



Sexual violence: all unwanted sexual acts – whether harassment, abuse, or assault - committed against another person, without that person’s freely given consent, is sexual violence and a could be prosecuted as a crime.

Sexual harassment: unwanted sexual attention. It can be visual, physical, or verbal. Examples include: sending explicit photos, or making sexual jokes.

Sexual assault: nonconsensual sexual penetration or contact. Examples include: rape, attempted rape, molestation, or penetration with an item or body part.

Sexual abuse: nonconsensual sexual activity where someone in a position of power or authority takes advantage of a person’s trust. Examples include: assault of a person with a disability, of the elderly, of deaf individuals, sexual harassment by clergy, professor, employer.

Child sexual abuse is any sexual activity between a minor (under 17)* and an adult. Examples include: rape, attempted rape, touching, exposure to explicit photos or body parts. *See rainn.org for state specific definitions of minor

Consent is the explicit expression to engage in a specific sexual activity. Consent is not just about agreeing to a particular sexual activity but also includes boundaries you set within sexual activity (i.e using contraception)

Victim Blaming: when the victim of a crime or any wrongful act is held entirely or partially responsible for the harm that occurred

Rape Culture: Coined by feminists in the United States in the 1970’s, rape culture was designed to show the ways in which society blamed victims of sexual assault and normalized male sexual violence. A complex set of beliefs that encourage male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture, women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm. In a rape culture both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life, inevitable

Gaslighting: Gaslighting is a colloquial term that describes a type of psychological abuse in which the abuser denies the victim’s reality, causing him/her to question him/herself, his/her memory, or his/her perceptions. The term gaslighting is also sometimes used to apply to the use of inflammatory behavior or language that provokes someone to behave in an uncharacteristic way

Grooming: Grooming is a tactic of overcoming the survivor's defenses by slowly desensitizing his or her natural reaction to abusive behaviors. The most commonly recognized context is when pedophiles use it on children and their parents, but the technique is also used in other contexts, such as confidence scams or commercial sex work. Grooming works by mixing positive behaviors with elements of abuse. At the beginning, all behaviors are positive. Slowly,

abusive elements are added in amounts that surprise the survivor to an extent, but do not push alarm to a high level. Overtime, the inappropriate comes to feel normal.

Stealthing: “Stealthing” is the pop culture name to describe a “new sex trend” reported to be “on the rise.” It refers to the act of deliberately removing a condom during sex without your partner’s knowledge or consent. This catchy phrase doesn’t actually mean there’s a new trend but coins a new term for a kind of sexual assault.

Often, survivors face multiple forms of abuse simultaneously. Other forms of abuse include the following:

Physical Abuse: The intentional use of force or threats of force on another person in an attempt to control behavior and/or intimidate. Examples include: hitting, slapping, punching, strangulation, shoving, throwing, pulling hair

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse often falls into one or more of these categories:

- Degrading: A person receives messages about not being good enough
- Ignoring: A person is given mixed messages - welcomed in some situations and ignored in others.
- Isolating: Individuals are cut off from normal social interactions and/or family and friends. They become emotionally dependent on their abusers.
- Terrorizing: Fear is created using insults and by verbal and nonverbal threats. This intimidates a person and destroys his/her independence and self-esteem.
- Corrupting: An individual is encouraged to participate in illegal, destructive behavior.
- Exploiting: A person is making use of a partner to meet inappropriate needs, or for economic or social gain.
- Controlling: One partner tries to dominate and control the other partner’s behavior. This is often motivated by jealousy.

Financial Abuse: The use of financial assets to control the victim. Examples include: denying access to money, preventing you from viewing or having access to bank accounts, stealing money from you or your family and friends

Digital Abuse: The use of technology and/or social media to control the victim. Examples include: tells you who you can or can’t be friends with on facebook, uses email, social media, and tweets to harass, threaten, or insult you, looks through your phone frequently

Spiritual abuse: Using religion to manipulate, control, and bully through the guise of religion, religious principles, or claims to spirituality. This includes using religion for personal gain, such as sexual or financial.

Additional Resources:

Tea consent video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQbei5JGiT8>

Consent by state - <https://www.rainn.org/news/how-does-your-state-define-consent>

<http://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/abuse-defined/>

<http://www.wavaw.ca/what-is-rape-culture/>

<https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/gaslighting>

<https://www.abuseandrelationships.org/Content/Behaviors/grooming.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/may/22/stealthing-sex-trend-sexual-assault-crime>