

## How Long Will the Physical Effects Last?

The physical effects of rape can last from a day to a few months, depending on the extent of the injuries involved. Schedule a follow-up visit so the doctor can make sure that any injuries are healing properly. The doctor will also want to make sure you are not developing any complications of rape. It's also important to see a doctor in case the rapist is prosecuted.

## What to Do if it Happens to You

1. Try to go to a safe place.
2. If you can, call a trusted friend, family member, or Crisis Intervention.
3. Seek medical attention. Not only for possible injury, but to protect against sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. A rape kit may be performed for possible future criminal prosecution and can be submitted to the police crime lab.
4. Do not change your clothes, wash, comb, or clean any part of your body. Don't touch or change anything at the scene of the assault. This ensures evidence preservation.
5. Know your options. You can file a police report with or without the intent of prosecuting. It is the survivor's right to change their mind at any time during the judicial process.
6. Because sexual assault is a crime of violence, emotions such as shock, anger, shame, guilt, and fear or a combination of those feelings are normal. It is important to get counseling from a trusted and professional counselor and to join a support group. No one should have to face the trauma of sexual assault alone.

We believe all people have a right to a life free of physical violence, sexual assault, verbal/emotional abuse, and restriction of personal liberties.

We believe that violence is a societal problem, a learned behavior, and with intervention and education, the cycle of violence can be broken.

We believe in the worth, dignity, and uniqueness of the individual, and we support these values through education, personal growth, self-reliance, and self-determination.

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*This pamphlet is sponsored in part by the Office of the Attorney General: Division of Victim Services.*

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## After Rape: Putting the Pieces Back Together

**Toll Free 24-Hour Crisis Line**  
**1-877-864-9688**

Cody Office  
1220 13th St.  
Cody, WY  
307-272-4754

Powell Office\*  
335 N. Gilbert Street  
Powell, WY  
307-754-7959  
Fax: 307-754-4448

\*Powell office is ADA accessible



## Psychological Trauma

Trauma can cause psychological pain as well as physical. Trauma can fracture our integral parts.

- Thinking
- Feeling
- Sensing
- Behavior
- 

## Psychological Symptoms

- Confusion
- Difficulty sleeping
- Headaches
- Increasing fears
- Overeating
- Difficulty concentrating
- Unexplained emotional outbursts
- Panic attacks
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Palpitations

## Why Treat Rape Trauma

If not treated trauma can develop into the following patterns and problems:

- Distressing memories or dreams
- Loss of interest in what were meaningful activities
- Emotional numbing
- Increased anger feelings
- Increased health problems
- Feelings of detachment or separation from others and self
- Restricted range of emotions, such as inability to have loving feelings

## Deciding on Getting Treatment

It can be easy to put off getting treatment because the memory of the event is so

painful or so feared that it seems best to avoid it. Some people even deny that the event occurred, or that it bothered them.

Unfortunately, evidence and clinical experience shows that memories of traumatic events do not just fade away like other more trivial memories and can stay with you until reprocessed in dreams or in therapy. When dreams are recurrent and interrupted by sleeplessness, they cannot serve the function of desensitizing the feared material. Putting off dealing with traumatic memories just makes the work you'll have to do in therapy more complicated and lengthy.

## Treatment

The treatment of traumatic stress (or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) involves re-experiencing the traumatic events. In therapy, you should learn from these incidents that what you did was probably the best you could have done to survive at the time.

Once traumatic events have been fully re-experienced in this way, they should not re-emerge in dreams or in waking thoughts (flashbacks or intrusive thoughts).

The goal of therapy for traumatic incidents like rape or sexual assault, is to desensitize the person to these events. The prognosis for therapy of PTSD is generally favorable without the use of medications. This is especially true if treatment can begin relatively soon after a single traumatic incident. Treatment of chronic or early trauma is more complex, but perhaps even more valuable.

## How Long Will the Psychological Effects of Rape Last

The mental and emotional effects may last a lifetime, but crisis counseling and support groups can help reduce long-term effects and help a rape victim cope with feelings of isolation, guilt, depression, or anxiety.

## It's Important to get Emotional and Psychological Support

Contact Crisis Intervention Services, the hospital, a psychologist, social worker, or counselor to find out about the resources available to you. You may benefit from a support group where you can share your feelings with others who have had a similar traumatic experience.

## Do Not Isolate Yourself

Allow family members to provide emotional support. There are family counseling programs for family members who need help dealing with their concerns and increasing their ability to provide emotional support.

## Physical Trauma

Seek a medical doctor for possible physical injuries that may need immediate attention:

- Injuries from beating or choking, such as bruises, scratches, cuts, and broken bones
- Swelling around the genital area
- Bruising around the vagina
- Injury to the rectal-vaginal (for example, tearing of the tissue that connects the anus to the vagina)
- Sexually transmitted infections (such as herpes, gonorrhea, AIDS, and syphilis)
- Possible pregnancy ( in a regularly menstruating female)