

Women's

AID

North Ayrshire

FOCUS ON SEXUAL ABUSE

If you have been raped or sexually assaulted, you do not have to cope on your own. There are many support services to help you. They know how difficult it is for people to come forward. They will respect you and believe you. **You are not to blame.** The person who raped or assaulted you is to blame



www.nawomensaid.com



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WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE?

Sexual abuse is any unwanted sexual contact or behavior that occurs without consent. It can involve physical force, coercion, manipulation, or threats. This abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of age, gender, or background. No matter which act occurs, it's not the survivor's fault that they were assaulted—and help is available to begin healing from such abuse.

WHEN AND WHERE DOES SEXUAL ABUSE HAPPEN?

Sometimes, sexual assault is a single incident. Sometimes, a person can be assaulted, regularly or periodically, over a long period of time, or by different people at different times in their lives.

WHO COMMITS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Most assaults are carried out by someone known to the victim. Most rapes are committed indoors, usually in the home. Forced sex within a relationship or marriage is a crime. Being violated by someone you know does not make the crime less distressing or more acceptable.

WHAT IS CONSENT?

A person consents to sexual activity if they agree by choice, and they have the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

If a victim gives in due to threats, demands, coercion, fear, or if they are unable to resist, that is not consent.

If someone is asleep, unconscious, or they are incapable due to alcohol or drugs, they are not able to consent.

The age of consent in Scotland is 16 – nobody under that age is able to consent.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

1

Get to a safe place.

2

Seek medical attention to treat injuries, test for STIs, and preserve evidence. You don't have to report to the police at this time.

3

Talk to someone you trust: a friend, family member, or an organisation like Women's Aid.

5

Consider reporting the assault. This is entirely your choice, and you can change your mind later.

4

Record details about what happened, including dates, times, locations. This can be helpful if you decide to report it but not essential.

6

Seek help from a professional who specialises in sexual assault to guide you through the healing process.

A change in usual behaviour for no apparent or obvious reason

Withdrawal, choosing to spend the majority of time alone

Overt sexual behaviour or language that is out of character

Self-inflicted injury

Irregular and disturbed sleep pattern and poor concentration

SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Difficulty in walking or sitting

Distress when being bathed, dressed, or medically examined

Love bites

Torn, stained, bloody underclothes

Sexually transmitted urinary tract/vaginal infections

Pregnancy in a person not able to consent

Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the rectal or genital area

Bruising to the thighs and upper arms

Disrespecting personal boundaries or ignoring consent.



SEXUAL ABUSE IN SCOTLAND

- More than 15,000 sexual crimes were recorded in Scotland in 2020-2021.
- The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2019-2020 showed that only 22% of victims/survivors of rape reported it to the police
- Around 4% of adults in Scotland experienced sexual assault in the past year.
- Most survivors of sexual abuse know their abuser.

WHO CAN HELP SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE?

In an emergency, call 999. There are lots of organizations to help women in Scotland who have experienced sexual abuse.

Rape Crisis

Support people of all genders living in Scotland aged 13+ who have been affected by sexual violence.

survivingeconomicabuse.org

08088 01 03 02

North Ayrshire Women's Aid

A specialist local service that provides emotional and practical support to women affected by domestic abuse.

01294 602 424

nawomensaid.com

Scottish Women's Rights Centre

Free and confidential legal information affected by gender based violence such as domestic abuse.

08088 010 789

scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Free 24-hour helpline for women who have experienced domestic abuse and violence, with all female advisors.

0808 2000 247

nationaldahelpline.org.uk

The Revenge Porn Helpline

Supports all adult victims of intimate image abuse in the UK.

0345 6000 459

Victim Support Scotland

Provides information, practical help, emotional support and guidance through the criminal justice system.

0800 160 1985

victimsupport.scot