

Be mindful of your reaction. Questions such as “why did you go to their house?” or “how much did you drink?” can imply victim-blaming.

Reporting to the police

As their support person, you can ensure your friend or family member knows of this option and you can encourage them to report, however the decision to report the sexual assault is theirs to make. There is no time limit to reporting to the RNC or RCMP. It is recommended that they not change their clothing or wash their body, though if they have already done so, they can still report the assault to the police. If your friend or family member is not sure about reporting, you can encourage them to write down any details so that they can refer to this should they decide to report at a later date.

Seeking medical attention

You can encourage your friend or family member to seek medical attention for potential injuries, pregnancy prevention if female, STI prevention and treatment, or a forensic medical exam. If they choose to seek medical attention, the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) suggests that it is helpful to not change their clothing, shower/bathe, eat, drink or chew gum. If they have already done any of these, that is okay, you can still encourage them to seek medical attention.

Resources

On campus

Campus Enforcement and Patrol

St. John's campus	864-8561
Emergency	864-4100
Grenfell Campus	637-6210
Emergency	637-2888

Sexual Harassment Office

St. John's Campus	864-8199
Grenfell Campus	637-7195
Advisor (direct line)	864-2015

Counselling Centre

St. John's campus	864-8874
Grenfell Campus	637-6232

International Student Advising

St. John's campus	864-8895
Grenfell Campus	637-6232

Resource Centres for Marginalized Groups

MUNSU	864-7633
Grenfell Campus Student Union	637-6200

Community

NL Sexual Assault Crisis Line 1-800-726-2743

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner

St. Clare's Hospital 777-5502

Mental Health Crisis Line 1-888-737-4668

NL Human Rights Commission 1-800-563-5808

Victim Services

St. John's 729-0900

Corner Brook 637-2614

Hospitals

Health Sciences ER 777-6335

St. Clare's ER 777-5501

Western Memorial ER 637-5524

Always
Ask.

Supporting a
friend or
family
member
following a
sexual assault

A resource for family and
friends provided by the
Sexual Harassment Office



What is sexual assault?

Sexual assault is a criminal offense. It is **never** okay and it is **never** the fault of the complainant.

Sexual assault It is any type of unwanted sexual act characterized by the use of force, threat(s), or control of a person or carried out in circumstances where the person has not freely consented.

Sexual assault is a traumatic experience that can impact individuals in various ways. It is most often committed by a known person of trust, such as friends, family, partners and acquaintances.

Sexual assault is not about love, desire, or attraction rather it is a crime of power and control.

How can I help?

It is common to feel helpless when a friend or family member confides in you that they have been sexually assaulted. You may also be feeling angry, disgusted, numb, guilty or fearful. It is important to keep these feelings in check and respond to your friend or loved ones feelings at their pace. There is no right or wrong way for your friend or family member to react to trauma, all feelings are real and valid.

You may at times feel that your friend or family member is not doing the right thing following an assault. Perhaps you think they need to pursue criminal charges, or maybe you think they should visit the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner in order to have a forensic exam. Remember it is their right to control how they cope following an assault, and supporting them through the process, no matter which decisions they make, is one of the best ways you can help.

What should I do?

If a friend or family member confides in you that they have been sexually assaulted, the following tips might be helpful in supporting them:

- let them know you believe them
- listen with full attention and respect
- provide immediate assistance for medical and safety concerns as needed
- avoid asking questions which can be interpreted as you implying they were at fault
- encourage them to connect with our office, advising them of our 'triple C's', as well as our ability to facilitate interim accommodations and referrals to other supports
- encourage them to report to the Police

CONSENT

Under the Criminal Code of Canada (Section 273.1), consent is the voluntary agreement to engage in the sexual activity in question. There must be an understandable exchange of affirmative words that indicates a willingness to participate in mutually agreed upon sexual activity.

Silence is not consent.

Consent is mandatory and can be revoked at any time. It must be reaffirmed and can never be assumed. Consenting to kissing does not mean consenting to making out, or consenting to sexual intercourse. It is important that both partners check in with each other every step of the way to ensure consent is mutual.

Consent cannot be given under coercion or implied threat. It must be voluntary and enthusiastic. As well, consent cannot be given when intoxicated with drugs or alcohol, when passed out, or when asleep.

Sexual Harassment Office

The Sexual Harassment Office is available to provide confidential consultation, advice, information, guidance and support.

The Advisor will work with the individual at their own pace and ensure the 'triple C's' remain with the complainant. The 'triple C's' mean their **confidentiality** is protected unless there is a concern of harm to self or others, they remain in **control** of the process, and their **consent** is required should they wish to have us share their information.

The Advisor will also review the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Policy and its related University Wide Procedures for Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Concerns and Complaints, and ensure the individual understands their options for reporting sexual assault as well as their options for an informal or formal resolution pathway.

The Advisor is also able to coordinate interim measures and accommodations as needed and facilitate referrals to other supports both on campus and in the community.

Encourage your friend or family member to connect with the Advisor:

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