




Sexual assault is defined as any deliberate sexual act performed by one person on another without their explicit consent. In Alberta, **1 in 3 children & adolescents** have experienced sexual abuse and **over 85%** knew the abuser.

APPROACH TO A SEXUAL ASSAULT DISCLOSURE		ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
1) SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Call 911 if you and/or the child are in immediate danger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Are they <u>safe</u> now? At home? At school? Etc. ☐ Do they have any injuries? Genital symptoms (pain, bleeding, dysuria, discharge)? Side effects of drug / alcohol ingestion? ☐ Were/Are they on birth control? ☐ Do they want to report? ☐ Is there a role for forensic evidence collection (acute assault)? Do they want to collect forensic evidence?
2) Validate & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tell them you believe them ✓ Remind them it is not their fault ✓ Validate their feelings ✗ Avoid making promises 	
3) Be mindful about your questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ask questions relevant to medical care ✗ Do NOT ask details about the assault (especially directly to the child). Liaise with trained child interviewers to arrange further forensic interview 	
4) Identify what supports they have	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Psychological / Mental health ✓ School counsellor ✓ Trusted family & friends ✓ Primary care physician 	
5) Pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If they have a uterus, have they reached puberty? ✓ Offer emergency contraceptives and pregnancy testing if timing is appropriate 	
6) Sexually Transmitted Infections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider empiric treatment for chlamydia & gonorrhea (cefixime / azithromycin) ✓ Check their vaccination status. If they are not immune, order Hep B & C serology (now & 6 weeks) and consider Hep B Ig within 14 days ✓ Consider HIV post-exposure prophylaxis within 72h 	
7) Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify IF they want to report the assault to police. ✓ Often police will come to the hospital to collect the report & forensic evidence. <p>Giving survivors the power of choice is important. Consider whether they have the capacity and ability to protect themselves. If not, you must report.</p>	
8) Physical Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If the patient consents, a head-to-toe exam is important to identify any occult injuries. ↪ In cases of historic sexual assault, if they have no acute injuries, physical exam can be deferred. <p>95% will have a normal exam after an assault</p>	
		<h3>SUPPORTS</h3> <p>Each region will have their own:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sexual assault response team ➤ Sexual assault centre ➤ Mental health resources ➤ Child & youth advocacy centre
		<h3>INVESTIGATIONS</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Pregnancy test ☐ Testing for syphilis, HIV, Hep B, Hep C, chlamydia, gonorrhea ☐ Alcohol, drug and toxin screening ☐ Forensic evidence collection ☐ Additional workup dependent on injuries present (XR, CT, labs, etc.)

The age of consent in Canada is 16, but there are some close-in-age exceptions:

Under 12	Unable to consent
12 - 13	Can consent up to 2 years older
14 - 15	Can consent up to 5 years older

No one under 18 can consent to sexual activity that is exploitative or with someone in a position of power.

When to report:

1. The patient does not have the capacity for decision making or the ability to maintain their own safety
2. The perpetrator is in a position of power (relative, teacher, coach, etc.) or has ongoing contact with the child

How to Report:

- Contact Child & Family Services || Child Welfare || Children Services (naming may vary across provinces)
- Consult your local child maltreatment team if available

