

# Sexual Assault & Sexual Harassment (SASH)

An Awareness Module for Students, Staff, Officers & Volunteers

Video recording:

<https://vimeo.com/user125359427/sash-training-2024>

# SASH – Support Services

This content may be upsetting or distressing for some. Please participate in this training in ways that are safe and appropriate for you.

## If you need support or advice there are free 24/7 National Support Services

- 1800RESPECT (Ph: 1800 737 732) – <https://www.1800respect.org.au/>
- Full Stop Australia (formerly Rape & DV Services) – <https://fullstop.org.au/>
- Sexual Assault Counselling Australia – 1800 211 028
- Lifeline – 24/7 Crisis Support – 13 11 14

**1800RESPECT**  
NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC  
FAMILY VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE



 **Lifeline**

# SASH – What do I need to know?

## What is included in this training?

- Why do I need to do this training?
- Fast Facts and Definitions (Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, and Consent)
- Prevalence—How common is SASH (in Australia, in Universities, in Bible Colleges)?
- How do I report SASH?
- Case studies
- What is the Australian College of Theology (ACT) doing to prevent and respond to SASH?

# Why do I need to do this training?

Because...

- The **ACT** considers both sexual assault and sexual harassment unacceptable forms of behaviour and will not tolerate them under any circumstances.
- There is a **biblical** basis for caring for the widow, the orphan and the oppressed.
- We have a **moral** imperative to look after “the least of these.”
- There are **legal** considerations to take into account.
- There are **compliance** requirements Colleges must meet.
- This is an **opportunity**. Ultimately, it’s up to all of us to foster the kind of safe educational environments where everyone has the opportunity to flourish.





# Sexual Assault in Australia

- In 2016, on average, police recorded 52 sexual assaults each day against women and 11 against men (ABS, 2017).
- Sexual assault is not defined by where the offence took place or by the relationship between the parties involved. The majority of sexual assaults (77%, ABS) are perpetrated by someone known to the victim.
- Sexual assault within marriage can occur. The most likely person to perpetrate sexual violence against a woman is her current or former partner (ABS, 2017).
- Girls are 3.5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than boys.
- Some people groups have an increased risk of (further) sexual assault, such as: people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people who have already experienced sexual assault.

The 2016 PSS estimated that **1 in 6 women** (17%, or 1.6 million) and **1 in 25 men** (4.3%, or 385,000) have experienced at least 1 sexual assault since the age of 15.



In 2018, the rate of police-recorded sexual assaults against **children aged 0-14** (167.6 per 100,000) was **nearly twice** that of people aged 15 and over (90.2 per 100,000).



During 2018-19, nearly all (**97%**) of **sexual assault offenders** recorded by police were **male**.



## Prevalence of lifetime sexual harassment



72% of Australians have been **sexually harassed** at some point in their lives.



85% of Australian women and 57% of Australian men over the age of 15 have been **sexually harassed** at some point in their lives.

## Prevalence of workplace sexual harassment

In the last **12 months**, 23% of women and 16% of men have experienced sexual harassment at work.



In the last **five years**, 39% of women and 26% of men have experienced sexual harassment at work.

## Age of people experiencing workplace sexual harassment

People aged 18-29 (45%) are **more likely** than those in other age groups to have experienced **sexual harassment** at work.



1 in 5 (20%) of 15-17 year olds have been **sexually harassed** at work.

# Sexual Harassment in Australia

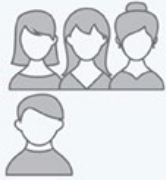
Sexual harassment is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act in different areas of public life, including **employment**, service delivery, accommodation and **education**. Some types of sexual harassment may also be criminal offences.

Employers have a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in employment, such as implementing a sexual harassment policy and providing training or information on sexual harassment.

# Prevalence of SASH at University

## Who experiences sexual assault and sexual harassment at university?

Women were **three times** as likely as men to have been **sexually assaulted** in a university setting in 2015 or 2016.



Women were **almost twice** as likely as men to have been **sexually harassed** in a university setting in 2016.



## Who perpetrates sexual assault and sexual harassment at university?

**51%** of students who were **sexually assaulted** and

**45%** of students who were **sexually harassed**

...knew some or all of the perpetrators.



## Complaints or reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment at university



**94%** of students who were **sexually harassed** and

**87%** of students who were **sexually assaulted**

...did **not** make a formal report or complaint to their university.

The AHRC conducted a national, independent survey to gain greater insight into the nature, prevalence & reporting of SASH at Aus universities.

- Over 30,000 students from 39 unis responded.
- 26% of respondents were sexually harassed in a university setting in 2016.
- 1.6% of students reported being sexually assaulted in a university setting in 2015/6.
- The majority of perpetrators at uni are male. In the broader population, males aged 15–19 had the highest offender rates of any age group.
- The majority of perpetrators are students, but postgrads were also harassed by lecturers.



# SASH at Bible College?

The same survey was later conducted with private higher education providers, including faith-based providers, but more research needs to be done.

We do know, however, that SASH does occur in Bible Colleges and the experience is often similar to other tertiary settings.

Both surveys found that women are the majority of victims and men are the majority of perpetrators. And both surveys found that students with disability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were more likely to experience SASH.





# ACT Policy & Procedure

The ACT has a Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) Policy as well as a Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) Procedure.

You can find both of these documents on the Student Support Services page of the ACT website.

The Policy and the Procedure are also located on the Policies section of the ACT website.



# Definitions and Examples

## Sexual Assault

The ACT's SASH Policy states that Sexual Assault is: “a term covering a range of criminal offences involving a sexual act or sexual contact without consent.”

Sexual assault is any actual or threatened contact of a sexual nature without consent, including:

- sexual intercourse;
- indecent assault;
- penetration by objects;
- other sexual activity.

As defined at 5.1 of the Policy.



# Definitions and Examples

## Consent

Consent occurs when a person freely and voluntarily agrees to the sexual activity.

Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Consent on one occasion cannot be taken to mean consent on another occasion.

Consent cannot be given by a child under the age of consent.

A person does not consent to a sexual activity if the person does not say or do anything to communicate consent, the person is incapacitated, or because of force, coercion, blackmail, intimidation or threat.

This is more fully defined in the SASH Policy Definitions.



# Definitions and Examples

## Sexual Harassment

The ACT's SASH Policy states that Sexual Harassment is:

"an unwelcome sexual advance, an unwelcome request for sexual favours, or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the possibility that a person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated."

Sexual harassment is more fully defined in clause 5.2 of the SASH Policy.

# Definitions and Examples

Sexual harassment may be physical and/or verbal and can occur online and through media involving information technologies. Sexual harassment may involve one or more of the following:

- unwanted physical contact, such as touching or fondling;
- staring or leering in a sexual manner;
- sexually suggestive comments, innuendo or jokes;
- displaying, sending or circulating sexually explicit pictures or posters;
- unwanted invitations to go out on dates, including repeated unwanted communication with a person after a date or relationship;
- unwanted requests for sexual intercourse or sexual contact;

This is from clause 5.2 of the SASH Policy.

# Definitions and Examples

- offensive sexual gestures;
- indecent exposure;
- intrusive questions about a person's sexual activities or body;
- unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against a person;
- insults or taunts of a sexual nature;
- making promises or threats in relation to sexual favours;
- conduct of a sexual nature; and
- sexually explicit telephone calls, emails, SMS text messages, or social media posts and messages.

This is from clause 5.2 of the SASH Policy.

# Definitions and Examples

Some of these forms of Sexual Harassment are also **criminal behaviour** and may be treated as a criminal offence.

These include:

- sexual assault;
- physically touching a person;
- stalking;
- indecent exposure; and
- obscene communications.

Please remember that **online** interactions—on platforms like Zoom, Teams, Moodle and other educational or social applications (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.)—require respectful and safe communication (just like in-person interactions).

# Case Study 1

Abi and Mark met at their college orientation week. They've been getting to know each other and have grabbed coffee together a few times.

Mark asks Abi to go on a date with him—he suggests dinner and a movie. Abi enjoys Mark's company and agrees to go on a date with him.

Abi had a fun time on her date with Mark but decides that a relationship is not a good idea. She thanks Mark for a nice date and explains that she does not want to have a relationship with him.

Mark waits a week and then asks Abi to go out with him again. Abi politely declines.

Mark still feels they'd be really good together so, after a few weeks, he gives Abi a book he thinks she'd like, along with a card in which he asks her to consider giving him another chance. When Abi doesn't respond, Mark starts texting her. He continues to send regular messages even after Abi texted Mark asking him to stop contacting her.



# Case Study 1

When Mark first asked Abi out for a date, was this sexual harassment?



## Case Study 1

**No. This was not sexual harassment.**

Mark and Abi spending time together, going out for coffee, and going on a date were not sexual harassment. Even if Abi had turned Mark down for the first date, Mark had done nothing wrong by asking for a date.

**When Mark asked Abi out again, was this sexual harassment?**

# Case Study 1

## This should give us pause to think:

Though Abi *might* not feel uncomfortable, and Mark *might* have asked respectfully, Mark should stop and consider his behaviour...

Being friendly and going on a date does not mean that Mark has a right to ignore a clear no from Abi. She has to continue studying at college with Mark, and he must respect her wishes and not continue to push her boundaries.

**What about when Mark continues to text Abi?  
Was this sexual harassment?**

## Case Study 1

# Yes. This is sexual harassment.

Mark has ignored Abi's wishes and not respected her boundaries. Abi clearly communicated to Mark not to contact her. Yet he continued to text her.

Under 5.2 of the ACT Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy, this is Sexual Harassment:

**“unwanted invitations to go out on dates, including repeated unwanted communication with a person after a date or relationship”.**

Abi isn't sure about speaking up. The card seemed nice enough and the text messages don't say anything offensive, so she worries her concerns won't be taken seriously.

## Case Study 1

**Abi's friend Kate thinks Abi shouldn't complain because she and Mark are friends, because Abi did go out with him that one time, and because, besides, he hasn't said anything that bad.**

# Case Study 1

## It's Abi's choice whether to speak up...

It's collectively our job as a community to make sure that Abi's college environment is one where she feels safe to raise her concerns.

Abi can and should speak up about Mark's behaviour—if she feels safe to do so. Having a friendship or relationship does not mean Abi can't speak to a SASH Contact Officer about Mark's behaviour.

Mark has sexually harassed Abi. He continued to contact her after being told to stop. Mark could face **disciplinary action** (see 5.41 of the Policy).

Abi can ask her College SASH Contact Officer for support, referral and advice about how to make a Disclosure or Formal Report of SASH.

# How do I report SASH?

There are two reporting pathways for SASH: Disclosure and Formal Report.

Disclosure	Formal Report
Anyone can make a Disclosure about SASH	Only the person who directly experienced SASH can make a Formal Report
Disclosures can remain anonymous	A Formal Report cannot be anonymous
Disclosures are not normally investigated	Formal Reports are normally investigated
Disclosures can be made at any time. You can still make a Formal Report after a Disclosure, if you choose.	Formal Reports can be made at any time

# How do I report SASH?

Disclosures and Formal Reports about issues at Affiliated Colleges are usually made to your College's SASH Contact Officer, and can be made by telephone or email, or face to face.

Your College's SASH Contact Officer can help you with the process of making a Disclosure or Formal Report. They can advise you about differences between the two pathways and let you know about next steps.

In certain cases, Disclosures and Formal Reports can be made to the ACT's SASH Contact Officer, the Moderation and Inclusion Manager.

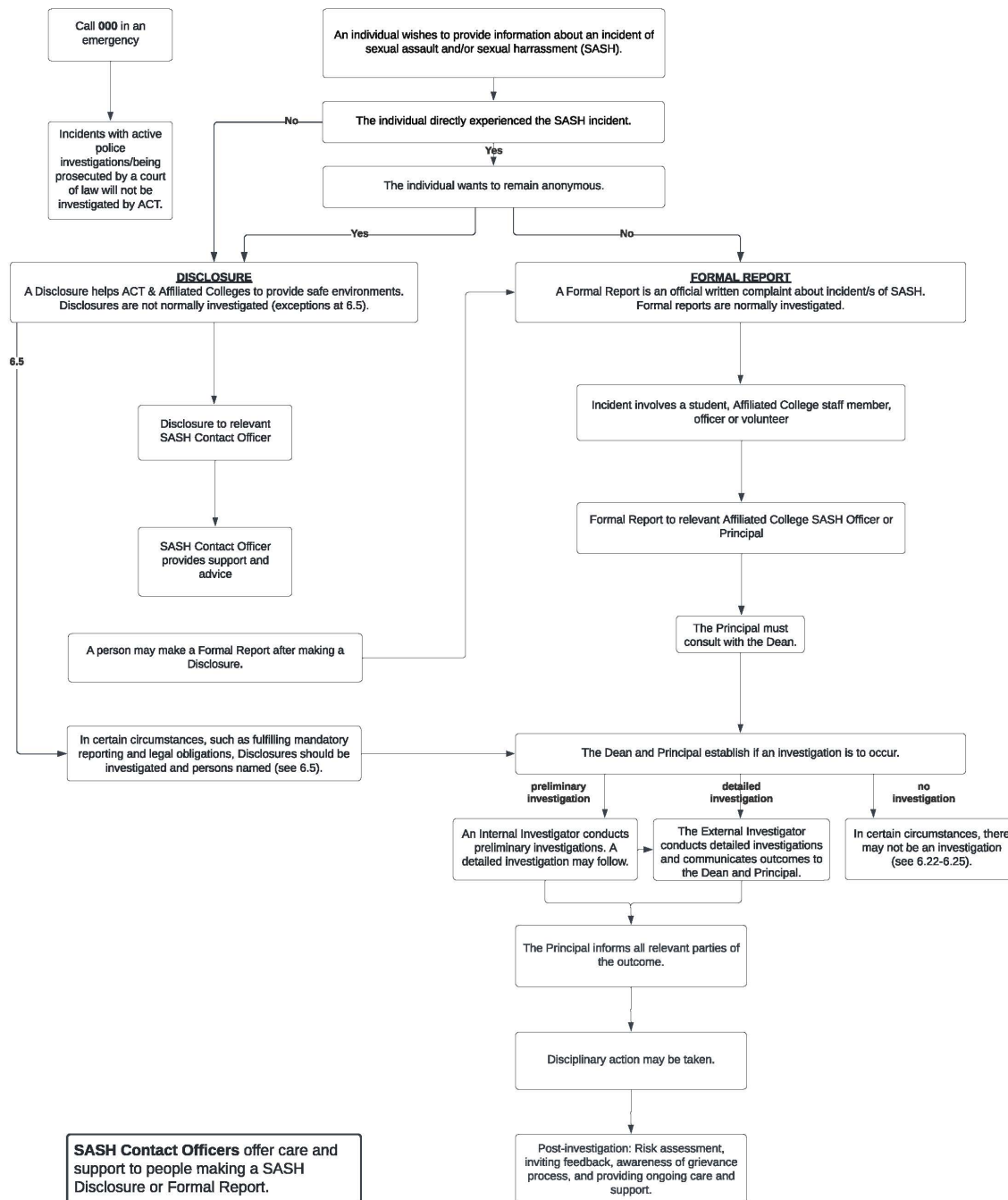
Phone: (02) 8937 5301

Email: [SASH@actheology.edu.au](mailto:SASH@actheology.edu.au)

Disclosures and Formal Reports may also be made via the Online Form on the [Student Support Services](#) page of the ACT website.



This flowchart is in Appendix 1 of the ACT SASH Procedure.



**SASH Contact Officers offer care and support to people making a SASH Disclosure or Formal Report.**

# What do I do if someone tells me they've been harassed or assaulted?

## Do:

- Listen. Believe. Reassure. Care and compassion comes first.
- If and when they are ready, help them talk to a SASH Contact Officer.

## Don't:

- Be dismissive or tell others who don't need to know.
- Start an investigation or make promises you can't keep.

## Remember:

- It is not our place to judge.
- We need to work together as a community so that people feel safe to speak up.
- There are free 24/7 national hotlines that can help:

1800RESPECT (Ph: 1800 737 732)

Lifeline (Ph: 13 11 14)



# What do I do if I see a SASH incident taking place?

1. **If anyone is in immediate danger, call 000.**
2. **Be a compassionate and active bystander.**

Students and staff are encouraged to intervene safely when they encounter instances of unacceptable behaviour. As compassionate and active bystanders, students and staff can **CARE**:

Create a distraction

Ask a question

Refer to an authority

Enlist others

## Case Study 2

Ellen has commenced her PhD in a different college to where she previously studied. Her new supervisor, Mike, is well known and respected in his field. He has been friendly and helpful, orienting her to the college and to higher degree research, and assisting Ellen with the forms she needs to complete.

During one of their supervision meetings, Mike mentions that he and his wife live near the beach and enjoy swimming. Ellen says she used to swim competitively and misses it. Mike replies that she looks like she has a swimmer's body. Ellen says she doesn't want to talk about it.

A few months later, in another supervision meeting, Mike asks Ellen if she's had a chance to get back in the water. Ellen shakes her head and says between family and work and study there's just no time. Mike expresses concern that Ellen might be losing her level of fitness and she wouldn't want to lose her nice muscle tone.

Ellen feels offended and does not appreciate having her body evaluated by her supervisor.

## Case Study 2

Do you think Mike has sexually harassed Ellen?



## Case Study 2

**Mike's conduct is not acceptable. This is a supervisory relationship, where there is a power differential.**

Mike has commented on Ellen's body more than once. It does not matter that it *might* be intended as a "compliment" or even a well-meaning "concern." His comments were offensive to Ellen, as they would be to many reasonable persons in her situation.

Commenting on Ellen's appearance is inappropriate for this context, especially by a supervisor. Ellen can consider raising concerns about his behaviour. Even though this *may not be* unlawful harassment (unless repeated on multiple occasions), Mike should be asked to stop.

He is required to model appropriate behaviour and should be very careful in commenting on physical characteristics of students. He should not make comments/judgements on the basis of sex (or race, age, ability, background, etc.). Ellen should not have to continue to put up with it, nor should other students.

Leadership should be aware of this (even if other students and staff are not) and Mike should be reminded of proper supervisory conduct.

# What is the ACT doing to prevent and respond to SASH?

The ACT expects all members of its community to treat one another with respect and dignity to make each campus and their online environments safer spaces for everyone.

The ACT will assist any member of our community who makes a Disclosure or Formal Report of SASH, through support and referral to relevant services.

- The ACT has developed this awareness module for all students and staff.
- The ACT website has a list of support services and information on how to report SASH.
- The SASH Policy and SASH Procedure can be found on the ACT website.
- The ACT has a SASH Taskforce reporting to the Dean, who reports to the Board of Directors, overseeing the development and improvement of these processes and materials.

**There are also denominational and ACT College resources and initiatives:**

[Before It Starts – Take Love – Anglicare and Youthworks College](#)

[Healthy Relationships Project – Australian Baptist Ministries](#)

[Responding to Domestic and Family Violence – Ridley College \(free training\)](#)