

RESOURCE GUIDE



I am

I am strong, wonderful, powerful, and capable.

I am worthy, I am deserving, I am open to change.

I am magnificent beyond comprehension.

I have a divine spirit and I can accomplish anything I set my mind to.

I control my thoughts, my mind and my body.

I am a positive light who inspires others.

I believe in myself.

I am more than enough.



Welcome.

This booklet is a resource for anyone who has experienced sexual violence. The Rape Crisis Center's staff and volunteers are here to help. If you have any questions about anything in this booklet, or anything **not** in this booklet, please contact us!



Here's what we want you to know:

- 1. We believe you.**
- 2. What happened was not your fault.**
- 3. We want you to make the choices that are right for you.**

Our main goal is to reinforce these three things, in any way you want us to. Our advocates will make sure you have the information you need, but they will never pressure you to behave or feel a certain way.

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Important Notes

What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence is an umbrella term for any unwanted sexual or romantic attention. This could be:

- Physical (touching or being too close)
- Verbal (spoken or written words)
- Visual or auditory (being forced to see or hear gestures, images, or videos)

Sexual violence is *never* caused by the victim. These unwanted interactions hurt them and violate their trust. It's *always* the perpetrator's responsibility.

The motivations for sexual violence can be complicated. They might include sexual entitlement, hate, anger, or a desire for power or control. Perpetrators may use any form of manipulation or coercion, including physical force. Pre-existing power imbalances often make it difficult for victims to resist.

People are more vulnerable to the impact of sexual violence if they come from a marginalized community, or experience social oppression.

When is reporting required?

RCC advocates are not required to make reports of abuse.

Some other professionals are *mandated reporters*. This means that if they hear about any abuse or neglect of a vulnerable person, they may have to report it to authorities. The term "vulnerable person" refers to:

- People under age 18
- Adults who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation **and either**:
 - Have physical or mental conditions that make it hard to care for themselves, or
 - Are age 60 and older

The following roles are commonly mandated reporters:

- Healthcare professionals (nurses, doctors, etc.)
- School staff (teachers, principals, administrative staff, etc.)
- Social workers and counselors (caseworkers, therapists, psychologists, etc.)

You can always ask whether someone is required to report before you share with them. Advocates and helpline workers (at RCC and elsewhere) can talk with you privately about your thoughts, feelings, and legal rights.

Information for Survivors

Welcome. We're glad you're here.

We recognize that you might feel alone and scared. You might have a million questions. You might be wondering if this is the right place for you to be.

You are definitely in the right place. And though we can't guarantee that everything about this process will be comfortable or easy, we are on your side. We are committed to helping you get your needs met.

We believe you, and we are here for you.

What do you want to read about first?

I don't know. I feel overwhelmed right now.

That's okay. Take a couple deep breaths. You can put this booklet down and come back to it later. Or you can have an advocate walk through it with you, anytime you want—just call one of our helplines.

Emotional health and self-care.

Options for mental health support: [page 9](#).

Self-care and examples of activities: [page 29](#).

Physical health and medical information.

Forensic nurse exams: [page 6](#).

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RCC advocacy and services.

What advocacy is and what our advocates do: [page 16](#).

Information about our Chimera® Self-Defense program: [page 17](#).

Police and other reporting options.

Information on the reporting process: [page 19](#).



Physical Health

Many survivors want at least a little medical attention after an assault.

- You can get a forensic nurse exam (FNE) at any emergency room that offers it. These are usually free of charge. **(See next section.)**
- You can make a normal appointment with your primary care doctor. You might want to do this even if you also get a Forensic Nurse Exam. **(See page 8.)**

What can I expect from a forensic nurse exam?

The FNE program is a comprehensive service for people who have experienced sexual or domestic violence. These nurses are trained in trauma-informed care and can provide a range of services to meet your needs. Your RCC advocate is also here for you, and can be another resource for you during this process.



What are my choices?

You can choose any one, two, or three of these options—or none of them.

 <p>Most FNEs involve a <u>medical check</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Physical health check▪ Sexually transmitted infection testing, treatment, and prevention▪ Pregnancy testing and prevention	 <p>You may also choose to do <u>evidence collection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Body swabs for DNA evidence▪ Photos of injuries
	 <p>You may also choose to make a <u>police report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Police officer takes your statement▪ Evidence turned in to police officer

This choice is completely yours. We are here to provide information and to stand by you and your decisions. If you don't like what's happening at any point, please let us know. We don't have to do anything you aren't okay with. It's okay to be unsure—it's also okay to feel strongly. There's no "right" way to do this. However you decide to do it is right.

An RCC advocate will be called to the examination, and afterwards, an advocate will get in touch with you to check in. You can tell them about things you may be struggling with. Together you can explore how we might be able to support you.

People often ask...

Q: *Can I still access this program if I wasn't raped?*

A: Yes. It's designed for all kinds of sexual violence as well as elements of domestic or intimate partner violence. Whatever your experience was, if you didn't want it to happen and are looking for care, this program is for you.

Q: *Can I still access this program if I don't want to report what happened to me?*

A: Yes. **Adults don't have to report at all.** You can get a health check and related treatment only, if you want. Reporting can be a difficult choice, and you're the only one who can make it. If you aren't sure, but you might want to report later, the nurse can collect evidence and hold it for you. According to Wisconsin's statute of limitations, you can still report it within 10 years. It's best to contact law enforcement about 6 months before time runs out to give them time for the investigation.

Q: *My assault happened a long time ago. Can I still get care?*

A: Yes. We know it can take survivors a long time to decide to reach out.

- Evidence collection is easiest within 72 hours of the assault. But you are welcome to come in later than that.
- Medical care, including contraception and STI treatment, is more effective sooner rather than later. But you are welcome to come in whenever you make your decision.

Q: *How much will I have to pay for this examination?*

A: Patients should not expect to pay for this examination. Your visit should be covered by one of several funders. Your RCC advocate or your nurse examiner can answer more questions you may have about this.

Q: *Is this service confidential?*

A: Yes. The nurse examiner might have to make a report if a minor or other at-risk person is being harmed. RCC advocates are completely confidential.

You might still have many questions, and that's all right. Take your time deciding, and let us know if there's anything else you want to talk through.



How do I talk to my doctor about follow-up care?

Whether you get an FNE or not, it might be helpful to let your doctor know about your experience. If you're nervous or unsure about it, RCC advocates can help you prepare or debrief.

During an FNE, the nurse will ask if you want them to call your primary doctor about your visit. As always, feel free to say no. Here are some things to consider:

- Some medications require more than one dose, so you'll need someone to prescribe them. The FNE nurse can only prescribe the first dose.
- It may be important for you to get follow-up care from someone you know and trust. In that case, it can help to ask the FNE nurse to contact your primary doctor.
- It might be important to have this visit in your medical records. It could affect future medical care.

Even if the above are all true, you might still want some time to think about it. Or you might want to talk to someone about your options.

RCC advocates are able to talk this through with you and help you navigate the process. Here are some ways we can help.



We can call your doctor together. If you think it will be hard to express your needs, your advocate can help explain the situation to your doctor.

We can help you write a script for the phone or the doctor's office. Sometimes knowing what words to say is half the battle.

<i>Script examples:</i>	
To set up an appointment:	"I'd like to make an appointment to speak about some (sexual / gynecological / reproductive) healthcare needs."
To ask your doctor about follow-up:	"(Last week / month <i>or</i> some time ago) I had a forensic nurse exam. I'd like to talk about a second round of (medication)." "After I completed a forensic nurse exam, the nurse said I would need to get in touch to discuss follow-up care related to a (medication / injury / other)."
If you don't want to share details or how you feel:	"I don't want to talk to about the details." "Thank you for your concern. I'm already speaking to someone about that."
<i>NOTE: These are only suggestions. It's important to use language you're comfortable with.</i>	

Your doctor might ask you questions about your experience or what brought to you to the FNE in the first place. Remember that you get to decide how much you share and with whom.

We can help you process the experience before, after, or even during the visit. We are here for you.

Emotional & Mental Health

Everyone reacts differently to stress and trauma. You might find yourself in unfamiliar moods, or you might wonder why you don't feel much of anything. Any new feeling is likely related to your most recent experience. Remember that this is all normal. It doesn't mean you're weak, broken, or flawed.



What will help my mental health?

For everyday maintenance, check out the **self-care section of this booklet on page 25**. But self-care can only go so far—we can't expect it to fix everything.

If you need to talk to someone right away, call a helpline. Ours is available 24 hours a day at 608-251-7273 (English) or 608-258-2567 (Español). Other helplines may work for you as well.

If you want recommendations on who can help, talk to your RCC advocate or contact another service agency. You might also want to talk to your primary care doctor to see if they can refer you to a specialist.

If you want support from other people (not professionals), look for support groups in your area. Your RCC advocate or staff at other service agencies can tell you more.

If you want consistent, professional support over a period of time, your RCC advocate can help you figure out your options. Our advocates can meet regularly with you to give **emotional support (page 16)**. Or you may want to find a counselor, either at RCC or somewhere else.

People who can help you find mental health resources:

- Helplines
- Doctors
- Advocates
- Service agencies
- Social workers
- Caseworkers
- Counselors

RCC advocates can help too.

NOTE: In this book, when we say "counselor" we mean a therapist or psychologist. Other agencies might have different definitions.

People absolutely can and do heal on their own. But specialized attention can often get you there more quickly and effectively. And remember that you don't have to pick just one strategy! Even if you're seeing a counselor, you can still choose to call a helpline or talk to an advocate for extra help and support.

The next section contains some advice on choosing a counselor. Most of that advice also applies to finding other support professionals. Depending on your situation, you might also meet consistently with advocates, social workers, or staff at other support agencies. You might even find a helpline you like better than others.

The most important thing is to find a person or people you feel comfortable and safe with. If you like working with them, their job title or education might not matter to you. (But it's good to be sure what their title is. Other service providers will need to know.)

social worker?
advocate?
counselor?
therapist?
psychologist?

What the heck is the difference?

All the terms for support professionals can be overwhelming, especially if you haven't gone through this process before.

Let's start with what's **similar**. All of these will:



Provide emotional support



Help you with strategies to manage stress and process your feelings



Try to find you additional resources



Tell you if a different type of provider might be a better fit

It's not your job to know which type of provider is best for you. It's their job to tell you. Don't be afraid to ask what they think.

Differences include:



What kind of training they have



What their approach to their clients is



If they're licensed or certified



How much they cost



What services they provide (besides emotional support)



How soon you can make an appointment with them

You can always ask about any of these!

What does it mean to be a licensed therapist?

You said "cognitive behavioral therapy," but what does that mean EXACTLY?

I'd like to see a counselor. Now what?

We are happy to help you figure out what to do if you like. Before you start looking for a counselor, there are a couple things to figure out.



If you're relying on insurance to help pay for counseling, call them. Find out how it works so there are no surprises later on. You might ask:

- How much will I have to pay per session?
- How do I know which counselors are in my network?
- How do I set up appointments?

Some insurance companies have a specific intake process, or require a referral from a doctor. (Your primary care doctor will probably give you one if you ask.) With other insurance, you can just start researching counselors and calling them on your own.

How do I choose a counselor?

The decision to reach out to and speak with a professional about issues and concerns in your life is a big step. It's important to find a counselor who is a good fit. It'll make it easier for you to learn new ways to cope with major life events, stress, or trauma. Counseling may also help you find greater enjoyment of your life and your relationships.

Remember that you are an *active participant* in the whole process. Trust yourself and your feelings, both before and during counseling. If you feel negatively about a counselor, you don't have to see them again. If you aren't sure, you can talk to them again for clarification. If you feel positively about them, go ahead with the counseling. You can also talk to a trusted friend or another counselor about making this decision.

Many people meet with more than one counselor before choosing one. It's fine to set up several appointments with different providers.

Some counselors are willing to meet briefly with you before scheduling an actual session. This initial consultation is for you to ask them questions and talk about your goals. (Sometimes they charge for this.)

Once you find someone you like, it's good to have at least 3 appointments before you decide whether to keep seeing them. It's normal to take some time to connect with a counselor, even if they're a great fit for you. And it's fine to take it slow. Don't feel like you have to tell them everything about yourself in the first session.

Helpful phrases for getting in touch with a counselor:

Are you taking new clients?

I'm looking for counseling related to a sexual assault.

Do you take ___ insurance?

Can I set up an initial consultation? Is there a fee for that?

How far out are you scheduling?

You can ask a potential counselor about anything that's important to you. This might include:

Logistics

- Do you charge for an initial consultation?
- How much do you charge per counseling session? Do you accept my insurance? Will I have to pay a co-pay?
- How long will our counseling sessions be?
- About how many times (or for how long) do you see a client?

Working Together

- Will you discuss my treatment plan with me? What happens if we disagree about my goals?
- Do you think you can work with me? Why?

You can also ask about their personal values, biases, or attitudes about important things. For example:

- What is your attitude toward LGBTQ+ folks? Abortion?
- Do you have experience working with people of color?
- Do you practice under an anti-racist framework?

Behavior

- Will you discuss my case with anyone (like a supervisor)?
- Do you follow a professional code of ethics? Which one?
- Have you ever been charged with unethical conduct?
- Do you ever have physical contact with a client? If so, under what circumstances?

Credentials

- What training and experience do you have?
- Do you have a specialty area?
- Are there particular techniques you will use?
- Are you licensed or registered with the state?
- What kind of ongoing training or supervision do you receive?

Here are some things to keep in mind as you search:

- Be patient. It will take time to find a good fit. And once you've found it, it will take time for the process to work.
- You can just stop seeing a counselor if you want. You don't have to tell them why. You don't even have to have "a good reason."
- You *never* have to share anything you don't want to, even with a counselor.
- If a counselor can't see you soon, or isn't taking new clients, you can ask:
 - If there's anyone they can recommend
 - If there's anyone at their workplace who is taking new clients
- Good counselors *do not mind at all* if you:
 - Say you're meeting with several counselors to see who's a good fit
 - Tell them you don't want to meet with them anymore (always optional)
 - Don't want to share everything right away

Counselors are people, which means they aren't perfect. A counselor is **not** a great fit for you if they:

- Pressure you (instead of kindly challenging you)
- Make you uncomfortable for *any* reason
- Bring up difficult stuff at the very end of a session
- Make you feel like you *have* to come back for another session

Questions to ask yourself after meeting a counselor

Did I feel...

- ... respected?
- ... heard and understood?
- ... safe?

Was I comfortable with...

- ... their personal style?
- ... the office or telehealth atmosphere?
- ... their assessment of me and my treatment plan?

Was I satisfied with how they answered my questions?

If you need any help with this process, call one of our helplines.



Your Rights During Counseling



Your rights related to respect

- You deserve respectful treatment.
- You deserve a safe setting, free from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.
- You can establish your own goals and evaluate your progress with your counselor.
- You can ask about any part of your counselor's values, background, or attitudes that are relevant. And you should get respectful answers.



Your rights related to decision-making

- You can always refuse treatment, or refuse a particular activity or strategy.
- You can consult as many counselors as you want until you find someone you can work well with.
- You don't have to share any information you don't want to. You can refuse to answer any question.
- You can end counseling at any time.



Your rights related to information

- You can ask questions at any time.
- You should understand how available the counselor is to see you, and what the waiting period is.
- You deserve full information about fees, methods of payment, and insurance reimbursement.
- You deserve full information about your diagnosis, if your counselor uses one.
- You deserve full information about your counselor's confidentiality. There may be circumstances when they can discuss your case with certain people.
- If it's legally possible, you can request copies of records and reports.

What about sexuality?

Most survivors find that sex is different after an assault, at least for a little while. You may have new feelings about your body. Some survivors become very critical of their bodies. Others feel totally disconnected. Some survivors find that they want to have sex more often than ever before. Still others hate being naked. Whatever you're feeling, it's normal. Eventually, you'll get back in touch with your body in a way that feels right.

It may be easiest to start with some small solo activities. First, make sure your environment is comfortable for you. Then do something that activates your senses, especially your sense of touch. Focus on your body without judging what you notice.

Some examples of activities:

- Take a bath or shower. Focus on the feel of water against your skin.
- Touch yourself (either sexually or not). Notice how the feeling in your hand combines with the feeling in the skin it's touching.
- Eat a comforting food. Notice the flavor, the feeling of the food in your mouth, and follow it down to your stomach.
- Smell something nice. Feel your breath travel down into your lungs, and notice the rise and fall of your chest.

Guidelines for starting slow

1. Try one baby step at a time. Wait until you're comfortable with the first step before trying the next one.
2. If it feels like too much, take a break. Try again later.
3. Accept all your feelings and perceptions without judging them.

As always, be patient with your healing process. Tell your intimate partner(s) what you think and feel, and ask them to be patient as well. There is no right way to heal. There is no set timeline. Patience and communication are the best strategies. And you can always reach out for help if something doesn't seem right.

A very kind (but profane) resource on this subject is "Sex after Sexual Assault: A Guide for When It's Tough." Access it online at EverydayFeminism.com/2015/01/sex-after-sexual-assault.

Advocacy & RCC Services

What is an advocate?

For us at RCC, an advocate is someone who:

- Wants to support you and your decisions in every way we can
- Understands the systems you might be working with

In addition to emotional and moral support, we can help you navigate unfamiliar systems to try to keep you from being overwhelmed. This might be a challenging time for you in more than one way. An advocate can help you identify and connect with resources that can reduce your burdens.

We are trained in interacting with medical, legal, criminal justice, and college campus systems, and experienced with finding and using other resources. But please keep in mind that our advocates are *not actually part of* any of these systems. We can speak up for you and your rights, but we don't have much more power than that.

Identifying your needs and resources

A one-on-one session with an advocate can help you think through what you need, now and in the near future. You can decide if you'd like to continue working with your advocate, or if you'd like to work with someone else or even on your own.

Common areas of concern include:

- Housing (changing living arrangements, rental assistance, temporary housing, campus housing, etc.)
- Healthcare (accessing public benefits, maintaining coverage, getting ongoing care, etc.)
- Food security
- General safety and security
- Legal resources
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing

We don't offer many of these services ourselves, but an advocate can help you assess your needs and connect with local resources that can help. If you want, your advocate can be involved in helping you communicate or coordinate services with other agencies.

Emotional support and processing

You might find that this is a confusing time—many survivors aren't sure who to talk to, or how to approach the topic.

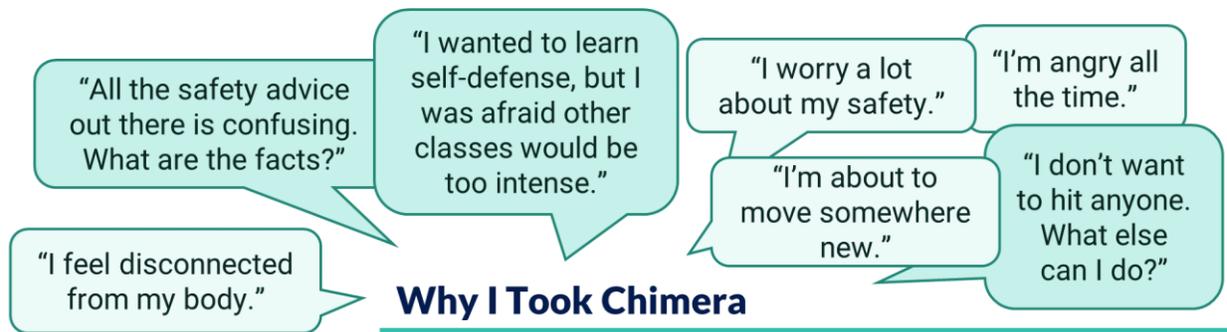
RCC advocates offer emotional support sessions where you can talk through anything you want. Maybe you want to make a plan, or maybe you just want someone to listen. Maybe you want someone to reassure you that you're doing your best in a difficult situation. Maybe you've been thinking about counseling but aren't sure what to expect from it. These are all conversations you can have with your advocate.

To set up a conversation with an advocate, call one of our helplines.



What is Chimera® Self-Defense?

Chimera (ky-MEER-ah) is RCC's empowerment self-defense program. We believe everyone has the right and ability to protect themselves. The goal is always to stop or escape violence—*before* it begins, if possible. We focus on empowerment, facts, and options.



Many people enjoy discussing safety in a group, and feel more confident afterwards.

Some of the content can be intense. Reach out to us if you want to know more.

What can I expect from class?

Chimera classes are relaxed and supportive. Most students leave every session with positive feelings. Instructors tell as many success stories as possible throughout the course to illustrate the effectiveness of every technique.

Classes are not physically difficult, even if you're out of shape or your movement is limited. The physical techniques we teach are easy to adapt for your body. There are lots of seated discussions too.

Our instructors have extensive training and experience working with survivors. We approach difficult material with lots of warning and support. You can always sit out, leave the room, or talk about how you're feeling. You can also talk to the instructor outside of class to discuss your concerns.

Who is Chimera for?

Survivors AND non-survivors. It doesn't matter. Every class has both.

Non-binary people and women (cis and trans). Male-identifying people are welcome to attend our annual all-gender class, and workshops like our Active Bystander Training are also open to all.

Ages 12 and older. We strongly encourage participants under 16 to attend with an adult friend so they can debrief together after class. There is no upper age limit!

How do I sign up?

1. **Choose a class and register** on our website (thercc.org/chimera).
2. **Pay OR request financial assistance.** The cost is \$120 (\$75 for students and seniors) for a 12-hour course, and \$30 (\$20 for students and seniors) for a workshop. Financial assistance is available to all.
3. **Come to class!** We try to hold classes in central locations—check our website.

Please contact us with any and all questions about special circumstances, accommodations, accessibility, clothing, mobility, etc.

**RCC staff can help you figure out if Chimera is a good option for you right now.
Call one of our helplines or reach the coordinator directly at
Chimera@theRCC.org.**

We will never...

- × Ask you to share your personal history.
- × Use or allow oppressive language during class.
- × Have padded attackers or "live" fighting scenarios.
- × Allow outside observers.



Reporting to Law Enforcement

Deciding whether to report is tricky for some people and very easy for others. There is no “right answer.” Many survivors have mixed feelings about it. No matter what your thoughts are, we support you and respect your decision.

Working with law enforcement can be rewarding and empowering. Some police officers have personal experiences with sexual violence. Others seek extra training to communicate effectively with victims.

Because of their profession, police are at risk of emotional fatigue and burnout. This can negatively affect victims, even if an officer’s intentions are good. We’re always working with law enforcement to improve survivors’ experiences of the criminal justice system.

At RCC, we respect the service that police officers provide. We also recognize that the goals of victims and law enforcement are fundamentally different. Our goal is to help bridge this gap, while centering *your* needs.

As you can see below, there are lots of reasons why someone might choose to report or not to report. Ultimately, only you know which decision is right for you.



You don't have to decide right away. Law enforcement may tell you that it's important to move forward as soon as possible. But you don't need to rush this decision. Your RCC advocate can help you navigate through this process and ensure that your voice is heard and respected by police and your loved ones.



If you do choose to make a report, law enforcement will need very specific answers to their questions. The person taking your statement will ask concrete questions about what happened and where, including:

- Which body parts were involved
- What actions were taken
- What specific words were said

"I don't know" or "don't remember" may be the correct answer. You do not have to have a detailed answer for every question, since your brain doesn't file memories efficiently during a traumatic event. Because law enforcement wants as much detail as possible, they may ask about the same things a couple times to ensure clarity. This doesn't mean that they don't believe you.

The initial interview may take a few hours or more, depending on the incident(s).

Remember to be kind to yourself. This process can be very difficult. It's normal for images and sounds and memories to feel scrambled. It's normal to forget details from stressful situations, and you don't have to have an answer for every question that is asked.

If you're worried, you can prepare with an RCC advocate beforehand. Hopefully the person conducting the interview can grant you kindness and help you piece things together. But no matter what they ask or say, remember:

**YOU were there.
This is YOUR story.
NO ONE gets to tell you how to feel about it.**

We are there **for you**. If you feel overwhelmed or need a break, either tell us or just do what you need. Your RCC advocate is there to make sure you have the space you need during this process.

What happens after I make a report?

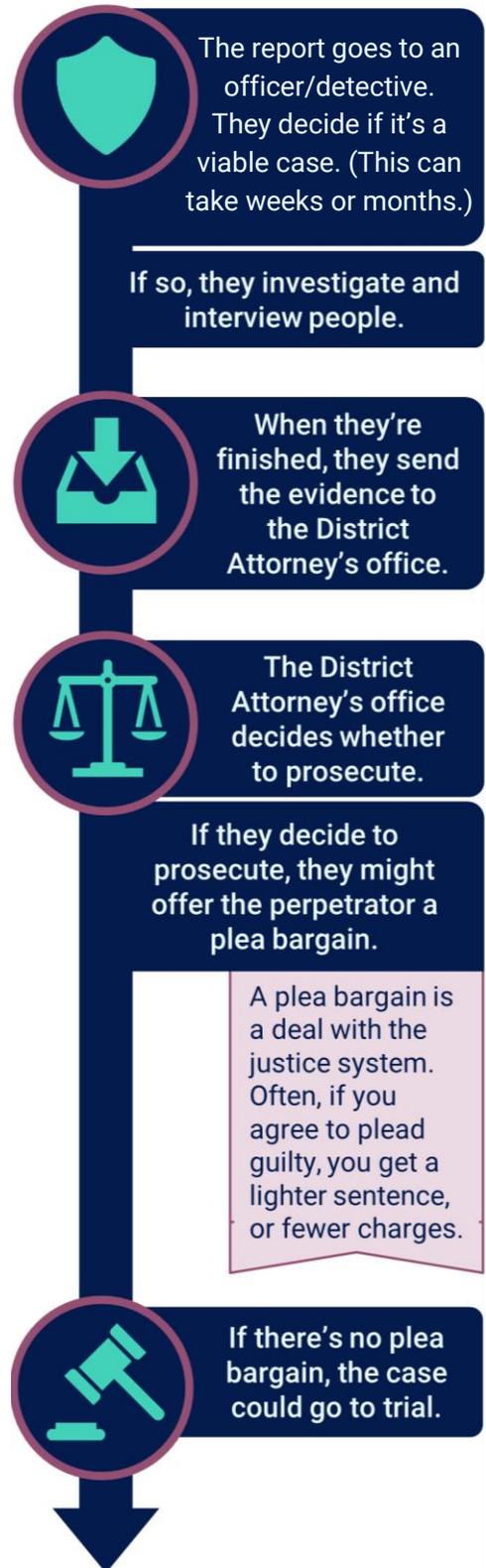
Once your report has been filed, much of the process is out of our hands. First the police, then the district attorney's office decide whether to move forward with the case. But they work hard to take your opinions and thoughts into account when moving forward with the case or not.

Many survivors experience strong emotions related to this process. Not having control over the process might make you anxious. Making the report might be a relief, but if the case does not go in the direction you were hoping, that can be disappointing. Unfortunately, cases often end during the process at right and never make it to trial.

Your RCC advocate will do their best to support you through this process. Different people need different kinds of support. Some common things we can help with:

- **Making sure you don't have questions about the process.** Many survivors are less overwhelmed when they feel they understand the system better.
- **Setting your expectations.** Many survivors struggle with optimism vs. pessimism, or expecting things to move forward more quickly.
- **Deciding how often you want updates on your case's progress.** Some people want frequent updates, others prefer to forget about it except when action is needed.
- **Communicating with the police, district attorney's office, and other agencies.** Many people struggle with these interactions even when they aren't working through their trauma. We can be with you when you make contact, or we can help you prepare.

How a police report gets to court



What are my rights?

Nothing about you or your past can change the fact that you have rights. Historically, law enforcement often discriminated against people based on identity, past record, immigration status, etc. But they should never make you feel that you are at fault or that you don't have rights. You should never feel punished for coming forward about your experience.

RCC advocates are there to make sure that you and your case are treated with respect and dignity. We can't change the progress of your investigation, but we can stand with you, and do everything in our power to make sure you are heard.

Wisconsin's Victims' Rights (*Wis. Const. Art. I, §9m*) are summarized on the following page. We have tried to make the language as clear as possible. If you want to exercise any of these rights, or if you have any questions, ask your RCC advocate. You can also contact the Office of Crime Victim Services at 1-800-446-6564.

Are there any alternatives to law enforcement reporting?



Unfortunately, there aren't many options besides law enforcement. There may be other kinds of accountability for the person who harmed you, especially in educational and religious communities. The process might be formal or informal. An RCC advocate can help you figure out if there are options for you in your community.

Even an anti-harassment policy or rule might be something that you can have enforced.

If you choose not to report to law enforcement, you deserve as much support as if you did. We are happy to connect with you about your needs.

Victim Rights in Wisconsin



Your rights related to advocacy

- You should be treated with fairness, dignity and respect for your privacy.
- You can have a service representative (like an RCC advocate) come with you to court.
- You should be informed of your rights and how to exercise them.
- You can contact the Dept. of Justice with any concerns or complaints about your rights.



Your rights related to legal and criminal justice proceedings

- You can ask to speak with the district attorney (DA) about the case, especially about possible outcomes of the prosecution. This might include potential plea agreements and sentencing recommendations. But the DA decides how to handle the case.
- You can attend court proceedings, unless the court specifically orders otherwise.
- You should have a waiting area at court separate from the defense witnesses.
- Your case should be moved along quickly, since it's more stressful the longer it goes.
- The court should consider your interests when deciding whether to allow a delay.
- The impact of the crime on you can be taken into account before sentencing.
- You can make a relevant statement (oral or written) at the sentencing.



Your rights related to property, compensation, and restitution

- Your employer should work with you so that you don't lose much income or benefits because of being in court. If they aren't doing that, you can ask for help.
- You can ask the court to order restitution, and to set up a penalty for not paying it. (Restitution is financial compensation for injury or loss.)
- To compensation for certain expenses as allowed by law.
- Any of your personal property should be returned as soon as it's no longer needed as evidence. If possible, this should be within 10 days of being taken.



Your rights related to information and notification

- You can ask that the offender be tested for sexually transmitted infections.
- You can ask for updates on the progress of the case, including:
 - Criminal charges and prosecution procedures
 - Dismissal of charges or decision not to prosecute
 - Time, date, and place of court proceedings
 - Sentencing or dispositional information
- You can ask for updates regarding the offender, including:
 - Release from custody
 - Eligibility for parole (and you can make a statement about it)
 - Releases, escapes, or confinements, in some cases
 - Pardon application to the governor (and you can make a statement about it)

What if I can't get the justice I was hoping for?

Sadly, many survivors feel that they don't get justice. We recommend doing internal work, so that even if the justice process is disappointing, you are still able to heal and move forward with your life.

All of these options can be explored along with reporting. An RCC advocate can talk to you about these options if you like.

Focus on getting your needs met

It's common for survivors to have to deal with complicated needs after an assault. Some people struggle with housing and food security. Students often see an impact on their academic lives. Many survivors struggle with emotional distress. RCC's advocates can help you connect with necessary resources and provide emotional support through this period.



Focus on important relationships in your life

This is a time where deep connections with others can be very important. Sometimes trauma can make us feel very far away from our "normal" lives, and having something to anchor us can really help. You can rely on or cultivate relationships that feel fulfilling with other survivors, with family, community members, an advocate, friends, and of course, yourself.

Document your story (even if you don't share it)

You are the expert on your own experience, even though it might not always feel that way. It helps some survivors to record their experience with words, art, or any form of self-expression. It reminds them that no one knows what happened better than they do. You can share your story if and when you want to, and you get to choose who hears it.

Please ask us any questions you have. We are here for you.



Self-Care

Self-care is any activity that lets you focus on yourself or your well-being, or that grounds you. It can look many different ways. You get to decide what it means to you and what activities count as self-care for you.

The goal of this section is to help you start building a self-care practice that meets your needs and goals. Creating a self-care routine can help you develop useful tools for coping with or avoiding a crisis. Making it a routine also makes it easier to remind yourself that you deserve this care from yourself, and also from others.

Self-care doesn't have to be glamorous or expensive. There are lots of options, depending on your needs. In times of crisis, a simple breathing exercise can make a big difference. Sometimes you might do small things that bring your mind and body some comfort, like a soft blanket, your favorite warm drink, or music you associate with fond memories.

Self-care can also mean doing nothing. It can mean resting, zoning out, or just giving yourself space to feel what you're feeling. Self-care is never one-size-fits-all. Everyone has their own experience and no one can define "care" for you.

You can have different levels of self-care, too. Sometimes you might need time alone to process things or take care of your individual needs. Other times you might need to connect with others. Sometimes we can take care of ourselves and others at the same time.

Examples of individual self-care:

- Developing grounding techniques (like deep breaths or stretching) to help process anxiety
- Creating daily hygiene routines
- Bedtime rituals to help you sleep

Examples of communal self-care:

- Cooking (or eating) with your family and friends
- Sharing music, culture, or art
- Dancing with people you love

One of the most important aspects of self-care is cultivating self-compassion. You know yourself and your experience better than anyone else. Comforting yourself can help you reconnect with yourself and your body. Remember to talk to yourself kindly, as you would to a good friend. Remind yourself that you're doing your best, even though it might not feel that way sometimes.

Emotional Self-Care Discovery Toolkit

Look through this section for ideas. Try out these activities, and if you like them, make them part of your routines and rituals. Feel free to change them or create your own similar activity. Remember, this is all about what works for *you*.

Start small

It's important to have a range of self-care options. Below are some examples of small things you could do immediately or soon. Major self-care activities (such as switching jobs or finding new housing) often take a while. What can you do today? Feel free to add your own!



Create a Checklist

What daily activities give you comfort or make you feel a little better? What will keep you from feeling worse?

Build your own checklist! We've given you an example and some ideas to get started.

Example:

- Take my meds
- Eat lunch!
- Call my brother
- Go to the park (even for 5 minutes)
- Hot cocoa before bed 😊

More ideas:

Basic needs

- Eating
- Drinking water
- Taking medications
- Caffeine or nicotine

Laughing

Socializing

Moving your body or going for a walk

A warm drink

Long-Term Self-Care Goals

Even though you might not know exactly what you want right now, sometimes it can be helpful to think about what you might want in the future.

In a year (or many years), where do you want to be? Can you think of anything you'd like to work towards? Sometimes we can take small steps toward meeting these goals—can you think of any?

Examples might include:

- Seeing the end of a court case
- Creating a self-care routine
- Getting a full night of sleep
- Sharing your journey with someone when you're ready

Gratitude

Make a list of small things that make you feel grateful.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

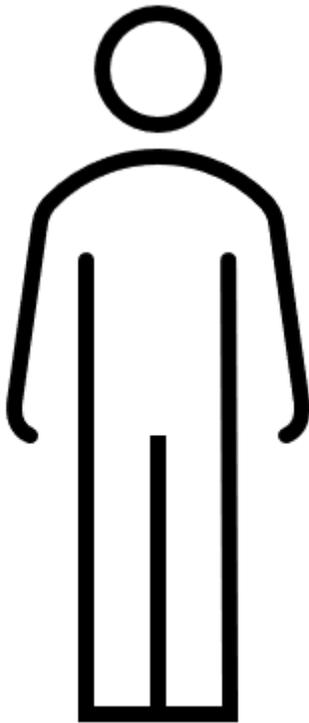
10.

Where is this feeling coming from?

Your emotions show up in your body, and body scans are one way to understand them better. Here are some ways people use this exercise:

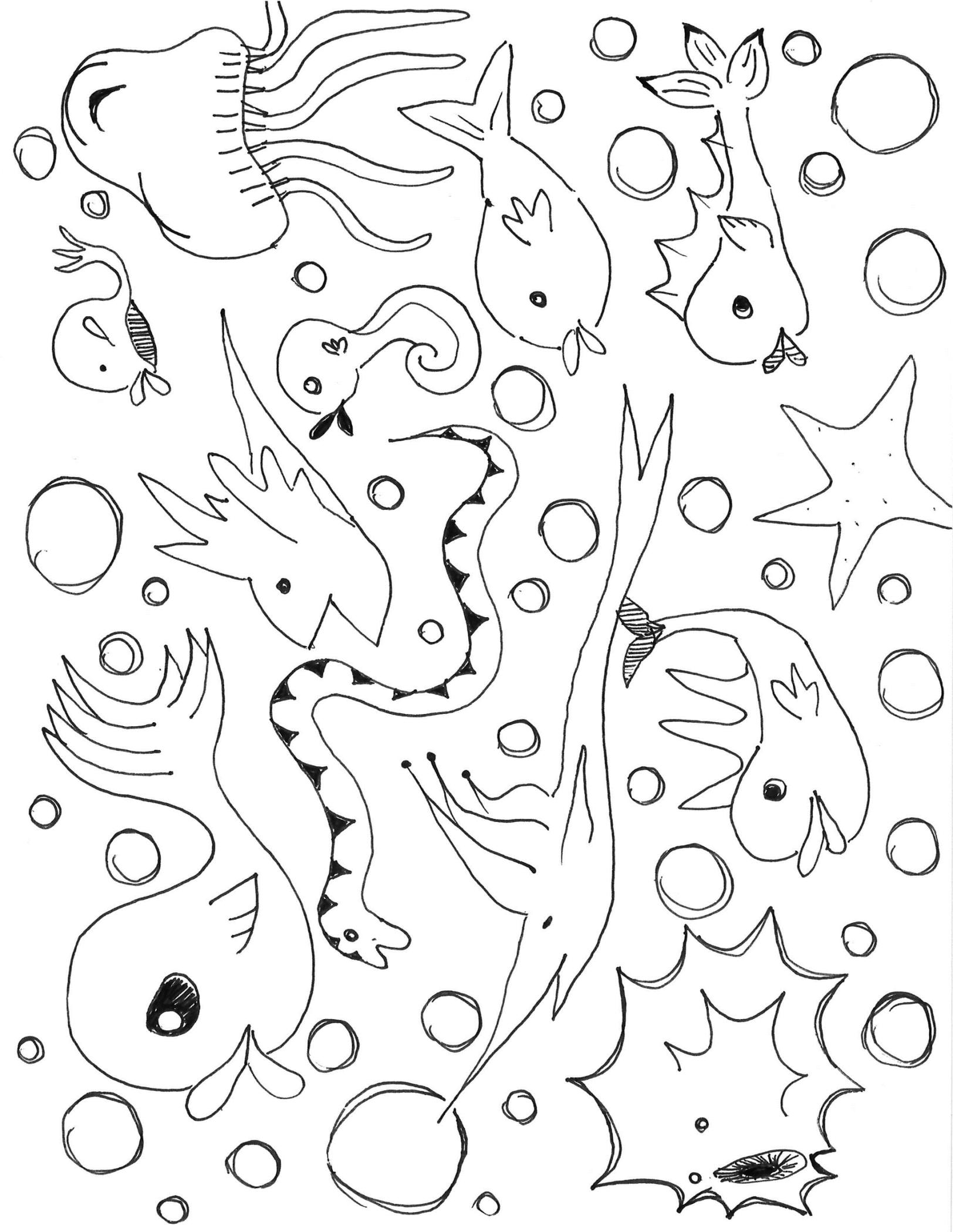
- ***How does this emotion make my body feel?*** If you know that you're anxious, triggered, angry, etc., it might help to observe how that emotion affects you. Some people simply notice without judgment. Others use this to choose a self-care activity. For example, if anxiety makes your shoulders tight, you could roll your shoulders, apply heat, or massage them. (It might not make the anxiety go away but it might make it a little less intense.)
- ***What emotion am I feeling?*** If you can't tell which emotion you're feeling, it might help to locate and describe your physical sensations. Sometimes it's hard to identify an emotion until you know how it feels physically.

Find a place to sit, stand, or lie comfortably. Close your eyes if you like. Scan your body for strong sensations. Where are they coming from? Write down or draw your impressions.

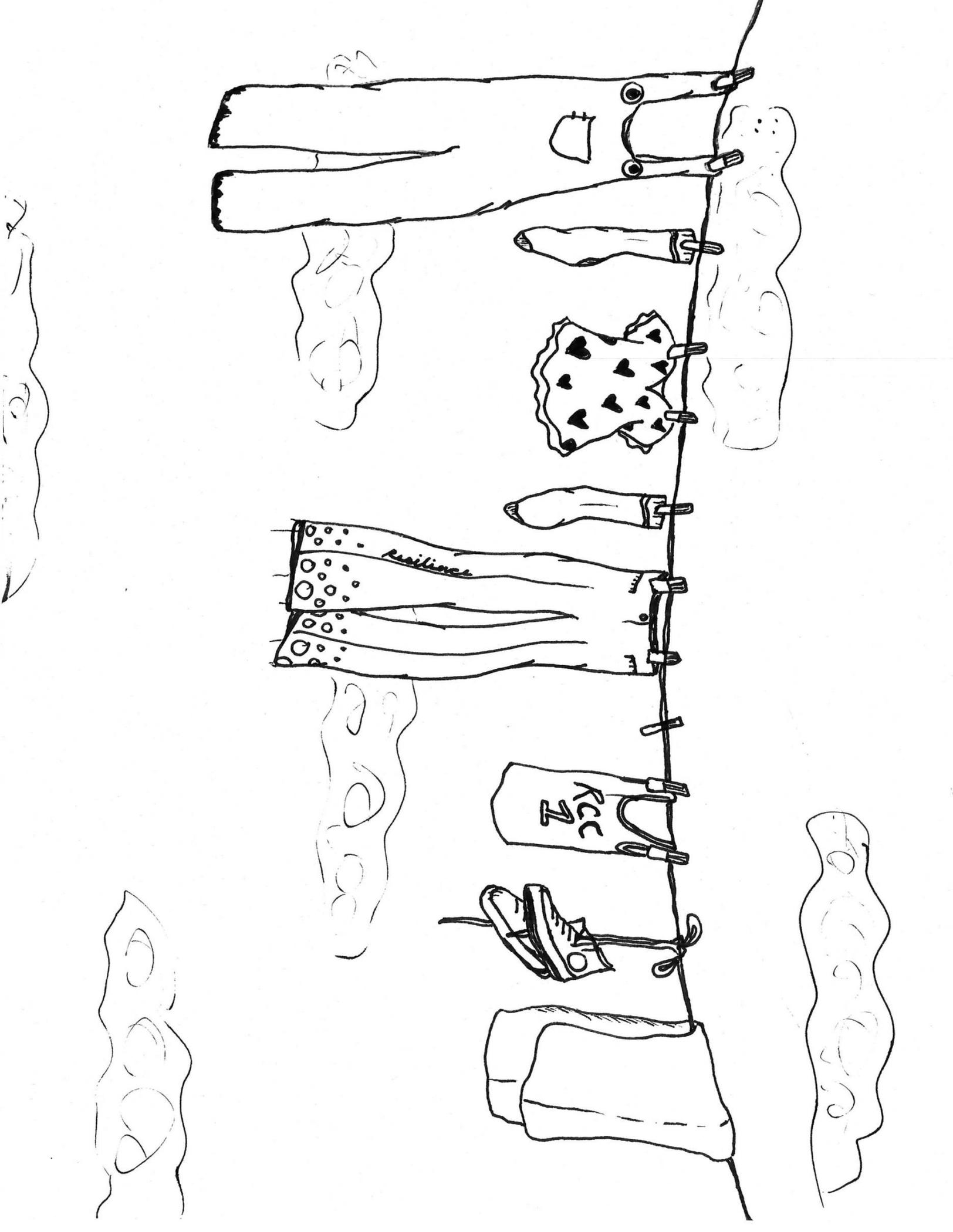


Letter to Myself

Write a letter to your past, present, or future self. What are you proud of yourself for? What are you grateful to yourself for? What is something you've learned about yourself?







We are always here for you.

Our goal is to support your decisions and your journey. If we aren't part of your plan, that's okay. If you'd like us to work with you, just let us know. You are always just a phone call away from a listening ear. We believe you.

Quick Resource List

All listed resources serve Dane County, Wis.

Rape Crisis Center ENGLISH & SPANISH	Resource for emotional support, education, and advocacy. <u>HELPLINE</u> ENGLISH 608-251-7273 SPANISH 608-258-2567	2801 Coho St #301 Madison, WI 53713 theRCC.org
Dane County District Attorney – Victim Witness Unit	Resource for information, services, and rights. <u>OFFICE</u> 608-266-9003 DaneVW@da.wi.gov	251 S. Hamilton St. #3000 Madison, WI 53703 DA.CountyOfDane.com/DA-Units/Victim-Witness-Unit
Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS)	Serves victims of domestic violence, including a shelter. <u>HELPLINE</u> 608-251-4445	2102 Fordem Ave Madison, WI 53704 AbuseIntervention.org
Safe Harbor Child Advocacy Center	Serves child victims of abuse & their families. <u>OFFICE</u> 608-661-9787 info@SafeHarborHelpsKids.org	2445 Darwin Rd Madison, WI 53704 SafeHarborHelpsKids.org
Briarpatch Youth Services	Serves runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth, including a shelter. <u>HELPLINE</u> 608-251-1126 TOLL FREE 800-798-1126	2720 Rimrock Rd Madison, WI 53713 youthSOS.org

Sexual and domestic violence services for the Latinx community.

Unidos Against Domestic Violence

ENGLISH & SPANISH

HELPLINE
608-256-9195
TOLL FREE 800-510-9195

unidosWI.org

Centro Hispano of Dane County

ENGLISH & SPANISH

Social services for the Latinx community.

OFFICE
608-255-3018
reception@MiCentro.org

810 W Badger Rd
Madison, WI 53713
MiCentro.org

Catholic Multicultural Center

Resource center offering immigration services and assistance with personal needs and employment.

OFFICE
608-661-3512

1862 Beld St
Madison, WI 53713
CMCmadison.org

Hmong Family Strengthening Helpline

ENGLISH & HMONG

Support for Hmong people experiencing violence or abuse.

HELPLINE
877-740-4292
(CALL OR TEXT)

BBWPcoalition.org/helpline

Freedom, Inc.

Anti-violence organization working in Black & Southeast Asian communities.

OFFICE
(608) 630-8901
info@freedom-inc.org

2110 Luann Lane
Madison, WI 53713
freedom-inc.org

StrongHearts Native Helpline

Serves Native people affected by domestic & sexual violence.

HELPLINE
844-762-8483

StrongHeartsHelpline.org

Deaf Unity

ENGLISH & ASL

Serves Deaf people affected by abuse.

HOTLINE
help@DeafUnityWI.org
TEXT 608-466-2881

DeafUnityWI.org

There are lots of resources out there! We've posted some on our website at <http://theRCC.org/resources/>. Scan the QR code to get there fast! →



