



# REGIONAL GUIDE

## Durham

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Chapter 4: What  
Happens Next?



VESTA

[www.vestasit.com](http://www.vestasit.com)

# This Guide is For You

**Welcome. We believe you. We believe them.**

This guide is for you and anyone who needs it. You have a friend and you're worried about them. They might be in a bad situation. You're pretty sure things aren't good and they're getting worse.

What do you need? Information. Resources. Things to do right now.

**This guide is a list of resources that you can share and take action on, if you or they choose to.** It has been written and sourced specifically for the Durham region. We created this guide for survivors of sexual violence and for those who want to help them. Maybe your friend needs support. Maybe you are a survivor and you never want to see another go through what you've experienced.

Sexual violence is a prevalent, intersectional and multi-factor issue affecting all communities. Its complexity makes it impossible to tackle alone. It takes every person who has endured gender-based violence standing up and refusing to let it happen to another.

**Thank you for taking the initiative.**



# What Happens Next?

So maybe there is a problem, or something has happened to them. If they aren't sure how to disclose their story to their family, or if they want additional support after talking to you, there is immediate and accessible help available. They can [speak to a therapist through online therapy](#) or [chat online using RAINN](#) to connect with a trained individual who can help.

## How to Deal with Unsupportive Responses

It would be wonderful if everyone was as supportive as you when they disclose their story. Unfortunately, not everyone is going to respond in a helpful way. They may ask questions or provide unhelpful comments, such as: "What were you wearing? What did you do to try to stop it from happening? Why didn't you tell me sooner?"

If someone responds in such a judgmental or unhelpful manner, remind them that it's not their fault. They are not alone. Just because someone isn't supportive doesn't mean that everyone else in their life will respond the same way.

## Online Legal Aid

There are services available that can help by providing **free, independent legal advice**. These services are available remotely or in-person based on region.

Visit the [Legal Aid section of our Resource Library](#) for individually sourced legal services and specialized programs for survivors of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and other forms of violence.

# Should They Go to the Hospital?

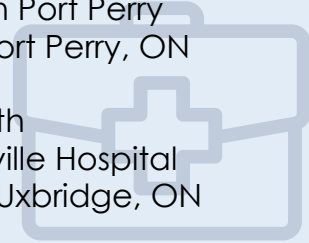
You or another friend or family member can accompany them to the emergency department of the hospital. There, they can tell the triage nurse that they have been assaulted. Physical evidence can be collected within 12 days of the assault, however, there is a greater chance at collecting forensic evidence within 72 hours.

By visiting the hospital and telling a nurse what happened, **they are not automatically reporting the assault to the police.** If they choose not to report to the police, they can still receive medical attention at any hospital.

The nurse will ask if they want to report to the police. If they don't want to report, the nurse will provide them with options, which can include a physical and genital exam to assess any injuries that may have occurred. The nurse will talk with them about sexually transmitted diseases, and for female victims, about pregnancy concerns. The nurse will discuss treatment options, such as emergency contraception and medicines to combat sexually transmitted diseases. They will also provide information about follow-up medical care.

## Emergency Rooms in Durham

- Lakeridge Health Bowmanville  
47 Liberty St. S, Bowmanville, ON
- Lakeridge Health Oshawa  
1 Hospital Court, Oshawa, ON
- Lakeridge Health Port Perry  
451 Paxton St., Port Perry, ON
- Oak Valley Health  
Markham Stouffville Hospital  
4 Campbell Dr., Uxbridge, ON



# How Does Reporting Work?

Reporting is their decision. You may want them to report. You may really want to see the perpetrator get arrested and possibly even go to court. But, it's up to them.

They don't have to report. But if they want to, now or later, they will need a record of what happened. As a friend, the most important thing you can do right now is help them document their experience.

If they're thinking about reporting but don't know where to start, we've created a user-friendly survivor's handbook for people who have experienced sexual violence. In this handbook, we cover topics like definitions, the way the Canadian criminal code outlines terms, myths, important details regarding reporting and court proceedings, links to 24/7 crisis services, and more.

Our hope is that our straightforward handbook is able to bring clarity to some of the common questions people may have surrounding sexual violence.

[Download the full handbook or individual chapters as needed.](#)



# Document Now. Report If They Want To.

For those looking to document their experience, they can start by visiting VESTA Community: a research-backed application for disclosure, reporting, and support.

Whether they want to share specifics or can't remember details, the app allows them to record their story in their own words using a trauma-informed question and answer format. They can also access online resources, crisis text or chat lines, counselling, report anonymously, report to the Kingston Police, or save their record and return to it at a later time.

[Visit the VESTA  
Community App](#)



**Together we can  
end gender-based  
violence. Be ready  
with resources.**



**VESTA**

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