

## What is a sexual offence?

**Sexual assault** is a sexual gesture committed by a person towards another person, without the latter's consent.

**There are other sexual offences** such as, for example, indecent acts, voyeurism and exposure. These offences do not constitute sexual assault.

Sexual offences are **crimes which should be reported**.

## How to prevent sexual offences: reinforcing knowledge and skills

Learning about healthy sexuality and healthy relations is an important asset in the prevention of sexual offences. This learning can start in childhood.

- **By listening** – Listen to your inner voice, which may warn you about a potentially dangerous situation.
- **By being assertive** – You have the right to say NO. Setting boundaries and not hesitating to report any difficult or disturbing situation you experience.
- **By maintaining your social network** – Avoid isolating yourself and continue to see people you fully trust (family, friends, etc.). Surround yourself with respectful people.
- **By being an active witness** – By openly objecting to unacceptable behaviour, you are taking part in preventing sexual violence.

**Seek help if you are experiencing sexual violence or abuse.**

## Resources

### SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS

#### Sexual Violence Helpline:

☎ 1 888 933-9007 (24/7)

Helpline offering listening, information and referral services to victims of sexual assault, their loved ones and professionals. The service is bilingual, free of charge and confidential.

#### DPCP info line on domestic violence and sexual abuse:

☎ 1 877 547-DPCP (3727)

Helpline providing reliable and relevant information about the judicial process, the handling of a police complaint and authorization for criminal prosecution.

#### Crime Victims Assistance Centre (CAVAC) of Montréal:

☎ 514 277-9860

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR TEENAGERS

#### Tel-jeunes:

☎ 1 800 263-2266

✉ text 514 600-1002; Ch@t

#### Kids Help Phone:

☎ 1 800 668-6868 (24/7)

✉ text 686868

### SUPPORT FOR PERSONS WITH PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOURS

#### Intervention Centre in Sexual Delinquency (ICSD):

☎ 579 641-3941

#### Ça suffit:

☎ 1 844 654-3111

#### Groupe Amorce:

☎ 514 355-8064



## SEXUAL ASSAULT

# A FIRST STEP TOWARDS DISCLOSURE

Montréal 

## Introduction

At the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM), our priority is to ensure your safety and provide you with personalized support throughout the judicial process. Sexual violence is unacceptable. We all have a role to play faced with this violence and we should report it.

A victim of sexual assault at any age is never responsible for their attacker's behaviour.

# Consent

Consent must be:

## ✓ FREE

You are the only person who can decide whether to consent or not. Your consent is not free if another person puts pressure on you, insists, threatens you or uses force.

## ✓ INFORMED

You should know exactly what is going to happen and what you agree to take part in. Your consent is only valid for the activity to which you consent at a given moment.

## ✓ REVERSIBLE

You can change your mind at any moment and your choice should be respected.

## ✓ ENTHUSIASTIC

You should be fully in agreement and at ease with what you are being proposed.

Source: Directeur des poursuites criminelles et pénales (DPCP)

# Your rights

- You have the right to agree to or refuse a sexual activity.
- You have the right to choose each behaviour that forms part of sexual relations: kissing or agreeing to be touched is not a free pass for other intimate or sexual contact.
- You have the right to change your mind at any stage and put an end to a sexual activity at any moment.

# Age of consent

The legal age of consent in Canada is 16.

**BEFORE AGE 16:** to protect minors, the Law stipulates that consent is only valid if the following age gaps are respected →

**Note:** Some exceptions may apply, particularly in cases where there is a relationship of trust, authority or dependence. For example, a situation involving a coach, teacher or employer.

# Did you know?

- A victim of sexual assault at any age is never responsible for the behaviour of the person committing the assault.
- Sexual consent must always be obtained before any sexual activity begins and it must be confirmed at every stage. It is possible to change your mind along the way.
- Sexual assault can happen in a couple or with an acquaintance.
- The person who commits a sexual offence is often known to the victim.

# What should you do if you are a victim of sexual assault?

- Call 911 or contact your neighbourhood police station.
- If you have been a victim of a recent sexual assault (0 to 7 days), it will be recommended that you go to one of the designated centres as soon as possible to receive medical and psychological help. It is possible in some cases to be accompanied by a police officer to take you there.

## Ages 12 and 13

Can consent if the partner is less than two years older than them

## Age 16

The legal age of consent in Canada

## Age 12 or under

Cannot consent to any sexual contact

## Ages 14 and 15

Can consent if the partner is less than five years older than them

# Useful kits

**Forensic kits (0 to 7 days after the assault):**

This kit helps to document the facts surrounding the sexual assault suffered and collect evidence (such as biological liquids). You should ideally go to the designated centre as soon as possible, even if you have not yet decided if you are going to report the sexual assault of which you were a victim to the police. The forensic kit will be kept while you take your decision.

**Medico-social kits (no time limit):**

This second kit helps to document the facts surrounding the sexual assault suffered. It does not require any samples to be taken. You should nevertheless make an appointment before going to a designated centre (Sexual Violence Helpline 1 888 933-9007). Victims are supported by a multidisciplinary team. Medico-social intervention is offered to all victims of a recent sexual assault and, regardless of whether or not they decide to report the sexual assault to the police.

- To help the medical team collect evidence at the designated centre, you should ideally:
  - avoid washing yourself;
  - avoid washing your clothes, bedding or any other object that may contain DNA;
  - avoid urinating;
  - avoid drinking or eating.

If already done, don't worry: you will have access to care and services.

There is a network of designated centres in all regions across Québec. These designated centres offer services to victims of sexual assault 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Sexual Violence Helpline: 1 888 933-9007.**