

Hi,

We made this packet to provide information to help you with your situation. Each person chooses to handle this difficult situation in their way. Please take what you need and leave the rest; what happens next is your decision, and we are here to support you!

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Arlington Heights 415 W Golf Rd Ste 47, Arlington Heights, IL 60005

McHenry (CARE Center) 4508 Prime Parkway, McHenry, IL 60050

Office Phone (847) 806-6526

Website <https://www.nwcasa.org>

Instagram @northwest_casa

Facebook Northwest Center Against Sexual Assault



Services

24/7 Crisis Hotline 888-802-8890

Our hotline is a 24/7 confidential, inclusive, judge-free space where our team can provide emotional support, advocacy, information, and referrals to survivors, significant others, and the community.

Medical Advocacy

It's the survivor's right to a medical advocate present during the hospital visit. We are available 24/7, and our advocates are ready to be dispatched to our partner hospitals. Once there, the advocate can offer emotional support, provide information on sexual violence, and give any necessary referrals.

Legal Advocacy

Legal advocacy is available 24/7. We can provide services at police departments or courthouses in McHenry and Cook County. Advocates are there to support individuals through the legal process, regardless of their decision to report or their participation with law enforcement. Legal advocacy services are available in both English and Spanish.

Trauma Counseling

Counseling services are available to survivors and their non-offending significant others of all ages and genders, regardless of when the sexual harm occurred. Counseling services are survivor-centered and intend to provide emotional support and help clients regain a sense of control over their lives and heal from the pain of sexual violence.

Education & Training

- Age-appropriate educational programs are available to K-12 and higher education students to help raise awareness of sexual violence to help empower the youth of today (Cook County).
- Prevention programs are available to community members interested in learning more about sexual violence, tailored to community needs.
- Professional training is available to various service providers and professionals to increase knowledge of sexual violence and raise awareness of community resources.

Our Partner Hospitals

We're proud to partner with ten treatment hospitals throughout the Northwest Cook County and McHenry Area

Cook County Hospitals

Ascension Alexian Brothers
800 Biesterfield Rd.
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
ER Phone: 847-437-5500

Endeavor Evanston Hospital
2650 Ridge Ave
Evanston, IL 60201
ER Phone: 847-570-2000

Endeavor Glenbrook Hospital
2100 Pfingsten Rd.
Glenview, IL 60026
ER Phone: 847-657-5800

Lutheran General*
1775 Dempster St.
Park Ridge, IL 60068
ER Phone: 847-723-2210

Endeavor Skokie Hospital
9600 Gross Point Rd.
Skokie, IL 60076
ER Phone: 847-677-9600

Ascension St. Alexius Medical Center
1555 Barrington Rd.
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
ER Phone: 847-843-2000

St. Francis Hospital
355 Ridge Ave.
Evanston, IL 60202
ER Phone: 847-316-2440

McHenry County Hospitals

Northwestern Huntley Hospital
10400 Haligus Rd.
Huntley, IL 60142
ER Phone: 224-654-0000

Northwestern McHenry Hospital
4201 W. Medical Center Dr.
McHenry, IL 60050
ER Phone: 815-344-5000

Northwestern Woodstock Hospital
3701 Doty Road
Woodstock, IL 60098
ER Phone: 815-338-2500

*Lutheran General is a certified pediatric treatment hospital in Cook County

At the Hospital

YOUR BODY, YOUR RIGHT, YOUR DECISIONS...

You have the right to consent or decline any portion of the hospital visit process...

Do You Consent?

STI Testing & Medications

An Advocate Present

Toxicology Testing

Pregnancy Testing & Emergency Contraception

A Shower

Using your insurance to bill the visit

Who Knows about it

Evidence Collection & Testing Options

A Physical Exam

Bloodwork

Who's in the Room

Doing all or only parts of the kit

Food & Drinks

Reporting to or not to law enforcement

Taking Photographic Evidence

Allowing the nurse to speak to police on your behalf

We're here for you! If there is anything you don't feel comfortable with or want done, let us know and we'll support your decisions.

your Advocate

Disclaimer: It is also your choice to identify as a survivor or a victim. The legal term for the state of Illinois is the latter. Most advocates refer to individuals who have experienced this harm as the former. It's your decision on what you feel most comfortable with.

SASETA

Sexual Assault Survivors Emergency Treatment Act

SASETA mandates that all hospitals must help sexual assault survivors in accordance with the following guidelines:

At the hospital:

- Immediately provide a private room for the patient.
- Offer an Evidence Collection Kit (DNA evidence is viable for up to 7 days; A hospital is legally required to offer evidence collection 7 days post assault)
- Provide a comprehensive exam to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the patient (that can also be a part of the evidence)
- Oral and written information regarding infection, STI, and pregnancy, including procedures and medication related to the case
- Medication for treatment at the hospital and after discharge
- Offer emergency contraception, providing medically factual oral and written information about emergency contraception and the time frame it's viable

Payment for care:

- The cost of services is settled by the State of Illinois. A voucher provided by the hospital is valid up to 180 days after the initial ER visit and can cover the cost of follow-up appointments and medication (please discuss with your nurse where the vouchers are valid)
- A voucher will be provided for you at the hospital visit unless you have Medicare or Medicaid (please ask your nurse for recommendations for where vouchers are accepted)
- The patient may decline to bill their insurance for billing, directly billing the state
- A hospital should not ask the patient for payment for services rendered because of the assault

This information was obtained from the Illinois General Assembly

SASETA


Sexual Assault Survivors Emergency Treatment Act

Post hospital visit:

- Referrals to appropriate specialists depending on the case, including counseling
- Follow-up healthcare
- Provide information regarding visits with healthcare providers within 180 days after initial ER visits
- Follow-up on laboratory test for STI
- Provide appropriate medications for the patient

Illinois State Police responsibilities:

- Distribution to and collection from hospitals
- Maintenance of chain of custody and safekeeping of evidence
- Analysis of collected evidence and laboratory test

- 
- If you get a direct bill from any medical facility that's related to the incident, you can contact us to help handle this! These services are at no cost to you!
 - You can decline to bill your insurance, it can be directly billed to the state
 - Take a picture of your voucher or make multiple copies just in case you misplace it or it's not returned to you!

your Advocate

This information was obtained from the Illinois General Assembly

The Evidence Collection Kit

COLLECTION, TESTING, AND REPORTING OPTIONS

As the survivor, you have the right to stop at any time, decline any portion of the exam, and return to any treatment facility for examination. We've summarized your options below, and hope it will help you make the best decision for yourself.

Option 1A: Patient Reports and Test

- The patient reports and provides information to law enforcement directly, providing as much information and can stop the interview at any time.
- The patient consents to gather evidence and information during the exam and release it to law enforcement.
- Law enforcement will submit the untampered kit to the forensics lab in 10 days after receiving it.
- Law enforcement will receive the results of the kit for their investigation(s), and the prosecution(s)

Option 1B: Patient Reports and Holds

- Only consent to collection and storage
- Evidence is held for 10 years or until the 28th birthday of a patient under the age of 18
- The patient can change their mind and submit evidence for testing

Option 2A: Healthcare Provider Reports and Test

- The healthcare provider reports and provides information directly to law enforcement, and the patient doesn't have to report at the hospital.
- The patient can choose to have law enforcement call them or for themselves after x amount of days.
- The patient consents to gather evidence and information during the exam and release it to law enforcement.
- Law enforcement will submit the untampered kit to the lab within 10 days after receiving it.
- Once finished by the lab, law enforcement will receive the results for investigation(e) or prosecution(s)

This information was obtained from ISP Division of Forensic Service

The Evidence Collection Kit

COLLECTION, TESTING, AND REPORTING OPTIONS

As the survivor, you have the right to stop at any time, decline any portion of the exam, and return to any treatment facility for examination. We've summarized your options below, and hope it will help you make the best decision for yourself.

Option 2B: Healthcare Provider Reports and Holds

- Only consent to collection and storage
- Evidence will be held for 10 years or until the 28th birthday of a patient under the age of 18
- The patient can change their mind and submit evidence for testing

Option C: Do Not Report and Hold

- No name or any identifying information has to be provided
- Will not report to law enforcement or participate in any investigation
- Consent only to collection and storage.
- Evidence is held for 10 years or until the 28th birthday of a patient under the age of 18
- The patient can change their mind and submit a request for evidence to be sent to a lab and analyzed by law enforcement for investigation and prosecution.

- Any physician or nurse must notify the local law enforcement agency of that jurisdiction when a patient requesting treatment has received any injury sustained due to harm by a criminal offense.
- The hospital should give you a copy of all your paperwork.

This information was obtained from ISP Division of Forensic Service

The Evidence Collection Kit

Frequently Asked Questions

- The kit doesn't prove if there was an assault or not, often, DNA evidence can be difficult to obtain. If DNA evidence isn't found, it doesn't mean it didn't happen to you
- To track your kit, you'll need your k-number and pin
- The turnaround time for evidence collection varies per case, however an average time frame is 6 to 8 months.
- If you change your mind and want to release the evidence for testing, we can help you through the process
- Obtain the RD number from law enforcement or your SANE
- Testing time frame, and ask us to find a healthcare provider

your Advocate

STI

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

Most STIs are contracted via intercourse; however, some like HIV/AIDs can be contracted by other bodily fluids, specifically through sharing needles. For more information, please contact your healthcare provider.

SYMPTOMS

IF LEFT UNTREATED

HEPATITIS B

- Symptoms show up 1 to 9 months after having sex with an infected person
- Many people show no symptoms or have mild ones
- Flu-like feeling that does not go away
- Tiredness
- Jaundice (Yellow skin)
- Dark urine, light-colored bowel movements

- Some people never completely recover
- There's no cure. Symptoms go away, but they can still spread Hepatitis B to other
- The infection can cause liver damage
- A mother with Hepatitis B can give it to her baby during childbirth

GONORRHEA

- Symptoms may show up 2 to 21 days
- Most women and some men have no symptoms
- Women: thick, yellow, or white discharge from the vagina; burning or pain when you urinate or have bowel movements, abnormal periods or bleeding between periods; cramps and pain in the lower abdomen
- Men: Thick, yellow, or white drip from the penis; burning or pain when you urinate or have a bowel movement; need to urinate more often

- You can give Gonorrhea to your sexual partner(s)
- The infection can become more serious, causing damage to reproductive organs
- Both men and women may no longer be able to have children
- A mother with Gonorrhea can give it to her baby during childbirth
- If untreated, it can lead to heart trouble, skin disease, arthritis, and blindness

PUBIC LICE (CRABS)

- Intense Itching

- Doesn't cause serious problems

This information was obtained from Planned Parenthood

HERPES

- Symptoms can appear 1 to 30 days after having sex with an infected person
- Some might not have any symptoms, others flu like feeling
- Small, painful blisters on mouth and or genital area that last 1-3 weeks
- Blisters go away but can return as herpes doesn't go away
- Herpes cannot be cured
- A mother with Herpes can give it to her baby during childbirth

HIV/AIDS

- Symptoms show up several months to several years after contact with someone infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS
- Can be present for many years without symptoms
- Unexplained weight loss or tiredness
- You can give HIV to your sexual partner(e), or anyone you share needles with
- HIV cannot be cured and most people die from the disease
- A mother with HIV can give it to her baby in the womb, during childbirth, or while breastfeeding

VAGINITIS

- Some women have no symptoms
- Itching, burning, or pain in the vagina
- More discharge from the vagina than normal
- Discharge smells and/or looks different
- Men can carry Vaginitis infections without symptoms
- You can give Vaginitis infections to your sexual partner(s)
- Uncomfortable symptoms will continue
- Men can get infections in the penis, prostate gland, or urethra

TRICHOMONIASIS (TRICH)

- Little to no symptoms
- When symptoms do appear the most common is vaginitis: irritation and itching, smelly discharge, and painful or frequent urination
- Can infect urethra, potentially affecting the kidneys

This information was obtained from Planned Parenthood

CHLAMYDIA (NGU)

- Symptoms show up 7 to 21 days
 - Most women and some men have no symptoms
 - Women: discharge from the vagina; bleeding from the vagina between periods; burning or pain when urinating; pain in the abdomen, sometimes with fever and nausea
 - Men: watery, white, or yellow drip from the penis; burning or pain when you urinate
- Can damage reproductive organs, lead to infertility, and be passed to newborns during childbirth

GENITAL WARTS (HPV)

- Symptoms can appear 1 to 8 months after having sex with an infected person
 - Small, bumpy warts on the sex organs and anus
 - The warts do not go away
 - Itching and burning around the sex organs
 - After the warts go away, the virus stays in the body, and warts can return
- Warts aren't curable
 - The more warts grow, the harder it is to get rid of them
 - A mother with warts can give them to her baby during childbirth
 - Warts may lead to a precancerous condition, especially in women

SYPHILLIS

- 1st stage: symptoms show up 3 to 12 weeks after sexual contact with an infected person — a painless, reddish-brown sore or sores on the mouth, sex organs, breast, or fingers; sores last 1 to 5 weeks, sores go away but the infection does not
 - 2nd stage: symptoms show up 1 week to 6 months after sores heal: rash over the entire body; flu-like feelings; rash and flu-like feelings go away, the Syphilis does not
- You can give Syphilis to your sexual partner(s)
 - A mother with Syphilis can give it to her baby during childbirth, or have a miscarriage
 - The infection can cause heart disease, brain damage, blindness, and death

This information was obtained from Planned Parenthood

Reproductive Rights

ILLINOIS LAWS ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The following information is to answer questions about your legal rights and is not a replacement for an attorney. Speak to a healthcare provider regarding your reproductive health, including whether and when you can terminate your pregnancy. Exercise caution when speaking with a new health provider or searching for health information. Do not share your personal health information except with a trusted provider. This document was last updated on October 2024.

Does Illinois law protect my right to an abortion?

Yes. Illinois law protects your right to have an abortion and treats abortion like other kinds of health care. You are entitled to this right regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, race, ethnicity, disability status, or any other protected characteristic.

Does the U.S. Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade mean abortions are illegal?

No, not in Illinois. On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court said that the U.S. Constitution does not include a right to abortion. But Illinois law separately protects the right to abortion.

Can I get a prescription for abortion medication online in Illinois?

Yes. In Illinois, you can get a prescription for medication abortion through an online Telehealth appointment with a medical provider and have the medication sent to you by mail. Providers who offer abortion medication do so up to around 10-11 weeks of pregnancy.

Will my health insurance cover an abortion?

Maybe. If you have insurance with pregnancy benefits, then it likely covers care related to terminating your pregnancy. Illinois Medicaid and most Illinois-based private health insurers cover abortion in policies that include pregnancy-related care. Contact your insurance provider for your policy information.

This information was obtained from the Illinois Attorney General's Office

Reproductive Rights

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Does Illinois law protect my right to receive other reproductive health care?

Yes. The State cannot interfere with your decisions regarding reproductive care, including whether or not to use birth control, how to manage a pregnancy loss, and decisions about giving birth, for example, whether to have cesarean surgery or epidural anesthesia.

Are there limits on when a provider can give me an abortion?

Talk to your provider. Illinois law does not set a specific time limit. Health care providers perform abortions until “viability,” which is determined by your circumstances. In some situations, a provider could determine that viability exists around 24-28 weeks into pregnancy. Even if your provider determines that your pregnancy has reached viability, you may be able to have an abortion if your provider thinks it is necessary for your health.

Do I have to be a resident of Illinois to receive an abortion in Illinois?

No. Residents of other states may receive health care in Illinois, including abortion and other reproductive care. However, Illinois does not regulate how out-of-state insurance plans provide coverage, so you should speak to your insurer and healthcare provider to understand your payment options.

I’m under 18 years old; can I get an abortion?

Yes, Illinois protects your right to an abortion.

This information was obtained from the Illinois Attorney General’s Office

Post Medical Advocacy

What happens next?

The hospital visit can be a draining experience. Take time for yourself, and when you're ready, we're here for you.

An advocate will follow up with you to check in and see if you have any questions or need additional assistance...these can include:

- Filing an Order of Protection
- Discussing options for work or school leave
- Help to file crime victims' compensation
- Discussing counseling options
- Navigating the criminal justice system, and discussing our intermediary services
- Connecting you to community resources

After speaking with your advocate and you have additional questions, call them during business hours, or our 24/7 hotline at 888-802-8890 for any advocate

If you had an evidence kit at the hospital and chose Options A or B: We can help guide and/or be your support system during the legal process

If you choose Option C and change your mind, we can discuss what this looks like for you and the options available to make an informed decision. n. We can also help you release your evidence kit.

If you live outside of our service area, we can refer you to the crisis center closest to you to get help from an advocate who knows the resources and institutions in your area.

Bill of Rights

Illinois Crime Victims' Bill of Rights

Is a set of statutes that establish the rights of those who have experienced violent crimes. These rights apply in adult criminal proceedings and juvenile delinquency proceedings. The law requires that these rights must be requested in writing when charges have been filed against an offender, known as a “Notice of Victim’s Assertion of Rights.”

- To be treated with fairness and respect for their dignity and privacy
- To be free from harassment, intimidation, and abuse throughout the criminal justice
- The right to notice of and to a hearing before a court ruling on a request for access to any of the victim’s records, information or communication which are privilege or confidential by law
- Timely notification of all court proceedings
- To be heard at any post-arraignment court proceeding in which a right of the victim is at issue and any court proceeding involving a post-arraignment release decision, plea or sentencing
- To be notified of any conviction, sentence, imprisonment and release of the accused
- Right to a timely disposition of the case following the arrest of the accused
- To be reasonably protected from the accused throughout the criminal justice process
- The right to have the safety of the victim and the victim’s family considered in determining whether to release the defendant and setting condition of release after the arrest and conviction of the offender
- The right to be present at the trial and all other court proceedings on the same basis as the accused, unless the victim is to testify and the court determines that the victim’s testimony would be materially affected if the victim hears other testimony at the trial.
- The right to be present at all court proceedings, subject to the rules of evidence, and advocate ad other support person of the victim’s choice
- The right to restitution

This information was obtained from the Illinois Attorney General’s Office

CVR

CRIME VICTIMS RIGHTS

Crime Victim Rights are a set of statutes that provide you rights in the legal process. Your Rights may be used at any point during your case.

GENERAL RIGHTS

- Receive a statement and explanation of your victim rights.
- Prompt disposition after the arrest.
- Information about the indictment or juvenile petition.

RIGHT TO BE NOTIFIED

- Notice of trial date, time, and location.
- Advance notice of all court dates and cancellations.
- Information on social services and financial assistance.
- Notice of the defendant's release and final case disposition.

RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

- Attend all court proceedings (except when your testimony may be affected).
- Have a translator and support person present.
- Retain an attorney and consult with the prosecution.
- Provide a Victim Impact Statement at sentencing.

RIGHT TO RESTITUTION

- Request restitution for losses (excluding pain and suffering).
- Prompt return of stolen property.

AFTER SENTENCING

- Notice of any appeal or post-conviction petition.
- Talk to the Prisoner Review Board
- Notice of the prisoner's release or discharge.
- Updates on furloughs, escapes, or apprehensions.
- Advance notice of parole hearings and the right to attend or provide a statement.
- Notice of the prisoner's death or request for clemency.

RIGHT TO PROTECTION

- Secure waiting area during court.
- Support from a victim advocate regarding employment.

This information was obtained from Illinois Attorney General's Office

CVC

CRIME VICTIMS COMPENSATION

Crime Victim Compensation provide financial reimbursement to those who were victims to or key witness to crimes. These are the following guidelines provided by the attorney generals website. *You will need a PD report # at minimum.*

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- Victims defined by the statute
- Dependents (for loss of support)
- Any person that paid, or became obligated to pay for the victim of the crime

WHAT IS ELIGIBLE

There are many things that the state considers a crime, including: sexual assault, sexual abuse, child exploitation, distribution of pornographic evidence...when in doubt, still apply.

MAXIMUM AWARD

As of August 7, 2022, the state has provided a maximum award of \$45,000 per victim that covers a variety of expenses.

WHAT'S COVERED

- Funeral and Burial (up to \$10,000)
- Lost Wages (up to \$2,400)
- Loss of Dependent Support (up to \$2,400)
- Crime Scene Clean Up
- Medical/Hospital/Dental
- Counseling and transportation
- Tuition Loss
- Replacement Costs
- Tattoo Removal
- Accessibility
- Relocation
- Replacement Service Loss
- And more...

APPLICATION WINDOW

- Adult without a disability: **Five years** from the date of the crime or **one year** from criminal charge of the offense
- Minor: **Three years** from turning 18
- Adult with disability: **Three years** from the removal of the disability
- You can always file an appeal

WHEN IN DOUBT FILE A CLAIM ANYWAYS.

This information was obtained from the Illinois Attorney General's Office

Orders of Protection

Illinois Order of Protection and No Contact Orders

Orders of Protection help victims and their family feel safe to be able to live their lives freely and without fear.

Who is eligible ?

STALKING NO CONTACT ORDER

Any person who is the victim of a course of conduct that causes the victim to fear for his or her safety or the safety of another person, or to suffer emotional distress, and relief is not available to the victim through the Illinois Domestic Violence Act or through a Sexual Assault Civil No Contact Order

SEXUAL ASSAULT CIVIL NO CONTACT ORDER

Any person who is a victim of non-consensual sexual conduct or sexual penetration.

These orders also can protect the following people:

- Family or household members of a victim; and
- Rape crisis center employees and volunteers

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDER OF PROTECTION

Family or household members who:

- Are related by blood, or by current or former marriage to the offender;
- Share or shared a common home with the offender;
- Have or allegedly have a child in common with the offender
- Share or allegedly share a blood relationship to the offender through a child; have or had a dating relationship or engagement with the offender; or
- Are highrisk adults with disabilities abused by a family member or caregiver

This information was obtained from the Illinois Attorney General's Office

Orders of Protection

Illinois Order of Protection and No Contact Orders

Remedies & Protections

STALKING NO CONTACT ORDER

The judge can grant any or all of these remedies. Prohibit stalking or threats of stalking; prohibit contact with the victim; Order the stalker to stay away from specific locations; Prohibit stalker from having a FOID card and owning firearms; Other injunctive relief necessary to protect the victim

SEXUAL ASSAULT CIVIL NO CONTACT ORDER

The judge can grant any or all of these remedies. Prohibit contact with the victim; Order the offender to stay away from the victim generally and/or to stay away from specific locations; Protection of property and pets; Order the offender to transfer to another school if the victim and the offender attend the same school; Other injunctive relief necessary to protect the victim

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDER OF PROTECTION

The judge can grant up to 18 different remedies from prohibiting further abuse, to ordering the offender to stay away, revoking a FOID card, protecting property and pets, requiring financial support, providing temporary care of children, and ordering exclusive possession of the home

This information was obtained from the Illinois Attorney General's Office

Orders of Protection

Illinois Order of Protection and No Contact Orders

Violations

ALL ORDERS

The first violation is a Class A misdemeanor. Any subsequent violations is a Class 4 Felony.

- It's helpful to have the name of the offender and their address to file the order.
- If you're interested in an order, know that you will go before the judge with the offender 21 days after you file. It means you will be seeing them.
- It's helpful to have evidence to present to the judge, and more is better

- Ask your advocate to help you fill it out and support you through the process!

your Advocate

This information was obtained from the Illinois Attorney General's Office

Fair Housing

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Fair Housing

Each year, up to 3 million Americans—85% of them women—experience physical abuse from intimate partners. Many assaults occur at home, and survivors often face immediate threats of violence. A key factor in women's homelessness is eviction by landlords who learn of the domestic violence, or women leaving to escape their abusers.

How the Fair Housing Act Protects Victims of Violence

Because women have a greater risk of being the victim of domestic violence, the Federal Fair Housing Act protects women from housing discrimination based on their gender when they are victims of domestic violence

Examples of Housing Discrimination

- Eviction due to learning they are domestic violence victims
- Application of new rules to her that do not apply to other tenants due to being a domestic violence victim
- Refusal to lease as a result of learning she has been the victim of domestic violence in the past
- A public housing authority discovers a woman has called the police to her home to protect herself from domestic violence and terminates her housing voucher as a result

If you Experience Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault

First, call the police; an order of protection bars the abuser from the premises. Anyone can file an OP on behalf of an abused minor or adult who cannot file the order for themselves because of disability, age, health problems, or inaccessibility. In Illinois, same-sex relationships are also covered by domestic violence law

This information was obtained from the Illinois Attorney General's Office

Fair Housing

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Fair Housing

Under the Illinois Safe Homes Act, effective as of January 2007

You may break your lease because of domestic and sexual harm, or stalking if you face a “credible imminent threat of harm on the premises,” even if the abuser is in the household. You must give the landlord written notice of the threat within three days of formally moving out

In an emergency, a landlord must change the locks within 48 hours of receiving your written request to keep out the abuser. This applies if you have written a lease and the abuser is not on the lease. You should include evidence of your claim. (Evidence can include police reports, court or medical records, or a statement from a victim services organization. This is not necessary if a violent act happens on site

If you need evidence to back your claim, let us know and we can write you a letter as your victim services organization.

your Advocate

This information was obtained from the Illinois Attorney General's Office

VESSA

Victim's Economic Security and Safety Act

VESSA allows for unpaid, job-guaranteed leave, and reasonable accomodation without fear of employer discrimination and retaliation.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

A victim or family member of domestic and sexual violence, who is a full-time or part-time employee of a covered employer

DOMESTICE VOILENCE IS...

Physical violence, verbal violence, harassment at work, school, or home, threats to hurt you or your children. Perpetrators are often former or current partner or member of your household.

HOW DOES IT HELP?

1. Requires employers to provide unpaid time off to deal with problems relating to violence
2. Prohibits against discrimination or retaliation as a victim

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS...

Rape, sexual assault, forced sex, child sexual abuse, uncomfortable or unwanted touching, stalking

SOME NOTES

- VESSA doesn't protect you from being fired or reprimanded for job performance problems not related to domestic or sexual violence.
- You don't have to file a police report or order of protection to benefit from VESSA.
- An employer cannot tell you to go to the police or get a court order before taking VESSA leave.
- Employers must keep this information confidential unless you give them permission

WHAT EMPLOYER IS COVERED?

1. The State or State Agency
2. Local government or school district
3. A private company with 1 or more employees

WHAT'S REQUIRED?

1. Tell your employer you need time off due to domestic or sexual violence
2. Your boss may ask for proof called "certification", a written statement you sign

TIME-OFF

VESSA is only unpaid timeoff or a reduction of work hours. You don't have to use your time like PTO to take time-off. Additionally, your employer can't make you take time off if you don't want to either

This information was obtained from the Women's Law & Policy Project



VESSA

Victim's Economic Security and Safety Act

EXAMPLE REASONS FOR A VESSA LEAVE

- Seeing a doctor or counselor for physical or psychological injuries
- Getting help from a crisis center
- Appointments with a lawyer, or going to court
- Securing your safety by looking for a new place to live or relocating temporarily

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

As long as you return when you are supposed to, your benefits should be the same as before. Your employer should also continue to provide health insurance while on leave.

NOTICE

A 48-hour notice is required, unless providing advance notice is not practicable. The employee must provide notice when they can, within a reasonable period after the absence.

DURATION OF LEAVE

1 -14 Employees 4 weeks
15-49 Employees 8 weeks
50+ Employees 12 weeks

Leave may be taken all at the same time, as needed, or as a reduced work schedule

- **When notifying your employer, you must let them know you're "exercising your right to VESSA"**
- **If an employer is asking you for evidence, we can write you a letter as your victim service organization. Let us know!**
- **A Social Security number isn't necessary for VESSA; Your legal status is not a barrier.**

your Advocate

This information was obtained from the Women's Law & Policy Project

SAFE-T ACT

The Criminal Justice System

The Illinois SAFE-T Act is a statute that went into effect on January 1, 2023 that reformed the criminal justice response to offensive and non-offensive crime by removing the requirement of the bail system. What impact does this have on survivors?

1

SPECIFIC, REAL, AND PRESENT THREAT

The phrase above doesn't have a definition or a previous case judges can follow, but there is a statute listing factors they can consider in making this decision.

What does this mean for your case?

Unfortunately, even though there is a statute that lists sexual assault as a criminal offense, it does not mean they will detain the offender. Much of what goes into this decision is specific to the patrol officer and the detective for the case.

If the current investigation does not find a 'specific, real, and present' threat and finds no reason to hold them, the individual can be released.

Additionally, if a judge does not believe they are a threat to the community, they can be released with or without parole conditions.

2

DETAINABLE VS. NON-DETAINABLE OFFENSE

According to the SAFE-T Act only individuals who commit a detainable offense, will be taken into custody and face a judge without unnecessary delay.

What does this mean for your case?

As mentioned above, a detainable vs. non-detainable offense has specific characteristics. In short, the law follows the SAFE-T Act according to these three categories:

- Those who meet Illinois statute for detainable offenses (someone who has committed a Class 3 Felony and above)
- Will highly likely to flee if not detained
- Individuals who are not detainable

The SAFE-T Act is a relatively new legislation. As time passes, we can pinpoint the legislation's strengths and weaknesses. Our team will continue to follow changes to advocate for you!

This information was obtained from Illinoispolicy.org

What is trauma?

The connection between mind and body

Rape Trauma Syndrome can manifest in physical, behavioral, and/or psychological symptoms.

TRAUMA, THE BRAIN, & THE BODY

Trauma occurs either with a repeated stressor or a single stressor that triggers the body's fight or flight mode...



When the fight or flight response is triggered, the sympathetic nervous system kicks in, and we go into fight, flight, freeze, or fawn



Depending on which response the body goes into, a person might lay still, scream or not scream, be more compliant, fight, or run. We have no choice in how our bodies react as the brain will override any freewill to survive

SYMPTOMS

When trauma develops, it can manifest in physical ways. These symptoms are different for everyone and can include a wide range of physical changes. Different bodily responses are normal

Trauma can also affect our behavior, the ability to focus, restlessness, crying, etc. As with the physical symptoms, there is a wide range of symptom, and it differs for everyone

Lastly, trauma affects our psyche. Psychological symptoms can spring up along with these other changes and are not at all uncommon. Any emotion you feel is valid and is the body's way of processing

GROUNDING

Grounding techniques are great tools to help our nervous system regulate. When we become dysregulated through triggers, our bodies utilize one of our fight-or-flight responses. Take what helps, and leave what doesn't. Different techniques will work for individual needs. We've included a few tools you can try, but the internet has many resources for grounding exercises if these don't work for you!

Grounding Techniques

The connection between mind and body

When choosing which grounding technique, try to listen to your body and see if you can pick up on what it needs! For example, if you feel anxiety in your chest, it might be your flight response, and walking or dancing to expel that extra energy is what your body is asking for!

your Advocate

Movement

Movement is a great way to feel connected to your body again and remove excessive energy that builds up. Be mindful of your body's movements, say it out loud or in your head as that particular body moves!

The 5 Senses

If being in your body is too difficult, try naming five things you can see in your room, four things you can feel, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing good about yourself.

Muscle Relaxation

In this exercise, go through each body part tensening and relaxing each area. Hold for 5 seconds and release for 5 seconds. Once you finish, tense the whole body for 10 seconds and release the tension from your body

Leaves on the River

This technique helps calm your racing mind and body. In a comfortable position, imagine you're sitting by a river. When you have a thought, gently place it on a leaf and watch it flow away. Allow your breathing to steady as you do this

For Parents

Taking care of yourself, to take care of your child

It is difficult for another human being when we do not even feel like one. As a parent, you want those closest to you to be safe, healthy, and happy. When this occurs to one of your kids, a range of emotions can come with your sense of responsibility. These emotions can feel too much, especially when navigating the medical and legal processes and DCFS. That's why caring for yourself and your needs is just as important. Here are some tips and information we hope can help you during this time.

1

Integrate coping skills in your routine with your child

Helping your kids overcome these challenges doesn't need a grand gesture. Often, when these types of trauma occur, sticking to a routine as best as we can has the largest impact. Compounding this with including quick moments of mindfulness can give the nervous system time to regulate.

2

Take a moment for ourselves

Throughout the day, it's easy to lose track of the day. You're homemaking, caring for kids, working, and dealing with other things. Taking this time for yourself doesn't have to take too much time from your day. 5 minutes is enough to provide your mind the break it wants! Even better is to let your child know that you need a moment, and when you're ready, you can come back to support them.

3

Build a support system

Asking for help is imperative to achieve a healthy balance in our day so that we can enjoy time for ourselves and time for our families. If you have friends and family who can offer help, don't be scared to ask! Most people are happy to help, and the barrier lies within ourselves. Additionally, There are also support groups and monetary relief. don't be afraid to ask your advocate for help and what assistance we can provide.

4

Self care

Self-care doesn't have to be complicated, require 20 different skincare products, or even take a long time. Sometimes self-care can look like cleaning your space or getting caught up on housework to prepare yourself for the week. It can even look like asking for help! Brainstorm on what it looks like for you.

5

Have grace for yourself

We're all humans, we can make mistakes and have difficult days. Give yourself grace when these struggles come and don't feel guilty for needing your own time. You're doing your best and that's enough.

Take what you need, leave what you don't: these are just starting points to help you manage this time. See if you can find something that's relevant to your situation you can integrate into this list

How to Help Kids Cope

Learning to foster trust and healthy emotional regulation

Trauma can affect a child's developmental process and follow them all the way into adulthood. Helping your child learn to regulate their emotions can provide them with tools to help them cope with these events. The sooner they learn these tools and know that you will be there for them, the better the outcome they have growing into a well-regulated adult. Create a routine you both can rely on and incorporate these exercises.

1

Be Calm

Imagine you're holding a cup of hot chocolate. It's too hot to drink still! Take it close to you, take a long breath in, and slowly blow the air out. It's still hot, do it one more time! Now take a tiny sip and say "mmmm...!" making the "mmm" sound as long as possible. Try it again. Put your hot chocolate down, take a long breath in, and let the air all the way out.

2

Focus

Imagine you're standing in front of the lake. The water is still and looks like glass. You throw a stone in, and it makes little waves. Watch the little waves as they go farther and farther out, getting smaller and smaller. Watch until the water becomes flat like glass again. Take a long breath in and let it all the way out.

3

Imagine

Imagine you're a tree. Your feet are the roots stretching into the ground, holding you steady and strong. Your arms are branches, reaching up high, high, and high! What color leaves do you have? What do your branches look like? How tall are you? You have strong roots holding you safely to the ground and strong branches that reach far and wide.

4

Make Some Energy

Imagine you're a sleepy lion, just waking up! Make lion claws with your hands. Stretch and wiggle your lion claws all around. Take a breath in and as you let it all out, say "Haaaaahhhh!" sticking your lion tongue out as far as it will go. Do it again! Now shake your lion claws. Take a long breath in and let it all the way out.

5

Relax

Can you make a grumpy face? Make a really grumpy face! Maybe you feel a little sad or angry today. If you do, make a sad face or an angry face. Now take a big breath in and blow all those bad feelings away. Do it again, just in case it didn't all go away....Sit up really tall. Are you able to smile a little? Take another long breath in, and let it all the way out.

This information was obtained from Kira Willey's "Breathe Like A Bear"



Safety Planning

How to create security

Safety planning doesn't have to happen when you're in immediate danger or for any fear of being in danger in the future. It can give you steps, outlets, and resources for different reasons and areas of your life. Here are a few exercises that may help. Fill out what feels comfortable to you and as best as you can. If you need help, give us a call!



Everyone needs their basic needs met, this can include: food, shelter, transportation, clean clothes, etc... Do you have your basic needs met?

- Shelter Food Clean, weather appropriate clothes Transportation
 Hygiene Products A safe adult to talk to



Do you feel comfortable where you're living now? Do you want to stay somewhere else to feel safe?

If not, who can you stay with?

- Yes, I feel safe where I'm at.
 No, I don't feel safe where I'm at.

What are ways you can make yourself feel safe? Is it food? Clean clothes? etc...

1

2

3

Where can you get these basic needs? If you aren't sure, give your advocate a call!



Safety Planning

How to create security

Who are the safe adults in your life you can go to?

What are my transportation options?

Good ways to distract myself are?

What coping skills can I use?

Yes or No?

If things feel out of your control, do you feel comfortable with the resources you've listed above?

Safety Planning

How to create security

Are there people in your life you don't feel safe with? How can you limit your interactions with them?

Yes or No?

Is your social media private?
Is your location accessible to others?

Green means you're doing well, yellow means you're okay, and red means you aren't feeling the best.

Can you identify behaviors and actions that can indicate your color?

Can you make yourself a list...or two...

What you'd want to take just in case of an emergency?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Professional Support?

- Therapist _____
- Doctor _____
- Nearest ER _____

NWCASA (888) 802-8890

Domestic Violence (800) 799-7233 or text BEGIN to 88788

Suicide Hotline Call or text 988