## If You Are Sexually Assaulted or Raped: Steps to Healing

## Immediately after the assault, any emotional response is normal.

You may feel very upset, very calm, or something in between. You may feel afraid, angry, numb, embarrassed humiliated, sad helpless, mistrustful, any or all of these and others. You might find yourself often thinking about the assault or trying to block it from your mind. You may have physical reactions such as problems sleeping or eating. You may notice soreness or pain from the assault and/or from tension and distress.

## Recovering from sexual assault takes your energy.

Your emotional and physical reactions to the assault tax your inner resources. You may have less to give to other areas of your life. Honor what you need to do to recover – whether it's sleeping a lot, crying, being with other people more than usual, or being by yourself. Look for ways and people to help you through. You are the best judge of what you need to do and what you are ready to do.

## Some things that might help:

- **Tell someone you trust.** It can be a comfort to have someone you care about to talk to, to help you regain a sense of security, to provide companionship, and to be a sounding board as you sort through decisions and options.
- Get a medical exam as soon as possible. You need to take care of your health by
  having injuries treated and preventing pregnancy an STDs. Getting proper health care
  also can relieve some stress. If you want to report the assault to the police, you must
  have a physical examination within 72 hours; the sooner the better.
- Report the assault to the police &/or Public Safety. You may feel more in control if
  you inform the authorities of the assault. You may want to pursue criminal or disciplinary
  action so that the assailant is held responsible and to help keep other students safe.
  This is an important decision; if you aren't sure you want to go to the police, consider
  making an initial, informal report so that you can learn about what taking formal action
  would require and to get help managing the impact of the assault.
- **Get support from a professional counselor.** A trained professional can provide unique assistance by sharing information about the healing process; being an objective, experienced listener; helping you assess options and make decisions you are comfortable with; and being there for as long as you need someone.

Counseling and Psychological Services is available for free and confidential counseling for sexual assault as well as a variety of other concerns. Contact the Counseling and Psychological Services office at 610-902-8561 or stop by Founder's Hall, Room 95.