

Medical Considerations and Health Care Supports

After an assault a victim/survivor may want to seek medical attention for the following: physical injuries (external and/or internal); pregnancy (testing, emergency contraception, and counseling regarding pregnancy options including abortion); tests and treatments for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs); and HIV testing and treatment if they have reason to believe they were exposed to the virus.

It is completely up to the person who has been assaulted if and when they want to seek medical attention.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner

If the assault(s) took place within the last five days (24 hours for pre-pubescent), the victim/survivor will be able to access the services of a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE). These registered nurses are available 24/7 in multiple locations across the province and have advanced training in providing non-judgmental, confidential support as well as conducting medical exams, and collecting forensic evidence. A person may want to see a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner to take care of any physical injuries, test for pregnancy, test for STIs, and begin treatment, if necessary, and collect evidence for police.

Sexual Health Centres

The Halifax Sexual Health Centre provides services including: pelvic examinations, emergency contraception, pregnancy testing, tests and treatments for Sexually Transmitted Infection (STIs), anonymous HIV testing, and counselling regarding pregnancy options, including abortion referrals. Sydney, Stellarton, Amherst, Sheet Harbour and Bridgewater also have sexual health centres that can provide information, support and referrals, but do not offer clinical services.

First Nations Health Centres

Each of the 13 Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia has its own health centre.

Telecare 811

Connects Nova Scotians with a registered nurse. Available 24/7 and free of charge.

211 Nova Scotia

Connects Nova Scotians with community and social services. Available 24/7 and free of charge.

Sexual Assault Centres

There are three sexual assault centres: Avalon Sexual Assault Centre (Halifax), Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association and Colchester Sexual Assault Centre (Truro). These centres exist to support victims/survivors of sexual violence, educate the public, and advocate to end sexualized violence.

Mental health/counselling supports

Mental health supports include:

- **Sexual Assault Centres**
- **University/ NSCC counselling**
- **Private counselling**
- **Mental health mobile crisis team**

Legal Supports

Legal supports include Legal Aid and/or Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network (MLSN). MLSN is a support system offered free of charge for Indigenous people involved in Nova Scotia's criminal justice system. MLSN staff can provide support to victims/survivors whether or not charges have been laid.

Indigenous mental health supports

If the person you are supporting identifies as Indigenous, they may want to access Indigenous mental health supports including

- ***Mi'kmaw Crisis and Referral Phone Line – 1-855-379-2099***
- ***Residential School Crisis Line - 1-866-925-4419***
- ***Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centres***
- ***Counselling (NIHB) Non-Insured Health Benefits Program***
- ***Indian Residential Schools Resolution Support Program***