

I'm interested in the Sexual Assault Counseling program at The Listening Ear.

I would like to:

- ___ Have a SAC counselor speak to my community group.
- ___ Learn more about SAC services.
- ___ Become a Listening Ear volunteer.
- ___ Donate \$ _____ to SAC and The Listening Ear.

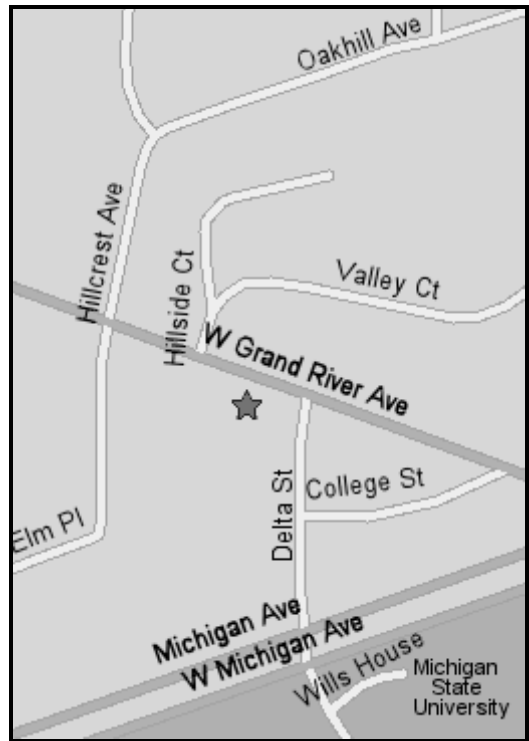
Name _____
Street _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
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Please mail this sheet to:

The Listening Ear, Attn: SAC
313 West Grand River Ave.
East Lansing, MI 48823-4213

"What is Rape?" is a publication of The Listening Ear. It may be freely redistributed so long as the content remains unchanged.

The Listening Ear is a non-profit crisis center located in East Lansing, Michigan. We have served the public 24 hours a day, 365 days a year without interruption since 1969.



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*Sexual
Assault
Counseling*

What is Rape?

The Listening Ear
313 West Grand River
East Lansing, MI 48823-4213

(517) 337-1717

24-hour Crisis Center

What is Rape?

Why is it so important to have a clear understanding of rape? Two statistics from a 1988 study provide the answer. Of women who have been sexually assaulted, only about 1 in 4 identify their experience as rape. More frightening was the fact that 84% of men who admitted to acts meeting the legal definition of rape believed their actions *did not* constitute rape.

There are several types of rape, all of which meet both The Listening Ear's definition of rape and Michigan's definitions for Criminal Sexual Assault.

- **Stranger Rape**

This is what most people think of when they hear the word rape, but it involves only a slim percentage of all rapes. The perpetrator is a stranger who may or may not have preselected his victim beforehand. Most public awareness and prevention efforts focus on stranger rape. Better lighting, locking doors, never walking alone at night, and carrying pepper spray are all ways to reduce stranger rape. But because more than 4 in 5 rape survivors know their attacker, public efforts must also focus on other types of rape.

- **Date/Acquaintance Rape**

In the most common form of rape, the perpetrator is a friend, a date, a spouse, a coworker, or another kind of acquaintance. Date rape is especially frequent among teenagers. Survivors of date and acquaintance rape often fear that they will be blamed if they were drinking, accepted a ride with their date, or if they had gone out with the perpetrator before. This fear is well-founded, since many people do still blame the victim. Because of this, few date rapes are reported.

It's important to remember that rape is always the responsibility of the rapist.

- **Incest**

Incest involves the sexual abuse by a member of the family. Incest often goes on for years without anyone in the community becoming aware of the abuse. Traditional beliefs that family issues should be kept within the family stop neighbors from "prying" into the family's business. Furthermore, since the victims are children, they are less likely to be believed if they do ask for help. But asking for help is less likely since the perpetrator is someone the victim has been taught to respect, love, and obey.

The Legal Definition of Rape

Michigan law defines four degrees of Criminal Sexual Conduct. Note that all four encompass more than just stranger rape.

1st: Involves sexual penetration and at least one of the following: a victim 13 years old or less, a perpetrator related to the victim or in a position of authority, a victim unable to consent, or the use of force or threat of force.

2nd: Similar to 1st degree CSC, but sexual penetration need not have occurred

3rd: Involves sexual penetration and at least one of the following: a victim between 13 and 16 years of age, the use of force, the threat of force, or coercion by the perpetrator.

4th: Similar to 3rd degree CSC, but sexual penetration need not have occurred.

The Listening Ear's Definition

At The Listening Ear, we define sexual assault as any unwanted sexual contact.