

Ask Marc

# Independent Sexual Violence Advice Services for Men

Don't deal with it alone

ask  
marc

## Rape and sexual assault: has it happened to you?

**Sexual Assault is defined as:** Sexual assault refers to sexual touching rather than a physical assault. Sexual assault can be perpetrated by either men or women. This includes touching: with any part of the body; with anything else; through anything (clothing) and in particular includes touching amounting to penetration. All of which is without consent.

**Rape is defined as:** Penetration by the penis of a vagina, anus or mouth, without consent. It can be committed against men or women, but since it involves penile penetration it can only be committed by **men**.

**Consent is defined as:** A person consents if he or she agrees by **choice** and has the **freedom** and **capacity** to make that choice.

If this has happened to you, it's important to remember that the abuse you have experienced is **not your fault**. No-one ever asks to be raped or assaulted, or deserves it. Rape and sexual assault are criminal offences, and the **blame lies with the abuser**.

**Don't deal with it alone: Ask Marc.**

We know it can be difficult to talk about, but telling someone can really help.

0121 289 6402  
info@askmarc.org.uk

## ? FAQs

### Was it my fault?

No. Whatever the circumstances, nobody has the right to force you to have sex, sexually assault or harass you.

#### This includes if you:

- Had been drinking alcohol or taking drugs at the time
- Know the person or have had sex with them before
- Had been kissing or touching that person beforehand
- Were with someone of the same sex
- Didn't say 'no' or didn't fight back
- Can't really remember it properly

### I was or I am in a relationship with the person. Is it still rape or sexual assault?

Yes, you always have the right to say 'no' or withdraw consent to sexual activity, regardless of whether you have given consent to sex with that person in the past, or are in a relationship with them, married or within a civil partnership. Sex without consent is rape.

### It happened a long time ago, is there anything I can do?

Yes. Some survivors of rape, sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse take many years to acknowledge what happened, and it can feel very difficult to talk about it or get help. But it's never too late. Our services can support and advise you whether the assault happened recently or many years ago, and whether you were an adult or a child at the time.

### Can this happen to a man?

Yes, men can be sexually harassed, assaulted or raped. This could happen to gay, bisexual, transgender or straight men, and you can be sexually assaulted by a man or woman. Being assaulted doesn't mean that you are weak or that you should have been able to stop it from happening. Sexual assault and rape are never your fault.

## How you might be feeling...

Rape and sexual assault are very traumatic events, and people respond very differently to trauma. Not everyone reacts in the same way but there are common reactions that people may have.

You might be experiencing one of these, or all of them. However you are feeling, you are having a valid response to what has happened to you. These are normal reactions to abnormal events.

#### You might be feeling:

- If the assault happened recently you might be in shock. This could mean that you feel numb, unemotional, or in denial, or it could mean that you are crying, laughing, shaking or feeling sick.
- You might have flashbacks of what happened
- You might feel guilty and ashamed, that you are to blame or should have done something to prevent the assault
- You might be too afraid to tell anyone
- You might fear that people will not believe you, will blame you or judge you
- You might have nightmares, or trouble sleeping
- You might feel depressed, upset and tearful, or feel worthless or critical of yourself or your actions
- You might find it hard to trust people or to make friends
- You might be afraid of people, places, or of being alone
- You might feel angry or irritable with people around you, and your relationships might become strained or break down
- You might find it hard to cope at work or with your studies
- You might feel you have lost your confidence and find it hard to cope with everyday life
- You might think about hurting yourself, or suicide
- You might want to use drugs or alcohol

## Talk to someone... it can help

### How we can support you

Our ISVAs (Independent Sexual Violence Advisers) are trained specialists who can work with you one to one and offer you emotional and practical support based on your needs.

#### This might include:

- Someone to talk to in confidence who will listen to you and believe you
- Sensitive services which respect your individual needs and your gender, culture, ethnicity and sexuality
- Sharing information with you so you feel empowered to make the right decisions for you. Your ISVA will not pressure you to make any decisions or take action you're not comfortable with
- Help to understand how the criminal justice process works, explaining what will happen if you choose to report to the police and if you choose not to
- If you do choose to report, we can support you through the legal process, at court, and afterwards
- Advocacy, ensuring that your views, opinions, wishes and feelings are respected and listened to by agencies you come into contact with
- Support with other practical issues that might have arisen as a result of the sexual violence you've experienced, such as accessing housing, education or healthcare
- Explaining the Criminal Injuries Compensation Award, and supporting you to apply if you are eligible
- Access to counselling and support groups

Although ISVAs work closely with other organisations to ensure you get the best support, they are **independent** of all statutory agencies including the Police, Local Authority and Social Services.

**If something has happened to you and you are not sure whether it was rape or sexual assault, you can still call us to speak to a support worker to get some advice.**

## Myths and facts about male rape and male sexual assault

There are a lot of myths about rape and sexual assault which can become barriers, stopping men from coming forward and getting the help they need.

### “Rape won’t happen to me or to anyone I know.”

Women, children, men, young and old, across all races, religions, economic and geographical divides can be victims of rape. Rape is the most under-reported crime.

### “Men cannot be sexually assaulted.”

Men can and are sexually assaulted. Rape and sexual assault are traumatic for both men and women and may have very long-lasting and damaging impacts. Men may find it difficult to talk about their experience for fear of being judged, ridiculed and not believed.

### “A man who is sexually assaulted by another man must be gay or appear to be gay.”

Research shows that the majority of sexual violence and assaults are committed by heterosexual males. Rape is not about sexual attraction but about power and control.

### “The victim must fight back for it to be called rape.”

Fighting back is not a criterion for rape or any sexual offence. A sexual offence is committed if consent is not given. Any coercion, threat, or use of force that prevents an individual from freely consenting is a criminal act.

### “Victims ask for it. They provoke or deserve an attack by their behaviour, attitudes or dress.”

No one asks to be the victim of sexual violence – you are not responsible for someone else’s violent behaviour. By blaming yourself you take the responsibility away from the person who decides to commit this very serious and damaging crime.

### “A rape victim always needs to say ‘no’ to show they don’t consent.”

There is a presumption that all rape victims need to say the word ‘no’ to state that they do not consent to sex. The reality is that some victims will ‘freeze’ during a sexual attack or behave in a submissive manner. This is sometimes due to shock, fear of the attacker, or fear for their lives.

### “Rapists are strangers.”

When most people think about how rapes occur, they imagine dark alleyways late at night and that the attacker is a stranger. The truth is the majority of people who commit rape know their victims and in some cases are relations, friends or work colleagues.

## What do people say about our support services?

- “This was one of the hardest things to speak about and not many men like me come forward...every session got easier as I shared my experience... they never judged me as a man or the colour of my skin... gave me the strength to fight another day...I can’t express the level of support I received and it was phenomenal.”
- “Joining the men’s group saved my marriage.”
- “My ISVA was easy to talk to and very kind. She listened to me and answered any concerns I had.”
- “I have been given the tools to be able to cope, to move from being a victim to a survivor. Understanding that I was not to blame, helping to deal with all the negative issues and giving me self-confidence.”

## Other useful contact numbers

These helplines offer a listening ear and advice if you need to talk in confidence:

**Survivors UK men’s helpline:** [www.survivorsuk.org](http://www.survivorsuk.org)

**The Samaritans:** 116 123

### Genito-urinary medicine (GUM) and Sexual Health Clinics

For confidential screening and treatment of sexually transmitted infections.

**Dartmouth Clinic, Sandwell General Hospital:**

0121 507 3094

**Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley:**

01384 456111 (ext. 3900)

**Embrace Sexual Health Service, New Cross Hospital**

**Wolverhampton:** 01902 695000

### Horizon SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)

SARCs are specialist units which support anyone who has been a victim of sexual violence and provide medical examinations and early forensic evidence collection. Any evidence collected can be made available to police if you choose to report the assault.

 **0808 168 5698**

### Survivors Manchester

Free information and self-help guides to support male survivors of abuse.

 [survivorsmanchester.org.uk](http://survivorsmanchester.org.uk)

### West Midlands Police

Dial **999** if you are in immediate danger or if an incident has just taken place. Alternatively, call your local police on **101**.

## Ask Marc

**We know it is difficult to talk about what has happened, but telling someone can really help.**

Contact us, and we will help you to get the support that you need. We will believe you. We will listen to you, support you, advocate for you and give you time and space to decide what you want to do. We won’t judge you because of what you say or force you to make a decision you do not want to make.

Our support is available to you whether the abuse happened recently or years ago, and whether or not you choose to report what happened to the police. We can never take away what happened to you, but there is life after rape and sexual assault. We can help you with choices on how to move forward.

## Don’t deal with it alone: Ask Marc.

We offer support for men who have experienced rape, sexual assault or childhood sexual abuse in Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

**0121 289 6402\***  
**[info@askmarc.org.uk](mailto:info@askmarc.org.uk)**

\*The telephone number will not show up on your phone bill.

ask:::  
marc:

Ask Marc is a support service for men who have been affected by domestic abuse, stalking, rape or sexual abuse.

We offer independent, confidential advice and support to help men be safer, make choices, and move forward with their lives.

 [info@askmarc.org.uk](mailto:info@askmarc.org.uk)

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## The Cedar Centre

Ask Marc’s services are based in our Cedar Centres in Sandwell, Dudley and Walsall which bring together a range of support services for survivors.

Ask Marc is a project of Black Country Women’s Aid, which has supported survivors of abuse and violence in the West Midlands for over 30 years.

 [blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk](http://blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk)

## Ask Marc.

**Don’t deal with it alone:**  
Anyone can experience abuse.



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