

Sexual Assault

The purpose of this fact sheet is to help people understand and recognise sexual assault. The content may be distressing for some people. Please see the end of the document for important phone numbers if you require support.

What is sexual assault?

Under Victorian law, sexual assault is **any sexual activity that happens without your consent**.

That includes:

- If you did not want it to happen
- If you felt pressured, forced or unable to say no
- If you were unable to provide consent

Sexual assault is never the fault of the person who experienced it.

What is consent?

Consent must be freely given and can be withdrawn at any time. Silence is not consent. Being frozen or unable to respond is not consent.

Sexual assault does not always look the same

Below are some examples of sexual assault:

- Unwanted sexual touching or contact
- Being pressured, manipulated or coerced into sexual acts
- Sexual acts with someone who is asleep, unconscious or affected by alcohol or drugs
- Being forced or threatened into sexual acts
- Continuing with sexual acts when the person has said no or has shown they are uncomfortable

Important things to note

- Sexual assault does not have to involve physical force
- Its most often perpetrated by someone known to the person
- People may freeze, comply or not resist – this is a normal trauma response
- Many people do not immediately recognise what has happened was sexual assault
- **If it felt unwanted, unsafe or pressured – seek support**

You might be unsure

It is common for people to question what happened to them, or minimise it, after a sexual assault. You might be wondering if what happened really 'counts' as sexual assault, or comparing your experience to others you have heard about.

There is no 'better' or 'worse' type of sexual assault and all people respond differently.

You do not need to be sure what happened to you was sexual assault to speak to a counsellor or get help.

After a Sexual Assault

How can sexual assault affect people?

People can experience a range of reactions, including physical, emotional, psychological and behavioural impacts. Responses vary and can change over time. See SECASA's [Understanding Common Reactions](#), [Survivors Guide](#) and [Sexual Assault: What Now?](#) resources for further information.

What can you do?

- Talk to someone you can trust
- Contact a support service – you can call the SECASA Intake team on **8769 2200 – opt 1** during business hours to speak to a counsellor/advocate
- Get medical attention if required

Where to get help:

If you are in immediate danger or need urgent medical assistance, call 000

During business hours

Contact your local Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)

Find your nearest service at: <https://peak.sasvic.org.au/servicemap> and enter your postcode or suburb

After hours, weekends and public holidays

Call the Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL) on 1800 577 011

If you are not in Victoria

Call 1800 RESPECT or 1800 737 732

Or find a local support service at: <https://www.nasasv.org.au/support-directory>

All services listed are free, confidential and voluntary.