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Teen Sexual Assault



LIVE WITHOUT FEAR

-38% of date rapes were reported by women between the ages of 14 and 17

Liz Claiborne Inc. Study on Teen Dating Abuse, Teenage Research Unlimited, www.loveisnotabuse.com (February 2005)

Sexual assault is forcing someone to have sex or do sexual things by using physical force, threats or coercion (pressure). Consent can only be given when there is equal power.

For teens, sexual assault goes beyond what most people view as rape. Many teens face pressure to engage in sexual activity they may not want to participate in and are often made to feel as if they have no other choice. This coercion leaves victims confused and scared. As a result, they often question if what happened to them was really sexual assault.

The fear of getting in trouble or that no one will believe them often prevents teens from reporting these crimes.

What can you do?

- Tell them it is not their fault: Never blame them. Don't let them blame themselves. Sexual assault is never the victim's fault even if they did not yell for help, fight back or if they were drinking or engaging in drug use. Someone else made a choice to sexually assault them.
- Tell them you believe them: Letting them know you believe what happened will show them support and will affirm that what happened was a crime.
- Ask what they need from you instead of telling them how to handle things: When someone is sexually assaulted, their power and control over their bodies is taken away. By asking them what they need, you are giving back some of that control and this will help empower them in their healing.
- Tell them it's ok to talk about their feelings as long as they need: Roughly 6% of teens report to the police they have been raped and only 22% tell their parents about the assault. You may be the first person the teen has reached out to and your response will affect how they pursue help and care for the rest of their life.

If you are a teen and you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted, it is never your fault, you have the right to report it, and there is help available.

Check out these websites for more information:

www.haven-oakland.org
www.chooserrespect.org
www.loveisrespect.org
www.weaveinc.com

To learn more about
HAVEN,
visit our website
www.haven-oakland.org
or call (248) 334-1284