

The University of Vermont

The UVM Women's Center

Definitions

Sexual Violence: is a continuum of attitudes and behaviors that takes many forms. Acts of sexual violence are used to exert power over another person. Some examples of sexual violence are:

- rape, attempted rape, & sexual assault
- unwanted sexual touching and/or molestation
- sexual harassment

Sexual Assault:

is any sexual contact forced on another person through threats to harm them or another, intimidation, coercion or without consent. This means if someone is impaired by alcohol, drugs, or otherwise is mental or physically incapable of consent, and sexual activity takes place, it's sexual assault.

Sexual Harassment: a deliberate or repeated behavior which is unwelcome, hostile, offensive, or degrading to the recipient.

Examples of sexual harassment are:

- making sexual jokes that are offensive to the recipient
- spreading sexual rumors about someone
- repeatedly asking someone out on a date when they have declined

These are just a few examples. If you are unsure you or a loved one is experiencing sexual harassment, talk to the victim's advocate. (UVM Campus Victim's Advocate, 802-656-7892). She can help you to determine whether what you're experiencing is sexual harassment and give you some options about how to proceed.

Relationship Violence:

(also known as domestic or dating violence) is a term used to define the tactics used by a person to gain and maintain control over their partner. These can be physical, psychological, and/or sexual.

Some examples of these tactics are :

- **Physical abuse:** punching, choking, pushing, restraining, slapping.
- **Psychological abuse:**
name calling, threats to harm his/her partner or others, isolating his/her partner from friends and family.
- **Sexual abuse:**
withholding intimacy to control his/her partner, sexual assault, putting pressure on his/her partner to engage in sexual activities that are degrading.

These are just a few examples. If you are unsure you or a loved one is experiencing abuse, talk to the victim's advocate. (UVM Campus Victim's Advocate, 802-656-7892). She can help you to determine whether what you're experiencing is abuse and give you some options about how to proceed.

Stalking:

is a series of behaviors or activities occurring more than once that together instill fear in the victim, threaten

her/his safety, or cause emotional stress to the victim. Such behaviors may include but are not limited to:

- Information gathering by the stalker
- Persistent unwanted physical approach and/or requests for dates, meetings, etc.
- Leaving unwanted notes or flowers
- Observing, following or "coincidentally" showing up where the victim is
- Sitting outside the victim's home, class, or work place
- Threatening e-mail, mail, beeper codes, or phone calls

These are just a few examples. If you feel threatened by unwanted pursuit from anyone in any way, talk to the victim's advocate. (UVM Campus Victim's Advocate, 802-656-9538). She can help you to determine whether what you re experiencing is stalking and give you some options about how to proceed and ways to protect yourself.

Because some elements of stalking, independent of a pattern of harassment, may not constitute a crime, it is usually necessary to show a pattern of unwanted harassment in order to charge someone with stalking.

- If you feel comfortable doing so, let the stalker know in writing that you do not want any contact him/her whatsoever of any kind. Keep a copy of this written notice and end all contact with the stalker. Do not respond to calls, email, letters etc. Any response is considered contact and may feed his/her behavior.
- Consider keeping a log of the date, time, and type of any contact that the stalker attempts. Consider applying for a Relief From Abuse Order (restraining order) if there has been any threat of physical harm made against you.

Links

1. <http://www.uvm.edu/~women/?Page=definitions.html#supplinks>