

Parent Wellbeing Tip Sheet



Sexual Violence

Sexual Violence is any unwanted sexual act or behaviour which is threatening, violent, forced or coercive. Sexual contact between two people must be consensual. That means both people must be of legal age (16 or older), agree to the act by choice, and have the freedom to change their minds. Consent cannot be acquired through fear, coercion, force or intimidation. It must be given actively and enthusiastically. Any sexual act performed without consent is sexual assault.

If you have been exposed to sexual violence you may be feeling:

- shock or disbelief
- shame and embarrassment
- fear
- sadness
- anger
- guilt
- helplessness
- anxiety
- physically unwell

Everyone has different feelings and reactions after a sexual assault and this may change from one day to the next. Talking to someone about the experience may help you to cope and to heal. It is important to remember that you are NOT to blame.

Sexual violence can have a lasting impact. It can affect relationships and harm a person's mental health and wellbeing. Many people find that counselling is helpful. For a list of specialist counselling services see the Sexual Assault Resource Centre's links and resources below:

<http://www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au/services/sarc/links.htm>

Sexual violence is a crime and if you have suffered sexual violence you might want to report the incident to the police. This is a personal choice which only you can make. If you are unsure, you can speak informally to the police over the phone to explore the possible options.