IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS EXPERIENCED STRANGULATION DURING AN ASSAULT, SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY. THE DANGERS OF STRANGULATION CAN PRESENT WELL AFTER THE EVENT OCCURRED.

**WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?**

When someone forces or manipulates someone else into unwanted sexual activity without their consent. Sexual violence is an act of power, control and violence, and no one form of sexual violence is more or less serious than another (just different). Sexual violence can include assault, rape, incest, child sexual assault, unwanted contact, harassment, exploitation, exposing oneself to others without consent, masturbating in public, watching someone in a private act without consent, and other acts.

**WHAT IS RAPE?**

Sex without consent is rape. Rape is the penetration of the vagina or anus by any body part or foreign object, or oral penetration by another person’s sex organ, without the consent of the victim. A person who is intoxicated, unconscious, asleep, or underage cannot consent to sexual activity. Rape can occur within a relationship or marriage or outside of a relationship. Statistically, most survivors know their rapist.

**WHAT IS CONSENT?**

Consent must be given freely, without coercion or manipulation. Consent must be specific to the time and activity, and it is always reversible. A person cannot consent if they are intoxicated, in an altered state due to the use of substances, or are unconscious. Consent to one act and time is not consent to all acts and all times. Being coerced in any way to participate in sexual activity is not consent. Any form of unwanted sexual activity (including oral sex, touching, and penetration) without consent is sexual assault or rape.

**WHO CAN EXPERIENCE SEXUAL VIOLENCE?**

Anyone can experience sexual violence, regardless of relationship status, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual activity, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, citizenship status or economic status.
WHAT MIGHT A SURVIVOR EXPERIENCE?

Sexual violence is a trauma and there is no one way that a survivor “should” respond. Some common responses to sexual violence may include: shame, depression, anger, feelings of powerlessness, denial, anxiety, depression, drug or alcohol use, loss of energy, suicidal thoughts/ attempts, dissociation, shock, numbness, changes in daily habits, physical impacts (bruising, bleeding, soreness, broken bones or cuts, STIs, HIV, pregnancy, impacts on menstrual cycle), self-blame, or self-doubt.

HOW CAN I BEST SUPPORT A SURVIVOR?

Know and reassure that violence is never a survivor’s fault. The only person responsible for sexual violence is the offender of that violence. Always validate a survivor’s experience, and listen and allow a survivor to share as much or as little information as they want. Be aware of how you respond and always avoid any language that might be or imply victim blaming. Remember that there is no “normal” or “right” response to violence and it is always a survivor’s choice as to when, how, and who they disclose to. Research support organizations that are affirming of identity and experience. Remember that only the survivor knows what feels safe to them and what they need.

RESOURCES:

BRAVO (Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization)

About Sexual Assault
National Sexual Violence Resource Center
www.nsvrc.org/about-sexual-assault

FORGE
A National transgender anti-violence organization
www.forge-forward.org/

LGBT National Help Centers
1-888-843-4564 (M-F 4pm-midnight EST, Sat 12pm-5pm EST)

New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP)
www.avp.org/

Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV)
www.oaesv.org/

RAINN (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network)
1-800-656-4673 (24/7)

Sexual Assault and the LGBTQ Community
The Human Rights Campaign
www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-assault-and-the-lgbt-community

The Network/La Red
www.tnlr.org/en/

*This is not a comprehensive list of all available resources, but rather resources we have chosen to highlight for distribution. If you would like additional resources, additional information, or a resource sheet on another topic please let a BRAVO advocate know.*