

FACT SHEET — *This fact sheet is for parents, carers, educators and community members.*

What is child sexual assault?

Child sexual assault is any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child or adolescent. It is an abuse of power and authority held by the abuser and is never the fault of the child. It is illegal.

The following actions are child sexual assault. If the abuser:

- exposes themselves to a child;
- shows pornography to children;
- touches a child in an inappropriate way;
- encourages a child to touch them in a sexual way; or
- has sexual intercourse with a child or young person under 16 years or 18 years if they are in a supervisory role'

Abusers take advantage of a child or adolescent's dependency or lack of understanding about what's happening. Physical force and/or psychological manipulation are usually part of the sexual assault.

Who are the abusers

Often the abuser is someone the child knows and trusts. This can include family members or family friends. Children can also be abused by someone they don't know. Positions of trust and authority offer abusers opportunities to manipulate children's trust and yours. Abusers are more likely to be men than women.

How sexual assault happens

Abusers trick and manipulate children. They use a range of tactics including bribes, threats, force and deception to coerce children and adolescents into participating and remaining silent about it. They may also try to gain the trust and friendship of parents and carers in order to obtain access to children.

How to provide support after sexual abuse

A child or adolescent who has been abused needs:

- to be believed and supported;
- acknowledgement that they've made the right decision to tell;
- safety and protection from the risk of further abuse and harassment;
- to know that what happened to them is serious and will not be ignored;
- acknowledgement of their feelings (whatever they may be);

- to know they're not responsible for the abuse;
- understanding that they may have both positive and negative feelings about the abuser;
- to know that they're not responsible for deciding what happens to the abuser after they have told; and
- support and counselling from a sexual assault counsellor.

Seek professional advice.

The following organizations will help you keep the child safe. You may be asked for information such as your contact details.

Child Protection Crisis Line

13 12 78 24 hours

7 days a week Toll free within Victoria

Victoria Police Sexual Offences Child Investigation Team

03 5444 6752 24 hours

Centre Against Sexual Assault Central Victoria (CASACV)

03 5441 0430 (BH)

1800 806 292 (AF)

The following organizations will help you keep the child safe. You may be asked for information such as your contact details and how the child talked with you.

National Child Abuse Prevention Helpline

1800 99 10 99

childwise.net

Kids Help Line

1800 551 800

kidshelp.com.au