

A sexual violence dictionary

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is any sexual activity that is forced and nonconsensual by means of psychological coercion or physical abuse. It includes all acts of sexual violation such as sexual abuse, rape, sodomy, sexual acts committed with foreign objects, sexual harassment, touching a person's intimate parts without their consent and any other unwanted sexual activity.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse, also referred to as molestation, is usually undesired sexual behavior by one person upon another. It is often perpetrated using force or by taking advantage of another. When force is immediate, of short duration, or infrequent, sexual abuse is called sexual assault.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AND RAPE

The terms "sexual assault" and "rape" conjure up many different images. For this reason, it can be challenging for individuals to define them. Sexual Assault is an umbrella term for when a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into participating in a sexual act to which she, he or they has not freely consented.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Unwanted, unwelcome sexual attention or advances. Sexual misconduct is a term often used to describe sexual harassment perpetrated by a person in a position of power, trust or authority.

CONSENT

Consent isn't something to be obtained with a simple "yes," it's a continual and open negotiation and dialogue.

- Consent is more than "yes" or "no"
- Consent is **WILLING** participation
- Consent is **SPECIFIC**
- Consent is **ENTHUSIASTIC**
- Consent is **INFORMED**
- Consent is **MUTUAL**
- Consent is **ONGOING**
- Consent is based on **EQUAL POWER**
- Consent can be **WITHDRAWN** at any time
- Consent is a **NEGOTIATION**
- Consent happens without **PRESSURE** or **MANIPULATION**
- Consent is **NOT PERSISTING** when someone says no (verbally or nonverbally)

Agreeing or giving in to sex because of coercion or fear is not consent. Just because someone says, "yes," they want to have sex with you doesn't mean you have consent to do whatever you want. Consent is about mutual desire, so get specific!

COERCIVE CONTROL

Coercive control is a strategic course of oppressive behavior designed to secure and expand gender-based privilege by depriving women of their rights and liberties and establishing a regime of domination in personal life.

Coercive control refers to abuse as a “strategic course of oppressive behavior,” meaning that:

- Behavior is rational, instrumental and not a loss of control
- Behavior is “ongoing” rather than episodic
- Behavior is based on multiple tactics like violence, intimidation, degradation, isolation and control

VICTIM BLAMING

Victim blaming is an umbrella term that denotes any actions or words that suggest or state that a victim of a crime -- in this case of sexual nature -- is to blame for what happened to them.

RAPE CULTURE

Rape culture refers to a society or environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual violence and abuse. More often than not, it's situations in which sexual assault, rape, and general violence are ignored, trivialized, normalized, or made into jokes. To learn more check out the following article on everydayfeminism.com

RESPECTFUL SEXUALITY

Is how we honor ourselves and how we treat others. It is about having knowledge of all the risks and ramifications of engaging in sexual behavior and choosing a path that respects both parties involved. Consent and communication are essential to respectful sexuality.