

## **About this website**

### **Legal versus ethical**

“Sexual assault” is a legal term used to describe a range of sexual behaviours that Australian law recognises as criminal.

The purpose of legal definitions of “sexual assault” and related concepts like “consent” are so that Courts can decide if a person has committed a criminal offence.

As a result, such definitions are very specific and in Australia, vary between States.

purplearmband.org does not seek to help people do the work of Courts, that is, make legal judgements about whether someone has committed sexual assault.

Rather, we aim to prevent sexual assault from occurring in the first place.

For this purpose, we believe an ethical approach to sexual decision-making is more useful. Therefore, our definitions and the range of behaviours we describe as sexual assault or non-consensual are based in ethics rather than the law.

“Ethics” comes from the Greek word “ethos” meaning “character”. Ethics is about deciding what is right, with the central question being “What ought I to do?”

We hope that this website assists people to find ethical answers in response to this question and their sexual choices, thereby never having to consider the legal prospect that they may have committed a criminal offence.

Likewise, our description of violence against women recognises a range of abusive behaviours, not all of which may be criminal or criminal in all circumstances.

## **Ten things I can do to prevent sexual assault and violence against women**

Although, most sexual assaults and incidents of violence (against both men and women) are by men, the majority of men are not violent or rapists.

However, all men have a role to play in helping to prevent sexual assault and violence in our communities.

This web-site advocates ten things that both men and women can do to prevent violence against women, with a particular focus upon preventing sexual assault.

### Ten Things I Can Do To Prevent Sexual Assault and Violence Against Women

- 1) Understand what violence against women and sexual assault is
- 2) Challenge Myths with Reality
- 3) Take an ethical approach to sex
- 4) Confront sexual bullying
- 5) Support victim/survivors
- 6) If prone to violent behaviours, seek professional help
- 7) Be inclusive of women
- 8) Learn how larger social forces affect conflicts between men and women
- 9) Lead by example
- 10) Be confident, speak out

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\* Concept adapted from Jackson Katz's *10 Things Men Can Do To Prevent Gender Violence* at [www.jacksonkatz.com](http://www.jacksonkatz.com)

# 1) Understand what violence against women and sexual assault is

## What is violence against women?

When we think of violence against women, many of us think of physical violence.

However, violence against women can be any abusive behaviour that causes harm and suffering.

Violence can take a range of forms, including:

- Verbal
- Emotional
- Social
- Racial
- Spiritual
- Financial
- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual

Both men and women are capable of inflicting violence upon women. Women can also inflict violence upon men.

However, research indicates that the majority of violence against both men and women is by men.

### Activity:

Match the following actions against the form of abuse in the list above:

Encouraging people to hate or ridicule a person on the basis of their race

MMS-ing a private and sexual photo of a person to other people

Withholding access to money held in a joint bank account

Calling someone a “slut”, “ho” or “nag”

Spreading a hurtful rumour about a person

Threatening to bash someone

Mocking someone for their religious beliefs

Threatening to injure a person’s household pet

Constantly criticising, insulting and putting a person down

### Sources:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Crime and Safety 2005*
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Crime and Safety 2002*
- South Australian Department of Human Services, *Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Survey 1999*
- *Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) House*
  - *Violence As A Gendered Issue*
  - *Violence Against Women Journal: Editorial Principles*
- *Lawlink: Violence Against Women Specialist Unit*
  - *What is violence against women?*

## **What is sexual assault?**

Sexual assault is any sexual activity against a person's will or to which a person does not consent.

In Australia, legal definitions of sexual assault vary between States.

However, from a prevention viewpoint, it is most useful to see sexual violence as occurring on a continuum ranging from unethical sexual behaviours through to sexual assault, including:

- Unwanted touching, fondling or kissing
- Sexual and verbal harassment, innuendo
- Being made look at, or pose for, pornographic shots
- Being exposed to flashing or masturbation
- Being watched while having sex without consent
- Being forced to give or receive oral sex
- Forced or unwanted sexual penetration
- Date rape
- Drink spiking for the purposes of non-consensual sex
- Child sexual abuse

Both men and women have the capacity to engage in sexual behaviour that may constitute sexual assault.

However, statistics indicate that the majority of sexual assaults are committed by men, while the majority of sexual assault victims/survivors are women.

### **Activity:**

Tick which of the following can be sexual assault:

- Using threats to force a person into sex
- Using deception to trick a person into having sex
- Continuing a sexual activity after a person has said they want it to stop
- Having sex with a person who is asleep or unconscious
- Any sexual behaviour that makes a person feel uncomfortable, frightened, intimidated, humiliated or threatened.

Answer:

All of the above can be sexual assault.

### **Sources:**

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Crime and Safety 2002*
- *Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) House website*
  - *Information about sexual assault*
  - *Definition of sexual assault*

### 3) Challenge Myths with Reality

There are many myths or false beliefs about sexual assault. Such beliefs excuse sexual assault by blaming victims and implying that offenders are not responsible for their actions.

Challenging myths helps make offenders more accountable and contributes to creating a safer, more empathic environment for victim/survivors.

Providing a reality check is the quickest and most effective way to challenge a myth or false belief. However, to do so, we must first be able to tell myth from reality ourselves.

#### **Activity:**

Choose whether you think the following statements are Myths or Reality, and the answer will appear below.

**Sexual assault couldn't happen to me**

**Myth/Reality**

**Myth**

One in three women will be sexual assaulted at some time during their lives (Fergusson & Mullen, 1999).

One in six men will experience some form of sexual violence by the time they are sixteen (Service Assisting Male Survivors of Sexual Assault, 2006).

**Rape is committed by strangers**

**Myth/Reality**

**Myth**

Most victims know the person who sexually assaults them. The offender may be a member of the victim's family, friend, husband, partner, date or a social acquaintance.

**Rape is committed by psychologically disturbed men Myth/Reality**

**Myth**

Rape is committed by ordinary men from all socio-economic classes, professions and nationalities. For example, a rapist may be in caring relationships with other women e.g. mother, partner, female family members.

**Most sexual assaults happen at home**

**Myth/Reality**

**Reality**

The most common place where sexual assault occurs is in a victim's home or another person's home. The second most common place is a public venue, such as a place of entertainment or a car park (ABS, *Crime and Safety 2002*).

**Young women are at greatest risk of being raped**

**Myth/Reality**

**Myth and Reality**

Babies, children, women of all ages and men can all experience sexual violence.

However, of all the groups, girls between the ages of 10-19 years of age have the highest victimisation rates for sexual violence (*Recorded Crime – Victims Australia 2003*).

Of the adult groups, women between the ages of 18-24 are most likely to experience sexual violence (*Women's Safety Survey 1995*).

**Men of all sexual persuasions can be victims of sexual assault**  
Myth/Reality

**Reality**

Heterosexual, gay and bi-sexual men are equally likely to experience sexual violence.

**Men who sexually assault men are gay** Myth/Reality

**Myth**

Most men who sexually assault other men identify as heterosexual.

**Most sexual assaults involve a weapon** Myth/Reality

**Myth**

The majority of sexual assaults do not involve a weapon.

**In most sexual assaults, the victim is not physically injured**  
Myth/Reality

**Reality**

Only a small number of sexual assaults involve physical injury.

**Women lie about rape to get back at a man** Myth/Reality

**Myth**

Police statistics indicate that "false" reporting represents between 2% to 7% of all reported assaults. These statistics include statements withdrawn by victim/survivors due to fear of revenge and the impact of the legal system.

**If a sexual assault charge is dropped, the accused is proved innocent**  
Myth/Reality

**Myth**

Sexual assault is a difficult crime to prove. When charges are dropped it means there is not enough evidence to obtain a conviction. It does not mean the sexual assault didn't happen.

**Women who dress and act sexily bring it on themselves** Myth/Reality

**Myth**

If you have money in your pocket does that mean you want to be robbed?  
Responsibility for rape lies with the rapist, not the victim.

**Women who are drunk or drug-affected are fair game for sex** Myth/Reality

**Myth**

Being affected by alcohol or drugs can mean a person does not have the capacity to give consent.

**Men rape because they need sex more than women do** Myth/Reality

**Myth**

There is no medical evidence to substantiate that men have uncontrollable sexual urges. Most men do not rape. Both men and women have sex drives. However, the threat of violence can prevent women from expressing themselves sexually.

**A strong man controls his woman** Myth/Reality

**Myth**

Using violence to control another person is a problem. Men with violent behaviours towards women or their families should seek professional help.

**It's natural for men to be violent** Myth/Reality

**Myth**

Violence is learned. In cultures where violence is frowned on, there is little violence against men, women and children.

Sources:

Information in this section has been reproduced with the kind permission of:

- NSW Rape Crisis Centre
  - The Myths and Realities of Sexual Assault
- CASA House website
  - Common Myths of Sexual Assault
- Service Assisting Male Survivors of Sexual Assault website
  - Myths and Facts: Common beliefs about rape
- South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault
  - Myths about male rape

Other:

Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Crime and Safety 2002*

Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Recorded Crime – Victims Australia 2003*

Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Women's Safety Survey 1995*

#### 4) Take an ethical approach to sex

“Ethics” comes from the Greek word “ethos” meaning “character”. Ethics is about deciding what is right, with the central question being “What ought I to do?”

An ethical approach to sex means asking “what ought I to do” to ensure that sex is safe, pleasurable and fun for each person.

The starting point for answering this question is consent.

##### What is consent?

Consent is an agreement between people about what sexually they choose to do together.

Consent is a legal requirement of all sexual encounters, whether they be spontaneous, planned, casual or within a long-term relationship.

However, consent is more than just a legal requirement. It is the starting point for making sex safe, pleasurable and fun for each person.

For sex to be consensual, each person must have

- a *free and voluntary choice*; and
- the *capacity* to make to make a free and voluntary choice.

##### Free and voluntary choice:

A *free and voluntary choice* means a person chooses to do something of their own will.

They choose to do it because they want to do it, not because they are forced, pressured or tricked.

To make a *free and voluntary choice* a person must feel:

- safe;
- trust;
- listened to;
- that they have options e.g. “yes”, “no”, “not now”, “maybe later”, “never”
- respected whatever their choice; and
- able to stop at any time.

A free and voluntary choice never involves:

- force;
- threats;
- coercion,
- intimidation;
- blackmail;
- tricks;
- deception or fraud.

## **Taking steps to ensure a person is making a free and voluntary choice**

Ethical sex means taking steps to ensure that each person is making a free and voluntary choice.

An effective way of doing this is to focus upon each person's enjoyment. Questions aimed at finding ways to increase a person's pleasure often have questions about consent built into them. For example, "Are you enjoying this?" "Would you like me to continue?"

Non-verbal cues are also important. Does the other person return your kisses and touches or do they push you away or try to avoid getting closer?

If a person does not offer verbal or physical resistance, this should not be taken to mean that they are making a free and voluntary choice. Sometimes a person can "freeze" because they are too frightened or intimidated to show how they are feeling.

Where there is a possibility that a person is not making a free and voluntary choice, or you are unsure, the safest and most ethical choice is to stop what you are doing and ask.

Where a person says or indicates that they do not want to continue, or is still unclear, then the only choice is to stop.

Remember, with free and voluntary choice, "yes" means "yes" and "no" is always an option.

## **Capacity**

To make a *free and voluntary choice*, a person must have the *capacity*.

This means they are:

- conscious;
- sober enough;
- mature enough; and
- intellectually capable.

In Australia, it is against the law to have sex with a person who is:

- Asleep
- Unconscious
- Under the age of consent (16 years of age).

A person's *capacity* may not always be clear. For example, if a person is:

- Drunk or affected by drugs;
- Intellectually disabled.

In some circumstances, a person who is affected by alcohol or drugs may still be aware and capable of making a free and voluntary choice. In other circumstances, they may not.

Similarly, some intellectually disabled people may be capable of free and voluntary sexual choices. Others may not or may not in certain circumstances.

In these situations, it is a matter of degrees. Therefore, you need to exercise extra caution when making sexual decisions.

Where there is a possibility that a person does not have the capacity, or you are unsure, the safest and most ethical choice is to take a raincheck or not have sex with that person at all.

Remember, just because you can doesn't mean it's right.

## **Ethical sex: beyond consent**

Beyond consent, certain ways of thinking can pre-dispose a person towards ethical sex that is safe, pleasurable and fun for each person. These include viewing sex as:

- A shared experience aimed at mutual pleasure and enjoyment;
- an opportunity to learn and discover new things;
- a matter of personal choice, to be respected as such for each person;
- a responsibility that involves self-care and care for others (before, during and after);
- a means of connecting or affirming relationships, whether casual or long-term.

For more information visit [www.sexualethics.org.au](http://www.sexualethics.org.au)

## **Making sex safe**

Safe sex means taking steps to avoid and/or minimise harmful outcomes as a result of sex, such as sexually transmitted diseases or unintended pregnancies.

For more information on safe sex choices, visit [www.istaysafe.com/istaysafe/default.asp](http://www.istaysafe.com/istaysafe/default.asp)

## Sources

Carmody and Carrington cited in Neame, A: "Differing perspectives on "preventing" sexual assault", *ACSSA Newsletter No 2* November 2003

Carmody M (2004) "Sexual ethics and the erotics of consent" in *Making sense of consent* eds Reynolds P, Cowling P, Ashgate, Aldershot, UK pp 45-56

Criminal Justice Sexual Offences Task Force *Responding to sexual assault: the way forward*, Attorney General's Department of NSW, December 2005

The University of Sydney, *Playing By The Rules Project: Summary* (2004) commissioned by the National Rugby League

## Other useful web-sites:

About date rape

<http://www.aboutdaterape.nsw.gov.au/index.html>

Sexual ethics

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

I stay safe

[www.istaysafe.com/istaysafe/default.asp](http://www.istaysafe.com/istaysafe/default.asp)

### Activity:

Indicate Yes or No as to whether the following scenarios are consensual.

*NB: These scenarios are about consent. They are not about whether a particular behaviour is criminal.*

#### Scenario 1:

Pete lives in a share house with his mates, Lenny and Todd. Pete's new girlfriend, Steph, stays over some nights. One night, Lenny and Todd decide to hide in Pete's room. They think it will be a great laugh to watch Pete's first attempts at being intimate with his new girlfriend.

Yes/No

Yes

Wrong: Pete and Steph are not given a *choice* as to whether they want to be watched. Remember, consent means "no" is an option.

No

Correct: Pete and Steph are not given a *choice* as to whether they want to be watched. Remember, consent means "no" is an option. You seem to understand this.

#### Scenario 2:

It's a great party. Lani is having a fantastic time. Feeling confident and flirtatious, she approaches Andrew, a cute guy she has had her eye on, and invites him to hook up at the end of the night. When Andrew finds Lani later, she is so drunk that she has passed out on a bed. He has sex with her anyway.

Yes/No

Yes

Wrong: Lani does not have the *capacity* to consent. Having sex with someone who is unconscious is against the law. Remember, just because you can doesn't mean it's right.

No

Correct: Lani does not have the *capacity* to consent. Having sex with someone who is unconscious is against the law. Just because you can doesn't mean it's right. You seem to understand this.

#### Scenario 3:

Lila and Caleb have been having casual sex for several weeks. Lately the sex has been getting more intense and exciting. Caleb suspects that they are both becoming more emotionally involved than they expected. Although the sex is fantastic, he's not sure he wants a serious relationship right now. Before they have sex the next time, he tells Lila how he feels. Together they make a choice about whether to continue in the sexual relationship.

Yes

Correct: This scenario is consensual. Both Lila and Caleb are *freely* choosing to have sex with each other. They recognise that an ethical approach to sex involves communication and honesty.

No

Wrong: This scenario is consensual. Both Lila and Caleb are *freely* choosing to have sex with each other. They recognise that an ethical approach to sex involves communication and honesty.

#### Scenario 4:

Darryn's mates tease him for being a virgin. One night at the pub, they charm Tatiana, a young woman they have previously called a slut, into coming onto him. They tell her that Darryn is keen on her and that she should make a move. When Darryn refuses her advances, his mates encourage her to keep touching and stroking him. Meanwhile, they ply both of them with alcohol and ridicule Darryn, calling him "shy" and a "poofa" every time he pushes her away. Eventually, Darryn starts playing along with the joke, touching and stroking Tatiana in return. At the end of the night, Darryn and Tatiana stumble out the door together, very drunk. Darryn's mates presume that they are off to have sex and celebrate this as a victory for the boys having broken their friend's resolve.

Yes

Wrong This scenario is not consensual. Darryn's mates bully both Darryn and Tatiana into sexual behaviour against their will. Remember, without *free and voluntary choice*, "yes" ain't "yes".

No

Correct This scenario is not consensual. Darryn's mates bully both Darryn and Tatiana into sexual behaviour against their will. Without *free and voluntary choice*, "yes" ain't "yes". You seem to understand this.

#### Scenario 5:

Ahmid's girlfriend Dahlia has finally agreed to have sex with him. They decide that Friday night is the night. After kissing and petting for a while, they start to remove each other's clothes. When Ahmid gets to Dahlia's underwear she says "no" and shakes her head. He keeps going anyway, just to test the waters. Because she doesn't offer any more resistance, he keeps going. After all, they had an agreement. Eventually, he ends up having intercourse with her, but it's not very pleasant. Although Dahlia doesn't stop him, she's really stiff and seems uncomfortable.

Yes

Wrong: Consent means taking steps to ensure that a person agrees to the sexual activity. Just because Dahlia doesn't resist does not mean she consents. A person can change their mind at anytime.

No

Correct: Consent means taking steps to ensure that a person agrees to the sexual activity. Just because Dahlia doesn't resist does not mean she consents. A person can change their mind at any time. You seem to understand this.

#### Scenario 6:

Phuong is dancing at a nightclub. He is aware of a young woman dancing near him who seems to be checking him out. She starts to move in and soon, they are dancing together in an incredibly sexy way. Phuong can't believe his luck, even more so when she leads him into a private corner to make out. It crosses Phuong's mind that she may have taken a drug that has made her lose her inhibitions, but it's difficult to tell with all the noise, smoke and music. He leads her to a quieter part of the nightclub with better lighting, so he can check her out. She seems fine. When he asks if she has taken a drug, the young woman laughs and in a clear and lucid voice says, "I can see why you would think that. But no, I haven't taken anything, but I appreciate you asking. I'm Jess" She gives him another kiss. They return to their private corner and pick up where they left off ...

No

Wrong This scenario is consensual. Phuong takes steps to ensure that Jess has the *capacity* to make a free and voluntary choice to make out with him.

Yes

Correct

This scenario is consensual. Phuong takes steps to ensure that Jess has the *capacity* to make a free and voluntary choice to make out with him.

## 5) Confront sexual bullying

### What is sexual bullying?

Sexual bullying is the sexual intimidation or coercion of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Unfortunately, sexual bullying is common and for some people, may even seem like the “normal” way to approach sex.

Sexual bullying is often used to pressure both men and women into sexual behaviour against their will. For example:

- Ridiculing a mate’s sexual choices because they don’t conform to the group’s expectations e.g. calling someone a “poofta” for not having sex
- Using emotional blackmail to pressure a girlfriend into sex e.g. “If you loved me you’d have sex with me”
- Making false promises to get a person to have sex e.g. saying “Of course I’ll ring you tomorrow” when there is no intention of doing so.

Some forms of sexual bullying are criminal. For example, physically forcing or threatening a person into having sex.

Other forms of sexual bullying may not be criminal, but can still have a traumatic impact upon a person.

### Sexual bullying: a high risk behaviour

Engaging in sexual bullying puts a person at higher risk of committing sexual assault.

Where sexual bullying occurs within a group, it can also pressure group members into sexual behaviours that are:

- Unsafe;
- unethical;
- unpleasant, embarrassing or humiliating;
- not chosen freely and voluntarily;
- at risk of being sexual assault; and
- possibly criminal.

### Sexual bullying: Risk signs

Certain ways of thinking can put a person at risk of being a sexual bully.

These include viewing sex as:

- An “act” that you do to someone or get from someone e.g. “a root”, “a head job”;
- a competition or opportunity to prove yourself e.g. “score”, “get notches on the bed post”;
- something you are entitled to e.g. being unable to take “no” as an answer;
- an opportunity to bond, boast or laugh about with your mates;
- a means of controlling or dominating another person.

Sexual bullies tend to also act in ways that are:

- homophobic;
- anti-women, unless for sex; and
- pro-violence as means of resolving conflict.

For example, sexual bullies may use anti-gay and anti-woman put-downs, such as “poofa” or “girls blouse”, or the threat of violence, to silence group members who challenge their behaviours.

### **How to confront sexual bullying**

Sexual bullies are most powerful when supported by peers who:

- follow,
- reinforce, or
- tolerate their behaviours (often in silence).

They are least powerful when supported by peers who:

- reject,
- challenge or
- confront their behaviours.

Men who sexually bully other people often assume that their peers hold similar attitudes to themselves. However, research suggests this is not the case. The majority of men do not hold abusive attitudes towards women and other men.

One non-violent way to confront sexual bullying is to *break the silence* surrounding these behaviours. Discuss sexual bullying with your mates. Ask how it makes them feel. Tell them how you feel when you see it happening. Chances are that once the silence is broken, you will find you are not alone in your concerns.

Other things you can do to confront sexual bullying:

- Refuse to participate in sexual bullying
- Refuse to encourage or laugh at it
- Urge other mates not to be part of it
- Support mates who stand up to it
- Help out and support victims of sexual bullying
- Find a quiet moment to try to talk to ringleaders. Urge them to seek professional help.
- Take an ethical approach to sex and support mates in doing likewise

### **Activity:**

Read the following scenario again. This time, imagine that you are one of Darryn's mates who is a by-stander to this incident.

Think of different things you could do to challenge this abusive situation.

NB: Often when confronted with situations like this, we see only two options: *intervene physically and possibly expose themselves to physical harm, or do nothing* \*.

Try to think of alternatives to these two options. Write them in the box below the scenario, then click on the icon to compare them with our suggestions.

Darryn's mates tease him for being a virgin. One night at the pub, they charm Tatiana, a young woman they have previously called a slut, into coming onto him. They tell her that Darryn is keen on her and that she should make a move. When Darryn refuses her advances,

his mates encourage her to keep touching and stroking him. Meanwhile, they ply both of them with alcohol and ridicule Darryn, calling him “shy” and a “poofta” every time he pushes her away. Eventually, Darryn starts playing along with the joke, touching and stroking Tatiana in return. At the end of the night, Darryn and Tatiana stumble out the door together, very drunk. Darryn’s mates presume that they are off to have sex and celebrate this as a victory for the boys having broken their friend’s resolve.

Our options:

- Encourage mates on the sidelines not to laugh at or support the abusive behaviours of the ringleaders.
- Try to pull Darryn and Tatianna aside. Let them know that there are people who support them. Ask them how you can help.
- Invite Darryn and Tatianna to leave to have drinks at another pub where they won’t be harassed. When you get there, encourage people to talk about what just happened.
- In the days following, find a quiet moment to talk to ringleaders. Tell them how their behaviour made you feel. Urge them to seek professional help.

Sources:

Banyard V, Plante E and Moynihan M “Bystander Education: Bringing A Broader Community Perspective to Sexual Violence Prevention”, University of New Hampshire, *Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol 32, No 1 2004

Criminal Justice Sexual Offences Task Force *Responding to sexual assault: the way forward*, Attorney General’s Department of NSW, December 2005

Flood M (2003) “Men, Sex and Mateship: How homosociality shapes men’s heterosexual relations”. Paper to *(Other) Feminisms: An International Women’s and Gender Studies Conference*, University of Queensland, 12-16 July.

Farrington, DP(1993) Understanding and preventing bullying in M.Tonny and N. Morris (Eds ) *Crime and Justice*, Vol 17, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Robins G, Kremer P & Lusher D *Masculine behaviour and social networks in team structures* An AFL Research and Development Project for 2005

Katz J; Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP); Gender Violence Prevention Education & Training, Focus on Bystanders at [www.jacksonkatz.com](http://www.jacksonkatz.com)

## **5) Support victim/survivors**

There are a number of ways to assist and support a person who tells you that they have been sexually assaulted.

If the assault is recent (such as in the last few days) it is important to make sure that the person is safe from further assaults and immediate danger. Encourage the person to go somewhere safe such as a police station, hospital or to a friend's house.

It is also important that you:

- 1) Believe them
- 2) Support them
- 3) Don't blame them
- 4) Inform yourself
- 5) Look after yourself

### **1) Believe them.**

Trying to get details and facts is not necessary. What the person needs to hear is that you:

- believe them,
- are willing to listen to them; and
- are willing to assist them as much as possible.

### **2) Support them**

A person who has been sexually assaulted often feels a mixture of emotions including powerlessness and indecisiveness.

It is important that supporters do not push someone who has been sexually assaulted to do what they think is best or necessary.

Instead support and encourage the person to make decisions for themselves.

It is the person's choice if they speak to the police, if they attend hospital for a medical or forensic examination or if they speak to a counsellor.

The most important thing is to let the person know that you are willing to support them in whatever decisions they make.

### **3) Don't blame them**

There are many myths surrounding sexual assault and why it occurs. Many of these myths place the blame on the victim and remove it from the offender.

It may be difficult to believe and support a person who has been sexually assaulted, especially if you know the offender personally.

It is important to remember that people rarely lie about sexual violence. It takes a lot of courage and trust for someone to disclose sexual violence to another person and it is important that you listen and respect them.

Often supporters feel a sense of guilt, self blame and even anger when someone close to them has been assaulted. It is common for supporters to think that if they had just done "so and so" then they could have prevented the assault from happening.

This is not the case. **Neither you, nor the victim, are at fault.**

Link to: *Challenge Myths with Reality*

#### **4) Inform yourself**

It is common for people to feel overwhelmed and unsure about how to support someone.

Information about sexual assault, its impact and the options available afterwards are widely available to both yourself and the victim from a number of sources.

Contact your local sexual assault service for more information. See the list below.

#### **5) Look after yourself**

It can be difficult and emotionally draining supporting a person who has been sexually assaulted.

Often people who are close to a victim may find that they are feeling a range of emotions and a sense of helplessness. It is important that supporters also have a supporter, someone that you can talk to.

You can access counselling and information from your local sexual assault service. See the list below.

##### Source:

The information in this section has been reproduced with the kind permission of the NSW Rape Crisis Centre.

To learn more about sexual assault, for counselling or to find out how to make a donation that will assist victim/survivors, contact your local sexual assault service.

##### NSW Rape Crisis Centre

Counselling On-line 1800 424 017

(02) 9819 7357

info@nswrapecrisis.com.au

##### Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA House)

1800 806 292

casa@rwh.org.au

##### Ruby Gaea (Darwin Centre Against Rape)

(08) 8945 0155

info@rubygaea.net.au

##### Sexual Assault Support Service: Tasmania

(03) 6231 1811 (South)

(03) 6334 2740 (North)

(03) 6431 9711 (North-West)

admin@kidshelp.com.au

##### Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service

(08) 8226 8777

yarrowplc@mail.wch.sa.gov.au

##### Brisbane Rape & Incest Survivors Support Service

(07) 3391 0004

info@brissc.com.au

Sexual Assault Resource Centre: Western Australia  
(08) 9340 1828  
Rural Freecall: 1800 199 888  
Kemh.sarc@health.wa.gov.au

Kids Helpline  
(07) 3369 1588  
admin@kidshelp.com.au

## **6) If prone to violent behaviours, seek professional help**

Being violent towards women is a serious problem that requires immediate help. If you have a problem in this area, find out how you can access counselling and support by calling:

### **National:**

Australia Says No	1800 200 526 <a href="http://www.australiasaysno.gov.au">www.australiasaysno.gov.au</a>
Lifeline	131 114 <a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a>
Men's Help Line	1300 789 978 <a href="http://www.menslineaus.org.au">www.menslineaus.org.au</a>

### **Australian Capital Territory:**

Domestic Violence Crisis Service (02) 6280-0900

### **Queensland:**

Queensland Men's Info Line: 1800 600 636

### **New South Wales:**

Relationships Australia (02) 9635 9311

### **Northern Territory:**

Crisis Line 1800 019 116

### **Tasmania:**

Centacare (03) 6278 1660

### **Western Australia:**

Men's Domestic Violence Helpline 08 9223 1199  
1800 000 599

Relationships Australia (08) 9470 5109

### **Victoria:**

Men's Referral Service 03 9428 2899 or 1800 065 973  
[www.ntv.net.au](http://www.ntv.net.au)

## 7) Be inclusive of women

Research suggests that *closely-knit all male groups* can be at higher risk of developing sexually abusive and violent behaviours towards women. This is particularly the case when group members see it as “normal” to:

- Exclude women from the “inner sanctum” of the group;
- treat behaviours and objects regarded as “feminine” with ridicule or disdain;
- draw a firm line between what is “masculine” and what is “feminine” e.g. men play footy, women watch;
- limit women to certain roles e.g. sex, housework, raising children;
- categorise women as either “sluts” or “good girls”, giving themselves permission to treat women deemed as “sluts” with less respect;
- control and dominate women, telling them what to do and what they should be (and often other men as well).

In contrast, groups who are less likely to develop sexually abusive and violent behaviours towards women see it as “normal” to:

- include both men and women in the “core relationships” that make up the group;
- see behaviours and objects regarded as “feminine” in a positive light;
- find things in common between men and women;
- encounter both men and women in a wide range of work, family and social roles;
- accept that women can initiate and enjoy sex (and are entitled to do so safely);
- allow both men and women to make their own decisions about who they are and what they want to do.

In short, being inclusive of women in a wide range of social groups and roles is a gender violence prevention strategy.

For more information on creating safe, respectful and inclusive sporting environments for women, including your club’s legal obligations in terms of:

- anti-discrimination;
- sexual harassment; and
- child protection

visit [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)

### Sources:

Flood M (2003) “Men, Sex and Mateship: How homosociality shapes men’s heterosexual relations”. Paper to *(Other) Feminisms: An International Women’s and Gender Studies Conference*, University of Queensland, 12-16 July.

Robins G, Kremer P & Lusher D *Masculine behaviour and social networks in team structures* An AFL Research and Development Project for 2005

The University of Sydney, *Playing By The Rules Project: Summary* (2004) commissioned by the National Rugby League.

## 8) Educate myself and others about how larger social forces affect conflicts between men and women

The last decade has seen increasing research into the subject of violence against women and how to prevent it.

Below is a selection of readings, books and web-sites on the topic, as well as related issues, that we have found useful.

### Articles/Papers:

*Towards Champions: A Better Culture, A Better Game: Submission to the Australian Football League and National Rugby League* by Football Fans Against Sexual Assault, February 2005

Submission in full: 47 pages  
(Microsoft Word document - [click here to download](#))  
Submission Summary: 13 pages  
(Microsoft Word document - [click here to download](#))  
Submission Appendices  
(Microsoft Word document - [click here to download](#))

"Sport and violence against women"  
Dr Michael Flood  
<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=2058>

"De-constructing the culture of sexual assault"  
Dr Michael Flood  
<http://www.xyonline.net/deconsexassault.shtml>

"Australia's sexist sub-culture is not limited to footballers"  
Dr Michael Flood  
<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=2269>

### Books:

"The Macho Paradox:  
Why some men hurt men and how all men can help"  
By Jackson Katz  
Sourcebooks  
[www.themachoparadox.com](http://www.themachoparadox.com)

"The Frailty Myth:  
Redefining the Physical Potential of Girls and Women"  
By Collette Dowling  
Random House Publishing Group

"Wifework:  
What marriage really means for women"  
By Susan Maushardt  
The Text Publishing Company

### Web-sites:

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is a clearinghouse for information and research relating to sexual violence.  
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa>

The Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse is a centralised collection of information and research on domestic and family violence.

<http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au>

Football Fans Against Sexual Assault is an advocacy site for sports fans and community members who wish to see sport play a leadership role in addressing sexual violence within sport and our communities.

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

Jackson Katz is an ex-All Star American Footballer and pioneer of gender violence prevention programs within sports cultures. His website provides information about American sports-based violence prevention programs.

[www.jacksonkatz.com](http://www.jacksonkatz.com)

Also see:

Mentors in Violence Prevention

<http://www.sportinsociety.org/mvp>

Sexual Ethics is a research project aimed at investigating how young people negotiate sex in ethical ways.

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

XY is a website focussed upon men, masculinities and gender politics

<http://www.xyonline.net/index.shtml>

## 9) Lead by example

Having taken on board the previous eight points, here's some tips on how to lead by example:

- Self-reflect:** Take the journey inwards. Try to understand how your own attitudes and actions may inadvertently contribute to the problem of gender violence and work towards changing them\*.
- Be confident:** Be confident in who you are and the choices you make. If people question you or your sexuality because you challenge their abusive behaviours, recognise this as a ploy to shut you down. Maintain your line and others will follow.
- Have courage:** It takes courage to speak out when others are silent. Remember, courage is not a lack of fear, it's facing fear and overcoming it.
- Work on your skills:** It takes time and conscious effort to learn how to say and do things differently. Be patient with yourself as you develop the skills that will allow you to practice what you preach. Read books and take courses that you think might be helpful e.g. leadership, conflict resolution or assertiveness training.
- Be positive:** Don't be overwhelmed by the size of the problem. Focus upon what you can do and acknowledge your breakthroughs, no matter how small. Encourage those around you by recognising their efforts too.
- Use your sense of humour:** Sexual assault and violence against women is a serious issue, but humour can still be part of your toolkit. Remember, laughter can be the ultimate diffuser, persuader and finder of common ground.
- Believe:** Believe that our communities are capable of being safer and that your contribution brings us closer to that goal.

### Sources:

Banyard V, Plante E and Moynihan M "Bystander Education: Bringing A Broader Community Perspective to Sexual Violence Prevention", University of New Hampshire, *Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol 32, No 1 2004

Flood M 2002-2003 Engaging Men: Strategies and dilemmas in violence prevention education among men *Women Against Violence: A Feminist Journal*, 13, pp. 25-32

\*Katz J *10 Things Men Can Do To Prevent Gender Violence* at [www.jacksonkatz.com](http://www.jacksonkatz.com)

## 10) Be confident, speak out

Don't hide your light under a bushel any longer.

Join the increasing number of men and women choosing to speak out against sexual assault and violence against women by being part of the following campaigns:

### *Purple Armband Games*

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

Winter sports:

anytime in July

Summer Sports:

between 25 November – 10 December

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

### *White Ribbon Day*

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

25 November

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

### *16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women*

25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) –

10 December (International Human Rights Day)

[http://www.amnesty.org.au/Act\\_now/campaigns/stop\\_violence\\_against\\_women/16\\_days\\_of\\_activism](http://www.amnesty.org.au/Act_now/campaigns/stop_violence_against_women/16_days_of_activism)

### *Reclaim the Night*

<http://www.isis.aust.com/rtn/>

