

If you are being abused by your partner, talk to someone you trust. You may want to try a friend, guidance counsellor, teacher, parent, physician, local transition house or a help/crisis line. Phone numbers will be listed on the inside cover of the phone book.

**Remember, the abuse is not your fault.**

#### Some Things to Think About:

- Date and acquaintance sexual assault: The term used to describe when someone is forced through coercion, pressure, intimidation or physical violence, by someone known to them, to go further sexually than they have agreed to go.
- Approximately 78% of sexual assault victims know the attacker.
- The more intimately a victim knows the offender, the less likely they are to report the assault.
- Trust your instincts; if a situation appears dangerous, it probably is.
- More than half of all sexual assaults take place in homes and cars.

**Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual act imposed on one person by another. Without consent, it is sexual assault. Sexual assault of any kind is a crime, even if you are in a dating relationship and may have had sex on prior occasions. Sexual assault is the responsibility of the perpetrator, not the responsibility of the victim.**

## About Avalon Sexual Assault Centre Who We Are

Avalon Centre is the only sexual assault centre in the Halifax Regional Municipality. We are a registered, not-for-profit, community based, charitable organization. The agency was established in 1983 and incorporated in 1984. We are a women-centred organization and provide a leadership role in ending all forms of sexual violence against women and children. We are committed to providing support programs, counseling, education, and advocacy for women affected by sexual violence. Our vision is to eliminate sexual violence, social injustice and other forms of oppression.

We gratefully acknowledge the core funding support provided by the Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Community Services; Capital Health; and the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia.

All donations from the public are gratefully accepted. Tax receipts will be issued upon request. We are an Associated Member of the Metro United Way's Donor Option program.

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre  
1526 Dresden Row, 4th Floor  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3K3  
Business Line: (902) 422-4240  
Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner After Hours  
Response Line: (902) 425-0122  
Fax Line: (902) 422-4628  
E-Mail: [avaloncentre@eastlink.ca](mailto:avaloncentre@eastlink.ca)



## Dating Violence And Sexual Assault

### Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

1526 Dresden Row, 4th Floor  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3K3

**Business Line:** (902) 422-4240

**Fax Line:** (902) 422-4628

**SANE Business Line:** (902) 422-6503

**SANE Fax Line:** (902) 422-4962

**SANE Response Line:** (902) 425-0122

[avaloncentre@eastlink.ca](mailto:avaloncentre@eastlink.ca)

[bzareski\\_saneprogram@yahoo.com](mailto:bzareski_saneprogram@yahoo.com)

[www.avaloncentre.ca](http://www.avaloncentre.ca)

## Dating Violence and Sexual Assault

If your dating partner has ever:

- pushed or shoved you;
- threatened you with a weapon;
- thrown things at you;
- slapped, punched or kicked you;
- treated you like a sex object;
- blamed you for their violence;
- put you down or called you names;
- intimidated you;
- made you afraid to say no;
- become overly jealous;
- criticized the way you dress;
- given you the silent treatment, regularly; or
- forced you to have sex,

you need to be aware that these are indicators of an unhealthy relationship. Even “in fun” these behaviours are not acceptable.



## Why Does Acquaintance Sexual Assault Happen?

Date and acquaintance sexual assault is a term used to describe when someone is forced - through coercion, pressure, intimidation or physical violence - by someone known to them, to go further sexually than they have wanted to go or agreed to go. It is almost always men who sexually assault women in cases of acquaintance sexual assault. Why does this occur?

- Sex can mean different things to men and women.
- Myths (see Avalon’s brochure titled “Sexual Assault: Common Myths and the Real Facts”).
- A sense of immunity to dating sexual assault: Women are taught that strangers will sexually assault them, not the men they know. 78% of sexual assault victims know the perpetrator.
- Women and men have been raised differently: Women are socialized to be passive, men are socialized to be aggressive.
- Lack of communication: Women and men do not talk openly about their sexuality with each other. As a result, consent may be wrongly assumed without verbally discussing it.
- Little or no consequences: Men who apply pressure or force usually count on the fact that their partner will not make trouble. This is especially true if the partner is drinking, doing drugs or is someplace she is not supposed to be.
- Some men knowingly commit acquaintance sexual assault: Sexual assault is sometimes an expression of anger against women. Also, some men think it is their right to expect sex from a date.
- Self-blame: Some people may give in to sexual pressure or blame themselves for the sexual assault especially if they were flirting, drinking or doing drugs. Also, people are less likely to report dating sexual assault because they feel others will blame them for the assault.

## What Are My Rights In A Dating Relationship?

- You have the right to say NO.
- You have the right to change your mind.
- You have the right to suggest activities to do together, and you have the right to refuse to do activities.
- You have the right to decide what your limits are and to have them respected.
- You have the right to trust your own feelings and the right to express them.
- You have the right to be listened to and taken seriously.
- You have the right to be treated with respect.
- You have the right to grow and explore your potential without feeling guilty, selfish or afraid.
- You have the right to have friendships with both women and men outside your relationship.
- You have the right to never be physically attacked or psychologically degraded by your partner, and the right to end the relationship if either occurs.
- You have the right to not blame yourself if the relationship, in which you have invested so much love and effort, ends.
- You have the right to a healthy dating relationship.