

IMPACTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence can take many forms and can impact you or someone you know in many different ways. The ways it impacts someone can change over time and may depend on the circumstance.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IMPACTS **EMOTIONAL** HEALTH IN MANY WAYS, YOU MIGHT FEEL:

- Fearful
- Disgust
- Sadness
- Numbness
- Emptiness
- Guilt
- Anger
- Isolated / Alone
- Self-hatred
- Self-blame
- Anxiety
- Disbelief / Self-doubt
- Shame
- Humiliation
- Out of control
- General loss of self-esteem

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IMPACTS **PHYSICAL** HEALTH IN MANY WAYS, YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE:

- Headaches, tension, pain
- Nightmares
- Sleeplessness or sleep issues
- Excessive tiredness
- Changes to eating patterns or digestive issues
- Change to drug and alcohol use
- Physical injuries
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Impacts in reproductive health
- Unplanned pregnancy

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IMPACTS **MENTAL** HEALTH IN MANY WAYS, YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE:

- Mood swings
- Not feeling 'yourself'
- Flashbacks
- Panicking
- Struggling to be in public spaces
- Difficulties dealing with certain people, places or smells
- Dissociation
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Eating issues
- Suicidal thoughts or actions
- Mental health impacts can be present over long periods of time for some survivors.
- Self harm
- Difficulty in keeping or getting work/school.
- Loss of meaning or purpose in life.
- Difficulty planning or imagining a future.
- Low or no motivation

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IMPACTS **SOCIAL** HEALTH IN MANY WAYS, YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE:

- Being isolated from family – due to lack of support and understanding
- Being isolated from support and/or family due to perpetrator control
- Loss of trust in people and the world
- Difficulty forming healthy, trusting relationships
- Difficulty in the expression of sexuality and intimacy
- Acting out with violent and/or risk-taking behaviours
- Reduced engagement in school and study
- Feeling out of control
- Not enjoying social activities or events as you once did

Everyone copes with their experiences differently. Some ways people cope might be by talking to friends, playing sport or exercising, sleeping/resting, watching TV, drawing, listening to music, art or whatever else they like AND want to do.



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