



What is rape?

In 2009 the definition of rape changed when the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act came into force. The new definition was significantly different to the original and the offence of male rape was included in this revised Act. The Act now defines rape as “penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth with a penis”. The new Act also includes, for the first time, a statutory definition of consent.

What is sexual assault?

Sexual assault is defined as “penetration, by any means and to any extent, the vagina, anus or mouth by things other than a penis (fingers, other body parts, objects); sexual touching; sexual activity by means of an implement; ejaculation of semen; emission of urine or saliva in a sexual manner”.

The Act also includes coercion offences, communicating indecently, administering a substance for sexual purposes and sexual abuse of trust. It is much more comprehensive than the original Act.

What is Child Sex Abuse

It is sexual abuse of children or young people which involves any sexual activity with a child under the age of 16. This can include rape, oral sex, intimate touching or inviting intimate touching; forcing children to watch/take part in pornography...the list goes on. This abuse can start at any age and can continue into adulthood, most often the perpetrator is known to the child either within the family or as a close family friend or neighbour.

Childhood sexual abuse is a hidden, secretive thing which often includes emotional and physical abuse. Children are never in a position to stop the abuse by themselves; they are never the ones with the power. Sometimes they are too afraid to tell anyone for fear of reprisals or simply do not have the language to speak about what is happening to them.

Who does it happen to?

Sexual violence can and does happen to anyone. Women, men, children, young people, elderly people, able-bodied, disabled people – anyone can be abused. There is no “type” of victim of sexual crime, nor is there a “type” of abuser. In many

cases, the abuser is known to the survivor, often a member of the family, close friend or someone in a position of trust.

Was I to blame?

No. The only person to blame for committing these crimes is the perpetrator. He or she (women also offend, although the majority of abuse against women, men and young people is carried out by men) chooses to disregard the humanity of the person being abused. It is all about what the abuser wants. Wants, not needs. There is a big difference.

Other types of unwanted sexual behaviour

Sexual bullying – includes any behaviour, whether physical or non-physical, which is based on a person's sexuality or gender. This can be inappropriate touching, forcing someone to carry out sexual acts, sexualised name calling and the use of innuendoes and propositions.

Sexual harassment – very similar to sexual bullying, it is not flirting. It's generally power-based and can be used by people in positions of authority.