SUPPORT FOR ADULTS WHO'VE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL ASSAULT

Anyone can experience sexual violence, no matter their gender, sexual orientation, or age. Sexual violence refers to any unwanted sexual act or behavior, including assault, harassment, or coercion, that violates a person's autonomy and consent.

If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted, **there are options to access care.** Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual contact or behavior that occurs without consent, including touching, penetration, or attempted penetration. Feeling scared or unsure about where to turn or what to expect when seeking help is normal.

A Note and Advisory

You may identify as a "survivor," a "victim," both, or neither — it's entirely personal. In the criminal justice system, terms like "victim," "complainant," "evidence," or "witness" are often used as part of legal processes. It is common to experience feelings of shame when engaging in legal proceedings related to assault. Still, it is crucial to acknowledge that this language is used in the courts and does not define who you are or how you choose to view your experience.

This document provides guidelines on what to do if you are sexually assaulted and what to expect from each available option. You are free to choose the resources that best meet your needs.

Remember, it is not your fault.
You deserve to be heard and believed.
You are not alone.

Step 1: Get Somewhere Safe

- Before deciding whom you will call, whether you will report the assault, and where you will go to receive care, try to get somewhere safe where you will be secure and protected.
- If you are seriously injured or still in immediate danger, **call 911.**

Step 2: What Are the Options?

1. **The police or Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).**
   You can go to your local police station or call 911.
2. **A sexual assault centre.**
   You can go to your local center if they are open, or call them for more information about what to do next. Most sexual assault centers have a 24/7 crisis line available.
3. **Hospitals and Community Health Centres.**
   Some people who are assaulted choose to check for pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection. Some hospitals have Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) who are specially trained to work with individuals who have experienced sexual violence.
4. **Counselling.**
   Counsellors have education and training to provide mental health support. Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) provides coverage for some counsellors and an NIHB Navigator can assist you in finding one.
5. **Do nothing.**
   Some people who have experienced sexual violence choose not to report or seek help.



It may feel more difficult to report a sexual assault when living in a small or isolated community. There may be fewer resources at a close distance, but you can still access the support and care that you need. It may feel especially difficult for you if you experienced sexual violence at the hands of a family member, relative, friend, or trusted guardian.

Police/RCMP can transport you to the closest service available, where you can access services from a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) or Forensic Nurse Examiner, if available. These professionals provide specialized care, including forensic evidence collection, medical exams, and support. Additionally, you will receive any necessary medical care, such as treatment for injuries, STI prevention, and emergency contraception, as required.

You can also call your local sexual assault centre crisis line if you do not want to contact the police.**Contact a trusted friend, family member, or Elder for support and healing if needed.**

Contacting the Police

It is ultimately your choice to report to the police/RCMP, which will not impact your ability to receive specialized medical care.

Many hospitals in New Brunswick also offer a service that will store evidence collected by a sexual assault forensic exam when and if you decide you want to report to the police/RCMP. A sexual assault forensic exam involves a thorough medical examination to collect physical evidence, such as clothing, hair, and bodily fluids, which can be crucial for any future legal proceedings. The exam also includes medical care, such as testing for STIs and offering emergency contraception, while ensuring the individual's physical and emotional well-being is supported throughout the process.

You can also report sexual assault to the police for information purposes only; it does not mean you have to press charges. **It is your choice.**

Calling the Police/RCMP

If you call the police/ RCMP, an officer will come to you to take a statement and write a report about what happened. Depending on when the assault occurred, the officer may suggest that you go to the hospital.

- If you haven't already, ask the police/ RCMP officer to contact support and discuss the next steps.
- If you decide to go to the hospital first, you can ask hospital staff to contact the police or RCMP, depending on your jurisdiction.

At the Police/ RCMP Station

You may also report an assault in person at your local police/ RCMP station. When you arrive, let the front desk know that you are there to "make a statement" or "report" an assault. **You don't have to disclose the nature of the assault** to administrative staff if you're not comfortable doing so. They will ask a person from Victim Services to support you while you provide a statement of what happened and they connect you with follow-up services.

- While you give your statement, the police/ RCMP officer will ask you questions to gather evidence. This could be video recorded for evidence purposes with your consent.
- You will be asked to write a statement about what happened, or the police/ RCMP officer will write one based on what you told them. If the officer writes it, you have the right to read it and must sign it to confirm the information is accurate. You can also request services from an officer whose gender makes you feel most comfortable.
- If you report the sexual assault within three days of the assault, the police/ RCMP may ask to collect physical evidence using a sexual assault forensic exam.



Contacting the Hospital

If you decide to go to the hospital after an assault, report to the emergency department, where you will be triaged. They may call a nurse who specializes in sexual assault, a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), for assistance. You may ask to wait in a quiet and private area. If possible, it may be helpful to bring along a support person.

Hospital staff will ask you to sign consent forms before proceeding with any examination.

Ask them to explain the forms to ensure you understand your agreement. The forms may vary depending on the health authority or hospital where you receive care. One commonly used form (e.g., Consent to Release Information, referral, etc.) allows the hospital to contact other relevant service providers (e.g., Victim Services, Sexual Violence New Brunswick, etc.) to support and inform you about follow-up services.

There are two kinds of exams that the hospital provides, with your consent, after being sexually assaulted.

1. **Medical Exam**
   This exam is meant to check for injuries and sexually transmitted or blood-borne infections (STBBIs) as well as for pregnancy prevention. Blood and urine samples may be requested during this exam.
2. **Sexual Assault Forensic Exam**
   This exam is meant to collect samples to identify your assailant — this process occurs with your explicit consent and can be stopped at any time. These samples can be kept for up to six months and will only be provided to police/ RCMP when a decision is made to report.

Will the Hospital Call the Police/RCMP?

It is your choice whether or not to involve police when you seek medical care at the hospital. Hospital staff can contact the police/ RCMP on your behalf with consent. **However, if you are under 18, hospital staff must call the police/RCMP and child protective services immediately.**

Collecting Evidence

Evidence collection can be uncomfortable. You may have a support person with you during the collection, and you can request to stop the process or skip a step at any time.

Evidence collection cannot be done without your consent. You may also ask the police/ RCMP officer and any other individual not involved in the exam not to be present.

Don't wash your hands, shower, use the toilet, file nails, drink, gargle, bath, douche, change clothes, use alcohol or drugs, or clean yourself up to ensure accurate samples are collected.

- It is best to collect evidence within 72 hours of an assault, but you have up to seven days to complete the examination.
- If you consent to both the medical care and forensic exam, they will be performed simultaneously and take 2-5 hours to complete.
- The nurse will take swabs of your skin, collect pubic and head hair, scrape underneath your fingernails, and collect your nail clippings as samples to test for DNA.
- Hospital staff may ask you to do a toxicology screen to look for evidence of drug and alcohol use. You might be worried that people may blame you if you were under the influence, but the toxicology screening is used to help prove you could not consent if you had alcohol or drugs in your system.

Contacting a Sexual Assault Centre

Sexual assault centres are specifically trained to help you in these circumstances. If you call them before the police/RCMP or the hospital,they can assign a support person to accompany you through this process. Most sexual assault centers provide a confidential 24/7 crisis line for immediate support.

Many sexual assault centres also provide safe and supportive counselling services to help you work through your feelings after surviving a traumatic experience. These services can be offered individually or in a group setting.

There is no right or wrong way to feel after being sexually assaulted, and it is your choice to partake in counselling services. Either way, these resources are available if you need them. **It is never too late to seek help**

Dealing with trauma from sexual assault or abuse

If you are coping with trauma from sexual assault — whether it happened in childhood, adolescence, or later in life — know that healing is possible and help is available. It is never too late to reach out to a mental health professional for support in addressing the impact of past traumatic events.

Trauma experienced as a child or youth can carry profound effects into adulthood. It can lead to an array of emotions, such as shame, guilt, anxiety, or depression, and it can have psychological impacts, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), dissociation, low self-esteem, and substance use or abuse.

The Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program offers First Nations and Inuit access to mental health counselling. Eligible individuals can receive coverage for sessions with registered professionals and other essential health services.

Resources

Sexual Assault Centres

- **Sexual Violence New Brunswick**
  Support line: (506) 454-0437
  Available 5 pm-8 am, 7 days a week
  Website

- **The Jade Centre**
  Formerly known as the South East Sexual Assault Centre
  24/7 Support Line: 1-844-853-0811
  Website

- **Non-Insured Health Benefits Coverage Atlantic (NL, NS, PE, NB)**
  Non-Insured Health Benefits
  40 Havelock Street
  Amherst NS B4H 3Z3
  Telephone (toll free): 1-800-565-3294
  Email: nihb-atlfnihb@sac-isc.gc.ca
  (do not send claims by email)
  Website

- **Boreal Child & Youth Expertise Centre**
  Greater Moncton Area
  Phone number: (506) 383-8300
  Email: directrice@centreboreal.com
  Website

- **Indigenous Domestic Violence Outreach**
  Buctouche (Elsipogtog, L'nui Menikuk, Tjipogtotjg)
  Email: Alanna.peters@gnb.ca

  Tobique First Nation (Neqotkuk & Wotstak):
  (506) 273-5557

  Fredericton Region (Sitansisk, Bilijk, Welamukotuk):
  (506) 452-2760

  Miramichi (Esgenoôpetitj, Natoaganeg, Metepenagiag):
  (506) 626-1399

2SLGBTQIA+ Supports

- **Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance**
  Email: W2SA.info@gmail.com
  Website

- **Imprint Youth Association**
  224 York St
  Fredericton, NB E3B 3P1
  Email:
  imprintyouthfredericton@gmail.com
  Website

- **Chroma NB**
  PO Box 203
  Saint John, NB E2L 3X8
  Email: query@chromanb.ca
  Website

- **LGBT Youth Line**
  Helpline available Sunday to Friday, 4pm-9:30pm: 1-800-268-9688
  Text only option: (647) 694-4275

- **Trans Lifeline**
  Helpline available from 5pm-1am ast, Monday to Friday: 1-877-330-6366

Telephone/Virtual Support

- **Hope for Wellness Helpline**
  24/7 helpline: 1-855-242-3310
  24/7 online chat: can be accessed through the website

- **Talking Stick App**
  Accessible through the website or through the app, available for download for Andriod and iPhone.
  Click "Start Chat" on either platform to be connected to someone right away.

- **Chimo Helpline**
  24/7 helpline: 1-800-667-5005

- **LOFEO**
  Looking Out for Each Other Helpline
  24/7 helpline: 1-833-664-3463

Emergency Shelters

- **Gignoo Transition House**
  24/7 support line: 1-800-565-6878
  Phone: (506) 458-1236
  Local crisis line: (506) 458-1224
  Email: info@gignoohouse.ca

- **Residence of Hope, Beauséjour Family Crisis Resource Centre**
  66 Rue Calder
  Shediac, NB E4P 1K8
  Phone: 506-533-9100
  Email: crcfb@nb.aibn.com
  Website

- **L'Accueil Sainte-Famille Inc.**
  3632 Main Street
  Tracadie-Sheila, NB E1X 1C9
  Phone: (506) 395-1500
  Phone for women who need services but do not need a place to stay: (506) 395-6233
  Email: accueilstefamille@gmail.com
  Website

- **Crossroads for Women**
  PO Box 1247
  Moncton, NB E1C 8P9
  Crisis line: (506) 853-0811
  Phone: (506) 857-8028
  Email: admin@crossroadsforwomen.ca
  Website

- **L'Escale MadaVic**
  PO Box 411
  Edmundston, NB E3V 3L1
  Phone: (506) 739-6265
  Website

- **Fundy Region Transition House**
  PO Box 73
  Saint Stephen, NB E3L 2W9
  Crisis line: (506) 466-4485
  Phone (outreach service): (506) 469-5544
  Email: reachus@fundyregiontransitionhouse.com
  Website

- **Hestia House**
  PO Box 22080
  Saint John, NB E2K 4T7
  24/7 crisis line: (506) 634-7570
  Business line: (506) 634-7571
  Text only: (506) 566-6667
  Email: transition@hestiahouse.ca
  Website

- **Maison Notre Dame**
  PO Box 158
  Campbellton, NB E3N 3G4
  Phone: (506) 753-4703
  Email: maisonnotredame@nb.aibn.com

- **Miramichi Emergency Centre for Women**
  611 King George Highway
  Miramichi, NB E1V 1N9
  24-hour crisis line:
  506-622-8865 or 1-888-836-1016
  Email: mecwstaff@nb.aibn.com
  Website

- **Passage House**
  PO Box 1284
  Bathurst, NB E2A 4J1
  Phone: (506) 546-9540
  Email: passagehouse@nb.aibn.com

- **Serenity House**
  7714 Route 134
  Sainte-Anne-de-Kent, NB E4S 1H5
  Phone: (506) 743-1530

- **Sussex Vale Transition House**
  PO Box 4862
  Sussex, NB E4E 5L9
  Crisis line: (506) 432-6999
  Office: (506) 433-1649
  Text only crisis line: (506) 435-1689
  Website

- **Women in Transition House**
  PO Box 1143
  Fredericton, NB E3B 5C2
  Crisis line:(506) 459-2300
  Phone: (506) 457-2770
  Email: transhouse1@nb.aibn.com
  Website

- **Woodstock Sanctuary House**
  PO Box 4294
  Woodstock, NB E7M 6B7
  24/7 crisis line: 1-866-377-3577
  General inquiries: (506) 325-9452
  Email: sanctuary@nb.aibn.com
  Website

- **Family Violence Prevention Program**
  Tobique First Nation
  Phone: (506) 273-5541

Hospitals that offer SANE Services

- **Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital**
  700 Priestman St., PO Box 9000
  Fredericton, NB E3B 3B7
  Fax: (506) 452-5233
  Phone: (506) 452-5400

- **Miramachi Regional Hospital**
  500 Water St.
  Miramichi, NB E1V 3G5
  Fax: (506) 623-3465
  Phone: (506) 623-3000

- **The Moncton Hospital**
  135 MacBeath Ave.
  Moncton, NB E1C 6Z8
  Phone: (506) 857-5111

- **Saint John Regional Hospital**
  400 University Ave.
  PO Box 2100 *for general mail*
  Saint John, NB E2L 4L2
  Phone: (506) 648-6000

- **Upper River Valley Hospital (Waterville)**
  11300 Route 130
  Waterville, NB E7P 0A4
  Phone: (506) 375-5900

- **Campbellton Regional Hospital**
  189 Lily Lake Road
  Campbellton, NB E3N 3H3
  Phone: (506) 789-5000

- **Chaleur Regional Hospital**
  1750 Sunset Drive
  Bathurst, NB E2A 4L7
  Phone: (506) 544-3000

- **Grand Falls General Hospital**
  625 Everard H. Daigle Boulevard
  Grand Falls, NB E3Z 1G5
  Phone: (506) 473-7555

- **Hôtel-Dieu Saint-Joseph de Saint-Quentin**
  21 Rue Canada
  Saint-Quentin, NB E8A 2P6
  Phone: (506) 235-2300

- **Hôpital de l'Enfant-Jésus RHSJ†**
  1 Saint-Pierre Boulevard West
  Caraquet, NB E1W 1B6
  Phone: (506) 726-2100

- **Tracadie-Sheila Hospital**
  400 Rue des Hospitaliéres
  Tracadie-Sheila, NB E1X 1G5
  Phone: (506) 394-3000

- **Edmundston Regional Hospital**
  275 Hébert Boulevard
  Edmundston, NB E3V 4E4
  Phone: (506) 739-2200


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