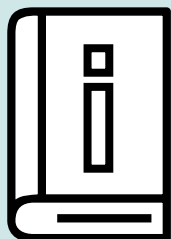


SANS  
VIOLENCE  
FREE

# Definitions of sexual violence



## Informational document

### Topic covered

**Various forms  
of sexual violence**

### Target audience

**CEGEP employees**

**Sexual violence resource personnel**

**Intervention workers from different fields**



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## PART 1

# Overview of sexual violence



### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. Differentiate between different types of sexual violence
2. Raise awareness among survivors and perpetrators of sexual violence



### TOPIC

All types of sexual violence

## TYPES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

### SEXUAL ASSAULT

- Incest
- Sexual assault with penetration
- Sexual assault with contact other than penetration
- Sexual assault without contact

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- Sexual harassment at work
- Street harassment

### SEXUAL CYBERVIOLENCE

- Sexual cyberharassment
- Sextortion
- Non-consensual publication of intimate images
- Cyberstalking
- Cyber sexual assault

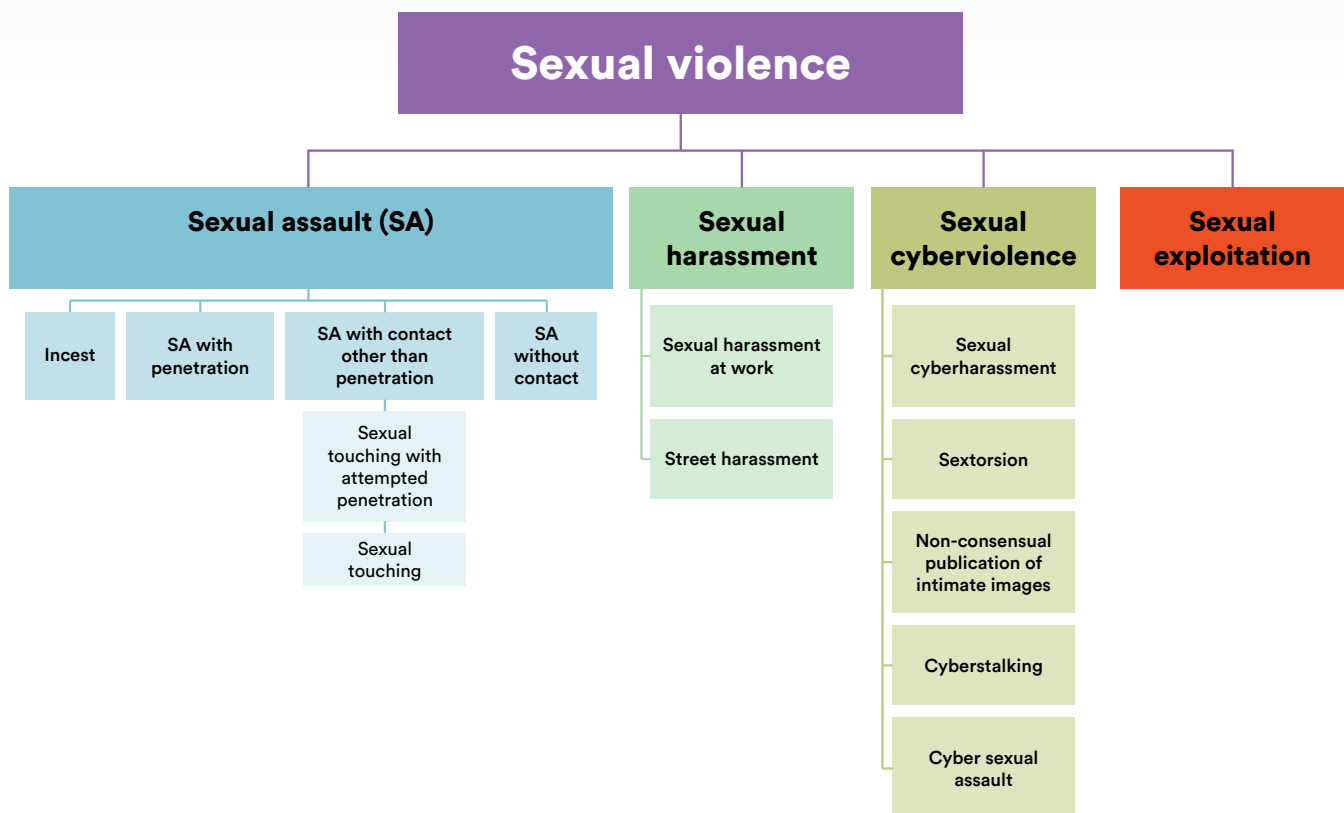
### SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

## Overview of sexual violence

This document provides definitions of the different types of sexual violence.

**The impacts of sexual violence** are covered in a separate document available on our website. However, remember that there is no hierarchy with respect to the different forms of sexual violence. Each type can lead to a variety of negative impacts for the person targeted.

If, while reading through this document, you are overcome by emotion, do not hesitate to ask for support. Our website ([www.ydesfemmesmtl.org/en/violence-free](http://www.ydesfemmesmtl.org/en/violence-free)) also has a **Directory of resources** that might prove helpful.



## Sexual violence

Committing an act of sexual violence results from a **desire to dominate and control** another person. Sexual violence can also stem from a **lack of consideration** for the other person during physical contact or sexual relations, or from not respecting the other person's wishes. These acts can translate into engaging in **unwanted sexual behaviour, sexual harassment or sexual coercion** (threats or blackmail). Note that sexual violence can be a one-time occurrence or an accumulation of acts.

Being subject to sexual violence means having your **sexuality**, your **integrity** and your **basic rights** compromised or violated. Regardless of the nature or characteristics of the sexual acts, being subject to any form of sexual violence can incur many negative impacts.

### Myths about desire

It is **WRONG** to believe that people who commit acts of sexual violence are **overcome by their attraction** to the other person or by innate and uncontrollable **sexual urges**.

### Clarification on sexuality

Sexuality is not limited to genitalia. It makes up an integral part of a person's identity, from birth until death, and encompasses **biological, psycho-emotional, socio-cultural, relational, and moral** aspects.

## PART 2

# Sexual assault

Sexually assaulting someone involves using different **power strategies** with the goal of satisfying the perpetrator's desires, to the detriment of the other person's desires, safety, and integrity. It's also a matter of making a conscious decision **to not ask for the other person's consent or to disrespect their boundaries**. Sexual consent is the foundation of healthy and enjoyable sexual activity. Rejecting or ignoring somebody's lack of consent, even if you are in a relationship with that person, constitutes sexual assault.

### Clarification of power strategies

Here are some examples of power strategies: blackmail, manipulation, threats, confinement, surprise, and physical force.

### Clarification of consent

For sexual consent to be valid, it must be **requested with respect** and **granted clearly and voluntarily** when engaging in sexual activity (sexual intercourse, touching, kissing, etc.). It is the **responsability** of the persons involved to ensure they have mutual agreement, and to continuously respect the wishes/boundaries of the other. For more information on the concepts of consent, see the attached appendix.

## Incest

Committing incest involves exhibiting sexual behaviour towards a person while being aware of their **blood ties** with that person. It could be a child, a parent, a sibling (including half-sisters and half-brothers), a grandparent or a grandchild. In the case of incest, because the perpetrator of the sexual violence is in a **position of authority over or in a relationship of trust with the underage person** at no time is consent valid.

## Sexual assault with penetration (commonly referred to as rape)

Committing sexual assault with penetration involves using different **power strategies** to sexually penetrate one or more parts of a person's body (**vagina, anus, mouth**). This penetration can be **full or partial** and can be done using body parts (finger, tongue, penis) or objects.

It can also be considered sexual assault, **even if the sexual activity is consensual** if a partner discretely removes their condom without the consent of the other partner(s).

## Sexual assault with contact other than penetration

There are two types of sexual assault with contact other than penetration:

### 1. SEXUAL TOUCHING WITH ATTEMPTED PENETRATION:

Engaging in sexual touching with attempted rape involves sexually touching someone **with the intent of penetration**.

### 2. SEXUAL TOUCHING:

Engaging in sexual touching involves:

- Touching a part or parts of a person's body (**vagina, penis, anus, breasts, buttocks, thighs**) through or underneath their clothes;
- **Unexpectedly or forcefully** kissing someone;
- Rubbing genital parts against another person's body intentionally or **pretending it was accidental**.

## Sexual assault without contact

### THERE ARE FOUR TYPES OF SEXUAL ASSAULT WITHOUT CONTACT:

1. Forced exposure to sexual acts: Engaging in forced exposure to sexual acts involves showing images/videos or behaviors that are sexual in nature to a **minor or a non-consenting person**, or participating in sexual activities in front of this person.
2. Exhibitionism: Engaging in exhibitionism involves finding pleasure in **exposing** genital organs to somebody without that person having first given their consent.
3. Voyeurism: Engaging in voyeurism involves finding pleasure in **observing** someone without their knowledge while they are naked or engaged in sexual acts.
4. Possession, production and distribution of pornographic materials: **Being in possession of** and/or **taking** and/or **disseminating** photos/videos of people engaged in sexual activity or in a position suggestive of a sexual act without having first obtained their **consent**. Within the realm of child pornography, this is considered sexual assault, even if the minor gave their consent, as their consent is not valid.

## PART 3

# Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is when a person **repeatedly subjects** a person to **unwanted behaviour** (hounding, staring, whistling) **or comments** (insults, threats, sexual jokes). The goal is to **demean, humiliate, intimidate, threaten or harm** another person (by targeting their body, physical appearance, individuality, sexual practices, etc.).

Words/behaviours intended to hurt, intimidate or insult a person must generally be repetitive to be considered harassment. If a person's words/behaviours are intended to obtain sexual activity without the consent of the other, this alone can be considered harassment.

### THERE ARE TWO OTHER TYPES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

1. Workplace harassment: Sexually harassing someone, often known to the perpetrator, at their **place of work or study**. In addition to hierarchical relationships, the fact that the two people know one another and frequent each other regularly (staff, colleagues, clients) gives **power** to the person engaging in the harassment.
2. Street harassment: Sexually harassing someone—often unknown to the perpetrator—in a public **space**.

For these two types of harassment, the intention is the same. It involves **subjecting** a person to sexist, humiliating, crude or hurtful **behaviour or words**.

## PART 4

# Sexual cyberviolence

Engaging in sexual cyberviolence involves using communication technology (emails, text messages, social media, etc.) to share secrets, images or videos, **spread rumours, insult or threaten** someone, commit an **act of voyeurism**, etc.

## Sexual cyberharassment

Engaging in sexual cyberharassment (see sexual harassment) involves **repeatedly** and incessantly asking someone for information or photos/videos; uttering threats or threatening **blackmail**; sending someone **intimate content** without first asking them if they wish to receive it; **following** or **interfering** with that person's accounts (social media).

## Sextortion

Engaging in sextortion involves **sexually blackmailing** someone, such as by **threatening to share** intimate photos/videos/information of/about that person so that they perform sexual services or give them money in exchange.

### Myths on sexual blackmail

Regardless of the initial circumstances under which a person sends someone else sexual content of themselves (of their own **free will**, out of **fear of displeasing** that person or in response to an **insistent request**), sextortion is never their fault. The person committing the blackmail is solely responsible.

## Non-consensual publication of intimate images

Non-consensual publication of intimate images of someone involves sharing these images on social media **without the consent** of this person (for example, using hidden cameras, phone hacking). **Revenge porn** also falls under this category. In all cases, whether done for the purposes of **revenge, blackmail, a dare, entertainment** or to seek approval from friends, showing people intimate images of another person without that person's consent constitutes a form of sexual cyberviolence.

## Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking involves **charming a minor** or intentionally posting **false information** (gender, age, etc.), with the goal of **luring** them into engaging in sexual acts.

## Cyber sexual assault

Engaging in **cyber sexual assault**, involves **repeatedly threatening**, a person with sexual assault or **sexually assaulting** a person using avatars, for example, in the context of a video or virtual reality game. Despite the physical distance between these people in the real world, sexually touching or harassing a person virtually is still sexual assault.

### Clarification on cyber sexual assault

It should be noted that the following characteristics apply to all forms of cyber sexual assault:

- The person committing an act of cyber sexual assault has the option of remaining anonymous;
- The perpetrator's lack of empathy due to the screen separating them from the other person;
- Accessibility at any time of day;
- The increased number of people who can witness this violence in cyberspace.

## PART 5

# Sexual exploitation

Sexually exploiting someone involves using their body in order to **obtain and maintain control** over sexual services (pornography, prostitution, trafficking) and to **benefit from this** (money, drugs, items, etc.). Maintaining control over somebody implies the constant use of various strategies encompassing **physical, psychological, economic, verbal and sexual violence**. For more information on the aspects of sexual exploitation, see the attached appendix.

## APPENDIX

# Resources

### Internal references

#### **IMPACTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE - YWCA MONTREAL**

Describes the impacts of sexual violence on various aspects of people's health.

Source: YWCA Montreal (2022). Impacts of sexual violence

#### **RESOURCE GUIDE - YWCA MONTREAL**

A comprehensive but by no means exhaustive list of resources dealing with the issue of sexual violence across the province.

Source: YWCA Montreal (2022). Resource guide.

#### **WORKING TOGETHER AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION - YWCA MONTREAL**

Research action project on sexual exploitation with the objective of preventing the recruitment of girls and providing them with the tools they need to escape the cycle of sexual exploitation.

Source: YWCA Montreal. (2016-2022). Working Together Against Sexual Exploitation.

### External references

#### **LET'S TALK ABOUT YES: HOW TO START TALKING ABOUT SEXUAL CONSENT - AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

Description of the concepts of consent (halfway down the page) preceded by information regarding their campaign to demand consent-based legislation so that more countries around the world have laws according to which rape is defined as sex without consent.

Source: Amnesty International. (June 9, 2021). Let's talk about yes: How to start talking about sexual consent. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2021/06/lets-talk-about-yes-activist-toolkit-blogs/>