“Sexual assault” is defined by the Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) as “any sexual behaviour that makes you feel uncomfortable, frightened or threatened”. An estimated 1.2 million women in Australia aged 18 and over have experienced sexual assault or its threat. One in six adult women over the age of 15 have been sexually assaulted.¹

We listen to many women’s experiences of unplanned pregnancy as a result of sexual contact they did not freely agree (consent) to. The Women’s Hospital recognises that: ‘The crime of sexual assault is one of the most violating experiences anyone can endure. It can have immediate, short and long term effects on physical and emotional well being.’²

Our aim is to help women who have been assaulted to access any of the support, medical, clinical and legal services they need.

**Decision-making in these circumstances**

Individual women vary in their responses to an unplanned pregnancy as a result of sexual assault. PAS recognises that it is crucial that women have control over this decision. Women may find that talking to PAS or the Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) can help them clarify their decision. There are a number of options women may wish to consider while in the care of the Women’s Hospital.

**Sexual assault and women’s rights**

Victim/survivors of sexual assault have the right to a full range of emotional, medical and legal support options. CASA provides such support, information and advocacy services.

If you are a victim/survivor of sexual assault, you may wish to report the sexual assault to police. If you terminate the pregnancy, you may request forensic evidence be collected at the time of the procedure. This would require you to speak to a police officer and CASA can support you to understand your legal rights.

You may also choose not to report to police or not have forensic evidence collected. This decision is entirely up to you. (Child protection laws may affect a young person’s rights to confidentiality and privacy. Our service will provide you with information about your rights throughout this process.)

To find out more, please talk to PAS 03 8345 3061 or CASA 1800 806 292.

**Support services at the Women’s for women who have experienced violence**

Skilled and supportive female counsellors/advocates and social workers support women during the initial phone-call to our service. Experiences may be difficult to talk about, but counselling staff can assist women to discuss as little or as much as they wish.

Other support services include:
- emotional support
- decision-making support
- information
- counselling
- advocacy
- referral – to CASA House (part of the Royal Women’s Hospital), the police, medical staff, other community services.

You may also wish for additional support in medical examinations or in the operating theatre and this can be discussed at any time.

The Women’s understands some women will prefer to see female medical practitioners and will do its best to provide this.

If you have an unplanned pregnancy and these or other situations sound familiar, you might find it helpful to discuss your situation with PAS or a Centre Against Sexual Assault service. Look at CASA House’s *Frequently Asked Questions* to assist with your decisions. [www.thewomens.org.au/sexualassaultinformation](http://www.thewomens.org.au/sexualassaultinformation)

**Useful phone numbers**

- **Pregnancy Advisory Service** (The Women’s) 03 8345 3061
- **Centres Against Sexual Assault** (CASA) 1800 806 292
- **Women’s Social Support Services** (The Women’s) 03 8345 3050
- **Women’s Domestic Violence Crisis Service** 1800 015 188
- **Immigrant Women’s Domestic Violence Service** 03 8413 6800 or Freecall 1800 755 988
- **Police** 000
- **No to Violence** Men’s Referral Service 1800 065 973

**References**


**Disclaimer** The Royal Women’s Hospital does not accept any liability to any person for the information or advice (or use of such information or advice) which is provided in this fact sheet or incorporated into it by reference. We provide this information on the understanding that all persons accessing it take responsibility for assessing its relevance and accuracy. Women are encouraged to discuss their health needs with a health practitioner. If you have concerns about your health, you should seek advice from your health care provider or if you require urgent care you should go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department. © The Royal Women’s Hospital, February 2011