

# What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual behaviour that's offensive, humiliating or intimidating. It can be written, verbal or physical, and can happen in person or online.

Both men and women can be the victims of sexual harassment. When it happens at work, school or uni, it may amount to sex discrimination.

## What does sexual harassment include?

- touching, grabbing or making other physical contact with you without your consent
- committing a criminal offence against you, such as making an obscene phone call, indecently exposing themselves or sexually assaulting you.
- making comments to you that have a sexual meaning
- asking you for sex or sexual favors
- leering and staring at you
- displaying rude and offensive material so that you or others can see it
- making sexual gestures or suggestive body movements towards you
- cracking sexual jokes and comments around or to you
- questioning you about your sex life
- insulting you with sexual comments
- using social media and online platforms to harass someone in a sexual nature.

## Sexual Assault

The term 'sexual assault' refers to a broad range of unwanted sexual behaviours which occur along a spectrum of violence, most of which now have legal consequences.

# Experience based definition:

Sexual assault is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes someone feel uncomfortable, frightened, intimidated or threatened. It is sexual behaviour that someone has not agreed to, whether another person uses physical or emotional force against them. It can include anything from sexual harassment through to life threatening rape. Some of these acts are serious indictable crimes but may not be perceived as such by the victim.

## Legal Definitions

OF SEXUAL OFFENCES IN VICTORIA

- Rape
- Threat to committing a sexual offence
- Sexual Offences Against Children
- Sexual Offences Against People with a Cognitive Impairment

To report the crime & request the police investigate (Statement of Further Complaint)

## Consent

Sexual consent is to agree to engage in any type of sexual activity. Consent must be sought and given by all people involved freely and voluntarily. No one should feel forced, coerced or threatened.

Consent is not limited to sexual penetration, it also includes oral sex, sexual touching and any other behaviour of a sexual nature

Giving consent to one sexual act does not mean that someone is agreeing to all types of sex, e.g. consenting to kissing does not mean someone consents to vaginal sex.

## Consent and the law

### Affirmative Consent

From 30 July 2023

In the new law, everyone is responsible for getting clear consent before starting any sexual activity. This can be done by asking or doing something to get consent.

For example, asking and receiving 'yes' as an answer or a clear nod.

For more information and exact wording please visit: [www.sasvic.org.au/consent](http://www.sasvic.org.au/consent) or search for affirmative consent on your preferred browser.

# Responding

## TO DISCLOSURES

### Believe

validate experience (including the courage to disclose sexual assault).

### Listen

ask open ended questions. Let them talk at their own pace.

### Don't Blame

avoid 'why' questions as can seem like you are blaming the person

### Needs

they have had an experience of their control being taken from them, so it is important they have sense of control around their own needs

### Safety

current living conditions, suicidal thoughts, siblings. What else would help them to feel safe?

## Helpful Responses

### Make clear statements

Make clear statements that show you believe the person and wish to support them.

*"It sounds like it was a very difficult situation for you to be in."*

*"What you are describing sounds like sexual assault"*

*"I believe you, it's not your fault"*

### Recognise

Recognise the courage it took to disclose to you:

*"It must have been very hard for you to tell me about this".*

*"Thank you for sharing that with me, let's see how we can support you".*

### Respond

Respond to immediate safety concerns

*"Are you safe when you leave here today?"*

### Offer support

*"Can I give you these contact numbers? Would you like support calling? Can I follow up with you tomorrow?"*

# Support and Referral Pathways

ECASA is a free to all service. You do not require a citizenship or a Medicare card. You do not need a police report or a referral.

ECASA is an inclusive service, we welcome anyone who has experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment.

**PH: (03) 9870-7330 or 9870-7310**

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

**Sexual Assault Crisis Line PH: 1800 806 292 (24 hours)**

Location: 17 Ware Crescent, Ringwood East 3121

Hours: 24 hours for Crisis Care (recent sexual assault up to 2 weeks)

9.00am to 5.00pm Monday – Friday for counselling

After Hours Clinic on Mondays until 8pm.

Referrals to ECASA: Contact the duty worker on 9870 7330 or 1800 806 292

Email: [ecasa@easternhealth.org.au](mailto:ecasa@easternhealth.org.au)

## Numbers and Resources

### Numbers

**Knox SOCIT on (03) 8335 6701**

**Box Hill SOCIT on (03) 88923292**

### Resources

Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault [www.aifs.gov.au/acssa](http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa)

Sexual Assault Services Victoria <https://www.sasvic.org.au/>

SECASA [www.secasa.com.au](http://www.secasa.com.au)

For men [www.malesurvivor.org](http://www.malesurvivor.org) or [www.livingwell.org.au](http://www.livingwell.org.au)

For adolescents [www.burstingthebubble.com](http://www.burstingthebubble.com)

or [www.lovegoodbadugly.com](http://www.lovegoodbadugly.com)

SOCIT <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/sexual-offences>

Sexual Assault Crisis Line <https://www.sacl.com.au>