

# *Help for Families and Individuals Dealing with Sexual Assault and Rape*

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As I have pondered what I could say to be helpful to those of you who have been sexually assaulted or raped as children, adolescents, or adults and your families and church leaders, I felt it might be most important to tell you the things I try to communicate to every young woman or young man who comes to my office in the BYU Counseling Center, who has been violated in this way. In focusing my remarks to those who have been assaulted, I hope to give insight to friends and family members about how your loved one might be feeling, and the messages they need to hear from you, to help them recover emotionally and spiritually from this violation.

If you are like 85–90 percent of individuals who reported sexual assault in Utah County for the year 2000, the person who assaulted, raped, or abused you is someone you know. It might be a boyfriend, date, acquaintance, friend, neighbor, family friend, or even a husband, father, mother, brother, sister, or other relative. It is very painful and confusing when someone you love and should be able to trust, treats you in such a way. It is especially confusing if this person claims to love you. Here are some important things to know

1. No matter what your relationship with this person is, or how old you were when it happened, sexual abuse or assault is a crime and a serious sin. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said the following about abuse in the family, and it applies to abuse and assault outside of the family as well:

We condemn most strongly abusive behavior in any form. We denounce the physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse of one's spouse or children. . . . No













