

## WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Sexual Violence is any unwanted, forced, tricked or coerced sexual activity.

There are many different forms of sexual violence, such as rape, incest, date/acquaintance rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, unwanted sexual touching, voyeurism, and many others

## ROOTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

There are many beliefs about why sexual violence occurs in our society. It is often seen as a criminal Justice problem, a public health or a social problem. It is all three and most of all it is a community problem.

The issue of why sexual violence occurs is very complicated. Yet it is clear that it occurs as a continuum of beliefs and actions. And at the base of the continuum are individual beliefs and social norms which allow sexual violence to occur.

The sexual violence continuum is an attempt to explain how our norms and beliefs allow for an environment where sexual violence can occur

### DEATH

#### RAPE

Many survivors of sexual violence are orally, vaginally, or anally penetrated. This type of sexual violence may or may not include other types of physical violence.

#### SEXUAL ASSAULT/ABUSE

Often sexual assault survivors are not penetrated but are forced to engage in sexual acts. They may also be forced to watch others do so or watch pornography.

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This type of sexual violence is a pattern of unwanted or uninvited sexual attention that is aimed at coercing someone to do or act in a way the harasser wants. This may include verbal and/or physical acts.

#### UNWANTED SEXUAL TOUCH

This type of sexual violence is blatant or implicated touching in a sexual manner. This may include: fondling, grabbing of sexual body parts, and forced or coerced kissing.

#### INVASION OF SPACE

This type of sexual violence is perpetrated by violating a person's sense of safety in a sexual context. This may include jokes, catcalls, obscene phone calls, leering at a sexual body part, "accidentally" rubbing up against someone, and voyeurism.

#### INDIVIDUAL BELIEF SYSTEM THAT JUSTIFIES AGGRESSION

This is the way people think about sexual norms and gender roles. This may include beliefs such as the notion that if one buys the other dinner the other person "owes" them sex, or the belief that only men can initiate sexual activity.

#### SOCIAL NORMS of ENTITLEMENT

Social norms are accepted behaviors, attitudes and beliefs that create an environment in which all individuals are not treated equally. These norms allow a person or group to have power over another. Violence is an act of taking away someone's power and it can only occur when social norms allow power differences between people. Some social norms include: portraying women and children as sexual objects versus full human beings, believing in strict gender or racial stereotyping, believing that victims are responsible for their own victimization.

# THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE CONTINUUM