

## Welcome to CCASA

CCASA offers free and confidential services, including:

- Counseling (Individual and Group)
- Support and Information Line
- Sexual Assault Response Team (24 Hour Hospital Accompaniment)
- Public Education and Training
- Police and Court Support

## FAQ

### What is sexual assault?

- Sexual assault is any sexual activity without consent. It is a crime of power and control. People who commit this crime aren't looking for sex; they are trying to take control of someone else's body, spirit and mind.

### What are the laws about sexual assault?

- Laws have been written into the Criminal Code of Canada in order to protect all people from being hurt. The following are examples of these laws:
- **Sexual assault (271)** – This is when a person is kissed, sexually touched or forced to have intercourse without their consent.
- **Sexual assault with a weapon, threats to a third party or causing bodily harm (272)** – This is when a person is sexually assaulted by someone who has a weapon (or pretends to have one), if the offender threatens to harm another person if they do not participate in a sexual act, or if more than one person sexually assaults them.
- **Aggravated sexual assault (273)** – This is when a person is wounded, disfigured, beaten, or in danger of losing their life while being sexually assaulted.

- Some laws talk about age. These laws were not created to stop teenagers from sexual activity, but to protect them from being taken advantage of by someone older or with more power. 'Consent' is when a person agrees to a sexual activity with someone else. However, there are certain situations when someone cannot legally give consent:
  - Anyone who is 12 or 13 cannot agree to sexual activity with someone who is more than 2 years older.
  - Anyone who is 14 or 15 cannot agree to sexual activity with someone who is more than 5 years older.
  - Anyone who is under 17 cannot consent to someone who is in a position of trust or authority (coach, teacher)
  - If any person is pressured into sexual activity with violence, weapons or threats. For example, if someone is told that if they don't participate in sexual activity, they will be dumped.
  - If someone is really drunk or high, they cannot give legal consent. For example, if someone passes out due to drinking, it is illegal to have sex with them or touch them in a sexual way.
- It is important to know that saying 'no' is not the only way to resist unwanted sexual advances. Some people stay quiet during the assault because they are scared that the offender might hurt them even more if they yell, or some people 'zone out' and pretend that they are somewhere else or not in their body in order to make the assault less scary.

## BOYS & SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault is usually thought of as something that happens to girls and women, but boys and men can also be sexually assaulted. It is likely that males do not report sexual assault as frequently as females because of the embarrassment and shame they experience. These feelings are often related to the mistaken belief that being sexually assaulted is a sign of weakness and should not happen to boys or men.

Males can be sexually assaulted by both men and women, although the majority of perpetrators are men. When a boy is sexually assaulted by a woman, especially an older woman, it is often not viewed as a sexual assault but as a 'rite of passage'. Boys are often given the message that this is a great way to learn about sex, or that a 'real man' wouldn't pass up a sexual opportunity.

These attitudes and messages are very harmful and tend to increase the level of shame boys feel about being sexually assaulted.

## How your son may be affected by sexual assault

After being sexually assaulted, most survivors feel very differently about themselves and others. It can feel helpless and frustrating to see someone you love experiencing the following feelings, but remember that these feelings and thoughts are very normal reactions to this type of violating trauma.

### Your son might feel:

- Guilt and shame
- Confusion
- Anger
- Powerlessness
- Fear and anxiety
- Embarrassment
- Grief and loss
- Disbelief
- Dirty
- Emasculated
- Numb

### They might experience:


- Nightmares or flashbacks (vivid memories or feelings that bring them back to the assault)
- Sleeping problems
- Attempts to escape from the pain through drinking or drugs
- Headaches or muscle tension
- Isolation or withdrawal from friends and family
- Problems trusting people
- Conflicts with friends or family
- Problems with school
- Difficulty concentrating
- Questions about sexuality

## After your son discloses: your reactions

Hearing that your son has been sexually assaulted can be one of the most devastating experiences as a parent. Your primary concern will likely be to care for and support them, however it is essential that you maintain awareness of your own feelings throughout this process. Remembering that your own reactions to the sexual assault are not a part of what your son needs to deal with. Give space for them to work through their own healing process.

**The following are some of the feelings that you might experience:**

- Loneliness
- Betrayal
- Helplessness and frustration
- Fear for their safety
- Anger at the offender
- Anger toward the survivor for not preventing the assault
- Guilt for not preventing the assault
- Impatient with the pace they are recovering from the assault



**We're here to help. If you are feeling any of these emotions, what you are going through is very normal. Get in touch if you need support.**

## How you can help

After being sexually assaulted, many people just want to forget about what happened. This might work for a short while, but it is likely that your son won't be able to forget about the sexual assault, and that the feelings will continue to bother them. Talking about the sexual assault can be one of the hardest things for a young man to do. Just as there are lots of reasons why it is helpful to talk about the assault, there are also a lot of reasons why they might not want to tell anyone, such as feelings of shame about the assault. As a parent, you can help to reduce your son's feelings of shame.

Every survivor of sexual assault needs love and support. Although this will look different for each person, there are several ways to offer your support:

- Assure them that you believe them.
- Let your son know that what happened is not their fault, under any circumstance.
- Do not question why they did or did not do certain things, as this can suggest blame for the sexual assault.
- If other circumstances were involved at the time of the sexual assault, such as drinking alcohol or breaking curfew, treat these as separate from the sexual assault.
- Remember that offenders are 100% responsible for their choice to sexually assault someone.

- Listen and talk about their feelings, without requiring that he tell you what happened during the assault.
- Let your son make decisions about their healing process. This may include attending counselling, reporting to the police, or telling others about their experience.
- Do not judge.
- Respect your son's right to confidentiality.
- Let your son know that you care and that you want to help.
- For some, physical affection can help to alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation. Others prefer not to be touched for a while. Simply ask your son what is most comfortable at any given time, and respect their wishes.
- Refer them to a support line or other resources. Having choice around when they want to talk and to whom can help your son to regain a sense of control.
- Encourage them to access support where and when they need it.



**Healing takes time and looks  
different for each person.**

## Supportive Messages

- Sexual assault is never your fault.
- You are believed and supported.
- Violence is never ok or justifiable.
- You have the right to set your own limits in any relationship.
- You did not cause the assault and are not to blame for anyone else's behaviour.
- You are not alone.
- You are not crazy.
- Sexual assault has nothing to do with who your friends are, what you are wearing, your sexual past or where you hang out.
- Sexual assault can happen to any gender.



# If Your Son Has Been Sexually Assaulted



## CCASA Contact Information

CCASA Support & Information Line  
9am-9pm – 7 days a week  
403-237-5888

Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence  
9am-9pm – 7 days a week  
Phone/Text | 1-866-403-8000  
Chat | [calgarycasa.com](http://calgarycasa.com)  
TTY Line 403-508-7888

