

Child Abuse refers to the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of a person under the age of sixteen. It may also include situations in which a child is being neglected or exposed to violence in the home. Anyone who has knowledge of, or is suspicious of child abuse (emotional, physical, sexual or neglect) is required by law to report that knowledge or suspicion to the nearest child protection agency.

Psychological Sexual Violence involves being controlled by someone else because of threats of sexual violence. Examples include, "If you date someone else I will rape you," or "If you break up with me, I'll rape your younger sister."

Intimate Partner Sexual Assault is sexual assault that occurs between two people who are involved in an intimate relationship. It can occur between two women, two men or a man and a woman in a relationship.

Gay Bashing is emotional, physical or sexual violence aimed at people because they are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered.

Heterosexist control is the threat to expose someone for being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered to family, friends, colleagues, co-workers or anyone else.

Homophobia/Transphobia is the hatred/discrimination some people have towards people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Ritual Abuse consists of sexual, physical and psychological abuse and involves the use of rituals. It can happen to children, adolescents or adults.

Sexual assault is never the fault of the victim. The perpetrator is 100% to blame. No one asks for, invites or deserves to sexually assaulted.

About Avalon Sexual Assault Centre: Who We Are

Established in 1983, Avalon Centre is the only sexual assault centre in the Halifax Regional Municipality. We are a registered, not-for-profit, community based, charitable organization. We gratefully received funding from The NS Department of Community Services, The NS Department of Health, The Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, and from special projects and private donations.

Vision Statement:

The Avalon Sexual Assault Centre is a feminist organization working to eliminate sexual assault/abuse, and to change the current socio-political culture that fosters sexism, social injustice and other forms of oppression.

Mission Statement:

To provide services for those affected by sexual violence, with primary emphasis on support, education, counselling and leadership/advocacy services for women.

Guiding Principles

As advocates, counselors, educators, health practitioners and activists, we are committed to providing a leadership role in the community by developing our practice around the following guiding principles:

1. We believe that sexual violence is caused and maintained by social and political imbalances of power. Therefore, we are committed to working with our colleagues, clients, and community using a feminist approach to invoke change and healing at both personal and societal levels.
2. We believe in using a flexible, client-centered approach that supports the inherent right to self-determination. As such, we support clients by being non-judgmental, providing information about their options and affirming their decisions.
3. We believe that healing is a process. Therefore, we offer a variety of program options that reflect different needs and layers of recovery work.
4. We are committed to a practice approach that promotes victim empowerment and acknowledges that the person who commits the violence is responsible for his behaviour.
5. We are committed to reducing barriers to accessing Avalon Centre's confidential services within our existing mandate and resources.
6. We are committed to providing a leadership role in eliminating barriers for access to justice.
7. We are committed to working with grass roots and women's organizations and other community partners on a local, provincial and national level to improve social policy and promote social action.
8. We are committed to fostering an environment that supports self-care and provides professional growth and learning opportunities for staff, students and volunteers.
9. We are committed to being flexible and accountable by developing policies, procedures and programs that are in keeping with our mission statement, principles and resources.
10. We are committed to a women only staff and Board of Directors.

We acknowledge that sexual violence profoundly affects individuals, families and our community. We ask every member of our community to support us in assisting sexual assault/abuse survivors/victims, their partners and non-offending parents to heal from the effects of sexual violence. We challenge all people to commit to a culture free from sexual violence and abuse.

Avalon Sexual
Assault Centre
www.avaloncentre.ca

Sexual Assault: The Laws and Other Definitions

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Sexual Assault: The Laws and Definitions

In 1983, the Criminal Code of Canada was amended in relation to sexual offenses. Rape and indecent assault were replaced with three levels of sexual assault. Some of the changes include:

- The new laws apply equally to both women and men as victims or perpetrators.
- Intimate partners are no longer immune to charges of sexual assault.
- Corroboration is not required; survivors of sexual assault can prosecute without witnesses.
- The "recent complaint" requirement was abolished. Sexual assaults can be prosecuted at any time following the assault.

Under the Criminal Code, offences may be tried in court as summary offences or indictable offences.

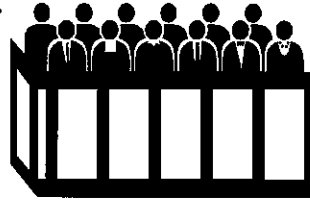
Summary offence: In relation to sexual assault crimes, an offence punishable by a prison term not exceeding 18 months.

Indictable offence: In relation to sexual assault crimes, an offence punishable by a prison term exceeding 18 months, and up to and including life in prison.



Sexual Assault is found in Section 271 of the Criminal Code. It is considered to be any non-consensual act of a sexual nature, including kissing, fondling, oral/vaginal/anal penetration of any kind, that one person does to another, or has another person do to them. Sexual Assault can be tried as an offence punishable on summary conviction, or it may be tried as an indictable offence. No physical injury is necessary to prove that an offence has occurred when tried as an indictable offence. The maximum penalty when tried as an indictable offence is ten years.

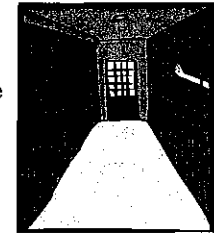
Sexual Assault With a Weapon, Threats to a Third Party or Causing Bodily Harm is found in Section 272 of the Criminal Code. There may be more than one assailant and/or the assailant uses, carries, or threatens to use, a weapon (imitation or real) during the commission of the offence. It also includes sexual assaults in which the assailant threatens to harm, or actually causes harm, to the victim or a third person. The maximum penalty for Sexual Assault With a Weapon, Threats to a Third Party or Causing Bodily Harm is 14 years imprisonment.



Aggravated Sexual Assault is found in Section 273 of the Criminal Code. It is a sexual assault in which the victim is wounded, maimed, disfigured, or in danger of losing her/his life. The maximum penalty for Aggravated Sexual Assault is life imprisonment.

Criminal Harassment (stalking) is found in Section 264 (1) of the Criminal Code. It prohibits the following conduct from occurring: repeatedly following a specific person or someone connected to them; repeatedly communicating with a specific person or someone connected to them; watching places a specific person lives, works, or plays, or doing the same to someone connected to them; engaging in threatening conduct directed at a specific person or anyone connected to that person. If any of these activities cause a specific person to reasonably

feel for their safety, or the safety of someone connected to them, it is considered to be a criminal offense. The charge may be a summary offence or indictable offence.



Sexual Harassment is any behaviour, comment or gesture of a sexual nature which is deemed to be offensive. It is unwanted behaviour that makes the receiver feel uncomfortable and can be coercive or subtle in nature. Sexual harassment is an abuse of power and is often used as a way of controlling or intimidating someone. It can happen in educational settings, workplaces or the street. Examples include threats and intimidation, untrue sexual comments about a person, remarks about a person's sexual orientation, displaying sexist or demeaning pictures, and telling jokes of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is covered by the Canadian Human Rights Code, and also provincial Human Rights Codes.

Incest is a type of sexual assault in which the perpetrator is a blood relative of the victim. It includes parents, children, brothers, sisters, grandparents, grandchildren, and half-siblings.

Stranger Rape involves being attacked and sexually assaulted by someone not known to the victim.

Date/Acquaintance Sexual Assault In many cases of sexual assault, the offender is dating the victim when the assault(s) occur. This is commonly referred to as date rape. Also, the offender can be someone known to the victim. This is commonly known as acquaintance sexual assault. These crimes tend to be ignored, denied or not treated as seriously as other sexual assaults because the offender is known by the victim.

Gang Rape involves being sexually assaulted by more than one person during the assault.