

FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

1 ANYONE CAN EXPERIENCE SEXUAL VIOLENCE

How someone dresses, behaves or looks is never the reason they experience sexual violence. Everyone has the right to dress and act how they want. There is NO EXCUSE for sexual violence, and it can happen to anyone. Nobody should be blamed for what happened to them.

The only person responsible for sexual violence is the perpetrator. Sexual violence is an act of power and control by one person over another. Perpetrators may target particular groups of people in our community, who may have less power already, ie: due to racism, sexism, classism, homophobia or transphobia.

Sexual violence can occur against anyone from any cultural background.

2 BELIEVE SURVIVORS

No matter what you hear on social media, the news or TV shows, reports of people lying about being raped is rare. The media will focus on a small few who have lied to continue this story. Most people don't tell anyone about their experiences of rape or assault because;

- They are scared no one will believe them.
- They are scared that other people will blame them for what happened.
- They wish it never happened and want to forget about it.

3 THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR CHILDHOOD ABUSE

A child is NEVER to blame for abuse. The perpetrator of abuse is solely responsible for their behaviour. The age of consent (16 years) is there to protect children, because of the power imbalance between adults and children.

4 SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS ABOUT POWER AND CONTROL

Most sexual assaults are planned and perpetrated by people known to the survivor. Rape and sexual assault is about holding power and control over someone - it is not about sex or a reaction to someone else's behaviour. Meaning it has nothing to do with anything you did when it happened.

5 MENTAL HEALTH ISN'T AN EXCUSE FOR SEXUAL ABUSE

Perpetrators aren't different from other people, they just believe that they have the right to do it. People are more likely to perpetrate sexual violence if they believe in myths around sexual violence and believe in traditional or negative gender roles.

6 MOST PERPETRATORS ALREADY KNOW THE PEOPLE THEY ASSAULT

It is more common for people to be sexually assaulted in their own home or the home of someone they know than anywhere else. It is less common for people to be assaulted by strangers, whilst this type of sexual violence does occur, most people already know the perpetrator at the time of the assault.

7 EVERY SURVIVOR'S RECOVERY LOOKS DIFFERENT

There is no right way to heal from trauma. It's important that you find your own way of healing and not feel pressured to do things a certain way. It's your journey. It's your choice who you talk to and what you choose to share.

8 YOU CAN SAY NO AND CHANGE YOUR MIND AT ANY TIME

You can say no at any time - no matter how far into having sex you are. It's always OK to say 'no' or change your mind. If someone keeps going after you try to stop, that is sexual violence. People can control themselves and stop. People should always check-in with their partner during sex!

9 PERPETRATORS CAN BE ANYONE

Anyone can be sexually violent and rape someone. It doesn't matter if they went to uni, have a job or not, are young or old, or seem nice or mean. We know that perpetrators are more likely to be male & someone who is known to the victim/survivor (e.g. family member, friend, partner, colleague, etc.)

10 EVERY TIME SOMEONE IS PRESSURED OR MANIPULATED INTO HAVING SEX WHEN THEY DON'T WANT TO, IT IS RAPE

Sexual assault happens when there is no consent - this does not require someone to say "no" or fight back. Many survivors will have a freeze response and find it difficult to say "no".

This is why it is important to be checking in with your partners, asking questions, and watching for body language and cues that show you they're engaged and check if they consent to sexual activity.

If you notice your partners body language appears frozen, upset or even unclear - stop and check in. It's also sexual assault for someone to guilt trip or pressure someone into having sex (e.g; through asking over and over again until they cave).



CONTACT ZIG ZAG

Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre Inc.
575 Old Cleveland Rd
Camp Hill QLD 4152
Phone: (07) 3843 1823
Email: info@zigzag.org.au