

# WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Sexual violence is any type of unwanted sexual contact. This includes words and actions of a sexual nature against a person's will and without their consent. A person may use force, threats, manipulation, or coercion to commit sexual violence.

## WHAT IS CONSENT?

Consent must be freely given and informed, and a person can change their mind at any time. Consent is more than a yes or no. It is a dialogue about desires, needs, and level of comfort with different sexual interactions.

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE MAY INCLUDE:

- Rape or sexual assault
- Child sexual assault and incest
- Sexual assault by a person's spouse or partner
- Unwanted sexual contact/touching
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual exploitation and trafficking
- Exposing one's genitals or naked body to other(s) without consent
- Watching someone engage in private acts without their knowledge or permission
- Non-consensual image sharing including pictures shared between minors, such as sexts, and child pornography



**Ashland County  
Safe Haven**  
Rape Crisis & Domestic  
Violence Services

**24 HOUR ANONYMOUS HOTLINE:**

**419-289-8085** 

**Appleseed**   
Community Mental Health Center

Safe Haven is a program of Appleseed  
Community Mental Health Center.

## **Victims are never at fault.**

Choosing to violate another person is not about "drinking too much", "trying to have a good time", or "getting carried away", nor is it about the clothes someone was wearing, how they were acting, or what type of relationship they have with the person who abused them. Violating another person is a choice.

## **Rape is often not reported or convicted.**

Some of the most common reasons a person may choose to not report to law enforcement or tell anyone about a victimization they've experienced include:

- a fear of not being believed
- being afraid of retaliation
- shame or fear of being blamed
- pressure from others
- distrust towards law enforcement
- a desire to protect the attacker for other reasons

## **Everyone is impacted by sexual violence.**

### **Impact on survivors.**

An assault may impact a survivor's daily life no matter when it happened. Each survivor reacts to sexual violence in their own way. Common emotional reactions include guilt, shame, fear, numbness, shock, and feelings of isolation. There is no time limit on how long sexual violence can impact someone's life.

### **Impact on loved ones.**

As loved ones try to make sense of what happened, they may experience similar reactions and feelings to those of the survivor such as fear, guilt, self-blame, and anger.

### **Impact on community.**

Schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, campuses, and cultural or religious communities may feel fear, anger, or disbelief when sexual assault happens in their community. Violence of all kinds destroys a sense of safety and trust.

**[www.SafeHavenofAshland.org](http://www.SafeHavenofAshland.org)**

**Follow us at RCDVSafeHaven**   

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