



Your place for family violence information

## Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual behaviour to which a person does not consent. It typically makes a person feel uncomfortable, frightened or threatened and can cause serious physical injury.

The use of emotional or physical violence to force another person to engage in sexual activity also constitutes sexual assault.

Sexual assault can take various forms, some of which are criminal offences:

- > Touching, fondling, kissing
- > Being made to look at, or pose for, pornographic photos
- > Voyeurism
- > Exhibitionism
- > Sexual harassment
- > Verbal harassment/innuendo
- > Rape
- > Incest/intrafamilial child sexual assault
- > Stalking

### Who experiences sexual assault?

Sexual assault is predominantly experienced by women and children. Incidence is much lower among men.

The offender is rarely a stranger. Most often it is someone the victim/survivor knows and trusts, such as a family member or friend. Most perpetrators of sexual assault are men who abuse a position of trust, authority and power.

Many sexual assaults occur in the context of family and domestic violence where men don't seek consent and women don't feel free to refuse. In these cases, women may not identify their experience as sexual assault.

### Seeking help

Sexual assault is never the fault or responsibility of the victim/survivor. If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted, either recently or in the past, there are services that can provide support. Victims/survivors also have the right to report their experience to the police and receive legal protection.

