



GET THE FACTS ABOUT

# SEXUAL ABUSE

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# What is Abuse?

**Abuse is when someone does things to control, bully, or hurt someone else.**

## What Is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse happens when someone has forced sexual activity on you. Sexual abuse also happens if someone you admire and respect has talked you into sexual activity, even if they didn't use force.

Abuse can be:

### PHYSICAL

Causing harm or injury to your body

### VERBAL

Causing harm to you by using mean or hurtful words

### EMOTIONAL/MENTAL

Causing harm to your feelings or ability to think clearly

## Examples of sexual abuse

- Having sex (oral, anal or vaginal)
- Touching your sex parts or making you touch their sex parts
- Showing you their sex parts or making you show yours
- Touching or kissing in a sexual way
- Asking to have sex
- Showing pictures or movies of other people having sex
- ...all against your will

These are not the only forms that sexual abuse can take, but these are the most common.

A note about consent vs abuse:

**Consent is an agreement between partners to engage in an activity. Consent should be freely given.**

- Enthusiastic consent is part of having a happy and healthy relationship. Consent helps you and your partner understand and respect each other's boundaries.
- Abuse can be sexual, physical, verbal, or emotional/mental. In a perfect world all relationships would be happy and healthy. However, sometimes things go wrong.
- Abuse can happen within a family, a friendship, or a romantic relationship—but no matter who does it, it is ALWAYS wrong.

# *Consent is mandatory*

Sexual activity without consent from every partner, every time, is sexual abuse.

Non-consent includes:

- Pressuring or intimidating someone into saying "yes"
- Waiting until someone is intoxicated or physically impaired and cannot say "no"
- Using physical force to overwhelm someone

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**If they can't say "no" then they can't say "yes"**

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Enthusiastic consent means saying "yes" freely and without feeling pressured. It is saying "yes" with your body language, words, and expressions.



# Rape and Sexual Assault

Rape, or sexual assault, is when one person forces another person to have sex. IT IS A CRIME.

**Rape is about POWER and CONTROL—it is NOT about love or intimacy.**

The act of rape could be committed by anyone, a stranger, or someone you know. Rape could occur at any moment, whether you are spending time with someone you like, at a dance, or in a car.



Rape can also happen when someone is drunk or drugged and is unable to say "yes" or "no" to sex.

No one has the right to force someone else to have sex against their will.

Being raped is traumatic and may leave the person feeling depressed, degraded, angry, and scared.

**Always remember...**

Rape is NOT the fault of the victim.

Victims need comfort and support from friends and family.

They also need support from professionals who help victims recover from this traumatic event.



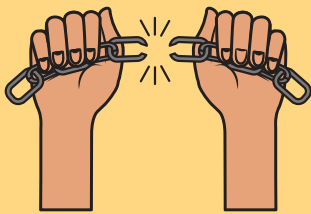
# Making Escape Plans

## The A-B-C Escape Plan



### **A: AVOID**

Avoid contact with the person



### **B: BREAK**

Tell the person you do not want to see him or her. Do this over the phone so they cannot touch you. Do this when someone you trust, like a parent or guardian, is with you so that you can be safe in your space.



### **C: CIRCLE OF SUPPORT**

**FRIENDS** - spend time with your other friends, and avoid walking by yourself

**TRUSTED ADULTS** - find an adult that you trust -- parent/guardian, counselor, teacher, doctor, or spiritual/community leader -- and go to them for advice when you need it

# Making Safety Plans

Carry a cell phone, phone card, and money in case you need to call for help



Call 911 if you feel threatened.

If someone was violent towards you, be prepared to tell the police

1. Exactly where you were,
2. Exactly what the person did, and
3. Exactly what effects it caused

Write this information down because the police need it to order that person to stay away from you.

Use code words on the phone that you and your family decide on ahead of time. If you are in trouble, say the code word on the phone so that your family member knows you can't talk openly and need help right away.



Also think of safe places to go in case of an emergency, like a police station or a public place like a restaurant or mall.



# Answers to Common Questions

## Can someone tell if I've been abused?

The physical signs of abuse will fade over time, and unless your health care provider tells you about specific problems, no one will be able to see that any physical abuse happened.

## I'm a guy who was abused by another guy. Does this make me gay?

No. Sexual orientation is not determined by abuse.

## Ever since the abuse, I've had a lot of problems. What can I do to feel better?

Talking to a professional will help. It's common for abuse victims to have problems. Some problems that may occur are:

- Sleeping problems
- Angry outbursts
- Physical aches and pains
- Withdrawing from friends
- Anxiety, depression, or panics
- Low self-esteem or confidence

## Will other people know if I tell?

Teachers, counselors, and doctors will have to report the abuse to the child protection authorities, but your friends will never know unless you decide to tell them.

## Will being abused make me an abuser?

No, it does not automatically make you an abuser. The more you emotionally heal from the abuse the less likely you are to act out in abusive ways. Seeing a counselor will help.

## The abuse has stopped. Why should I tell?

Telling is still important. Below are just a few reasons to tell:

- No one has a right to do that to you
- To make sure you are physically and emotionally okay
- The abuser may do the same thing to someone else

## How do I get it to stop?

Tell someone and get help. You can tell your parents, a teacher, counselor, doctor, or a child protective services worker. If the first person you tell doesn't listen, tell someone else.

# RESOURCES

[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

[www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

[www.iknowmine.org](http://www.iknowmine.org)

[www.wernative.org](http://www.wernative.org)

[www.healthynativeyouth.org](http://www.healthynativeyouth.org)

Domestic Violence Hotline:  
**1.800.799.SAFE (7233)**

Sexual Assault Hotline:  
**1.800.656.HOPE (4673)**

Suicide Prevention Lifeline:  
**1.800.273.TALK (8255)**

