support the healing of her sexuality?

- ✓ Talk with your partner about her feelings, listen and understand them.
- ✓ Comply with any requests she may make to make her feel safe and supported
- ✓ Stop any physical, sexual and non-sexual, touching if she requests it.
- ✓ Emphasize the type of sexual and non-sexual touching that allows her to relax

Help, Hope, and Healing

- ✓ As a general rule, if your partner shows sexual interest, continue to initiate contact even if some sexual activities need to stop for a while.

If your partner is not open to sexual contact with you, understand this is a normal response that is not a total rejection of you. Do your best not to pressure her. Believe that your partner's sexual desire will return in time.

If you lose your sexual desire, you may be fearful of hurting or scaring your partner, or feel that she is dirty or contaminated, or feel guilty or suspicious. Talk about your feelings to your partner or a trained professional.