

## How do I find the right counsellor for me?

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Once you have the details of counsellors in your area, it can be a good idea to call several of them before choosing who to make an appointment with. This gives you a chance to ask questions about each counsellor and their approach before deciding which one(s) are right for you. Once you've decided which counsellor to see, they'll apply to ACC for the subsidy for your counselling on your behalf.

Once you choose a counsellor, you don't have to stay with them if they don't turn out to be right for you. Just contact Rape Prevention Education for details of more counsellors in your local area.

## Where can I go for help?

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Rape Prevention Education offers a referral service which is culturally appropriate, safe and supportive. You can contact them to talk through your options and get information about what's available in your area. Call (09) 360 4001 during office hours, or email [info@rapecrisis.org.nz](mailto:info@rapecrisis.org.nz).

Auckland Sexual Abuse Help has a 24 hour crisis and information line. They offer ACC subsidised counselling from a range of experienced counsellors. Their phone number is (09) 623 1700.

South Auckland Counselling Services has a 24 hour crisis and information phone line. They offer ACC subsidised counselling and their phone number is (09) 277 9324.

Check out the Rape Prevention Education website for information on other sexual assault agencies in New Zealand.

[www.rapecrisis.org.nz](http://www.rapecrisis.org.nz)

## AFTER SEXUAL ASSAULT Information about effects and options



Rape  
Prevention  
Education

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RAPE CRISIS AUCKLAND INCORPORATED  
WHAKATU MAURI

*Supporting survivors of sexual violence & their whanau.  
Working to eliminate rape and sexual abuse through  
education and community work.*

### CONTACT DETAILS

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*After Sexual Assault: Information about effects & options*

Rape Prevention Education

Rape Crisis Auckland Inc.

Ph. (09) 360 4001

Fax. (09) 360 4015

Email: [info@rapecrisis.org.nz](mailto:info@rapecrisis.org.nz)

Every person who has been sexually abused or raped recovers from the experience in their own time and in their own way. Some people have a reaction immediately, while others may find it takes weeks or months to feel anything about what happened.

Everyone has different reactions to sexual assault. This pamphlet describes a few of the ways that people feel after being sexually violated, and gives information about some of the options available to you.

## Some effects of sexual violence

*Emotionally* - One minute you may feel calm and composed, while the next you might be very upset. Mood-swings like this might seem out of control. You may also feel confused, uneasy or powerless. Your job or school work may be effected, as might your relationships with other people.

*Physically* - Your appetite and sleep patterns might change. You may also get a cold or the flu; this could be your body's reaction to stress. Gynaecological or genital problems can be checked out by a sexual health clinic or GP.

*Flashbacks* - Memories of the assault and the sights, smells and sounds associated with it may intrude on your day-to-day life. These might come in the form of nightmares and bad dreams.

*Depression* - This can be related to the abuse itself or to other people's reactions to it.

*Low self-esteem* - You may feel angry with yourself for the abuse or the way you reacted to it. You might dislike your body or appearance.

*Anger* - You may find yourself lashing out at people and feeling angry a lot of the time.

## Things that could effect your reaction

You might find that your reaction to the assault is heightened or particularly hard to deal with if:

- you've been sexually abused or raped before
- your family or friends are unable to give you the support and understanding you need
- you were assaulted in the presence of someone else, like a partner or friend
- you knew the person who abused you
- you were rendered incapacitated by alcohol or drugs before you were assaulted
- the assault happened more than once, or was ongoing.

**Some effects may be immediate, while others may surface later. You might start feeling something months after the assault happened, and while some effects may lessen with time, others can be more persistent. Some people feel they don't have any reaction at all to what happened. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way reaction .**

## What can I do about the way I feel?

If you find you're numb, scared, angry, depressed, guilty, dirty, not hungry or unable to sleep, it could be time to deal with how you feel about the assault and take your personal power back.

A lot of people find talking to someone about what happened to be useful. Talking can help you understand your feelings and identify ways to regain a sense of self. Other people find expressing themselves through art, dance, or by writing poetry or in a journal to have a similar effect.

## Who can I talk to?

Some people find they feel comfortable talking to someone they trust, like a family member or friend, to help them work through their feelings about the assault. Other people find talking to someone who has been trained to deal with a disclosure of abuse and who can suggest some practical ways of dealing with their feelings to be useful.

Seeing a counsellor can give you a place where you can talk safely and openly with someone who can empathise with your reaction to the assault and help you work through your feelings.

In New Zealand, the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) helps subsidise the cost of counselling for most people who have been sexually abused or raped. Counsellors who are registered with ACC have experience in helping survivors of sexual assault and work in a variety of different ways.

You can access ACC subsidised counselling by contacting Rape Prevention Education and asking for information about counsellors in your local area.

**For more information check out our website**

**[www.rapecrisis.org.nz](http://www.rapecrisis.org.nz)**

**Regardless of what you were doing before the rape or abuse, or how you responded to it, responsibility for the assault *always* lies with the offender. The fact that you survived a sexual assault shows that you did the right things at the time to stay alive.**