

SEXUAL ASSAULT

A RESOURCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

This contains sensitive and detailed information about sexual assault. Please reach out to us for support or questions: Harborview Abuse & Trauma Center 206-744-1600 or www.uwhatc.org

CONSENT AND SEX

Not sure if someone is consenting? Ask them! Are they OK with this? You can ask if you can do something with them—it's best to be specific.

Or, you can just ask what they want to do!

CONSENT MEANS AGREEMENT. Consent is necessary each time that people do any type of sexual activity together.

RESPECTING A SEXUAL PARTNER LOOKS LIKE:

1. **Each person's choice:** Made with a clear head.
2. **Boundaries:** Respectfully accept when a partner says "no" (with words or actions).
3. **Affirmative consent:** Engage in sexual activity only when there is a clear "yes" (with words or actions).
4. **Checking in:** Each person feels good about what they choose to do together.
5. **Between equals:** People have equal power considering their developmental level, their job, etc.

WHAT DOES THE LAW ACTUALLY SAY?

Sexual assault is sexual activity that is forced, illegal, or done without a person's consent. It is a violation of a person's body or boundaries. Often, it is an abuse of power. Sexual assault can happen to anyone, including people of all genders, ages, races, and sexual orientations. Many people have questions about the laws. Here are a few of the Washington State laws in simpler language. For more laws and exact definitions, look up the RCWs (Revised Codes of Washington) at app.leg.wa.gov. These laws vary state by state.

RAPE: Forcing someone to have sex is rape. Legally, consent means words or actions that show agreement. Having sex with someone who did not give consent is rape. Having sex with a person who is unable to give consent is also rape. People who are "physically helpless" or "mentally incapacitated" (such as due to illness, effects of a substance, defect, or being unconscious) are unable to consent to sex. [See RCW Chapter 9A.44]

DEPICTIONS OF MINOR ENGAGED IN SEXUALLY EXPLICIT CONDUCT (Child Pornography): There are several crimes related to developing, possessing, viewing, copying, publishing, printing, exchanging, or distributing an image or video of a minor (under age 18) engaged in sexual conduct. [See RCW Chapter 9.68A]

COMMERCIAL SEX ABUSE OF A MINOR: There are several crimes related to promoting, allowing, paying, or offering anything of value in exchange for a minor engaging in sexual activity. [See RCW Chapter 9.68A]

The legal response can vary in different cases. Many times there is no arrest or jail time. Survivors can still get support. Minors and people with developmental disabilities should also be aware of mandated reporting laws. If you are concerned about this, you can always call our center anonymously and speak to a counselor: 206-744-1600.

Legal Definition of CONSENT in

WA: "at the time of the act of sexual intercourse or sexual contact there are actual words or conduct indicating freely given agreement to have sexual intercourse or sexual contact."

REACTIONS AND RECOVERY

Laws About Age Differences: These laws say who can consent to who, based on age. In general, the age of consent in Washington is 16. This chart explains more:

RAPE OF A CHILD (STATUTORY RAPE): When an older teen/adult has sex with a younger child.

CHILD MOLESTATION: When an older teen/adult sexually touches a younger child.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT: When an older person in a significant relationship and supervisory position (such as a coach, boss, youth counselor, teacher, etc.) has sex or sexual contact with a younger person.

WHEN THE YOUNGER PERSON IS...	AND THE OLDER PERSON IS...
Under age 12	At least 2 years older
Age 12 or 13	At least 3 years older
Age 14 or 15	At least 4 years older
Under age 14	At least 3 years older
Age 14 or 15	At least 4 years older
Age 16 or 17	At least 5 years older + supervisory position
An enrolled student under age 21	At least 5 years older + school employee

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

For the sexual crimes involving age differences, the older person is considered to be responsible. The older people in these situations often have more life experience and resources. They can use those to pressure or manipulate the other person. Even if younger person thinks it's OK, or their parents think it's OK, it is a crime.

If a person chooses to have sexual contact with someone who did not consent (or could not consent), they are responsible for that choice. Sexual assault is never the victim's fault. You can challenge victim-blaming phrases like: "They should not have been drinking." or "They were leading them on." or "They didn't fight back." You can simply say, "I don't agree. No one ever deserves to be assaulted."

It's normal to have different reactions after a sexual assault. It varies depending on the person and their experiences. Some common thoughts and feelings are:

- Feeling like it was their fault
- Feeling sad, anxious, or agitated
- Worrying people won't believe them
- Having repeated and unwanted memories of the event
- Feeling unsure about talking with investigators, other professionals, or even people close to them
- Having a hard time being happy or doing fun or important things

HOW CAN A COUNSELOR HELP?

1. Discuss your options, your rights, and share resources
2. Help to problem solve issues that come up
3. Answer your questions about the legal process
4. Teach new skills to manage bad feelings and memories
5. Discuss ways to get back to things you want to do

We want to help you move forward and start to heal.

TIPS FOR SURVIVORS AFTER A SEXUAL ASSAULT:

1. **Time** really does help heal.
2. **Stay connected** with supportive friends, parents, and other trusted people.
3. Do things that **relieve stress** and make you feel good. It's okay to set boundaries or take a break from people who have caused harm.
4. **Get a medical exam:** An exam is a good way to make sure your body is OK. You can ask questions, and get medications to prevent STDs and pregnancy. Evidence can be collected if you want (up to 5 days after an assault: sooner is better).
5. **Talk to a counselor or advocate:** Discuss concerns. Ask questions. Decide next steps.
6. Not everyone has trauma symptoms after an assault. If they do, **counseling** can be very effective at reducing symptoms (like nightmares and flashbacks). It can be short term.

CALL US. WE CAN HELP.

206-744-1600

Harborview Abuse & Trauma Center: Offices in Seattle, Bellevue, and Shoreline
Services include: medical exams, crisis help, and counseling (most services are free)
www.uwhatc.org