

SEXUAL ASSAULT IS A  
CRIMINAL OFFENCE. IT IS A VIOLATION OF  
TRUST, AN EXPLOITATION OF VULNERABILITY  
AND AN ABUSE OF POWER. IT COVERS  
MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR  
THAT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS UNWANTED  
OR FORCED, INCLUDING INDECENT ASSAULT, RAPE  
OR ANY ACTIONS OF A SEXUAL KIND  
RESULTING IN PAIN, FEAR  
OR INTIMIDATION.

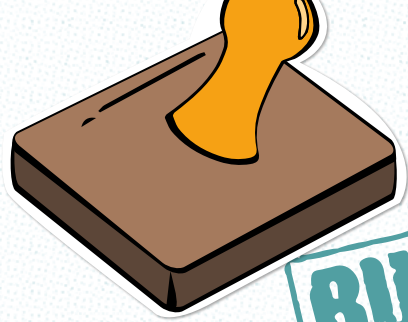
SEXUAL  
ASSAULT

## LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual Assault is a criminal offence and covers many different types of sexual behaviour that can be understood as unwanted or forced, including:

- **Indecent Assault** - unwanted touching, fondling, masturbation
- **Rape** - unwanted oral, anal or vaginal penetration, and
- **Sexual Harassment** – unwanted repeated sexualised comments, “passes”, dirty jokes, sexual questions<sup>4</sup>.

Sexual assault is a violation of trust; an exploitation of vulnerability and an abuse of power that can happen to anyone regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion or disability. Sexual violence does not always include physical touch. It might involve, but is not limited to, coercion, manipulation, grooming or other non-physical acts of a sexual kind that make a person feel unsafe.



## BIUSTING MYTHS

**Myth 1: People are more likely to be sexually assaulted by a stranger, at night, on a dark street or in a park**

Most sexual offenders are known to the victim – e.g. a relative, partner, friend or peer – so assault can happen in the victim or the offender's home, day or night.

**Myth 2: You can't be sexually assaulted by someone you're in a relationship with or have had sex with before**

Forcing or coercing someone to have sex when they don't want to is sexual assault, regardless of the relationship between the perpetrator and victim. Consent needs to be sought each and every time.

**Myth 3: Some people provoke sexual assault by the way they dress or behave**

No one asks or deserves to be sexually assaulted, and dressing to feel comfortable or attractive does not suggest otherwise. Perpetrators are responsible for their own actions.

**Myth 4: People can only be sexually assaulted by a man with a penis**

Women, men and people with diverse gender identities can be sexually assaulted by someone of the same or different gender, by use of an object or hand.

**Myth 5: If the victim didn't say no, or scream or fight then it isn't sexual assault**

We all react differently to high-stress situations. Some people react in a fight or flight response, while others freeze up and withdraw. Many victims become paralysed with fear, which means they are unable to speak-up or fight back. Remember, the absence of a clear and enthusiastic yes is a no.

If you haven't consented to any type of sexual activity, you have a legal right to take action. You can go to the police and report the sexual assault or rape as a crime.

This is not an exhaustive list of common myths surrounding sexual assault. Get educated and know the facts, at [healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Common-myths-about-sexual-assault](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Common-myths-about-sexual-assault)



# LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour where a reasonable person, having regard for all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the person harassed might feel offended, humiliated or intimidated<sup>5</sup>. It can be a form of discrimination against the victim, and is an inappropriate assertion of power by the perpetrator.

Sexual harassment can occur in person or online. Common examples include:

- making unwanted remarks regarding a person's appearance or attractiveness
- asking a person questions about their relationship or sex life
- sending emails with sexual content
- showing pornographic pictures
- unnecessarily touching the person without their consent<sup>6</sup>

The *Australian Sex Discrimination Act 1984* makes it unlawful for a person to sexually harass another person in a number of areas including employment, accommodation and education, specifically for:

- a teacher or a student over the age of 16 to sexually harass a student; and
- a student over the age of 16 to sexually harass a teacher<sup>7</sup>

Sexual harassment in the context of uni or work can seem pretty straight-forward (we know what's appropriate and what's not) but when it comes to meeting people 'out' and building relationships, signs can be misread and faux pas made. In any environment, it is important that you assess the situation. If you feel you are in danger, take immediate precautions. If you believe that the person approaching you has simply overstepped their bounds or lacked the ability to read the room (and you), let them know that their behaviour was not okay and that they made you feel uncomfortable. If at any point you think that the comment or behaviour of an individual constitutes sexual harassment and you want to report it, you can do so by contacting the services outlined on page 42.

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE DIGITAL REALM

Let's be real for a moment – regardless of whether you think it is good or bad – 'sexting' is something people do. The term 'sexting' was added to the Oxford Dictionary in 2011 (seriously, look it up), but another term you should be aware of is image-based abuse, commonly referred to as 'revenge porn'.

Image-based abuse is serious with stats showing that 1 in 5 people have or will be the victim of revenge porn in their lifetime<sup>8</sup>, but in many cases image-based abuse is not about 'revenge', nor is it restricted to 'porn'. Revenge porn can occur for a range of reasons, and while most image-based abuse is about the sharing of images without consent, it can also include the threat of an image being shared<sup>9</sup>.

What you need to know:

- 1) Posting nude images without the other person's permission can be deemed illegal distribution of an invasive image, regardless of the person's age or whether they originally consented to them being taken. It can also be considered a menacing, harassing or offensive use of the internet or mobile phone – all of which are crimes under South Australian law with a maximum jail time of three years<sup>10</sup>.
- 2) If you learn there is a photo of you posted online without your permission, you can do something about it: (A) If it has been posted on social media, you can contact the relevant website and ask to have it removed, and (B) contact the Office of the E-Safety Commissioner or the police to report the matter. It's easy to feel embarrassed and ashamed if this happens to you, but know that you are not to blame.

To receive assistance in removing an image online and reporting a matter, visit the E-Portal through the Office of the E-Safety Commissioner: [esafety.gov.au/image-based-abuse](http://esafety.gov.au/image-based-abuse)



## DATING APPS

Whether good or bad, dating apps are changing the way we communicate and well... date. The fact that we need to specify to friends that we met someone IRL, not online, speaks volumes. Point is, many of the aforementioned nudes are sent via dating apps, and while they are sometimes welcomed, an influx of nudes in your feed after all you said was "hey, how are you?" can be the bane of our online experience.

While there are no specific laws (as yet) protecting you against online harassment on dating platforms, most apps and websites – whatever their colour or creed – have their own reporting protocol in place to deal with fake accounts, harassment and online bullying. Get to know the inner workings of your app of choice and how the reporting feature works. In situations where you feel your welfare is in danger (1) take screenshots of the conversation, and (2) call the police directly.

Here are a few things to remember the next time you start swiping:

1. Communication is key, even via text, so read the proverbial 'chat room' and make sure the direction the conversation is heading is consensual for both parties.
2. Keep in mind that sending a nude or unlocking your private gallery does not mean the receiver has to do the same. 'An eye for an eye' does not apply.
3. Don't send unsolicited pics – ask first. Know that if you send a pic before asking, it could be received negatively (this includes the person on the other end going silent). Don't continue to send images or badger them. You made a choice to send an image, and they made the choice not to humour it.
4. If you and the hottie on the other end do decide to exchange pics, don't take screenshots or save the image to your phone to show friends – they gave permission for you to view the pic only.



# IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

Remember, there is no one way a person who has experienced sexual assault or harassment will react. You may experience a range of reactions both physical and emotional. Know that:

- It can help to talk to someone to try and get your head around how you are feeling. This can be someone you trust, a friend or family member.
- Professional support and information is available.

If you have experienced sexual assault and/or harassment, there are a number of immediate steps you can take on and off campus.

## ON CAMPUS

The Health, Counselling and Disability Service can provide information and advice as well as assistance with wellbeing and health concerns. They can be contacted on 8201 2118 during office hours. You can see a Doctor, speak to a Counsellor and/or a Student Equal Opportunity Advisor. Advise that your request is urgent.

What you can expect:

- To be listened to and taken seriously.
- Not to be judged or made to do anything you do not want to do.
- To be given all of your rights and options.
- To be supported in making the best choices for you.
- To discuss possible consequences and ask questions so you can make informed decisions.
- To be supported towards recovery.

Telling someone may be hard but help is available and can make a difference in recovery. This is a free, confidential service that puts your safety and privacy first. Please see the Health, Counselling and Disability Services website for more details on how your confidential information is handled.

[flinders.edu.au/current-students/healthandcounselling](http://flinders.edu.au/current-students/healthandcounselling)

If you feel unsafe, call Campus Security for assistance on 8201 2880 or locate a Campus Security hotline phone.

## OFF-CAMPUS

If you have experienced assault or harassment off campus your immediate safety is important. If you are at a venue, you may want to seek out security or other staff for safety, perhaps with a person you know and trust.

For immediate support:

- Contact Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Services on 1800 817 421
- For 24/7 Counselling call the National Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Counselling Services “1800Respect” or 1800 737 732
- For a Police response and/or to make a report, call SA Police on 000 or 131 444 or visit your local police station

If the incident occurred off-campus, please know that you can still discuss the matter and seek assistance from Health, Counselling and Disability Services during office hours.

If you have been harassed and would like to learn more information on whether an incident is unlawful and covered by the Equal Opportunity Act, visit the Equal Opportunity Commission website: [eoc.sa.gov.au](http://eoc.sa.gov.au)



# REFERENCES

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