

# Compassion care for victims of sexual assault

For a victim of sexual assault, it is a very traumatizing time in their life. Regardless of when the victim was assaulted, either as a child or an adult, they will need a lot of support from their family and friends. Victims often feel as if the assault was their fault. Thinking that something they did, said, wore, or consumed gave the perpetrator the “right” to assault them.

Some of the most common feelings that the victim will experience is: Shame, guilt, fear, confusion, anger/rage, suicidal, “dirty,” depression, and shame.

When a victim reports or “tells” of an assault, they are taking a huge step towards starting the recovery from the assault. This is usually the first step to regaining their safety, security and also self control. When a victim tells about the assault, some of the most helpful things you can do is:

- **Listen and let the victim talk.** Listening and offering support without judgment, criticism, or blame will be the most beneficial to the victim.
- **Offer suggestions.** Victims often do not realize that there are options for them. Mental health, support groups, spiritual advisors, sexual assault programs and medical personnel are places for the victim to consider starting to talk to.
- **Refer to programs.** There are many programs that are able to help support a victim of sexual assault through the many stages of their victimization.
- **Don’t “blame” or “presume.”** Just because the victim was dressed provocatively, or was walking at night, or had went out with friends, does not mean that what happened to them was their fault or that they deserved it.

Nobody deserves to be sexually assaulted and nobody has the right to sexually assault another person.

If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual assault, please seek help. The DOVE Program offers free and confidential services to victims of sexual assault and also the people that are affected by it.

For more information or confidential services please call DOVE at 218-935-5554 Ext. 3218 or the 24-hour Crisis Line at 1-877-830-3683.