



WAIRARAPA  
RAPE & SEXUAL ABUSE  
COLLECTIVE INC.

# **Let's talk about Rape & Sexual Abuse**





Kia ora,

I would like to acknowledge Wairarapa Rape & Sexual Abuse Collective, staff and volunteers who are committed to ending Sexual Violence in our Community and who continue to support and advocate tirelessly for the Sexual Violence Community.

I would like to thank Ihaka Consultancy for their assistance in the formatting of this booklet.

He mihi maioha ki a koutou katoa i tautoko ai te whakaputa i te pukapuka nei “Let’s Talk about Rape & Sexual Abuse”.

Over the years there has been wisdom and strength from survivors, the community and the sexual violence sector that I would also like to acknowledge.

#### Disclaimer

The views expressed in this booklet are our own and do not necessarily reflect the views of others.



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# Who are We? | Ko wai mātou?

Wairarapa Rape & Sexual Abuse Collective Incorporated is a non-government organisation, we are non-profit, free and confidential specialist in sexual violence for people who have been directly or indirectly affected by rape or sexual abuse at any time.

We work with a range of age groups of Child/Tamariki, Youth/Rangatahi and Adults/Pakeke.

This includes supporting Parents/Caregivers.

The organisation is governed by a Collective made up of dedicated volunteers and paid staff who are committed to supporting our community.

Our services include advocacy, referrals to ACC, assistance with medical requirements, police options and legal proceedings.

We also deliver a Sexual Violence Prevention education program to our local Colleges to educate and raise awareness.

Our office is based in Masterton with our services covering the Wairarapa area from Cape Palliser to Tararua.

**Break the silence.**





# **Who is This Book For?**

## **Mā wai tēnei pukapuka?**

This book has been created for everyone within our communities.

No matter who you are or where you come from, Rape & Sexual Abuse can affect many people and the impact for each person is different.

We want people to have an understanding of the realities around this tough subject so they are aware of the impacts, effects and the healing process of those who experience Rape, Sexual Abuse.

We hope you find this booklet useful in some way, that it helps to give a better understanding of Rape & Sexual abuse and raise awareness.

Everyone has different views and opinions, you might too and that is okay.



# Why is this book important?

Rape & Sexual Abuse is real and alive in our communities. There is no age, gender, financial status or ethnicity that it does not affect.

There are a lot of myths and false beliefs around Sexual Violence that victim-blame and shame.

Here are some of the stereotypes that are alive and real in our communities of what a “real rape/unwanted sexual incident” should have consisted of.

- The stranger in the dark alley
- The person who didn't scream
- The person who had no marks
- The person in a van
- The person who always seemed a bit weird

Myths, stereotypes and false beliefs lead to people not getting the support they need because their experience did not fit with these, which also means the real extent of rape and sexual abuse remain unspoken.

The distinction between consensual intimate acts/sex and rape or sexual abuse can be unclear to many people.

Our purpose in this book is to educate and bring awareness to help you understand clear boundaries, respect of others and to raise healthy conversations to have a positive impact on breaking the silence of Rape & Sexual Abuse.



# What is Rape?

Legal definition:

Rape is gender specific as it involves a penis entering a vagina without consent. It also includes people who have surgically altered their genitals.

Our Definition:

Rape is a form of sexual violence that involves an individual being forced or coerced into engaging in sexual activity against their will.

Consent for sexual activity means a clear voluntary ongoing enthusiastic yes, given freely by someone with the capacity to agree without force or threats etc.

Consent is to give permission. When you give consent it means that you agree to doing something and that you are fully aware of what you are going to do.

Being pressured into doing something sexual you do not want to do is not true consent.

You can stop or change your mind at any time .

You cannot force, bribe or pre-book consent.

Consent is applied to the present time.

Sex can include different things that involves the feeling of a sexual nature like:

- Sexual intercourse
- Oral sex
- Anal sex
- Sex involving objects

# What is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual Abuse is all other forms of unlawful sexual connection which covers all sexual contact that occurs without consent and is non-gender specific.

That is, it allows for non-consensual sexual contact between male-to-female, male-to-male, female-to-male and female-to-female individuals.

Unlawful sexual connection includes the penetration of one person by another person with genitals, fingers or objects.

Unlawful sexual connection also includes oral sex given or received without consent.

Sexual behaviors that are inappropriate or unwanted. These do not always involve touching and can be:

- Forced to watch sexual acts in person or digital.
- Sharing of intimate images without consent.
- Unwanted touching in a sexual nature.
- Being secretly watched naked or undressing.



# What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Sexual Abuse is any inappropriate sexual behaviour towards a child or young person under the age of 17yrs, it becomes Child Sexual Abuse.

When Sexual Abuse happens to a child, it may not occur to the child that they have been sexually abused.

The abuser is usually someone close or known to the child and family which can make it hard for the child to talk about Sexual Abuse.

## Approximate NZ Statistics:

- 1 in 3 girls in New Zealand will encounter an unwanted sexual experience by the age of 16.
- 1 in 4 boys will experience sexual abuse by the age of 16.
- 1 in 2 disabled people will experience sexual harm of some kind.
- 47% of trans people have reported unwanted sexual advances from the age of 13.

# What if I am in a Relationship?

You have rights over your body just like items you may own.

Your body should be treated and given the same respect as items that belong to us.

Some important things to remember while in relationships are:

- Everyone has the right to set sexual limits and to communicate those limits
- Everyone has the right to be assertive, state what they really want and what they really feel
- Everyone has the right to take care of themselves and trust their own feelings
- It is OK to say no at any point
- Everyone has the right to be where they want to be at any time, wear what they feel comfortable in and make free choices about alcohol and drugs
- It is important to respect other people's autonomy.
- No means "No"

## What if?

Let's look at some scenarios:

- A 16 year old offers to give someone 16yrs or older sexual favours in return for the latest phone:
  - If consent is clearly given and by no way of coercion, blackmail or force this is okay
- A 15 year old is fooling around with their 17 year old partner. Play-kissing is happening when the 17 year old pushes them down and begins to have sex with them:
  - This is not okay and is Rape
- Two 16 year olds, who were in a relationship and having consensual sex, break up. One of them is unhappy with the breakup and tells their friends that they had been raped by now ex-partner:
  - It is never okay to make false allegations of rape against someone. This can also lead to the person being charged with a false allegation as it has many negative impacts for the other person

**Sometimes things don't seem clear and can be confusing.**



## But what if?

- Intimate “intimate visual recordings” photos or recordings are taken of a person without their knowledge:
  - Intimate visual photos & recordings cannot be taken without a person’s knowledge and consent
- You are at a party, there is a person who is being touched inappropriately and taken to a nearby bush. You can see that they can barely stand:
  - You try to stop the situation safely, or go to someone who can help stop and intervene
- A teenager sends naked photos of themselves to their partner who then shares those pictures with all their friends:
  - It’s okay to share naked photos with the person of your choice, but as soon as that person passes on the naked photos to other people without your permission, it becomes illegal, and the person receiving the photos will also get in trouble if they were to share further

# Some Common Effects of Rape & Sexual Abuse

Rape & Sexual Abuse can have profound and long-term effects on your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing. These effects impact everyone in different ways. There is no right or wrong way to feel but they are all normal.

This is not a diagnosis; some people develop many effects following an experience of sexual violence and some develop few effects.

The impact can depend on a number of things including the following:

- The relationship of the offender (known, unknown, family, within the community)
- The number of offenders
- The physical severity of the abuse
- The duration of the abuse (from minutes to repeated abuse over many years)
- If force, threats, fear, intimidation, coercion or grooming techniques were used
- The amount of time until the abuse was first disclosed
- The response to the disclosure (positive or negative)
- The number of positive, mediating variables (supportive people, safety, positive interventions)
- Whether there was a previous history of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, bullying), neglect or trauma including effects from a background of poverty or discrimination or harassment (racism, sexism)

# Psychological | Physical | Social Effects

- Self-blame leading to Depression/Self-harming/Suicidal thoughts
- PTSD /Dissociation/Anxiety/Anger
- Relationship difficulties/Parenting difficulties/Sexual difficulties
- Using substances to self-medicate (alcohol, drugs, smoking)
- Revictimisation
- Headaches
- Chronic pain (particularly pelvic pain in women)/Stomach pain
- Early sexual activity/Pregnancy/STI's
- Eating difficulties
- Stress reactions to health interventions



# Varying Emotional Reactions:

- **Shock**

- Disbelief at what has happened
- Numbness: the event may seem unreal, like a dream
- Shaking, crying, laughing
- Slow comprehension of what has happened
- May occur immediately or sometime later

- **Fears**

- Of recurrence of the event
- Of damage to oneself or of death
- Awareness of personal vulnerability
- Panicky, irrational feelings
- That others will blame or reject you or may not believe you
- Other, apparently-unrelated fear

- **Anger**

- At the rapist
- At yourself or others for “allowing it to happen”
- At your feelings of powerlessness
- At the unfairness and senselessness of it all; generalised anger and hostility may be directed towards the gender of the person who abused you

# Varying Emotional Reactions:

- **Shame:**

- Feeling that there is something basically wrong with you, that you somehow deserved what happened
- For not having reacted as you would have wished

- **Helplessness:**

- Feeling powerless and being out of control of life.
- Inability to make any decisions

- **Sadness**

- For the loss of the belief that the world is safe and predictable; about human destruction and loss of every kind
- For loss of the life you had before the rape changed everything

- **Guilt**

- Feeling responsible, a long list of “if only”

# Behavioural Effects:

- **Tension**

- More easily startled, general agitation (physical and / or mental)
- Sleep disturbances - inability to sleep, thoughts that prevent sleep, replaying the event, wanting to sleep all the time
- Dreams / nightmares of the rape or other vivid and frightening events

- **Fearfulness**

- Of the place, reminders of the incident
- Of the gender of the person who abused you or people in general
- Of going out of your own home. Of being alone

- **Intrusive memories and feelings**

- Flashbacks which interfere with concentration and daily life. Attempt to shut them out which leads to deadening of feelings and thoughts

- **Irritability**

- Frequent mood swings



# Behavioural Effects:

- **Depression**

- Loss of interest in life
- Sense of meaninglessness
- Lethargy

- **Social withdrawal**

- Wanting to be alone
- Reluctance to talk or associate with anyone

- **Physical sensations.**

- Tiredness
- Palpitations
- Tremors
- Breathing difficulties
- Headaches
- Tense muscles
- Aches and pain
- Loss of appetite or over-eating
- Loss of sexual interest
- Nausea, diarrhoea or constipation
- And many other symptoms

# What if Someone Wants the Police to Know?

If you or someone you know have experienced Rape or Sexual Abuse, the idea of reporting the experience to the Police can seem incredibly intimidating.

You don't have to contemplate doing this on your own. There are agencies, like ours to work with you, your whānau and loved ones to provide all the wrap-around support you need to contact the Police with confidence.

NZ Police have provided advice on their website for survivors of rape and sexual abuse, as well as resources on what you need to know about sexual assault.

# Formal Complaints

The first part is talking to the police to arrange a statement which is recorded on video. (Evidential Video Interview). You will have the option of a medical examination by a specially trained Clinician if the Rape or Sexual Abuse was recent.

## Talking to the Police

You can go to the police station or ask the police to come to you to start the process. If you feel more comfortable you may ask to speak to a male or female officer, but there may not always be one available.

## Medical Examination

If the assault was recent (within 7 days), the police will ask for a medical examination to gather forensic evidence. You can choose to say no, however, this may be helpful for police and used as evidence in court.

The examination will be carried out by a Wahi Marie Clinician (a Specialist Doctor/Nurse trained for Medical Sexual Assaults) and will take up to a few hours.

Medical support is still available by Wahi Marie for acute and historical well-being checks.

## Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)

ACC has a Sensitive Claims Process for costs relating to counselling and therapy following any sexual assault you may have experienced. We can work through this process with you.



## Formal Complaints

- **Further information can be found in:**

- The Rape Survivor's Legal Guide
- The Wahi Marie (Medical Sexual Assault Clinicians Aotearoa) pamphlet on medical care for sexual assault survivors. You can get a copy of this by contacting us

- **Further Information can be found Online:**

- <https://communitylaw.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Rape-Survivors-Legal-Guide-2011.pdf>
- <https://wahimarie.org.nz/sexual-harm-services/>
- <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/sexual-assault-and-consent/what-can-i-do-if-i-have-been-sexually-assaulted>
- <https://sexualviolence.victimsinfo.govt.nz/>

Please note, regardless of the decision you make to have Police involved or not, Wahi Marie services are available for just in case Forensics Examinations, therapeutic and non-forensic specialist support, this is not restricted to being done within 7 days.

Please refer to the Wahi Marie website for further detailed information.

# Going to Court

The Court process can be traumatic for survivors and proceeding can be slow.

The basic legal process in New Zealand is:

- Decision by Police to lay charges
- Accused arrested and charged
- Preliminary hearing
- District Court Trial
- Sentencing
- Appeal
- A court-based services for victims of crime is available, known as the Court Victims Advisor Service.

This process can be shorter if the accused pleads guilty.

Detailed information on the court process can be found in The Rape Survivors Legal Guide.

The sentence:

The maximum sentence is 20 years but differ with every sentencing.

# Supporters

You can ask family, friends and supporters to:

- Go with you to Police
- Be with you while you talk to them
- Be with you at your medical examination
- Take you somewhere safe after the police and doctors listen to you
- Speak on your behalf (e.g. request breaks)

## Specialist Support Workers

- Can be with you if you want
- Listen to you
- Be with you when you talk to the police
- Speak on your behalf (e.g. request breaks)
- Stay with you during your medical
- Stay with you during your statement
- Be with you at any identity parade
- Support you during a court case



# Healing

## Stages of Healing from Sexual Abuse

Although most of these stages are necessary for every survivor, a few of them (the emergency stage, remembering the abuse, confronting your family and forgiveness) are not applicable for every person.

### **The Decision to Heal**

Once you recognise the effects of sexual abuse in your life, you need to make an active commitment to heal. Deep healing happens only when you choose it and are willing to change yourself.

### **The Emergency Stage**

Beginning to deal with memories and suppressed feelings can throw your life into utter turmoil. Remember this is only a stage. It won't last forever.

### **Remembering**

Many survivors suppress all memories of what happened to them as children. Those who do not forget the actual incidents often forget how it felt at the time. Remembering is the process of getting back both memory and feeling.

### **Believing it Happened**

Survivors often doubt their own perceptions. Coming to believe that the abuse really happened and that it really hurt you is a vital part of the healing process.

# Healing

## Stages of Healing from Sexual Abuse

### **Breaking the Silence**

Most adult survivors kept the abuse a secret in childhood. Telling another human being about what happened to you is a powerful healing force that can dispel the shame of being a survivor.

### **Understanding that it Wasn't Your Fault**

Children usually believe abuse is their fault. Adult survivors must place the blame directly where it belongs – on the shoulders of the abusers.

### **Making Contact with the “Child Within”**

Many survivors have lost touch with their own vulnerability. Getting in touch with the “Child Within” can help you feel compassion for yourself, more anger at your abuser, and greater intimacy with others.

### **Trusting Yourself**

The best guide for healing is your own inner voice. Learning to trust your own perceptions, feelings and intuitions forms a new basis for action in the world.

# Healing

## Stages of Healing from Sexual Abuse

### Grieving and Mourning

When being abused as a child, moving into adulthood may seem a struggle to survive, most survivors haven't felt their losses. Grieving is a way to honour your pain, let go and move into the present.

### Anger - The Backbone of Healing

Anger is a powerful and liberating force. Whether you need to get in touch with it or have always had plenty to spare, directing your rage squarely at your abuser and at those who didn't protect you is pivotal to healing.

### Self-Care for Survivors

Whether your experience of abuse was recent or a long time ago, having an action plan for healing and recovery is really important. We provide access to some practical resources for showing yourself the compassion and gentleness you deserve.

***“You are stronger than you feel, smarter than you know and more resilient than you realise”***



## Counselling - Part of Your Action Plan

Talking to a counsellor about the Abuse for some survivors is part of their recovery.

We will support and refer you to access free counselling with a locally-qualified ACC (Accident Compensation Corporation) Counsellor or therapist to work with you in your recovery.

Some survivors have found counselling really helpful, It gives you a chance to talk about feelings and experiences that may be hard to share with other people in your life.

You don't have to talk about the details of the abuse if you don't want to, you can talk about whatever is going on for you right now.

It's not that simple, Sexual Abuse has serious effects and healing from it will be full of ups and downs. Some days will be better than others. Facing what happened head-on will take courage but things will get easier.

***“Inhale the future. Exhale the past”***

## Information for Whānau & Friends.

Are you a friend or whānau of a survivor?

For a survivor of Sexual Abuse, the way their whānau and friends react to their experience may influence how they recover. Some people may blame the survivor for what has happened. The survivor can be sensitive to other people's reactions and the survivor may not tell anyone of their experience, fearing the possible consequences of their reactions.

### **REMEMBER**

**The survivor is not to blame.**

A survivor may feel powerless, guilty, shameful, fearful, angry, sad or depressed. They may blame themselves at times, these reactions are common.

Everyone is different and copes with trauma differently. There is no 'one way' to feel, there is also no time limit on a survivor's healing process.

Any of these reactions may occur months or even years following an experience of Sexual Abuse.

A healing process is not linear, It is important that the survivor knows that you love, support and care for them.



## **Do Not:**

- Urge or force the survivor to go to the Police. This decision is for the survivor to make when/if they are ready
- Question the survivor about their experience. This could feel invalidating
- Urge the survivor to forget about or hide the experience.
- Blame the survivor. It is never the survivor's fault
- Express the want to cause harm to the perpetrator. It will not help the survivor's recovery process

## **Do:**

- Show your support, care and affection. There are many ways to do this, however touch may not be most appropriate
- Allow the survivor to regain control over their life and make their own decisions. Treat them no differently than before Continue to live the way you always have, providing stability and security
- Be willing to listen if they want to talk. Do not force them to talk if they do not want to. They may feel more comfortable talking to someone else, that is okay too

**The most important things to do are  
LISTEN, BELIEVE & SUPPORT.**

If someone you know and are close to such as a whānau member or friend, has experienced Sexual Abuse, it is common to feel disbelief, guilt, helplessness and anger. You may want to talk to someone about your feelings and how you can best help.



# Confidentiality & Your Rights

**Confidentiality - all information provided to Wairarapa Rape & Sexual Abuse Collective Inc. is confidential, except in the following situations:**

- If there is clear danger or risk of danger to yourself
- If there is clear danger or risk of danger to a child/children
- If there is clear danger or risk of danger to another person
- External and peer supervision purposes

If we have concerns about your own or someone else's safety, we will consult with a clinical supervisor before deciding if we need to speak to another party.

# Your Rights with Police

- To be treated with courtesy, compassion and respect for your privacy and dignity
- To be told of services and supports available to you
- To be given information about the progress of the police investigation, to be told what charges are being laid or the reason for no charges
- To be told dates, places and result of court hearings.
- To have property returned to you as soon as possible
- To have your street address withheld from Court
- To be told about bail, sentencing, release, or escape from jail
- To tell the parole board your views on release

# **Your Rights when You Engage with Our Service.**

(Health and Disability Code of Rights, 1996)

## **You have the right:**

- To be treated with respect
- To freedom from discrimination, coercion, harassment and exploitation
- To dignity and independence
- To services of an appropriate standard
- To effective communication
- To be fully informed
- To make an informed choice and give informed consent
- To support
- To make a complaint
- To have an advocate



# Myths around Rape & Sexual Abuse

Myths are made up from opinions with no facts or truths behind them. Myths create false views and opinions that make some people believe some strange thoughts around Rape and Sexual Abuse which makes it harder for people to talk about.

Lets break down some myths:

MYTH	TRUTH
It only happens to strangers	90% of victims knew who Raped or Sexually Abused them
It is not rape if you are in a relationship	Any sexual act without consent is Rape or Sexual Abuse
They were asking for it	No one asks to be Raped or Sexually Abused
It doesn't happen to males	Males are victims of Sexual Abuse
If your abuser is of the same sex, it means you are gay	Rape and/or Sexual Abuse does not make you gay
They didn't tell anyone so it can't be true	It is common that victims do not speak about the abuse until some time after
Only men are abusers	Females are abusers as well



## FACTS

You have the right to live without fear of Rape or Sexual Abuse. It's the responsibility of the abusers to stop rape and sexual assault. A situation can start off innocent and fun but can then very quickly escalate out of control.

Think about what feels right for you and what doesn't. It does not matter what you've done before. Your limits are for you to decide.

Sexual assault can occur in any situation. It's never your fault regardless of the circumstances. However, if taking drugs and alcohol:

- Stay in control – don't get pressured into drinking more than you are comfortable with. Look out for people trying to get you drunk; they may be trying to force you into sex.
- Make a plan with your mates to look out for each other when you're partying. Never leave a friend/anyone alone if they are drunk or wasted – intervene. You may prevent future trauma for that person
- Keep an eye on what you are drinking. Drinks can be spiked. Non-alcoholic drinks can be spiked too

If someone/ a partner starts to offend you or cross a line that you have set for yourself, tell them firmly and early. Polite approaches may be misunderstood or ignored. If the person does not respect your wishes, remove yourself from the situation immediately. Miscommunication can be explained later. Do not give someone the chance to violate your wishes or boundaries. This can often contribute to the guilt felt following unwanted sexual advances, but it does not make it your fault.

## FACTS

If someone tries to talk you into doing something that you are not comfortable with, or someone is doing things that you don't feel comfortable with, speak up and say no if you can do so safely.

Remember that no one has the right to force you into anything you don't want to do. It's your body - stand up for yourself. There must always be CONSENT on both sides. Consent to one thing does not give consent to another.

If you feel you are being pressured into unwanted sex, you probably are. If you feel uncomfortable or threatened around anybody, get out of the situation immediately. If you misread someone's signals, you can always explain later.

If someone is assaulting you and not responding to your objections, you have the right to respond physically or to physically defend yourself if you feel you can do so. If possible, push the person away, scream "No!", and say that you consider what the person is doing to be rape. It is understandable that most people instinctively do not respond forcefully to people they know. It is not your fault if you find that you are unable to do so.

**Without consent from both parties, it is still Sexual Assault and no one ever deserves to be raped or assaulted!**



## The meaning of our Logo

### Ko te tikanga o tō mātou tohu

The highlights on the logo symbolises the layers that the clients develop, while they also add versatility to the design.

The colour palette was found over series of collaborative stages, using some existing colours as a starting platform.



Left side: Represents the client, their growth, their supports, the building of their strengths and their flourishing out of the service (bold + thick, to represent strength and building).

Right side: Wairarapa Rape & Sexual Abuse 's supporting element at every step (smaller + thinner and contained growth as we are a smaller part of their whole healing journey).

## How to Contact Our Service.

Our Office is open: 8.30am - 2.30pm.

Appointments are preferred and can be made outside office hours.

Address: Departmental Building, 35-37 Chapel Street,  
Masterton 5810.

The main entrance which also has disability access, is at the front North Side of the building.

Phone: 06 370 8446

Please leave a message if no immediate answer as we may be on another call or with a client.

Email: [coordinator@wairarapa-rapecrisis.org.nz](mailto:coordinator@wairarapa-rapecrisis.org.nz)

Website: [www.wairaraparapecrisis.org.nz](http://www.wairaraparapecrisis.org.nz)

Office is closed public holidays.

**Direct, free & confidential 24 hour  
phone line  
0800 614 614**

**More information can be found on our website by scanning the QR code below:**



## **Additional information and helpful sites :**

**National Rape & Sexual Abuse Crisis Line  
0800 88 33 00**

Free calling number to select your closest specialist service who offer free & confidential support for survivors of rape and sexual abuse across Aotearoa New Zealand.

- <https://www.acc.co.nz/im-injured/what-we-cover/support-after-sexual-abuse-and-assault>
- <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/advice-victims/victims-rape-or-sexual-assault>
- <https://takeitdown.ncmec.org/>
- <https://wahimarie.org.nz/>



# Notes

