



**SEEK**

**THEN > SPEAK**

**A NEW PILOT PROGRAM IN THE CITY OF SEATTLE**

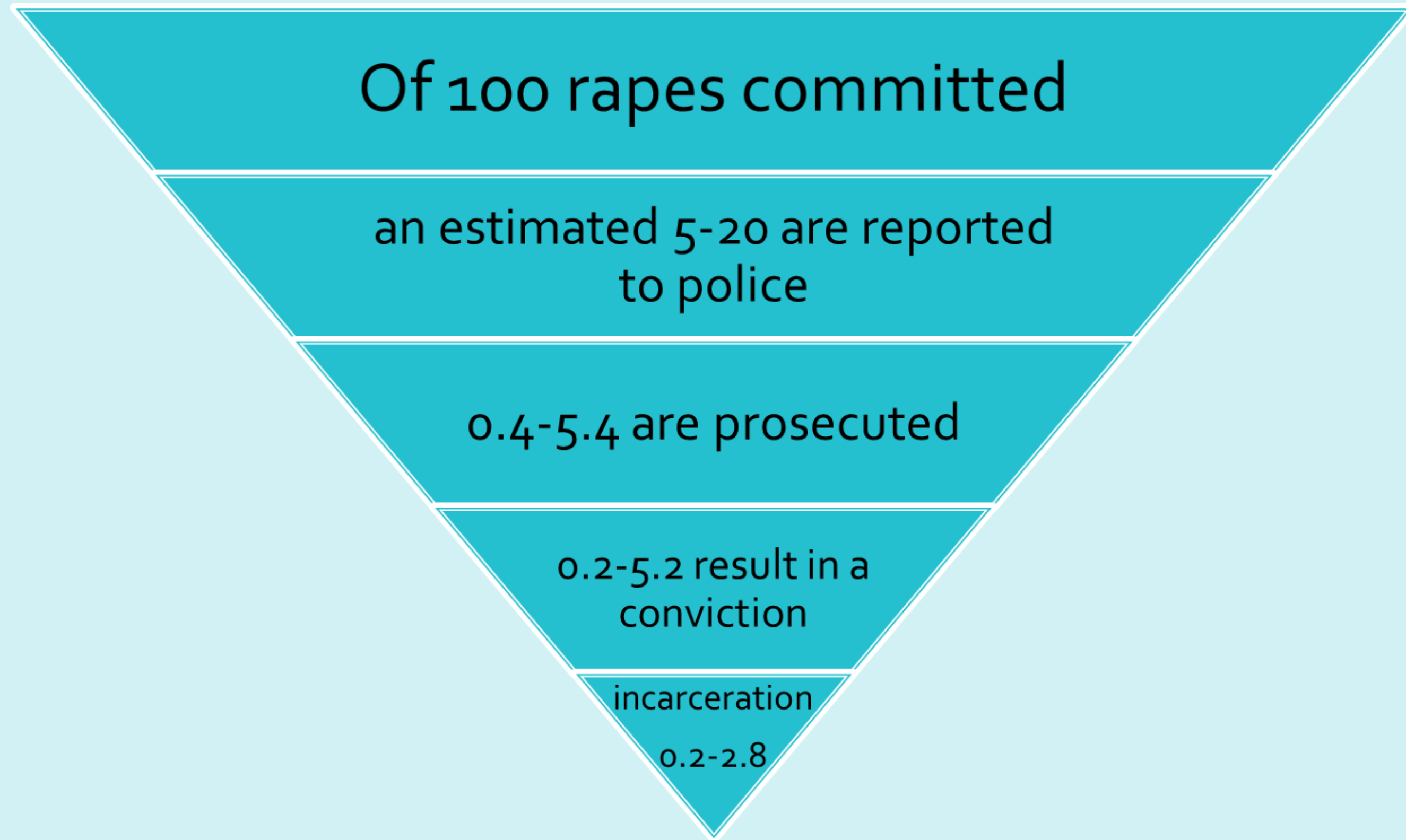


## PRESENTER:

Alison Forsyth, (she/her)  
Sr. Planner with the Mayor's Office on  
Domestic Violence and Sexual  
Assault, with the City of Seattle

## STS PARTNERS:





LONSWAY, K.A. & ARCHAMBAULT, J. (2012). THE "JUSTICE GAP" FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT CASES: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH AND REFORM, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, 18 (2), 145-168.



# WHY DON'T SURVIVORS REPORT?

## Common barriers include:

- Fear of retaliation
- Concerns about being doubted or blamed
- Fear of others discovering their experience
- Apprehension towards the justice system
- Concerns about not being believed



# CONSEQUENCES OF NOT REPORTING

**Without a report,**

- Law enforcement cannot investigate
- Offenders escape prosecution.
- Survivors may face unresolved trauma.
- Perpetrators may repeat offenses.



"Without a report, the perpetrator is free to offend again, and nothing changes for the next victim. So the cycle repeats."

Lonsway & Archambault (2010)



# A NEW APPROACH TO REPORTING

**"Open doors lead to more open doors"**

- Access to one professional often leads to more engagement with others.

**Studies show survivors need time**

- Survivors typically contact 2-3 formal or informal support providers prior to police (ie friends, family).\*
- Only 1/4 victims reported in less than 24 hours after their assault.\*\*

\*Patterson, D. & Campbell, R. (2010). Why rape survivors participate in the criminal justice system. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 38, 191-205; Paul, L.A., Zinzow, H.M., McCaugly, J.L., Kilpatrick, D.G., & Resnick, H.S. (2014). Does encouragement by others increase rape reporting? Findings from a national sample of women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 38 (2), 222-232.

\*\*Kilpatrick, D.G., Edmunds, C.N., & Seymour, A.E. (1992). *Rape in America: A Report to the Nation*. Arlington, VA: National Crime Victims Center.

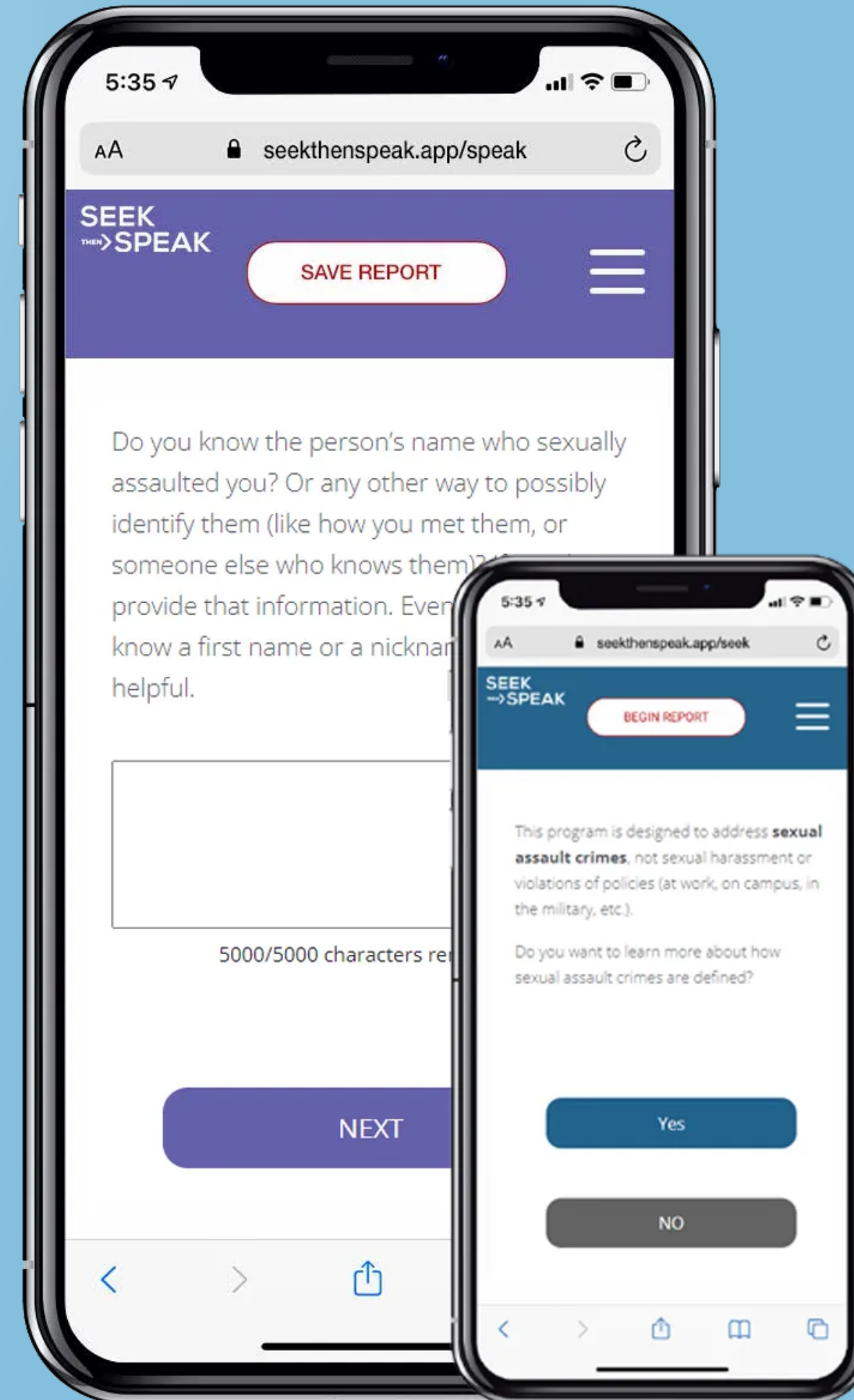


## SEEK THEN SPEAK



Sexual assault information  
*when you need it* in **SEEK**.

Begin reporting  
*when you're ready* in **SPEAK**.







**SEEK  
THEN > SPEAK**

If you've been sexually assaulted and live in the City of Seattle, or the assault took place in Seattle, there is now a new pathway to justice.

SEEK THEN SPEAK is a tool adopted by the Seattle Police Department to support survivors of sexual assault to explore their options, connect with local resources and begin the process of reporting to law enforcement.

AA [seekthenspeakseattle.com](https://seekthenspeakseattle.com)

**QUICK REFERENCE**

- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING A SEXUAL ASSAULT IN SEATTLE
- RESOURCES ABOUT THE INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS
  - KCSARC's Guide to Sexual Assault Investigation
  - Seattle's Criminal Investigation and Prosecution Process
- WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?
- CRIME VICTIMS COMPENSATION
- IMMEDIATE SERVICES OR SUPPORT



Connect

Click below to gather information or begin a report.

**SEEK then SPEAK**

To submit your report to Seattle Police Department, email the pdf to [seekthenspeak@seattle.gov](mailto:seekthenspeak@seattle.gov)

The Seek then Speak tool is designed for use when circumstances do not require urgent law enforcement

AA [seekthenspeakseattle.com](https://seekthenspeakseattle.com)



**SEEK THEN SPEAK**

SEEK THEN SPEAK is a tool for sexual assault survivors and support people.

In SEEK, you can privately gather information and explore your options for medical care, supportive services, and reporting to police.

**SEEK**

If you choose, you can even begin the process of reporting to police by completing a self-guided interview in SPEAK.

**SPEAK**

SEEK THEN SPEAK is brought to you by End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI)

AA seekthenspeak.app

**SEEK THEN SPEAK**

**SAVE REPORT**

This program will lead you through a series of questions, to **gather critical information about your sexual assault.**

You can go through the questions at your own pace, taking as long as you need. You can take breaks whenever you want. You can also provide as much or as little information as you choose.

**CONTINUE**

- Back -

AA seekthenspeak.app



Next, we want to ask about other types of force, control, or coercion that may have been used by the person who sexually assaulted you. Please mark any of the options below that describe what happened.

**You can choose more than one. Please mark all the options that apply, then click SUBMIT.**

If none of those descriptions fit, or you want to explain something in your own words, choose OTHER and click SUBMIT for the next screen. Or you can SKIP.

**IGNORING WHAT I SAID OR DID TO COMMUNICATE NON-CONSENT**

**VERBAL PRESSURE OR COERCION**

**POSITION OF AUTHORITY (parent, stepparent, teacher, coach, boss, etc.)**



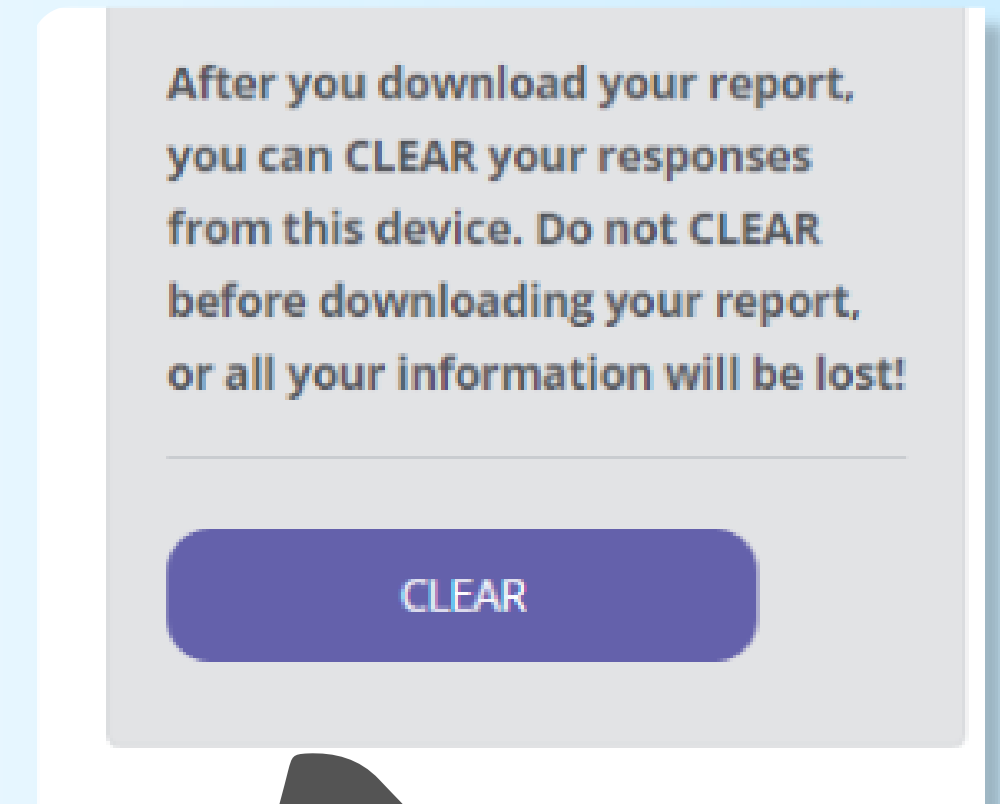
# HOW IT WORKS

## Accessibility:

- Available in multiple languages.
- Designed for all reading levels.
- Website formatted to be viewed from cell phone.
- Compatible with device accessibility features.

## Privacy and Confidentiality:

- No data is stored to the Seek then Speak website.
- Responses are stored locally to their device until they clear it (to avoid accidental loss of the report).
- Survivors control who has access to their information prior to reporting.





# HOW IT WORKS

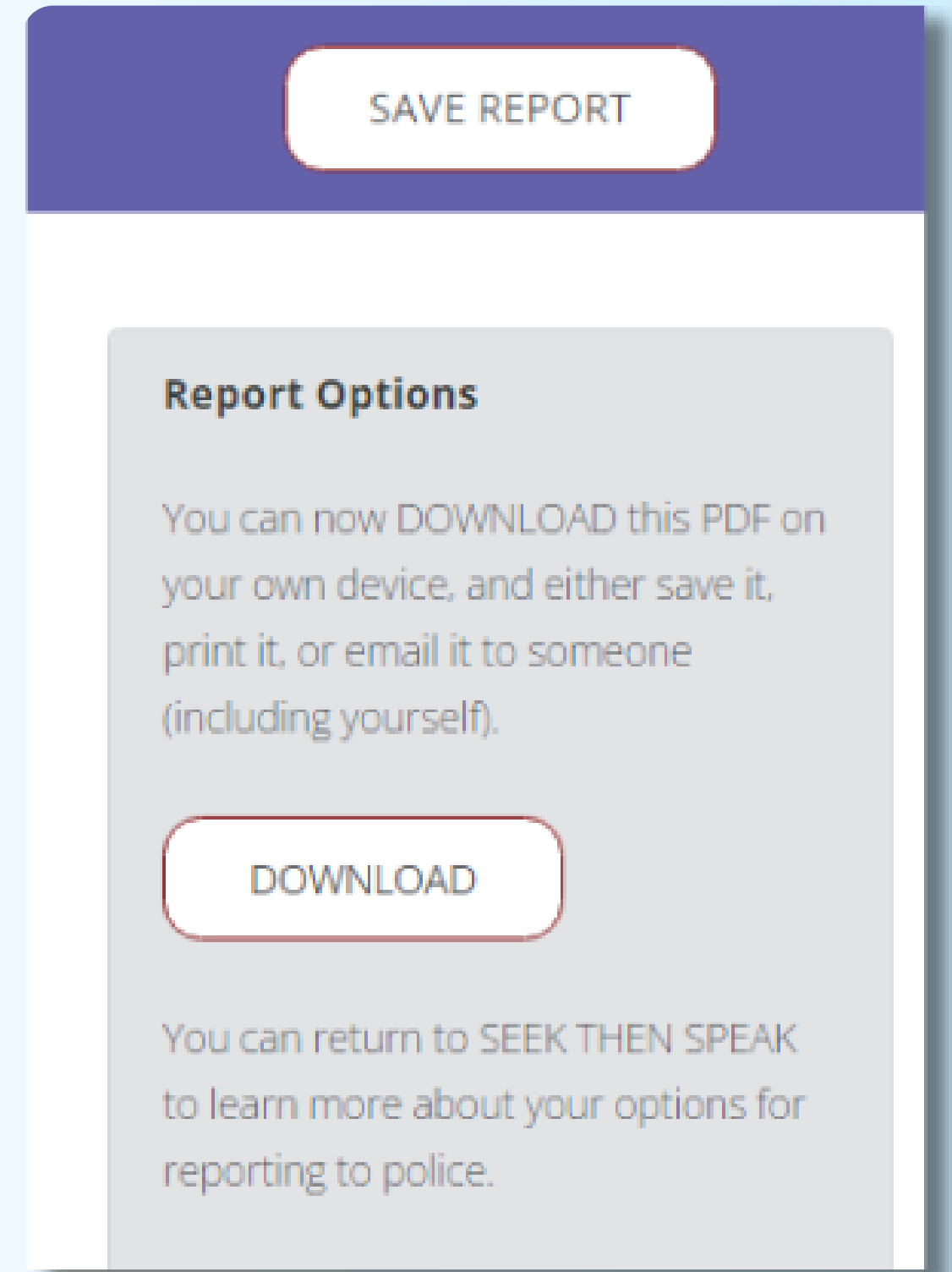


## Increased Agency:

- Survivors can provide as little or as much information as they want.
- They can skip any questions or not answer them.

## Empowerment through Choices:

- Survivors decide when and where they chose to complete the report.
- Once complete, survivor decides what they want to do with the PDF.



SAVE REPORT

Did you get any **medical care** or **first aid** after your sexual assault? This could have been from a health care provider like a doctor or nurse, or even from a family member, friend, or someone else.

YES

NO

SKIP

- Back -

Screen: 46 of 183 / 24% Complete

## SPEAK QUESTIONS COVER:

- Instructions
- Prior Police Reports
- Basic Information
- Assault Date
- Pain or Injuries
- Prior Medical Exam
- Type of Assault
- Consent, Coercion
- Assault Location
- Alcohol or Drugs
- Victim Narrative
- Suspect Information
- Evidence Available
- Victim Information
- Potential Witnesses
- Next Steps



SAVE REPORT

Did you get any **medical care** or **first aid** after your sexual assault? This could have been from a health care provider like a doctor or nurse, or even from a family member, friend, or someone else.

YES

NO

SKIP

- Back -

Screen: 46 of 183 / 24% Complete

SAVE REPORT

Were you **injured in any way** beyond the sexual assault itself?

YES

NO

I'M NOT SURE

SKIP

- Back -

Screen: 50 of 183 / 26% Complete

SAVE REPORT

We are sorry to hear you were hurt.

**Please consider getting medical care for your injuries if you haven't already.**

Your physical well-being is the most important thing right now.

NEXT

- Back -

Screen: 52 of 183 / 28% Complete



SAVE REPORT



Once a survivor finishes their report, they click “SAVE REPORT” to download a PDF.

**IMPORTANT:** A survivor must email the PDF to SPD if they want to report it. Survivors can also choose to simply download the PDF and save it to their own records.

**In order to submit their report to SPD, survivors must email their PDF to:  
SEEKTHENSPEAK@SEATTLE.GOV**

REPORT CREATED: 2023-08-08 21:12:44 UTC

This report was produced using SEEK THEN SPEAK, a program of End Violence Against International (EVAWI) which can be accessed from any computer, laptop, tablet, or mobile phone. The program provides information about sexual assault victimization and survivor options for reporting to police and accessing services (SEEK). Survivors then begin the process of reporting their sexual assault to police by providing information in response to self-guided interview prompts (SPEAK).

Interview prompts guide sexual assault survivors through careful documentation of the information and evidence that will be most critical to a law enforcement investigation. The interview also serves an educational function, explaining why questions are asked, how the information will be used, and what survivors' rights are throughout the criminal justice process. This helps reduce survivors' anxiety, increase accuracy, and keep survivors in the driver's seat while preparing to report.

Survivors can complete the interview in more than 100 languages. However, the translation is browser-based, which means the report is generated in the language the survivor used. The questions appear in English, but the survivor's responses appear in the language used on their own device.

For more information about the program, go to <https://evawintl.org/seek-then-speak/>.

### PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

**Q:** What is your native language?

**A:** English

**Q:** First, we want to ask whether you have tried to report your sexual assault to police already. Have you contacted any police about your assault?

**A:** NO

**Q:** Were you sexually assaulted by one person? Or do you think more than one person might have sexually assaulted you?

**A:** ONE PERSON

**Q:** Do you know the person's name who sexually assaulted you? Or any other way to identify them (like where you met, or someone else who knows them)? If so, please provide that information. Even if you just know a first name or a nickname, that can be helpful.

## REPORTING TO SEATTLE POLICE



**Reports should be sent to:  
SEEKTHENSPEAK@SEATTLE.GOV**

### Once a report is received,

- Email is managed by SPD SAU Unit.
- Reports are first treated as information-only and reviewed for elements of a crime.
- Sgt reviews all STS reports first then may assign to a detective for investigation.
- All STS emails receive contact from a SAU advocate to connect them with resources.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**Q: Can I report anonymously through Seek Then Speak?**

A: Yes, you can send in anonymous reports. You decide how much information you choose to share.

However, it's important to note that while initial reports can be made anonymously, investigations and prosecutions require non-anonymous reports. Anonymity at the report stage does not mean the case can proceed anonymously through the legal system.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**Q: Once a report is sent to SPD, is it still confidential?**

A: Submitting a report means it becomes part of official police record, accessible by legal parties if the case goes to court.

As with most forms of reporting to law enforcement, complete privacy cannot be guaranteed once a report becomes part of the legal process.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**Q: Can I report without starting an investigation?**

A: Yes, typically. You can request to simply submit your report without triggering an investigation, and SPD usually follows the victim's wishes.

However, there are exceptions, such as cases involving very young or elderly victims, serious injuries, serial offenders, or intimate partner violence.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**Q: How is my privacy protected?**

A: No information is stored or uploaded to the Seek Then Speak website.

Report data is temporarily stored to the user's device, so it is recommended that users clear their device's history after submitting a report to maintain privacy.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**Q: Will my report always lead to an investigation?**

A: Not necessarily. SPD carefully reviews each report to see if there's enough information to trigger an investigation.

The threshold to instigate an investigation depends on many factors, such as the details provided, the nature of the incident, related laws, statute of limitations, etc.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**Q: Can someone else complete the interview on behalf of a victim?**

A: No, it is important that the victim completes the interview themselves to ensure the accuracy and legality of the report.

However, victims can have emotional support from someone else while they complete the interview.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**Q: When should Seek Then Speak not be used?**

A: The platform is not a substitute for immediate medical or safety interventions.

It's not suitable for very recent assaults requiring urgent attention, individuals under significant distress, or when there's an immediate threat to safety.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**Q: What are the best practices for completing the SPEAK interview?**

A: Before starting the interview, it is advised to preview all the questions to prepare for the types of information requested.

The SPEAK interview has 183 screens to click through. Although not all of them are questions, it can be a time-consuming process so previewing in advance can help.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**Q: What are the benefits of using this reporting option?**

A: The tool helps explain why questions are asked, how the information will be used, and what survivors' rights are throughout the process.

It can also provide helpful insight to the later investigative process, such as prepare victims for detective interviews, should they choose to submit the pdf to SPD.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**Q: Who can I contact with questions about submitting a report through Seek then Speak?**

A: Crime Victim Advocates are available at the [seekthenspeak@seattle.gov](mailto:seekthenspeak@seattle.gov) email to answer questions about the reporting process, provide support and connect survivors with free and confidential resources.



# OBJECTIVES

**SEEK**  
THEN **SPEAK**



## Survivor Impact

- Empowerment through Information.
- Enhanced Agency over Reporting.
- Reporting Process More Accessible.
- Increased Connection to Resources.
- Direct Connection to Advocacy.
- Reduced Barriers to Reporting Process.



## System Improvement

- Enhanced Quality of Investigative Information.
- Increased Collaboration between Community and Criminal Justice System Stakeholders.
- Lightened Load on First Responders.
- Streamlined Reporting Process.

**Q: Where can I learn more?**

A: Seek then Speak is a national resource created by End Violence Against Women International, which has additional resources on their website.

**Q: I have feedback about the tool, suggestions to make it better or want technical support. Who do I contact?**

A: Ongoing feedback is a critical part of the success of this project!

You can submit yours here:

<https://victimsvoice.app/seekthenspeak/support/>



**Alison Forsyth** *(she/her)*

Sr. Planner

[Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault](#)

City of Seattle, **Human Services Department**

PO Box 34215, Seattle, WA 98124-4215

[alison.forsyth@seattle.gov](mailto:alison.forsyth@seattle.gov)