

WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS A WORD USED TO DESCRIBE MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR, INCLUDING:

- sexual harassment;
- any unwanted sexual touch;
- rape and attempted rape;
- incest;
- exposing another to pornographic material;
- unwanted sexual comments or jokes
- recording sexual activity (e.g. on camera or phone) without participant's consent;
- stealthing;
- distribution of sexually explicit images of a person without their consent; and
- any sexual contact with a child under 16 years of age by someone 16 years or older.

SEXUAL ASSAULT IS ANY BEHAVIOR THAT IS SEXUAL IN NATURE WHICH HAPPENS TO A PERSON WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT OR ANY SEXUAL CONTACT OR BEHAVIOUR THAT HAS BEEN COERCED (FORCED).

Consent does not occur when someone:

- has said 'no' or has pushed the other person away;
- is 'frozen' and unable to speak or engage (even if they can't explicitly say no at the time);
- is unable to communicate because they're affected by using drugs and alcohol. For example, if a person has consumed too much alcohol or drugs, or they can't talk or walk as normal.
- is unaware of exactly who they are with e.g. it is a crime of sexual violence to have sexual contact with someone while pretending to be someone else.
- is not able to make an informed decision about what they would like to do.

Coercion refers to making someone do **something they do not want to do** by:

- threatening you with violence;
- making other threats (e.g. to end the relationship with you);
- manipulation and/or *grooming;
- pressuring you;
- telling you that you don't know what you really want;
- making you responsible for someone else's physical and emotional well-being;
- exerting physical control over you;
- any sexual contact between a child under 16 years and an adult is considered coercive due to the power imbalance that results from age difference.

*grooming refers to the process where a perpetrator spends time targeting a person, works to gain access to that person, and works to increase their control/influence in that person's life. Grooming can be done in range of ways, including in person, online, or through others.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS ALWAYS AN ACT OF POWER BY ONE PERSON OVER ANOTHER IN A LESS POWERFUL POSITION (THE VICTIM/SURVIVOR)

Reasons why the person may be in a less powerful position could be: gender, age, sexual preference, ethnic or cultural background, disability, social status, or socio-economic background.

- Sexual violence functions not only to harm but also to control the survivor.
- Sexual assault and rape are criminal offences and are punishable by law.
- Sexual violence goes against the human rights of the survivor.
- Sexual violence is most likely to be perpetrated by men, and someone known to the victim/survivor.



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