

# Sexual violence in LGBTQ2S+ communities: understanding the issue

It's important to recognize that sexual and intimate partner violence are about power and control, and so identities that hold less power or privilege in our society are often more targeted with these forms of violence. In keeping with this, the rate of sexual assault is higher among people who hold one or more identities that experience marginalization, including trans, bi/pansexual, Indigenous, racialized, and differently abled. Statistics often don't accurately reflect the complexities of people's intersecting identities.

**The only person responsible for sexual assault is the person who chooses to harm.**

For more on these stats and how to interpret statistics about sexual violence, visit [sace.ca/understandingsvstats](https://sace.ca/understandingsvstats)

In addition to sexual and intimate partner violence in relationships, LGBTQ2S+ communities are often the target of sexual violence and/or marginalization by others because of homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, misogyny, and other forms of discrimination. This can create barriers to accessing support too. Biases and normative assumptions about genders and experiences can make it more difficult for people to get the support they need. Trans, two-spirit, and non-binary folks in particular may also be unable to access needed services due to barriers in gender segregated services, or a lack of knowledge and competency about trans care from professionals.

Bisexual people are  
**2-3x**  
more likely to experience sexual violence.

Gay men are  
**2x**  
more likely to experience sexual assault

**3 in 4**  
people with diverse sexual orientations have experienced sexual assault

**People are the experts in their own experience.**

If you are supporting someone who has experienced sexual violence, the most important things you can do are to listen without judgement, to support whatever they choose to do and how they choose to frame their experience, and, most importantly, to believe them.

**Visit [sace.ca/learn](https://sace.ca/learn)** for more or to chat with a support volunteer from 9 am to 9 pm daily or call or text:

**1.866.403.8000**





## Sexual assault is common



In Alberta experience sexual assault before the age of 18

\* Studies did not indicate whether these stats are trans-inclusive



**Listen. Believe. Support.**  
[sace.ca](http://sace.ca)

## Definitions

### Age of Consent

When someone is 16 years old they are able to consent to sexual activity with a person who is 14 or older. The only exception would be when the older person is in a position of power, trust, or authority. 14 and 15 year-olds are able to consent with someone who is LESS than 5 years older than them, and 12 and 13 year-olds are able to consent with someone who is LESS than 2 years older than them. For more, visit [www.sace.ca/learn/what-is-child-sexual-abuse](http://www.sace.ca/learn/what-is-child-sexual-abuse).

### Child Sexual Abuse

The improper exposure of a child to sexual contact, activity, or behaviour. This includes all forms of sexual contact, including oral contact (forced kissing), sexual touching, oral-genital contact (forced oral sex), and/or vaginal or anal penetration. Showing a child sexually explicit material (pornography) or genitalia (flashing) are also sexual abuse, as is the invitation to sexual touch, even when no physical contact has occurred.

### Consent

A voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity. Consent must be clear, informed, voluntary, sober, act and person-specific, ongoing, mutual, active, and come directly from the individuals engaging in the sexual activity. It is impossible for children to consent, though close-in-age and peer experimentation exceptions exist for youth ages 12-15.

### Coercion

Forcing another person to engage in sexual activity against their will. Force can often include, but is not limited to, acts of violence, threats (physical or emotional), pressure, deception, or guilt.

### Non-Consensual Photo Sharing

When an intimate or sexually suggestive photo or video is taken, shared, or otherwise used without the voluntary consent of the person in the photo or video.

### Sexual Assault

Any form of sexual contact without voluntary consent, including unwanted oral contact (forced kissing), sexual touching, oral-genital contact (forced oral sex), and/or vaginal or anal penetration.

### Sexual Violence

An umbrella term that refers to any form of non-consensual sexual behaviour, including sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, sex trafficking, and sexual violence facilitated through technology.