

# What New Yorkers Can Do to End Sexual Assault



[www.nycagainstrape.org](http://www.nycagainstrape.org) **New York City**  
**Alliance Against**  
**Sexual Assault**  
Advocacy | Education | Research

Created by the New York City Alliance  
Against Sexual Assault, with funding from  
the New York City Council.



New Yorkers deserve the freedom to live without fear. This booklet will help you discover ways to fight sexual assault in your community.

Whether you volunteer at a rape crisis program, help a friend in need, or take an outspoken personal stand against victim-blaming attitudes, you can be a part of the solution.

# What You Can Do to Stop Sexual Violence

## 1. Learn about the issue.

Start learning the myths and facts about rape, how to support a friend in crisis, and the legislative issues that affect survivors. There is a wealth of information on the Alliance's website, [www.ny.cagainstrape.org](http://www.ny.cagainstrape.org), and in our library (call our librarian at 212-523-5770 to schedule a visit), or contact a local rape crisis program.

## 2. Take back the night.

If your school or community has an annual Take Back the Night event, find out how you can participate in this empowering action to reclaim your right to feel safe, in the streets or in your home. If there is no such event, consider creating one by reaching out to friends and neighbors who want to organize for change.

## 3. Support your local rape crisis program.

Find out what local programs are doing to stop sexual assault and support survivors. They may have a volunteer opportunity that's right for you, or you might be able to support their work through charitable donations or in kind services. Invite the program to your congregation, school, social club or business. Make sure the people around you know what services are out there.

## 4. See something? Say something.

Ever read a news story that exploited the victim's past, or blamed her behavior for the rape? Tired of newspapers that reveal the victim's identity against his or her will, and don't address public attitudes that condone sexual violence? Write a letter to the editor! If the paper won't publish it, you can still speak out. Send your response to friends, family and others to spread the word that you don't condone irresponsible reporting, and you hope they won't either.

## 5. Become a rape crisis advocate.

Make a difference in a survivor's life by becoming a certified rape crisis advocate. In the immediate aftermath of rape, survivors face a host of emotional, medical, and legal decisions. Advocates can provide information to assist the survivor (and her/his family) in making the best possible choices. Most hospital-based rape crisis programs in the city offer an annual training that prepares volunteers to provide compassionate, knowledgeable support and information during the crisis.

## 6. Join the Listen. campaign.

Listen. is an email- and web-based campaign sponsored by the Alliance. The campaign asks participants to do two simple things. First, think back on your life and answer the question: How many times has somebody told you about experiencing a sexual assault? Second, and just as important, we need you to invite your friends. This campaign will only be successful if it spreads widely. We can't do that. You can. Visit [listencampaign.org](http://listencampaign.org) to help.

## 7. Join our organizing committee.

The Alliance's Sexual Assault Awareness Month organizing committee raises awareness about victims' rights and needs, fosters discussion about sexual assault and provides opportunities to reach out to victims. The Alliance is dedicated to ensuring that awareness efforts are accessible and relevant to the many cultural, ethnic, racial and other groups that make up the city community. Local rape crisis center staff, community educators, grass roots activists and concerned individuals are encouraged to join. Call 212-523-4344 or email [saam@nycagainstrape.org](mailto:saam@nycagainstrape.org) to learn how.

# Stopping Rape: What Men Can Do

## by Men Can Stop Rape

**Be aware of language.** Words are very powerful, especially when spoken by people with power over others. We live in a society in which words are often used to put women down, where calling a girl or woman a *bitch*, *freak*, *whore*, *baby*, or *dog* is common. Such language sends a message that females are less than fully human. When we see women as inferior, it becomes easier to treat them with less respect, disregard their rights, and ignore their well-being.

**Communicate.** Sexual violence often goes hand in hand with poor communication. Our discomfort with talking honestly and openly about sex dramatically raises the risk of rape. By learning effective sexual communication—stating your desires clearly, listening to your partner, and asking when the situation is unclear—men make sex safer for themselves and others.

**Speak up.** You will probably never see a rape in progress, but you will see and hear attitudes and behaviors that degrade women and promote rape. When your best friend tells a joke about rape, say you don't find it funny. When you read an article that blames a rape survivor for being assaulted, write a letter to the editor. When laws are proposed that limit women's rights, let politicians know that you won't support them. Do anything but remain silent.

**Support survivors of rape.** Rape will not be taken seriously until everyone knows how common it is. In the U.S. alone, more than one million women and girls are raped each year. By learning to sensitively support survivors in their lives, men can help both women and other men feel safer to speak out about being raped and let the world know how serious a problem rape is.

**Contribute your time and money.** Join or donate to an organization working to prevent violence against

women. Rape crisis centers, domestic violence agencies, and men's anti-rape groups count on donations for their survival and always need volunteers to share the workload.

**Talk with women...** about how the risk of being raped affects their daily lives; about how they want to be supported if it has happened to them; about what they think men can do to prevent sexual violence. If you're willing to listen, you can learn a lot from women about the impact of rape and how to stop it.

**Talk with men...** about how it feels to be seen as a potential rapist; about the fact that ten to twenty percent of all males will be sexually abused in their lifetimes; about whether they know someone who's been raped. Learn about how sexual violence touches the lives of men and what we can do to stop it.

**Organize.** Form your own organization of men focused on stopping sexual violence. Men's anti-rape groups are becoming more and more common around the country, especially on college campuses. If you have the time and the drive, it is a wonderful way to make a difference in your community.

**Work against other oppressions.** Rape feeds off many other forms of prejudice. By speaking out against any beliefs and behaviors, including rape, that promote one group of people as superior to another and deny other groups their full humanity, you support everyone's equality.

**Never have sex with anyone against their will!** No matter what. Although statistics show most men never rape, the overwhelming majority of rapists are male. Make a promise to yourself to be a different kind of man - one who values equality and whose strength is not used for hurting.

# Child Sexual Abuse: What Can I Do?

## by Generation Five

Each of us can become a community leader on this issue, someone who helps educate those around them about child sexual abuse (CSA) and who lends their skills and knowledge to preventing abuse. Here are four simple steps you can take to become a leader in fighting CSA:

### 1. **Notice.**

Pay attention to what is going on around you. At [www.generationFIVE.org](http://www.generationFIVE.org) you can learn some simple signs to help you recognize three ways that people can be affected by of CSA:

**Victims:** Both boys and girls can be victims of sexual abuse. Children who are being sexually abused can exhibit a range of behaviors. Different children will cope differently, using a variety of strategies to deal with abuse.

**Offenders:** Both men and women can sexually abuse children. There are no easy, telltale signs that allow us to recognize offenders. Some offenders are very jovial, intelligent, or well liked, while others are more isolated and socially removed.

**Bystanders:** We are all bystanders to CSA. The statistics suggest that we are each in contact with someone whose life has been touched by this issue. Bystanders may or may not know what is happening. They may have seen many signs of CSA, or even witnessed the abuse themselves, but not be able or willing to face it. There are behaviors you may see in people who are bystanders to the sexual abuse of children, but who are unable to take effective action to stop or prevent it.

## 2. **Speak.**

Learn how to have a conversation with people you know about CSA. Talk with children not only about prevention, but also when you think they might be experiencing sexual abuse. Talk with your friends, with co-workers, with someone you think may be offending. When something seems wrong, ask the person - what's going on? Is there something you're having trouble telling me about? What can I do to help? Be comfortable bringing up the topic of CSA and listening with openness to what people have to say.

## 3. **Connect.**

Find out how to locate other people who are concerned about CSA. Check out what resources are available for victims, offenders, and affected families in your community and have information ready to help others who may not be ready to look for those resources themselves. Find allies for yourself and support for others working to prevent CSA. If there are no resources in your community, you might want to get socially or politically involved in developing them.

## 4. **Act.**

When you find out something is wrong, take action to make it stop. Talk with the victim and the victim's family about their options. Bring together concerned family and community members to brainstorm solutions that will serve everyone involved. Help the victim and the victim's family design a plan to end the abuse and hold the offender accountable. Where appropriate, help the offender and offender's family seek help and accountability. Find out about legal and child protective system options and help the family make decisions about interacting with those systems. Get treatment resources immediately.

# For Survivors

by the NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault

## **If you have been sexually assaulted recently...**

If you do not have visible physical injuries from the assault, friends and family may think you are okay. Many people do not understand the extent of trauma endured by rape and sexual assault victims. There may also be physical injuries that you can't see. The following are some suggestions of how to get the practical and emotional support you need:

### **Get to a safe place.**

For example, the nearest hospital, police precinct, or someone's home.

### **Call for help.**

You can call 911 for immediate police protection and assistance. You can also call one of a number of hotlines to discuss your options for reporting the assault. Turn the page for hotlines and referral services.

### **Go to your local hospital emergency room.**

A nurse or doctor can provide immediate medical care to check for injury, prevent sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy, and collect evidence.

Evidence collection does not require you to place a report with the police or press charges; it just preserves these options for the future. For the purposes of evidence collection, we suggest that you avoid showering, combing your hair or changing your clothes before going to the hospital.

### **Tell someone you trust.**

Talk to a friend or family member who can support and assist you.

### **Call the nearest rape crisis program.**

Programs provide crisis intervention, hospital accompaniment, counseling, courtroom advocacy,

support groups for you or your partner, information and referrals. Or, call the Safe Horizon 24 hour hotline at 212-227-3000 for support and referral to a local program.

### **If you have been sexually assaulted in the past...**

Sexual assault, no matter when it happens can change your life. It can change your view of yourself and others. You may experience changes in your eating and sleeping patterns. You may have nightmares or flashbacks about the assault or rape. Certain sounds, smells, or other sensory experiences may trigger these feelings and fears. You may be afraid of being alone, or you may fear being in crowds. You also may fear that the offender may have infected you with a sexually transmitted disease, such as HIV/AIDS, or that you may become pregnant.

Maybe you were abused by someone you knew (a boss, family member, spouse, friend). Maybe you were assaulted by a stranger. As time passes, you may have a variety of feelings, thoughts, and reactions to what has happened—most rape and sexual assault victims do.

Whatever the circumstances, whatever your reactions or fears may be, support and help are available for you. Local rape crisis or sexual assault program staff will assist you, regardless of whether you decide to report the assault to the police.

### **Find someone to talk to—someone who can listen.**

#### **Call a rape crisis program.**

Rape crisis programs provide counseling and support for survivors, no matter when the assault occurred. Call your local program. Or, call the Safe Horizon 24 hour hotline at 212-227-3000 for support and referral to a local program.

# Hotlines & Referral Services

## Find the nearest rape crisis program:

**Safe Horizon Rape Crisis/Sexual Abuse Hotline:** 212.227.3000

## General information, support and assistance with reporting:

**New York City Police Department Special Victims Report**

**Line:** 646.610.RAPE (7273)

**NYC Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project Hotline:**

212.714.1141

## To report child abuse and neglect:

**New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register**

**Hotline:** 800.342.3720

## District Attorney's Crime/Special Victims Bureaus:

**Manhattan:** 212.335.9373 (adult sexual assault)

**Manhattan:** 212.335.4300 (child sexual abuse)

**Brooklyn:** 718.250.3170 (sex crimes bureau)

**Brooklyn:** 718.250.3820 (counseling)

**Bronx:** 718.590.2115

**Queens:** 718.286.6505

**Staten Island:** 718.556.7125

## Help with crime victims' rights and compensation:

**New York State Crime Victims Board:** 718.923.4325,

800.579.0689, 888.289.9747 (TTY)

## Help for crime victims pursuing civil justice:

**National Crime Victims Bar Association:** 202.467.8753

## About convicted felons in the Dept. of Corrections:

**Victim Information & Notification Everyday (VINE):**

888.VINE.4NY

## Referral service for offenders:

**STOPIT NOW! Helpline:** 1-888-PREVENT (773-8368)

*for adults at risk for sexually abusing a child, for friends and family members of sexual abusers and/or victims, and for parents of children with sexual behavior problems.*

*Confidential. Mon-Fri, 9-5.*

**Sexual Abuser Treatment Referral Line:** 1-800-247-3132

*for anyone interested in locating a treatment provider for an individual with sexual behavior problems. Mon-Fri, 9-4:30.*

## NYC Domestic Violence Hotline:

**Voice:** 1-800-621-HOPE (4673), **TTD:** 1-800-810-7444

# Join Us!

*Please print clearly!*

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Eve:**

**E-mail:**

Please sign me up for  
announcements.

- Local events
- Group counseling opportunities
- Jobs
- Volunteer opportunities
- Legislative alerts

I would like to make a donation.

- I have enclosed a check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
payable to NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault.

*The Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.  
Donations are tax deductible. Thank you for  
supporting us!*

**New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault**  
411 West 114th Street, Suite 6D  
New York, NY 10025