



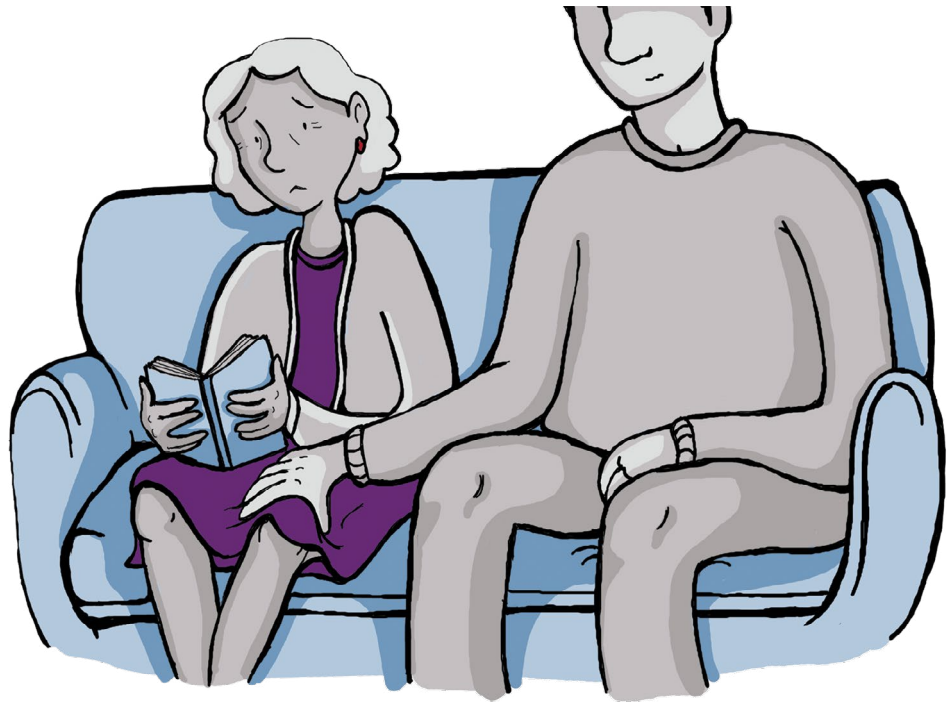
# Warning signs: Indicators of Sexual Assault

## Be Aware and #ReadyToListen

Most indicators of sexual assault are psychological or behavioural changes rather than physical indicators. Sometimes this can make it hard to identify if a person has experienced or is experiencing sexual assault. Physical indicators of sexual assault may be present also, however are much less likely.

### If you suspect a person may be a victim/survivor of sexual assault look for:

- Making vague or incomplete references to sexual assault
- Sudden changes in behaviour or character, such as depression, anxiety attacks, social or emotional withdrawal (e.g. crying, sweating, trembling, distress, agitation, anger, violence, absconding, seeking comfort and security)
- Urinary tract infections or unexplained sexually transmitted disease
- Torn or stained clothing or bedding
- Avoiding or being fearful of a particular person or gender (staff member, visitor or another resident)
- Suicide ideation or attempts
- Sleep disturbances, refusing to go to bed, and/or going to bed fully-clothed
- Refusing personal care, or to get undressed
- Requesting a lock on the door to their room
- Signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Social or emotional withdrawal from others
- Having problems walking or sitting
- Bleeding from the anus or genitals
- Irritation or pain of the anus or genitals
- Bruises, pain, bleeding – including redness and swelling around breasts, thighs, or genitals.



### Sexual Assault Myths:

- Indicators of sexual assault are all physical
- All changes in mood or behaviour can be attributed to dementia or a urinary tract infection (UTI).

### Sexual Assault Facts:

- Physical indicators of sexual assault may not always be present
- Perpetrators may cover up trauma to hide sexual assault
- Behavioural or psychological indicators of sexual assault are more likely than physical indicators
- Victim/survivors with dementia DO experience trauma
- People with dementia may present behaviour-cues of distress following sexual assault, rather than verbal disclosure.

### What do I do?

There are a number of things you need to do when someone has disclosed a sexual assault, you suspect a sexual assault has occurred, or you have witnessed a sexual assault directly.

The main things to remember:

- Any suspected, witnessed or disclosed incidents of sexual assault **MUST** be reported immediately to the most senior manager at the facility
- All sexual assault disclosures **MUST** be reported to the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) as a Priority 1 incident within 24 hours
- Report the incident to the police – observe mandatory reporting requirements
- Notify the family/guardian – a guardian (current order) must be notified immediately.

Contact the WA Elder Abuse Helpline on **1300 724 679**