

## DV/SA ADVOCACY AGENCIES

**Bismarck**  
Abused Adult Resource Center  
Crisis Line: 866-341-7009  
Office: 701-222-8370  
abusedadultresourcecenter.com

**Bottineau**  
Family Crisis Center  
Crisis Line: 800-398-1098  
Office: 701-228-2028  
famcrisiscenter.org

**Devils Lake**  
Safe Alternatives for Abused Families  
Crisis Line: 701-409-0665  
Office: 701-662-7378  
saafnd.org

**Dickinson**  
Domestic Violence & Rape Crisis Center  
Crisis Line: 888-225-4506  
Office: 701-225-4506  
dvrcnd.com

**Ellendale**  
Kedish House  
Crisis Line: 877-349-4729  
Office: 701-349-4729  
kedish-house.com

**Fargo**  
Rape & Abuse Crisis Center  
Crisis Line: 800-344-7273  
Office: 701-293-7273  
raccfm.com

**Grafton**  
Domestic Violence & Abuse Center Inc.  
Crisis Line: 866-435-7490  
Office: 701-331-0466  
dvacnd.org

**Grand Forks**  
Community Violence Intervention Center  
Crisis Line: 866-746-8900  
Office: 701-746-0405  
cviconline.org

**Jamestown**  
Safe Shelter  
Crisis Line: 888-353-7233  
Office: 701-251-2300  
safeshelterjamestown.org

**McLean Co.**  
McLean Family Resource Center  
Crisis Line: 701-462-8643  
Office: 701-462-8643  
mcleanfrc.weebly.com

**Mercer Co.**  
Women's Action & Resource Center  
Crisis Line: 701-873-2274  
Office: 701-873-2274  
mercerwar.com

**Minot**  
Domestic Violence Crisis Center  
Crisis Line: 701-857-2200  
Office: 701-852-2258  
courage4change.org

**Ransom Co.**  
Abuse Resource Network  
Crisis Line: 701-683-5061  
Office: 701-683-5061  
abuseresourcenetwork.org

**Fort Totten**  
Spirit Lake Victim Assistance  
Crisis Line: 701-766-1816  
Office: 701-766-1816  
spiritlakenation.com/programs/  
spirit-lake-victim-assistance/

**Stanley**  
Domestic Violence Program NW ND  
Crisis Line: 800-273-8232  
Office: 701-628-3233  
dvpnwnd.weebly.com

**Turtle Mountain Reservation**  
Hearts of Hope  
Crisis Line: 701-477-0002  
Office: 701-477-0002  
E-mail: gourneau@utma.com

**Valley City**  
Abused Persons Outreach Center  
Crisis Line: 701-845-0072  
Office: 701-845-0078  
apocnd.org

**Wahpeton**  
Three Rivers Crisis Center  
Crisis Line: 701-642-2115  
Office: 701-642-2115  
threeriverscrisiscenter.weebly.com

**Williston**  
Family Crisis Shelter  
Crisis Line: 701-770-5180  
Office: 701-572-0757  
familycrisisshelter.com

## EFFECTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON YOU

If someone you care about has been sexually assaulted, you may be experiencing an array of emotions, such as:

- Guilt that you did not prevent the assault
- Fear over the realization that you are also vulnerable
- A strong desire for revenge
- A desire to "fix it" and move on
- Victim blaming: rationalizing that the assault "wasn't that bad" or "wasn't really rape" or was the victim's fault
- Impatience at your loved one's long recovery

These feelings are common and can be hard to deal with on your own. It's completely normal to reach out to a professional to talk about your own response to the assault, if needed. Remember to practice good self care, and keep these things in mind:

- It's OK to set boundaries and limitations with your loved one in order to care for yourself, especially when you are experiencing high levels of stress.
- Don't blame yourself. The only people at fault for sexual assault are the offenders!

## CAWS NORTH DAKOTA

521 E Main Avenue  
Suite 320  
Bismarck, ND 58501

Phone: 701.255.6240  
Toll Free: 888.255.6240  
Fax: 701.255.1904

Web: [cawsnorthdakota.org](http://cawsnorthdakota.org)  
Email: [contact@cawsnorthdakota.org](mailto:contact@cawsnorthdakota.org)

*CAWS North Dakota does not provide direct services to victims of domestic and sexual violence. Contact your local domestic violence/sexual assault advocacy agency for support. Call 911 in an emergency.*

[f](#) [@](#) [t](#) [in](#) [v](#) @cawsnorthdakota

*This project was supported by Grant No. 15JOVW-22-GG-00907-MUMU awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

8/2023

# Sexual Assault: Support Guide for Friends and Family



**caws**  
NORTH DAKOTA  
ending sexual and domestic violence

View this directory online:  
[cawsnorthdakota.org/get-help/advocacycenterdirectory](http://cawsnorthdakota.org/get-help/advocacycenterdirectory)

## UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL ASSAULT (SA)

Sexual assault, also referred to as sexual violence, is any type of forced or coerced sexual contact or behavior that happens without consent. Anyone can experience sexual violence, regardless of age, race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or economic or cultural background.

Forms of sexual violence include: sexual assault, rape or attempted rape, child molestation, incest, unwanted touching (groping, fondling, forced kissing), sexual harassment or threats, sex trafficking, alcohol and drug-facilitated sexual assault, exposing one's genitals or naked body to others without consent, voyeurism (watching someone engage in sexual acts without their knowledge or consent), and non-consensual image sharing.

*The more you know about sexual assault, the more you'll be able to provide positive support to a loved one who has been sexually assaulted. Visit [cawsnorthdakota.org](http://cawsnorthdakota.org) or contact your local domestic violence/sexual assault (DV/SA) advocacy agency to learn more about sexual assault and supporting your loved one.*

The majority of sexual violence is committed by someone known to the victim. It can be anyone from a brief acquaintance to a spouse or partner. Because the victim knows the offender in most cases, they often feel somehow responsible for the assault. This can cause confusion and other emotions, such as guilt or shame. As a result, victims of sexual assault are less likely to report the crime to law enforcement.

In North Dakota, victims of sexual assault typically have 96 hours to obtain a forensic medical examination, although certain situations may extend that time frame. If the victim goes to the hospital for an examination, it's important to know that most hospitals are required to report the assault to law enforcement. However, it's always up to the victim to decide if they want to talk to law enforcement.

Even if more than 96 hours has passed, the victim still has the opportunity to obtain medical treatment and an evaluation for pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Contact a DV/SA advocacy agency near you to learn more about medical treatment and reporting options.

## HOW YOUR LOVED ONE MAY REACT

After a sexual assault, your loved one may experience a wide range of reactions and emotions. There is no one pattern or order of responses, but many sexual violence victims experience:

- Denial/shock
- Anger/irritability
- Self-blame
- Depression
- Guilt/shame
- Anxiety/panic attacks
- Flashbacks
- Dissociation
- Dislike of sex
- Promiscuity or hyper-sexuality
- Fear
- Numbness
- Social withdrawal
- Difficulty with intimacy
- Difficulty trusting themselves or others
- Impaired memory
- Nightmares or insomnia
- Eating problems or disorders
- Self-harm
- Thoughts of suicide

Remember that your loved one is having a normal response to an abnormal situation. Be there to support your loved one in coping with emotions, accessing medical and mental health services, and seeking social support systems.

## 10 WAYS TO SUPPORT A LOVED ONE WHO HAS BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

1. **Believe them.** One of the most common fears victims of sexual assault face is that no one will believe them. This fear may affect who the victim talks to about the assault and what they share. Remind them that you believe them and are there for them.
2. **Listen without judgment or giving advice.** The victim may be feeling many different emotions. It's important to support them in expressing any feelings they're experiencing.
3. **Remind them that the assault was not their fault.** Victims often blame themselves for the assault, especially if they know the perpetrator personally. Remind your loved one that they are not to blame. The only person at fault for the sexual assault is the offender.
4. **Remain calm.** How you react to sexual violence will affect further reactions and responses from the victim.
5. **Encourage your loved one to talk to a professional about their experience.** You're a strong supporter, but you might not feel equipped to provide all the support that your loved one wants. Provide information to contact the nearest sexual assault victim advocacy agency, staffed with professionals trained in working with victims of sexual assault. All services are FREE and confidential.

I believe you, and I'm sorry this happened to you.

Is there anything you want to talk about?

Thank you for telling me, I know it must be hard to talk about this.

You didn't do anything wrong. How can I support you?

Are you considering making a report? If so, would you like me to go with you?

6. **Be there for them.** This may look like going with them to medical appointments, listening to them when they want to talk, or helping them contact professional help. Keep in mind that healing from sexual assault doesn't happen within a specific time frame. Be there for your loved one throughout the entire healing process, however long that may be.
7. **Give your loved one the opportunity to share their experience with you, but avoid pressing for information.** They may not feel comfortable providing certain details of the assault, and it's important to respect their privacy and boundaries.
8. **Give the victim as much control as possible—the very thing that was taken from them during the assault.** Let them choose who they talk to about the assault and where they get support. It's their experience to share, not yours.
9. **Only touch the victim if you've received permission first.** Physical contact without permission can cause anxiety or flashbacks.
10. **Don't attempt to confront the offender or tell the victim you are going to "get" the offender.** Doing or saying things like this can cause the victim additional stress. It may also create a dangerous situation for you and the victim.