

What is sexual exploitation?

This brochure is intended to provide information to women and their loved ones about issues related to sexual exploitation. In addition to assisting the reader in understanding what sexual exploitation is, it provides helpful types and resources that may assist in exiting sexual exploitive relationships.

“The term ‘sexual exploitation’ means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.”¹

Myth vs. Fact

Myth: Women are always sexually exploited by strangers.

Fact: Those who sexually exploit women are not always strangers. Women are often sexually exploited by parents, husbands, boyfriends, relatives, friends, teachers or bosses.

Myth: Only sex trade workers are sexually exploited.

Fact: Sexual exploitation can happen to anyone regardless of class, sex or occupation; they are our mothers, our children, our cousins and our friends. It

can happen anywhere; in the home, on the streets, in hotel rooms, at a friend’s place or at the workplace.

Myth: Sexual exploitation always involves physical violence.

Fact: Sexual exploitation can also be subtle, including demeaning sexual comments or controlling behaviours. Some women do not recognize they are being sexually exploited.

Am I being sexually exploited?

- Do you feel you must give sex for money, food, drugs, or a place to sleep?
- Have you ever been a target of sexual solicitation, including uninvited or unwanted requests to engage in sexual activities or explicit conversations in person, on the phone, or over the internet?²
- Do you feel someone will hurt you unless you are sexually active with them?³
- Does someone make you feel guilty for not engaging in sex or a sexual relationship?⁴
- Has someone convinced you to move away from your home and community for sexual purposes?
- Has someone ever touched themselves inappropriately in front of you, or touched you⁵ when it is unwanted?

If I am sexually exploited, what do I need to know?

It’s not your fault. No one deserves or asks to be sexually exploited for any reason.

There is help available. Find out about your options by talking with women’s resource or community centres. You can speak to them about advocacy, legal support, health care, cultural programming, housing, counselling, crisis services, information on street programs and addiction services.

If you need immediate help, call 911 or the local police. Keep emergency phone numbers with you.

If you need a safe place to go, there may be emergency shelters in your area. There may also be safe, low-income housing available if you cannot afford regular housing and need to find a safe place to live.

If you need food, clothing, or other items such as, condoms, or clean needles, you can often get these from community centres for free.

What can you do?

Reach out to others. Speak to a trusted Elder, family member, health care provider or friend or find someone to talk to at support groups or drop-in centres.

Set up a buddy system with someone you trust. Keep them up-to-date about where you are. You might want to share your contact information with them.

Create an exit or emergency plan. Find out where the shelters are and who you can contact for quick help. Have a bag ready for you and your children in case you have to leave in a hurry. You may want to speak to a councillor or another professional to help you plan a safe exit.

It’s Complicated

Exiting a sexually exploitive situation whether it be a relationship or an occupation can often be difficult and complicated for a variety of reasons including division of property, child custody and welfare concerns, and fear of escalated violence. It is important that you make informed decisions about how you will deal with issues such as these. There are services available to assist you in addressing these concerns.

If you know someone who is being sexually exploited, you can...

Be supportive. Talk to them without judgement. Remember, women and children are sexually exploited because of circumstances, not choice.

Be there for them. Some women may want a friend or relative to be with them when they visit services like support circles, drop-in centres, doctors or shelters.

Let them take the lead when deciding what help they may want.

Be safe. Your safety is important too. Do not confront the offender or put yourself in danger.

Children are our future. If you believe that a minor person (someone under the age of 18) has been sexually exploited in any way you are legally obligated to report it to authorities.



<http://www.naho.ca/metis/>



Resources

Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Services:
Toll-free: 1-800-663-1441
www.vcn.bc.ca/isv/adirs.htm

BC Crisis Line (24 hr):
Toll-free: 1-866-661-3311
www.crisiscentre.bc.ca

Fort St. John Keeginaw Friendship Centre
10208 - 95th Ave, Fort St. John
Ph. 250-785-8566
Elder program and legal information services.

Fort St John Métis Society
10011 100 St, Fort St. John
Ph. 250-785-1541
Drop-in centre, referral services, Métis children's advocate, Elder program.

Fort St. John Women's Resource Society
10051 - 100th Ave, Fort St. John
Ph. 250-787-1121
<http://www.fsjwrs.ca/>
Housing and shelter, food, clothing, condoms, bus passes, computer access, child custody workshops.

Métis Centre
National Aboriginal Health Organization
220 Laurier Avenue West, Suite 1200
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5Z9
www.naho.ca/metiscentre/
Métis specific health promotional tools, research database, and health information resources.

National Crisis Line for Victims of Human Trafficking:
Ph. 1-866-529-7109

North East Native Advancing Society
10328-101st Avenue, Fort St. John
Ph. 250-785-0887
Youth recovery and family programs.

North Peace Community Resources Society
10142 – 101st Ave, Fort St. John
Ph. 250-785-6021
<http://www.npcrs.bc.ca/>
Counselling, sexual abuse intervention, transition house,

victim services, children who witness violence/abuse program.

Rape Relief Line:
Ph. 604-872-8212
<http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/>

Rising Spirit Aboriginal Youth Centre
10035 – 100th Ave, Fort St. John
Ph. 250-263-9919
Drop-in and recovery program.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Ph. 1-604-264-3111
<http://bc.rcmp.ca>

Salvation Army Emergency Shelter
10116 100th Avenue, Fort St John
Ph. 250-785-2538

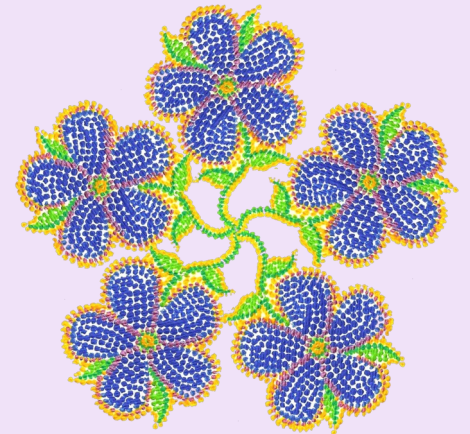
VictimLink BC:
Toll-free: 1-800-563-0808
<http://www.victimlinkbc.ca/>

Women Against Violence Against Women
Ph. 604-255-6228
Toll-free 24hr crisis line: 1-877-392-7583
<http://www.wavaw.ca>
Hospital accompaniment, counselling, Aboriginal support groups, referrals, educational workshops, victim's services.

1. United Nations. *Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. Retrieved July 15, 2011, from <http://www.un.org/en/pse/taskforce/overview.shtml>
2. Sexual solicitations include uninvited, unwanted requests to engage in sexual activities or explicit conversations, or give personal sexual information" Canadian Red Cross (2011). *Adults: Help keep kids safer online*. Retrieved July 15, 2011, from <http://www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=29033&tid=001>
3. Helping spirit healing lodge. *On Violence and Abuse*. "Sexual Abuse". Retrieved July 18, 2011, from <http://helpingspiritlodge.org/violence.php>
4. Helping spirit healing lodge. *On Violence and Abuse*. "Sexual Abuse". Retrieved July 18, 2011, from <http://helpingspiritlodge.org/violence.php>
5. "Sexual assault is any form of unwanted sexual contact. It can include kissing, touching, grabbing, or forced sexual intercourse." Wavaw. *Facts about sexual assault*. http://www.wavaw.ca/index.cfm?page_id=23

Understanding Sexual Exploitation

A quick guide for Métis women



"You are our mothers, sisters, daughters, cousins, aunts, grandmothers... You are not alone."