

## What is sexual assault?

Have you experienced unwanted sexual contact?

Did you feel powerless, helpless, fearful, ashamed, embarrassed, angry, dirty or confused?

Unwanted sexual contact is sexual assault and it is a violation of human rights.

Sexual assault is a crime and can include rape, attempted rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment and indecent exposure (flashing).

### Other facts about sexual assault:

- Anyone, regardless of age, sexuality, gender, culture, ability or religion, can be sexually assaulted
- Perpetrators are often someone the person knows and sexual assault can happen within a relationship
- Sexual assault is not about sexual desire, rather it is about someone's need for power and control
- Sex is used as a weapon
- Perpetrators are 100% responsible for the sexual assault
- The person who has been sexually assaulted is never to blame
- There are no excuses for sexual assault
- Sexual assault is a distressing and often traumatic experience – getting support can help.

## Welcome To Yarrow Place

Yarrow Place is an inclusive service and welcomes people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual or intersex. Clients and staff represent the diverse community we live in.

### At Yarrow Place:

- Discrimination or unfair treatment based on sexual identity will not be tolerated
- You will be listened to, believed and not blamed
- You will be given information about your medical, counselling and legal options in a way that is understandable
- Your right to privacy and confidentiality will be respected. Any limitations to confidentiality will be discussed with you
- There are no time limits for accessing a service. Services are provided for recent and past sexual assaults.

Yarrow Place is not part of the police. Your decision to report or not to the police will be entirely respected and supported by Yarrow Place.

### Services include:

- 24 hour Crisis Response Service (medical & crisis counselling services for recent sexual assaults)
- Counselling (telephone/face to face). Duty Social Worker available Monday – Friday 9 am – 5 pm
- Medical care. Male and Female Doctors available Mon – Fri 9 am – 5 pm
- Collection of forensic evidence as requested by those people who have made, or may wish to make, a complaint to the police
- Support groups
- Education, training and consultation
- Community Education

## Myths

There are many myths about sexual assault, for example:

- If the person didn't get bashed or have any injuries then it couldn't have been rape
- If the perpetrator didn't use a weapon then the victim should have been able to get away
- Normally he's a nice guy – he didn't mean to rape her the alcohol made him do it
- Men can't be raped.

Myths are used to shift responsibility for the sexual assault from the perpetrator to the person who has been sexually assaulted.

**The person who is sexually assaulted is never to blame.**

We at Yarrow Place also acknowledge that for those of us who identify as other than heterosexual, society often places obstacles in the way of us leading a happy and healthy life. Our perceived 'difference' can be used to place us at a disadvantage to others in the community.

Perpetrators of sexual violence choose to abuse people who they perceive as more vulnerable than themselves. They may believe that a person's age, gender or cultural identity, for instance, will enable them to abuse a person more easily or with fewer repercussions. Likewise, a perpetrator may choose to view sexuality or sexual identity in the same way.

Despite this, we continue to challenge and positively influence society's views of sexuality and sexual identity and strengthen our place within the diverse community we live in.

**Perpetrators are always responsible for choosing to sexually abuse.**

## Reactions

Sexual assault is a violent, humiliating and traumatic experience.

Everyone's experience of sexual violence is different although there are some common reactions including:

**Feeling:** fearful, shocked, powerless, ashamed, angry, embarrassed, dirty, anxious, distrustful, sad, irritable, depressed, withdrawn

**Experiencing:** sleeping difficulties, appetite changes, head aches, fatigue

It is important to remember that:

- These reactions are normal
- You are not to blame
- People can and do deal with the impact of sexual violence on their life. You will not always feel like this.

## Coping

Sexual assault is a distressing experience and you have the right to speak out about it, be believed, supported and not blamed.

It may help to:

- Talk with someone you trust
- Seek medical advice if you have health concerns as a result of the assault.
- Contact a sexual assault service that can provide you with support and information about your legal, medical and counselling options.
- Contact one of the services listed on this pamphlet (see over).
- Remind yourself that it is ok to feel distressed after a traumatic experience. Give yourself time to recover.

Services for those of us who identify as transgender, intersex, transsexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual.

### Bfriend

Supports people who are newly identifying as being same sex attracted or are questioning their gender identity. Free and confidential. Phone: Truffy 8202 5805.

### Gay Men's Health

Counselling, health information and support for gay & bisexual men. Free and confidential. Phone: 8334 1617, TTY 8334 0306

### South Australian Transsexual Support Group

A service for people who have Gender Dysphoria. Your enquiry will be treated as strictly confidential. Phone Sarah 0409 091 663.

### Women's Health Services

Providing free, confidential health information and support to women.

Women's Healthline ph: 1300 882 880

Dale Street Women's Health Centre ph: 8444 0700

Northern Women's Community Health Centre ph: 8252 3711

Southern Women's Community Health Centre ph: 8384 9555

### Second Story Youth Health Service

Information, support, counselling and programs for people under the age of 25. Ph: City 8232 0233, South 8326 6053, North 8255 3155.

### Shine SA (Sexual Health Information Networking & Education South Australia)

Counselling, information and support on sexual health issues. Confidential. Ph: 8431 5177

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## Information about sexual assault for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Transexual and Intersex people

