

**You have a right to support
What to do after a rape****216 88 88**

LARA
CRISIS AND ADVISORY CENTRE FOR RAPED AND SEXUALLY HARASSED
WOMEN

Fuggerstraße 19
10777 Berlin - Schöneberg

What you can do after a rape

The right to sexual self-determination is established by law in Germany. However, at the same time, women have to deal with assaults which injure them as women. Harassment, sexual assault and rape still constitute problems of our society.

Women often defend themselves against assaults successfully. However, every woman can become the victim of rape.

After a sexual assault happened, it is good to know where you can find advice and support.

Consultation

Whether it is about general information, a counselling session or help to file charges and to go through the legal procedures, you can always contact LARA. Here, you can also take part in a group or short-term therapy. There are many ways to overcome an act of violence. We help you to find your own way. Many women seeking our help have not talked to anyone about the offence yet and thus increasingly feel alone. Fear of rejection and shame or the feeling that they contributed to the assault constitute the reasons for their silence. One basic principle of our consultation is: Only the offender is responsible for the assault.

The female employees of LARA

Give you advice and help women after each type of sexual violence and sexual assaults that happened after puberty. You can contact us, no matter whether it is about a current incident or something that happened a long time ago. It is our standard to integrate your personal living conditions into our help. We also offer consultation in barrier-free rooms if required. The consultation of LARA is free of charge and can also be availed anonymously; we offer interpreting services at request.

Seeing a doctor

If you file charges immediately after the assault, the criminal investigation police can take you to a medical examination. Physical injuries are often documented by means of photographs directly with the police.

In case you press charges, injuries, traces of sperm or genital hair of the offender constitute essential evidence. Therefore, we ask you to wash only after the medical examination, even if this may be unpleasant for you.

Irrespective of your charges, it makes sense to see a gynaecologist within 24 hours in order to:

- treat possible injuries
- be examined for contagion with sexually transmitted diseases
- get informed about the possibility of an HIV test
- get a prescription for the "morning-after pill"
- ask whether traces and examination results can be documented for a possible future report of the incident to the police (no standard service)

It is also advisable to keep clothing, underwear and other objects that could exhibit traces of the act of violence in paper bags as further evidence.

Reporting to the police

Sexual violence (also in marriages or partnerships) is a crime. You have the right to file charges, the police have to listen to you and to make investigations.

In order to file charges, you can:

- call the police under 110 or go to the next police station
- directly go to the criminal investigation police, thus you can avoid multiple questioning. The Department for Crimes against People, LKA 413 in Keithstraße, Berlin-Tiergarten, is responsible for such cases. There, you will be questioned in detail and the officers will initiate an investigation. If you filed charges at another police station in the first place, you then will be summoned to appear before the criminal investigation police.
- or you file charges with the public prosecutor's office.

You can also hand in a written testimony to the police. If the public prosecutor's office summons you, you have to give personal testimony.

According to the seriousness of the offence, charges cannot be withdrawn as the criminal proceedings are then continued for the public benefit (offence liable to public prosecution). Therefore, it is good if you make the decision with regard to filing charges on your own behalf.

You can obtain information beforehand, e.g. from LARA, as charges do not have to be filed directly after the offence. For example, rape only comes under the statute of limitations after 20 years.

Your rights with the police

- If you want to be questioned by a woman, the police will try to accommodate your wish.

- You have the right to a translator if German is not your mother tongue. You can also consult an attorney or another person of trust for your support, provided that he or she is not a witness with regard to the offence.
- If some questions seem strange to you, you can ask why they are posed.
- If you are exhausted, you can demand breaks or an interruption of the questioning.
- If you have the impression that you are treated badly, you can discontinue the questioning and only make a testimony with the public prosecutor's office.

If you are given the questioning protocol for signature, please make sure that it really contains what you said, also with regard to your formulations. Make the officers correct everything wrong before you sign the protocol. The protocol possibly has to be translated into your mother tongue.

If legal proceedings are initiated, you are the injured party and the witness whereas the public prosecutor's office is the plaintiff. You can join the legal action as joint plaintiff with the help of a female attorney in order to play a more active role. You normally do not have to bear the legal fees.

At LARA, you can obtain advice from experienced female attorneys free of charge.
Time to overcome the shock

Rape, no matter whether committed by a stranger or a familiar person, can cause a shock.

- You can feel thrown out of your normal life for hours or several days.
- You may constantly feel uneasy and stressed, depressed or exhausted. Maybe you feel paralysed and dazed.
- Even when the shock wears off, symptoms like fear, sleep disorders and nightmares can occur.

All these feelings are normal and mostly abate automatically after several weeks or months. An environment in which you feel safe and comfortable is helpful in this respect. Your body and your soul need time in order to adapt yourself to the fact that the danger has passed.

Maybe you will particularly pay attention to your needs during this time or you will remember what helped you in high-pressure situations or crises in the past. Family members, partners and friends can also help you in this respect.

Your family members and attachment figures can also obtain advice from LARA.

Important telephone numbers

LARA

Crisis and Advisory Centre for Raped and Sexually Harassed Women
Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm 216 88 88

Women's Crisis Telephone	615 42 43
Berlin Crisis Service	390 63 10
Network of Handicapped Women	617 09 16 7/8
Lesbian Counselling Service	215 20 00
Wildwasser (<i>against sexual violence</i>)	693 91 92
FrauenNachtCafé (<i>contact point for women in crisis situations</i>)	616 209 70
BIG – Hotline of the Berlin Initiative Against Domestic Violence	611 03 00
Frauenraum – help and information centre	787 18 34 0
Self-defence for women	781 94 32
Carité Campus Benjamin Franklin Rescue Centre	84 45 – 3025
State Office of Criminal Investigation 13 Keithstr. 30, 10787 Berlin	46 64 – 0
Public Prosecutor's Office at the District Court, Turmstr. 91, 10557 Berlin	90 14 – 0
Office for Medical Refugee Aid	69467 46
Emergency Service for Girls	610 063

LARA

Crisis and Advisory Centre for Raped and Sexually Harassed Women
Fuggerstraße 19
10777 Berlin - Schöneberg
Phone: 216 88 88 Fax: 216 80 61

Personal and telephone consultation
Monday to Friday 9am until 6pm

www.lara-berlin.de
Homepage: lara.kub@t-online.de
E-mail: beratung@lara-berlin.de

Donation account:
Bank für Sozialwirtschaft
Account No.: 32 668 01
Bank Code No.: 100 205 00

Services by Lara:

- Telephone and personal consultation
- E-mail consultation
- Support in crisis situations
- Short-term therapy
- Accompanying you while filing charges and during legal proceedings
- Legal consultation by female attorneys
- Group offers
- Consultation for family members and other attachment figures
- Advanced training for other professional groups