Deciding who to tell about the assault

When deciding who to tell about the assault, consider the following points:

- Having support of friends or family during this time is important to your recovery. You may wish to carefully consider who around you makes you feel comfortable and safe, and let that person(s) know what happened.
- Sometimes survivors feel that they are burdening others by talking about the assault. Remember that those people around you who care about you want to be there to provide support. You would probably do the same for them if they experience a challenging situation.
- Consideration of your family and friends’ possible reactions is helpful in making this decision. You may wish to think about past and current relationships and history of support, and how you think family members and friends may respond.
- Understand that responses may vary widely from supportive and understanding to rejection and accusation. These responses may come from the same person over a period of time.
- At times not telling the family may be the right decision - the survivor can make this determination. You may decide to tell family and others at a later date or not at all. Each individual must make this decision for her/himself.
- Friends, partners, lovers and other significant people including roommates, may have a difficult time understanding your feelings. They may also be in need of counseling, not only to assist you but also to obtain support for their own feelings. Counseling is available at VPVA not only for survivors but also for others who may be affected.