



# Sexual Violence Basics

## *Glossary*

### *of Sexual Violence Terms*



**T**he following words can be defined in several ways, but the definitions listed below relate specifically to sexual violence.

**Child Sexual Abuse** - forced, tricked, bribed, and coerced sexual behavior between a child and another child or adult.

**Child Pornography** - any sexually graphic material, or material used for the purpose of sexual arousal, that depicts children.

**Coercion** - actions and words used to threaten, manipulate, bribe, and otherwise compel someone to submit to an unwanted sexual act.

**Commercial Sexual Exploitation** - paying someone else for sexual activities, or for sexually graphic materials or behaviors.

**Consent** - free agreement to engage in some type of sexual activity.

**Fetishism** - the use of non-living objects (e.g., women's underpants, bras, stocking, shoes, boots, other apparel) for sexual excitement (a form of *paraphilia*).

**Force** - physical, emotional, social, and financial pressure by one individual in order to use sexual actions and words that hurt another.

**Frotteurism** - sexually touching and/or rubbing against a non-consenting person, typically taking place in a crowded place from which the perpetrator can easily escape (a form of *paraphilia*).

**Healthy Sexuality** - acceptance of and respect for one's own and others' gender, body, sexual orientation and feelings; practicing ways to express sexuality that are self-affirming and pleasurable, and that deepen intimacy with others (without causing harm).

**Incest** - sexual abuse that is committed by one family member against another. Also called *familial sexual abuse*, incest can be committed by a parent, step-parent, guardian, sibling, other family member, or an unrelated person living with, or treated as part of the family.

**Sexual Violence** is the use of sexual actions and words that are unwanted by and/or harmful to another person.

**Molestation** - *see Child Sexual Abuse*

**Offender** - *see Perpetrator*

**Paraphilias** - psycho-sexual disorders involving recurrent, intense, sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges or behaviors that involve nonhuman objects or the suffering or humiliation of oneself, one's partner, children, or other non-consenting persons (e.g., pedophilia, sadism, voyeurism, fetishism).

**Pedophile** - an individual with a diagnosable mental disorder which features recurrent, intense, sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child (generally age 13 or younger). *Pedophilia* is a form of *paraphilia*.

**Perpetrator** - an individual who uses sexual words or actions that are unwanted by and/or harmful to another person.

**Pornography** - sexually graphic materials created for the purposes of sexual arousal.

**Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder** - a mental disorder in which symptoms develop after exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor (including sexual victimization). Symptoms include extreme fear, helplessness, or horror; recurrent flashbacks, memories and nightmares; difficulties concentrating and falling or staying asleep; hypervigilance, irritability, and outbursts of anger; markedly diminished interest in activities; and loneliness or feelings of isolation.

**Prevention** - keeping something from happening.

**Primary Victim** - *see Victim*

**Professional Sexual Exploitation** - inappropriate use of sexual actions and words by professionals and volunteers within a helping context. Any sexual interaction between helping professionals and clients is sexually violating.

**Promotion** - encouragement of progress, growth and acceptance.

**Prostitution** - buying and selling people for the purpose of sexual activities.

**Rape** - unwanted, coerced, and/or forced oral, anal, and vaginal sexual penetration.

**Ritual Abuse** - an organized form of sexual abuse, frequently involving numerous victims and perpetrators.

**Secondary Victim** - an individual who experiences sexual violence as a bystander or as someone who knows and/or loves the victim and/or perpetrator; this individual may be affected in ways similar to a *Primary Victim*.

**Sexual Assault** - *see Sexual Violence*

**Sexual Harassment** - unwanted verbal sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates a hostile or intimidating environment for the victim.

**Sexual Health** - *see Healthy Sexuality*

**Sexual Sadism** - acts in which the individual derives sexual excitement from the psychological or physical suffering (including humiliation) of the victim (a form of *paraphilia*).

**Sexual Violation** - use of sexual behaviors involving contact that are unwanted by and/or harmful to another person, but do not involve penetration.

**Sexual Violence** - the use of sexual words or actions that are unwanted by and/or harmful to another person. Also referred to as sexual assault and sexual abuse.

**Significant Relationship** - legal term referring to a relationship which exists between a victim and a perpetrator who is a parent, step-parent, or guardian of the victim; related by blood, marriage or adoption; or living in the same house.

**Survivor** - individual who has been sexually victimized and is healing/recovering.

**Victim** - individual who has been, or is being, sexually victimized; someone who has had unwanted and/or harmful sexual actions and words used against him or her.

**Victim Advocates** - staff, interns, and volunteers of victim service programs who work to prevent sexual violence and meet the needs of victims.

**Violence** - words and actions that hurt people.

**Violent Pornography** - sexually graphic material, created for the purpose of sexual arousal, that combines sex with violence, mistreatment, humiliation, or abuse in its imagery or production.

**Voyeurism** - the act of observing unsuspecting individuals, usually strangers, in the process of disrobing or engaging in sexual activity (a form of *paraphilia*).