

S.A.N.E. and S.A.F.E.:

*Information and Support
in North Carolina*

by Charlotte Rogers

CONTENT WARNING

This is a book made for self-identified survivors of trauma, supporters, advocates, and anyone looking for more information related to the medical forensic exam experience in North Carolina.

If you are in a potentially dangerous situation and are in need of immediate help, please call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at **800-656-7233**.

You can find all of this information online as well at **[WEBSITE ‘GO’ LINK HERE]**.

Reminders for yourself:

Repeat after me.

It is not my fault.

There is no "right way"
to handle this.

I am not alone.

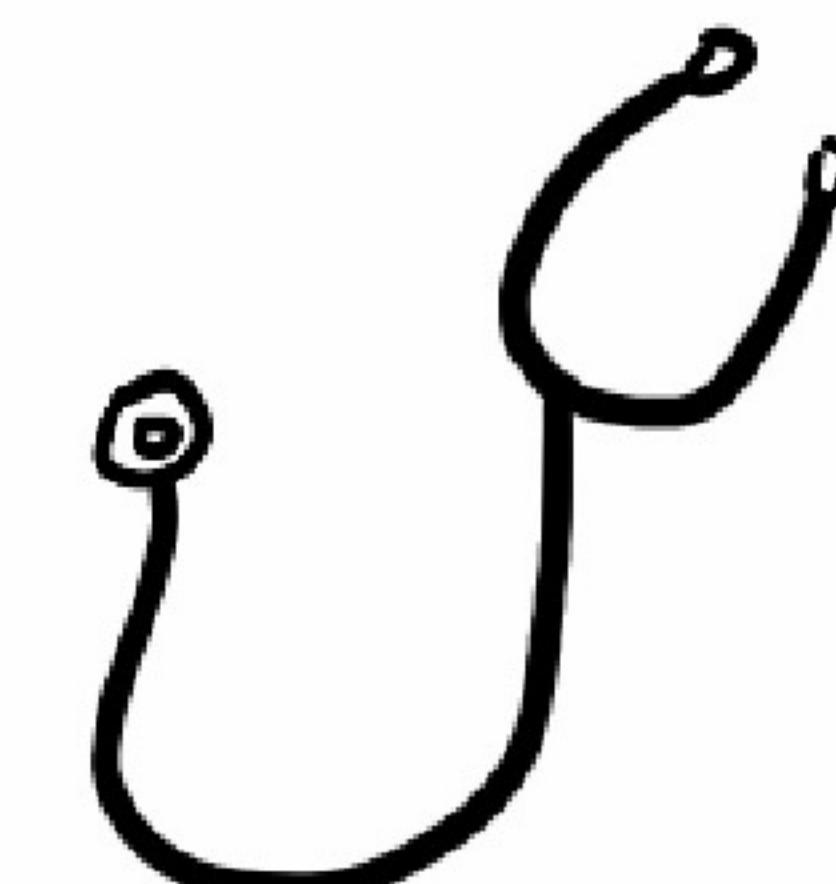
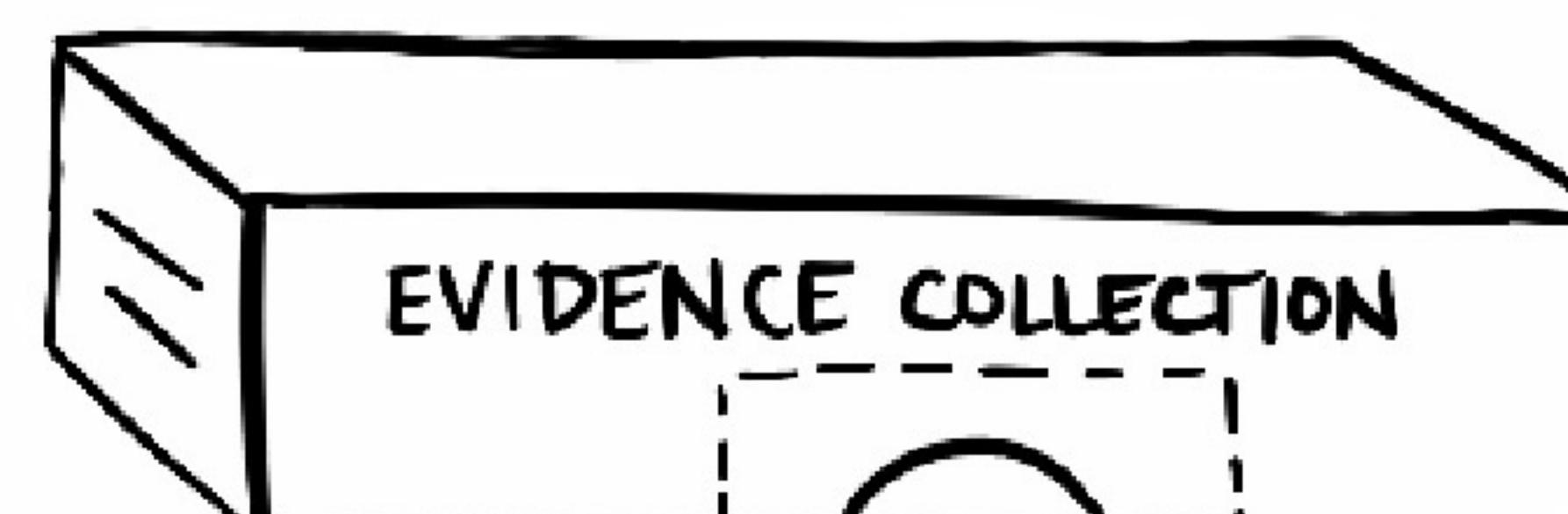
It is okay to feel
how I am feeling
about all of this.

I am strong and things will get better.



A Collection of Terms That Might be Helpful to Know:

- **Advocate:** professionals trained to support people after they have been sexually assaulted
- **Consent:** an agreement between people that gives permission for something to happen; it is freely-given, reversible, sober, enthusiastic, and specific
- **Evidence:** an item or piece of information that helps to prove something
- **F.N.E.: Forensic Nurse Examiner:** another name for the professional that leads you through the medical forensic exam after a sexual assault
- **M.F.E.: Medical Forensic Exam:** the term that describes the entire process of collecting evidence and information from a survivor following a sexual assault and providing them with care and resources, usually split into two parts (medical exam and forensic exam)
- **Rape kit:** another term for the sexual assault kit where all evidence is collected and kept throughout the forensic exam; can be tracked unless anonymous



A Collection of Terms That Might be Helpful to Know (continued):

- **S.A.F.E.**: Sexual Assault Forensic Exam
 - **S.A.N.E.**: Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner
 - **Sexual assault**: any sexual act that is not consensual
 - **S.T.D.**: Sexually Transmitted Disease
 - **S.T.I.**: Sexually Transmitted Infection
 - **Survivor**: a term often used to describe someone who has survived a sexual assault or other traumatic event
 - **Trauma**: an emotional response to a terrible or disturbing event or series of events; can look like a fight, flight, freeze, or any other form of response; is different for every person
 - **Trigger**: a reminder of past trauma
 - **Victim**: another term often used to describe someone who has survived a sexual assault or other traumatic event

"Victim" vs. "Survivor"

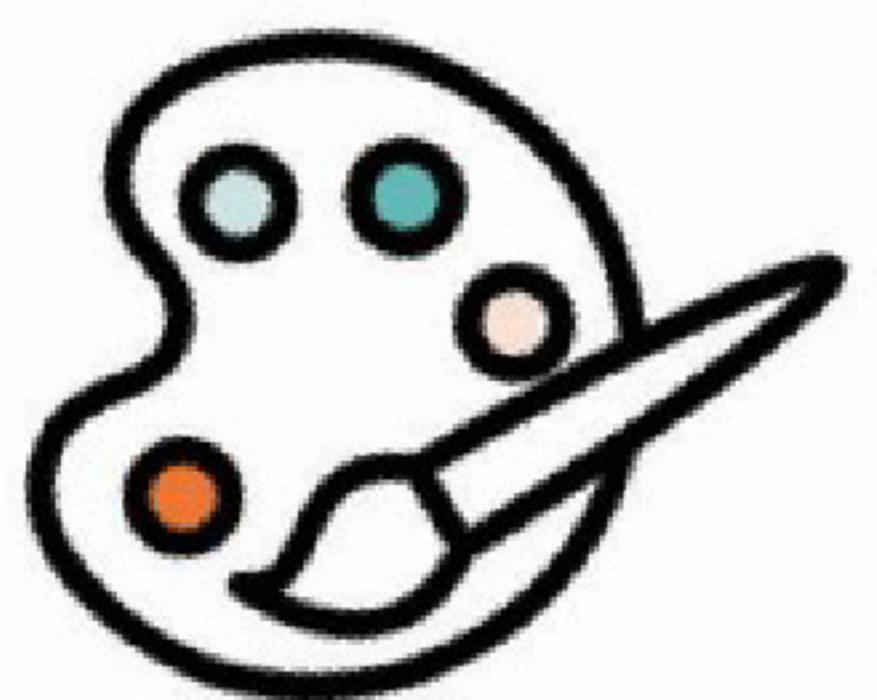
Need to get all your thoughts down on paper?

DO IT.

I want... -

I don't want...

Activities to try to help with healing the mind and body



crafty creative outlets

meditation and breathwork



journaling

talking about it
(when you feel ready to)



Medical vs. Forensic Exams:

Medical Exam:

for your general health; This exam would be focused on injuries, your general health history, treatment plans, and would all stay private unless any piece of it directly helped with evidence in the forensic kit, if you chose to complete one

Not confidential unless anonymous

Forensic Exam:

for evidence collection and documentation; This exam is done by a specially trained professional that helps you through the process of collecting evidence for the option to report what happened to you later if you want

confidential
on its own,
as in it remains private

“What happens exactly?”

During a forensic exam, a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (or SANE) might:*

- ask about medical and consensual sexual history
- ask for you to share what happened to you
- ask about what you did after the event and before getting to the hospital/office
- ask about any trauma or physical responses, such as pain or memory loss
- keep the clothing worn by the patient during their assault
- perform a full exam of each portion of the patient's body, which might include:
 - taking photos of and documenting injuries
 - mouth and genital swabs
 - taking blood
- offer care to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pregnancy, or HIV

*Consent is
REQUIRED at
every step

This process involves repeating details over several hours, but you have control!

Other Healing Help:

WEBSITES



Hear others' stories

ourwave.org

Connect with other survivors anonymously

aftersilence.org

Learn about trauma

nsvrc.org

interactofwake.org/resources

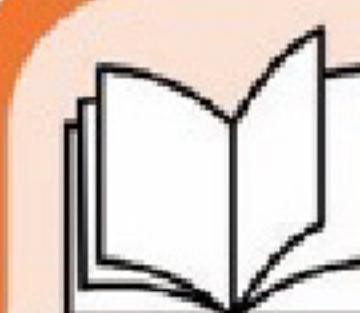
Heal from trauma

bloom.chayn.co

Learn, heal, organize

metoomvmt.org

BOOKS



Understanding and treating trauma

The Body Keeps the Score
by Bessel van der Kolk

Trauma and Recovery
by Judith Lewis Herman

Waking the Tiger
by Peter A. Levine

Work through healing trauma

The Courage to Heal
by Laura Davis

The Complex PTSD Workbook
by Arielle Shwartz

"This is a lot... who can I go to talk to?"

There are many resources!

Reaching out for support:

National:

- Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)
National Sexual Assault Hotline
800.656.4673
- National Domestic Violence Hotline
800.799.7233

Statewide:

- HopeLine Crisis and Text Line
919.231.4525
- REAL Crisis Center
24 Hour Sexual Assault Helpline
252.758.4357

go to
centers.rainn.org or
nccasa.org/get-help
 to find help near you.

"Do I have to report anything?"

You decide. **NO!** *Your choice.*

Only cases with child abuse/neglect, elder abuse/neglect by a caretaker, injuries received by gun or poison, or cases shared with mandatory reporters like school principals will be automatically investigated.

You have **OPTIONS**:

1. Report to the police



Anyone can get a rape kit, or forensic exam, done after an assault has happened and have it tested and investigated immediately. You can also track your tested kit online using the North Carolina Department of Justice website.

2. Report to a medical professional **without** going to the police



If you're unsure about having police involved, that's okay! Anyone above the age of 18 can complete a sexual assault forensic exam (or SAFE) anonymously and decide at any point in the future to have it tested. Delaying might make investigative work more difficult, but there is no limit on how long the kit will be stored.

If you choose to report to the police,

try to remember:

- not to change clothes
- not to eat or drink anything yet
- to bring the clothes you were wearing
- not to bathe or brush your teeth
- that it is **OKAY** to not remember everything!

"Why?"

If you choose to report,
or complete an exam for
the option to report later,

EVIDENCE

can be found and might
become helpful later.

"Isn't this all expensive?"

In North Carolina, you should not
be billed for your forensic exam.

- The Rape Victims Assistance Fund (RVAP) is a state fund that covers all expenses within the forensic exam (SAFE) process. You should not be billed!
- The Crime Victims Compensation Commission will also possibly cover other medical expenses and lost wages if applications are completed within two years and are approved.

- A L S O -

- The North Carolina Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) funds support for eligible survivors that pays for various therapy, medications related to their treatment plans, and travel costs related to legal and treatment dates after they get lab results.

 You have support. 

Do what is best for you.