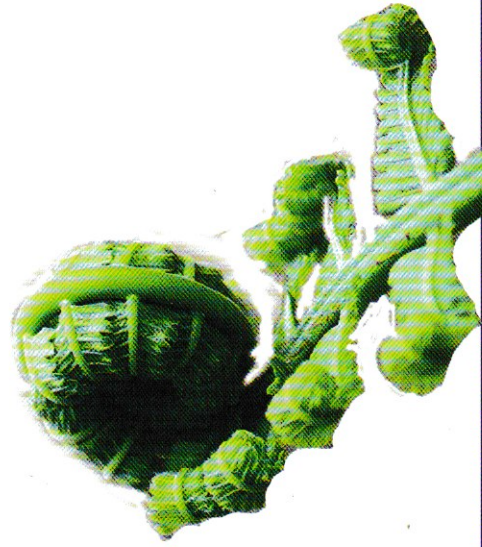


History of SASH

Since 1984 we have worked alongside thousands of people, their family / whanau, partners and friends, seeking healing from rape and sexual abuse.

Our focus is on support and healing.

We believe people have a right to live in a society free from sexual abuse and violence. We aim to assist people by empowering them towards healing and promote autonomy, self-determination, personal growth, pride, confidence and self-esteem.



Where to find us

SEXUAL ABUSE SUPPORT & HEALING



16 Nile Street West, Nelson



155 High Street, Motueka



03 548 2407



sash@sash.co.nz



www.sash.co.nz

We have compassionate,
dedicated specialists
to help you, your family /
whanau, partner and friends.



Information for..... **family /**

**whanau, partner and
friends**

of Survivors of
Rape / Sexual Assault

**Support
Counselling
Advocacy**

What is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse includes rape, sexual assault, sexual violence, inappropriate touching and sexual harassment.

This involves any form of unwanted or forced sexual contact where consent has not or cannot be given. Rape is about power and control and many of those affected feel that the sexual nature of the assault is secondary compared to the feeling of having their own authority and choice taken away from them.

Who is Responsible?

Sexual abuse can happen to any one at any time. The person it happens to is not responsible for what happened to them. Misconceptions and victim blaming are still common occurrences, but the reality is that it is never the fault of the person sexually abused, no matter what they were wearing, doing or drinking at the time. Nobody ever asks to be sexually abused. The responsibility is always with the offender.

Common Reactions

Every situation is unique and every person who has been affected by sexual abuse reacts differently.

There is no right or wrong way to feel and there is no time limit on "getting over it". Initially it is common to experience shock, anger, shame, numbness, disbelief, fear, difficulty sleeping, depression, self-blame or mood swings but it is important to remember that everybody responds to trauma in their own way and each person will recover in their own time frame.

If someone has disclosed to you about being sexually abused in the past, do not expect the person to be over it. The consequences of sexual abuse can last a lifetime and that person will still need your support to embark on their own process of healing.

Reactions may include:

- Fear
- Crying
- Shock
- Low self-esteem
- Self-blame
- Fluctuating emotions
- Panic attacks
- Stress
- Numbness
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Inability to sleep
- Pain/nausea
- Shame
- Loss of intimacy
- Social isolation

How you can help?

It can be hard to know how to support someone who has experienced sexual abuse. You may not know what to say or how to help. The most important thing is that you take the time to listen to them and believe them.

What you can say :

- "I am sorry this happened to you"
- "It was not your fault"
- "Thank you for trusting me enough to tell me"

What you can do :

- Ensure their immediate safety.
- Give your full attention and be non-judgemental.
- Don't pressure them to talk if they don't want to and be gentle.
- Believe them and validate what they are feeling. Reassure them that their feelings are normal.
- Acknowledge and support how they are feeling rather than offering advice.
- Respect their right to confidentiality and support their choices about who they tell.
- Offer to link them in to support services such as SASH who can arrange follow up support and counselling.
- Be aware of your own feelings. It is difficult to know that someone you care about has been sexually abused. Get support and help for yourself if you need it.

To access any of our services, get more information or to talk to someone in confidence who will understand, contact us:



03 548 2407



sash@sash.co.nz



www.sash.co.nz