

## A teen's guide to overcoming sexual assault

The G.U.T.S. program gives the teen girl a safe place to process the emotional and psychological impact of sexual assault.

Groups for the survivors of sexual assault are held weekly. Here girls with similar life circumstances discuss their pain and problems. A group of peers will help the teen to know she is not alone. They offer each other hope, support and comfort. The members develop new ways to relate with people and to find meaning from what has happened.

Traumatic events have the ability to change anyone who experiences them. The person who works through the history of trauma and comes out stronger represents the young women who have survived and conquered with G.U.T.S.

### For Further Information:

**Girls United Together For Strength**

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### Services:

- Dual Diagnosis
- Individual Counseling
- Family Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Psychological Evaluations
- Drug Screening

## A teen's guide to overcoming sexual abuse/assault



**G.U.T.S.**

Girls United Together for  
Strength

**INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY &  
GROUP THERAPY**

## **Breaking the silence**

For survivors of sexual assault and molestation, putting the pieces of your life together can be overwhelming. It takes time... but it can be done and you are not alone. After the trauma one of the most critical factors in healing is a strong social support. G.U.T.S. creates a safe harbor to explore the trauma, understand its impact and move towards recovery. The sexual assault group allows each member to work through their individual trauma and help others who have experienced similar events.

## **What Is Sexual Assault?**

Sexual assault includes rape and any type of unwanted touching or sexual contact. “No means No”. Rape and other kinds of sexual assault are crimes of violence, hatred, and power. Attackers use different techniques to overpower their victims, such as:

- force or violence
- threats of violence or harm against the person or their loved ones
- alcohol or drugs to subdue the person
- psychological coercion by a trusted friend, family or someone in authority

## **Reacting to a Trauma**

What happens when you experience a sexual assault? There are many reactions you might have. Initially, you may feel shock, horror, terror, or a sense of what happened is unreal or surreal. You might not remember all the details of what happened. If you are a life long survivor of traumatic events, your reaction may be different. Many factors impact how you may react to the event or events. Your age (younger persons often react more strongly);

the amount of damage done to you; the amount of responsibility you feel for causing or not preventing the event; the length of time; the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator; genetics; previous exposure to severe adverse life experiences; earlier depression and anxiety; absence or presence of good support. The reactions may vary. However, the G.U.T.S. program is an effective step-by-step approach for overcoming traumatic stress symptoms.

## **Why therapy? Why remember?**

An important reason to try and remember what happened to you is to decrease the fear related to the trauma. Memories of trauma are not dangerous in and of themselves, even though they may feel dangerous. Confronting your memories in group therapy allows you to find different ways to deal with, work through, or process, your traumatic history. Processing these memories helps you to integrate them into your past. Continuously avoiding memories of the trauma keeps those memories in your present, with all their associated pain, fear, rage, depression, shame, and self blame. Remembering safely will give you a sense of control over the experience and the terror you felt.

Treatment can include EMDR, hypnotherapy, role-playing, relaxation exercises, art therapy, psycho education, journal keeping and/or individual and family therapy.

I needed someone to understand. They did.  
*Katy 16*

## ***Symptoms of Rape Trauma Syndrome***

- \*You may have recurrent and intrusive recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions.
- \*You may have recurrent distressing dreams.
- \*You may act or feel as if the traumatic event was recurring, through flashbacks, hallucinations and illusions.
- \*You may experience psychological distress when exposed to external or internal cues that resemble an aspect of the trauma.
- \*You may make a great effort to avoid thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with the trauma.
- \*You may be unable to recall important aspects of the trauma.
- You may lose interest or participate in activities less.
- \*You may feel detached from others.
- \*Your ability to feel emotion is restricted (e.g., you are unable to have loving feelings).
- \*You may have difficulty with sleep.
- \*You may feel irritable with angry outbursts.
- \*You may have difficulty concentrating.
- \*You may become overly watchful.
- \*You may become jumpy and nervous

## **Sexual Assault Group Therapy provides :**

- a way to work through the trauma
- a way to help manage in a crisis
- a way to reverse negative thinking
- a way to appraise the degree of threat in a situation
- a way to learn through the experience of others
- a way to vent your emotions
- a way to cope effectively and problem solve