

3.1 Safety & Crisis Response

1. **Creating a safe space:** Mental health professionals provide a secure and confidential environment where survivors can openly express their feelings and emotions. They offer empathy, understanding and validation, allowing survivors to feel heard and supported during their healing journey.
2. **Providing psychological treatment:** Mental health professionals utilise various evidence-based therapeutic approaches to address the psychological effects of trauma. Techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) and trauma-focused treatment can help survivors reframe negative thoughts, process traumatic memories and develop coping strategies.
3. **Facilitating emotional healing:** Survivors of sexual assault often grapple with intense emotions such as anger, fear, sadness and guilt. Mental health professionals can help survivors navigate these emotions, develop self-compassion and work toward emotional healing and resilience.
4. **Addressing PTSD symptoms:** Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a common consequence of sexual assault. Mental health professionals can help survivors identify triggers, manage symptoms and work through traumatic memories to reduce the impact of PTSD on their lives.
5. **Empowering survivors:** Mental health professionals aim to empower survivors by helping them regain control over their lives. They work with survivors to set realistic goals, rebuild self-esteem and develop healthy coping mechanisms to foster a stronger sense of self-worth and autonomy.
6. **Connecting with resources and support networks:** Mental health professionals can also connect survivors with additional resources and support networks. For example, they may recommend support groups, legal assistance or medical care to ensure a comprehensive approach to healing.

Creating support systems for Sexual Assault survivors should also include methodologies to accommodate social and cultural markers that demarcate trauma in a particular social setting.

- Survivor support and trauma and trauma care toolkit by Michigan State University
<https://centerforsurvivors.msu.edu/resources/how-to-help-a-survivor/>
- What do mental health professionals do? Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute
<https://ppimhs.org/newspost/the-crucial-role-of-mental-health-professionals-in-healing-sexual-assault-survivors/>
- The rape of India's Dalit women and girls <https://equalitynow.org/news/news-and-insights/the-rape-of-india-s-dalit-women-and-girls/>
- LSE Article on Media coverage and hypocrisy of covering rape of Dalit women
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2018/04/13/blame-and-shame-examining-the-media->

[coverage-of-dalit-rape-victim-in-india/](#)

- Dalit Survivors Of Sexual Violence Deal With Blocks To Justice At Every Step

<https://behanbox.com/2022/04/12/dalit-survivors-of-sexual-violence-deal-with-blocks-to-justice-at-every-step/>

- How to respond to disclosures of abuse <https://thirtyoneeight.org/blogs/how-to-respond-to-disclosures-of-abuse/>

- Reacting to disclosure of abuse

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/primarycare/childrenfirst/resources/responding-to-a-disclosure-of-abuse.pdf>

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