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# Dear Dr. Chloe, I Have Recently Been Falsely Accused of Sexual Misconduct, and I Am Not Sure What to Do

*Dear Dr. Chloe, I am writing to you today because I am in need of your advice. I have recently been falsely accused of sexual misconduct, and I am not sure what to do.*



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By [Dr. Chloe Carmichael](#)

8/28/2023

Updated: 8/28/2023



Dear Dr. Chloe,

I am writing to you today because I am in need of your advice. I have recently been falsely accused of sexual misconduct, and I am not sure what to do.

The accusation against me is completely false. I never had anything to do with the woman who is accusing me—in fact, I actually declined her advances towards me.

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I am worried about the impact that this accusation will have on my life. I am a college student, and I am worried about being expelled. I am also worried about my reputation, and I am not sure how I will be able to move on from this.

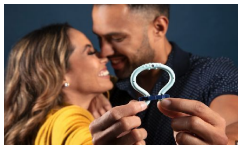
I am feeling so lost and alone right now. I just want to stay inside and hide all day. I have even thought about quitting my job, because I don't want to face people who might think I am guilty. I've tried to see therapists, but they just re-accuse me and ask if I'm sure I'm really innocent.

I would really appreciate any advice that you can give me. I am feeling very lost and alone right now, and I could use your help.

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Sincerely,

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Josh

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Dear Josh,

I am so sorry for what you have experienced. Unfortunately, your story is increasingly common—a fallout of the #metoo movement is that men are often considered "guilty till proven innocent,"—a perspective that is harmful to all parties involved. It pains me to acknowledge that your experience of therapists accusing you is also increasingly common—at least according to the stories I have heard from countless young men like yourself.

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You wrote for advice, not for sympathy—so let me suggest a few ideas:

1. See a lawyer. Depending on the situation, there may be things you can do to help protect your reputation and guard against inappropriate expulsion from school or other harms that arise from false accusations. Try searching online with terms like "attorney + false allegations of sexual misconduct + (your state)" to get started.

2. Reach out to organizations like [FACE](#) (Families Advocating for Campus Equality). FACE provides resources to young men who are falsely accused, especially in [Title IX](#) (link added) college settings. I have spoken for their organization before, and the engagement included sitting privately with a group of about a dozen young men in a similar situation. They took great comfort in supporting one another—do everything you can to find community. You are not alone!

3. Continue seeking therapy, but vet the therapists carefully. FACE may have resources, and [Open Therapy Institute](#) may be helpful as well (full disclosure: I am a consultant at this organization). Many therapists offer the chance for you to communicate why you're seeking therapy before they have an appointment with you. Take this opportunity to explain briefly that you have been falsely accused of sexual misconduct and that you have been hurt by previous therapists re-accusing you during sessions. Consider sending them a

link to this column if you wish. Early communication in the initial appointment-setting phase may deter therapists who are fond of the irrational "believe all women" approach from even having an intake visit with you. The sooner you can eliminate such therapists from your search the better.

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4. I would encourage you to resist the temptation to just stay inside and hide—or to quit your job like you mentioned—I don't know all the details of your situation, so please use your own judgment on this. Sometimes hibernating for a little while to recover and collect yourself is the best thing to do—but don't let it go on too long because it can start a spiral effect that leads to isolation and helplessness.

Do everything you can to remain active and connected with people who support you—and do things that make you feel empowered—such as having a job and getting your education. Make sure that you are eating well, exercising, and doing everything you can to stay strong both mentally and physically. The more you surrender the normalcy of your daily life, the more you are allowing your accuser to control you.

Thank you for sharing, Josh. Please feel free to keep me updated as your situation progresses. You are not alone. Stay strong and keep your eye on the future!

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Chloe

*Dr. Chloe Carmichael is a clinical psychologist and USA Today bestselling author of "Nervous Energy: Harness the Power of Your Anxiety" and "Dr. Chloe's Ten Commandments of Dating." Send any questions where you'd like a psychologist's perspective to ask@drchloe.com. Responses are not guaranteed, and do not constitute medical advice.*



**Dr. Chloe Carmichael**

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