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Disclosure

Supporting & reporting

Sexual assault is any type of sexual activity or contact that happens without consent.

Sexual assault can take many different forms:

- Rape
- Attempted rape
- Sexual coercion
- Unwanted sexual touching
- Any other sexual contact with someone who does not or cannot consent (someone who is underage, unconscious, etc).



Sexual assault remains one of the most underreported crimes among adults and young people.

Many victims don't tell anyone or report what happened to them at all.

Why do you think that is?

CSO Sexual Violence Survey 2022



Common reasons for not disclosing sexual violence

- Not wanting family or other people to know
- Being unable to prove the incident occurred
- Fear that police will not take it seriously
- Fear of police hostility

Fear of
punishment or
reprisal

Shame

Cultural or
religious reasons

Confidentiality

**Other reasons for
people not disclosing
sexual assault**

Trauma

Emotional Pain

Fear over not
being believed

Feeling partly
responsible

Fear of being
blamed

**What could be the benefit
of disclosing or reporting
a sexual assault?**



Benefits of disclosing

Medical
services

Support
services

Legal services

Mental health
services

Moving
forward

Accountability

**Let's take a look at what
we can do if someone in
our life discloses to us...**



It's okay and natural to feel nervous or apprehensive if someone discloses to you.

Remember, they have chosen you because they feel you will be a good and positive contact who will not judge, and will support them in their next steps - but that doesn't mean that you need to know everything to do.

If a person discloses to you that they have been assaulted, try to remain calm and non-judgemental, don't try to find where they may have been at fault.



All we can do is support the person and listen.

If the person that discloses to you is under 18, encourage them and support them to disclose to a trusted adult or professional. This may be a teacher, parent, social worker or Rape Crisis Centre or helpline. One of these people can then take it from there.



Some people may also be ready to report the incident to the Gardaí.

Get support for yourself, hearing about a sexual assault may be traumatic for you too.

Let's take a look at what reporting looks like...



Anybody who has been the victim of sexual violence can report it to the Gardai. In the case of a recent sexual assault, you can call emergency numbers such as 999 or 112 or contact your local Garda station.

Any sexual crime is dealt with by the Gardai Protective Services Unit (PSU).

These Gardai are trained to investigate your report in a compassionate, sensitive and professional manner.

Every effort will be made to have a Garda of the gender of your choice allocated to the investigation.



If you have been the victim of a rape or sexual assault in the last 7 days you may attend a Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) with or without Garda accompaniment.

Each SATU is a safe place to go if a person has been raped or sexually assaulted. Under 18's will need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Someone from the Rape Crisis Centre can come to the SATU to support a person throughout the reporting process, if they wish.



- A SATU can help by offering medical care and, if needed, help with a possible pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection (STI).
- The evidence can help the Gardaí to investigate the crime. The person can choose to report to the Gardaí immediately - if they need time to think about whether they want to report, the SATU can store samples for up to one year.
- The best time for collecting forensic samples is in the first 72 hours (3 days) after the assault. However, samples can still be collected within 5 days.
- If a person was assaulted more than seven days prior to attending a SATU, the unit can still help.

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