



Empowering survivors of

Gender-Based Violence

Immediate Response Guide: If You Have Experienced Sexual Assault

First, Know This: What happened is not your fault. Your safety and wellbeing are the priority right now. You are not obligated to do anything before you are ready.

1. Get to a Safe Place

- Move to a location where you feel safe.
- Contact someone you trust for support.
- If you are in immediate danger, call emergency services immediately.

2. Seek Medical Attention

Even if you do not have visible injuries:

- Obtain medical care as soon as possible.
- A healthcare provider can treat injuries, assess your wellbeing, and discuss options for pregnancy HIV and STI prevention.
- You can seek medical attention whether or not you decide to report the incident.

3. Preserve Evidence (If You Choose)

If you may want to report the assault:

- Avoid bathing, showering, or washing.
- Avoid changing clothes if possible.
- Do not clean the area where the incident occurred.
- Save any messages, emails, photographs, or other evidence.

If you have already showered or changed clothes, you can still seek help and report the incident.

4. Consider Reporting Options

You have the right to:

- Report the incident to the police.
- Report through your organization's reporting channels (where applicable).
- Seek legal advice.
- Choose not to report immediately.

The decision is yours.

5. Access Support

Sexual assault can have emotional, physical, and psychological effects. Consider reaching out to:

- A trusted family member or friend.
- A counsellor, psychologist, or social worker.
- An Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), if available.
- A survivor support or crisis service.

6. Take Care of Yourself

Over the coming days you may experience a range of reactions, including shock, fear, anger, numbness, confusion, or difficulty sleeping. These responses are common after trauma.

Be gentle with yourself and seek professional support if needed.

Remember - You are not alone. You deserve support, dignity, and respect. Help is available whenever you are ready to access it.