

Sexual Assault Myths

MYTH: Sexual Assault is caused by the perpetrators uncontrollable sexual urges
FACT: Sexual assault is an act of **POWER** and **CONTROL** not sex

MYTH: Men cannot be sexually assaulted

FACT: Men and boys can be sexually assaulted regardless of size, strength, appearance or sexual orientation. 1 in 6 men have been sexually abused or assaulted

MYTH: The victim must have “asked for it” by being seductive, careless, drunk, high, etc

FACT: No one asks to be abused, injured, or humiliated

MYTH: Victims often lie about being sexually assaulted

FACT: Sexual assault is the least reported crime. According to the FBI, the false report rate is 2-8%

MYTH: Most perpetrators are strangers to their victims

FACT: Most sexual assaults are committed by someone that the victim knows: a neighbor, friend, family member, acquaintance, co-worker, classmate, spouse, partner, or ex-partner

MYTH: If the victim did not physically struggle with or fight the assailant, it wasn't really rape

FACT: Perpetrators are not looking for a fight and they use many forms of **COERCION**

A person can also freeze, the inability to move or fight back, this is called tonic immobility and is a common response to a sexual assault



Turning Point



@TurningPointMAC



TurningPointInc



@TurningPointInc



Turningpointmacomb.org

Sexual Assault Hurts

- Every survivor of sexual assault reacts differently
- If you have been hurt, know it wasn't your fault
- Find someone you can talk to about what has happened
- The actual incident is only part of what a survivor experiences

Survivors may also experience...

Emotionally

- Having flashbacks—seeing things that remind you of the assault
- Feeling blamed or responsible for the assault
- Feeling powerless, like you have no control over your life and emotions

In Dating Relationships

- Fearing your partner won't care about you after the assault
- Being intimate with your partner brings back painful memories
- Having many sexual partners because you feel like your sexuality doesn't matter anymore

In School

- Skipping class
- Difficulty concentrating
- Caring less about grades

Socially

- Wanting to be alone, avoiding people
- Not going out or doing things you used to enjoy
- Difficulty trusting others

Physically

- Feeling dirty, taking showers and still not feeling clean
- Injuries from assault or sexually transmitted diseases
- Sleeping all the time or not being able to fall asleep

“It already is bigger than everything else. It lives in front of me, behind me, next to me, inside me every single day. My schedule is dictated by it, my habits by it, my music by it.”
— Daisy Whitney, *The Mockingbirds*

After a Sexual Assault

Go to a hospital

A survivor can go to a hospital to treat any injuries and check for injuries that may not be seen. If a survivor wishes to have a Turning Point Nurse and/or Advocate called to the hospital, they can contact the 24 hour help line.

Seek Counseling

A survivor can seek counseling days, weeks, months, and even years following a sexual assault. Turning Point provides free, confidential group and individual counseling to survivors and their support systems to process through feelings. A survivor aged 14 and up can receive 12 confidential sessions with a Turning Point counselor without a parent's permission.

Call a help line

Turning Point's 24 hour help line is anonymous and confidential. The trained advocate who answers the hotline can provide support, give resources, and answer questions. The Forensic Nurse Examiner Program can also be reached through the 24/7 help line.

Not Disclosing

Some survivors choose not to disclose their sexual assault, this can be for a lot of reasons. A survivor may fear that they won't be believed or that they will be blamed for the assault. There may also be fear due to threats from the perpetrator or distrust in the judicial system. Survivors may feel shame or embarrassment due to religious affiliations or social groups that they're in. It is also possible that a survivor may not know that what they experienced was sexual assault.

Go to police

A survivor can report a sexual assault to the police. A police report must be made to the police in the city that the assault occurred.

FNEP (Forensic Nurse Examiner Program)

A survivor can connect with a FNEP nurse and/or advocate by contacting Turning Point's 24 hour help line. FNEP nurses are trained to complete evidence collection kits while the advocates provide emotional support through the process. A survivor does not have to complete an exam in order to speak with a nurse or advocate. A hospital or Police department can also request FNEP services for a survivor.

Coercive Control

Coercion is a tactic used to get someone to do something that they are not comfortable doing. Below are some examples of coercive tactics.



- Persuasion: *"I know you really want to."*
- Blame: *"But you got me excited, you can't stop now."*
- Pressuring: *"you said you loved me, why don't you show it?"*
- Guilt Trips: *"I gave up going out with my friends to be with you tonight."*
- Put downs: *"Nobody is going to put up with you like I do."*
- Blackmail: *"If you don't, I will post the pictures you sent me."*
- Manipulation: *"You're the only one who understands me."*
- Threats: *"I'm going to kill myself if you leave."*

Threats of suicide should never be taken lightly.

You should never be the only one who knows this information.
If someone is threatening suicide or harm to themselves or others,
tell a trusted adult.



Turning Point



@TurningPointMAC



TurningPointInc



@TurningPointInc



Turningpointmacomb.org

Safety Planning

Create a "crisis card"

This card consists of contact information of trusted people

Create a code word with friends or family

A word or symbol that someone can use to communicate that they're in danger

Log any unwanted contact

This includes unwanted stalking, verbal or physical contact it can be useful to have this information written down for reporting reasons

Share these concerns with a trusted adult

This can include a teacher, coach, counselor or parent

Call a help line

Speak to professionals who are trained in trauma, crisis intervention, domestic and sexual violence to help with safety planning or resources.

Turning Point's 24/7 hotline: 586-463-6990



Turning Point



@TurningPointMAC



TurningPointInc



@TurningPointInc



Turningpointmacomb.org

Supporting Survivors

Listen!

Survivors don't need advice, just being present and listening can help a survivor feel supported and less isolated.

Believe them!

Hear the survivors experience and believe what they say. Remind them that what happened is not their fault and be mindful not to lay any blame or judgement on them.

Let the survivor take the lead!

It is important to survivors that they have control over their experience. Let survivors talk about their experience at their own pace and do not pressure them to disclose anything before they're ready.

Check in!

Reach out and remind survivor that you care about them and are available to talk to and support them.

Share resources!

When a friend or family member discloses domestic violence or sexual abuse, it can be difficult and overwhelming and they may not know where to turn. Listed below are some resources to share. Offer to sit with them while they call a help line, counselor, or the police.



RESOURCES

Turning Point 24/7 Support Line: 586-463-6990

National Sexual Assault Hotline (RAINN): 1-800-656-4673

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233

Love Is Respect 24/7 Support Line: 1-866-331-9474

The Trevor Project 24/7 Support Line: 866-488-7386

(LGBTQIAH+ services)



Turning Point



@TurningPointMAC



TurningPointInc



@TurningPointInc



Turningpointmacomb.org