



## Staying Safe After a Sexual Assault

Safety planning is risk management and is different for everyone. Contact Daya for personalized support: 713-981-7645 or <https://dayahouston.org>.

Sexual assault includes *any forced, coerced, or unwanted* sexual contact by an intimate partner, dating partner, spouse, family member, friend, colleague, or stranger. It also includes controlling your reproductive health or birth control decisions, and sending or forcing you to send unwanted sexual images or messages.

*You never owe anyone sex or intimate contact.* To prevent sexual violence and coercion, discuss boundaries and your comfort level with your spouse or partner. If they do not respect your wants or put you down for trying to talk about consent, birth control and protection from sexually transmitted infections, you are in an unhealthy relationship.

If you are being harassed or assaulted by a partner or family member, *it's not your fault.* Take steps to stay safe as you leave this relationship by reaching out for support. Decide *who you will trust* to help you, such as coworkers, friends or family members and agencies like Daya. *You decide what you share and with whom.*

Your allies can reassure you that what you're going through is real and that *you are not alone.* Work with people you trust to make plans to leave. Leaving an abusive relationship and the year following are the most risky times, because people causing harm can lash out to regain control. Therefore, plan to stay in touch with people you trust as and after you leave, when the person causing you harm may follow or track you.

Right after an assault you can get safe, free and immediate care with a *medical forensic exam.* Trauma-informed nurses offer immediate care, collect evidence, and will connect you to supportive services. [Call](#) for an exam *as soon as possible* (within 120 hours). Getting an exam *does not mean you have to make a police report.*

Try to wait to shower, use the restroom, and comb your hair until after the exam. Avoid changing clothes, or seal the clothes you were wearing during the incident in a bag. The [forensic clinic](#) can help with emergency contraception and screening for sexually transmitted infections.

If you cannot get a medical forensic exam, consider emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex and testing for sexually transmitted infections. Call [Daya](#) or one of your allies for help in case you are unable to get this on your own.