

It Can't Happen to Me!

Yes, it can. Sexual violence can happen to anyone regardless of their sex, race, age, economic status or religion. It is a common misunderstanding that most sexual assaults are committed by strangers. You are more likely to be sexually assaulted by someone you know - a friend, date, neighbor, spouse or relative - than a stranger in a dark alley. Nearly 7 out of 10 rape and sexual assault victims know their attacker.

Sexual violence violates a person's trust and feeling of safety. It occurs any time a person is forced or intimidated into any unwanted sexual activity. It includes rape, date rape, child sexual assault and marital rape as well as unwanted sexual touching or contact.

Sexual assault is never the victim's fault. No one asks to be raped. The responsibility is the perpetrators.'

Rape is a crime. It is motivated by the need to control, humiliate and harm. It is not motivated by sexual desire or urges. Rapists use sex as a weapon to gain power and control over the other person.

Talking about sexual assault often helps survivors to heal. Each county in Pennsylvania has a rape crisis center that provides free and confidential counseling 24 hours a day for survivors of sexual assault and those who care about them. The centers can also offer assistance such as going with victims to the hospital, the police or into court. In Pennsylvania, you can reach your local rape crisis center's hotline by calling toll free 1-888-772-7227.