SEXUAL ASSAULT...

...can be a very traumatic, terrifying and life-threatening experience.

What is Sexual Assault?

In Colorado Sexual Assault & Rape are synonymous. Sexual assault is sexual penetration or intrusion without your consent. This crime also covers circumstances when you are mentally incapable of giving consent to any sexual contact, including being in a coma or passed out from drug or alcohol use. Sexual assault can happen anywhere or anytime.

Threats, intimidation, manipulation, physical force, or abuse of power are commonly used to get the victim to comply. The perpetrator may be a stranger, an acquaintance, a friend, co-worker, classmate, family member, boyfriend, girlfriend, partner or spouse.

In most cases, the perpetrator is someone you know.

Sexual assault is a crime.
No matter what the circumstances, sexual assault never your fault.

Consent is permission or agreement that is free from threats, intimidation, manipulation, force, pressure, or abuse of power over another. Submission is not consent. Consent may be affected if you are:

- Under the influence of drugs or alcohol (self-induced or forced intoxication)
- Unconscious
- Affected by a physical or mental disability
- Not of legal age to provide consent
- Unable to consent for any other reason

You can change your mind and withdraw consent for sexual activity at any time.
That means STOP!

Help is available.

If a friend or family member tells you they were sexually assaulted:

- Start by believing them.
- Do NOT blame them, because it's not their fault.
- If they want, help them get to the hospital, police station, or local rape crisis center.
- If the victim is a child, immediately call the police or child protective services, and take them to the hospital for a forensic medical examination.
- Provide support by listening.
- Understand that there are many different ways victims may respond to a traumatic event. You may even experience some of these reactions yourself.

You are not alone.
What to do if you have been sexually assaulted:

- Get to a safe place.
- Seek medical attention. In the aftermath of a sexual assault, it is important for your health to get checked medically. Even if you don't have any obvious injuries, visiting a medical provider can be very helpful. You can obtain a medical forensic exam, from a SANE/SAFE (see below), free of charge. You may also get tested for sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy. Although it is usually best to be seen within 5 days of the assault, there is recommended to seek medical attention even after 5 days to make sure you are okay. Adults can have evidence collected even if they don't want to file a police report. It is your choice to have evidence collected in case you decide to file a report later (see Reporting Options).
- If possible avoid eating, drinking, showering, bathing, douching, brushing your teeth or hair, or changing clothes until after your examination. This helps to preserve valuable evidence. But if you've already done any of these, please seek medical help anyway.
- Contact a local rape crisis center or victim advocate for help, support, and other resources. See Resources in this brochure.
- Understand that there are many different responses to this traumatic event, and coping with it can be a long process.

What is a SANE/SAFE?
A sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) also known as sexual assault forensic examiner (SAFE) is a Registered Nurse (RN) who has completed specialized training in the comprehensive care and treatment of adult, adolescent and child victims of sexual assault. A SANE/SAFE has the ability to conduct a medical forensic exam with or without evidence collection. A SANE/SAFE will provide you with compassionate care and treatment of any injuries, resulting from the assault, and provide crisis intervention and resources. The SANE/SAFE Program provides a safe environment to receive prompt care and begin the healing process.

What is a Medical Forensic Exam?
When you experience a sexual assault, it is important to seek medical attention as soon as possible. A medical forensic exam is a comprehensive medical exam administered at a hospital by a SANE/SAFE. You are in control of the entire exam. A nurse will only complete the parts of the exam that you agree to have done.

A medical forensic exam includes:
- Prompt, compassionate care and treatment.
- Preventative treatment for sexually transmitted infections and emergency contraception.
- Referral for additional treatment or services.
- Skilled collection of evidence that may be used in subsequent police investigation and prosecution.
- Note: It is your choice to have evidence collected. Even if you don't want evidence collected, it's strongly recommended that you seek medical attention.

*See resources on the back of this brochure for local SANE facilities.

Is there a fee?
In Colorado, medical forensic exams are provided free of charge to you, regardless of whether you choose to report the assault to law enforcement. In addition to the cost for the exam, you may be charged for other medical expenses that are not related to the exam.

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Common Reactions/ Effects of Sexual Assault
There are many different responses you might experience after being sexually assaulted. It is important to remember that sexual assault is an act of violence and can be very traumatic.

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Reporting Options for Survivors of Sexual Assault
Colorado offers 3 reporting options for adult survivors of sexual assault ages 18 through 69. Please note, due to other mandatory reporting obligations, these reporting options do not apply to minors or at-risk adults. For individuals who do not fall under these two categories, survivors have the following 3 options:

Law Enforcement Report: A victim chooses to obtain a medical forensic exam and chooses to participate with law enforcement and the criminal justice system at the time of the exam.

Medical Report: A victim chooses to obtain a medical forensic exam but, at that time, chooses not to participate with law enforcement or the criminal justice system. Evidence is collected and released to law enforcement identifying victim information. A victim can choose to have the evidence tested.

Anonymous Report: A victim chooses to obtain a medical forensic exam but, at that time, chooses not to participate with law enforcement or the criminal justice system. Evidence is collected and released to law enforcement without the victim’s identifying information. An anonymous reporting victim is consenting to evidence storage only.

If you are a victim of sexual assault call 9-1-1 or go to a hospital that provides a sexual assault nurse examiner’s (SANE) program. See information in this brochure.