



A guide
FOR Young
Women
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A guide FOR Young Women

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Information and Support if you or  
a friend have been Sexually assaulted

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# INTRODUCTION

The Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault *A guide for young women: Information and support if you or a friend have been sexually assaulted* has been developed following the popularity of our previous young women's brochure *A Guide for Young Women About Sexual Assault* and in response to numerous requests from clients, other CASAs, schools and agencies for an updated, easy to read resource for young women who are dealing with the impacts of a recent sexual assault or past childhood sexual abuse.

The booklet includes a section on sexual assault perpetrated via Information and Communication Technology, primarily mobile phones and the internet. This has become a very major part of young people's lives and an arena where young people communicate with each other, form relationships and arrange social events.

Many people have contributed to *A guide for young women*. Particular thanks go to Katrina Holland, RMIT final year Social Work student, who took responsibility for driving and organising the development and completion of this booklet, incorporating contributions and suggestions from the NCASA team and NCASA clients to ensure the booklet was both comprehensive and concise.

Thanks also to the NCASA staff who have worked on the Working Group at various stages – Kaye Rigby, Heather Clarke, Kim Robinson, Anna McKellar and Julie Dallaway. We would most especially like to acknowledge and thank the young women who so generously contributed their time, their thoughts and their very creative ideas – Briony, Chloe, Danni, Emily, Jamie, Jess, Monica, Richelle and Sharmayne.

Thanks to our Copyeditor, Julia Farrell, and to our wonderful Graphic Designer, Johanna Villani, who has gone above and beyond to work with us on the development of this booklet.

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# ABOUT THIS booklet

Sexual assault is a crime that affects one in three women - with those aged 15-19 most likely to be affected.

This booklet has been written for young women who have been sexually assaulted. It aims to let young women know what their rights are if they have been sexually assaulted and the options available to help them recover.

This booklet can also be used by friends, family members and professionals to help them better understand the impacts of sexual assault and the challenges facing victim/survivors.

There is a lot of information in this booklet, so don't feel that you have to read it all in one go. Take your time. If you are finding it hard to read, or some of the content has made you feel distressed, anxious or panicky, have a rest from reading it and look after yourself. You may like to talk to a trusted friend or family member about the feelings it's bringing up for you or, alternatively, ring one of the support numbers listed in the resources section, such as the Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL) on 1800 806 292. See page 9 for further advice about what you can do if reading this booklet (or anything else in your life) brings up feelings of anxiety or panic for you.

# What IS sexual assault?

Sexual assault is any behaviour of a sexual nature that:

- is unwanted and makes the victim feel uncomfortable, frightened or threatened
- happens without consent or free agreement.

Sexual assault occurs across all ages and cultural, religious and socio-economic groups.

*Sexual assault is a serious crime. Maximum penalties are between five and 25 years in prison.*

## **Types of sexual assault**

- Sexual harassment, including verbal harassment/innuendo
- Unwanted touching, fondling or kissing
- Being made to look at, or pose for, pornographic photos
- Voyeurism – peering at or spying on someone
- Exhibitionism – flashing (indecently exposing) oneself to someone else
- Stalking
- Rape
- Sexual assault by a family member
- Sexual activity with a child under 12 years (even if the child has agreed)
- Coercing a person to perform a particular sexual activity, for example, anal sex (even if s/he has consented to other types of sexual activity)
- Filming a person having sex without her or his knowledge or consent
- Distributing naked or semi-naked images of a person without her or his consent.



## What is consent?

If you have sex with someone, you must first agree to have sex. If you don't agree and someone threatens you or touches you sexually, they are breaking the law.

The law defines consent as 'free agreement'. You cannot give 'free agreement' to sex if you are:

- asleep or unconscious
- significantly affected by alcohol or other drugs
- unable to understand or mistaken about the sexual nature of the act
- mistaken about the identity of the person.

It is also sexual assault if:

- you agreed but then changed your mind, and the other person knew or should have known this but continued when you didn't want them to
- you'd had consensual sex with the person previously, but did not consent on a subsequent occasion. Each instance of sexual activity must be consensual
- you felt pressured by emotional threats such as 'You know you really wanted this' or 'What else did you come here for?'

CASA Forum, 2010 'Community Education Package about sexual assault'

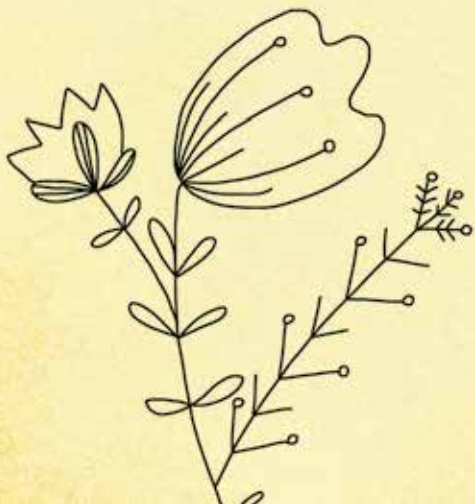
## Silence does not mean consent.

Just because a young woman did not protest, physically resist or suffer additional injuries, this doesn't mean she freely agreed to sexual activity. Consent should never be assumed. Consent is an active process, where it is made clear from the woman's words (e.g., saying yes) and/or actions (e.g., fully participating) that she wants to have sex. These words or actions must not have been the result of pressure or coercion.

## Consent - Age matters! In Victoria, if you are:

- **under 12 years old**, it is illegal for a person to have sex with you, touch you sexually or perform a sexual act in front of you, *even if you agree*.
- **12–15 years old**, it is illegal for a person to have sex with you, touch you sexually or perform a sexual act in front of you if the person is more than two years older than you, *even if you agree*. However, it is not an offence if the sexual act was consensual and the person honestly believed you were 16 or if there was less than a two-year age difference between you.
- **16–17 years old**, it is illegal for a person who is caring for or supervising you, such as a teacher, youth worker or foster carer, to have sex with you, touch you sexually or perform a sexual act in front of you, *even if you agree*. However, it is not an offence if the sexual act was consensual and the person honestly believed you were 18 or older.

Victoria Legal Aid 2013, <http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/find-legal-answers/sex-and-law/age-of-consent>



# Myths AND facts

'Sexual  
assault:  
it's not  
your fault'

MYTH

*Most Sexual assaults are  
committed by strangers.*

In 80 per cent of cases when young women are sexually assaulted, they are assaulted by someone they know.

This myth is linked to the old idea of 'stranger danger' – that young people have most to fear from adults they don't know. Young people are frequently given advice about the danger posed by strangers. But this advice ignores the fact that most assaults and abuse are perpetrated by someone the young person knows, rather than a stranger.

FACT

*Sexual assault happens because  
men can't control their urges.*

MYTH

There is no medical evidence to prove that men biologically have uncontrollable sexual urges. Men CAN control their sexual urges. It is a choice to sexually assault someone – a deliberate action.

FACT

Remember:



MYTH

## Women 'ask for it'.

Women do not ask to be sexually assaulted.

This myth tries to shift responsibility away from the offender and onto the victim/survivor and takes attention away from the fact that sexual assault is a serious crime.

The sex offender is always responsible, no matter what the young woman was wearing or doing at the time.

FACT

## Young women say 'no' when they really mean 'yes'.

MYTH

FACT

This myth defends the sex offender who does not take 'no' for an answer. Women always have the right to say 'no' to sex or any other type of sexual behaviour. Even if a woman consented in the past, this doesn't mean she has automatically consented to future sexual activity. And even if she consents to some type of sexual activity, such as oral sex, this doesn't mean she has consented to all types of sexual activity.

MYTH

## If you have been sexually assaulted, you should just forget about it and get on with your life.

Sexual assault can affect all parts of a young woman's life and it can sometimes take a long time to recover. Every young woman is different, so there is no right or wrong way or amount of time needed to recover. One of the first steps to recovery is recognising and challenging sexual assault myths.

FACT

It doesn't matter how you were dressed or what you were doing.  
It doesn't matter if you've had sex with that person before.  
What matters IS - did you freely agree to have sex on this occasion?

# Why does sexual assault HAPPEN?

In Australia and around the world, there are major differences between the power men have and the power women have (gender inequality).

Sexual assault is an abusive act of power, which is mainly carried out against women and children. It is a violation of human rights and is a crime against the individual and the community.

## **In Australia:**

The Personal Safety Survey 2016 showed that during the previous year:

- Almost two thirds of women experienced inappropriate comments
  - Over half of women experienced unwanted touching
  - Over a third of women experienced indecent exposure
    - Around 1 in 5 women had experienced stalking
- Young women in the 18-24 year age group are the most likely to have experienced violence in the last 12 months
- Almost 80% of reports of sexual assault involved female victims with largest group aged 15-19 years (Victorian Crime Statistics Agency)

**It is really important to remember that sexual assault is not just an individual or private matter – it's a problem for our whole society. Sexual assault happens because one person abuses their position of power or strength and uses sex to try to control and overpower someone.**



# COPING WITH feelings of anxiety and panic



If you are feeling anxious or panicky at any time while reading this booklet (or at any other time in your day-to-day life), you may find the strategies outlined below helpful.

## Symptoms of anxiety and panic

- Racing or pounding heart
- Trembling or shaking
- Experiencing shortness of breath
- Feeling dizzy or faint
- Feeling like you are choking
- Sweating
- Fearing that you are dying
- Experiencing hot flushes/chills
- Fearing that you are going crazy or losing control

## Strategies to manage feelings of anxiety or panic

- Breathe slowly and try not to fight your feelings, as struggling with them can increase the sense of panic.
- Remind yourself that your feelings are not dangerous or harmful and are an exaggeration of your body's normal response to stress.
- If your mind is full of unhelpful thoughts such as 'I'm not coping' or 'I'm going crazy', try to tell yourself something more helpful, like 'These feelings will pass and I will be okay'.

- Try this grounding technique to help you stay in the present: press the palms of your hands together and press your feet into the ground. Notice the contact your hands are making with each other and the contact your feet are making with the floor. Be aware of your surroundings. Name five things that you can see around you and three or four things that you can hear.
- Try this breathing technique: Hold your breath for six seconds, then breathe in slowly for six seconds, then slowly out again for six seconds. Continue breathing in and out in this six second cycle. After about a minute, hold your breath again for six seconds. Continue in this way until the anxiety has passed.
- For emotional support, try talking to a trusted friend or family member, or calling the Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL) on 1800 806 292, or your local Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) (see the resources section for phone numbers).

You can use some or all of these strategies any time you are feeling anxious or panicky. If you have concerns about your physical health, please make an appointment with your doctor.







# What you may experience FOLLOWING SEXUAL ASSAULT

If you have been sexually assaulted you may be feeling overwhelmed by a range of thoughts and feelings. This is a common reaction to a traumatic event. Your feelings may differ from day to day. Some days you may feel okay while on other days you may have difficulty just getting up in the morning.

## *Some common feelings following sexual assault*

- Fear
- Guilt and shame
- Feelings of dirtiness
- Embarrassment
- Worthlessness
- Helplessness
- Confusion
- Grief and loss
- Anxiety
- Loneliness and isolation
- Like you have been shattered into pieces
- Suspicious of other people's motives, like you can't trust people
- Anger
- Irritability
- Exhaustion
- Like you want to hurt yourself
- Like you are going crazy
- Like you have lost control of your life
- Like it's your fault
- Overwhelmed
- Hatred
- Like you have lost your innocence
- Like you want to kill the perpetrator
- Emptiness or numbness
- Sadness or depression
- Difficulty concentrating
- Powerlessness
- Unsafe
- Disconnected
- Frustration
- Physical and/or emotional pain
- Betrayal
- Like a little bit of you has died inside
- Like you have been forced to grow up overnight

## *Some of the ways sexual assault may affect you*

- Getting scared easily
- Flashbacks (feeling like you are reliving the experience)
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Nightmares
- Loss or increase of appetite
- Low self-esteem
- Self-harm
- Pregnancy
- Use of drugs and/or alcohol to numb feelings and block out memories
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Difficulties with intimacy and sex
- Panic attacks

*Remember: Everyone's experience is different. You may not experience any of these feelings or issues, or you may experience them at different times.*



## Young women's reflections on the experience of sexual assault:

"I felt trapped"

"always questioning myself, what if I'd..."

"Sometimes I respond to a mildly stressful situation as if I am experiencing the trauma all over again"

"living in my head all the time"

"feeling fake because you present one face to the world, but at home it is a different story"

"not knowing who I am"

Comments from women who participated in NCASA Young Women's groups, 2011 & 2013.

These reactions are natural and a part of the process of dealing with a traumatic event. In some cases these feelings are temporary and, with support from family and friends, will go away with time. But in other cases sexual assault may cause longer term issues that affect your ongoing health, relationships and lifestyle. So it's really important to look after yourself, and to seek help from others, including supportive friends and family, and/or a support service such as a CASA.

**Remember:** Sexual assault is the responsibility of the perpetrator. If you have been sexually assaulted, it is NOT your fault.



## **Coping with these feelings**

Everyone reacts and deals with their feelings in their own way.

The following tips may help you:

- Talk about how you feel with someone you trust.
- Try to have a routine in your life.
- Put off major life decisions.
- Accept that you may have good days and bad days.
- Try to eat regularly and nutritiously.
- Try to get physical exercise.
- Limit the use of alcohol and other drugs.
- Keep a journal and write down how you feel each day.
- Try not to be hard on yourself. Perhaps imagine how you would respond to a close friend in a similar situation and treat yourself in the same way.
- Try to spend some time each day doing things you enjoy – see below for some ideas. Not all of these activities will be right for you – choose activities that help you feel better.

## **Self-care activities that have helped some young women**

- Doing a course
- Exercise
- Having baths
- Doing yoga
- Being with friends
- Watching movies/TV
- Making art
- Making or listening to music
- Spending time with animals
- Going to a place you like
- Meditating

## *Eventually you may experience some positive life changes*

Although it might seem impossible for you at the moment, it may be helpful to know that many people who have been through a traumatic event, like sexual assault, eventually experience some positive changes in their lives.

*“For me, yoga and art therapy have been really helpful.”*

*“You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.”*

Kabat-Zinn, 2004



## *It is your choice what you do*

Whether you were sexually assaulted recently or a long time ago, it's up to you to decide what you need to do and who you want to talk to. You don't have to cope alone. A good first step is to tell someone you trust. Make sure this person is someone who treats you with respect and makes you feel good about yourself. If you know who you want to tell, but it feels too hard to say it out loud, you could try writing down what happened to you and giving it to the person.

## **Why tell someone?**

Telling someone you trust that you have been sexually assaulted will assist you to get some further help. If the offender is someone you know, the person you have told may be able to help you work out a way to keep safe – for example, to report the sexual assault to the police, to get an Intervention Order or to tell another trusted adult. Telling someone you trust will also help you to feel less alone and burdened with the secret as s/he will know what you have been through.

# What you

## **Some ideas about who you could tell**

- A trusted friend or family member
- A trusted teacher
- The school counsellor

If you don't feel like you can tell anyone you know, you could call a confidential helpline and they can help you work out what to do next.

## **Some (free) helplines you could call**

- Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL) 1800 806 292
- Headspace 1800 650 890
- Kids Helpline 1800 551 800

Alternatively, you could contact one of the organisations listed on page 30.

### **What if the person I tell doesn't believe me or makes me feel like I'm to blame?**

Unfortunately, sometimes the first person who a young woman tells about the sexual assault she has experienced responds in a non-supportive way, for example, by refusing to believe that the assault occurred or making the woman feel like it was her fault. This kind of response is likely to make the young woman feel even worse than she did before.

If this happens to you, it's important that you get support immediately from someone who will believe you. Please call SACL on 1800 806 292 or your local CASA (see the resources section for contact details) as soon as you can. You don't have to provide your real name if you don't want to or you could choose to provide your first name only.



# can do

## if you have been SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

### **Some organisations that can help**

- A Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)
- Victoria Police – some stations have specialist sexual offence teams (SOCIT). There are 27 SOCIT units in Victoria. To find your nearest SOCIT, you can contact your local police station or go to [www.police.vic.gov.au](http://www.police.vic.gov.au)
- A hospital emergency department (for a recent sexual assault)
- Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service

- Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights

**See the resources section at the end of this booklet for phone numbers.**

**See further on in the booklet for details about what will happen when you contact the police (page 19) or a CASA (page 17).**



# Should I see A COUNSELLOR?

Counselling after sexual assault can help you to express your feelings, understand how it has affected you, and discover new ways of coping and feeling safe.

Counselling provides a safe and confidential place to talk, be listened to, and be believed by someone who is just there for you.

*In counselling you  
have the right to:*

- be listened to and believed
- have your needs and decisions respected
- go at your own pace
- not talk about anything you don't want to
- ask questions about the counsellor's knowledge and beliefs about sexual assault
- ask the counsellor about their qualifications and experience
- feel comfortable with the counsellor
- choose the gender of your counsellor
- change your counsellor if you are not comfortable with her/him
- have what you tell the counsellor kept private.

## **Young women's reflections on counselling at the Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault (NCASA)**

*'Counselling's been very helpful. It's an outlet and they are on your side. You don't have to worry about the counsellors not believing you.'*

*'Counselling is a place where I can come and let out my frustrations. The counsellors aren't shocked by the horrible things that have happened to me and I'm able to talk openly and honestly without fear of judgement.'*



Young Women's Mandala Group creations.

# What is a Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)?

There are 14 CASAs throughout Victoria as well as the Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL). The CASAs work to challenge the myths about sexual assault in our community and to assist people who have been sexually assaulted. You don't need a referral or a Medicare card to come to a CASA and you don't have to provide your real name if you don't want to. If you aren't sure whether you would like to have ongoing counselling, you could opt to talk to a counsellor/advocate over the phone or just come in for a one-off appointment.

SACL is a statewide, after-hours confidential telephone crisis service for people who have experienced past and recent sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse. SACL operates between 5pm and 9am weekdays and throughout weekends and public holidays. If you call SACL in business hours your call will be diverted to your nearest CASA.

The CASAs offer:

- free, short- to medium-term confidential counselling and support to victim/survivors and their family members and friends (so long as they aren't perpetrators of sexual assault)
- advocacy and referral
- telephone counselling
- 24-hour crisis care following a recent sexual assault
- support groups, including young women's groups
- information and support about medical and legal issues
- community education (including in schools) about sexual assault and its causes and impacts.

See the resources section to find your local CASA

## What will happen when I ring a CASA?

If you ring a CASA, you will speak to a counsellor/advocate. If you and s/he decide that meeting face to face would be helpful, an appointment will be made for you to come in. If you want, you can ask for information to be sent out to you first.

The CASAs offer a 24-hour crisis care response, so if you have been assaulted within the past two weeks, you can be seen by a CASA worker immediately. If you have been assaulted recently, but more than two weeks ago, or are feeling distressed or like you are not coping, an appointment can be made for you to see a counsellor within 24 hours.

When you go to a CASA to see a counsellor/advocate, you can bring a friend or family member with you if you want to. While you have your appointment s/he can wait for you in the waiting room, or if you prefer s/he can come into the counselling session with you.

## Who will I see?

At a CASA you will see a counsellor/advocate. CASA counsellor/advocates are social workers, psychologists or counsellors with training and experience in supporting people who have been sexually assaulted. They are called counsellor/advocates because as well as providing counselling they can also advocate on your behalf with other professionals and services, such as housing, education, Centrelink, the police and medical services.

# SHOULD I SEE a doctor?

Being sexually assaulted can affect your physical health as well as how you feel. If you have been sexually assaulted recently, it's a good idea to see a doctor. The doctor can check whether you are pregnant or have contracted a sexually transmitted infection. S/he can also help you deal with some of the other things you may be experiencing, like trouble sleeping, distress and anxiety. The doctor can also refer you to a counsellor if you would like.

## **Finding a good doctor**

You don't have to go to your family doctor or the doctor you usually see. It is your choice to see who you feel comfortable with.

### *Some tips for finding a good doctor*

- Do you understand her/him?
- Do you feel comfortable with her/him?
- Does s/he spend enough time with you?
  - Does s/he listen to you?
- Prior to any examination, does s/he explain what s/he is going to do and why?
  - Does s/he treat you with respect?

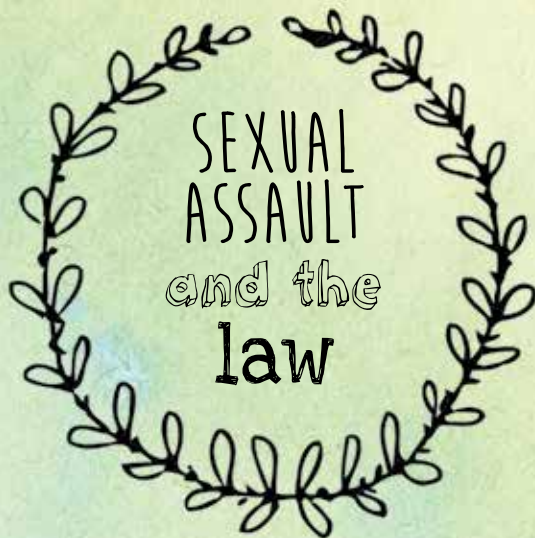
If you need help finding a doctor you could call the Women's Information and Referral Exchange (WIRE) on 1300 134 130 or your local CASA (phone numbers in the resources section). These organisations often have a list of supportive female doctors. They will also be able to tell you which doctors bulk bill so it doesn't cost you.

If you would like to visit a doctor specifically about your sexual health, you may like to visit the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre in Carlton.

Its services are free, confidential and non-judgemental  
(see the resources section for contact details).

If you decide to report the sexual assault to the police you will have the option of seeing a specially trained doctor (Forensic Medical Officer). See the next section for more information.





## Should I report the sexual assault to the police?

Sexual assault can be reported to the police regardless of whether it happened recently or in the past. It is your choice whether you report sexual assault to the police.

If you do not want police involvement, but still want the police to know that the assault occurred, go to [www.sara.org.au](http://www.sara.org.au) to report the sexual assault anonymously (online or via an app) to South Eastern CASA. The anonymous data collected from SARA is passed on to police all over Australia to identify trends and target problem areas, and by doing so helps to make our communities safer.



### What does it mean to report a sexual assault to the police?

If you decide to report the sexual assault, you can contact your local police station and ask to speak to an officer at a sexual offences unit, or you can contact the sexual offences unit directly (go to [www.police.vic.gov.au](http://www.police.vic.gov.au) to find the unit nearest you).

If you make a report, the police are required to inform you about the CASA services.

If you choose to, you can put off making your statement until you have met with a counsellor/advocate at a CASA.

You can choose to have a friend or family member with you while you talk to the police.

The police may want to collect evidence for potential court proceedings, including physical objects, such as clothes or other property, or medical evidence. The police may organise for you to have a forensic medical examination by a specially trained doctor (Forensic Medical Officer). **You have the right to choose whether you want to proceed with this examination.**

If you are afraid that the offender may come after you when he finds out you have reported the assault to the police, you should tell the police that you are concerned about your safety. If necessary, they can take out an Intervention Order against the offender.

If you are feeling unsure about reporting the sexual assault to the police, you might like to talk this through with a counsellor/advocate at a CASA.

**If you decide to report to the police, you have the right to:**

- be believed and be treated with respect and dignity
- have a friend or support person with you at all times
- put off making your statement until you are ready
- give your statement to a police officer, and say whether you prefer a female or male police officer
- ask questions if you don't understand something
- medical support if needed
- have an interpreter if English is not your first language
- be given information about the law and what might happen if the case goes to court
- read your statement and make any changes to make sure it is in your words and it accurately reflects what happened to you
- be given a copy of your statement
- make a complaint if you think the police have treated you unfairly (for more information contact a CASA or a Community Legal Centre – see the resources section for contact details).



## Intervention Orders

Sometimes a young woman is at risk of further harm from the person who assaulted her and steps need to be taken to help her be safe. Some women choose to take out an Intervention Order against the offender. An Intervention Order is a court order made by a magistrate. You can request certain conditions to be put on the Order. For example, you can request that the person does not come near your place of work or home – even if it's his home too.

## Family violence

Sometimes a person is sexually assaulted by someone in the family who is regularly abusive and violent, maybe to one person or maybe to a number of family members. The violence might be physical, like punching or pushing, or verbal, like yelling or saying insulting things. The person might be threatening or intimidating you in some way. These types of behaviours are called family violence and are wrong and against the law. The police and the courts can help to stop family violence happening to you or other family members.

## Child protection

If you are under the age of 17 and tell a teacher, doctor, counsellor or other professional that you are being abused or are seriously at risk, for your safety, this person has a duty of care to inform Child Protection. Child Protection is the Victorian Government service responsible for protecting children and young people from abuse.

The person who you have confided in should talk to you about this process and the options for ensuring your safety.



# Respectful relationships

## Sex

Engaging in sexual activity with someone should be an experience that you both want and makes you both feel good. You should both feel safe and able to stop at any time.

You don't need to have sex in order to have a good relationship. Whether it's kissing, touching or having sex, it should always be something you both want to do. Saying yes to one type of sexual activity, like kissing or oral sex, doesn't mean you have agreed to all types of sexual activity, like vaginal sex or anal sex.

Viewing pornography can lead to young people having distorted views about sex. In pornographic films, women appear to enjoy

all sexual acts and to respond enthusiastically no matter what is being done to them. For example, in porn films, women appear to get a lot of enjoyment out of anal sex; but in real life many women find anal sex painful and choose not to do it. It's important to remember that women in porn films are acting and are being paid to look like they find all sexual activities pleasurable.

If someone loves or cares about you, they will not pressure you to have sex or engage in sexual activities that you are not comfortable with. They will respect your right to decide if and when you want to have sex.



*‘‘You’d do it if you loved me.’’*

It’s not okay for someone to pressure you or ‘guilt trip’ you into having sex. Sex isn’t the only way to prove that you love someone, and having sex doesn’t necessarily mean that two people love each other.

*‘‘Everyone else is doing it, what’s wrong with you?’’*

Not everyone’s doing it ... only about a quarter of year 10 students and half of year 12 students in Australia have had sex.

National Survey of Australian Secondary Students,  
HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health 2008).

REMEMBER:

*Sex is meant to be  
something that makes  
you both feel good.*

*‘‘You’ve got me turned on  
so we can’t stop now.’’*

This comment is based on the myth that men can’t control their sexual urges. There is no evidence to support that once a man is sexually aroused, he must have sex. Men can control their sexual urges and behaviour.

**If you agree to sex...**

- It is not okay for someone to pressure you into having unprotected sex.
- It is not okay for someone to film you having sex without your knowledge or to pressure you into allowing the sex to be filmed.
- It is okay for you to change your mind about continuing at any stage. Once you have let the person know you want to stop, the law says that s/he must respect your decision to stop.





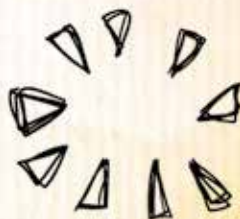
# STALKING

Stalking includes behaviours such as following someone, monitoring someone's activities on social media, tracking a person's internet usage, checking a person's emails and mobile phone, and constantly calling, messaging, emailing or texting someone. This communication may be sexual or threatening.

Some perpetrators use mobile phone technology to monitor the location and mobile phone activity of the person they are stalking. For information on minimising the risk of being tracked through your smartphone, see <http://smartsafe.org.au>.

A person who stalks a girlfriend or boyfriend (or an ex) is usually possessive and controlling, and doesn't respect their girlfriend or boyfriend's right to freedom, privacy and independence. Stalkers often try to make the person they are stalking feel intimidated and afraid, and enjoy the power it brings them making the other person feel like they're always being watched.

You don't have to go through this experience alone. If you are being stalked, it's a good idea to talk to a trusted person, such as a friend, family member or counsellor, about it, who can help you decide what to do next. Stalking is against the law in Victoria, so you may also want to consider reporting it to the police.



# Increasing YOUR safety

No matter what you are doing, where you are, what you are wearing or who you are with, you always have the right to be safe from sexual assault. Listed below are a few things you could try that might help to increase your safety. However, it's important to remember that sexual assault can occur regardless of what precautions a woman takes. Part of the reason for this is that in most cases women are sexually assaulted by someone they know, like a boyfriend or family member. So please remember that **sexual assault is always the fault of the perpetrator and never the fault of the victim/survivor.**

## **If you are currently experiencing repeated sexually assault by someone**

If you are currently experiencing repeated sexually assault by someone, try to tell someone, preferably an adult who you trust, who can then help stop the assaults from occurring. Consider getting an Intervention Order out against the offender.

## *Safety when you're out and about*

- If your instincts are telling you something is not right, listen to yourself and take steps to be safe.
- Try to avoid travelling home alone at night on public transport or by taxi – travel home with a friend instead.
- If you're getting a taxi at night, try to book one rather than hailing one.

## **If you're planning a night out**

- Try to include people you can trust. Make an agreement that at least one person won't drink alcohol, or not much, so they can help the group stay safe.
- Be aware that someone may spike your drink. Don't let people you don't trust make or buy you drinks, and make sure you can see your drink at all times.
- If you're drinking alcohol or using drugs, be aware of the amounts and side effects. If you're out of it, you are more vulnerable.

## *Safety on the internet*

The internet provides an opportunity to meet and communicate with people from all over the world and is a central part of life for most young people. But it's important to balance the time you spend in cyber world with the time you spend in the real world. Don't ignore your real life friends. If something bad happens online, you will need your real friends to support you. It's important that you are aware that the use of online technology has risks and is used by sex offenders to target and exploit young people.

## **Chat rooms**

In chat rooms, avoid giving personal information about yourself such as where you go to school, where you go shopping, your telephone number or address, and, especially, a photo of yourself. Be careful about going into sites or chat rooms that contain violent and/or sexual material.



If you find yourself in a site that makes you feel uncomfortable, exit the site straight away to get back to safety. In chat rooms there is the chance that you will get messages that are harassing or sexually explicit. Some sex offenders have admitted to deliberately targeting young women in this way. The best thing to do is to ignore their comments and:

- report the user to the chat room's administrator
- consider reporting the user to Crimestoppers either by phone on 1800 333 000 or online [www.vic.crimestoppers.com.au](http://www.vic.crimestoppers.com.au).

If you are particularly concerned by their comments or behaviour, or if the behaviour does not cease, it would be a good idea to avoid using that chat room and consider reporting it to your local police. In the future, you may also want to consider using a login name that doesn't identify you as a young woman.

## Social networking

When you share things online you may be sharing with people you didn't intend to share with – people who you don't know or trust. Remember, once a message, photo or video has been shared, you've lost control over who sees it.

### Tips

- Limit your friend list to people you know – don't 'friend' random people.
- Set your profile to private and don't share your password with others.

- Don't share your personal details.
- Think before you post – don't upload anything that you wouldn't want your family or employer to see. What you say or post on the internet is permanent.
- Be careful about who you trust – a person can pretend to be someone s/he is not.
- Don't use a webcam with people you don't know.
- If someone has tagged you in a photo that you are not comfortable with, remove the tag and ask the person to take the photo down (and tell them why).
- If you are being bullied or harassed on social media, deactivate your account and go offline for a while ([www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)).

**Remember:** What goes online stays online. What you do online can affect your whole world.

### Meeting online friends in the real world – do you really know who you are meeting?

Keep in mind that there are risks associated with meeting online friends in the real world. Sometimes people can pretend to be someone they are not. The person you thought was a sexy 16 year old could turn out to be a 60-year-old sex offender.

If you want to meet an online friend, DON'T go alone. Ask an adult or trusted friend to go with you. Always meet in a public place, preferably during the day.

[www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)





# Sexting

## What is sexting?

'Sexting' is the practice of creating, forwarding or receiving 'sexts'. 'Sexts' (also known as noodz, selfies or pics) are sexually explicit (naked or semi-naked) images or messages sent via mobile phones or through the internet.

People often send a picture with the intention that only one person (often a boyfriend or potential boyfriend) will see it; however, frequently these images are forwarded (accidentally or deliberately) to other people.

## Things you should consider before sending a sexually explicit image

- Once an image has been sent or posted, you have lost control of it. It may be forwarded accidentally or deliberately to someone who it wasn't intended for.
- A sexually explicit image can circulate in cyberspace for years even if you think it has been deleted.



## What to do...

**... if you have received or been forwarded a sexually explicit text or image**

- **Don't forward it on to anyone else or upload it onto a social media site!**
- If this is a one-off occurrence, delete the image and tell the person not to do it again.
- If you have received several sexually explicit images from the same person or if an image makes you uncomfortable, talk to a trusted adult or contact your local police station. If you want to report to the police, don't delete the images. If you don't want to report to the police, delete the items and tell the sender to stop.

*"My boyfriend tries to get a photo of me when I'm naked."*

**.... if you have been asked to take and send a sexually explicit image**

If this happens, take some time to think about it before you send the image. Ask yourself:

- why the person has asked for the photo. If they really cared about you, would they ask you to do this?
- what might happen and how you might feel if the picture is accidentally or deliberately shown or forwarded to other people.

Everyone needs to be able to say no, even to people they care about. If you don't feel confident about saying no, it may help to think of your reasons for saying no, and explain them to your boyfriend or girlfriend. Hopefully this will help him/her to understand.





Try saying something like:

*‘That’s not my thing.’*

*‘I don’t want to, and if you care about me, that’s the last time you’ll ask me.’*

*‘It makes me feel sick when you ask for a nude pic.’*

Or send him a ‘zapp’ – an image you can send instead of a nude pic that will help you refuse in a gentle...(or not so gentle!) way.



To download zapps see the SECASA website: [www.secasa.com.au/pages/respect-me-dont-sext-me/zapps](http://www.secasa.com.au/pages/respect-me-dont-sext-me/zapps)

Also see [www.thatsnotcool.com](http://www.thatsnotcool.com) for callout cards you can download and share in response to a request for a pic or if you have received unwanted photos.

**...if you have already taken and sent an image**

If this has happened you should:

- Delete the image from your phone, computer or wherever it is stored. Make sure you also empty the trash on your computer.
- Ask the person who received it to delete the image from their phone or computer immediately.

If you are concerned that the picture may have already been sent to other people, you may need independent legal advice from a legal service such as Youthlaw or Victoria Legal Aid (see the resources section at the end of the booklet for contact details).

**Remember: what goes online stays online.**

(CASA Forum, ‘Community Education Package about sexual assault’, p.103)

*‘My boyfriend keeps pressuring me to send him a nude pic of myself.’*





# Resources



## *Sexual assault-specific counselling and support*

### **Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL) 1800 806 292**

After hours (5pm–9am weekdays and 24 hours a day on weekends) confidential telephone crisis counselling support, information, advocacy and referral to anyone living in Victoria who has experienced any form of sexual assault at any point in their lives. If you call SACL during business hours, it will automatically divert to your nearest CASA.

### **Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASAs)**

9am–5pm weekdays. Free and confidential short- to medium-term counselling, support, information, advocacy and referral to victim/survivors of sexual assault and their non-offending family members and friends. Also offer 24-hour crisis care following a recent sexual assault. You do not need a Medicare card to receive counselling at a CASA and you do not have to provide your real name if you do not want to. Please note that if you call a CASA after hours the call will automatically divert to the SACL.

|                                         |                |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------|
| Ballarat CASA                           | (03) 5320 3933 |
| Barwon SAFVC                            | (03) 5222 4318 |
| CASA House                              | (03) 9635 3610 |
| Eastern CASA                            | (03) 9870 7330 |
| Gatehouse Centre                        | (03) 9345 6391 |
| Gippsland CASA                          | (03) 5134 3922 |
| Goulburn Valley CASA                    | (03) 5831 2343 |
| Loddon Campaspe CASA                    | (03) 5441 0430 |
| Mallee Sexual Assault Unit              | (03) 5025 5400 |
| Northern CASA                           | (03) 9496 2240 |
| South Eastern CASA                      | (03) 9594 2289 |
| South Western CASA                      | (03) 5564 4144 |
| Upper Murray Centre<br>Against Violence | (03) 5722 2203 |
| West CASA                               | (03) 9216 0444 |



## *24/7 counSelling helplines*

### **1800 RESPECT**

1800 737 732 [www.180orespect.org.au](http://www.180orespect.org.au)

24/7 national telephone and online counselling helpline, information and support service for survivors regarding any issue in relation to sexual assault or family violence.

### **Lifeline**

13 11 14

24/7 national confidential telephone crisis counselling support helpline.

### **Kids Helpline**

1800 55 1800 [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

24/7 national confidential telephone and online counselling service for young people aged 5–25.



*If you are in  
immediate danger*

**24/7 Emergency  
Assistance**

**000**

## *Other support, referral and counSelling Services*

### **Headspace**

1800 650 890 [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

Confidential online chat and telephone support for young people aged 12–25, seven days per week, 9am–1am.

### **WIRE**

1300 134 130 [www.wire.org.au](http://www.wire.org.au)

Statewide confidential telephone support and referral service for women, Mon–Fri 9am–5pm. Also offer online chat and an email support service.

### **Kids First Australia**

(03) 9450 0900 [www.kidsfirstaustralia.org.au](http://www.kidsfirstaustralia.org.au)

Offers a range of programs that help families provide a safe, nurturing environment for their children. Programs include a specialist therapeutic counselling service for children and young people under 18 years of age who have been sexually abused.

### **Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Services**

1800 796 112 [www.emhaws.org.au](http://www.emhaws.org.au)

Provides a range of support to Aboriginal women and children experiencing family violence from crisis to recovery programs.

### **Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights**

(03) 9481 3000

Provides case work, referrals, advocacy and outreach to Muslim women.





## **Safe Steps**

1800 015 188

24/7 family violence response phone line.

## **The Orange Door in North East Melbourne**

1800 319 355 9-5pm

Free service for adults, children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence and families who need support.

## **InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence**

(03) 9413 6500 or freecall 1800 755 988

## *Legal/Court Support*

### **Police**

Contact your local police station or go to [www.police.vic.gov.au](http://www.police.vic.gov.au) to find your local sexual offences and child abuse investigation team (SOCIT).

There are 27 SOCIT units in Victoria. They are teams of specialist detectives trained to investigate sexual assault and child abuse. The SOCITs deal with a case from the time of disclosure, through the investigation process and on to court. This means that victim/survivors are able to establish an ongoing relationship with one or two police members and don't have to continually retell their story.

### **Youthlaw**

(03) 9611 2412 <http://youthlaw.asn.au>

Youthlaw is a statewide Community Legal Centre for young people. It provides free and confidential legal information and advice to young people up to the age of 25.

## **Federation of Community Legal Centres**

Referral Line – (03) 9652 1500

[www.fclc.org.au](http://www.fclc.org.au) to find your nearest community legal centre

## **Victoria Legal Aid**

1300 792 387 [www.legalaid.vic.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au)

Victoria Legal Aid helps people with legal problems in areas of criminal law, family law and some civil law matters, and provides free legal advice. You may also be entitled to get a lawyer to run your case through a grant of legal assistance. These grants pay for some or all of the costs involved in running a case.

## **Djirra (Aboriginal Family Violence and Prevention Legal Service)**

(03) 9244 3333 or 1800 105 303 (freecall)  
[www.fvpls.org](http://www.fvpls.org)

Djirra provides assistance to victims of family violence and sexual assault and works with families and communities affected by violence.

## **Witness Assistance Service**

(03) 9603 7425 or 1800 641 927 (freecall)

The Witness Assistance Service (WAS) supports victims of serious crime through the court process. It can give you information about the prosecution process, and provide ongoing support before, during and after a court case.

## **Women's Legal Service**

Legal Advice Line 1800 133 302  
[www.womenslegal.org.au](http://www.womenslegal.org.au)





## Child Witness Service

(03) 9603 9266 or 1300 790 540

The Child Witness Service (CWS) is a specialist service that provides court education and support to children and young people (up to age 18).

## Victims of Crime Helpline

1800 819 817 [www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au](http://www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au)

The helpline operates 7 days per week 8am–11pm and is staffed by specially trained Victim Support Officers. The website provides information about the court process.

## Sexual Health

### Melbourne Sexual Health Centre

(03) 9341 6200 or 1800 032 017 (toll free from outside Melbourne metropolitan area only)  
<http://mshc.org.au/>

Melbourne Sexual Health Centre is a free, walk-in clinic that provides testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. Contraceptive advice and emergency contraception are also available. Services are free, non-judgemental and confidential. It is not necessary to make an appointment. No Medicare card is required and you do not have to provide your real name if you don't want to.

## Useful websites

South Eastern CASA [www.secasa.com.au](http://www.secasa.com.au)

For information on sexual assault

CASA House [www.casahouse.com.au](http://www.casahouse.com.au)

For information on sexual assault

Domestic Violence Resource Centre

[www.dvrcv.org.au](http://www.dvrcv.org.au)

For information on family violence

eSafety [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)

For information on cybersafety

Bullying. No way! [www.bullingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullingnoway.com.au)

For information and helpful ideas about bullying

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

<http://lovegoodbadugly.com>

For information on respectful relationships

SmartSafe <http://smartsafe.org.au>

For information on using technology safely (includes how-to videos to minimise the risk of a mobile phone being tracked and how to use a phone to collect evidence)

That's not cool [www.thatsnotcool.com](http://www.thatsnotcool.com)

For help with deciding where to draw your digital line with others

S.A.R.A. Sexual Assault Report Anonymously

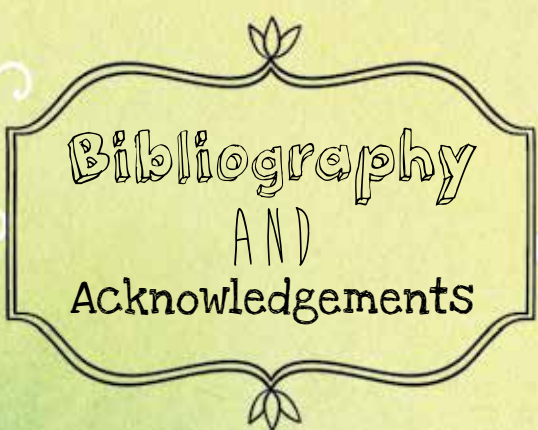
[www.sara.org.au](http://www.sara.org.au)

Website and phone app for people wanting to report sexual assault without going to the police. The anonymous data collected from SARA is passed on to police all over Australia to identify trends and help make our communities safer.

## Useful Books

*8 Keys to Safe Trauma Recovery*

by Babette Rothschild



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