

*"Someone attacked me."*

## Assault

### ■ What is it?

Assault is a physical attack or threat that causes you to fear an attack. Victims may be attacked by one person or a group. The attacker may push, shove, slap, punch, or kick the victim. Sometimes it can include weapons like knives, sticks, bottles, or bats. Common injuries from an assault include bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, broken bones, and so on. However, it's still an assault if there was no injury. Victims can even be killed during an assault. There are many laws used to classify different kinds of assault. The classification can be based on injury, weapons used, or other circumstances of the crime. Any assault victim, injured or not, can still experience emotional reactions to the crime.

Assault can happen to anyone. Assaults on teens have nearly doubled in the past few years. Many teen victims of assault report that they know who attacked them, and often the attacker has been a family member, friend, or someone they knew from school or the neighborhood. If someone assaults you, it is important to tell an adult you trust and to contact the police.

### ■ If you are a victim of assault, you might...

- Be shocked, angry or afraid.
- Feel guilty because you could not prevent the assault.

- Have nightmares or flashbacks about the assault.
- Want to hurt the attacker(s).
- Think that you did something wrong that caused the attack.
- Feel embarrassed to tell your family and friends.
- Feel any or all of the above, whether you were physically injured or not.

### ■ You're Not Alone

- Teens experience the highest rates of violent crime.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2003, slightly more males than females were victims of simple assault.<sup>2</sup>
- Assault is the most common violent crime in the United States.<sup>3</sup>
- Juveniles constitute 19 percent of all assault victims. "Simple" assault is the most common crime committed against juveniles, constituting 41 percent of all offenses against juveniles known to the police.<sup>4</sup>

### ■ Get Help

Being assaulted is not your fault. It is important to remember that assault is a crime, and as an assault victim, you do not have to deal with this alone. There are people in your community who can help you.

“Someone attacked me.”

- If you want advice about who to talk to, call our Helpline (**1-800-FYI-CALL**) or a crisis hotline in your area. You might also want to talk to a trusted family member, a friend's parent, an adult neighbor or friend, an older sibling or cousin, or other experienced person you trust.
- Consider calling the police.
- If you choose to tell, you should know that some adults are mandated reporters. This means they are legally required to report neglect or abuse to someone else, such as the police or child protective services. You can ask people if they are mandated reporters and then decide what you want to do. Some examples of mandated reporters are teachers, counselors, doctors, social workers, and in some cases, even coaches or activity leaders.

#### ■ Help Yourself

- If you sense that something is about to happen, try to get to a safe place.
- Try to stay in areas where there are other people around.

- If you are attacked and need medical treatment, call 911, and let your parent or another adult know as soon as possible.
- If you are attacked and you do not know the attacker, try to remember what the person looked like. It will be useful when you call the police.

#### ■ Help Someone Else

If you see or know someone who has been assaulted, you can:

- Call the police.
- Get a parent, teacher, or other adult to come help.
- Talk to the person who was assaulted, let them know you want to help them, and encourage them to talk to a supportive adult.

#### ■ If you want to read more...

- ...about assault, read our **GET HELP** series bulletin on assault; *or*
- ...for more information about assaults related to your race, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, see our **GET HELP** series bulletin on hate crimes at [www.ncvc.org/gethelp](http://www.ncvc.org/gethelp).

<sup>1</sup> Catalano, Shannan. (2004). *Criminal Victimization, 2003*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Characteristics of Crimes Against Juveniles. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2000.