



Freephone 24-Hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline: **0808 2000 247**

or visit www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk (access live chat Mon-Fri 3-10pm)

Sexual violence

Sexual violence includes any form of sexual activity (involving physical contact, words, or photographs) that takes place without the other person's full and informed consent. Rape and sexual assault are mostly carried out by someone known to the victim: a husband, boyfriend, friend, colleague or other family member.

Sexual violence can happen to anyone regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, class, or background.

Research shows that the majority of sexual violence is experienced by women and girls, but men and boys can also be victims. If you are a man who has experienced sexual violence, visit our [Support for Men](#) page for further resources.

Forms of sexual violence

Sexual violence can include:

- Pressuring or forcing someone to do something sexual
- Touching someone sexually without their permission
- Unwanted sexting – sending sexually explicit texts and images to someone without their consent
- Unwanted sexual attention – for example 'wolf-whistling' and making sexualised comments about women's bodies
- Watching a sexual act take place without permission
- Engaging in sexual acts with someone who is too drunk, or too intoxicated, to give consent
- Engaging in a sexual act with someone who is asleep or unconscious
- Having sex with someone who cannot legally consent – for example, a boy or girl under the age of 16, or someone with disability who does not have the capacity to understand the situation
- Making someone watch or appear in pornography against their will
- Preventing someone from using contraception

For further information see:

<https://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/forms-of-violence-and-abuse/rape-and-sexual-assault/>