
THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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 and/or depressed. Some may choose to numb their pain with alcohol, drugs, or other coping behaviours like disordered eating or cutting.

Intimacy and relationships:

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

You are not alone. Visit ssaic.ca for more resources and information.

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: info@ssaic.ca

Visit us on the web: ssaic.ca

Facebook: [Facebook.com/SSAICI](https://www.facebook.com/SSAICI)

Remember: As with any other crime, a survivor of sexual violence is not to blame. It is never OK, acceptable, or justifiable to force or threaten someone into any sexual act, regardless of the circumstances.

SSAIC acknowledges that we operate on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place, and recognize the harm done to Indigenous peoples through colonization, Residential Schools, and the Sixties Scoop. This legacy of intergenerational trauma is one of the reasons why our agency was created. We commit to working towards reconciliation, and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

SSAIC

Saskatoon Sexual Assault
& Information Centre



SOMEONE
CLOSE TO YOU HAS
BEEN SEXUALLY
ASSAULTED –HOW
YOU CAN HELP

WWW.SSAIC.CA

Some people prefer the word victim, and others prefer survivor. We use the term survivor as it implies strength and recovery. Ask the person in your life how they want to be identified.

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 if 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. Respect the survivor's request for privacy.

LONG-TERM HELP

It is not uncommon for survivors to want to forget what happened and try to move on (and in some cases, the survivor may actively say they don't want to discuss the incident or seek help) 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.

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.

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.

Be mindful that there are varying levels of service provision and additional discrimination for LGBTQ2S people.

Remind the survivor that 100% of the blame rests with the offender, no matter the circumstances.

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. Remember to take care of your own emotional and physical well-being, too!

COUNSELLING & SUPPORT SERVICES OFFERED BY SSAIC

SSAIC does not charge clients a fee for counselling services or for participation in groups, or for survivor assistance services.

People of all genders are encouraged to access our services.



INDIVIDUAL & GROUP COUNSELLING

PHONE: 306-244-2294

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

Our office has access to a smudging room as an option before or after counselling services.

24-HOUR CRISIS LINE

PHONE: 306-244-2224

This service is intended for emergencies only. We provide support, information, and referrals to anyone dealing with issues related to sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and memories of childhood sexual abuse.

Saskatoon Mobile Crisis is our trained partner, and will answer the line evenings, weekends, and holidays.