

Sexual Abuse/Assault & Memory

Memories can emerge years after the event took place, often so intensely that it feels as if it is happening in the present.

Sometimes these memories are triggered by a sensory experience – a touch, smell, sight, taste, or sound.

A common worry for survivors is whether or not they can trust their memories – that maybe they are imagining it, or pulling together pieces from TV shows or news stories.

It is not uncommon for people to forget or bury traumatic events. It is possible for someone to have no or few memories of sexual abuse.

Trust yourself – your knowledge, your gut instinct, your feelings. Even if you can't remember the exact details, healing is still possible.

You have control over your life and what happens next.

When you are ready, talk to someone you trust, or get in touch with SSAIC to discuss your options.

You are not alone.

Contact Information

Visit us in person:

506 25th Street East, Suite 201
Saskatoon, SK S7K 4A7

The SSAIC office is located on the 2nd floor of the Saskatoon Community Service Village (Attached to the YWCA)

Monday – Friday

9am to 5pm

(Closed for lunch from 12pm to 1pm)

Call our office:

(306) 244-2294

Send us an email:

ssaic@sasktel.net

Visit us on the web:

ssaic.ca

Thank you to our funding partners:

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SSAIC

Saskatoon Sexual Assault
& Information Centre



Recovering from Childhood Sexual Abuse

24-Hour Crisis Line: (306) 244-2224

ssaic.ca

The Road to Recovery

If you're an adult who experienced sexual abuse as a child, know that you are not alone. In Canada, *1 in 4 females* and *1 in 6 males* are sexually abused before they turn 18 years old.*

Sexual abuse of children and youth often involves manipulation, coercion into sexual situations, bribery, and forced secrecy. As an adult survivor, you have been living with these memories for a long time.

As a child you may have tried to tell an adult and were met with resistance or felt that there was no one you could trust. For these reasons and many others, **the effects of sexual abuse can appear many years after the abuse has ended.**

Remember that there is no “normal” timeline for dealing with and recovering from this experience.

It is not uncommon to want to forget what happened and try to move on, but **research shows that the sooner you can speak about your experience in a supportive environment** (with family, friends, and/or a professional counsellor), **the faster and more complete your healing process will be.**

We can help.

* Statistics Canada. Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends, Marie Sinha. February 2013.

Counselling & Support Services Offered by SSAIC *free of charge*

We offer a welcoming and safe environment to survivors of sexual violence regardless of race, gender, religion, or romantic orientation.

24-Hour Crisis Line

We provide **information, referrals, and support** to anyone dealing with issues related to sexual violence.

Individual & Group Counselling

We offer **crisis and short-term counselling to female and male survivors** of *past or recent* sexual abuse/assault, and to those who have been impacted by the abuse of others.

Group counselling for survivors is also available.

Appointments are preferred, but walk-in clients are accepted. We have client in-take available during business hours for walk-in appointments.

Child Sexual Abuse – Effects

Adult survivors of child sexual abuse may have some of the following concerns that are specific to their experience:

Guilt, shame, blame, and anger. You may feel angry and direct that at people you love and trust, but not really know why. You might feel guilty about not having been able to stop the abuse, or blame yourself if you experienced physical pleasure. It's the person who manipulated and hurt you should be held accountable – not you.

Self-esteem. You may struggle with low self-esteem, which can be a result of negative messages you received from your abuser(s) and from having your personal safety violated or ignored. Low self-esteem can affect different areas of your life such as your relationships, career, and health. Self-sabotage is also common; the moment things start to go right you may unconsciously do something to set back or damage your progress because you believe you don't deserve happiness or success.

Physical and emotional effects. You may experience headaches, digestive issues, or other pain, develop sleeping difficulties, or become anxious or depressed.

Intimacy and relationships. It's possible that your first experiences with sex came as a result of sexual abuse. As an adult, intimacy might be a struggle. Survivors may also struggle to set boundaries that help them feel safe in relationships. Trusting others may be difficult. Adult survivors may find challenges when they begin parenting as certain situations uncover buried memories.