REPORTING SEXUAL ASSAULT
I want to tell, but...

will the police come?
what if they don’t believe me?
will people stop talking to me?
how will it affect my community?
will this bring shame to my family?
if nothing happens, I will see him every day.
I need my family to stay together.
everyone knows anything.
I heard my family members talk about this.
YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

You deserve to be heard and believed. You deserve help.

It can be scary when you don’t know where to get help or what will happen when you do. This booklet provides key information about your options to report a sexual assault.

If you want to report, do it as soon as you can. It is never too late to report.

If you live in an urban area, you have three options: Go to...

- The police station (or call the police)
- The hospital or a health center
- A sexual assault center (or call)

Ask the police or hospital staff to call support for you and ask about what will happen next.

*IMPORTANT* To ensure the best chance to collect evidence, don’t wash hands, shower, file nails, drink, gargle, bath, douche, change clothes, use alcohol or drugs, or clean yourself up.
Should I Contact the Police?

It is your choice.

If you call the police, an officer will come to take your statement and write a report. Depending on when the assault happened, the officer may suggest you go to the hospital.
You can also **go to the police station**. When you arrive, tell the front desk staff that someone sexually assaulted you. The police will ask a person from Victim Services to support you while you provide a statement and connect you to follow-up services.

When the officer takes the statement, they will ask you questions (interview) to gather evidence. They may also videotape it. The police will ask you to write a statement or they will write it for you based on the interview. You can sign it once you agree that it is correct.

If you report **within 3 days** of the assault, they may ask to collect physical evidence in a sexual assault kit that includes skin swabs and photos.
Should I go to the Hospital?

At the hospital,

• Tell the front desk staff that someone sexually assaulted you. They may call a nurse. You can ask to wait in a quiet, private area.
• Staff will ask you to sign consent forms. Ask them to explain the forms so you understand.
  o One form allows the nurse to contact other service providers on your behalf. These providers, such as a sexual assault center, to support you while and after you report and to help you identify any follow-up services.
• There are two exams that can happen while you are at the hospital: 1) Medical exam that will check for injury and sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy prevention (blood and urine samples may be needed), 2) Sexual assault evidence kit (police evidence collection)

Will the hospital call the police?

• Usually, you will be able to choose if you want to involve the police at the hospital.
• If you do, the nurse will contact them and an officer will come to the hospital with a kit to collect evidence, which the nurse will use.

IF YOU ARE YOUNGER THAN 18, HOSPITAL STAFF MUST CALL THE POLICE AND CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES RIGHT AWAY.
Evidence collection may make you feel uncomfortable. You can have a support person with you. You can say “no” to any step or stop at any time for any reason. You can also ask the police officer to wait outside of the exam room.

It is best to collect police evidence within 72 hours of the assault and no more than 7 days after. You must decide whether you want to collect evidence for the police before the nurse examines you.

If you decide to collect evidence, the nurse will do this exam at the same time as the medical exam. It will take between 2-5 hours. The nurse will take swabs of your skin and scrape under your nails, and collect pubic hair, head hair and nail clipping samples to test for DNA evidence.

Medical staff may ask you to do a toxicology screen to look for evidence of drugs or intoxication. You may be worried that people will blame you if you were drinking before the assault. If the test shows you were drinking or using drugs, it can help prove that you could not legally consent to sex.
Should I Call or go to the Sexual Assault Center?

Sexual Assault Center staff have specialized training to best support you. If you decide to go to the hospital or the police, they can accompany you. Most sexual assault centers have a 24-hour Crisis Line for immediate support.
What Can I Do If I Live in an Isolated Community?

It may feel especially difficult to report when you live in an isolated community.

There are fewer resources and supports available. If you want support from a specialized team, the police can transport you to the closest service such as a sexual assault centre.

You can get medical care and sexual assault kit at your local hospital or health center.

Your local health care provider can tell you about follow-up services in your area, which may be available through Family Services or Mental Health Services.

You can call Alberta’s One Line for Sexual Violence at 1-866-403-8000 to identify services in your area.

If you can, seek support from a trusted Elder or friend in your community for support and healing.
People You Might Meet When Seeking Help:

Reporting a sexual assault requires many service providers to work together. It is important to understand their roles. Some can be your support and others must remain neutral.

Supportive Professionals:

Victim Services Staff or Volunteers: They can support you through the reporting process and help you identify follow-up resources. The police will contact Victim Services for you before they take your statement. If they do not, you can ask them to call and tell them you want to wait until Victim Services arrives before continuing with any investigation.

Sexual Assault Center Staff: They have specialized training in sexual assault and will know about:

- What you might need or experience in the short- and long-term
- How best to support you
- Reporting options and the processes available to you

They can coordinate services, accompany you to the hospital or the police station and help prepare and accompany you to court, if charges are laid.
Impartial Professionals:

Police: They must uphold the law and collect evidence to potentially lay charges and for court. It is their job to remain neutral. They may need to ask you many questions to make sure your case has the best chance in court. The police have the responsibility to present evidence to the Crown Prosecutor. Following the law, the Crown decides if there is enough evidence to go to trial.

Police questioning may make you feel like they don’t believe you.

Medical Staff: They are required to be objective and health-focused while they conduct a medical exam and collect evidence for the sexual assault kit. The court can call medical staff as a witness if the case goes to trial. Medical staff may ask you questions about what happened to identify injuries or health concerns. They should treat you as a patient, not a victim.
Alberta Sexual Assault Centers

Alberta’s One Line for Sexual Violence
Call or text: 1-866-403-8000
Chat support: aasas.ca/get-help

Sexual Assault Center of Edmonton
Crisis: 780-423-4121
Main: 780-423-4102

Edmonton - University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre, Main: 780-492-9771

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse
Toll Free: 1-877-237-5888
Chat support: calgarycasa.com

Sherwood Park - SAFFRON Centre
Crisis: 1-866-956-1099 (call or text)
Main: 780-449-0900

Fort McMurray - Waypoints
Support line: 780-791-6708

Bonnyville - Dragonfly Sexual Assault Services
Crisis Support Textline: 780-207-7535
Main: 780-812-3174

Lloydminster Sexual Assault & Information Centre
Crisis Line: 306-825-8255

Grand Prairie - PACE, Community Support, Sexual Assault and Trauma Centre
Main: 780-539-6692

Peace River - PACE
Main: 587-479-6698

Red Deer - Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre
Crisis Phone and Text Toll Free: 1-866-956-1099
Chat support: casasc.ca/crisis-response

Stettler Association for Communities Against Abuse
Toll Free: 1-866-807-3558
Main: 403-742-3287

Medicine Hat, Southeastern Alberta Sexual Assault Response Committee
Crisis: 1-800-661-7949
Main: 403-548-2717

Lethbridge, Chinook Sexual Assault Centre
Main: 403-694-1094