

Effects of Sexual Abuse/Assault

There is no “normal” way to cope with the aftermath of sexual violence, but there are many common short and long-term effects. Keep in mind that everyone reacts differently.

Guilt, shame, blame, and anger

Survivors may feel angry and direct that at people they love and trust, but not really know why. They might feel guilty about not having been able to stop the abuse, or blame themselves for what happened.

Self-esteem

Survivors may struggle with low self-esteem, which affects many different areas of life such as relationships, school, career, or health. The survivor may feel overwhelmed, inadequate, or helpless.

Physical and emotional effects

Survivors may experience headaches, digestive issues, or other pain, develop sleeping difficulties, or become anxious or depressed.

Intimacy and relationships

Survivors may struggle to set boundaries that help them feel safe in relationships. Trusting others may be difficult. Survivors may find challenges with intimacy or communication.

The 24-Hour Crisis Line is available for anyone suffering from the effects of sexual violence.

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



When Someone Close to You Has Been Sexually Assaulted – How You Can Help

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

ssaic.ca

We use the term “survivor”, a word conveying strength and potential for recovery, as many persons who have been assaulted do not wish to be labelled as a “victim”.

How Can You Help?

Immediately After the Assault

Ensure that the survivor is in a safe location, or help them to find a safe place to be in the short term.

Make sure the survivor knows you believe them. Remind the survivor that what happened was not their fault.

Encourage the survivor to seek medical attention for the treatment of sexually transmitted infections, possible pregnancy, concussions, or other injuries.

A request of the forensic exam (rape kit) will mean the automatic involvement of the police, and it is the survivor’s choice whether or not to get the exam (medical care can still be given without a forensic exam)!

It is the survivor’s choice whether or not to involve the police. Voice your support in an offer to accompany him/her to the police station is ever they want to make a report, and respect the survivor’s wishes if they do not want to do so at this time.

There is no statute of limitations on reporting sexual abuse/assault; the report can be made at any time in the future.

Ask the survivor what their needs are, and help in those specified ways.

Long-Term Help

Encourage the survivor to seek professional help. It is not uncommon for survivors to want to forget what happened and try to move on, but research shows that the sooner they can speak about the experience in a supportive environment (with family, friends, and/or a professional counsellor), the faster and more complete the healing process will be. Our counselling services are free and confidential.

It is important not to minimize their experience or feelings to try to get them to feel better. There is no timeline for recovery – it takes as long as it takes.

Sometimes talking about it can be overwhelming. There are many ways of being supportive (going for a walk, running errands together, preparing meals, etc.) – find the ones that work for your relationship with the survivor.

Respect the survivor’s independence and avoid the temptation to be overprotective. Many survivors worry that they will be seen or treated differently because of their experience.

Remind the survivor that 100% of the blame rests with the offender, no matter the circumstances. Respect the survivor’s request for privacy.

Self-Care

In the aftermath of a sexual assault, family, friends, and partners often have responses that are parallel to those of the survivor: shock, rage, confusion, and feelings of helplessness.

If you need support, SSAIC is here for you.

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.

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.

24-Hour Crisis Line

We provide information, referrals, and support to anyone dealing with issues related to sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and memories of childhood sexual abuse.

Call (306) 244-2224 to connect with support.