

Coping with Sexual Assault

***A Guide to Healing for Survivors,
Their Loved Ones and Allies***



About this booklet and the “Coping” series

Our publications are written for victims of sexual assault, their loved ones, and allies. This booklet provides information about healing from sexual assault, medical options, the criminal justice system, victim rights, and resources for sexual assault survivors. The content in this publication is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for medical or legal advice.

This publication is one in a series on coping with sexual assault. The original booklet was written by Terri Spahr Nelson and Julie Campbell-Ruggaard with a grant from the Violence Against Women Office, U.S. Department of Justice. It was developed as a national resource with the assistance and expertise from a national advisory council including survivors. We are grateful to the advisory team who shared their input and expertise for the development of this booklet including:

Linda E. Ledray, RN, Ph.D. SANE-A, FAAN, Director, Sexual Assault Resource Service and Advisory Director www.sane-sart.com

Jennifer Long, J.D. (former Director, National Center for Prosecution of Violence Against Women, American Prosecutors Research Institute, National District Attorneys Association) www.ndaa.org

Sgt. John Buchholz (Retired Detective) Oxford Police Department

Alexis Moore, Survivors In Action www.SurvivorsInAction.com

Refer to our website for a complete list of national advisory consultants.

Regarding use of language: We have used gender neutral language to recognize the importance of inclusivity and an awareness that sexual assault affects all people. Therefore, you will find “their” or “they” in place of gender specific pronouns with respect that each of us gets to choose how we want to be identified. We have also used the terms *survivor* and *victim*; *rape*, *sexual assault*, and *trauma*; as well as *offender* and *perpetrator*. These terms are used throughout this booklet with the understanding that some persons will have preferences as to how they identify themselves and their experience. Use what is best for you.

This booklet is based on information available at the time of publication. We strive to keep our publications current and welcome any suggestions. Keep in mind, state and federal laws do vary and are subject to change.

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*Whether it happened recently or years ago,
there are many people available to support you.*

This booklet was written by and for survivors of sexual assault.

We believe that healing and moving forward after a sexual assault is possible. If you are ever unsure about your ability to heal, or if you just need to talk to someone, reach out to any of the organizations listed in the resources section in the back of this booklet. The helplines are confidential and available 24/7 with counselors who know about sexual assault. Or find a good therapist that understands trauma-informed care and healing from sexual assault. You do not have to deal with this alone.

May you find support and care on your journey of recovering and know that you are so much more than a rape survivor.
