

Concerns about a sexual encounter

Brown Health Services Patient Education Series

There may be instances during a sexual encounter when what happened may not have been desired or consented to. This can be difficult and confusing and people often have a variety of reactions. Sometimes alcohol or drugs may be a part of the encounter – although this does not have to be the case. There are confidential advocates here on campus, specifically trained to help you process this experience and navigate your options. They are available by phone at any time to help you sort out your feelings and review options for how to protect your health. Some medical decisions are **time sensitive** and it is **your choice** to receive or decline any treatment. They can also talk to you about options for reporting, accountability, or legal responses. There may be times when you just need to talk over what you experienced with a knowledgeable professional. Tell your provider if you would like to speak with an advocate (It's okay if you're not yet ready!). Support is available 24/7 by calling the Sexual Assault Response Line at **401-863-6000** (on the back of your Brown ID card). **You have the right to make your own decisions, BWell SHARE(Sexual Harm Acute Response & Empowerment) Advocates can support you in doing this.** If you would like to make an appointment with a SHARE Advocate:

- 1) Call BWell Health Promotion at **401-863-2794**
- 2) Go to www.brown.edu/bwell and click "Confidential Appointments"
- 3) Email a request to bwell@health.brown.edu

The following contains information about important time-sensitive medical decisions, helpful resources, and common reactions. For more info, go to brown/bwell.edu

Time-sensitive medical concerns

These options are most effective and best for your care when done as soon as possible.

How long after the incident can I make this choice?	What are my medical options?	Where can this care be accessed?
Up to 3 days (optimally within 6-12 hours)	Screening for drug-facilitated sexual assault	Hospital emergency room
Up to 3 days	STI & HIV treatment and prevention medication	Hospital emergency room or Health Services
Up to 4 days	Medical evidence collection kit	Hospital emergency room
Up to 5 days	Emergency contraception	Hospital emergency room or Health Services

Screening for drug-facilitated assault

Local hospital emergency rooms (see section on Off-campus resources) can run a specialized test to screen for drugs given to someone to facilitate an assault. This test is most effective within **6-12 hours** of an incident, but some providers will conduct this test up to 72 hours (3 days) after an incident. Many of these drugs leave the system quickly, so a negative test result may not mean that no drug was involved. In order for these tests to be useful for seeking accountability, they need to be completed at the forensic level. Working with an advocate can help you to understand how to access the type of testing you want.

Some reasons why a person might wonder if they have been drugged include:

- Difficulty breathing
- Feeling drunk when they haven't consumed any alcohol or very limited amounts
- Lost or rearranged clothing
- Having unexplained injuries
- Sudden body temperature change that could be signaled by chills, sweating, or chattering teeth
- Sudden increase in dizziness, disorientation, or blurred vision
- Difficulty remembering, waking up with no memory, or missing large portions of memories
- Having trouble thinking or perceiving

Medical exam for evidence

This exam can occur up to 96 hours (4 days) after the incident, but if this is your choice, getting a forensic medical exam as soon as possible is best for your care but optimally within 72 hours (3 days). This type of exam can only take place at a hospital. Health Services can answer questions you may have and connect you with a SHARE Advocate who can help. You can have evidence collected whether or not you want to press criminal charges. More information can be found later in this handout or at brown.edu/bwell To help preserve all evidence:

- Avoid drinking, bathing, showering, douching, brushing your teeth, or changing your clothes if possible.

STI & HIV prevention and treatment

Medications can be prescribed to prevent the development of some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV. HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is most effective when started as soon as possible, but can begin up to 72 hours after the incident. These medications can be prescribed at Health Services or other medical care centers, such as a hospital or a clinic.

Pregnancy prevention

Emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs) can be taken up to 120-hours (5 days) after penis-in-vagina sex that has occurred without a barrier method, such as a condom, or when a barrier method has been removed during the sexual encounter. This medication is most effective when taken as soon as possible and can be prescribed at Health Services or other medical care centers, such as a hospital or a clinic.

Health Services providers can answer your questions about these medical options and can connect you with a BWell SHARE Advocate for support. **You are not alone.**

Cost should not be a barrier when seeking medical care after a concerning sexual encounter.

A Health Services provider or BWell SHARE Advocate can help you navigate these needs.

What will happen during the medical exam?

Below you will find a description of what happens during a medical exam for evidence collection. Even with no visible injuries, it can still be a good idea to seek medical care. Health Services or a BWell SHARE Advocate can assist in coordinating transport.

At the Emergency Room, you will be asked questions about your general health and about the sexual encounter to find out what to look for during the exam. It is normal to find this emotionally painful to discuss or find it difficult to recall some of the details. An advocate can accompany you for support.

You may choose to have a physical exam, evidence collection and, if needed, drug screening and testing and treatment for any STIs or pregnancy concerns. **You have the right to decline any part of the exam.**

If you have visible injuries, you may be asked to have photographs taken. Photographing injuries may be helpful because injuries may heal before any legal response you may choose could take place.

An advocate can review options with you and accompany you during this exam if you wish.

What will happen with the evidence?

The evidence will be stored, giving you the choice to pursue further action in the future if you decide. All exam findings are completely confidential and can only be released with your written consent. The hospital staff will offer you a follow-up appointment or you can follow up with a medical provider of your choice, including the providers at Health Services. Additional ongoing counseling and advocacy is available to support you confidentially at no cost, either at Brown University or with community advocates. See the next section for more info about available resources.

Having evidence collected, or going to the hospital for care, does not mean that you have to make a report to the police.

RESOURCES

ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES

CONFIDENTIAL:

Sexual Assault Response Line, 401-863-6000

24/7 confidential crisis support and information available for any Brown student dealing with sexual, relationship, or gender-based harm.

BWell SHARE Advocates, 401-863-2794

Call 401-863-2794, click "Confidential Appointments" at www.brown.edu/bwell or email a request to bwel@health.brown.edu

Confidential advocates available to help students affected by sexual, gender-based and relationship violence and friends who are helping them.

Counseling & Psychological Services, 401-863-3476

Clinicians provide confidential mental health support, follow-up appointments, and 24 hour on-call services.

University Health Services, 401-863-1330

Confidential medical care, testing and treatment.
EMS is available 24 hours a day.

**Office of the Chaplains & Religious Life,
401-863-2344**

Chaplains can keep your disclosures of harm confidential and provide counseling and support.

NON-CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT:

Student Support Services, 401-863-3145

The Deans connect students with medical, counseling and legal resources. They can assist with academic difficulties, alternate housing arrangements, and a University No-Contact Order. Employees are required to report information to the Title IX Office. Information will be kept private.

SAFETY, ACCOUNTABILITY, & REPORTING:

Brown Public Safety, 401-863-4111

Non-emergency Line 401-863-3322

DPS can advise you of your options and can also preserve evidence while you consider your options. DPS staff can advise you on safety planning techniques and connect you with a law enforcement advocate.

**Title IX & Gender Equity Office,
titleixoffice@brown.edu**

For students who want to report, discuss, or need support in addressing gender-based discrimination or sexual violence. any incident of sexual assault, sexual or gender-based harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, learn about their options, and access supportive measures.

OFF-CAMPUS RESOURCES

Local Hospital and Emergency Rooms

- Women & Infants Hospital, 401-274-1100
101 Dudley Street, Providence
- Rhode Island Hospital, 401-444-5411
593 Eddy Street, Providence
- Miriam Hospital, 401-793-2500
164 Summit Avenue, Providence

**Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Helpline
1-800-494-8100, www.dayoneri.org**

For 24/7 help after a sexual assault or an abusive relationship. Advocates provide confidential support and accompaniment to the hospital and police station. Ongoing counseling and support groups are available (specific to Rhode Island).

**Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)
1-800-656-HOPE(4673), www.rainn.org**

National hotline for survivors of sexual assault for confidential counseling 24/7 from anywhere in the country. RAINN also offers an online 24/7 chat line.

Crisis Text Line text HOME to 741-741

24/7 support for any type of crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds quickly.

Common reactions after being harmed*	Helpful strategies to deal with trauma
Shock and disbelief	Getting support
Recurring thoughts	Rest and Relaxation
Intense emotions	Nutrition

Self-blame and shame	Physical activity
Fears about safety	Supporting others

***This is not a complete list, every person is different.**