



AFRICAN-GERMAN
YOUTH OFFICE

***Help for people
who have
experienced
sexual violence***



What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence is something that occurs everywhere. It happens in African countries, Germany and all over the world. Rape might be the first thing you think of when you hear the term "sexual violence" but it actually comes in many forms and it affects all genders.

- › It includes unwanted sexual innuendo, obscene gestures, looking at someone in a sexual way that makes them feel uncomfortable or sending someone sexual content. Don't let anyone tell you these things are "just a bit of harmless fun"!
- › Sexual harassment is when someone touches you (your breasts, bottom or other intimate places, for instance) against your will.
- › Sexual coercion is when someone uses pressure, threats or violence to commit sexual assault. It includes taking advantage of someone who is unable to defend themselves - like when you're under the influence of alcohol or what are known as "date rape drugs" (drugs someone gives you so that they can sexually assault you).

If you feel pestered or uncomfortable with something, trust your instincts. Set boundaries and say "No!". Say clearly what you want and what you don't want. You don't have to remain friendly when things like this happen. Get out of situations that don't feel good.

**Sexual violence is always wrong.
The aggression always comes from
the person doing the thing to you.
It is not your fault!**

How sexual violence can affect you

Sexual violence can have a number of different effects. Coping with the experience can be extremely distressful - especially if you're somewhere you don't know very well or where you don't feel safe.

You might feel ashamed or worthless or think that you did something wrong, like it's your fault. You might become withdrawn and try to get through it all on your own or try to forget what you've experienced. Other common effects are feeling powerless, anxious, depressed or listless or having nightmares or trouble sleeping.

However, sexual violence can also result in irritability, anger, aggression or self-hate. People often self-harm (stabbing, cutting or burning themselves, for example) to block out their negative feelings.

These are all normal ways of reacting to an experience that is not normal!

In the case of rape, there can be serious physical effects too:

- › internal and external injuries;
- › unwanted pregnancy;
- › infection with sexually transmitted diseases like HIV or hepatitis;
- › irregular periods.

Support is available - reach out for it!

The African-German Youth Office does everything in its power to ensure your youth exchange or internship is a positive and safe experience. But if something does happen, we'll be there to help. Get in touch with the people in charge of your exchange/internship or contact us direct so that we can make the necessary arrangements to ensure you get help.

You might need some time first and you might not want to talk to anyone. That's fine too. Make sure you feel safe where you are and reach out to people you know and trust. That might help you to start talking about what happened.

Think about what did you good in past difficult situations. If you're not feeling a lot better after a while, you should seek psychological help.

It is completely up to you whether you go the police and press charges if you've experienced sexual harassment, coercion or rape. Don't let anyone pressure you!

*No! = Nein!, Non!
Stop it! = Hör auf!, Arrête!
Help! = Hilfe!, Au secours!*

Rape victims need quick help

If you've been raped, it's important to get medical help quickly to protect yourself.

- › HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP): PEP can considerably lower the risk of HIV infection. It has to be started within 24 hours - the earlier, the better. Talk to a doctor about it - they'll be able to advise you and prescribe the medication.
- › Emergency contraceptive pill ("morning-after pill"): To reduce the risk of unwanted pregnancy, you should also take a morning-after pill as soon as possible. The pill prevents pregnancy by delaying ovulation. The right product for you will depend on which phase of your menstruation cycle you're in so it's important to get advice before you take it.
- › Forensic evidence: If you want to be able to take legal action at a later stage, you'll need to get any forensic evidence secured. This is usually only possible within the first 24 hours after the incident. Remember: the evidence can be stored and you don't have to decide straight away whether to go to the police and press charges.



If you see something

If you notice something strange - like inappropriate touching or someone looking uncomfortable - trust your instincts. You can help even if you're not sure they've experienced sexual violence.

- › Talk to the person in a careful and respectful way. You might say something like, "I could see you felt uncomfortable. Do you want to talk about it?" Show them you're there for them.
- › Get help. You don't have to deal with the situation on your own. There are clearly defined protection policies and guidance documents for these cases.
- › Keep a record of what you saw. It might be useful if more action is needed at a later stage.
- › Don't take any further action yourself unless necessary because you could end up making things worse.

Let the people in charge know and leave it to them to decide what action to take next.

If you're not sure what to do, remember it's better to do too much than not enough. It's up to the person affected to decide whether and when they want to take further action. You can help them make that decision but you mustn't force them into anything.

Counselling services

If you're not ready to talk to someone you know yet, you can contact the following organisations for free, anonymous counselling:

International counselling services

Information in various languages

www.hotpeachpages.net

Violence against Women Helpline

Counselling offered in various languages, including German Sign Language and simple language **+49 116 016**

Online counselling via chat or email:

www.hilfetelefon.de/en

Berliner Initiative gegen Gewalt an Frauen und Kindern (Berlin Initiative against Violence towards Women, BIG)

Counselling offered in various languages

BIG-Hotline: **+49 (0) 30 611 0300**

Online counselling via chat or email:

www.big-berlin.info/big-intervention

Counselling centres for women in Germany

www.frauen-gegen-gewalt.de/en/local-support-services.html

Violence against Men Helpline

+49 800 123 99 00

(Monday to Thursday: 8am-8pm; Friday: 8am-3pm)

Online counselling via chat or email:

www.maennerhilfetelefon.de/en

Tauwetter: Help for men, trans, intersex and non-binary people

Counselling and information in various languages

www.tauwetter.de/en

Sexual Abuse Help Site

Counselling offered in various languages, including German Sign Language **+49 800 22 55 530**

(Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 9am-2pm;

Tuesday, Thursday: 3pm-8pm)

www.hilfe-portal-missbrauch.de/en



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