



THE HEALING PROCESS

People are different and each survivor will have a different experience with the recovery process. As you go through this process, remember:

- Be honest with yourself about feelings and thoughts.
- You can't control another person's behavior and you are not responsible for their actions.
- You don't have to go through this alone.
 - Consider talking to a trusted friend or professional acquaintance.
 - Contact your local sexual assault center about their survivor services.
 - Call LaFASA's statewide helpline any time, day or night, whenever you want to talk. It is free, confidential, and you don't have to give your name.
- Sometimes coping strategies are unhealthy. Seek help if you are using drugs, alcohol (excessively), harming yourself, or using other measures.
- Be patient with yourself. Healing and processing trauma can take a long time.

This brochure can provide resources and options for sorting out what makes sense to you and how you want to deal with your unique experiences.

LaFASA

*Louisiana Foundation
Against Sexual Assault*

Sexual Assault Crisis Centers provide a 24-hour crisis hotline, information and referral, free counseling, and more!

www.lafasa.org

MAIN 225.372.8995
HELPLINE 888.995.7273

2133 Silverside Drive, Ste. A
Baton Rouge, LA 70808



This project was supported by Grant No. 2016-KF-99 3533 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.



LaFASA

Sexual Assault:
HEALING TAKES TIME

WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Sometimes, survivors question if what they experience is sexual assault. Any unwanted sexual contact or behavior is sexual assault. It includes rape, groping, forced kissing, and other sexual acts. A person can be forced or coerced, unconscious, or too intoxicated to consent. Anyone regardless of gender, age, race, income level, sexual orientation, and/or ability can be a victim.

Like survivors, perpetrators can be anyone. When you have to regularly interact with your perpetrator(s), the healing process can be affected.

If you have been raped or sexually assaulted, you have experienced a frightening, life threatening trauma. Research shows that trauma can change a person's entire body, including the brain; it impacts how we act during and after the traumatic event. With help, survivors can heal from trauma.

Sex or sexual acts without your consent is sexual assault. It is illegal. It is wrong.

***You are not alone.
It was not your fault.
It is possible to heal.***

Sexual violence doesn't define:

- **Your worthiness**
You are not responsible for the assault. Feelings of guilt, shame, and self blame are normal responses to sexual violence. Working through these feelings can help you regain self-confidence.
- **Your strength**
Being a survivor does not make you weak. There are many reasons why people can't or don't fight back when they are assaulted. They may freeze, laugh, go along with it, be overpowered, or mentally "shut down." Whatever you did to cope with the situation was okay.
- **Your future**
While there are no quick fixes to the reactions you may experience related to trauma, there are many resources available to help you. Remember, healing is a process and you are not alone.

Recognize the unique challenges you face and cut yourself some slack.

It is important to remember:

- You are not to blame.
- Rape is a violent crime involving power and control.
- No one asks or deserves to be raped.
- You have the right to experience any and all feelings you have.
- You are not alone.

***Call the LaFASA helpline for 24/7, free and confidential support and information services.
888-995-7273***



Trauma caused by sexual violence can affect each person differently, and potential reactions may include:

- emotional reactions such as depression, guilt, shame, fear, anger, grief, and mood swings.
- behavioral reactions such as an inability to concentrate and/or relax, loss of interest, avoiding places and people.
- Physical reactions such as nausea, headaches, and changes in eating or sleeping patterns.

There is no right or wrong way to feel after being sexually assaulted. Your reactions may be more difficult to manage at certain times. Remember this is normal and these reactions can diminish with time.