



YOU ARE A
SURVIVOR

You Are A Survivor

The Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ucasa), a statewide non-profit organization founded in 1996, is the only non-profit organization addressing sexual violence issues statewide.

UCASA serves as a support organization for rape crisis programs, victim advocate programs, and institutions and organizations that respond to and provide services to victims of sexual violence. UCASA provides resources and fosters a sense of community and statewide support.

UCASA supports a community that embraces the experiences and rights of each victim of sexual violence, deconstructs the myths supporting sexual violence, develops strategies for preventing rape, and provides avenues for justice, dignity, and respect for victims in and outside the criminal justice system.

With our combined efforts, society will advance to a society in which sexual violence is not tolerated.

if you have been raped or sexually assaulted

Try to find safety.

Call someone you trust, such as a friend, and/or a confidential rape crisis victim advocate at 801-736-4356.

Please remember that the assault was not your fault.

There are people throughout Utah who will believe you and support you as you decide what to do.

Whether or not you wish to report to the police, go to the hospital, or have questions, call the English statewide toll-free crisis and information hotline for confidential support and crisis intervention at 801-736-4356 or the Spanish hotline at 801-924-0860.

If you are planning to have a sexual assault exam, and it has been less than 24 hours, if possible, do not urinate, eat, or drink until the nurse examiner can speak to you about the specimens to be collected. If you have already urinated or had something to eat or drink, an examination and specimen collection can still be performed. Some evidence may be lost if you bathe or brush your teeth, but evidence collection can still be possible.

Medical attention is vital, as you may have injuries of which you are unaware. Healthcare providers can also provide medication to help prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. You can access these services without talking to law enforcement; however, the healthcare providers must report your name, address, and injuries if they see you for injuries resulting from a crime.

If you've already changed clothes, place them in a paper bag (plastic may destroy evidence) and bring them with you. If you haven't changed, keep your original clothes on, and bring an extra set to wear home from the hospital. The police may need to keep your clothes for evidence. This could be vital to prosecution.

You may be provided with a victim advocate at the hospital or police department. If not, you may ask for an advocate from the local rape crisis center and contact the statewide sexual assault and rape information hotline at 801-736-4356.

You will find a directory of resources on page 32.

There are people who care about what you have endured and are going through as you are trying to heal.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

You are Not Alone ...	4
Myths and Realities ...	5
During an Assault: Common Reactions ...	6
After an Assault: Who to Tell & Reporting ...	7–8
Legal Options ...	9–11
College and University ...	12
Your Rights ...	13–14
Medical Attention ...	15–18
Rape Trauma Syndrome ...	19–21
Prolonged and Compounded Abuse ...	22
Defense Mechanisms ...	23–24
Coping Skills ...	25–26
Sex and Sexuality ...	27
Gender Roles ...	28
Resources ...	30–36
Important Information Log ...	37–38

You Are Not Alone

You Are a Survivor was written for survivors of rape and sexual assault to provide information about the impact of sexual assault and to assist survivors in their efforts to heal from this devastating form of violence. Perhaps the most important message we wish to convey is that it is possible to heal.

Our hope is that this booklet will support you throughout your recovery process. The information presented is generalized, so keep in mind that your life, your victimization, and your recovery will be very personal and individual. You may not think, feel, or act as other people tell you that you should, or they have. You are an individual and will move through stages and feelings at your own pace.

It is important to note that emotional and physical wounds may heal at different rates. Emotional wounds require patience and self-compassion. Some events in your life may be painful, confusing, and traumatic. Sexual assault can be one of those experiences. You, like them, can learn to regain a sense of power over your life. You may feel very isolated and alone, but there are agencies and organizations ready and able to help you and your loved ones. There is support available.

As a survivor of sexual assault, you are not alone in what happened to you or in how you feel. There are people who care about what you have endured and what you are going through as you heal. We hope that you will find You Are a Survivor helpful.

Although you may not wish to read it all right now, please keep this booklet to refer to later. In the meantime, it is important for you to know that the feelings, reactions, and questions you may be experiencing are similar to those of other people who have been victimized through no fault of their own. Sexual assault is never the fault of the victim. You are not to blame for what another person has done to you. If you have any questions or concerns, contact the English statewide toll-free rape crisis and information hotline available 24 hours a day at 801-736-4356 or the Spanish hotline at 801-924-0860. Reaching out is a very important step toward recovery.

remember, you are not alone.

Myths & Realities

Most of us are taught to think that if we are smart, careful, and follow specific rules, we can stop something like sexual violence from happening to us. Sometimes, that has the effect of self-blame for victimization because we "didn't do enough" or "didn't" do the right thing." But as you'll find out, understanding sexual violence better, we want you to understand the facts about sexual violence so you can begin to believe that you did not cause yourself to be assaulted. Rape can happen to anyone.

Rape is a devastating violation of body, mind, and spirit. Sexual assault takes your feelings of control and safety away, no matter who you are or who the perpetrator is. Every survivor has characteristics or previous experiences that impact the way the assault feels to them.

Survivors often wonder what they did to cause a sexual assault to happen. Sometimes, placing responsibility on yourself feels safer, as if by blaming yourself, you can ensure it will never happen again. This does not keep you safer because you did not cause the assault. Experiencing some feelings of guilt is normal, but you are not responsible for the rapist's behavior. The rape was not your fault.

Myth: It could never happen to me.

Reality: Anybody can be raped, regardless of age, gender, gender identity, class, race, occupation, religion, sexual orientation or physical appearance. In Utah, one in eight women will be raped, and one in three will be sexually assaulted.

Myth: I can spot a rapist.

Reality: It is impossible to tell if someone has sexually assaulted or raped another person by simply looking at them.

Myth: Rapists are acting on impulse.

Reality: Sexual assault is an act of violence, power, and control – not passion. Rape is not the result of sexual arousal. Offenders seek power by taking it away from someone else. Sex is the weapon used to commit the crime.

Myth: If I didn't fight back, it's my fault, or it wasn't really rape.

Reality: Submitting to sexual assault to save your life, to keep from being hurt, or because you were afraid does not make it any less of a crime. Some survivors "freeze" or "space out." Deciding to be still or pretend to "go along" with a rapist is another way to fight back and is not the same as consent. SUBMISSION IS NOT CONSENT. If you did not want it, it was sexual assault.

Myth: Rapes are committed in dark alleys by strangers.

Reality: Over 80% of sexual assault cases were perpetrated by men who knew the women they assaulted. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 6 out of 10 rapes and sexual assaults occur in the victim's home or at the home of a friend, relative, or neighbor.

no one deserves to be raped

If you have been sexually assaulted, the sexual assault was not your fault. Anything you did to live through the rape is valid. Every survivor of sexual violence is different and reacts in their own unique way to an assault. If you do not recognize yourself here, that does not mean your reaction was wrong. For most people, the main task during an assault is survival.

Some Common Reactions During A Sexual

Freezing:

The experience of being sexually assaulted is shocking. A common response for many survivors is to freeze, feeling unable to think, move, or speak. When your life and safety are threatened, your fight or flight reaction is triggered. If you are in a situation where either physically fighting or running is impossible or dangerous, the only option is to flee mentally. If you have been assaulted in the past, this reaction is even more likely. Freezing probably helped to keep you alive.

Yielding:

Another way many survivors describe yielding is "giving in" or pretending to cooperate. Many survivors are able to figure out what the perpetrator wants and try to minimize injuries by seeming to go along with the rapist. There is no shame in deciding that you do not want to die or have serious physical injuries. The fact that you were able to think clearly enough to strategize is impressive in itself.

Bargaining:

Some survivors will try to cut a deal during the assault. Bargaining might mean performing one sex act if the perpetrator agrees not to do another or convincing them to wear a condom or having sex in exchange for protection.

Physical Fighting:

There are many ways to fight. Anything you did to survive was fighting back. Some survivors have the reaction of screaming, pushing, kicking, scratching, or hitting. The rapist who is not looking for a physical fight may give up. Many rapists are looking for a fight and will respond even more violently. You are the only one who was there, and your instincts helped protect you. If you did fight off the attacker, you may feel empowered. But you may still have many feelings listed in the next section. Attempted rape is also sexual assault.

Terror and Disbelief:

Many survivors experience extreme fear, helplessness, and hopelessness during an assault. A sexual assault is an experience where you have no control over what is happening to you. Terror, which does not go away when the assault is over, is a normal reaction.

Sexual Response:

It is normal to experience some sexual response during an assault that would otherwise signal sexual pleasure. A sexual response makes many survivors feel very ashamed, but it does not mean they wanted or liked what was happening to them. Your body is designed to respond to touch. You have nothing to be ashamed of.

After An Assault

Taking care of yourself is the first step in the healing process after an assault. You have important decisions to make, even if the first decision may be that you are not ready to make them right now. Some of the things to think about are:

Who to Tell

You have the right to have control over your story. Sorting through who to tell about a sexual assault is an important step in the healing process. Many survivors do not tell anyone. It can be very scary to risk letting strong feelings out and to wait for another person's reaction.

The perpetrator may tell others their side of the story, or someone may spread rumors. If you had injuries and sought medical care, others may know, too. Losing control of the disclosure process can be very painful. Many survivors find themselves telling everyone because, that way, the truth is being spread instead of rumors. Many survivors also hope that if they tell enough people, someone will help them.

Think about who has been supportive or fair to you in the past. Maybe there is a person you trust, a friend, or a loved one that you can confide in. Some resources are confidential yet governed by mandatory reporting laws, which may require specific situations to be reported, such as a minor experiencing a sexual assault. If you have concerns, ask before disclosing personally – identifying Information. Whichever agency you choose to contact can help explain your options and rights.

Reporting

The decision to report the assault to law enforcement is solely up to you. You are not required to speak to law enforcement even if evidence is collected during a forensic medical exam. Deciding whether or not to report a sexual assault is very difficult for most survivors. Reporting may simply not be possible for you right now. Only you know what's right for you. Before you disclose that you have been raped or sexually assaulted to a medical practitioner, be aware that all medical professionals (including SANE) are required to report to law enforcement when they treat injuries that are the result of a crime.

Many survivors see reporting as a good way to get some control back. It's important to remember that the process can sometimes be frustrating. Although the process may take months or even years, it can help provide closure or justice. If you choose to report the crime, it is very important to report a sexual assault to the police as soon as possible. Evidence may be lost or damaged with time, so please consider ways to preserve evidence, such as having a sexual assault medical-forensic examination or turning items of digital and physical evidence over to law enforcement. Reporting a crime to law enforcement is a choice. It is the role of law enforcement to offer protection as well as investigate reported crimes. The hospital staff or a victim advocate can contact the police for you, or you may contact them yourself. Reporting is the only way law enforcement will know that a crime has occurred and hopefully protect you and others from future harm. However,

Police First Response

The responding officer will ask detailed questions about what occurred, where, when, and how. Many of the questions may feel invasive or difficult to answer. It will be helpful to have a victim advocate sit with you to provide support and to intervene if needed in the event that the officer makes inappropriate comments or asks biased questions. Well-trained officers understand how difficult it is to answer these questions, but if the information provided is to aid in an investigation, they need as much detail as possible. You will be asked to sign a victim/witness statement (a declaration of the facts in your own words about what happened to you), including a description of the offender and where the attack took place. Your case will be assigned a number, which is something you should keep to have available when needed. Additionally, you may request a copy of the police report for your own files. If you see any errors or remember any further information that will aid the police, you should inform the victim advocate and/or police. It is not unusual to remember more details as time passes. The officer must also protect the crime scene, determine the type and circumstances of the crime committed, as well as identify potential suspects and witnesses. After a preliminary survey of the crime scene, the responding officer will call in an investigator.

Investigation

Not all reports of sexual assault will have a crime scene, but there may be other things to investigate for further evidence. Upon their arrival, the investigator takes charge of the crime scene and is briefed about the incident by the responding officer. The investigator will then interview the victim and other witnesses, asking very specific questions about the crime. The questions will help guide the investigation to ensure evidence collection and preparation for future interviews with witnesses and the perpetrator. The investigator will then collect evidence and document the crime scene.

Consider not taking a shower, washing, or throwing away any items related to the assault. You may consider telling the police about these items, including clothing or linens, because they may need to collect them as evidence. After the investigator conducts interviews and gathers evidence, they will then write up a report. The police may need to contact you during their investigation. Your help is very important to the investigation.

Someone from the prosecutor's office (a prosecutor or an investigator) may contact you. You may also be contacted by a law enforcement victim advocate who will work to assist you through the legal process.

Even though it may sometimes be challenging, cooperation with law enforcement officers, detectives, and prosecutors may benefit you and your case.

Legal Options

All survivors of sexual assault and rape have legal remedies available to them. The two primary options are: Criminal Prosecution and Civil Suit for Damages

All survivors of sexual assault and rape have legal options available to them. The two primary options are: Criminal Prosecution and Civil Suit for Damages. These avenues may be pursued simultaneously; criminal and civil suits take time and may result in no conviction or loss of a case. Yet, some survivors who have chosen either option or both have found the process empowering, regardless of the outcome. Criminal and civil procedures are very different, each with its own set of rules. Before proceeding with either option, it would be helpful to discuss these options with a sexual assault counselor or advocate, a victim-witness coordinator, and a lawyer with experience in this area.

Criminal Prosecution

The criminal justice process typically proceeds through the following stages:

- Investigation
- Arrest or Citation
- Initial Appearance of Defendant
- Charging the Crime
- Arraignment
- Discovery/Pretrial Motions
- Plea Bargaining or Trial
- Sentencing
- Review and Appeals
- Probation and Parole

If the offender is arrested, they may be released on bond (released from custody while awaiting trial). If you are afraid, you should contact a counselor or victim advocate to discuss your fears and options. You have the right to tell the prosecutor if you are afraid of the defendant/assailant. The court can issue orders to the defendant not to contact you. If contact is made, bail may be revoked.

If you reported to law enforcement but criminal charges aren't filed, and you don't agree with that decision, contact the district/county attorney directly and have the district/county attorney explain in their own words why the decision to not file charges has been made.

If criminal charges are brought against the assailant and the location of the assailant is known, an arrest takes place, and a bond hearing is held the next business day.

It may seem very impersonal, but from this point on, your role becomes solely that of witness. It is the State of Utah, as represented by the district or county attorney, which brings charges against the perpetrator, with your testimony serving as evidence. Your testimony is essential to a successful prosecution.

Your testimony (statements made, usually in court, under oath) will be very important:

- at the preliminary hearing: To help a judge determine whether the case should go to trial;
- at the trial: To help a judge or jury decide whether to convict the accused/offender;
- before sentencing: You can speak to the preparer of the Pre-sentence Investigation Report (a report about the offender that is prepared by the Office of Adult Probation and Parole to be used by the judge in determining the offender's sentence) that will be given to the judge;
- at sentencing: Your Victim Impact Statement (a written or verbal statement by the victim at sentencing telling the judge how the crime has affected your life) will help the judge to decide a proper punishment for the offender; and
- at the parole hearing: To help the Parole Board (panel that decides whether or not to grant parole) decide whether to grant the offender's request for early release.

Preliminary Hearing

The preliminary hearing is held after the bond hearing and, like a trial, is open to the public and lasts about an hour. It is a probable cause hearing; guilt or innocence won't be decided at this time. The prosecutor generally presents only enough evidence to establish the possibility that the assault occurred. In most cases you must be present to testify. If you choose not to appear, it's possible that the case will be dropped. It's normal to feel anxious before and during the hearing. It helps to prepare for this by practicing relaxation techniques and/or talking with members of your support system.

Plea Bargaining or Trial

All cases differ and not all cases go to trial. The criminal justice process can take a long time. Sometimes it is difficult to get into court and quickly resolve the case. Sometimes criminal cases are resolved without a trial through a plea bargain or plea agreement. This agreement is made between the prosecutor and offender regarding the plea of either guilty or not guilty. If a plea bargain is reached (the defendant pleads guilty to rape or a lesser charge), there is no trial, and the case will be set for sentencing. During this period you can be in contact with someone from the prosecutor's office. The prosecutor may consult with you before settling any plea bargains or agreements.

If the case goes to trial, you will need to testify before the trial jury. The prosecutor will assist you in preparing your testimony, and a victim advocate will provide support during the court process. A trial will last approximately two to three days.

Sentencing

If the assailant is found guilty, you may file a Victim Impact Statement with the judge prior to sentencing. This allows you to tell the judge how the assault affected you, and your family, emotionally and economically.

A "Not-Guilty" verdict may be emotionally devastating and possibly very frightening. However, in addition to focusing on your own healing process, you may still be able to bring further legal action against your assailant by filing a civil suit.

Civil Suit for Damages

Legally, sexual assault is not only a crime against the state, but also a civil dispute between survivor and assailant. You may win a civil suit in court or you may choose to negotiate a contract, or “settlement”, out of court even if you lose a criminal case. This means that two parties or their lawyers reach a legally binding agreement without holding a trial. In exchange for a promise not to sue or withdrawal of a pending suit, you may seek any or all of the following promises from the assailant:

- That they keep away from you;
- Withdraw from a shared college or university (if a student);
- Obtain counseling;
- Apologize;
- Pay your legal fees;
- Compensate you for your medical and/or counseling expenses and for pain and suffering.

The first step is to consult a lawyer. Some lawyers offer a one-time, initial free consultation and may take this kind of case for a “contingency fee”. This means that the lawyer’s fee comes only from money received from the assailant as part of any settlement.

Some assailants settle out of court because they don’t want the adverse publicity of a public trial, particularly if they fear the effects on their future careers, standing in the community, etc. The assailant also may prefer an out-of-court settlement that offers financial terms he or she can afford, rather than risk the possibility of a financially devastating judgement.

Statute of Limitations on Civil Suits

As a survivor, you may have other legal options beyond cooperating with a criminal prosecution. To find out more of those options, you can consult an attorney or a free legal clinic.

College & University

Most colleges and universities are jurisdictions separate from the cities and towns they operate within. Each jurisdiction usually extends to premises used or controlled by that college or university.

In addition to criminal and civil remedies, students often have options for resolution of their sexual assault, stalking, and other violent crime cases through a campus judicial process.

If you are a student, we encourage you to contact your campus resource to find out what assistance is available, regardless of where the crime occurred. Victims of sexual and physical assault, relationship/domestic violence, stalking, and/or harassment which violates the college’s or university’s student code of conduct may receive specific victim accommodations.

In many cases, these accommodations include:

- **Offender sanctions**
- **A campus restraining order to prohibit harassment**
- **Assistance with pressing criminal and/or civil charges (if desired)**
- **Housing transfers (victim and/or offender if living in campus housing)**
- **Academic schedule modifications (victim and/or offender)**
- **Letters of absence**
- **Attendance/enrollment options**
- **Procedures for campus disciplinary actions**
- **Information on your rights as a victim on campus**
- **Information and referrals**

Your Rights

The Utah State Legislature has passed a number of provisions to afford victims the rights they deserve. In 1994, a Victim's Rights Amendment was added to the state constitution.

In Utah, victims of crime have rights that are protected by law. Some of these rights are complicated and difficult to fully explain. If you have any questions about your rights, contact your victim advocate or call the statewide toll-free rape crisis and information line at 801-736-4356.

A summary of the Victim's Rights Amendment is as follows:

- Victims have the right to be treated with fairness, respect, and dignity, and to be free from harassment and abuse throughout the criminal justice process.
- Victims have the right, upon request, to be informed of, be present at, and to be heard at important criminal justice hearings related to the victim, either in person or through a designated representative.
 - a. The rights apply to important criminal justice proceedings which are defined as: preliminary hearings; arraignments; disposition of charges; conditions of release/bail hearings; trials; sentencing and parole hearings.
 - b. These provisions apply to all felonies in adult courts. In cases involving juvenile offenders, victims have the right to attend and speak at juvenile proceedings for offenses that are comparable in adult court.
- Victims have the right to reasonable employer intercession services to minimize loss of pay and benefits.
- Victims have the right to be informed as to the level of protection available to protect them from intimidation and harm.
- Victims have the right to a secure waiting area that does not require them to be in close proximity to defendants and offenders.
- Victims have a right to privacy and should not be forced to disclose their address, telephone number, place of employment, or other locating information, without compelling reason.
- Victims have the right to have a sentencing judge, for the purpose of imposing an appropriate sentence, receive and consider reliable information concerning the background, character, and conduct of those convicted.
- Victims have the right to reparations and restitution when appropriate.
- Victims have a right to a speedy trial and disposition of charges.

Additional Rights for Children

- The right to have interviews relating to a criminal prosecution kept to a minimum.
- The right to be questioned in a manner that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding.
- The right not to be questioned in a manner that implies they are responsible for the inappropriate behavior of adults.
- The right to protection from physical and emotional abuse during their involvement with the criminal justice process.
- The right to be informed of available community resources and how to gain access to those resources.

Rape Shield Rule

In the event of a trial, Utah's Rape Shield Rule may prohibit the admission into evidence aspects of a victim's past sexual behavior, sexual predisposition, or reputation.

The Rape Shield Rule safeguards victims of sexual assault from some level of embarrassment, invasion of privacy, and sexual stereotyping that may result from unnecessary public disclosure of general reputation or prior sexual acts.

When cases proceed to court, a survivor's past should and can be protected in the court. However, Utah's Rape Shield Rule, like most statutes that seek to protect victims, are not applicable to the media. This can result in a violation of the survivor's privacy outside of the courtroom. As a matter of professional courtesy, most newspaper and broadcast media do not disclose the name of an alleged rape victim (the complaining witness) during the trial. If the alleged rapist is convicted, most media will continue to protect the identity of the victim.

Medical Attention

Getting medical care is a major step toward recovery and healing. We encourage all survivors to seek medical care after a sexual assault. If you are unsure of where to seek medical care, please call the statewide toll-free rape crisis and information hotline at 801-736-4356 or the Spanish hotline at 801-924-0860.

The Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examination

The purpose of the sexual assault medical forensic examination is to provide comprehensive healthcare to a survivor of sexual assault and if the survivor desires the collection of forensic evidence. This healthcare includes providing preventive treatment for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.

If you are planning to have a sexual assault exam, and it has been less than 24 hours, if possible, do not urinate, eat, or drink until the nurse examiner can speak to you about the specimens to be collected. If you have already urinated or had something to eat or drink, an examination and specimen collection can still be performed.

Before the exam begins, the examiner will obtain your consent to perform an examination, collect specimens, and take photographs. You can decline any part of the examination. The examiner will ask general questions about your health history and details of the sexual assault. These questions may be difficult but are necessary to help the examiner identify and treat any injury. The history you provide will assist the examiner where to collect possible evidence. You can request to have a person of your choice in with you during the exam, including family members, friends, or a victim advocate.

You are in control of the exam process. You can ask any questions you may have about any aspect of your care. All aspects of the medical-forensic examination should be explained. If that doesn't happen, it's okay to ask the nurse or doctor to explain what they are doing. A careful head-to-toe exam, including your genital area, will be done to look for any injury. The examiner will collect specimens from different areas of your body that may yield D.N.A. evidence. Other samples, such as your blood and urine, may also be collected. Part of the exam is to offer medications to prevent sexually transmitted infections (S.T.I.s) and pregnancy. Referrals may be given for follow-up medical care and counseling if desired.

In some cases, clothing may be collected and given to law enforcement. If you have changed your clothing, consider bringing the clothing you were wearing at the time of the assault with you. The clothes/items submitted will not be given back as they are evidence. You could bring a change of clothing with you, but a victim advocate will provide you with clothing to wear home from the exam.

Evidence collected in the hospital will be released to law enforcement following the examination. Law enforcement is responsible for submitting your kit to the state crime lab to be processed. You will be given information on how to track your sexual assault evidence kit as it moves from law enforcement to the crime lab. Once a kit has been returned to law enforcement, you can contact the agency about any results found by the crime lab.

BY LAW, YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COST OF THE SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAMINATION.

EXAMINATION. In all cases, the hospital examination, clinician's fee, preventive medications will be paid for by your insurance or Crime Victim Reparations (CVR). If you get a bill, including for a co-pay or deductible, please contact the hospital or program that provided your exam or the victim advocate to have these charges reversed.

CVR may also reimburse you for follow-up medical care related to the assault, relocating, if necessary, as a result of the crime, counseling, lost wages, and other costs. Your victim advocate can help you apply for CVR funds and give you more information on what CVR may be able to reimburse.

Sexual Assault Kit Tracking

For survivors who would like information about their sexual assault kit can contact the information line at (801)965-4747 Option 2 (Business hours M-Th 8 AM to 5 PM) or email the SAKI Victim Advocates by visiting <https://sakt.ps.utah.gov/sakt/status/> and then selecting the Contact Us button at the top of the page.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Sexually Transmitted Infections (S.T.I.'s) are infections spread during sexual activity; many can be prevented if treated as soon as possible following a sexual assault. If you receive a forensic exam, you should be given preventive medications. It is strongly recommended that all survivors get S.T.I. tests at two to four weeks. Antibiotics can effectively treat most S.T.I.'s.

If such medications are prescribed for you, it is important to carefully follow the prescription directions. Please remember that it is virtually impossible to tell immediately after a sexual assault if you have contracted any S.T.I.'s. This is why a follow-up exam should be obtained 2-3 weeks after the assault. If you vomit your medications within 3 hours, then your medication to prevent pregnancy may not be effective. Call your healthcare provider to determine if redosing is recommended.

If you experience any of the following symptoms, contact your health care provider or call 9-1-1 immediately:

- Burning, itching, unusual discharge
- Sores on your mouth, anal area or genitals
- Milky or foul discharge from vagina or penis
- Bleeding with intercourse
- Burning or bleeding with urination
- Fever
- Itching or hives on various parts of your body
- Difficulty breathing, swelling of the tongue or breathing tubes
- Dizziness
- Vomiting

HIV/AIDS

If you seek health care within 72 hours of a sexual assault, you may be a candidate for medication to prevent an H.I.V. infection. After 72 hours, the medications used to prevent H.I.V. are not effective. There are many factors that increase the risk of getting H.I.V. from an assault. While the medications are always recommended, if you know the assailant is positive for H.I.V. and you experienced vaginal, oral, or anal assault, in most circumstances, you will not know the suspect's H.I.V. status. The highest risk of transmission is from an anal assault or needle sharing. Also, some assailants are considered to be high risk if they are men who have sex with men, injection drug users, or persons with Hepatitis C. If you have been assaulted and are concerned about getting H.I.V., please go to the closest emergency department and they can assess your risk, and provide you with treatment options. In most circumstances, medication costs not covered by your insurance can be paid for by the Utah Office for Victims of Crime.

If you are seeking health care more than 72 hours after an assault, you can request a baseline H.I.V. test along with other S.T.D. testing. Repeat testing should be done at 6 weeks and at three months. Until testing negative three months after your assault, you should use safe sex practices to prevent your consensual partners from being exposed to H.I.V.

You can be tested confidentially through your primary health care provider or anonymously at any State Health Department clinic. Please ask your health care provider about the differences between confidential and anonymous testing if you need more information.

Also note that Utah law gives you the right, if your assailant has been indicted or arrested, to be tested for H.I.V. under U.C.A 53-10-802 with results reported to you. Please contact a victim advocate to help you access testing of a sexual offender.

Pregnancy

Emergency contraception is a highly effective single dose of medication that can prevent a pregnancy after unprotected intercourse. Plan B, one step, is available over the counter and is most effective if taken within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse. Still, it can be taken up to 5 days after unprotected intercourse. Ella is a prescription-only medication for emergency contraception, and it is highly effective up to 5 days after unprotected intercourse. Ella should not be taken in combination with any form of hormonal birth control because that may decrease the effectiveness of both the birth control and the emergency contraception. Emergency contraception medications are not abortion pills and will not terminate an existing pregnancy. Typical side effects can be nausea and vomiting; call your healthcare provider if you vomit within three hours of taking the emergency contraception, as you may need to receive another dose. Emergency contraception is offered to all victims as part of the protocol of the forensic exam; if you do not get offered Emergency contraception, please ask your healthcare provider.

A pregnancy test is routinely given as part of the forensic exam. This will only determine if you were pregnant before the exam but will not tell you if you are pregnant as a result of the sexual assault. It is recommended to get a follow-up pregnancy test two to four weeks after your assault.

After an assault, if you do not have your period on the day you typically expect to start, you may want to contact your healthcare provider for an additional pregnancy test. At that time, you can discuss the options available to you regarding your particular situation.



Rape Trauma Syndrome

Rape Trauma Syndrome (RTS) describes the feelings, thoughts, reactions or symptoms that frequently occur after a sexual assault. Every survivor is unique and will experience RTS in her or his own way depending on previous experience with trauma, resources, life experiences, and personality. Rape Trauma Syndrome is a type of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In fact, many mental health professionals use the term “PTSD” to describe “RTS”.

Survivors often feel like they are “going crazy.” Healing takes time and sometimes the process is scary and overwhelming. With support you can heal. The hurt you feel in the aftermath of an assault will not last forever. Remember, Rape Trauma Syndrome and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder are essentially normal reactions to an abnormal level of stress.

Rape Trauma Syndrome has three phases that last different lengths of time for each person. You might experience them in order, or you might find that you go back and forth. They are called phases because they do not last forever.

Crisis Phase

- The crisis phase usually occurs right after the assault or when the survivor remembers or begins to think about the assault for the first time. The survivor’s life is disrupted and they are left feeling overwhelmed, disoriented, and unable to cope.
- Unfortunately, this is also when survivors are expected to report the crime, especially if there is hope of gathering physical evidence. Making such complicated decisions right now is often impossible. Most survivors are unable to process the assault, much less make decisions about disclosing and reporting.
- Survivors may experience a wide range of emotions, including fear, anger, hurt, shock, sadness, self-blame, relief, and shame.
- A survivor who is expressing their feelings may cry, laugh, shake or yell. A survivor who is controlling their emotions may feel numb or seem too quiet, or even “robotic”. This does not mean the assault did not affect them.
- Daily tasks become difficult to manage. Bathing, grooming, eating, and sleeping are often disrupted. Some survivors eat, sleep or bathe a lot more than usual while some are unable to do any or all of these activities.
- Concentration and decision making are difficult or impossible. Survivors may have no energy or, on the other hand, may feel driven to stay very busy.
- The assault is often relived in nightmares, flashbacks, by replaying it or in unwanted thoughts that feel out of control. Sometimes the nightmares, flashbacks or thoughts can be so real that it feels like the rape is happening again.
- Survivors experience “hyper-vigilance,” which means being super alert or feeling jumpy and anxious. Hyper-vigilance is not paranoia. It is natural to be fearful because you should have been safe and you were not. You may feel afraid even in situations where you felt safe before.
- You may worry that you will never feel safe again.

Adjustment Phase

- To others it could look as if the survivor has adjusted. Survivors in this phase feel a need to “get back to normal” and go on with life.
- Grooming, eating, and other daily tasks might return to normal. However, trouble sleeping is still very common.
- The intensity of emotions seems to fade. Nightmares and flashbacks probably still happen, but less frequently and require stronger triggers.
- You might decide to talk about the assault at this time, to ask for counseling, to tell someone about it or to ask for accommodations such as time-off, class schedule change, or a change in living arrangements. Conversely, you might also decide to repress, or try to forget about the assault. Either is an attempt to regain control over your life.
- Survivors often try to avoid reminders of the assault. Unlike during the crisis phase, when everything was a reminder, avoidance might be possible if you are able to stay away from people, places or situations that bring up strong feelings.
- Deep feelings may surface after the initial crisis has passed and you fully realize what has happened. Sadness and hopelessness that look like depression are common. You might cry often, lose interest in activities or programs or even feel like hurting or killing yourself. If you are thinking about harming yourself, it is really important to talk to someone. To reach the National Suicide and Crisis hotline, dial 988.
- Maybe you feel like you can function, but you are not really better. Many survivors describe this as “just existing” or feeling “like a robot.”
- Anger often comes up during adjustment. You may feel angry with yourself, the perpetrator or your living situation. Some survivors feel angry with everything. Anger can be scary, especially if it is hard to find any healthy way to express it. Anger can also be the feeling that gives you the energy to heal.
- Many survivors feel bad about themselves; they have lower self-esteem than before the assault. You may blame yourself, or feel guilty or feel so ashamed that you begin to believe that you deserved to be assaulted.
- After the initial crisis, it is normal to begin to question your sexual orientation, your feelings about sexuality or your desire to be sexual again. Sex is a strong reminder of the assault and can be a difficult trigger.
- If you are in a situation where you are being assaulted regularly, you may not fully get to the outward adjustment stage until you are away from the abusive situation. You may feel like you are living somewhere between the first and second phases.

Integration

- Many survivors report that they feel like they were one person before the assault and are another person after the assault. Integration is when you accept the sexual assault as part of your life experience and bring together the best aspects of those two halves of yourself in a way that works for you.
- You practice positive ways to cope so that when strong or difficult feelings surface, they do not take over. Everything you have done and gone through since the rape is part of the journey to integration.
- Some survivors report that they like themselves and their lives better now than before the assault. That does not mean they are glad they were raped. It means that they take joy in their own healing process. They were able to take something terrible and make good come out of it.
- The healing process after a sexual assault may take months or years.

Reactivation of Crisis

The second or third phases may be temporarily interrupted by a reactivation of crisis. The feelings of the crisis phase seem to come back and can be triggered by sights, smells, sounds, situations or memories.

- Triggers are like buttons to the trauma. At first, it may feel like everything is a trigger. As time goes on, triggers will have to be much stronger to reactivate a crisis.
- A reactivation of crisis is an important part of the healing process. Every time you work back through the phases you will gain skills and strengths that improve your life and health.
- A reactivation of crisis does not mean you are back at square one of the healing process. All the good work you have done remains within you.
- If you have experienced other traumatic events, such as childhood abuse, you may find that you go into crisis about that as well as the recent sexual assault.
- An important time to reach out for support is when a crisis is reactivated.

healing is possible. it won't always hurt as much as it does right now.

Prolonged & Compounded Abuse

No one can survive prolonged abuse without having it change them in some way. When unable to flee, even a very healthy person may experience:

- Feeling sad all the time, feeling hopeless enough to plan to hurt or kill yourself, feeling explosive anger or feeling numb.
- Changes in thinking and memory, like forgetting all or part of a traumatic event, reliving traumatic events, blocking out chunks of time, and feeling detached (separate) from your thoughts or your body.
- Seeing yourself as different and separate from every other person, feeling helpless and believing that you are “marked” in some permanent way.
- Thinking that the perpetrator is all powerful, feeling obsessed with them or having intense revenge fantasies.
- Relating to other people differently by isolating yourself, distrusting everyone or looking for someone to rescue you.
- Seeing the world in new ways, such as losing faith, having a sense of impending doom (feeling like something awful is going to happen all the time), feeling disconnected from your family or community or not being able to handle everyday events.

The more times you have been assaulted, the more likely you are to believe that the abuse happened because of you. Many survivors of repeated trauma switch from thinking "it must have happened because of something i did" to "it happened because of who i am."

Remember that no one can force another person to commit rape or assault. It is a choice the perpetrator made. Self-blame does not keep you safer and prevents you from fully healing.

Defense Mechanisms

Defense mechanisms protect a person from emotional pain. You may use a defense mechanism and not be aware of it. Survivors often know they are doing something differently but are not sure why and may feel ashamed. When people are in impossible situations, with no way out, what they do to survive does not always look good or even make sense. At some point you will not need the defense mechanism anymore and you will use healthier ways to cope. You don't need to be hard on yourself.

Denial or pretending nothing happened.

Being raped can be so shocking that a survivor may not be able to find somewhere in their brain to put the experience. Some survivors call the rape something else or find a way to say it was not that bad, and some literally put the fact that they were assaulted out of their heads. You may be able to pretend you were never assaulted but still have the strong feelings of the crisis phase of Rape Trauma Syndrome, which can be very confusing. Be patient and gentle with yourself. Do not force yourself to remember or to talk about what happened if you are not ready.

Suicidal thoughts/plans/actions.

If you are in a situation where you feel afraid and isolated and you see no way out, thinking about suicide may seem reasonable. Many survivors say that their feelings are so strong and hard to express that they cannot imagine any other way to show how they are feeling. Even if you are not ready to talk about the sexual assault, please consider talking to someone you trust about your thoughts of killing yourself. Please seek help if you are having any suicidal ideation and call 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Self harm.

Sometimes, survivors cut, burn, hit, or starve themselves. Self-harm can provide a release of tension. The physical pain can be a momentary relief from the emotional pain. The act of hurting yourself can also make you feel, for a moment, like you are back in control of your body. However, the self-harm very quickly makes most survivors feel more out of control and becomes a new problem. Please consider talking to someone if you are hurting yourself. You deserve not to be hurt anymore.

Risky behavior.

For some survivors, creating danger is another way of harming themselves or taking their own lives. For some survivors, this relieves some of the feelings of helplessness because of the rush of a dangerous situation.

Becoming more sexually active than before or deciding never to be sexual again.

Some survivors feel like they will never be able to feel good about being sexual again, and some survivors start having much more sex than before the assault. Most people understand the first reaction and are confused by the second. For some survivors, it feels like saying "no" did not work, so it is hopeless or dangerous to try. For other survivors, going after sexual activity feels like the best way to reclaim some power and control again. Some survivors may try to have a positive sexual experience in order to erase the rape.

Alcohol and/or drug use.

Many survivors use alcohol and other drugs to numb their feelings or to get through the day. Many survivors find that getting drunk or high helps them survive in the short term, but the alcohol or drug use quickly becomes a problem that makes things worse and makes the survivor feel even less in control. Support for recovering from addictions may be available in your community. You can get the support of a group, whether you are ready to talk about the rape or not. Remember that the 12 Steps used in Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous were not written about healing from sexual assault, although they can be helpful for a sexual assault survivor who has an addiction.

Dissociating or spacing out.

Most survivors dissociate to some extent in response to stress, danger, or very strong feelings. Spacing out can be the only way to "escape," especially if you have survived multiple assaults. Mentally escaping can become a problem when it begins to happen often or is out of your control. If you find yourself missing chunks of time, ending up in places to which you do not remember going, or hearing that you did or said things you do not remember, you may be dissociating. Seeking mental health help is important when it feels safe to do so or if you are dissociating so much that it is

Coping Skills

Coping skills are tools used to process and deal with feelings. People are usually aware of using them and see them as a healthy and positive part of the healing process. As you make progress in your healing process, you will learn new coping skills and find out what works best for you.

- Talking to someone. One of the hardest parts of surviving a sexual assault is feeling alone and separate from everyone else. If you can find a supportive and understanding person to talk to, it can help you to work through your feelings, feel less alone, feel less “crazy,” and plan for your future. If you try to talk to someone and they have an unsupportive attitude or blame you for the assault, remember that their reaction has to do with their own thoughts and feelings about rape; it has nothing to do with you.
- Writing or drawing. A journal can be a great way to express feelings in a safe and private way. If you are afraid of what will happen if someone finds your journal, drawings can be an even more private way to express yourself. Some people tear up what they have written after they are finished.
- Exercising. A sexual assault is a physical, as well as mental and spiritual violation. Exercising can help to work out some of the difficult feelings. It can also help you to feel more in control of your body.
- Handling triggers. Flashbacks, panic attacks, and unwanted thoughts after a sexual assault can be terrifying. Below are some simple ways to try and deal with them in the moment:

Some examples of coping skills are:

Deep Breathing

- 1) Breathe in through your nose for a count of four.
- 2) Hold your breath for a count of four.
- 3) Breathe out through your mouth for a count of four.
- 4) Hold your breath out for a count of four.
- 5) Repeat until your heart slows to normal and the feeling of panic eases.

You may prefer to come up with a simple, calming phrase to repeat instead of counting.

A Safe Place

- 1) Get into a comfortable position and do the breathing exercise above.
- 2) Picture a place where you feel completely safe (it can be real or imaginary). Picture every detail about the place. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel? What do you smell? Are you alone? What are you doing? Spend some time imagining this place, so that you become familiar with it. You may want to write about or draw the safe place.
- 3) Come up with a cue that will help you to “visit” your safe place when you need to. The cue can be a word, tapping your hand, or anything that will help you avoid a panic attack. When you feel a panic attack or a flashback starting, use your cue to signal that it is time to picture your safe place.
- 4) Continue to imagine the safe place until the flashback or anxiety has passed.
- 5) Do another deep breathing exercise before going on with your day.

Grounding

- 1) When you feel a flashback or panic attack coming on or you begin to have unwanted (intrusive) thoughts, say or think “stop” .
- 2) Grab onto something solid and notice how the object feels (the arms of a chair, the table, the bed post or something comforting like a book or photograph) and answer the following questions:
 - Where am I?
 - What is happening now?
 - Repeat the answers at least twice. For example, I am in class. I am safe right now.
- 3) If you can, interrupt what you are doing. For example, if you are listening to music or watching television, turn it off or step away. If you are in a class or at work, draw/scribble something calming. If there is a person nearby that makes you feel safe, try and be near that person.
- 4) Make a plan for what you will do next.
- 5) Tell yourself that you handled this situation well.

Sex and Sexuality

Rape can have a big impact on your feelings about sex and sexuality. It is important to remember that sexual assault is not about lust, attraction or miscommunication. The perpetrator used the rape to be in control and to make you feel powerless.

- Healing your sexuality is a process that will take time. Any sexual contact or feelings may be a trigger right now. Be patient with yourself.
- Feeling safe and comfortable is necessary for any healthy sexual activity. If at all possible, do not try to force yourself to be sexual when you do not really want to. If this is not a choice you can make right now, take any opportunity to have some control. Maybe you can avoid certain sex acts that are particularly difficult.
- Flashbacks to the assault during consensual sex or masturbation are very common. This can be confusing if you are engaging in something that is pleasurable. If you can stop whatever is happening right then, do so.
- If your body responded with sexual arousal during the assault, you may feel ashamed any time you have sexual feelings. Some survivors begin to fantasize about being out of control during sex or while masturbating to ease the shame, which is not a sign of any desire to be raped again.
- Many survivors wonder about their sexual orientation, feeling like their sexuality has been so deeply wounded that their sexual orientation has changed. Sexual assault does not determine sexual orientation. However, most survivors do go through a time when they question or explore different ways to feel good about being sexual. This is a normal and healthy part of the healing process.
- Many survivors find that they become more sexually active, including through masturbation, after the assault. Increasing sexual activity may not be the reaction we expect, but it is normal. However, if the sexual activity is a reaction to trauma, it may not feel like a real choice and may make the feelings of degradation and shame worse.
- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual survivors have many of the same feelings as heterosexual survivors after a rape. Any kind of sex may be a trigger. However, lesbian, gay, and bisexual survivors may have been targeted for a hate crime because of their sexual orientation. This discrimination can increase self-blame, self-hatred, and fear.

Gender Roles

All parts of your identity...particularly gender, will affect your experiences as a survivor of sexual assault.

Survivors of rape experience the assault and healing process in a very personal way. However, sexual assault occurs within a broad cultural context that enables violence against certain groups of people. All parts of your identity, such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and particularly gender, will affect your experiences as a survivor of sexual assault.

Rape is a highly personal crime in which you are treated like you do not matter. It is a deeply hurtful and dehumanizing experience for anyone. The feelings of disgrace and shame are deep after an assault, survivors of all gender identities, races, and cultures tend to question who they are, what they want, and how to recognize themselves. Healing is possible.

The following is intended to help you realize how your understanding of gender roles and your gender identity might impact your experience as a survivor.

Folks Assigned Female at Birth

- Most women, nonbinary folks, and girls are aware of the possibility of being raped from a young age. They are often told about the ways they can prevent sexual assault – by not wearing certain clothes, not seeming sexual, never being drunk, not going out alone or being escorted by a man, the list goes on. Unfortunately, such rules place the responsibility of preventing sexual assault on victims and, therefore, continue to push the narrative that perpetrators are not fully responsible for their actions.
- Women, nonbinary folks, and girls are frequently taught that all men, masculine folks, and boys want sex, and it is the job of women to set the sexual limits. This leads survivors to blame themselves for the assault and may lead to feelings of hatred toward their own bodies. Victims often change their dress and appearance after an assault to appear less traditionally feminine.
- Many women and nonbinary folks are very likely to be survivors of other gender-based violence (child sexual abuse, domestic violence, sexual harassment, or exploitation). Multiple traumatic experiences compound each other and complicate healing.
- Part of the healing process will be to honor your strengths and recognize what a powerful person you can be on the other side of this turmoil.

Assigned Male at Birth

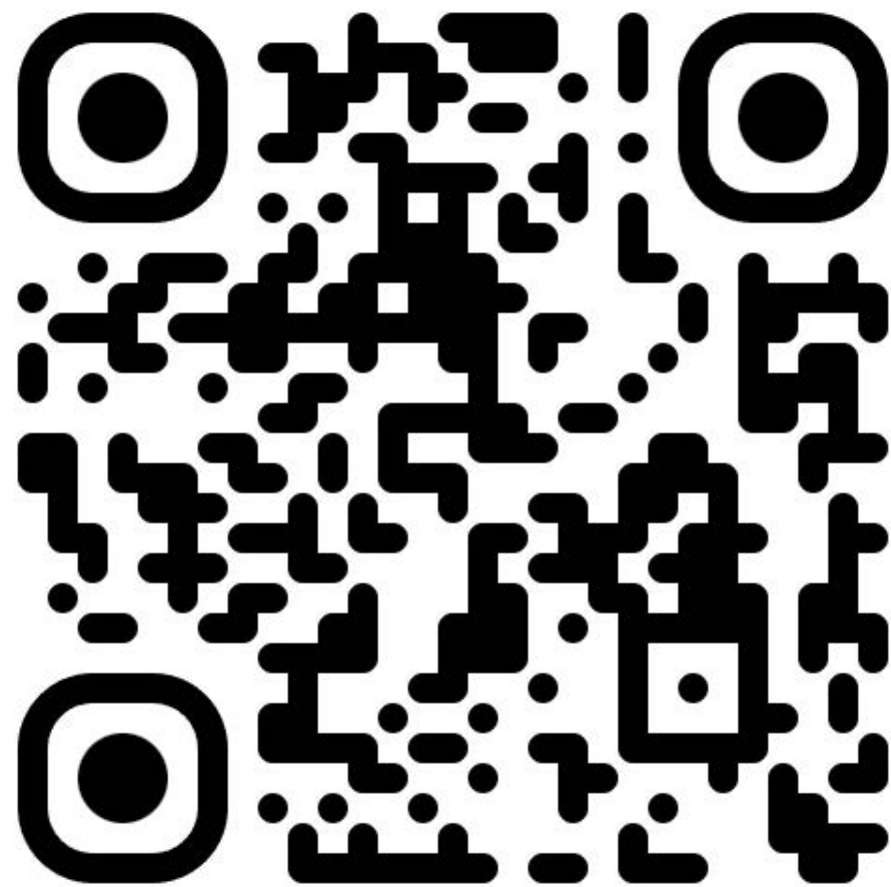
- Being raped is an assault against many commonly held stereotypes about what it means “to be a man” or to be “masculine.” Men, nonbinary folks, and boys are told that they are supposed to be able to fight anyone off. The need to be tough, invulnerable, and aggressive is drummed into many young boys. Boys who do not like or fit this mold are often subjected to sexual harassment and assault from a very young age.
- In more hyper-masculine settings, the need to be a “tough guy” is a matter of life and death, and the definition of masculinity is even more violent and controlling.
- A sexual assault can lead a survivor to question his identity as a man, question his sexuality, and leave him feeling as if he does not know how to behave even in simple situations. A survivor may react by taking on extremely macho behaviors to appear less vulnerable or by taking on feminine attributes and dress in an attempt to protect himself.
- Part of the healing process will be to define for yourself a new, hopefully more affirming version of masculinity, including honoring the positive ways in which you have been strong.



WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

Utah Toll-Free 24-Hour Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis and Information Line
1.888.421.1100

Scan this Q.R. code to go to UCASA's resource page for survivors



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Rape Crisis Victim Advocate (Confidential Communicator)

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

SAKI Tracking #: _____

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner

Nurse: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Medical Personnel

Facility: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Doctor: _____

Nurse: _____

Police Officers

Officer Name: _____

Department/Jurisdiction: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Officer Name: _____

Department/Jurisdiction: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Law Enforcement Victim Advocate

Name: _____

Department/Jurisdiction: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Detective/Investigator

Case #: _____

Name: _____

Department/Jurisdiction: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Prosecutor

Name: _____

Agency: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Prosecution Victim Advocate

Name: _____

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Notes _____



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