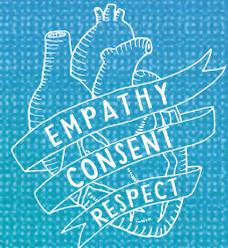




Southern
Cross
University

BE A BETTER HUMAN



THE WHO, WHAT, WHERE & WHY TO BECOMING BETTER HUMANS.

We acknowledge Widjabal Country as the Country where Southern Cross University originated and grew, and from where it continues to grow. It seeded the growth of our Gumbaynggirr Campus in Coffs Harbour, our Yugambeh Campus in Coolangatta and it planted the seeds to transform the Countries we are on.

The Be a Better Human campaign was developed by a group of Flinders University students to reflect the views of students, for students. The content does not represent the views of Flinders University or the Flinders University Student Association, and they take no responsibility for this publication and the amendments made to reflect the Southern Cross University context and environment. Reasonable care has been taken by the authors to ensure the information provided is accurate and, where possible, evidence-based. We're not claiming this to be the voice of truth but a common-sense guide to, well, being a better human.

In 2017, The Australian Human Rights Commission conducted a randomised survey of university students and released the *National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities*. The report offered many suggestions for Universities to adopt and while we think those recommendations are fantastic, here at Southern Cross University we want to do even better!

This initiative was created to reflect our campus culture and what we think everyone needs to appreciate – consent, respect and empathy. The campaign is called **Be a Better Human**, because we don't just want it to be about what we shouldn't do; we want it to be about self-improvement for everyone. And when we say 'everyone', we really do mean everyone. We're encouraging everyone who is part of our campus community to take a moment and consider how we can 'better' our behaviour.



1 IN 5 WOMEN ARE VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THEIR LIFETIME BUT 5 IN 5 PEOPLE CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

Statistically we know that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 20 men experience sexual violence in their lifetime¹. We also know that this is more likely to occur during your 'university years' than at any other time in your life. We know that statistically men are usually the perpetrators of sexual violence², and that women are usually the victims. But we also know that some sexual relationships don't include men, some don't include women, and some might include someone who doesn't identify as a man or a woman. Some of what we cover will be inclusive of your experiences, and some will reflect other's experiences and identities. There may be times where we use examples, words or phrases that don't feel right to you, and that's ok – that's part of why this is important.

This booklet is going to talk about affirmative consent – how to ask for it and ensure that it is enthusiastically given. We're also going to talk about what happens when consent is not given and what to do – as someone who changed their mind or never said yes, as that person's friend, or even as a bystander. We're also going to look at the culture and attitudes that shape the way we think about sex, consent, and well... each other, because it affects everyone and it's something we ought to explore.

Change, whether it's a national movement or within our community, is not just achieved by the famous, the politicians or the activists – it's created by all of us. So let's allow ourselves to picture a new reality, a new campus, a new community. What would that look like? Read on and let's examine our behaviour and attitudes in a way we may have not considered before. Talk to people about it; ask them how they're going and what they think, and share how you feel. But most of all, be open and get involved!

Let's figure out how we can all be better humans.

XO

TERMINOLOGY

Affirmative Consent – The proactive asking for and giving of consent. It is when the cues a person is giving (verbal and non-verbal) show that they are comfortable, in agreement, and want to engage in sexual activities every step of the way.

Coercion – Forcing others into an act, without their consent – by use of intimidation, threats, pressure or force.

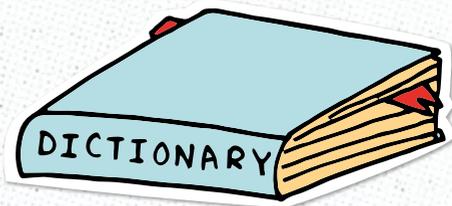
Empathy – The ability to be aware of, and be sensitive to, the experience and feelings of others.

Image-Based Abuse – Commonly referred to as ‘revenge porn’, but it is not limited to acts of revenge, nor is it limited to porn. It usually refers to the sharing, or threat of sharing, images or video of someone without their permission.

LGBTQIA+ (sometimes shortened to LGBT) – The acronym used for those who identify as non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender (those whose gender identity does not correspond with their birth sex). The acronym includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual people as well as people with other identities.

Positive Intervention – A safe, positive response to a problem or situation by someone who is a bystander that helps to prevent or address the problem. Also called bystander intervention.

Sexual Violence – When consent isn’t provided, any form of sexual activity is considered to be sexual violence (i.e. sexual assault and harassment). This includes situations where consent is not properly sought, agreed upon, or when a person doesn’t stop or respond appropriately when their sexual partner changes their mind before or during the sexual activity.



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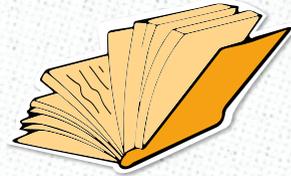
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LET'S TALK ABOUT CONSENT!

Consent is about saying “yes” and about respecting and accepting a person’s right to say “no”. Consent is required at any stage of being intimate with someone – asking for a dance, a date, to make out – and at any point in a relationship, whether you’ve just met or you’ve been going steady since the dawn of time.

But let’s talk about consent and sex! You may think you know it well, but read on ahead and reaffirm that you’re on the right track. It is important to be able to communicate what we want, when we want it, and how we want it, with whomever we’re wanting it with. Don’t pressure anyone into having sex and don’t do anything that makes the other person feel uncomfortable. Sex should be about mutual pleasure so communication is key. Check in with the person you’re having sex with and make sure they are enjoying themselves and want to continue.

Equally, if someone is pressuring you or making you feel uncomfortable, it’s your right to say “no”. Consent is something you give, so it’s also something you can take back.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE CONSENT?



AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT

When asked about consent back in the day we might have said something like “no means no”, and while that’s still the case, consent goes far beyond this now. Affirmative consent is when the verbal and physical cues a person is giving you show that they are comfortable, consenting and keen to continue. It’s all about the proactive asking and giving of consent between people. A “no” is still a ‘no’, but the absence of an enthusiastic and ongoing “yes” is a ‘no’ as well.

Every person has the right to choose to have sex the way they want, and to make that choice freely every time without feeling pressured due to their circumstances or out of fear of repercussions. Saying “yes” to a kiss or allowing your partner to touch you, caress you, take your top off etc. does not imply a yes to everything.

The most basic thing to remember is that consent is voluntary, enthusiastic and continuous.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF SOMEONE IS INTO YOU OR NOT?

WHAT DOES IT LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?

WITHOUT CONSENT

If someone does something to you that you don’t want, for example, coercing you into sex when you’ve said – or were unable to say – no, then that’s non-consensual sex, and sex without consent is considered rape or sexual assault by Australian Law.

But what does ‘without consent’ really mean? Being bullied, tricked or intimidated with words or violence into having sex or physical contact is coercive control and that’s non-consensual; so is having sex with someone who cannot clearly and freely give consent. This category includes minors (under the age of either 16 year (QLD, ACT, NSW, NT, VIC, WA) or 17 years (SA and Tas) pending on your state), people who are intoxicated, passed out or asleep, as well as those with a mental impairment that may inhibit them from being fully aware of what they are agreeing to.

[View Local Laws](#)



CONSENT IN RELATIONSHIPS

Sex can be non-consensual in all types of relationships, even if you and your boo have been going steady for 6 months or 60 years. Sex varies and what worked in the bedroom last week might not feel right, now. If your partner doesn't feel like it, if they want to slow down or stop altogether for any reason, you have to respect this. Remember they know what's right for them, just as you know what's right for you. Just because you've entered into a relationship doesn't mean there is perpetual consent. Failure to stop when someone says no, if they can't consent, or they were coerced into having sex (that old "come on baby" line), is illegal and constitutes rape.

**HOW MIGHT YOUR PARTNER,
LOVER OR FRIEND
EXPRESS THAT WHAT IS
HAPPENING IS NOT OKAY?**



RESPECT

"R.E.S.P.E.C.T find out what it means to me" – catchy and true. Aretha Franklin clearly knew what she was doing because respect lies at the heart of every relationship. Respecting yourself and your lover is important. Remember, you have the right to:

- Change your mind whenever you want to (and communicate it!).
- Ask for a date, but not act badly if the answer is "no".
- Refuse a date without feeling guilty.
- Suggest activities.
- Refuse activities, even if your date is excited about them.
- Have your own feelings.
- Have your limits respected.
- Tell your partner that you want physical closeness and/or sex.
- Refuse sex, or any other intimacy, anytime, for any reason.
- Have an equal relationship.
- Act or feel one way with one person and a different way with another³.

In short, be clear about your feelings and intentions and respect those of your partner, lover or friend, knowing that their feelings and yours might change over time – and that's okay.

RESPECT





HOW YOU
DOIN'?

CONSENT AND COMMUNICATION

Have you ever seen a newborn horse trying to walk for the first time? It's awkward (and a little cute), but they get the hang of it super quick! Asking for consent and learning to improve the way you seek and give consent can feel the same way. Here's a few tips we can all apply, regardless of where you're at with someone.

BEFORE

Discuss clearly with your lover what you're into as well as your sexual health status. Know, understand and respect that they might not be into everything you are. Be open about where you see things going and ask them to do the same. Also ask what you should look out for if they start to become uncomfortable. We all know how we react when we don't like something but we're all unique in the way we communicate this. Make sure you know your lover's 'yes' language and their 'no' language, and that they know yours as well.

DURING

Good manners are important in and out of the bedroom, so start by asking whether you can touch___; kiss___; do this or that, and once you're in the throes of passion, verbally check in to see if they're into it, and how they are feeling. Reading body language is useful, but so is asking outright.



CAN I?

IF THEY WANT YOU TO STOP

If your partner's not into it – whether they ask for you to stop or become withdrawn, for example – back off and give them some space. Try to see the situation from their point of view. You might be disappointed, but don't pressure them into doing anything further. There's no need to get defensive or cross. Instead, take a breath, stop what you're doing and relax. Talk to your partner and ask them what they're feeling, ask if there's anything you should change in the future and most of all, listen.

ON SAYING NO

You have the power to decide whether what's happening, or what might happen, is okay with you or not. If you feel uncomfortable or you are asked to do something or go somewhere when you don't have all the details, you have the right to say no – whether you scream it from the rooftops, say “no thank you”, “no sorry”, “not tonight”, “not now”, “we are never ever ever getting back together” – it's all a no, and it all needs to be respected. Remember even if you have consented to something already, you are allowed to stop that activity at any time. Consenting once doesn't mean you are consenting continuously. It's your right to say “no” and you don't need to feel guilty for doing so.

**WHAT ARE YOUR EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL
AND DIGITAL BOUNDARIES?**

SEXUAL ASSAULT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE. IT IS A VIOLATION OF TRUST, AN EXPLOITATION OF VULNERABILITY AND AN ABUSE OF POWER. IT COVERS MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR THAT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS UNWANTED OR FORCED, INCLUDING INDECENT ASSAULT, RAPE OR ANY ACTIONS OF A SEXUAL KIND RESULTING IN PAIN, FEAR OR INTIMIDATION.

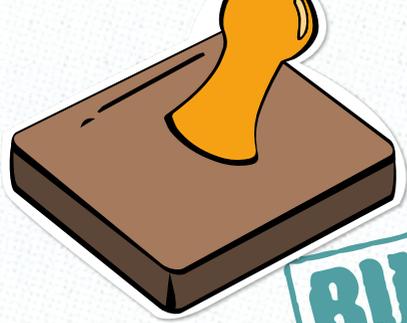
SEXUAL ASSAULT

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual Assault is a criminal offence and covers many different types of sexual behaviour that can be understood as unwanted or forced, including:

- **Indecent Assault** - unwanted touching, fondling, masturbation
- **Rape** - unwanted oral, anal or vaginal penetration, and
- **Sexual Harassment** – unwanted repeated sexualised comments, “passes”, dirty jokes, sexual questions⁴.

Sexual assault is a violation of trust; an exploitation of vulnerability and an abuse of power that can happen to anyone regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion or disability. Sexual violence does not always include physical touch. It might involve, but is not limited to, coercion, manipulation, grooming or other non-physical acts of a sexual kind that make a person feel unsafe.



BIJSTING MYTHS

Myth 1: People are more likely to be sexually assaulted by a stranger, at night, on a dark street or in a park

Most sexual offenders are known to the victim – e.g. a relative, partner, friend or peer – so assault can happen in the victim or the offender’s home, day or night.

Myth 2: You can’t be sexually assaulted by someone you’re in a relationship with or have had sex with before

Forcing or coercing someone to have sex when they don’t want to is sexual assault, regardless of the relationship between the perpetrator and victim. Consent needs to be sought each and every time.

Myth 3: Some people provoke sexual assault by the way they dress or behave

No one asks or deserves to be sexually assaulted, and dressing to feel comfortable or attractive does not suggest otherwise. Perpetrators are responsible for their own actions.

Myth 4: People can only be sexually assaulted by a man with a penis

Women, men and people with diverse gender identities can be sexually assaulted by someone of the same or different gender, by use of an object or hand.

Myth 5: If the victim didn’t say no, or scream or fight then it isn’t sexual assault

We all react differently to high-stress situations. Some people react in a fight or flight response, while others freeze up and withdraw. Many victims become paralysed with fear, which means they are unable to speak-up or fight back. Remember, the absence of a clear and enthusiastic yes is a no.

If you haven’t consented to any type of sexual activity, you have a legal right to take action. You can go to the police and report the sexual assault or rape as a crime.

This is not an exhaustive list of common myths surrounding sexual assault.

Get educated and know the facts, at crcc.org.au/myths-and-facts-about-sexual-assault or dvconnect.org/sexual-assault-helpline/myths-and-facts/



LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour where a reasonable person, having regard for all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the person harassed might feel offended, humiliated or intimidated⁵. It can be a form of discrimination against the victim, and is an inappropriate assertion of power by the perpetrator.

Sexual harassment can occur in person or online. Common examples include:

- making unwanted remarks regarding a person's appearance or attractiveness
- asking a person questions about their relationship or sex life
- sending emails with sexual content
- showing pornographic pictures
- unnecessarily touching the person without their consent⁶

The Australian Sex Discrimination Act 1984 makes it unlawful for a person to sexually harass another person in a number of areas including employment, accommodation and education, specifically for:

- a teacher or a student over the age of 16 to sexually harass a student; and
- a student over the age of 16 to sexually harass a teacher⁷

Sexual harassment in the context of uni or work can seem pretty straight-forward (we know what's appropriate and what's not) but when it comes to meeting people 'out' and building relationships, signs can be misread and faux pas made. In any environment, it is important that you assess the situation. If you feel you are in danger, take immediate precautions. If you believe that the person approaching you has simply overstepped their bounds or lacked the ability to read the room (and you), let them know that their behaviour was not okay and that they made you feel uncomfortable. If at any point you think that the comment or behaviour of an individual constitutes sexual harassment and you want to report it, you can do so by contacting the services outlined on page 42.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE DIGITAL REALM

Let's be real for a moment – regardless of whether you think it is good or bad – ‘sexting’ is something people do. The term ‘sexting’ was added to the Oxford Dictionary in 2011 (seriously, look it up), but another term you should be aware of is image-based abuse, commonly referred to as ‘revenge porn’.

Image-based abuse is serious with stats showing that 1 in 5 people have or will be the victim of revenge porn in their lifetime⁸, but in many cases image-based abuse is not about ‘revenge’, nor is it restricted to ‘porn’. Revenge porn can occur for a range of reasons, and while most image-based abuse is about the sharing of images without consent, it can also include the threat of an image being shared⁹.

What you need to know:

- 1) Posting nude images without the other person's permission can be deemed illegal distribution of an invasive image, regardless of the person's age or whether they originally consented to them being taken. It can also be considered a menacing, harassing or offensive use of the internet or mobile phone. You can find out more about this on the esafety website <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/image-based-abuse/police-and-legal-help>
- 2) If you learn there is a photo of you posted online without your permission, you can do something about it: (A) If it has been posted on social media, you can contact the relevant website and ask to have it removed, and (B) contact the **Office of the E-Safety Commissioner** or the police to report the matter. It's easy to feel embarrassed and ashamed if this happens to you, but know that you are not to blame.

To receive assistance in removing an image online and reporting a matter, visit the **E-Portal through the Office of the E-Safety Commissioner:** [esafety.gov.au/image-based-abuse](https://www.esafety.gov.au/image-based-abuse)



DATING APPS

Whether good or bad, dating apps are changing the way we communicate and well... date. The fact that we need to specify to friends that we met someone IRL, not online, speaks volumes. Point is, many of the aforementioned nudes are sent via dating apps, and while they are sometimes welcomed, an influx of nudes in your feed after all you said was “hey, how are you?” can be the bane of our online experience.

While there **are no specific laws (as yet) protecting you** against online harassment on dating platforms, most apps and websites – whatever their colour or creed – have their own reporting protocol in place to deal with fake accounts, harassment and online bullying. Get to know the inner workings of your app of choice and how the reporting feature works. In situations where you feel your welfare is in danger (1) take screenshots of the conversation, and (2) call the police directly.

Here are a few things to remember the next time you start swiping:

1. Communication is key, even via text, so read the proverbial ‘chat room’ and make sure the direction the conversation is heading is consensual for both parties.
2. Keep in mind that sending a nude or unlocking your private gallery does not mean the receiver has to do the same. ‘An eye for an eye’ does not apply.
3. Don't send unsolicited pics – ask first. Know that if you send a pic before asking, it could be received negatively (this includes the person on the other end going silent). Don't continue to send images or badger them. You made a choice to send an image, and they made the choice not to humour it.
4. If you and the hottie on the other end do decide to exchange pics, don't take screenshots or save the image to your phone to show friends – they gave permission for you to view the pic only.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS A TYPE OF SEX DISCRIMINATION. IT CREATES A WORK, SCHOOL OR LIVING ENVIRONMENT THAT IS HOSTILE, OFFENSIVE AND ABUSIVE. IT INCLUDES ANY UNWANTED OR UNWELCOME SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR (VERBAL, NON-VERBAL OR PHYSICAL) WHICH CAN BE REASONABLY CONSIDERED AS OFFENSIVE. IT CAN BE A FORM OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE VICTIM AND IS AN INAPPROPRIATE ASSERTION OF POWER BY THE PERPETRATOR.

BOTH MAKE YOU FEEL... UNSAFE, OFFENDED, HUMILIATED OR INTIMIDATED, BOTH ARE ALWAYS WITHOUT CONSENT.

AS SEXUAL ASSAULT

SEXUAL ASSAULT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE. IT IS A VIOLATION OF TRUST, AN EXPLOITATION OF VULNERABILITY AND AN ABUSE OF POWER. IT COVERS MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR THAT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS UNWANTED OR FORCED, INCLUDING INDECENT ASSAULT, RAPE OR ANY ACTIONS OF A SEXUAL KIND RESULTING IN PAIN, FEAR OR INTIMIDATION.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

Remember, there is no one way a person who has experienced sexual assault or harassment will react. You may experience a range of reactions both physical and emotional. Know that:

- It can help to talk to someone to try and get your head around how you are feeling. This can be someone you trust, a friend or family member.
- Professional support and information is available.

If you have experienced sexual assault and/or harassment, there are a number of immediate steps you can take on and off campus.

ON CAMPUS

The Student Counselling Service can provide information and advice as well as assistance with wellbeing and health concerns. They can be contacted on 1800 SC HELP / 1800 72 4357 (option 4, then 1) during office hours. You can see a Doctor, speak to a Counsellor and/or a report the incident online through SCU's riskware reporting platform. Advise that your request is urgent.

What you can expect:

- To be listened to and taken seriously.
- Not to be judged or made to do anything you do not want to do.
- To be given all of your rights and options.
- To be supported in making the best choices for you.
- To discuss possible consequences and ask questions so you can make informed decisions.
- To be supported towards recovery.

Telling someone may be hard but help is available and can make a difference in recovery. This is a **free, confidential service** that puts your safety and privacy first. Please visit scu.edu.au/counselling for more details on how your confidential information is handled.

Contact 1800 SC HELP / 1800 72 4357

If you feel unsafe, call Campus Security for assistance on 1800 SC HELP / 1800 72 4357 or locate a Campus Security hotline phone.

OFF-CAMPUS

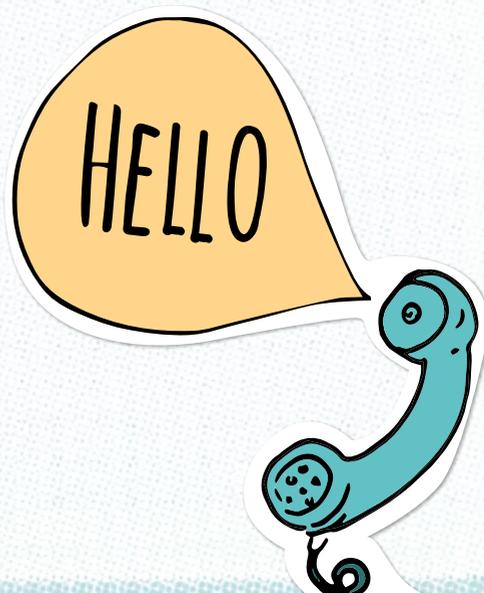
If you have experienced assault or harassment off campus your immediate safety is important. If you are at a venue, you may want to seek out security or other staff for safety, perhaps with a person you know and trust.

For immediate support:

- Call the Police 000
- Lifeline 13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au
- For 24/7 Counselling call the National Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Counselling Services “1800Respect” or 1800 737 732
- Qlife 1800 184 527
- Sexual Assault Crisis Line 1800 737 732
- Mensline 1300 78 99 78
- 1800respect.org.au
- 13YARN 13 92 76

If the incident occurred off-campus, please know that you can still discuss the matter and seek assistance from either SCU Student Counselling Service or by contacting studentsafety@scu.edu.au during office hours.

If you have been harassed and would like to learn more information on whether an incident is unlawful and covered by Australia’s anti-discrimination law, visit ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/human-rights-and-anti-discrimination/australias-anti-discrimination-law

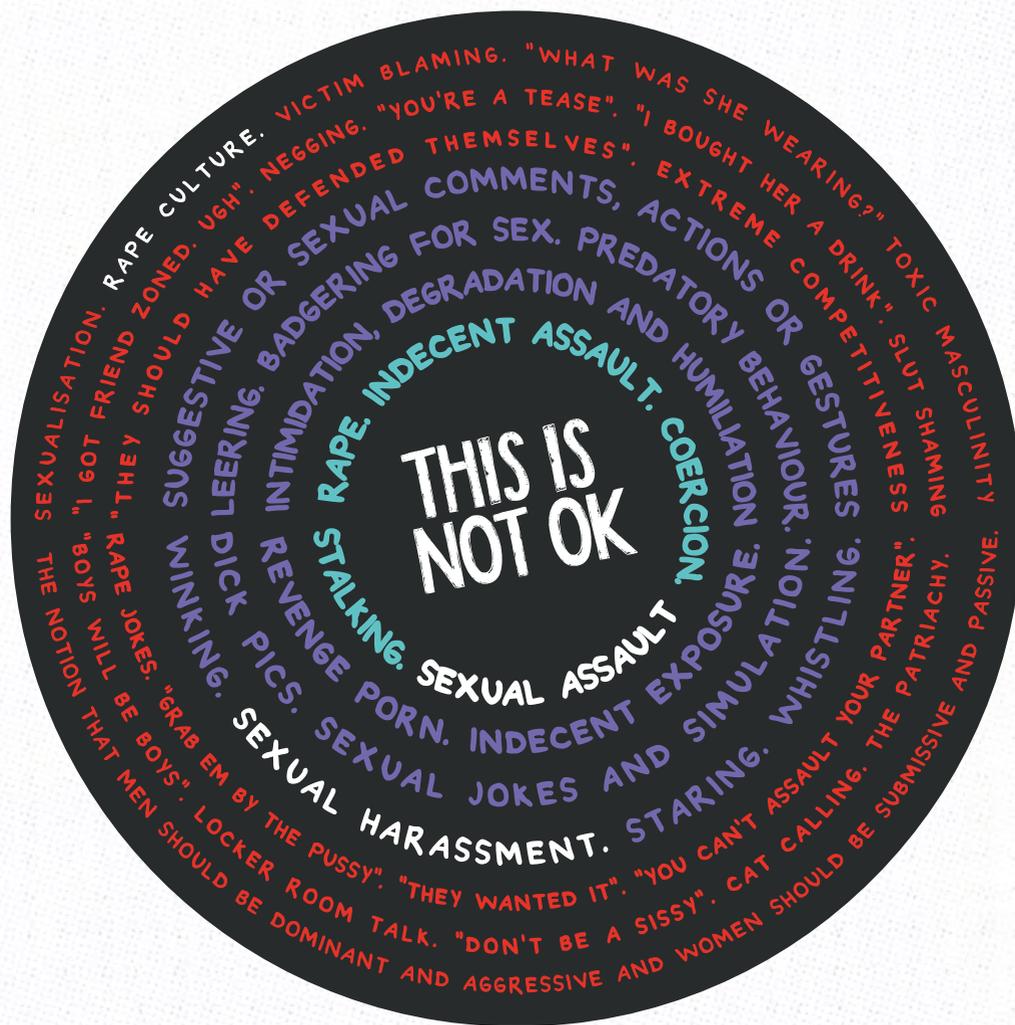


LET’S TALK ABOUT RAPE CULTURE

The term ‘rape culture’ can sound pretty extreme and it elicits all kinds of responses, whether it’s scoffs of anger about the terminology and what it represents, or a deep sigh at the state of things. But what does the term mean? Rape culture is used to describe the environment where sexual violence is normalised and excused – that it’s “just the way things are”.

Rape culture is perpetuated through media and pop-culture by use of misogynistic language and jokes, the objectification of women’s bodies and the glamorisation of violence, creating a culture that ignores women’s rights and safety and makes sexual coercion seem normal. Why is it so dangerous? Because it reinforces the continuum of sexual violence, starting with so called “jokes”, and finishing with rape and murder.

**DO YOU LAUGH AT SEXIST JOKES?
ARE YOU SILENT WHEN YOUR FRIENDS MAKE THEM?**



MYTHS & RAPE CULTURE

Phrases like “she asked for it” or “boys will be boys” are examples of rape culture; so too are attitudes based on gender stereotypes – that being a ‘man’ means you should be dominant and aggressive; that being a ‘woman’ means you need to be submissive and sexually passive; that men ought to score and women ought to be nice and not act so cold. Accepting rape myths only helps to create environments in which many individuals – women, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQIA+ community – are disempowered.

Rape culture is tasking victims with the burden of rape prevention. Rape culture is encouraging women to learn self-defence as though that is the only solution required to prevent rape. Rape culture is warning women to “learn common sense” or “be more responsible” or “avoid these places” or “don’t dress this way”; failing to caution men to not rape. – Melissa McEwan, Rape Culture 101

The legacy of rape culture and victim blaming affects everyone, but let’s focus on women as an example. Although most males are decent humans and thankfully many females are never the victims of rape, the existence of sexual assault and rape in our community means women do change their behaviour, whether it’s learnt (“don’t go out wearing that”) or out of fear (“I should get home before it’s too dark”). **50% of Australian women¹¹ for example, don’t feel comfortable walking a short distance home after a night out for fear of being harassed or assaulted, whereas a guy more than likely would (79.2%)¹².**

ASK WOMEN YOU KNOW IF AND HOW THEY MODIFY THEIR BEHAVIOUR IN A SIMILAR SITUATION

Being on the receiving end of ‘locker room talk’, upskirting, catcalls, stalking, all the way to coercion, harassment and sexual violence can happen to our students. So who are we kidding? Let’s all try to be better and speak up instead of staying silent. Let’s put a stop to the behaviour that normalises rape culture.



UNDERSTANDING PATRIARCHY

We cannot address rape culture without discussing patriarchy. Before some of you say “Patriarchy doesn’t exist. It’s 2024! The marriage equality act was passed last year and Wonder Woman is arguably the most popular DC character in its current incarnation (‘cause she’s a badass)”, know that ‘patriarchy’ isn’t just a women’s issue, and it’s not a made up concept tied to feminism or trans and gay rights. Patriarchy is the term used to describe the political and social systems in which men are generally the beneficiaries (more power and more privilege). Patriarchy shapes and continues to inform largely ‘white’ male heterosexual identity and their sense of self from birth until death¹³, valuing stereotypically ‘masculine’ qualities – power and extreme competitiveness for example – inadvertently devaluing women, people of ‘other’ ethnic backgrounds and the LGBTQIA+ community in the process.

“Patriarchy has no gender” – bell hooks, *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*

The thing is, we can all be guilty from time to time of subscribing to these patriarchal norms, as we define ourselves and try to understand others around us – but men aren’t from Mars and women aren’t from Venus, you know. Patriarchy is generally not an explicit ongoing effort by men to dominate women. It is a long-standing system that we are all born into and participate in, mostly unconsciously¹⁴, feeding racism, sexism, homophobia and toxic masculinities in the process.

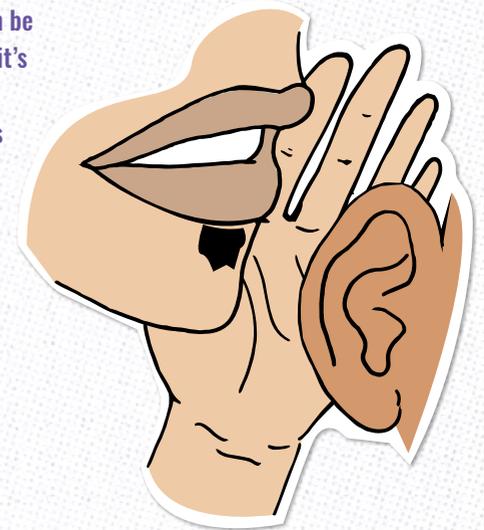
WHAT TYPE OF PATRIARCHAL ATTITUDES DO YOU SUBSCRIBE TO?

TOXIC MASCULINITY

Patriarchal attitudes are bad for everyone, even males who supposedly benefit the most from the socially constructed system. In recent years, the term toxic masculinity has been coined to describe the performance of being masculine, to be models of sexual conquest (of women) and violence; suppressing emotion and devaluing women in the process.

In order to prove one’s masculinity, to be a man and not a boy, men are told from an early age to distance themselves from femininity (“pink is a girl’s colour”); to suppress emotion (“boys don’t cry”); to be tough and aggressive (“don’t be such a pussy”); to be seen as sexual with women (“hit it and quit it”) and to prove one’s heterosexuality through homophobia (“don’t be a sissy”). This isn’t good for anybody, and only reinforces attitudes towards rape culture that excuses mens’ violence and focuses instead on women needing to protect themselves. These attitudes also stifle men from expressing themselves, leading to depression and contributing to a suicide rate three times higher than their female counterparts¹⁵.

Masculinity is not in and of itself bad, and it can be celebrated. But we also have to remember that it’s just a set of ideas, and being ‘masculine’ is not about subscribing to a set of misogynistic traits that assert power and dominance over people and objects. We say this because in order to address rape culture as a community, we need to change our attitudes around masculinity and maleness, and that includes making the alternative(s) an attractive option.

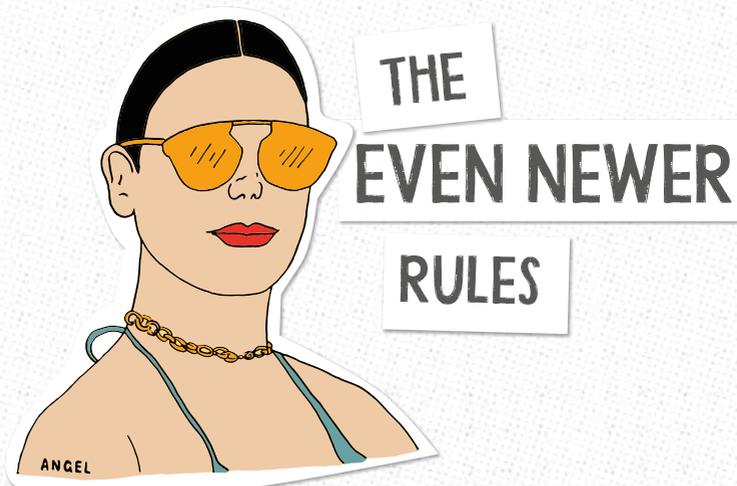


BREAKING THE CYCLE

So what can you do to break the cycle?

- 1) Get to know yourself. Define your manhood, womanhood or whoever you want to be, free from stereotypes.
- 2) Think critically about the media's portrayal of gender identities, relationships, sex and violence, and be supportive of alternative portrayals – e.g. that men can be empathetic; that women can be assertive.
- 3) Avoid using language that puts people down, objectifies or degrades.
- 4) Speak out if you hear a sexist joke. It's not cool and it's just lazy.
- 5) Respect people's personal space and need for alone time.
- 6) Learn to communicate openly with your partner, lover or friend; that includes both the speaking and the listening parts.
- 7) Advocate and practice affirmative consent, never assume it's given.
- 8) Know that the myths we mentioned earlier are just that, myths. Take it seriously if someone tells you they were sexually assaulted.

When it comes down to it, this is an issue of equality, not in the sense of 'who has the most money or power' but equality in building empathy, mutual respect and the ability to enjoy the same rights.



LET'S TALK ABOUT BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

It's 1:30am and you're slaying the d-floor with a group of friends at the club. You scan the crowd and notice a guy is dancing a little too close with a woman he clearly does not know; her body language tells you this. Her posture is turned away from him and she's looking out to the crowd. What do you do?

When we witness a situation that feels wrong or behaviour that makes us feel uncomfortable, chances are something is awry. Most of us want to do the right thing, to intervene – distracting the guy for a moment or providing an opening for the woman to dance with your friends if appropriate – but knowing what to do and feeling confident enough to step in can be difficult.

DO YOU NOTICE SITUATIONS LIKE THIS ON/OFF CAMPUS?

WHAT DO YOU DO?

BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

1 NOTICE THE EVENT

Be present and notice what is occurring around you.



2 IDENTIFY IF IT'S A PROBLEM

Be critical of our own perceptions and attitudes of others.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

A Would you behave in the same way?

B Would this kind of behaviour be okay if it were occurring to a friend or family member?

C Does the situation at hand make you feel uncomfortable?

3 TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Perhaps the hardest step. If we all assume someone else will step in, nothing will happen.

4 MAKE A PLAN

Directly or indirectly. Just remember to be respectful and careful in whatever approach you take.

5 ACT

Not participating in a conversation or calling-out bad behaviour; derailing an incident from occurring by distracting the would-be perpetrator. These are all ways you can act.

HOW TO BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

An active bystander is someone who, when noticing a situation that concerns them, does something about it – they are everyday superheroes. This might be similar to the scenario mentioned on the previous page; or maybe you're looking out for your friends; maybe you're calling them out when they are making an offensive comment towards another person. Each situation is different, but there are some basic things you can do in any scenario:

1) Notice the event We've mentioned a few scenarios throughout this booklet – a friend showing you a nude that was sent to them privately, hearing someone making a homophobic, sexist or racist remark towards another person or group, or noticing a peer incessantly pursuing someone who is not interested – these are all situations where you might intervene.

2) Identify if it's a problem Interpreting an event as a problem requires judgement on your part, but as a guide, question whether the situation at hand makes you feel uncomfortable. Would you behave the same way? Would this kind of behaviour be okay if it were occurring to a friend or family member? If you are unsure about positively answering these questions, or the answer makes you feel uncomfortable, chances are a positive intervention is called for.

3) Take responsibility This is perhaps the hardest step; deciding to step up. In difficult situations we often assume that someone else will do something – surely the woman at the club has friends who will come to her aid – but if we all assume someone else will step in, nothing will happen.

4) Make a plan There are a number of different ways to intervene and take responsibility – either directly or indirectly – just remember to be respectful and mindful of your own safety and theirs in whatever approach you take, whether you decide to act in the moment or check-in with the person later to see how they feel.

5) Act Choosing to not participate in a negative conversation or calling-out bad behaviour; derailing an incident from occurring by distracting the would-be perpetrator (i.e. ask for the time, directions, what drink they're having); offering assistance to the victim by listening or helping them to report the incident – these are just some of the ways you can intervene and be an active bystander.

WHY IT CAN SOMETIMES BE DIFFICULT

Being an active bystander can be challenging at times – with great power comes great responsibility.

For starters, we all fall victim to apathy at times. You might fail to notice an incident is occurring due to noise or other sensory distractions¹⁶ (i.e. looking down at your phone), or you might find it difficult to judge whether an incident such as the woman in the aforementioned club is at ‘high-risk’ or not – what if you misread the signs?

Research suggests that our judgement is sometimes influenced by the myths¹⁷ we mentioned earlier. What we have to remember is that these myths are false – wearing provocative clothing does not constitute sexual availability, for example. Research also shows that people are less likely to help in situations where the perception of ‘need’ is ambiguous¹⁸. The trick is to be present and notice what is occurring around you, and to learn to be critical of our own perceptions and attitudes of others.

Second, you might feel uncertain about how to best intervene. You might not feel physically equipped to step in, or you might find the whole experience embarrassing, awkward or scary.

Looking out for someone is nothing to be embarrassed about. It demonstrates empathy and concern. Being an active bystander does not always require you to confront the situation yourself. You can contribute to defusing the situation by informing someone in a position of authority that an incident might be occurring – bar staff or campus security for example.

WHY MIGHT PEOPLE AVOID BEING AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER?

HOW MIGHT YOU CHANGE THIS?

ASSISTING OTHERS

As a friend or active bystander, you might find yourself assisting a victim of sexual assault or harassment immediately after an incident occurred. In the event of assault or rape, it’s important that you listen to them, let them know you understand what has happened and ask them how you might help. Remember that they are likely feeling vulnerable, having had their sense of control shaken, so it’s important to not rush them into making decisions or to tell them what to do. Be gentle and let them know their options. These include:

- Asking whether they would like medical attention for both their wellbeing as well as collecting evidence if necessary.
- Asking whether they wish to notify the police. An informal report does not mean they have to press charges, and it could be helpful if there is future legal action.

HEY, CAN I TALK TO YOU?

Helpful Responses

- Seek safety and privacy.
- Encourage them to take their time and take what they say seriously.
- Remember that they want to be heard by you. You don’t have to be an expert to listen.
- Acknowledge the courage it has taken for them to disclose to you.
- Assist them to get the information they want in order to make the best decision for them.
- Support them in accessing the medical or emotional support they may want.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Not So Helpful Responses

- Minimising what the person says.
- Forcing the person to seek help or do something they don't want to do.
- Insisting that they report the incident to the police.
- Asking for details that are not necessary or too much detail.
- Telling them that they need to forget about it and move on.
- Blaming yourself or the person, asking questions like "Why didn't you try to fight them off?". The perpetrator is 100% responsible.
- Making comments that might appear supportive, but could be upsetting, like "Where do they live? I'll kill them".¹⁹

Your instinct might be to comfort the person with a hug, but only do so if you're sure that they are comfortable with physical contact. The key is to let them lead the way and to work through this process at their own pace. Be an ear and an open heart.



COPING STRATEGIES & SELF-CARE

If you have experienced or witnessed something that has upset you, you may experience a range of short and long term psychological and emotional effects. Every person reacts differently and it is usual for feelings to change from day to day.

'Coping' describes all the different things people do to manage problems or difficult situations. How we choose to cope can have a big impact on our mental and physical health.

Coping strategies can be both positive and negative. For example, if you're going through a tough time, a negative way of coping is to use drugs or alcohol to 'numb the pain'. This kind of coping may provide a quick fix, but often it will make things worse in the long run.

Choosing positive coping strategies, such as the ones on the next page, will help you manage and reduce stress in a way that won't be harmful in the long term. You'll probably find that some strategies work better than others depending on the kind of situation or stressor that you are facing.



COPING STRATEGIES TO TRY

- Ask a trusted friend or family member for help and support. Sharing your thoughts with someone else may bring some relief, and might help you work through the problem.
- Look after yourself – try to eat well, get plenty of sleep and exercise regularly.
- Prioritise self-care each day. Exercise, meditate, listen to music, get close to nature – or whatever it is that makes you feel good – even if it's just for five minutes a day.
- Write down how you're feeling. This can really help to clarify things when you're feeling strong emotions. Write in a journal and keep it handy, so that you can look back at what you've written.
- Use positive self-talk and self-compassion to counteract negative thought patterns.
- Keep yourself active, but maybe look at reducing your load. Sometimes you just have to accept that you can't do everything. Make a list of the things you need to accomplish, and adjust your schedule according to how you feel each day.
- Remember to be patient, kind and caring with yourself.²⁰

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE REALLY STRUGGLING?

You don't have to work this stuff out on your own. Counsellors are available at Southern Cross University to hear your case and help you with any problems you are facing. They're also good to talk to if you prefer not to talk to friends or family, or if your problems are making it hard to carry on with your day-to-day stuff. Key contacts and services can be found at the end of this booklet (page 42).

HAVE YOU SAID SOMETHING KIND AND CARING TO YOURSELF TODAY?

REPORTING ON CAMPUS

Southern Cross University has zero tolerance for sexual harassment and sexual assault and is proactive in its commitment to creating an inclusive study and work environment, free from harassment, discrimination and bullying. If you are sexually assaulted or harassed whilst studying at SCU, whether on or off campus, know that assistance is available.

The University has Equal Opportunity and Grievance policies in place to report an incident on campus, in line with State and Federal legislation. Complaints Assistance Officers are trained to provide confidential support and information in the event of discrimination, sexual harassment and/or sexual assault. Complaints Assistance Officers can provide you guidance by outlining your options and supporting you with whatever decision you make, which may include making a formal complaint. Whether you decide to report the incident or not, Complaints Assistance Officers will respect your decision. The University's Counselling Service can provide continued support which may include counselling and assistance to negotiate your studies.

Please note that your information will remain confidential, however, there are some circumstances where it may become necessary to disclose some information. These include if you are at risk to yourself, there is risk to others or it involves a person under the age of 18.





CHANGING CULTURE

So what can we do to move forward as individuals and as a campus community? What's the takeaway? Having read through the booklet, we hope you understand that being a better human is not just a matter of responding to situations of sexual harassment and sexual assault. It's about creating a culture that prevents it from happening in the first place.

Practice being critical of the pervasive ways society reinforces sexist attitudes and stereotypes that normalise sexually abusive behaviour AND be proactive in taking a stand. How can you help women on campus to feel safe, to feel empowered? How can you actively encourage men on campus to express their emotions in healthy ways? How can you be an ally of the campaign and an advocate for the change we want to see?

At the very heart of the 'Be A Better Human' campaign are three simple words – consent, respect and empathy – and this is where we encourage you to start

1. Talk about and engage in ideas surrounding affirmative consent – that it's voluntary, enthusiastic and continuous.
2. Respect each other – women, men and gender diverse people – their rights, their identity and autonomy.
3. Show empathy for your fellow student and their lived experience and be an active bystander to ensure that they are okay.

Use the questions dotted throughout the booklet as conversation prompts with your friends and classmates. If your thoughts and actions come from a good place, and the person next to you does the same, then person by person, group by group, we can make our community better for everyone.

We welcome your polite, engaged feedback. Email: studentsafety@scu.edu.au



KEY CONTACTS

ON CAMPUS

SAFETY

Campus Security

1800 SC HELP | 1800 72 4357 or locate a Help Phone

COUNSELLING & REPORTING

Health, Counselling, Equity and Inclusion Services

1800 SC HELP | 1800 72 4357

Counselling Services: Option 4, then 1

counselling@scu.edu.au

Equity Services: Option 4, then 2

equity@scu.edu.au

Inclusion Services: Option 4, then 2

inclusion@scu.edu.au

SCU Health Clinic Lismore

T: +61 2 6626 9131

E: clinic@scu.edu.au

SCU Health Clinic Gold Coast

T: +61 7 5589 3252

E: clinic@scu.edu.au

SCU Health Clinic Coffs Harbour

T: +61 2 6626 9131

E: clinic@scu.edu.au

OFF CAMPUS

SAFETY

Police 000 or report to your local police station

1800RESPECT is Australia's National Helpline responding to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. They are available 24/7 for phone or online counselling and can provide referrals to appropriate services around Australia. It can be a fantastic first introduction to counselling (as callers can be anonymous if they would like) and a gateway to services. Online chat is available.

1800RESPECT or 1800 737 732 or 1800respect.org.au [live web chat 24/7]

RESOURCES

Lifeline Australia

Crisis Support and Suicide Prevention
13 11 14
lifeline.org.au

BeyondBlue

Depression and Anxiety Support Service
beyondblue.org.au
1300 22 4636

Reach Out

Online mental health organisation
au.reachout.com

Qlife

1800 184 527
qlife.org.au

13YARN

13 92 76
13yarn.org.au

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20. Advice on this page was heavily influenced by content featured on au.reachout.com

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