

Fact Sheet

Alternative and Reporting Options – To report or not to report

When it comes to sexual assault it is not always clear how to proceed. The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) offers clients the information required to assist them in making an informed decision best suited to their situation. We do not provide medical, forensic or legal advice – instead, we encourage clients to ask questions directly to those experts. SART supports our clients throughout this decision making process.

Queensland Police Service (QPS)

QPS are available to attend the hospital at any time to answer questions involving the process of reporting a sexual assault. Please be assured that just because a person speaks to QPS, this does not mean that they are making a complaint or that the QPS will investigate.

If a person chooses to make a 'complaint', SART will support our clients while they provide details of what happened during the assault to QPS. QPS may then contact the Forensic Medical Officer/Forensic Nurse Examiner to discuss the case further and to decide if there is value in conducting a Forensic Medical Examination. The purpose of the examination is to obtain additional evidence to support the police investigation. A Forensic Medical Examination can only occur with a client's consent.

The choice to involve QPS is one that is respected by our staff. If a person does not want to speak with the QPS, we will discuss Alternative Reporting Options (ARO)

<http://www.police.qld.gov.au/programs/adultassault/default.htm> (as outlined below).

If a client chooses not to involve the QPS, a non-forensic pathway will be initiated where by the client is seen by medical staff in the Department of Emergency Medicine and provided with any necessary medical care before being discharged.

Alternative Reporting Options (ARO)

ARO gives the opportunity to provide police with details of the assault while remaining anonymous. This option can be an extremely useful healing strategy; it can help survivors feel empowered by knowing that the information they possess and provide could be used to solve reported offences of a similar nature.

Police can use this information to;

- assist other prosecutions against an offender; and
- protect the community by enabling police to devise intelligence driven strategies designed to target an offender and reduce repeat offending

<http://www.police.qld.gov.au/programs/adultassault/altReportOpt.htm>