



When Sex is Not OK

Sexual Assault

The majority of young people in Australia feel positive about sex and get involved sexually at a time that's more or less right for them. Sadly, this isn't always the case. Sexual assault is "any unwanted sexual behaviour that makes a person feel fearful, uncomfortable or threatened. It includes any sexual activity that a person has not freely agreed to. All forms of sexual assault are criminal and the responsibility lies solely with the offender." Australian statistics show that the majority of victims of sexual assault are girls and young women. For both girls and boys, and young women and young men, the greatest number of victims of sexual assault are children, teenagers and young people under 25. Women who are sexually assaulted nearly always know the person who did it.

For more information about sexual assault statistics go to <http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/statistics.html>

For more information about where to go for help for yourself or a friend, there are a number of websites that you might find useful:

www.reachout.com.au

www.kidshelp.com.au

<http://www.burstingthebubble.com/services.shtml>

<http://www.dvirc.org.au/whenlove/>

<http://www.aboutdaterape.nsw.gov.au/index.html>

The influence of drugs or alcohol

There can be other times when sex is not OK either. Research shows that one quarter of Australian high school students who have had sex report that they were drunk or intoxicated the last time they did it. This meant the sex was unprotected, or that they didn't really want to have sex but were too 'out of it' to know.

When a relationship is not equal

Another, different situation, is when a young person has sex in exchange for money or some other reward. For some people this might be OK, but for others, it can obviously lead to abuse and exploitation. It is also illegal in most states and territories in Australia for someone in a position of authority over a young person to have sex with them if they are under 18 years. Teachers and sports coaches are examples of this.

For someone who has been sexually assaulted, or who has had sex under circumstances which they don't feel completely OK about, it can make it much more difficult to even think about sexually transmitted infections like Chlamydia, let alone go to a doctor to ask for a test. That's why it can be useful to involve a 'support team' that might include a trusted adult, counsellor, sexual assault professional and a doctor.