



Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services
Sexual Assault Program Coordinator
58 South Main Street, Suite 1
Waterbury, Vermont 05676
TEL: 1-802-241-1250 ext. 104
1-800-750-1213
FAX: 1-802-241-1253

Your Health Matters!

If you are a victim of sexual assault, the Sexual Assault Program of the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services (VCCVS) can provide you with financial resources for the following:

- *sexual assault examination ****
- *STI screening (including HIV) and prophylaxis*
- *pregnancy testing*
- *treatment of injuries from the sexual assault*
- *2 follow up medical care visits*
- *mental health counseling (limited to 20 visits)*

At No Financial Cost to You!

If you are under the age of 18, the sexual assault will be reported to the VT Dept. of Children and Families. If you are over the age of 18, the sexual assault does not have to be reported to police!

Choosing a Mental Health Provider

Some victim/survivors have found it helpful to seek counseling services from a mental health provider, psychologist, psychiatrist, or other counseling professional. A Mental Health Provider can be a valuable part of your support system. They can provide clarity, insight, information, and consistent support as you move through the journey of healing.

A mental health provider should:

- Believe what you tell her or him
- Fully respect your feelings and experiences
- Keep the focus on you
- Encourage you to develop a support system outside of therapy
- Help enhance your self-care skills
- Be open to feedback and be willing to discuss problems that may occur in the therapy relationship
- Ensure your confidentiality

A mental health provider should NOT:

- Have a friendship with you outside of counseling
- Make light of your feelings or experiences
- Talk about his or her personal problems
- Want a sexual relationship with you now or in the future

- Force you to do anything that you do not want to do
- Push reconciliation or forgiveness

A mental health provider is someone employed and chosen by you. You have the right to information about their beliefs, methods and areas of expertise. You have the right to end a counseling relationship if you are not comfortable with your mental health provider, if you do not feel safe, or for any other reason.

If you are searching for a mental health provider now, it is okay to interview several before making your choice. Here are some questions that you might find useful in interviewing potential mental health providers. You may have other questions depending on your own needs or belief system.

- How long have you been practicing and what kind of degree do you have?
- What is your approach to therapy? (He/she should be able to explain this to you in easy to understand terms.)
- Do you have an area of specialization?
- Can you be reached during an emergency? How can I reach you if I have an emergency?
- Do you schedule emergency sessions?
- What training do you have in the area of working with victim/survivors of (type of crime that occurred to you)?
- What is your approach to treating crime victim/survivors?
- What do you believe is the role of a mental health provider in helping someone who is dealing with (type of crime that occurred to you)?

After you have spoken to the mental health provider, you may want to ask yourself a few questions.

- What feelings did I notice when I was talking to him/her?
- Did I feel respected and listened to?
- What did I like about talking to him/her?
- What did I dislike about talking to her/him?

Portions of this were adapted from [The Courage to Heal Workbook](#), by Laura Davis. The workbook includes a helpful chapter on finding a counselor. Another book with helpful information on finding a counselor is [Getting Free: You Can End Abuse and Take Back Your Life](#) by Ginny NiCarthy.

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