

What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence is any sexual behaviour which negatively impacts on the victim in a physical and/or psychological way and can include:-

Childhood sexual abuse

This can be abuse perpetrated by a stranger, someone known to the family such as a babysitter, or a family member (otherwise known as incest).

Rape (including gang rape)

The legal definition is of a person who intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with his penis. Perpetrators of rape can be strangers, acquaintances and partners. The majority of rapes are committed by someone known to the victim.

Sexual Assault

Someone intentionally touches someone else sexually with any part of their body or anything else, without consent. This can be through clothing

and includes kissing.

Assault by penetration

This is intentional penetration of the vagina or anus of the victim with a body part or something else (does **not** include penetrating the mouth) .

Drug-assisted sexual assault

Reports of this have increased. The victim may be rendered unconscious and only remember small details, or nothing at all, of the incident. The drugs may prevent the victim from refusing to consent however **the absence of a “no” does not mean “yes”**.

Sexual Harassment

This includes touching which is sexual or not comfortable to the victim. This can be a one-off occasion or multiple occurrences. It can include face to face sexual comments, over emails or via post. This can happen at work but not always.

Sexual coercion

When someone pressures another person into having sex with them. The perpetrator may not use physical force but may employ psychological techniques such as making threats to the victim.

Prostitution

Home Office figures show that up to 70% of prostitutes spent time in care, 45% report sexual abuse and 85% physical abuse within their families (Figures from *Paying the Price: a Consultation Paper on Prostitution*, Home Office, 2004).

Between 1996-2006, 48 women working as prostitutes were murdered in the UK, according to figures from the Women's Library in London

Sex Trafficking

The recruitment, transportation within or across borders, purchase, sale, transfer, receipt or harbouring of a person for the purpose of prostitution or exploiting the marriage or such a person (CATW), 1999.

What are the effects of sexual violence?

- Depression and/or anxiety or other mental health issues.
- Shame and guilt (**note: sexual violence is never the victim/survivor's fault**)
- Time off of work or education.
- Physical illness.
- Problems with food/eating such as eating disorders.
- Self harm.
- Difficulty with parenting or other relationships.
- Problems with sex and intimacy.
- Low confidence and self esteem.
- Misuse of drugs (including prescription drugs) and/or alcohol.



Contact CSVSS

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Calls via Typetalk welcomed. If you telephone at any other time please leave a message on our answer-phone and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

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Information Leaflet: What is sexual violence?