

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN ABUSED**

The experience you have been through may have been confusing, frightening, embarrassing, and uncomfortable. It is important to know that no matter what the circumstances surrounding the abuse were, you are not to blame.

The Helpline (1-800-494-8100), a partnership between Day one and Blackstone Shelter, is a 24-hour Helpline where trained advocates offer confidential information and support for victims and survivors of all types of crime. Advocates can also meet you at the hospital, police station, or in court. There is no charge for these services. Advocates provide support and information to friends and relatives of victims, men, women, teens, and children.

If you would like to speak with a staff at Day One, call 421-4100 during the day 9:00-5:00, or after business hours to leave a message.

Depending on the type of crime, you may be able to take legal action several years after the abuse occurred. For example, there is no statute of limitation for first and second degree child molestation or first degree sexual assault in the State of Rhode Island.

### **If you have just been abused,**

Talk to an adult you trust. You do not have to decide about reporting to the police right away. You can discuss the steps in making a police report with an advocate from Day One. If you decide to report the assault to the police, an advocate from the Center can meet you at the police station.

- Call the Helpline at 1-800-494-8100.
- Go to the hospital emergency room for a medical examination. The Helpline will arrange for someone from Day One to meet you there.

If the abuse was a sexual assault:

Do not wash, change your clothes or eat anything before you are examined.

The hospital can treat you for internal and/or external injuries, sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy prevention. The exam will also collect evidence in case you decide to report the assault to the police.