



PAAR

**Pittsburgh Action
Against Rape**

**& Help
Healing
Guide**



81 South 19th Street Pittsburgh, PA 15203

(412) 431-5665

24-HOUR HELPLINE: 1-866-END-RAPE

(1-866-363-7273)

www.paar.net

Sexual violence can affect anyone.

If you are the victim of sexual assault, abuse or exploitation, or want to help someone who has been, Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR) is here to help.

Our experienced counselors and advocates provide in-person and confidential services.

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PAAR SERVICES

24-HOUR HELPLINE

PAAR provides confidential support and information, 24 hours a day via the Helpline. Helpline counselors and staff are available to talk with survivors, their families and friends, and providers about sexual violence.

There are (3) ways to connect with the Helpline:

- **Place a phone call, 24/7**
- **Send a text message to the Helpline #**
- **Join an online chat at www.paar.net**

1-866-END-RAPE

1-866-363-7273

COUNSELING SERVICES

Child and Family Counseling Center

The Child and Family Counseling Center at PAAR has provided specialized trauma treatment services to child and adolescent survivors of sexual abuse and their families for 50 years. Our clients range from 3- 18 years of age.

The Child and Family Counseling Center at PAAR provides trauma- informed and evidence-based treatment to children and adolescents. Our short-term and weekly therapy utilizes modalities and interventions that are both engaging to the child and individualized to therapeutic needs. PAAR believes that parents and guardians play an active role in a child's healing and should be included in the treatment process when appropriate.

To reach the Child and Family Counseling Center, contact PAAR's scheduling department at (412) 431-5665 x5.

Counseling services for adults

PAAR's therapists are professionally trained in all aspects of treatment of trauma and sexual abuse. Clinical services are held in the strictest of confidence and follow ethical and professional standards of practice.

Therapy services we offer include:

- **Individual counseling for adults**
- **Wellness Workshops for adults**
- **Group counseling for adults**
- **Men's Group**

PAAR's therapists are professionally trained in a variety of trauma- informed and evidence-based treatment modalities. We believe in person-centered healing and understand that every survivor is on their own unique path toward self-actualization. Psychological trauma impacts the survivor mentally, physically, and emotionally. Therefore, we utilize treatment modalities that provide healing for the person as a whole.

PAAR therapists are trained in crisis intervention, trauma-informed supportive counseling, cognitive behavioral treatment modalities, mind-body modalities, creative arts modalities, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR). PAAR offers crisis intervention, individual therapy, a variety of group therapies, and wellness workshops.

To get started with therapy or counseling services, contact PAAR's scheduling department at (412) 431-5665 x5.

Visit paar.net for more information about our services.

PAAR SERVICES

MEDICAL ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT:

PAAR is available 24/7 to respond to any emergency room in Allegheny County. Medical advocates provide in-person support and information as victims navigate the medical setting, including information about your rights in anonymous reporting and evidence collection. To request medical advocacy services, contact PAAR's Helpline.

COURT ACCOMPANIMENT AND SUPPORT:

PAAR helps survivors understand their rights and options in the aftermath of sexual violence. PAAR will provide in-person support and accompaniment to victims as they navigate the judicial system or an investigation process. Accompaniment is available in the civil and criminal legal systems, including a campus investigation or hearing process.

For those in need of legal representation, PAAR will provide an appropriate legal resource. To request an advocacy appointment, contact PAAR at (412) 431-5665.

VICTIMS COMPENSATION & NOTIFICATION:

Victims Compensation

Compensation is available to victims and their families to help cover out-of-pocket expenses related to a crime. Contact PAAR at (412) 431-5665 to request an application and to receive assistance filing a claim.

PREVENTION & EDUCATION:

Prevention and training are the first steps to stopping sexual violence. PAAR's dedicated team serves individuals, communities, businesses, volunteers, schools, and more.

Prevention programs and training are provided to audiences including:

- **Parents and guardians**
- **Community members**
- **School personnel/ Educators K-12**
- **Professionals working with youth and youth-serving agencies**
- **Service Providers**
- **Employer/Employee**
- **College Student Training and Professionals working with college students**

PAAR's trainings are customizable for audience and time constraints. Training topics may be developed or combined upon request. To request additional information about prevention programs or training, contact PAAR at (412) 431-5665.

More information at [paar.net/education-prevention/trainings-programs/trainings](https://www.paar.net/education-prevention/trainings-programs/trainings)

PAAR SERVICES

PROJECT RISE

Resilience.
Independence.
Strength.
Empowerment.



At Project RISE, these are characteristics we embed in our programming and see in our clients. Project RISE addresses the unique and practical needs of people who experience commercial sexual exploitation or sex trafficking with services to help them move from surviving to thriving.

Sex trafficking is when someone has to perform commercial sex acts (exchange sex for something of value such as money, food, a place to stay, or drugs & alcohol) by force, fraud, or coercion or when the person performing the sex act is a minor.

DROP-IN CENTER

Our drop-in center is a safe, secure place for youth and adults of all gender identities. Whether you want to simply talk about your situation, need support, or need to take action to remove yourself from a person or situation, we are here every step of the way.

We are located in the city of Pittsburgh and provides a safe and secure place to turn.

No appointments are needed to visit the center. Services are available in-person and via telehealth (virtual or phone).

The Project RISE Drop-In Center provides:

- **Crisis and Supportive Counseling**
- **Individualized Case Management**
- **Psychoeducational Groups**
- **Emergency Shelter Coordination**
- **Emergency Meals, Snacks, and Beverages**
- **Emergency Toiletries, Clothing, and Transportation**
- **Creative Arts, Crafts, Games, & Activities**
- **Computer Lab, Wi-Fi, & Phone Access**
- **Lockers**

CASE MANAGEMENT

Project RISE case managers provide survivor-centered case management services to support clients in addressing basic needs and work on their short- and long-term goals. Services are available in- person and via telehealth (virtual or phone).

PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL GROUPS

Project RISE staff lead trauma-informed psychoeducational groups for youth and adults to help in their healing and as a method of prevention.

Groups focus on topics such as:

- **Healthy Relationships**
- **Consent**
- **Boundaries**
- **Online Safety**
- **Health & Wellness**
- **Self-Care & Coping Skills**

If you or someone you know is interested in connecting with the Project RISE Drop-In Center, please call us at (412) 431-5665 x1117.

Visit paar.net for more information about our services.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND CASE CONSULTATION

For many, it may be surprising that sex trafficking—exploitation of people for the purpose of commercial sex—happens in Allegheny County. PAAR engages community members and providers to educate and bring awareness about human trafficking through webinars, trainings, presentations, conference workshops, and resource fairs.

Professional Trainings and Presentations offered by Project RISE:

- **Understanding Human Trafficking**
- **How to Identify, Respond, and Care for Victims of Sex Trafficking**
- **Overview of Project RISE**
- **Overview of PAAR Services**

Project RISE staff also provide case consultation services. If you know a person who may be experiencing trafficking or exploitation, we can help brainstorm intervention strategies, link them to resources, or offer safety planning tips.

If you or someone you know is interested in Project RISE services, please call us at (412) 431-5665 x1117.

KNOW THE SIGNS

Warning Signs of Human Trafficking

- Showing signs of physical or sexual abuse (bruises, cuts, burns, scars)
- Unexplained absences from school/truancy
- Avoiding eye contact, social interaction, and authority figures/law enforcement
- Seeming to adhere to coached, scripted, or rehearsed responses in social interactions
- Working excessive, long hours
- Living at place of employment
- New tattoos (often used by traffickers to brand or control victims)
- Untreated sexually transmitted diseases
- Frequent pregnancy concerns
- Small children serving in family restaurant
- Security measures that appear to keep people inside an establishment—barbed wire inside of a fence, bars covering the inside of windows
- Is not allowed or able to speak for themselves or a third party insists on being present and/or translating
- Not allowing people to go into public alone, or speak for themselves
- Not in control of their own identification documents, money, or bank account

These warning signs are adapted from information provided by the Polaris Project, The National Human Trafficking Resource Center, and Innocents at Risk.

If you or someone you know is experiencing exploitation or trafficking, please call PAAR at (412) 431-5665.

COMMON REACTIONS

It can be difficult to think clearly if you or someone you know has been the victim of sexual violence and abuse. Whatever you are feeling is normal.

THE HEALING PROCESS

Sexual violence and abuse can bring up uncomfortable feelings. These feelings are normal reactions, but you may feel as if you are alone. Knowing the stages of the healing process may help you better understand how and what you are feeling. While healing from sexual violence does not follow any certain time schedule or pattern, many victims experience similar reactions and feelings:

STAGE I

- shock: “I feel so numb, I can’t cry.”
- disbelief: “Did this really happen to me?”
- shame: “I feel like it was my fault. I feel dirty.”
- guilt: “If only I had...”
- anger: “I want to get even with him/her.”

STAGE II

After some time passes you may be returning to regular routines. You might start to think you should be “over the assault.” You may have some of these feelings:

- depression: “I feel tired and hopeless.”
- powerless: “Will I ever have control again?”
- re-triggering: “I keep having flashbacks and nightmares.”
- anxiety: “I’m a nervous wreck. I can’t sleep.”

STAGE III

You may begin to acknowledge your feelings and learn what you might need to resolve the assault. You may start to regain control and power and begin functioning again as you routinely did prior to the assault.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

- Try not to make any major life decisions or major life changes right away. This is not a time to put pressure on yourself. Concentrate on taking care of yourself.
- Ask a friend or family member to keep you company. Tell them you may not feel like talking, but it helps to be with someone who cares about you.
- Get plenty of rest when you are tired.
- Allow yourself to cry, be angry, and express your feelings. There is no “wrong” feeling.
- Talk to your doctor if you are not feeling like yourself (Changes in eating, sleeping, waking, taking care of children, working, or substance use). He/she can help.
- Do things that feel good to you.
- Remember, sexual violence or abuse is never your fault.

Sometimes victims of sexual violence and abuse continue to experience difficulties with daily routines and getting connected back to life. Some victims may turn to alcohol and drugs to numb feelings and escape the pain of victimization. Working through your feelings can help you feel better and regain your life. It is not uncommon for some victims to also struggle with setting sexual limits and boundaries. Negotiating with your partner(s) about birth control and sexual activity can be difficult after sexual violence and abuse, but is an important part of your healing process. PAAR’s therapists can help you work through the healing process.

FLASHBACKS: WHAT ARE THEY?

It is common for victims of sexual violence and abuse to experience flashbacks. Experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event can cause feelings of extreme fear, helplessness, and horror. A flashback is often how trauma is remembered.

FLASHBACKS: WHAT ARE THEY?

A FLASHBACK COULD BE:

- Things you see (Like a snapshot or a movie in your mind)
- Sounds (Hearing voices or sounds from the event)
- Smells
- Pain or sensations in your body
- Feelings not connected to what is happening now (Anger, rage, hopelessness, terror)

A FLASHBACK CAN:

- Be unexpected
- Be frightening
- Feel like the event is happening all over again
- Feel out of control
- Make your heart race, make it hard to breathe, or cause you to feel faint, hopelessness, terror)

HOW TO MANAGE FLASHBACKS

There are ways that you can manage a flashback. Flashbacks are common after rape or any type of unwanted sexual experience.

If you are experiencing flashbacks because of sexual violence, these are some ways you can get through it. It is a good idea to practice these skills when you are relaxed and not having a flashback. While in a flashback, it can be hard to remember what to do and what helps.

Read the following list and pick a few items to practice until you find something that works for you.

- Breathe deeply
- Open your eyes
- Put your feet flat on the ground or touch the ground with your hands to remind yourself that you are safe
- Look around the room and say out loud what you see
- Name what is happening: “I’m having a flashback, this isn’t happening now.”
- Listen for present day sounds and say them out loud (Birds, cars, people talking) or say calming things to yourself
- Try a taste that is connected with being safe (Drink coffee, chew gum: Keep something with you that works)
- Use a smell that reminds you of the present (Hand lotion, coffee, mint, candles)
- Hold an object that feels comforting (Key chain, coins, a picture, rocks, beads)
- Say the current date out loud
- Avoid doing things like staring, rocking, humming: They will take you further into the flashback
- Make a flashcard with messages: “I am safe now.” “It is OK to ask for help.”
- Keep a list of people who are safe to call for help

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur after experiencing or witnessing life-threatening events. Some examples are rape, domestic violence, military combat, natural disasters, or terrorist incidents. It can also occur after experiencing physical or sexual abuse as a child.

PTSD can interfere with daily living and can interrupt the healing process. These symptoms can last for a short period of time, months, or even years. Symptoms could begin right after the event or can surface months or even years later.

People who suffer from PTSD often relive the experience through:

- Nightmares
- Flashbacks
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feeling alone or different

These symptoms can be severe enough and last long enough to cause problems in your life. Trauma can also affect your physical health.

Help is available.

Talk with your doctor about any symptoms you experience. Contact PAAR to learn more about healing from sexual violence.

The checklist on this page could be helpful in talking to your counselor if you have any of these symptoms related to a sexual assault:

I “RELIVE” THE TRAUMATIC EVENT BY:

- Having bad dreams or nightmares
- Behaving or feeling as if the event were actually happening again
- Having a lot of feelings when I am reminded of the event
- Having physical sensations when I am reminded of the event (Heart races or pounds, hard to breathe, feel faint, sweating)

I AVOID REMINDERS OF THE TRAUMATIC EVENT BY:

- Avoiding thoughts, conversations, or feelings that remind me of the event
- Avoiding people, places, or activities that remind me of the event
- Having difficulty remembering some important part of the event

I HAVE NOTICED THAT SINCE THE EVENT HAPPENED:

- I have lost interest in things that used to be important to me
- I feel “detached” from people. I find it hard to trust people
- I feel emotionally “numb”
- I have a hard time falling or staying asleep
- I have problems with anger
- I am “jumpy” and always on guard

I HAVE THESE MEDICAL OR EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS:

- Stomach problems
- Gynecological problems
- Weight gain or loss
- Chronic pain (back, neck, pelvic area in women)
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Nightmares
- Depression
- Lack of energy
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Anxiety attacks
- Other symptoms I have:

TOOLS TO HELP

COPING WITH YOUR FIVE SENSES

SIGHT:

Look around the room and name what you see. Notice safe people and objects.

SOUND:

Listen for sounds and name them.

TASTE:

Eat a peppermint. Chew gum. Drink coffee or tea.

SMELL:

Use scented hand lotion or candles. Lavender and eucalyptus help to calm.

TOUCH:

Hold a safe object. Feel your feet on the floor.

BODY SCAN MEDITATION

- 1** Begin by bringing your attention to your body.
- 2** You can close your eyes if that's comfortable for you.
- 3** You can notice your body seated wherever you are, feeling the weight of your body on the chair, on the floor, or on another space.
- 4** Take a few deep breaths.
- 5** As you take a deep breath, think about bringing in oxygen.
- 6** As you exhale, think about relaxing your body.
- 7** You can notice your legs against the chair and notice if you feel pressure from the chair, heaviness or lightness.
- 8** Notice your back against the chair.

MEDITATION

- 9 Bring your attention into your stomach area. If your stomach is tense or tight, let it soften. Take a breath.
- 10 Notice your hands. Are your hands tense or tight? See if you can allow them to soften.
- 11 Notice your arms. Feel any sensation in your arms. Let your shoulders be soft.
- 12 Notice your neck and throat. Let them be soft. Relax.
- 13 Soften your jaw. Let your face and facial muscles be soft.
- 14 Then notice your whole body be present. Take one more breath.
- 15 Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Take a breath. When you're ready, you can open your eyes.

THE LEGAL SYSTEM

In-person advocates are available to accompany and support victims and their families through all police and court proceedings. contact paar to request an advocate.

CRIMINAL COURT

1. Police conduct an investigation. The alleged perpetrator will be arrested if probable cause can be determined.

In cases with a child victim, the interview is held at a Child Advocacy Center with the police (this is called a "Forensic Interview").

2. A Preliminary Hearing is held if charges are filed: You will be asked to testify in front of a local magistrate. You become a witness for the commonwealth and an Assistant District Attorney (ADA) is assigned to the case.

3. Cases approved at the preliminary level are sent to The Allegheny County Court and have a trial date set. About one month before the trial date, you will meet the ADA at a Pre-Trial Interview.

4. The case could have continuances and postponements, which lengthen the court process. The defendant has the option to choose a plea bargain or request a trial, which could be held with a jury or just the judge. You will testify in the case along with witnesses as needed. The defendant is found guilty or not guilty of all or some of the charges.

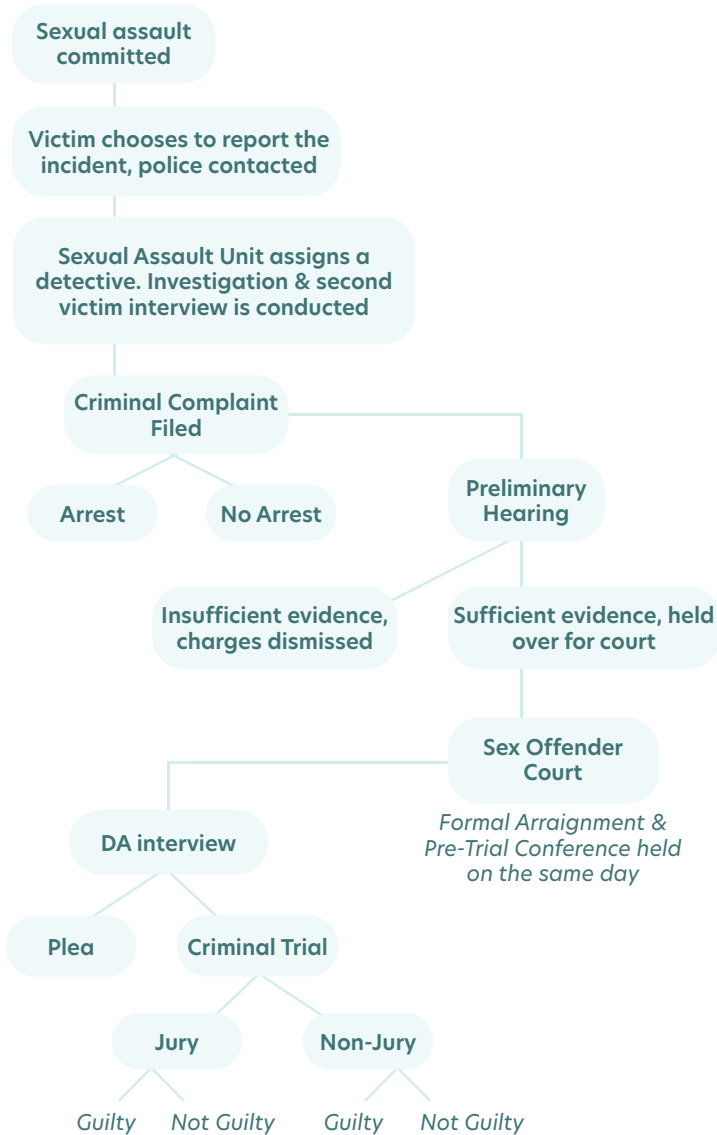
5. Sentencing: You have the option to read a Victim Impact Statement and to tell the judge how the crime has impacted your life.

JUVENILE COURT

1. An alleged juvenile perpetrator might be sent to a detention facility until the hearing date or released to a parent or guardian with court supervision.

2. Juvenile Court cases are held in front of a judge, with no jury. The defendant is adjudicated delinquent or found not delinquent of all or some of the charges.

THE CRIMINAL COURT PROCESS



THE JUVENILE COURT PROCESS



VICTIMS NOTIFICATION

Victims have the right to know the status of their offenders. VINE is an automated, reliable, and confidential system. VINE provides access to timely information about an offender's custody status and criminal case information. Register and stay informed.

REGISTRATION:

The offender must be in custody in order to register. Once registered, you can choose to receive notifications by email, text, or phone call. Or you can check custody status information online at any time.

HOW TO REGISTER:

Via PAAR:

PAAR will help you navigate VINE registration, including submitting registration on your behalf. Contact PAAR at (412) 431-5665.

Online:

VINELink.com is the online portal for VINE. VINE can be accessed anytime to provide the most reliable information for custody status changes.

The Office of Victim Advocate (OVA) is the state agency with the authority and duty to advocate for the rights and needs of crime victims.

This mission is accomplished through victim services, which include post-sentencing notifications of offender status and movements within the PA Department of Corrections and the parole system, as well as restorative justice programs that promote resilience and healing.

ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM:

The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) provides victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, or stalking with an alternate mailing address to keep track of their actual home address out of public records where the perpetrator may find their location. ACP is designed to be a part of an overall safety plan for victims who are planning to move or have recently moved to a location unknown to the perpetrator.

RESILIENT VOICES SPEAKER PROGRAM:

The Resilient Voices program matches survivors with speaking opportunities - both virtual and in-person - according to their individual goals. Educating advocates and the public on the impact of trauma are key to crime prevention.

CONTACT:

Reach OVA Monday through Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm at 800.563.6399. Calls are answered by professional Victim Assistance Coordinators who are available to assist with any questions related to victims' rights and the services available.

You can learn more at www.ova.pa.gov.

Source: Pennsylvania Office of Victim Advocate

PROTECTION ORDERS

You may be eligible to file a protection order, which can help ensure your safety if you have experienced sexual violence or intimidation.

Advocates are available to provide support and accompaniment to victims as they navigate this process. To request an advocate or to learn more about protection order options, contact PAAR at (412) 431-5665.

TYPES OF ORDERS

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PROTECTION ORDER (SVP)

Available to people who have experienced sexual violence. It is not required that the incident be reported to police in order to seek this protection. To be eligible, the plaintiff must not have a “family or household member” relationship with the defendant and should be able to indicate a continued risk of harm.

PROTECTION FROM INTIMIDATION ORDER (PFI)

Available to minor children who have experienced intimidation, including harassment and stalking. To be eligible the incident must involve a victim less than 18 years of age and an adult defendant. The minor child must not have a “family or household member” relationship with the defendant.

A parent, adult household member, or guardian may seek relief on behalf of minor children.

PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDER (PFA)

Available to people who have experienced violence and have a “family or household member” relationship with the defendant including spouses; ex-spouses; current or former sexual/ intimate partners; parents and children; siblings; other people related by blood or marriage.

TYPES OF RELIEF INCLUDE:

Prohibiting direct & indirect contact with the victim
Keeping the defendant from entering the victim's residence, place of employment, business or school
Prohibiting direct & indirect contact with other designated people
Any other appropriate relief sought by the plaintiff

WHERE TO FILE :

You may file a petition in the county where you reside or are employed; in the county where the sexual violence/intimidation occurred; or in the county where the defendant will be served.

In Allegheny County, petitions are filed in Family Division:

440 Ross Street Suite 3030 Pittsburgh, PA 15219

A Temporary Order can be filed beginning at 8:30am until 11:00am on days the court is open. The order will remain in effect until the Final Hearing, which will be in 10 business days. A Final Order could be granted for up to 36 months.

CIVIL JUSTICE

In the civil justice system, victims may seek accountability in the form of monetary resources.

THE CIVIL AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Unlike the criminal justice system, the civil justice system does not attempt to determine the innocence or guilt of an offender. The civil court will determine whether the offender or a third party is liable for harm as the result of the crime—this means the offender would pay the victim, or the victim’s family, monetary damage.

STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

Victims who were over the age of 18 at the time of the crime have (2) years to file civil cases. Victims who were under the age of 18 at the time of the crime have until their 30TH birthday to file a civil case.

Victims should speak with an attorney to determine the statute of limitations that applies to their case and to protect their rights.

THE CIVIL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The civil justice system can provide victims with monetary resources necessary to rebuild their lives. The civil justice system often provides victims and their families with a sense of justice. Unlike the criminal court system, which holds defendants accountable for their “crimes against the state,” the civil justice system seeks to hold defendants directly accountable to the victim(s).

Victims have control in how a case moves through the civil process. It is the victim who chooses whether or not to file a case, accept a settlement offer, or go to trial.

BURDEN OF PROOF

Civil cases must be proven by a preponderance of the evidence, or “more likely to have occurred than not.” This means that the victim’s evidence is more persuasive than the defendant’s. The burden of proof in civil cases is lower than the “proof beyond a reasonable doubt” that is required for a conviction in the criminal justice system. Therefore, it is sometimes possible to find the defendant liable in a civil case even though the criminal case had a verdict of “not guilty.” Victims may choose to pursue only a civil case, or there might be both a civil and criminal case.

HOW TO SEEK CIVIL REMEDIES

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR)’s Sexual Violence Legal Assistance Project

The Legal Assistance Project provides free holistic legal advice and counsel, and short-term representation to victims of sexual violence.
(717) 901-6784

The National Crime Victim Bar Association

The National Crime Victim Bar Association provides information about the civil justice system and will provide attorney referrals.
(202) 467-8716

VICTIMS RIGHTS

AS THE VICTIM OF A CRIME, YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS:

- To be provided with basic information on available services;
- You will be told about certain significant actions within the justice system pertaining to your case.
- This includes the granting or denial of bail to an adult offender, the detention or release of a juvenile, the filing of a petition alleging delinquency, and the escape and subsequent apprehension of an adult prior to trial or a juvenile prior to adjudication;
- To be accompanied at all proceedings by a family member, a victim advocate, or other support person;
- To give prior comment on the sentencing decision regarding an adult offender or the disposition of a delinquent child;
- To receive help in preparing an oral and/or written victim impact statement detailing the physical, psychological and economic effects of the crime, which will be considered by the courts;
- To be restored as you were before the crime, as much as possible, through restitution and to receive assistance with preparing, submitting and follow-up with a claim for compensation;
- To be notified of an adult offender's transfer from a state prison to a mental health facility and the discharge, transfer or escape of the adult offender from that facility;
- To receive immediate notice of the release of an adult offender on bail who is incarcerated in a local prison for a violation of a
- Protection From Abuse (PFA) order, or for a personal injury crime committed against the victim protected by the PFA;
- To have property returned that was seized as evidence, but is no longer needed for prosecution;

- To have notice and to provide prior comment on a judicial recommendation that the defendant participate in a motivational boot camp;
- To have notice and provide comment on resentencing decisions regarding an offender;
- To have notice and provide prior comment on prosecutor's waiver of eligibility requirement of an offender to enter the Recidivism Risk Reduction Incentive (RRRI) Program;
- To be notified and provide comment if the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections requests that the court reconsider an inmate's sentence, and re-sentence that inmate to the State Intermediate Punishment Program;
- To be present at trials and the execution of an offender; and
- To receive notice of the arrest of a defendant for violating a PFA order.

VICTIMS OF A PERSONAL INJURY CRIME COMMITTED BY A JUVENILE HAVE THE ADDITIONAL RIGHT:

- To receive prior notice of delinquency hearings and notification of hearings about the transfer of a juvenile to and from criminal proceedings;
- To receive notice of the details of the final disposition of a juvenile's case;
- By your request, to receive notice prior to the release of a juvenile from residential placement, a shelter facility, or a detention center;
- By your request, to be notified and have the opportunity to submit a written objection prior to the transfer or release from a placement facility of a juvenile who has been adjudicated delinquent, when such action is contrary to a previous court order or placement plan approved at a disposition review hearing;
- By your request, to be given immediate notice of a juvenile's escape from residential placement, a shelter facility or a detention center and subsequent apprehension; and
- By your request, to submit written comment and oral testimony at a disposition review hearing.

VICTIMS RIGHTS

SEXUAL ASSAULT TESTING AND EVIDENCE COLLECTION ACT

The Sexual Assault Testing and Evidence Collection (SATEC) Act was enacted in 2015 and requires a comprehensive and precise process for the testing of evidence and notification of victims, and qualifies PA for federal funding to test backlogged or untested forensic exam kits. Includes:

- Allows victims to have evidence collected and tested anonymously.
- Allows victims to consent to testing of the evidence, whether through the Department of Health (DOH) forensic exam paperwork or a separate consent form.
- Requires law enforcement officers to notify victims about the status of evidence, if requested and if contact information is provided.
- Directs law enforcement to take possession of evidence within 72 hours of receiving notice from health care facilities.
- Directs local authorities to submit evidence within 15 days to an approved laboratory, which would have to complete testing within six months.
- Mandates annual reports on testing backlogs, and permits authorities to upload testing results into databases to help solve related sexual assault cases.

HOW THIS IMPACTS VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The Sexual Assault Testing and Evidence Collection Act, also known as Act 27, requires that victims are informed of timelines and testing results. This allows victims time to decide about their options in pursuing evidence testing and investigation.

Law enforcement with custody of the kit are required to collaborate with a sexual assault counselor to employ best practices when notifying a victim of the following information:

- When the kit is submitted to the lab for testing;
- When the lab has received a request to compare the evidence collected from the victim's kit to existing profiles maintained by the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) or other federal DNA databases;
- If a match is found by comparing evidence collected from the victim to existing profiles maintained by CODIS or other state or federal DNA databases;
- Of intended destruction or disposal of the sexual assault evidence collection kit or its contents. This must happen at least 60 days prior to the date of destruction and the victim must request this notification in writing. This notification may occur over a number of years since evidence will be preserved for the full duration of the Statute of Limitations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.legis.state.pa.us and type "2015HB272" in the search box.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CRIME VICTIMS RIGHTS IN PA:

www.oa.pa.gov

PA Crime Victims Act (2007)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE MEDIA YOU HAVE THE RIGHT...

- To say “No” to an interview.
- To select the spokesperson or advocate of your choice.
- To select the time and location for an interview. To avoid a press conference atmosphere by speaking to only one reporter at a time.
- To say “No” to an interview even though you have previously granted interviews.
- To release a written statement through a spokesperson instead of an interview.
- To exclude children from interviews.
- To demand a correction when inaccurate information is reported.
- To conduct a television interview using a silhouette or a newspaper interview without having your photo taken.
- To refrain from answering reporter’s questions during the trial.
- To file a formal complaint against a journalist.
- To be treated with dignity and respect by the media.

VICTIMS COMPENSATION

Compensation is available to the victims of crime and their families through pccd (*pa commission on crime & delinquency*).

the crime victims compensation fund can help cover out- of-pocket expenses related to a crime.

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE IF :

- The crime occurred in PA
- The claim is filed within 5 years of the crime
- Out-of-pocket expenses are at least \$50
- The crime was reported to police, campus police, or a protection order was filed*

*This is not required when the victim is/was a child at the time of the crime.

REIMBURSEMENT INCLUDING :

Medical bills	Child care	Travel costs, including
Counseling	Relocation	mileage to counseling
Lost wages		and/or proceedings

To request an application and to receive assistance filing a claim, contact PAAR at (412) 431-5665 or contact the Victims Compensation Assistance Program at 1-800-233-2339.

In 2022, the Victim's Compensation Program was updated through ACT 77. The changes to eligibility and reimbursement are not retroactive, but instead apply to crimes that occurred after 09/08/2022. For more information about eligibility and the application process, please contact PAAR.

CLIENT INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information contained within your client record is protected by state confidentiality laws (42 PA C.S.A. Section 5945.1 and/or 23 PA C.S.A. Section 6102). Both the law and professional standards require that PAAR maintain service records with confidentiality and respect.

PAAR is not permitted to disclose information from your client record to a third party without your written consent. This includes your protected health information and any personal information that identifies who you are. Written consent is documented by you signing a PAAR's Authorization to Release Information form. Verbal consent for limited release of information may be necessary in special circumstances.

For clients who are under age 14, written and verbal consent are provided by a legal caregiver.

In certain situations, PAAR may have a legal obligation to report information:

- All PAAR employees and volunteers are mandated reporters of child abuse. This means that any suspicion of child abuse will be reported to PA Childline.
- Safety is a priority at PAAR. PAAR employees will take action to prevent harm if you disclose a plan to harm yourself or someone else. To ensure the safety of everyone, PAAR staff will disclose the relevant information to the appropriate law enforcement, medical, and/or mental health professionals to maintain safety.

- In the event that a PAAR employee believes that you, or someone else, might be in immediate danger of being harmed, PAAR reserves the right to call the Resolve Crisis Network or 911 to help you obtain a higher level of care for your safety or the safety of others.

- When a valid court order is issued for records, PAAR will make every attempt to quash the subpoena. However, if this is not successful, the agency is bound by law to comply with such requests.

CLIENT RECORDS

Although the records containing your information are the physical property of PAAR, the information belongs to you. To request a copy of your records, please submit your request in writing (81 South 19th Street, Pittsburgh 15203) or call the main office at (412) 431-5665.

For additional information pertaining to confidentiality, please reference the “Consent to Counseling Services and Notice of Privacy Practices” document and/or the “Advocacy Consent Form.”

RIGHT TO FILE A COMPLIANT

If you feel that your privacy rights have been violated you have the right to file a complaint.

You may contact the person listed below if you want to file a complaint or to report a problem with how PAAR has used or disclosed information about you. PAAR cannot retaliate against you for filing a complaint. You may contact:

Lisa Kadlecik
Pittsburgh Action Against Rape
81 South 19th Street Pittsburgh, PA 15203
(412) 431-5665

PAAR observes the following process to express and resolve non-PHI complaints you may have about the decisions and/or quality of services you have been provided:

1. You, the client or primary care giver, or guardian (in the case of children) should talk about the problem with the staff member with whom there is a problem.
2. If this does not resolve the issues to your satisfaction, you will be asked to describe your complaint in writing. The staff person will give you the grievance form to complete. He/she will forward the complaint to his/her supervisor within (10) workdays.
3. Once the supervisor gets the complaint, he/she will schedule a meeting to include you, the staff person and him/herself. This meeting should take place within (5) days of the written complaint being received. If the grievance is resolved at this stage, you will be given a written copy of the agreed resolution by the staff supervisor within (5) working days following the meeting.

4. If the grievance remains unresolved all documentation of the process to date will be turned over to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will conduct the needed investigation and respond to you in writing within (5) workdays of receiving the grievance.

5. For a non-counseling grievance, if a resolution has not been reached following this process, you may pursue resolution through contacting the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR).

Upon receipt of a written consent from you, the Executive Director will send all documentation of the grievance process to the Director of PCAR. You will also receive a copy of this material. This will be completed within(5) working days following receipt of the signed consent.

6. If you are not satisfied with the resolution at this stage, you may appeal the decision to the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) or the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD):

**Department of Public
Welfare Health &
Welfare Building Room
533
PO Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105-
2675**

**Pennsylvania
Commission on Crime
and Delinquency Office
of Victim's Services PO
Box 1167
Harrisburg, PA 17108-
1167**

**PA Office of Victim
Advocate 1101 South
Front Street Suite 5200
Harrisburg, PA 17104**

SAFETY PLAN TEMPLATE

STEP 1

Warning signs (thoughts, images, mood, situation, behavior) that a crisis may be developing:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STEP 2

Internal coping strategies—Things I can do to take my mind off my problems without contacting another person (relaxation technique, physical activity):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STEP 3

People and social settings that provide distraction:

1. Name _____ Phone _____
2. Name _____ Phone _____
3. Place _____ Place _____

STEP 4

People whom I can ask for help:

1. Name _____ Phone _____
2. Name _____ Phone _____
3. Name _____ Phone _____

STEP 5

Professionals or agencies I can contact during a crisis:

1. Clinician Name _____ Phone _____

Hotline or Emergency # _____

2. Clinician Name _____ Phone _____

Hotline or Emergency # _____

3. Local Urgent Care Services

Address _____

**RESOLVE 1-888-7-YOU-CAN / 1-888-796-8226
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255
suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat**

STEP 6

Making the environment safe:

1. _____

2. _____

The one thing that is most important to me and worth living for is:

FOR YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Many victims of sexual violence and abuse may struggle with feelings of guilt, shame, and sadness. Providing comfort and support to victims can often mean just listening without judgment and without asking questions. Knowing what to say can help reassure victims that their feelings and reactions are appropriate and expected.

HOW TO RESPOND TO A DISCLOSURE:

- Say “I believe you” out loud.
- Validate their feelings: “It’s ok to feel _____.”
- Stay calm.
- Use active listening. Stay in the moment.
- Be non-judgmental.
- Don’t try to fix it. They might not want advice.
- Hold space for their feelings. Use your empathy.
- Be ok with silence.
- Stay grounded. Take some deep breaths together.
- Acknowledge their resilience and strengths.
- Normalize the impact of trauma.
- Say it wasn’t their fault. No matter what.
- Be transparent and honest about what happens next.
- Provide choice and control when you can.
- Ask them what would be helpful.
- Give unconditional support: “This is hard, but I believe in you.”

YOU CAN LISTEN

Let the victim talk. Allow them to express feelings in their own time. Do not push the victim to talk or share. Let them know you are there to listen when they are ready.

YOU CAN BELIEVE

Tell the victim you believe them. If they are talking to you about the assault, they trust you. You can believe and support them without judgment by saying things like:

- “I believe you and I am sorry that happened to you.”
- “It took a lot of courage for you to share that with me.”

YOU CAN EMPOWER

Allow the victim to make choices. All power and control were taken from the victim during the assault and making decisions can give back a feeling of control. you can educate

- “Your feelings are normal.”
- “Do you know what might feel helpful?”
- “You get to decide with whom to share this.”

Learn more about common reactions to sexual assault so you can better understand the victim. Contact PAAR for resources to help you.

Many family members and friends of victims of sexual violence and abuse are also impacted. if you want to talk, or want help for yourself or a family member, paar is here.

SELF-CARE TIPS

For family members and friends

TIME FOR YOURSELF

Recognize that you need to take time for yourself. Make the time to engage in activities or hobbies you enjoy.

DEAL WITH YOUR OWN FEELINGS

It is common to experience a range of emotions. Realize that you are not alone in feeling this way. These feelings are normal reactions:

- Impatience or frustration at the length of recovery
- Guilt that you could not prevent the assault
- Anger at the perpetrator or a desire for revenge

REACH OUT

Knowing how to take care of yourself and feeling supported is important. Reach out to family and friends about what you are experiencing.

To request services, contact PAAR at (412) 431-5665.

7 THINGS TO TRY WHEN YOU ARE FEELING ANXIOUS

1. Write it out

Try not to worry about style or grammar, just relax and write.

2. Don't forget to breathe

We sometimes forget to breathe in stressful situations.

3. Use water

Try running your hands under the faucet. Change the temperature and pressure. Notice how it feels.

4. Do something repetitive

Try something that's natural, like washing dishes, knitting, or coloring.

5. Go for a walk

Go outside if you can. Count your steps and listen to the noises around you.

6. Think outside the box

You don't have to be calm and quiet. Turn on some loud music and dance.

7. Be kind to yourself

Say out loud to yourself: "Everything is going to be okay. I am okay."

WHAT IS CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE?

Many victims of sexual violence and abuse may struggle with feelings of guilt, shame, and sadness. Providing comfort and support to victims can often mean just listening without judgment and without asking questions. Knowing what to say can help reassure victims that their feelings and reactions are appropriate and expected.

HOW TO RESPOND TO A DISCLOSURE:

- Say “I believe you” out loud.
- Validate their feelings: “It’s ok to feel _____.”
- Stay calm.
- Use active listening. Stay in the moment.
- Be non-judgmental.
- Don’t try to fix it. They might not want advice.
- Hold space for their feelings. Use your empathy.
- Be ok with silence.
- Stay grounded. Take some deep breaths together.
- Acknowledge their resilience and strengths.
- Normalize the impact of trauma.
- Say it wasn’t their fault. No matter what.
- Be transparent and honest about what happens next.
- Provide choice and control when you can.
- Ask them what would be helpful.
- Give unconditional support: “This is hard, but I believe in you.”

Childhood sexual abuse can take many forms including inappropriate touch, sexual acts, sexualized grooming, child pornography, child sexual exploitation, internet-based child sexual abuse, and sexual harassment.

Childhood sexual abuse can involve the use of physical force, threats of violence, bribes or abuse of a position of authority.

Most children seek approval from adults and authority figures, and therefore will do what they are told.

BREAKING THE SILENCE AND BUILDING STRENGTH

Sexual abuse can have long-lasting effects, not only on children but also on the entire family. The Child and Family Counseling Center provides trauma-informed and evidence-based treatment to children and adolescent survivors of sexual abuse and their families.

PAAR therapists are trained in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR), and other evidence-based and trauma-informed modalities. The PAAR Child and Family Counseling Center utilizes mind-body based interventions as well as other creative art interventions to promote the processing of trauma and development of healthy coping skills.

COMMON REACTIONS

Children and adolescents who have been sexually abused may react in different ways. Here are some signs to look for:

- Becoming withdrawn
- Changes in eating habits
- Outbursts of anger or mood swings
- Changes in sleep patterns like nightmares, bedwetting, refusal to sleep alone
- Behavioral changes at school
- Physical symptoms like headaches or stomach aches
- Inappropriate sexual behavior
- Sexualized play or talk
- Cutting and other self-harming behavior
- Becoming unusually secretive
- Difficulties separating or being “clingy”
- Fear of particular places or people

TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT THE ABUSE

Children and adolescents who have been abused need:

- To know that the abuse was not their fault
- To know that they did nothing wrong
- To be reassured that they were right to tell what was happening to them
- To know what will happen next
- To be supported unconditionally
- To know what will happen (do not make unrealistic promises)
- To receive trauma counseling

TO BE BELIEVED

“I believe you and I’m glad you told me.” “I’m proud of you for telling me.”

“You did the right thing by telling me.”

TO HEAR IT IS NOT THEIR FAULT

“I’m really sorry that happened to you.” “I want you to know it is not your fault.” “You didn’t do anything wrong.”

“You are not bad or in trouble.”

TOOLS TO HELP

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness can be a useful tool for decreasing anxiety in children of all ages. Mindfulness can help parents and caregivers, too, by promoting calm and relieving stress. To get the most impact, take a few minutes each day to practice mindfulness. For parents and caregivers, the best way to teach a child to be mindful is to do it with them!

FINGER COUNTING BREATHS TO CALM PANIC OR ANXIETY

Make a gentle fist with your hands. With each breath, uncurl a finger from your palm. For example, on the first exhale open your left thumb from your fist. Pause and inhale. On the next exhale, open your left index finger. Pause and inhale. Continue until you have two open palms.

DEEP BREATHS BEFORE BED TO HELP WITH SLEEP

Take a deep breath in through your nose. On the exhale, chant out loud “three” (threeee). Take another deep breath and on the exhale, chant “two” (twwooo). Take a last deep breath and on the exhale chant “one” (onnee). Relax for a few breaths. Repeat.

TOOLS TO HELP

FIST SQUEEZE TO LET GO OF ANGER

- 1:** Stand, sit or lie down and relax your arms by your sides. Take three soft, slow, mindful breaths. Pay attention to what you are thinking and feeling.
- 2:** Imagine those thoughts and feelings gathering like red-hot energy in your hands. Breathe in and squeeze your fists as tightly you can.
- 3:** Breathe out and open your hands, soft and loose. Imagine the red- hot energy flying away like sparks.
- 4:** Breathe in and squeeze your fists again. Let the energy build.
- 5:** Breath out, open your hands and let the energy go.
- 6:** Repeat until you feel calmer. When you are done, swing your arms gently side to side to loosen up.

THE POWER OF BLUE TO CALM AND MANAGE FEELINGS

- 1:** Sit with your spine straight and body relaxed. Close your eyes.
- 2:** Breathe in and picture a blue ball of light pushing inside your fore- head. Imagine it calming your thoughts.
- 3:** Breathe out and picture the blue ball of light dropping into your throat. Imagine it clearing out unkind thoughts and words.
- 4:** Breathe in and see the blue light glowing brighter. Breathe out and picture it dropping into your heart. Imagine it soothing hurt feelings.
- 5:** Breathe in again and picture the blue filling your body. Breathe out and feel it down to your toes.
- 6:** Sit with the blue light for a moment and let it glow inside you. You can take it with you when you are done.

FOR PARENTS

For parents and caregivers, it is normal to feel upset, uncertain or anxious. The mindfulness exercised “S.T.O.P.” can be a helpful tool.

STOP. Take a moment to pause, no matter what you are doing. It can wait.

TAKE a breath. Feel the sensation of your own breathing, which brings you back to the present moment.

OBERVE. Notice what is happening, good or bad, inside you. Notice what is happening, good or bad, around you. Just note it.

PROCEED. You have checked in with yourself. You are rooted in the present moment. What do you feel? How do you want to respond?

**HEALING TAKES TIME.
BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF.**

WAYS TO HELP KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFE

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN...

- ...the basic and accurate vocabulary of their body parts
- ...they decide who touches their body
- ...to trust their own feelings about touch
- ...that it is not fair for an adult to make you keep a secret about a touch that is uncomfortable
- ...how to be assertive, say “No!” and ask for help in a loud, strong voice
- ...that an uncomfortable touch is not their fault

Keep communication open with your children. Tell them that they can come to you whenever they need to talk. Don't assume they know to do this.

Listen to your children completely, do not interrupt them when they are talking.

Be in control of your reactions if a child tells you something upsetting. Children look to their parents for their reaction.

Pay attention to your own reactions. Get support from other supportive adults, so you can be available to your child.

Model the behaviors you want your kids to learn.

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN...

Teach children to respect their own boundaries. Do not make kids hug or kiss people if they feel uncomfortable.

If a child discloses abuse, tell them you believe them, even if you have questions and doubts.

Tell them you are glad they talked to you about the abuse and that you will help them.

Read books about children's self-esteem, child sexual abuse, and children's rights.

WAYS TO HELP KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFE

THE ROLE OF A PARENT...

While empowering our children to trust their own boundaries and to report abuse through open and honest communication is very important, we must always remember that it is the adult's responsibility to keep the child safe.

As adults, we must:

- Be involved and in communication with all the adults in our child's life
- Question questionable behavior. Don't just question your child, but question the adult.
- Tell the adults in your child's life that you are aware of what goes on.
- Don't assume that traditional safe people are all safe.
- Understand that people who groom children, also groom and manipulate the adults in the child's life.

COMMON REACTIONS OF ADOLESCENTS

- Sudden thoughts of the event come into your head when you least expect or don't want them to (Flashbacks)
- Becoming upset when reminded of the trauma
- Avoiding reminders of the trauma
- Feeling "numb" or "different"
- Not spending time with friends (social withdrawal)
- Becoming easily angry or frustrated
- Difficulty sleeping and nightmares
- Changes in eating and appetite
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in hobbies or activities
- Sudden onset of feeling:
 - Sad or depressed
 - Bad about yourself
 - That things will not work out in your future
 - That others don't understand you
 - That you don't care about things that happen around you
 - Alone

COMMON REACTIONS OF LGBTQ+ YOUTH

- Sudden thoughts of the event come into your head when you least expect or don't want them to (Flashbacks)
- Difficulty identifying sexual abuse
- Feeling invisible, isolated or as though no one understands
- Loss of trust in adults, teachers, others your age or other people who identify as LGBTQ+
- Feeling humiliated or blamed for what happened
- Feeling like you are betraying your LGBTQ+ community if you report partner sexual violence
- Feeling like you have no where to go for help
- Feeling afraid of unhelpful responses from friends, family, police, etc.

BOOK LIST

FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma
Bessel van der Kolk

My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies
Resmaa Menakem

Written on the Body: Letters from Trans and Nonbinary Survivors of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence
Jessica Kingsley Publishers

We Believe You: Survivors of Campus Sexual Assault Speak Out
Annie E. Clark and Andrea L. Pino

Know My Name
Chanel Miller

Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body
Roxane Gay

BOOK LIST

FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Helpline Your Child Recover from Sexual Abuse

Caren Adams and Jennifer Fay

When Your Child Has Been Molested: A Parent's Guide to Healing and Recovery

Kathryn Brohl and Joyce Case Potter

WEBSITES

FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

The National Traumatic Childhood Stress Network (NTCSN):

www.nctsn.org

Sesame Street in Communities: Activities and Tips for Families:

www.sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/traumatic-experiences

BOOK LIST

FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Amazing You

Gail Saltz (ages 3 and up)

My Body Belongs to Me!

Larissa H. Rhone (ages 3 and up)

My Body Belongs to Me

Jill Starishevsky (ages 5 and up)

Let's Talk about Body Boundaries, Consent, and Respect

Jayneen Sanders (ages 5 and up)

RESOURCES

POLICE

Allegheny County Police 875
Greentree Road
10 Parkway Center Pittsburgh,
PA 15220

P: (412) 473-3000

CHILDREN

A Child's Place

P: (412) 232-7200 www.achildsplacepa.org

www.achildsplacepa.org

Child Advocacy Center,
Children's Hospital

P: (412) 692-8747 www.chp.edu

City of Pittsburgh Police
1203 Western Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

P: (412) 323-7141

Child Line (24-HOUR)

P: 1-800-932-0313

report suspected child
abuse and neglect.

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Allegheny Link

P: 1-866-730-2368

emergency shelter and rapid
rehousing programs.

Southwestern PA 211

P: 2-1-1

database of human services and representation.

crisis resources.

Re:Solve Crisis Network

P: 1-888-7-YOU CAN (1-888-

796-8226)

telephone and walk-in crisis

intervention. mobile crisis unit.

community referrals.

Sexual Violence Legal
Assistance Project

P: (717) 901-6784

free and confidential

legal advice and

short-term legal

representation.

Women's Center &

Shelter hotline: (412)

687-8005 intimate

partner and domestic

violence program



PAAR Helpline: 1-866-END-RAPE