

Wath Academy Safeguarding Bulletin



Parent Bulletin

THE IMPACT OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

It's important to understand that everyone is affected differently by sexual abuse and violence. There is no right or wrong way to be, act or feel. How a person is impacted by sexual violence and abuse looks different for everybody. This is because every victim or survivor is different and every case of sexual violence or abuse is different. Some of the impacts might last a few days, while others may last for years, or only appear sometime later. Some victims and survivors might also feel that they haven't really been affected by what happened to them. There's no right or wrong way to be or to feel afterwards, and there is no timeline for getting over it. Many victims and survivors are still affected years after the event.

LONG TERM IMPACT OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual violence and abuse impacts the lives and wellbeing of victims and survivors in lots of different way.

It can affect their;

- Physical health.
- Mental and emotional health
- Behaviour and habits.
- Job and finances.
- Daily routine.
- Social life.
- Sleep.
- Relationships of all kinds – both romantic and non-romantic.

It's a really common myth that sexual violence and abuse has to involve other physical violence or leave the victim or survivor with visible injuries. Some victims or survivors may not have any physical injuries. So, just because some doesn't have these doesn't mean they didn't experience sexual violence or abuse.

It's really important to remember that everyone responds differently to sexual violence and abuse – so whatever someone feels is a valid response.

"I never thought I'd feel this happy again but with the right support you can carry on with your life."

Gemma

100% of the blame and responsibility lies with the perpetrator or perpetrators, no victim or survivor should ever be made to feel that they're making a 'big deal' out of what happened or should 'get over it'.

Trauma

For many victims and survivors of sexual violence and abuse, what happened to them was a traumatic event. These events that are very stressful, scary or upsetting can cause lasting harm to someone's mental, emotional and physical health. Not everyone finds the same experiences traumatic and not everyone's mind and body responds to trauma in the same way.

Trauma responses can include but are not limited to;

- Intrusive thoughts or feelings.
- Very upsetting or painful emotions.
- Low mood, feeling upset or being irritable.
- Suicidal thoughts or feelings.
- Self-harm or self-harm urges.
- Alcohol or drug misuse.
- Withdrawn or isolated.
- Flashbacks.
- Feeling anxious, worried.