
Information and Resources



**For Survivors of Sexual Assault
250-383-3232 - vsac.ca**





This booklet contains important information and resources for you, including your medical and reporting options, what to expect, and the supports available to you.

The Victoria Sexual Assault Centre is a feminist organization committed to ending sexualized violence through healing, education and prevention.

We are dedicated to supporting all women, trans, two-spirit and gender non-conforming survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse.

The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) provide an immediate response for all genders, 13 years of age and over who have experienced a sexual assault within the last seven days.

SART services are free

To access support, information and resources
call the
Vancouver Island Crisis Line at
1-888-494-3888
and ask for SART

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Important Phone Numbers

Victoria Sexual Assault Centre Access	250-383-3232
Victoria Sexual Assault Centre Office	250-383-5545
Vancouver Island Crisis Line	1-888-494-3888
Island Sexual Health	250-592-3479
Victoria Child Abuse Prevention & Counselling Centre (children and families)	250-385-6111
Men's Trauma Centre	250-381-6367
Cowichan Women Against Violence Against Women	250-748-7273
Island Women Against Violence	1-877-435-7544
Haven Society Nanaimo	250-756-2452
Youthspace.ca (text only)	778-783-0177
VictimLink (multilingual)	1-800-563-0808
Suicide.org	1-800-784-2433
Trans Lifeline	1-877-330-6366
Victoria Women's Transition House	250-385-6611
Cridge Transition House	250-479-3963
Sooke Transition House	250-642-2591
Sandy Merriman House	250-480-1408
Rock Bay Landing	250-383-1951
Kiwanis Youth Shelter (up to age 18)	250-386-8282
Victoria & Esquimalt Police	250-995-7654
Saanich Police	250-475-4321
North Saanich Sidney RCMP	250-656-3921
Oak Bay Police	250-592-2424
Central Saanich Police	250-652-4441
Westshore RCMP	250-474-2264
Sooke RCMP	250-642-5241

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)

Assistance with medical and/or police response to a sexual assault occurring in the last seven days.

Access Line

Call to access counselling, victim services or referrals.

250-383-3232 Access@vsac.ca

Counselling

Crisis and Stabilization (Individual) Short term support assists in dealing with the most immediate impacts after a sexual assault.

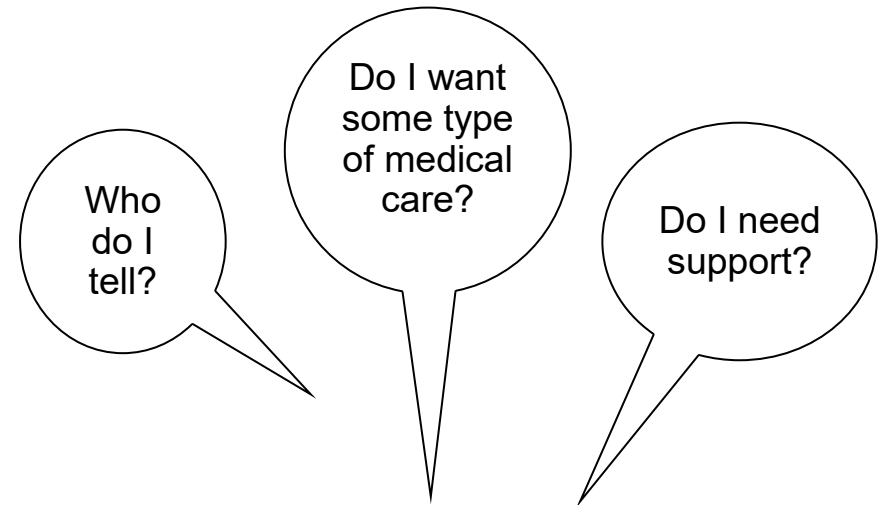
Trauma counselling (group & individual) provides support as survivors work through the longer term impacts of sexual assault.

Victim Services

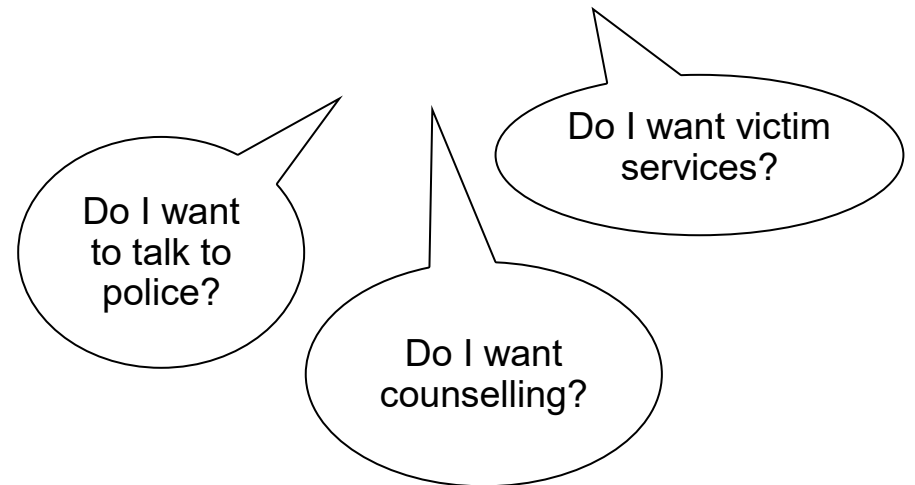
Provides information and support as you make the decision whether or not you want to report to police; support in making a report; updates on your case; assistance with preparation for the court process; and assistance with Victim Impact forms and applications for the Crime Victim Assistance Program.

Referrals

Sexual assault impacts people of any gender and all ages. The Victoria Sexual Assault Centre provides follow-up counselling and victim services to all women and trans survivors. VSAC can also provide referrals to other similar services such as: Child Abuse Prevention & Counselling Centre (children and families); Men's Trauma Centre (for men or trans); or services in other communities.



Only you know what the right decision is for you



Questions

I'm physically hurt (urgent medical care)

Contact 911 or go to the closest hospital emergency department. Once you are medically stable, SART can be called.

I'm not safe (I'm afraid)

If you are in immediate danger, contact 911. If this does not feel like an option for you, call someone you trust or a crisis line.

I think something happened ...

Call us if you're not sure what happened. SART may not be able to tell you if something happened but we can make sure you're okay medically and offer support.

I don't want to tell ...

It's up to you what you say to whomever is in your life.

In **rare** circumstances when someone's safety is at risk, SART may need to contact someone in authority, but you will be told who is being contacted and why this is happening.

My friend/partner/parent told me I should ...

It's your choice. You decide what's right for you. VSAC will suggest that you get medical follow-up from someone at some point but only you can decide what is best for you.

YOU ARE IN CONTROL

Common Reactions

There is no right or wrong way to react

You might feel:

Fear	Self-blame	Depression
Anger	Embarrassment	Confusion
Denial	Sadness	Numbness
Alone	Grief	A sense of loss

You may experience some, none, or all of these emotions.

It is common for sexual assault to affect your lifestyle, disrupt your routine, affect your relationships, school and career. **Support is available.**

You might experience:

Change in sleep patterns	Change in alcohol or drug use
Feel like a zombie	Mood swings
Trouble eating	Can't concentrate
Can't trust	Flashbacks
Isolating yourself	Nightmares
Don't want to be touched	Fear that everyone knows

Remember – you are not alone.

If you need support, information, counselling or victim services, please call VSAC Access Line at

250-383-3232

Questions about Reporting to Police

What if I have concerns about my safety?

If you have concerns about your safety, one option is to call the police. They may be able to help with protection options. You can also discuss a safety plan with a VSAC Support Worker.

The police want me to sign a consent form ...

If you chose a forensic exam with evidence held at hospital, the police need your signed consent to release the evidence (kit) to them.

What kind of questions will the police ask me?

The police will ask what happened and then ask you very detailed questions. Some questions may feel embarrassing or judgmental but this doesn't mean the police do not believe you.

The police role is to gather as much information as possible about what happened for the investigation. You have the right to ask for clarification from police at any time.

Can someone come with me to the police station?

Yes. A VSAC Victim Service Worker can go with you to provide support and to answer any questions. You can bring a friend or family member to the police station, but it is up to the police who can come into the interview room.

What about time off work, lost property, medical costs?

The **Crime Victim Assistance Program** may offer financial help, although it may take some time to process your claim. Our Victim Service Worker can explain this program and help with the application.

Meet the Team

The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) is made up of Support Workers from Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC), Forensic Nurse Examiners (FNE)*, Physicians, Emergency Room Nurses, and Police/RCMP (survivor's decision).

The Team responds to sexual assault cases within seven days for survivors of all genders, 13 years of age and over. We provide information, support, medical treatment as well as collection and preservation of forensic evidence (as requested).

* **FNEs** are specially trained to provide care to survivors of sexual assault, and trained to find and collect evidence if you choose to have them do so.

SART = Sexual Assault Response Team
VSAC = Victoria Sexual Assault Centre
FNE = Forensic Nurse Examiner

What you can expect from us:

- To receive considerate and respectful care from all members of SART including your support worker, nurse, and any police officers or medical professionals involved.
- To receive full information about your options and the care and supports available.
- To have the right and the opportunity to ask questions.
- To be supported to make your own decisions regarding your medical treatment or police reporting.
- To have a support worker or a friend or family member present for support if requested.
- To receive continuing care from a medical practitioner.
- To receive support from the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (or similar service) for future or ongoing concerns.

What Happens at the Clinic

Call VICL
1-888-494-3888

Call Vancouver Island Crisis Line (or go to any hospital or contact police). SART will be contacted for you.

Support &
Information

The SART Support Worker will provide you with emotional support and explain the medical, legal and police options available to you.

Medical
Assessment

If you want to access the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic, SART Support Worker will connect you with the Forensic Nurse Examiner for a brief medical assessment.

Come to Clinic

The SART Worker can arrange transportation if you need it (at no cost to you).

Choice -
Medical

If you decide you would like medical attention, the SART Support Worker and FNE will discuss your options with you. If you have concerns, please ask your SART Support Worker or FNE.

Choice -
Police

If you would like to report the sexual assault, your SART Worker can contact the police at anytime. **It is your choice.**

Counselling or
Victim Service
Support
Available Anytime

Feel free to contact the VSAC Access Line: **250-383-3232**. for information, counselling, or victim services at anytime.

Making a Police Report

In most circumstances, it is your choice to report your sexual assault.

It is common to have mixed feelings or feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, or fear about making a police report. You can have support throughout the process if you choose to report to police.

Not right now but maybe later ...

There is no time limit - you can make a report at any time

A medical or forensic exam is not required to make a police report but can sometimes help.

Write down everything you can remember or write some notes for yourself if you think you might want to talk to the police at a later time.

I've already talked to the police ...

The police will give you their business card and a police file number. The police file number helps you to get information or updates from the police. A Victim Service Worker from VSAC can provide support, information and give you updates as well.

What happens next ...

Police start to investigate what happened. They will contact you and ask you to give a recorded statement either at a police station or at VSAC. The police may interview other people who might know something about the sexual assault.

What support is available ...

The VSAC Victim Service Worker can explore your options with you before deciding to make a police report as well as go with you to police if you choose to report. They will also help with forms and keep you updated on what is happening with your report.

Call VSAC's Access Line **250-383-3232**

Treatment for Possible Sexually Transmitted Infections and/or Pregnancy Prevention

Herpes

What you need to know - Sores may appear on genitals or mouth in 2-15 days and can cause fever, headache and pain.

What you can do – If there are concerns you may have this infection, talk to a doctor about treatment options available.

HIV

What you need to know - Human Immunodeficiency Virus attacks and weakens the immune system. The chances of contracting HIV vary from situation to situation—from very low risk to high risk (blood contact with someone known to carry HIV). Preventive treatment is expensive and extremely hard on your body.

Discuss your risks with the nurse or other medical practitioner or clinic.

What you can do – A follow up HIV blood test in 6 weeks, again after 3 months, and for a third time after 6 months is important.

Pregnancy

What you need to know - Pregnancy can occur from a sexual assault.

What you can do – Plan B, an emergency contraceptive, is available as part of the medication offered. Plan B can be taken within five days but the success rate decreases significantly the more time elapses. You can also ask the FNE or your doctor about other options.

**If you have questions or concerns
ask the FNE
or speak with your doctor.**

**In the middle of this book there is a form to keep track
of your treatment and the necessary follow-ups**

What Happens at the Hospital

Hospital
Emergency
Check-In /
Triage

When you arrive at Victoria General Hospital, speak with the nurse at the front desk (triage). They will ask you for some information such as your name, address and BC Services Card (CareCard) number*.

SART
Contacted

The nurse will then take you to a private area and contact the Forensic Nurse Examiner (FNE) and the SART Support Worker from the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre.

Support &
Information

Once at the hospital, the SART Worker will provide emotional support and explain the medical, legal and police options available to you.

Choice -
Medical

If you decide you would like medical attention, the SART Support Worker and FNE will discuss your options with you. If you have concerns please ask the SART Support Worker or FNE.

Choice -
Police

If you would like to report the sexual assault, the SART Worker can contact the police at anytime. **It is your choice.**

Counselling or
Victim Service
Support
Available Anytime

If you do not wish to speak to the SART Support Worker at the hospital, but would like to connect with the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre at a later time, Feel free to contact the VSAC Access Line at **250-383-3232**. for information, counselling, or victim services at anytime.

* BC Medical Service Plan or other health insurance. Please note: if you don't have health insurance or a BC Services card check in with the VSAC support worker. **This will not prevent you from accessing services.**

Your Choices for Medical Care

It is **your decision** what type of medical care you will receive

Decline

Although SART encourages you to receive medical attention at some point, it doesn't have to be right now.

Information

If you need some support or information, call us. Take the time you need to make the decisions that are right for you.

Medical Exam

You can be checked medically by the FNE. With your consent, the medical exam can include any or all of the following:

Medication: preventative treatment for some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and/or pregnancy

Medical Exam: to check that you are physically okay

Documentation of Injury: documenting any injuries, bruises or sore spots.

Forensic Exam

Medical-Forensic Exams are only available within 72 hours (3 days) after the sexual assault. There are two options available:

Evidence Given to Police: This includes everything in the Medical Exam plus the possible collection of physical evidence. All of this is handed directly to police.

Evidence Stored for One Year: This includes everything above but the evidence is not given to police without a signed consent from you. The evidence is **stored for one year** allowing you time to decide if you want to talk to the police.

You can stop the process or change your mind at any time

Treatment for Possible Sexually Transmitted Infections and/or Pregnancy Prevention

The Forensic Nurse Examiner can treat you for some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy prevention (if relevant).

Any blood or urine tests taken are used as a baseline and will only show whether there was an infection or pregnancy before the sexual assault. All test are given with your consent.

STI testing is also available with a doctor, medical clinic or at Island Sexual Health.

Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis

What you need to know – Chlamydia and gonorrhea are both bacterial infections that can grow inside the throat, bladder opening, cervix, and anus. Syphilis bacteria can grow anywhere and appears as a painless sore.

What you can do – The antibiotics offered by the FNE can treat and prevent these infections. A follow up test in two weeks with a doctor is important.

Hepatitis B

What you need to know - This sexually transmitted infection affects the liver.

What you can do – If individuals have been immunized they are protected, if not, the FNE can provide information about options. Ask the FNE or doctor if you have concerns.

Hepatitis C

What you need to know - Contracting Hep C from sexual contact varies from situation to situation—from very low risk to high risk (blood contact). Like Hep B, it attacks the liver.

What you can do – A follow up Hep C test in 3 months and again in 6 months is important.

My Information
(detachable)



My Information
(detachable)



My Records

Medical records about my visit will be stored at:

- Victoria General Hospital or

I was seen at Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic

Victoria General Hospital

Or:

Date seen _____

VSAC SART
Worker _____

FNE (Nurse) _____

- Medication for Gonorrhea and Chlamydia
 Medication: _____
 Medical Exam _____
 Forensic Exam with evidence securely stored at Hospital
until (date): _____
 Forensic Exam with evidence given to Police _____

Police Department _____

File # _____

Officers _____

My Records (continued)

Medical Follow Up

My test results will be sent to _____

Phone _____

Follow up tests can be done at _____

Recommended Dates for Follow Up:

Gonorrhea _____

Chlamydia _____

Syphilis
(blood) _____

HIV (blood) _____

Pregnancy _____

Other: _____

Vaccines/Medication—Recommended Dates for Follow Up:

Hepatitis B - 1st vaccine _____

Hepatitis B - 2nd vaccine _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Victoria Sexual Assault Centre Follow Up

- Someone from VSAC will call me to check in
 I didn't want to be contacted but can call 250-383-3232
when I'm ready for information, support, victim services or
counselling