

What About My Feelings...

Rape affects you too.

You might be having very *powerful* feelings.

You might feel guilty. Like what happened was your fault.

You might feel mad and angry. You might take your anger out on her.

You might wonder if she is really telling the truth about the rape.

You might get impatient with the way she's acting about it, especially when she has feelings you don't understand.

These are all common feelings that people can have at a time like this. Don't hold them in. Don't pretend they aren't there. We're here to talk over those feelings with you. Please call us if you need us.

A Special Message For Husbands and Partners:

If you have a sexual relationship with a woman who has been raped, you may have questions about what to do.

You may be wondering if she'll be turned off to sex, and to you.

You may be worried that she could have an infection.

You may be wondering if you should have your regular sexual life together or if you should leave her alone for a while.

Remember that what's most important right now is what's best for *her*. She may want and need sexual intimacy very much right now, or she may not be interested in sex at all. Ask her what she wants. Make sure she knows you're willing to do whatever feels right to her.

If you're concerned about your sexual feelings about her, please call and talk to us about it. Remember that for most couples, rape does **no permanent harm** to their sexual relationship.

Reminder

Because you know her and care about her, there are some things you can do for her. Listen. Support. Be patient. Be loving. Know the facts about rape.

Getting back to normal may take time. Having people who care—like you—will help so much.

And call us if **you** need us. We're here to help you, too.

Council Against Rape

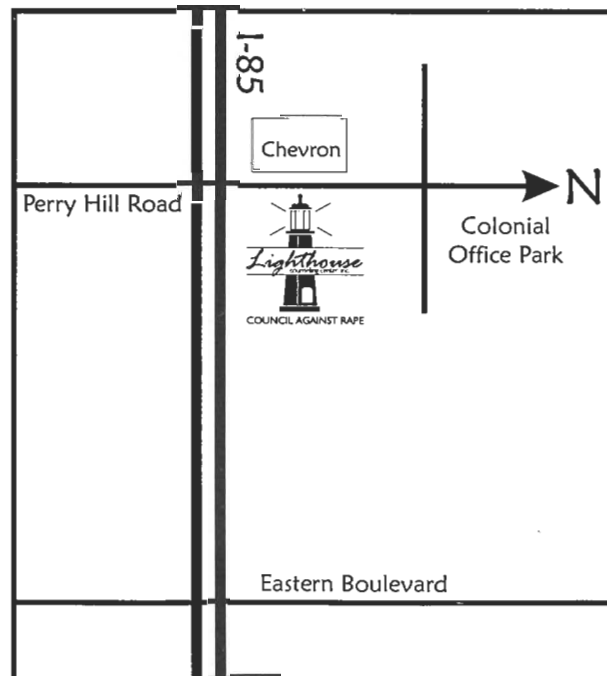
Lighthouse Counseling Center, Inc.

1231 Perry Hill Road
Montgomery Alabama 36109

Ph. (334) 213-1227 Fax (334) 215-2227

24 Hour Crisis Line (334) 213-1227

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The Council Against Rape

"A Caring &
Compassionate
Response to Rape"

If She Is Raped



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When someone you care about has been raped, you want to understand how to help and offer support. You will also need help understanding your own confusing feelings.

Does This Happen To A Lot of Women?

We see many rape victims through the Council Against Rape. Probably many more females are raped each month who don't ever call us. Victims are young and old, rich and poor. It can—and does—happen to anybody. It can happen at home, at work, or on the street.

What Happened While She Was in the Hospital?

Not every victim has exactly the same experience. She was probably examined by a doctor who specializes in emergency medical care. The victim probably had a pelvic exam to check for injuries and, if permission was given, the doctor probably collected any physical evidence of rape to be turned over to the police. This procedure is called a "Rape Kit," and means that samples of body fluids, hair and other materials will be put into containers for examination by a laboratory to determine their origin. A police officer probably asked for a description of the rapist and any other details she may be able to recall about the incident.

Does She Need Any Other Medical Care?

Tests done during her medical exam cannot tell if she caught VD from her attacker. Those tests should be repeated. The vaginal exam and test for Gonorrhea can be repeated in two weeks. The blood test for Syphilis can be repeated in six weeks. It's important to have these tests repeated. These infections often have no symptoms in the early stages, so a test is the only way to tell for sure.

AIDS is a concern of many rape victims today. It is suggested that if the attacker cannot be tested to determine if he carries the HIV antibody, the victim should consult her physician about being tested herself.

What About the Police?

We encourage all women to report an attack to the police.

Rapists are often repeaters, and her report may help the police see a pattern in his attacks.

Reporting the crime does not mean she has to go through with an arrest, hearings, or trial. She can decide for herself whether or not she wants to bring charges against her attacker.

How Is She Feeling About This?

Each victim has a different experience. Right after a rape many victims feel shocked and numb. Other common feelings are anger, guilt, or fear. Some victims act as though nothing happened.

Some victims can talk about their feelings openly. Others stay quiet and don't talk about how they're feeling.

Remember that she is probably thinking, "I thought he was going to kill me!" Rape is an act of violence that leaves a victim feeling powerless, vulnerable, and abused.

Some people may get over it fairly quickly, or it may take months or even longer to get over being raped.

How Can I Help Her?

Be there for her to talk to. There's nothing more important than that. It's something only her family and close friends can give her. Be careful not to make her talk, but let her talk and get her feelings out. Make sure she knows you are willing to listen.

Try to understand what rape is all about. You can help her best if you know the facts about rape. Remember that rape isn't a sexual act: It is a violent crime that happens to look like a sexual act. There are many, many myths about rape that all of us have heard (for example, "No woman can really be raped against her will"). If you aren't sure in your own mind what rape is all about, please call the Council Against Rape. We can give you facts, and tell you what good books or articles to read.

What About Problems We Can't Handle?

That could happen. Victims sometimes do get into real emotional trouble after being raped. And no one expects you to know how to be a professional counselor. If you think there's a problem you and she together can't handle, the first step is to call us at 213-1227. Often just talking out a problem can really help. If necessary, we can also put you in touch with a psychologist, psychiatrist, or other therapist. These referral services are free and confidential.