



edinburgh rape crisis centre  
supporting survivors of sexual violence

WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE,  
WHERE CAN YOU GET SUPPORT IF YOU  
EXPERIENCE IT,  
AND HOW CAN YOU LOOK AFTER  
YOURSELF?

A HANDBOOK FROM YOUR PREVENTION TEAM

Content warning: This may contain information which readers find difficult, but we've included some support contact details if anything comes up for you.





A PICTURE OF CONSENT:

“I CARE ABOUT WHAT FEELS GOOD FOR THEM, AND THEY CARE ABOUT WHAT FEELS GOOD FOR ME.”

If you've been affected by sexual violence, please know that it wasn't your fault.

Open here  
to find  
out  
more!

## HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOURSELF IF YOU'VE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

We understand that sexual violence can bring up a whole range of thoughts and feelings, from anger to guilt and shame. We want you to know that this is completely normal, but that you also deserve to heal. Here are some ways you can start that journey.

### BE KIND TO YOURSELF!

Take time for yourself. You could write down your thoughts, do something creative or get some exercise if you're able to. Do what works best for you, and go easy on yourself.

### WHAT HAPPENED WASN'T YOUR FAULT

No one asks to be raped or sexually assaulted, and you're in no way responsible for what happened. The only person to blame is the person who raped or assaulted you.

### YOU CAN TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT IT

Talking about it to someone who believes and supports you can be a big relief. We know that it can be difficult to talk about sexual violence. If and when you are ready, there are people who want to listen to you – their contacts are at the back of this booklet.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS AFFECTED BY SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

We know that it's really hard to hear that someone you care about has experienced this. Here's a few helpful tips so that you can look out for them:

Believe them!

Give them the space to talk about it, if they want to.

Encourage them to make the decisions which feel best for them.

Let them know about places that can support them, like the ones in this booklet.

## SO WHAT DOES SEXUAL VIOLENCE LOOK LIKE?

Sexual Insults e.g. calling someone a "slut", "easy" or "frigid"

Doing sexual things in exchange for gifts, such as cigarettes, drugs or alcohol

Any kind of sexual contact between an adult and a child under 16

Putting pressure on someone to send a sexy picture, or being shown or sent a sexual picture that you didn't want to see

HERE'S A FEW EXAMPLES:

Touching someone in a sexual way without asking e.g. squeezing someone's bum at a party

Any kind of sexual activity with someone who is too drunk or high to be able to consent

Sharing a sexy picture of someone else without their permission – even if they sent it to you freely

**Sexual violence is anything sexual that happens without your consent.**

## WHAT DOES CONSENT ACTUALLY LOOK LIKE, THEN?

Consent is an enthusiastic "YES" and not just the absence of a "NO"!

Consent is mutual, relaxed and free from assumptions and pressure.

You can change your mind at any time – just because you start doing something sexual doesn't mean you have to keep going.

Consent is about noticing and communicating what feels good for each other; caring that you're both having an equally good time.

Sex is something you do with someone, not to someone.

There are physical and verbal signs that show someone is comfortable.

## SOME STUFF WE WISH EVERYONE KNEW

▶ Rapists aren't just strangers – they are often people you know. Rape is rape, no matter who did it to you.

▶ Women and girls are more often affected by sexual violence, but it can happen to anyone. It doesn't matter what gender you identify as, and it has nothing to do with your sexual orientation.

▶ Rapists don't always threaten people with weapons or use force. If someone puts pressure on you or makes you feel like you don't have a choice, they do not have your consent.

▶ People respond to traumatic experiences in many different ways. Our brain goes into survival mode, and does what it can to keep us safe. That means we don't always respond in a way we might expect.

▶ Rape is not about sexual attraction or sex. It is about having power over someone else.

# CONTACT INFO

We understand all of the feelings that go along with experiencing sexual violence can be really tough, and we want you to know that there are people out there who will listen to you and believe you. Here's a few contact details for you or someone you care about:

## EDINBURGH RAPE CRISIS CENTRE (STAR PROJECT) RAPE CRISIS SCOTLAND HELPLINE

**For Young People in Edinburgh, East & Mid Lothian**

**07583 158 058**

**star@ercc.scot**

**For Anyone**

**Text 07537 410 027 or call 08088 01 03 02  
(free number)**

**Open every day, 6pm to Midnight.**

## DOMESTIC ABUSE & SEXUAL ASSAULT TEAM

**For Young People in West Lothian**

**01506 281055**

**dasat@westlothian.gov.uk**



**To book Prevention Workshops, please email [prevention@ercc.scot](mailto:prevention@ercc.scot)  
or Call 0131 557 6737 for more details.**