

Understanding Sexual Violence: A Youth Workbook

"Not everyone shares the same boundaries. Just because someone's actions won't affect you doesn't mean it won't harm or have a negative impact on another individual"
- Youth

"I learned that sexual violence doesn't just happen. That beliefs grow and it can turn into that."
-Youth

"If I were to send a message to the world, it would be you are never alone."
-Youth

Purpose of this Workbook

This workbook was created as a resource for youth around sexual violence. Unfortunately, many children and youth experience sexual abuse. We know that 44% of girls and 24% of boys will experience child sexual abuse before the age of 18.

Sexual violence is not an experience that young people have to go through alone. This workbook aims to provide information around sexual violence and ideas for how we can support others and ourselves. In addition to the workbook, there is the Alberta One Line (1-866-403-8000).

This line is available from 9 am to 9 pm MST every day of the year. It provides emotional support around sexual violence as well as answers questions and provides resources to callers.

Sexual violence can be a difficult topic to read about and it is important to take care of ourselves when exploring these impactful topics. Your feelings are normal and everyone deserves support.

Wellness Check In:

Before beginning to explore sexual violence, take a minute to think how learning and discussing this topic might affect you.

Throughout this workbook, we will build a toolkit through our 'Wellness Check Ins' that you can pull from if you start to feel upset. A lot of these activities are meant to help you connect to your body. We know that connecting to your body doesn't always feel safe for everyone, so we want to emphasize that these are suggestions and there is no pressure to use them.



Land Acknowledgement

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse is located on Treaty 7 Territory in Calgary, Alberta. Calgary is at the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers and the traditional Blackfoot name for this place is Moh'kinstis.

This is the traditional homeland of the Blackfoot Confederacy which includes the Siksika, Piikani and Kainai First Nations. Treaty 7 is also situated on the lands of the Tsuut'ina and the Îyârhe Nakoda Nations. The Îyârhe Nakoda Nation includes the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations. Calgary is also part of District 5 & 6 of the Metis Nation of Alberta.

Many of us may be settlers to the places we call 'home'. We wish to acknowledge the traditional peoples who have nourished and cared for these lands for millennia. By reflecting on the past, we also hope to move forward in our journey towards Truth and Reconciliation.

Take this time to reflect on what actions you could take in your own life to work towards Truth and Reconciliation?

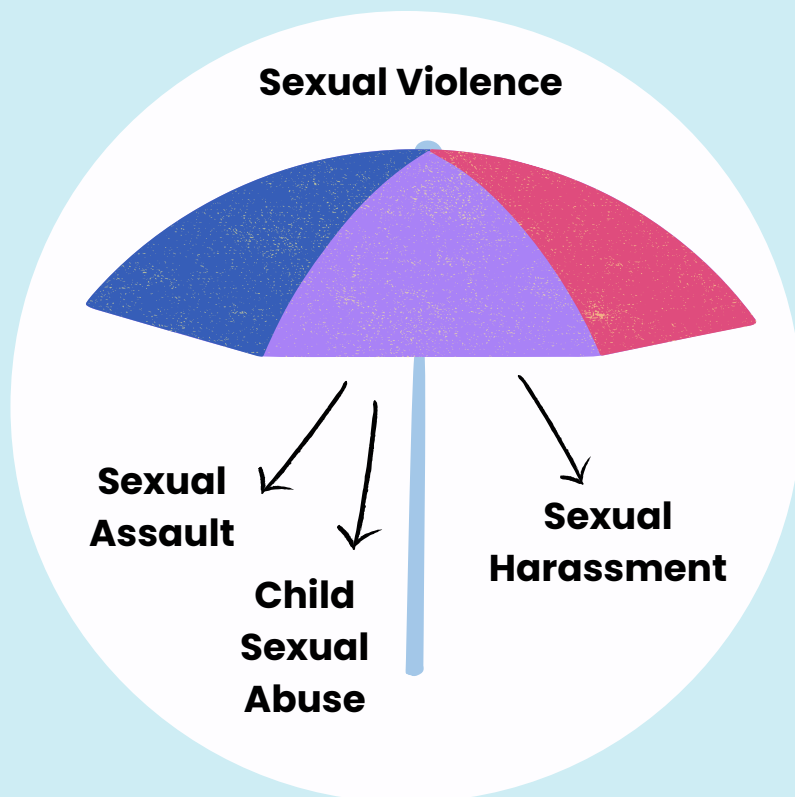
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What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence is any sexual act that disregards another person's consent. Sexual violence can be physical (types of touches) or psychological (affects someone's emotions and self-image).

Sexual violence is an umbrella term that includes many types of violence. This includes child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. We will explore all of these terms in more detail later on.



Activity

See if you can identify the myths vs facts:

- Sexual violence is a rare experience. **Myth or Fact**
- Physical aggression is not often used with sexual violence. **Myth or Fact**
- Sexual violence only affects women. **Myth or Fact**

Activity Answers

(upside down below)

- **Sexual violence is a rare experience:** Myth. Sexual violence is much more common than people might believe. 45% of Albertans will experience some form of sexual abuse in their lifetime.
- **Physical aggression is not often used with sexual violence:** Fact. Most sexual violence includes little physical violence. This is because of a process called coercion which we will talk about later.
- **Sexual violence is a rare experience.** Sexual violence can affect a person of any gender. In Alberta, 1 in 5 adult men will experience sexual violence.

Why do people choose to use sexual violence?

People choose to use sexual violence because they hold discriminatory beliefs and want to have power and control. These types of discrimination mean they might see someone else as 'less than' and not deserving of dignity, respect, and equality. When these beliefs are acted on, a person might choose to cross someone else's boundaries and ignore their lack of consent.

At CCASA, we use a tree metaphor to understand sexual violence. A tree does not grow overnight and neither does sexual violence. Trees grow over time and need soil, sun, and water. A person's choice to use sexual violence also develops over time and is influenced by many factors.



**Discriminatory
Attitudes & Beliefs**

Ageism

Sizeism

Heterosexism

Racism

Cissexism

Sexism

Classism

Ableism

Colonialism

On our tree, we place attitudes and beliefs at the bottom because these are the roots or foundations of sexual violence. Attitudes and beliefs determine what actions people think are 'okay'.

Activity

What are some attitudes and beliefs that we could use to challenge these discriminatory attitudes and beliefs? (eg. equality)



When we begin to reflect on and challenge our own attitudes and beliefs, we begin to work towards creating communities free from discrimination and sexual violence.

Wellness Check In

Sometimes learning about sexual violence can make people feel overwhelmed or anxious. If that happens, here are some simple grounding techniques you can try:

- Rub your palms together, notice the feeling and listen to the noise
- Feel your feet on the ground beneath you
- Wrap yourself in a blanket, notice how it feels



What is consent?

Consent is when someone gives permission or agrees to participate in an activity. We give consent in our everyday lives, not just for sexual activities. Even asking for a high five can be a type of consent.



Consent can also be given verbally and non-verbally.

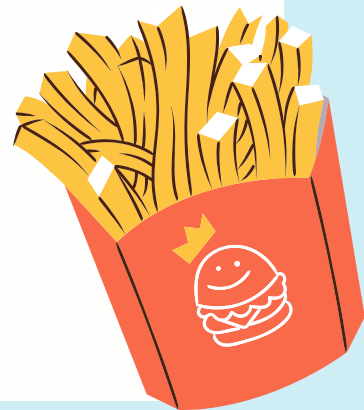
	Verbal	Non-Verbal
Consent	<p>"YES"</p> <p>"Absolutely"</p> <p>"I would love to"</p>	<p>Smiling and looking excited</p> <p>Thumbs up!</p> <p>Open body language</p>
Lack of Consent	<p>"NO"</p> <p>"I'm not sure"</p> <p>"Not right now.."</p>	<p>Backing away</p> <p>Shaking head</p> <p>Looking uncomfortable or scared</p>

YES

If a person says 'Yes' but they look uncomfortable or uneasy, it is the responsibility of the other person to check in with them. There are situations where people may feel pressured to say 'Yes' but they are not giving their true consent.

We use FRIES to talk about different aspects that are needed for consent

- F** **Freely Given:** Someone chooses to do an activity by their own free will without pressure.
- R** **Reversible:** Consent can be taken back at any time. If someone said 'yes', it is always okay for them to change their mind later on. They can do this even during an activity.
- I** **Informed:** Someone is aware of all the potential risks and consequences of what they are agreeing to.
- E** **Enthusiastic:** Both people are excited to do the activity together.
- S** **Specific:** Consent only applies to the specific activity someone has agreed to. It does not mean they have said 'yes' to anything else.



Activity: Identify which element of FRIES is being ignored in each situation

(answers are upside down on the bottom of the next page)

1. Jayden said they wouldn't share their homework answers with Drew but Drew kept asking until Jayden said 'yes'.
2. Jin agrees to hold hands with Luca but seems uncomfortable and doesn't maintain eye contact.
3. Valentine said 'yes' to a hug but someone gives them a kiss instead.
4. Ali agrees to be in a relationship with Kerri but doesn't know they are already in a relationship with someone else.



Consent is also freely given without coercion. **Coercion is when someone uses pressure, force, or threats to make someone do something they don't want to do.**

Some examples of coercion are:

- Continuously asking someone out after they said no
- Saying, 'If you loved me, you would do this'
- Using explicit images of someone to blackmail them for more photos
- Threatening to end a relationship if someone does not do a certain sexual activity
- Using peer pressure

If coercion is present, there is never consent.

Answers from FRIES Activity

1: Freely given: Drew used coercion to pressure Jayden to say 'yes';
 2: Enthusiastic: Through Jin's body language, they are showing that they are not enthusiastic about holding hands or comfortable.
 3: Specific: Valentine agreed to a hug but not to a kiss.
 4: Informed: All is not aware of all the risks when they agreed to be in a relationship.



Ages of Consent & Child Sexual Abuse

The legal age of consent in Canada is 16. However, it is understood that youth between 12 to 16 may choose to be in relationships and engage in sexual activities. Therefore, there are close-in age exemptions in place.

Under 12

Cannot consent to any sexual activity even if they agree to it.

12-13

Can consent with someone less than two years older.

14-15

Can consent with someone less than 5 years older.

16

Can consent with anyone over the age of 14. Unless that person is in a position of trust or authority

Under 18

Cannot consent if there is a relationship of trust, authority, or dependency. Cannot exchange sex for something (eg. money, gifts)

Close-in-age exemptions are laws that are used to protect young people from older people with more power and control.

They do not exist to encourage or discourage sexual activity. However, it is important when young people are choosing to be in a relationship, that they feel safe and comfortable.

If you are in a relationship that does not feel safe or is outside the legal ages of consent, it is important to reach out to an adult or call the Alberta One Line for Sexual Violence.



Activity

Who are people that hold positions of power or control over youth? (eg. a teacher)

		Other Person's Age									
Your Age		12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	12	✓	✓	○	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	13	✓	✓	✓	○	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	14	○	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✗	✗
	15	✗	○	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✗
	16	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	17	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	18	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Legend:

- ✓ You can legally give consent.
- Depends on the exact birthdays.
- ✗ No legal consent can be given.

Using the Ages of Consent Tool can help us understand when child sexual abuse is happening. Child sexual abuse is when an older person uses the power and control they have over a child or adolescent to expose, force, or coerce them into a sexual activity. This could include sexual touching, intercourse, forcing a young person to take intimate pictures, or exposing them to intimate pictures.

What are some ways that older people could hold power and control over younger people?

- Physical size: Could be stronger and bigger than a younger person
- Age: Older people might have privileges that younger people don't have like being able to drive, vote, buy alcohol, and more.
- Knowledge: Could have knowledge that a younger person might not have.
- Relationship: Could hold positions of trust and authority

Fact:

A child under the law is anyone under the age of '18'

Child sexual abuse can happen in person but it is also happening increasingly online. It can take place on social media, texting, chat sites or apps. It often occurs through the process of 'grooming'. Grooming is when an older person forms a relationship with a child or adolescent with sexual intent. At first, it might feel friendly and supportive but with grooming, that relationship is sexualized over time.



Experiencing child sexual abuse is never a child or adolescent's fault, it is always the older person that is responsible.

Fact: 88% the child or adolescent will know the person choosing to harm them. Children do not hang out with people they don't know. Often when child sexual abuse happens, it is done by people the child and family may trust and have a relationship with.

Youth should be able to trust the older people in their lives! However, being aware of child sexual abuse can help youth know when to ask for help if they need it.

Wellness Check In

Take a moment to reflect on how you are feeling. Pause for a few minutes if you need to or have a drink of water. If it feels helpful, we also have a breathing exercise you can practice.

Breathe in for 4 seconds

Hold for 4 seconds



Hold for 4 seconds

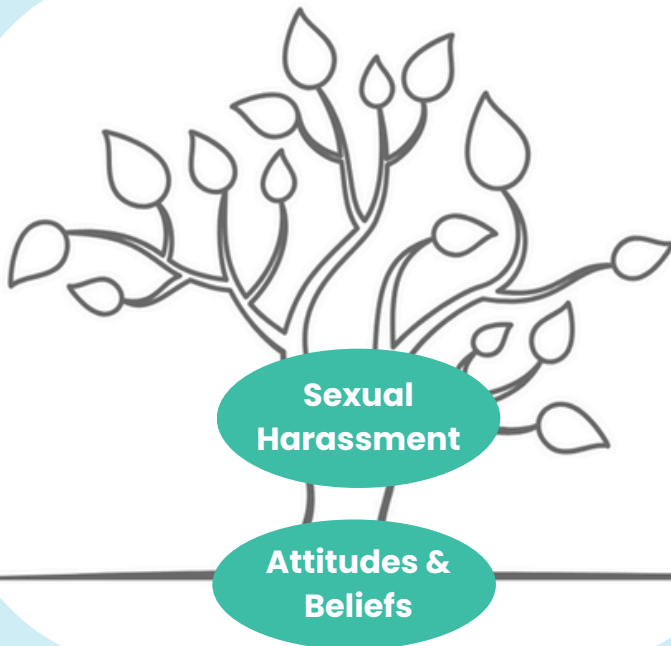
Breathe out for 4 seconds

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual behavior or comment that makes another person feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Sexual harassment can include:

- Any unwanted touches, not to the private parts
- Unwanted comments about someone's body, sexual activity, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
- It can be verbal, physical, written, or visual



We place sexual harassment in the middle of our tree of sexual violence.

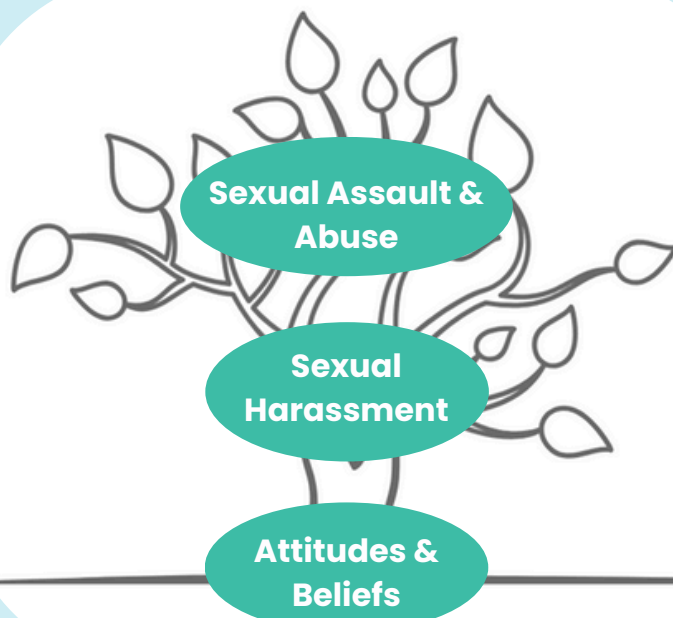
When discriminatory beliefs are not challenged and continue to grow, it can lead someone to thinking others aren't deserving of dignity or respect. They may then choose to push someone's boundaries or ignore their consent.

It is the person on the receiving end that gets to decide if something is sexual harassment. We often hear things like: "It was just a joke or a compliment". However, we know that it is the impact on the person on the receiving end that matters.



Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual activity or contact that is done without one person's consent.



Sexual assault can include:

- Unwanted touches to the private parts. This includes the mouth and kissing someone without their consent is a form of sexual assault.
- Using force or coercion to make someone do a sexual act they do not want to do.

Wellness Check In:

If you want an activity to help ground you in the moment, you can practice something called **"5,4,3,2,1"**.

- Name 5 things you see
- Name 4 things you can touch
- Name 3 things you can hear
- Name 2 things you can smell
- Name 1 thing you can taste



Language & Sexual Violence

We often hear words like '*victim*' or '*survivor*' when talking about sexual violence. These words have strong feelings attached to them and a person might not see themselves as a '*victim*' or a '*survivor*'. We instead use '*person first language*' and say a '*person who has experienced harm*' until that person has decided if they want to use one of these terms.

VICTIM

SURVIVOR

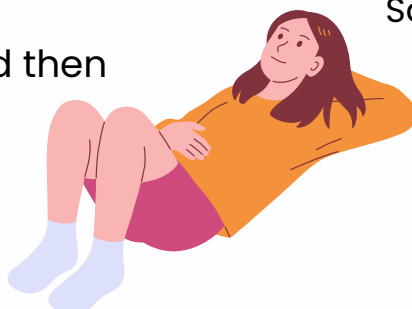
'*Perpetrator*,' '*rapist*,' and '*offender*' also have strong emotions attached to them. We know most of the time when someone experiences sexual violence it is done by someone they know. They might see that person as a friend or a loved one. Therefore, it may be harmful if we use those terms. Instead, we can use '*a person who chose to harm*' until the other person has decided which word they want to use.

Wellness Check in:

Take a deep breath in and practice this activity if it feels good for you.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation:

- Find a comfortable place to lie or sit down
- You will squeeze and then relax different body parts over time.



Start with your fingers and toes, squeeze and release



Next squeeze your leg and arm muscles, squeeze and then release



Squeeze all the muscles in your stomach and abdomen, then release



Squeeze in your shoulders to your ears, then release



Tense all the muscles in your face, hold and then release

How to support a friend or ourselves?

Activity:

Think of a time where you felt supported or you supported someone else. What did that support look like? (eg. How did a friend support you when you were having a bad day?)

We may already support our friends or family in our everyday lives. When we think of sexual violence, the support we provide may look very similar.



What we should NOT do:

- **Ask irrelevant or victim-blaming questions** (eg. Why were you out so late?). It is never someone's fault for experiencing sexual violence
- **Question the truth of the other person's story.** It is very rare for people to lie about experiencing sexual violence. Telling someone else takes a lot of courage.
- **Question their reaction** (eg. Why didn't you scream or fight back?). When our body is in a dangerous situation, it will often automatically go into flight, fight, freeze, or fawn. This is not a reaction we can control.
- **Tell them what we would have done.** All responses to sexual violence are normal.

What should we do:

- **Believe them** and thank them for sharing
- **Actively listen.** Do not be on your phone or interrupt them.
- **Let them know it's not their fault**
- **Ask how they want to be supported** (E.g. Do they want to be distracted or do they want to talk about it?)
- **Respect their decisions**
- **Share resources when that person is ready**
- **Care for yourself**

At CCASA we use these four key messages, when supporting someone with an experience of sexual violence.

Activity:

For each of the key messages, read the message and answer the questions:

I Believe You

Why do you think this is an important message to send to someone experiencing sexual violence?

What are other ways you could communicate this message?

Its Not Your Fault

Why do you think this is an important message to send to someone experiencing sexual violence?

What are other ways you could communicate this message?

Your Feelings are Normal

Why do you think this is an important message to send to someone experiencing sexual violence?

What are other ways you could communicate this message?

I Support Your Decisions

Why do you think this is an important message to send to someone experiencing sexual violence?

What are other ways you could communicate this message?

How does sexual violence affect someone?

All feelings and reactions to sexual violence are normal. These reactions are a normal response to an abnormal situation.

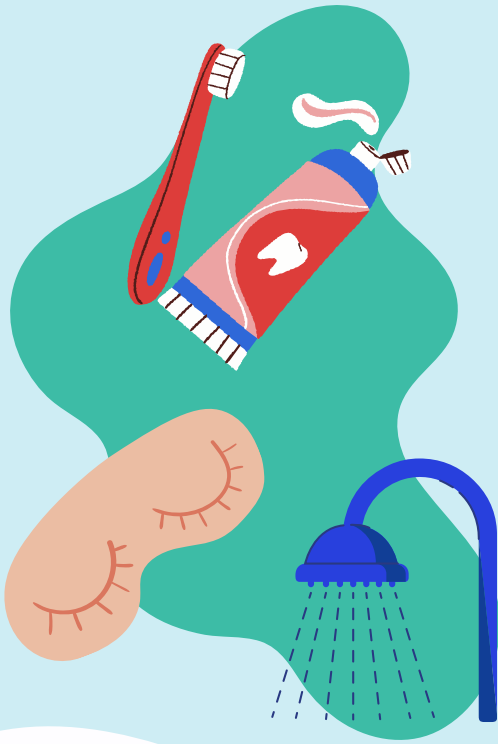
People that experience sexual violence can have many impacts



Someone could experience many of these impacts, none of these impacts, or impacts that are not included on this list.

All impacts are a normal response.

How do we take care of ourselves?



It is important that we treat ourselves with the same kindness and support that we provide to others.

When we are dealing with difficult things in our lives, we can practice self-care. Self-care is taking the time to do the things we enjoy and make us feel good. It can sometimes even be doing the boring things like brushing our teeth, taking a shower, or getting a good sleep.

Activity:

Draw the different things that you enjoy doing.

There are also people and trusted adults in our lives that can help support us.
Sexual violence is not something people have to go through alone.

Circles of Support Activity:

For each circle, brainstorm some support people that you could talk to.



Wellness Check In:

We are almost at the end of the workbook. The content we covered could feel really heavy and impactful. How are you feeling? Think of some things you can do after you finish reading this workbook to take care of yourself.

Services Offered by CCASA

Support and Information Line (403-237-5888):

Available from 9 am to 9 pm MST every day of the year, provides support around sexual violence as well as resources and information. The Support and Information Line is also where you can ask to access any of our other services.



Counselling

CCASA offers up to 24 free and confidential sessions for individuals aged 12 and older who have experienced sexual violence. We also provide 6 free sessions for support persons. These sessions range from individual to group counselling.

Police and Court Support Education and Support (PACES):

PACES is a service for individuals navigating or considering navigating the legal system. This program does not provide legal advice but provides individuals with support, court accompaniment, and information, serving as an additional avenue for client advocacy through the judicial and legal process.

Calgary Sexual Assault Response Team (CSART):

This team of specially trained female doctors, nurses, and CCASA staff supports those who have experienced a sexual assault within the last 7 days. Individuals can choose if they would like to receive medical support, evidence collection, resourcing, or emotional support through this program. The main access point for CSART is through the Sheldon Chumir Urgent Care Centre, but this team can be mobile to other hospitals as needed. This team works with anyone who is 12 years of age and older; anyone under the age of 12 can access services through the Alberta Children's Hospital.

Education:

CCASA provides education about sexual violence in schools, the community and to other organizations. Through the 'Who Do You Tell?' and 'Birch Grove' programs, CCASA teaches students from pre-school to high school about body autonomy and sexual violence.



Youth Services

Sexual Violence Services

Alberta One-Line

1-866-403-8000

Alberta Violence Services
<https://aasas.ca/get-support/>
9 am - 9 pm daily

Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre

1-866-956-1099

<https://casasc.ca/>
24 hrs daily

Youth Serving Organizations

ConnecTeen

403-264-8336

Or text 587-333-2724

<https://calgaryconnecteen.com/>
Peer support 3-10 pm weekdays &
12-10 pm weekends
24 hrs daily

Kids Help Phone

1-800-668-6868

Or text CONNECT to 686868

Crisis Support and Counselling
<https://kidshelpphone.ca/>
24 hrs daily

Housing and Necessities

Avenue 15 Shelter

403-543-9651

Temporary Drop-In Shelter for Youth
938 15 Ave SW, Calgary
24 hrs daily

Distress Centre

403-266-4357

Calgary Crisis Line
Phone and text, 24 hours daily

Family Violence

Family Violence

Information Line

1-310-1818

24 hrs daily

Alberta Abuse Helpline

1-855-443-5722

24 hrs daily



CCASA
CALGARY COMMUNITIES AGAINST SEXUAL ABUSE

Health and Mental Health Services

Health Link

811

Health Advice and Information
24 hrs daily

Talk Suicide

1-833-456-4566 (24/7)

Or text 45645 (2 pm to 10 pm)

Crisis response without judgement

Mental Health Helpline

1-877-303-2642

Crisis Support and Information
24 hrs daily

Addiction Helpline

1-866-332-2322

Information and Referrals
24 hrs daily

2SLGBTQQIA+ Services

You Matter Support Line

587-800-4121

Non-crisis peer support
5pm-9pm, Mon to Thurs

Trans Lifeline

1-877-330-6366

Community connections and support
24 hrs daily

Indigenous Services

Hope for Wellness Helpline

1-855-242-3310

Counselling and crisis intervention
24 hrs daily

Indian Residential School

Survivors Society

1-800-721-0066

Support for survivors and families
24 hrs daily

Specific Community Resources

Chinese Emotional Support Line

587-997-5877

24 hrs daily

Black Youth Helpline

416-285-9944

7 am - 8 pm daily

Naseeha Helpline

1-866-627-3342

Mental health support for Muslim
youth
10 am to 1 am daily

SACHSS Distress Line

1-289-277-4770

Or 1-437-254-2794

Support for South Asian Communities
24 hrs daily