





## who we are

Since we opened in 1978, Edinburgh Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (EWRASAC) has provided information, advice and advocacy to thousands of women and girls aged 12 and over.

The centre is run by women for women. All workers are trained to a high standard and share the feminist view that violence against woman is an abuse of power and should not happen.

We will listen, believe and support women of any age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and religious and cultural background.



## what we do

### We offer free and confidential support:


- to women who have been raped or sexually assaulted at any time in their lives.
- to women survivors of childhood sexual abuse.
- to workers in other organisations who are supporting survivors of rape, sexual assault or sexual abuse.

### Support can be provided:

- by telephone, by letter or email, face to face, or in support groups.

## when you contact us

### This is what will happen:

- we will believe you
  - we will listen to what you are able to tell us
  - we will support you
- 

## confidentiality

What you tell us remains confidential within our support team.

There are some circumstances, however, when we are required by law to share information with other agencies. A support worker will always discuss this with you first.

If you need more information on our confidentiality policy, phone us or speak to a support worker.

## reactions and feelings

If you have survived rape, sexual assault or childhood sexual abuse you may feel very alone and wonder if your thoughts and feelings are "normal".

Everyone reacts and feels differently. Your feelings may keep changing over time.

You might feel anger and experience flashbacks or sleep disturbances. You might feel fear, feel numb, feel guilty or feel isolated. You may have feelings of not being able to trust, depression, self-blame and low self-esteem. You may feel all of these. You might feel it was all your fault. **It wasn't!**

## regaining control

Only you will know when the time feels right to access help and support. Taking this step can be the beginning of regaining control over your own life and moving on.

There are a number of practical things that you can do, and that other women have found to be helpful.

### **Talk to yourself**

Give yourself positive messages; **you are not to blame**, remember you have survived up to now because of your inner strength. Keep going a day at a time if you need to.

### **Go to a safe place**

Where do you feel safest? Try to find a secure and comfortable place where you know no one will harm you. Maybe that "safe" place is in your head?

### **Talk to us**

Ring the line, or leave us a message if the line is not staffed and we will ring you back. We will not say who we are unless we speak directly to you. Our telephone

number is always withheld.

One of the most helpful things to do is devise a personal checklist of things that, if times get bad, you know will feel good.

### **Your list might have things like:**

- listen to a relaxation tape
- take a bath with some lavender oil in it
- cuddle the cat
- make yourself a hot drink
- hit a big cushion with a tennis racket
- write down three positive things about yourself and put it where you will see it often
- write a list of people you can phone
- phone someone, even if you can't think of a reason why – use your list to be sure to get someone
- phone EWRASAC: 0131 556 9437

## recovery time

Recovering can take an enormous amount of energy so **remember to be kind to yourself.**

It's OK to take time out from other commitments and to put yourself first as much as you can.

When you have been through a bad patch you may feel exhausted. Take it easy and rest. When you feel up to it, it may be useful to try to identify if there was something that triggered your bad feelings. Something you saw or smelled or something someone said. Next time, identifying the trigger might help you to be more ready and prepared for it in the future.

## put your health first

### Physical injuries

If you have recently been sexually assaulted, you may wish to consider going for a check up with a doctor or your local Accident & Emergency department.

You may need medical attention, especially if you are bleeding, or in pain.

### Sexually transmitted infections

If you are worried that you may have caught a sexually transmitted infection as a result of being assaulted, you can go to a special clinic (GUM clinic, Lauriston Buildings, Lauriston Place) to have tests done.

Their telephone number is: 0131 536 2104. You can also speak to one of their health advisers directly on 0131 536 2108.

## put your health first continued

### Sexually transmitted infections continued

Everything that happens at the GUM clinic will be confidential. You don't have to give your own name when you make an appointment. You can make the appointment yourself, or ask your doctor. You can take a friend with you for support.

It is a good idea to be tested for sexually transmitted infections. Treatment for any infection resulting from the assault can prevent you from becoming more seriously ill later on. Some infections don't show symptoms right away. Only tests show them up.

If you are worried about any unusual symptoms at all, you can phone the GUM clinic which provides confidential testing and women only sessions.

## put your well-being first

### Going to the doctor or dentist

If you need to visit your doctor or dentist you might be worried about the examination or treatment. It may help to find out exactly what is involved before you go, and to take a friend with you for support. Some women find it helpful to have all their questions written down. It may also help to tell your doctor or dentist that you feel worried or nervous.

Remember that no one has a right to make you go through anything you don't feel you can handle.

## put yourself first

### Mental health and emotional well-being

There may be times when you think you are going to go mad with the thoughts and feelings that are going round in your head. You are not mad. Your reactions are common and normal in these circumstances. **What happened to you was not your fault. It should not have happened.**

It is important that you look after yourself well. Don't take on too much. Try to keep your stress levels down. Exercise regularly and try to eat well. **Be patient and kind to yourself.** Remember that you are not responsible for anyone else's feelings.

### Pregnancy

If you know that you are pregnant, you may want to talk to someone about what to do next.

If you are comfortable talking to your GP s/he will go through the options with you, or you may prefer to talk to an EWRASAC worker first.

At the Caledonia Youth Clinic (0131 229 3596) or the Family Planning Clinic (0131 343 6243), the workers will talk to you when they give you the results of a pregnancy test.

## put yourself first

### Pregnancy

If you think you may be pregnant, you may find it useful to take a pregnancy test.

- you can ask your GP to do a pregnancy test.
- you can go to the Caledonia Youth Clinic (0131 229 3596) or the Family Planning Clinic (0131 343 6243).
- you can buy a home pregnancy-testing kit for around £6. They are available from any chemist, have clear instructions, and are quite reliable.

### Make the decision that's right for you

It's important that you know about all the options available. Decide if you feel you can talk to your GP, an EWRASAC worker, or clinic worker. They will all try to help you.

You might decide that you want to have an abortion or you might decide that you want to continue with the pregnancy. It's your life. Nobody should try to pressure you into a decision that you don't want. Access the support you need to make the decision that feels right for you.

## reporting a sexual assault

You can report a sexual assault at your local police station, or you can phone the Family Protection Unit (FPU) now known as the Amethyst Project, based at the Gyle on 0131 316 6600. There are other FPUs in the Lothian area. You can find the numbers for these in the useful telephone numbers on page 21.

You can arrange to speak to an officer first and then decide whether you want to report the crime. The decision will be yours.

When you report an assault to the police, they will take a brief statement and notify CID. A CID Detective Sergeant will take charge of the investigation.

All interviews with you should be by a Family Protection Unit officer, who is specially trained to deal with sexual assault cases. They will take a detailed statement, which will be passed on to CID, and CID will interview the accused.

A Family Protection Unit (FPU) officer may also arrange for a forensic examination in a specialist unit. This is

currently based at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Edinburgh (in other areas it may be done at your local hospital). This unit is relocating to a specialist integrated FPU service at the Gyle during the course of 2006. Please contact EWRASAC or the FPU for further information.

If you report an assault and the police think there is unlikely to be any forensic evidence, you may not need to go for a forensic examination.

Once someone has been charged with the assault, the police will send all the information they have to the Procurator Fiscal.

Family Protection Unit staff should stay in touch with you throughout the process, including the trial, if there is one.

If you would like more information on reporting to the police, you can request a copy of our information leaflet on legal procedures and reporting to the police by calling us on 0131 556 9437.

## recommended reading

### For any woman survivor

- *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis (1990)
- *I Never Called it Rape* by Robin Warshaw (1994)
- *The Memory Bird: Writing by Survivors of Sexual Abuse* by Caroline Malone, Linda Farthing and Lorraine Marce (1996)
- *I Never Told Anyone: Writings by Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* by Ellen Bass and Louise Thornton (1991)

### For young women

- *Out in the Open* by Quaine Bain and Maureen Sanders (1990)
- *The Me Nobody Knows: A Guide for Teen Survivors* by Barbara Bean and Shari Bennett (1997)

### For family, friends and partners

- *Allies in Healing: When the person you love was sexually abused as a child* by Laura Davis (1991)
- *Partners in Healing: A Handbook for Partners of Rape Survivors* by Teri Platt

Please contact us if you would like information on where these books are available from.

## our service

You can contact us on 0131 556 9437 for support.

You can contact us on 0131 557 6737 to let us know what you think about our service. Please send any suggestions, comments or complaints to the address below.

If you would like a copy of this booklet in large print please contact us on 0131 557 6737.

**EWRASAC**  
**PO Box 120**  
**Brunswick Road**  
**Edinburgh**  
**EH7 5WX**

[support@ewrasac.org.uk](mailto:support@ewrasac.org.uk) for support

[info@ewrasac.org.uk](mailto:info@ewrasac.org.uk) for information

Useful web site:

[www.rapecrisisScotland.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisisScotland.org.uk)

## useful phone numbers

- **Caledonia Youth Clinic**  
0131 229 3596
- **The Family Planning Association**  
0131 343 6243
- **GUM Clinic**  
(Genito Urinary Medicine, Lauriston Buildings,  
Lauriston Place)  
0131 536 2104
- **Family Protection Unit**  
0131 316 6600 (The Amethyst Team, Edinburgh)  
01506 652 615 (West Lothian)  
0131 654 5528 (East and Midlothian)
- **Criminal Injuries Compensation Board**  
0141 331 2726

## key agencies

- **Edinburgh Women's Aid**  
Confidential information, support and refuge for women experiencing domestic abuse  
0131 315 8110
- **Shakti Women's Aid**  
For black and minority ethnic women  
0131 475 2399
- **Social Work**  
0131 554 4301  
0800 731 6969  
Social Work Services (emergency out of hours only)
- **Housing/Homelessness**  
0131 529 7368  
0800 032 5968 (emergency out of hours)
- **Victim Support**  
Practical and emotional support for victims of crime  
0845 603 9213 (Scottish Helpline)
- **Domestic Abuse Helpline**  
24 hour helpline set up by Scottish Executive  
0800 027 1234 FREE  
[www.domesticabuse.co.uk](http://www.domesticabuse.co.uk)
- **The Samaritans**  
Confidential and emotional support  
0131 221 9999  
08457 90 90 90 (24 hour helpline)
- **Edinburgh Crisis Centre**  
24 hour helpline for adults who have used mental health services  
0808 801 0414

## supporting our work

We are a registered charity and fundraise every year to continue providing our services. If you would like to make a donation, you can contact us to discuss this further or send a cheque payable to Edinburgh Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre. Our address is on page 20.

You can also make your donation go further by using Gift Aid, which means that for every pound you give, the Inland Revenue gives an extra 28 pence (at no extra cost to you).

For your donation to go further, please complete this form and send it back to us.

*giftaid it*

I hereby declare that I want this donation to EWRASAC to be treated as Gift Aid.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I am a UK taxpayer and I wish Edinburgh Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre to reclaim tax back on all donations I have made since 6th April 2004 and all donations I make hereafter.

Please note: You must have paid an amount of UK income tax or capital gains tax equal to the amount we claim in the tax year.

notes



notes

