

## Defining Sexual Violence and Assault

Sexual violence is sexual activity when consent is not obtained or not freely given. It is a serious public health problem in the United States. Sexual violence impacts every community and affects people of all genders, sexual orientations, and ages—anyone can experience or perpetrate sexual violence. The perpetrator of sexual violence is usually someone known to the victim, such as a friend, current or former intimate partner, coworker, neighbor, or family member.

(Source: CDC)

## Types of Sexual Assault and Violence

The term "sexual violence" is an all-encompassing, non-legal term that refers to crimes like sexual assault, rape, and sexual abuse. Please note that the legal definition of crimes vary from state to state. There are often other crimes and forms of violence that arise jointly with crimes like sexual assault, and these are described as well.

(source: RAINN)

**Sexual Assault:** Sexual assault can take many different forms and be defined in different ways, but one thing remains the same: it's never the victim's fault.

**Child Sexual Abuse:** When a perpetrator intentionally harms a minor physically, psychologically, sexually, or by acts of neglect, the crime is known as child abuse.

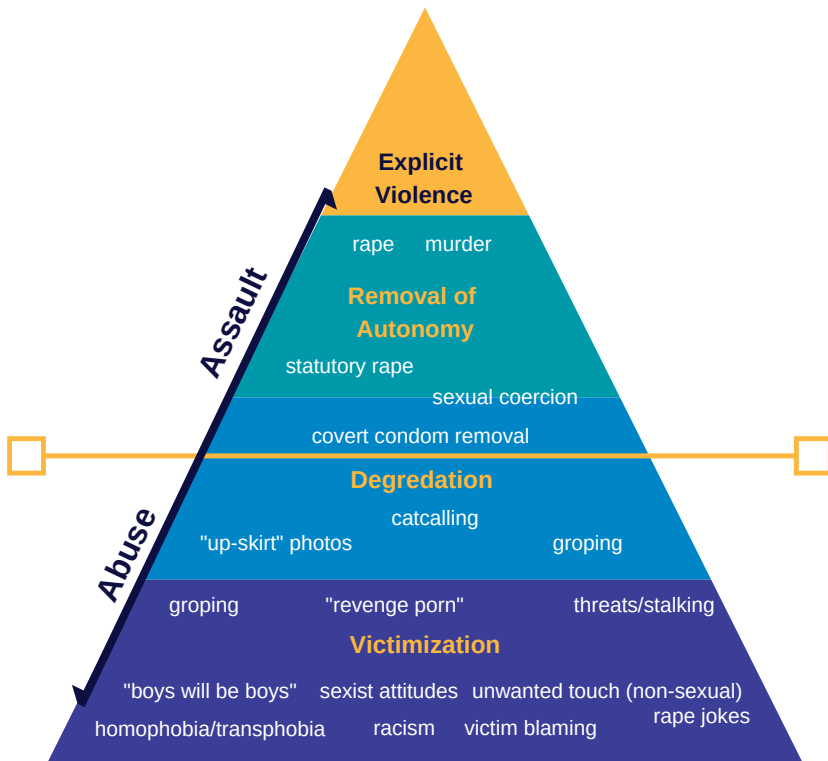
**Sexual Assault of Men and Boys:** Men and boys who have been sexually assaulted or abused may also face some additional challenges because of social attitudes and stereotypes about men and masculinity.

**Intimate Partner Sexual Violence:** A perpetrator can have any relationship to a victim, and that includes the role of an intimate partner.

**Incest:** Regardless of how the law defines incest, unwanted sexual contact from a family member can have a lasting effect on the survivor.

**Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault:** In cases of drug-facilitated sexual assault, survivors often blame themselves. Remember—you are not to blame. You are the only one allowed to make choices for your body. Using drugs or alcohol is never an excuse for assault and does not mean that it was your fault.

## Rape Culture and the Continuum of Sexual Violence



“Rape Culture” is an environment in which rape and other sexual violence are common and in which prevalent attitudes, norms, practices and media condone, normalize, excuse or encourage sexualized violence. Rape culture allows for sexual violence to happen.

## Resources

### Hotline Resources

Heartly House Inc.  
24/7 Hotline: 301-662-8800  
heartlyhouse.org

### RAINN

24-Hour Hotline: 1-800-656-4673  
www.rainn.org

### Online Resources

MCASA  
www.mcasa.org

NSVRC  
www.nsvrc.org

1in6  
www.1in6.org