



Dealing with shame & self blame

It is important to remember if you have been sexually assaulted that you have not done anything to cause this. Nobody chooses or deserves to be sexually abused. The responsibility for the abuse lies completely with the offender. They have made the decision to abuse and are solely responsible for what they do. Remember sexual assault is a crime.

If you feel that you are blaming yourself for the sexual assault it is useful to remind yourself of a few things:

- No one ever deserves to be raped or sexually abused
- Rape and sexual assault is a violation of basic human rights
- It is the offender who should be feeling ashamed - not you
- All you could do at the time was survive, you are not responsible for the abuse:
 - whether or not you were a child who had been tricked into participating
 - whether or not you had tried to stop it
 - whether or not you said no
 - whether or not you went along with it
 - whether or not you thought it was normal

You are not to blame. The blame lies solely with the offender.

It is important that you talk to someone you trust who can help you to say "I am not to blame", rather than "Am I to blame?".

A counsellor, friend, or family member can help you understand it was not your fault and can help to place the responsibility back onto the offender.