



The Royal  
Children's  
Hospital  
Melbourne



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SASH  
Support After  
Sexual Harm

# Welcome

**Support After Sexual Harm (SASH) Service**

The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne  
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[www.rch.org.au/sash](http://www.rch.org.au/sash)

Information  
for children over 12

## Why do kids come here?

At SASH, we see young people who have experienced sexual harm.

Sexual harm is any kind of sexual behaviour you did not want, that happened without your consent, or made you feel uncomfortable or scared.

Sometimes after sexual harm you can:

- feel big emotions
- have confusing or upsetting thoughts
- have uncomfortable feelings in your body
- have nightmares or other sleep problems
- want to stay away from places and people that remind you of what happened
- struggle to find ways to help you cope.

### About consent

Sometimes young people feel that they have given consent, but the law says that they cannot because of their age. It is sexual harm if any sexual activity happens with:

- anyone more than two years older than you (if you are 15 years or younger), even if you feel you did consent.
- Someone in a position of power or care, like a teacher, coach, foster carer or another adult, even if you feel you did consent.

This can be really confusing and difficult to go through.

**A parent or another adult who cares about you might suggest you come to SASH so you can talk about this in a safe space.**

## What do our counsellors do?

When you first come to SASH, you'll meet with a sexual assault counsellor who cares about how you're doing after experiencing sexual harm. They will talk with you and your carers about what's tough right now, what you want to be different, what's going well, and how making it to your first appointment is a big step you've already taken.

You can talk to your SASH counsellor about your thoughts and feelings. Games, music and art are also used when talking is too hard.

SASH counsellors can help you to:

- understand that what happened to you was not your fault
- know that it is ok to feel upset, angry or confused
- find ways to cope when you have these feelings
- process memories to make them feel smaller and less intense.

## Do I come with my parents?

Usually, SASH counsellors will also support parents/ carers and will meet with them separately or sometimes together with you.

If you have a reason for coming to SASH without your parent or carers consent, call us to discuss this. There are some situations where this is OK.

Some days you might feel OK, some days you might not feel OK.