

How can I provide support to youth survivors?

If your child discloses sexual assault or harassment, there is no one “right” reaction. The following might be helpful if your child tells you about their experience:

- **Listen** without interruption or judgement
- **Believe** your child and tell them you support them
- **Don’t assume** anything about what happened or how your child is feeling
- **Be present** and ask them how you can help them feel safe

Not all survivors share their story with their loved ones, especially youth who might not know how to explain the assault or who fear your reaction. It’s important to be patient and supportive.

Many parents want their children to take action. This may include filing a report, seeking medical care, or counseling. Let your child make an informed decision by helping them find out what services are available.

Resources available for parents and guardians

Iowa Victim Service Call Center
Free and confidential 24/7 phone support for victims of crime
1-800-770-1650
or text “IOWAHELP” to 20121

Parents for Prevention
An online resource for parents and guardians to learn to talk to youth about sexual violence prevention
www.parentsforprevention.org

Stop It Now!
Provides support, information, and resources to create safer and healthier communities
www.stopitnow.org

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How to Support Survivors of Sexual Assault:

Information for Parents and Guardians of Adolescents, Teens, & Young Adults



 **IowaCASA**
Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault

3030 Merle Hay Road Des Moines, IA 50310
www.iowacasa.org (515) 244-7424

1 in 4 girls

*will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old**

27 percent

*of college women have experienced some form of sexual violence***

1 in 6 boys

*will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old**

15 percent

*of college men are victims of rape during their time in college****



FREE legal assistance may be available

IowaCASA provides legal help to students in middle school, high school, and college who have been sexually assaulted and whose education has been impacted by their experience.

This assistance may include:

- Representing survivors within schools to make sure safety needs are addressed
- Assist with protective orders for those who are sexually abused in the State of Iowa
- Provide support and referrals to other crime victim services throughout the state

The person causing harm does not need to be a student, and the assault does not need to happen at the school. We can help with options whether the assault or harassment is reported to the police or to school officials.

Our legal services are free of charge. Call us for more information! 515-244-7424.

What is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual contact or activity. It may include verbal or visible behaviors, as well as forcing someone to join the sexual activity. Sexual assault can be committed by anyone.

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is any unwanted sex-related advance that makes a person feel uncomfortable and unsafe.

Sexual harassment can be

- Verbal (calling names, sexual jokes)
- Physical (slapping a person's butt)
- Visual (showing sexual pictures)

Remember:

- Most survivors of sexual abuse know the person who harmed them
- Sexual assault is *never* the victim's fault
- The person causing harm is the *only* one to blame

**IOWA VICTIM SERVICE CALL CENTER:
1-800-770-1650
or text "IOWAHELP" to 20121**

* Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., Lewis, I. A., & Smith, C. (1990). Sexual abuse in a national survey of adult men and women: Prevalence, characteristics and risk factors. *Child Abuse & Neglect* 14, 19-28. doi:10.1016/0145-2134(90)90077-7

** Gross, A. M., Winslett, A., Roberts, M., & Gohm, C. L. (2006). An Examination of Sexual Violence Against College Women. *Violence Against Women*, 12, 288-300. doi: 10.1177/1077801205277358

*** Cullen, F., Fisher, B., & Turner, M., *The sexual victimization of college women* (NCJ 182369). (2000). Retrieved from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/182369.pdf>