

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. What if I have consensual sex with another inmate?**

**A.** Any sexual interaction between inmates is against facility rules and regulations, and violations will be handled through the inmate discipline process. There is no such thing as consensual sex in jail.

**Q. Aren't there offenders who "ask for it" or "deserve" to be sexually abused?**

**A. No.** All sexual contact is against the rules. Being sexually assaulted to "teach them a lesson" is not part of any inmate's sentence no matter what you think about their crime, behavior, or sexual orientation.

**Q. What if I willingly participate in sex with staff?**

**A.** Sexual misconduct is a violation of the professional boundaries between you and staff. When these boundaries are crossed, there is a confusion of roles, putting you and staff into potentially dangerous situations. No matter who initiates the contact or how "consensual" the relationship is, when a staff member has a relationship with you it is an abuse of power by staff.

## Support System

Serving time is not easy and being a victim of sexual abuse only makes it more difficult. Deciding whether or not to formally report sexual abuse can be a **VERY** difficult decision. It is important that you have support. Here are some organizations you can contact:

### **Vermont Network against Domestic and Sexual Violence**

P.O. Box 405, Montpelier VT, 05832  
1-802-223-1302

### **The Advocacy Program at Umbrella**

1222 Main St, #301, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819  
Hotline: (802)748-8645  
93 East Main St., Suite 1, Newport, VT 05855  
Hotline: (802)334-0148

### **H.O.P.E. Works**

P.O. Box 92, Burlington, VT 05402  
Hotline: (802)863-1236

### **Voices Against Violence**

P.O. Box 72, St. Albans, VT 05478  
Hotline: (802)524-6575

### **Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter**

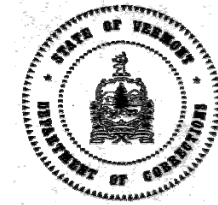
P.O. Box 313, Rutland, VT 05701  
Hotline: (802)775-3232

### **Rape and Incest National Network (RAINN)**

1-800-656-HOPE

### **ACLU National Prison Project**

1875 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 410  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 234-4830



**Vermont Department  
of Corrections**

**YOU HAVE THE  
RIGHT  
TO BE SAFE**

**A guide about Sexual  
Abuse for  
Inmates/Offenders in  
Corrections**

**Know Your Rights and  
Responsibilities**

Rev. 05/13

This brochure was prepared by the Prison Rape  
Elimination Act Office of the VTDOC.

The Vermont Department of Corrections is committed to the prevention of sexual abuse, and the promotion of safety and security for all inmates/offenders and staff. Staff includes, but is not limited to, teachers, medical providers, caseworkers, law enforcement officers, correctional officers, maintenance staff, and volunteers.

## WHAT IS IT?

**Sexual abuse** in facilities or in the field is any behavior used to pressure another to participate in relationships and/or sexual activities, including the use of threats, intimidation, and touch. This includes staff pressuring inmates in facilities or offenders under supervision, or inmates pressuring other inmates. Sexual abuse is not part of your sentence, and you don't have to endure unwanted sexual activity. Staff must report all allegations of sexual abuse and activity.

## Inmate Sexual Abuse

is against facility rules and regulations, and the perpetrator will be held accountable through the disciplinary process. Some sexual abuse may be a crime and will be referred to the Vermont State Police.

### Some examples of sexual abuse:

- Another inmate holds you down and forces you to engage in a sexual act
- Another inmate touches you inappropriately while you are sleeping
- An inmate sexually violates you with an object or any part of their body

**ANYONE INTENTIONALLY PROVIDING A FALSE STATEMENT OF SEXUAL ABUSE MAY BE CHARGED CRIMINALLY**

## Staff Sexual Misconduct

is any behavior of a sexual nature by staff directed toward an inmate/offender that is prohibited by federal law, state statute, Agency of Human Services policies, or Department work rules. This includes, but is not limited to, propositions, undue attention, inappropriate touching, indecent exposure, voyeurism, and sex.

### Some examples of misconduct may be:

- A medical provider offers to bring in contraband in exchange for sex
- A volunteer tells you that you are the only reason they volunteer at the facility
- A caseworker says "good game" and slaps your buttocks.
- A mental health provider shows you nude photographs of themselves
- A teacher looks at pornographic materials during class

**SEXUAL ACTIVITY BETWEEN INMATES IS NEVER CONSENSUAL.**

## Inmate Sexualized Behavior

Some behaviors are against the law, but a wide range of behaviors are inappropriate and are against facility rules.

### Some examples of these include:

- 2 inmates lying in bed together
- Performing oral sex on another inmate in exchange for tobacco
- Engaging in sex as payment for borrowed commissary
- Masturbating uncovered, for your cellmate to see
- Showering under the same shower head with another inmate
- Forcing another inmate to dress or alter their appearance in a certain way



## Who can I talk to if this happens to me?

**PREA OFFICE** You may contact the departments PREA Office for the purpose of bringing sexual abuse concerns or complaints forward. The PREA Office will work with appropriate parties (local management/Central Office/Department of Human Resources Investigations Unit/Vermont State Police) to ensure an investigation is conducted, when appropriate, regarding the concern, complaint, or allegation.

- PREA Office  
Vermont Department of Corrections  
103 South Main Street  
Waterbury, VT 05671-1001

**OUTSIDE THE DEPARTMENT** You may report outside of the Department as well. Your identity will be confidential and/or anonymous upon request.

- Prisoners' Rights Office  
Office of the Defender General  
6 Baldwin St., 4th Floor  
Montpelier, VT 05633-3301
- Disability Rights Vermont  
141 Main St., Ste.7  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
Toll Free 1-800-834-7890
- An advocate from a sexual assault program listed on the back panel

**IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO REPORT!**