

.....

## Frequently asked questions

### Do I need a referral?

To contact the service you do not need a referral you can call 4775 7555 and ask to speak to a counsellor.

### Does it matter how long it's been?

You can speak with one of our qualified counsellors about childhood sexual abuse or a sexual assault when you are ready, it doesn't matter how long ago the abuse occurred.

### Is there a fee to use your service?

The service is delivered free of charge in the Townsville region.

### How long can I be supported for?

Some people require support for just a couple of weeks whilst others might need support over many months. The service is flexible and tailored to meet individual needs.

### Who will I be working with?

Counsellors have a tertiary qualification and are professionally trained to provide support.



## The Sexual Assault Support Service

*A service provided by the Women's Centre*

50 Patrick Street, Aitkenvale 4814

Email [sass@thewomenscentre.org.au](mailto:sass@thewomenscentre.org.au)

 [facebook.com\NQCWS](https://facebook.com/NQCWS)

[thewomenscentre.org.au](http://thewomenscentre.org.au)

*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land.*

Funded by



# Townsville Sexual Assault Support Service

**A professional and non-judgemental service within a safe, caring and supportive environment.**

*The Sexual Assault Support Service respects the diversity of circumstances and is dedicated to delivering a comprehensive and holistic service by providing help, information, referral and support – you are not alone.*

**SAFETY IS A HUMAN RIGHT**

## What is sexual assault?

**Sexual Assault is a crime, it is a violation of a person's human rights and is a trauma that threatens a person's sense of safety.**

It is sexual activity to which a person does not consent and includes any sexual behaviour which makes a person feel uncomfortable, frightened or threatened.

Perpetrators of sexual assault use power, force and manipulation in an attempt to control another person's body, senses and emotions.

Sex offenders come from all age groups, social backgrounds, ethnicities and income levels. Most victims are sexually assaulted by someone they know and trust including, family members, close family friends and neighbours. As a result, survivors of sexual assault can be left with social, emotional, medical and legal consequences.

**The Townsville Sexual Assault Support Service offers crisis support, referral, information and counselling to women 15 years and above. Information and referral is provided for all others and in certain circumstances counselling is available for children.**

## Reactions to sexual assault

If a person has been sexually assaulted or raped they may experience some or all of the following responses:

- » Fearfulness
- » Powerlessness
- » Shame or guilt
- » Self-blame
- » Anger
- » Lowered self esteem
- » Loss of trust and difficulty trusting others
- » Anxiety, nightmares, sleeping disturbances, and eating disorders
- » Problematic relationships with partners, peers, colleagues
- » Difficulties with intimate relationships
- » Flashbacks – reliving the memory of the assault(s)

### Sexual assault victims have the right to:

- » be heard and supported
- » be accepted
- » be treated with respect and dignity
- » be informed of all possible options and choices
- » have access to appropriate services and information

**People do survive and heal from the trauma of sexual assault**



## Support following sexual assault

Seeking professional help can be a positive experience. The Townsville Sexual Assault Support Service provides free and confidential crisis support, information, referral and counselling.

### Contact

Phone: 07 4775 7555

Fax: 07 4779 2959

Email: [sass@thewomenscentre.org.au](mailto:sass@thewomenscentre.org.au)

Hours: 9:00am - 4:30pm Monday, Tuesday,  
Thursday and Friday  
9:00am - 12.30pm Wednesday

### Things to consider if you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted:

If possible;

- » A person should try to make their way to a safe place away from harm.
- » For the purposes of reporting the sexual assault and retaining evidence for forensic testing it is advised that the person who has been sexually assaulted does not wash or bath themselves. It is also recommended that the person does not eat, drink, or smoke. Evidence can be collected up to 72 hours to 5 days after the rape.
- » Make contact with a trusted person such as, a reliable friend or appropriate service who can provide support and assistance for this traumatic experience.
- » Seek medical assistance and care.
- » Contact the Police for a Forensic examination.