

3RD - 9TH FEBRUARY 2020

#ITSNOTOK

This week is Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week, which is all about raising awareness and promoting support for survivors of sexual abuse #itsnotok.

Sexual violence and abuse is any behaviour of a sexual nature which is unwanted and takes place without consent or understanding. This includes rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, childhood sexual abuse, female genital mutilation and more.

The long-term effects of sexual violence can include many emotional, psychological and physical conditions. The experience of sexual assault or abuse at any age and whether male or female can have devastating effects on every aspect of a person's being and life – on their mind, their body, their behaviour, thoughts and feelings.

Sexual violence is still very prevalent in our society. It is estimated that approximately 700,000 people aged 16 to 59 years were victims of a sexual assault in the last year (2017/18). It is estimated that only 1 in 5 survivors will ever report what happened to them to the police. Part of the reason why survivors do not report is due to a number of widely upheld rape myths and stereotypes.

If you are a victim-survivor of sexual violence, no matter when this occurred or the circumstances that it occurred under, know that it was not your fault. You are not responsible for the actions of anyone else and you did not ask for this to happen to you.

The **#ITSNOTOK** campaign is to encourage discussion about sexual abuse and sexual violence and how to prevent this in the UK.

The message of this week is 'it's not okay' - that all forms of sexual abuse and sexual violence are unacceptable and victims and survivors should not have to tolerate it. There should also be adequate services to support those who have experienced it and clear guidelines for reporting it. This is an all inclusive campaign to support anyone who has experienced sexual abuse or sexual violence, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, identity, age, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

If you have experienced sexual violence or abuse

If you are in immediate danger, phone 999 and ask for the Police.

If you need information, advice and support on sexual abuse/violence and what help is available, your safeguarding coordinator, or the charities below can advise further.

Charities that support people who have experience sexual violence or abuse

- **Victim Support (link to website)**

Women

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline (link to website)**
- **Women's Aid (link to website)**
- **Rape Crisis (England and Wales website)**
- **Rape Crisis (Scotland website)**
- **Rape Crisis Help (Northern Ireland website)**

Women and children

- **Refuge (link to website)**

Children

- **Childline (link to website)**
- **NSPCC (link to website)**

Men and boys

- **Survivors UK (link to website)**

Links for more information :-

<http://sexualabuseandsexualviolenceawarenessweek.org/>

<https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/about-sexual-violence>

<https://www.facebook.com/SASVAWUK/>