



## Coping Skills After Experiencing Sexual Assault or Abuse

### COMMON FEELINGS PEOPLE HAVE AFTER SEXUAL ASSAULT or ABUSE

You may feel sad, scared, lonely, mad, embarrassed or fearful of the person who hurt you.  
You may also feel love or anger at the person who hurt you.

### COPING WITH FEELINGS:

It's normal to experience many different feelings following sexual assault or abuse. It's important to identify ways for coping with feelings, learn the difference between ways to cope that help and ways to cope that are less helpful.

Some common helpful ways of coping with feelings include:

- Listen to music
- Exercise
- Count to 10 and take some deep breaths
- Talk to a friend or family member
- Take time to be alone
- Relax/take part in a pleasurable activity
- Express your emotions by crying, laughing, talking to a friend, etc.

When you practice coping with feelings, pay attention to **how it made you feel**. If a coping strategy was helpful, you'll feel better afterward. If you still feel bad, it may not work well, and you should **try other coping strategies**. It's good to have more than one way to cope, so try a few different ways and find what works best for you.



### PREVENTION OF FUTURE ASSAULT/RISK REDUCTION

Improve your knowledge about sex and sexuality

Tell people when you feel uncomfortable or want their behavior to change

Develop your own rules for personal space and privacy, always tell people to stop when they have broken these rules

Know the signs of abuse, tell someone you trust if you think abuse might be happening to you

### WHO'S TO BLAME FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT or ABUSE?

Abuse is **NEVER** the victim's fault.  
The **offender is always to blame** for the abuse.