

Sexual harm of youth & teens

For advice and support, contact [Safe to talk](https://safetotalk.nz) (safetotalk.nz). This is a free national 24-hour seven day a week confidential service for anyone looking for help to do with sexual harm. You can get help by phone **0800-044-334**, text **4334**, or via the website.

Sexual harm is when someone:

- touches you sexually when you don't want them to (for example, touching your genitals or breasts)
- makes you touch another person, or yourself, sexually when you don't want to
- does non-touching things, like making you watch sexual behaviour or watching you do sexual behaviour, when you don't want to
- touches you or makes you do something sexual that makes you feel uncomfortable, threatened or scared.

If you've been sexually harmed it's important to know there are people who want to help you and you don't have to go through this alone.

You may have many different feelings, or maybe you feel numb. Everyone is different, so people will react differently. Just remember there are people who can help.

What you can do if you've been sexually harmed

If you've been sexually harmed, the first thing to do is go somewhere you feel safe, such as the home of a close friend or family member.

If you feel able to, tell someone you trust what has happened. Don't feel ashamed or to blame for what has happened to you – it isn't your fault.

You don't have to decide straight away whether you want to make a formal complaint to the Police. It's OK to take the time you need to decide this.



Whether or not you go to the Police or tell anyone else, it's best to go to a doctor as soon as possible if the sexual harm has included rape. If you live in Canterbury or on the West Coast, you can see the doctors and nurses at the [Cambridge Clinic](https://cambridgeclinic.co.nz) (cambridgeclinic.co.nz). They specialise in looking after people over 12 who've been sexually assaulted. You can see them straight after an assault, or years afterwards if it happened some time ago. Or you can go to your own doctor, or the hospital.



If the assault has just happened, it's best not to wash before going to the doctor, so you can talk about your options. Even if you're not sure about going to the Police, a Cambridge Clinic doctor may still be able to take samples, just in case you change your mind later.

Just like talking to your own GP, talking to a specialist doctor at the Cambridge Clinic is all confidential. It can also be very important for evidence if you later decide to go to the Police. If you're under 16, they'll advise you to see a GP, the Police, or Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children first.

You can also call the Police. It's OK to contact them just to ask for advice and to find out what your options are, you don't have to make a formal complaint. The Police can also help you and put you in touch with people who can help.

Supporting a friend

Sometimes people confide in their friends about being sexually harmed before they tell anyone else. [BodySafe](https://bodysafe.nz/active-bystanders) (bodysafe.nz/active-bystanders) has info about how you can support your friend and help them be safe. [Gr8Mates](https://gr8mates.org.nz) (gr8mates.org.nz) explains different ways that sexual assault can happen and has lots of advice about how you can support your friend.

 *HealthInfo recommends the following pages*

- [BodySafe – Consent](https://bodysafe.nz/consent-3) (bodysafe.nz/consent-3)
A clear explanation of what it means to consent to sexual activity, and what isn't consent.
- [Love is respect – Power and control wheel](https://loveisrespect.org/is-this-abuse/power-and-control-wheel/) (loveisrespect.org/is-this-abuse/power-and-control-wheel/)
Use this interactive tool to find out more about different kinds of abuse.

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