

### Do I have to report what happened to me?

No. In general, whether the sexual violence is reported to police will be up to you. If you are unsure about whether to report what happened, it can be helpful to talk through your options with a sexual violence service. They will know all the options in your state/territory and be able to help you think through the possible outcomes of the different choices you might make. Remember that the most important thing is what is *right for you* – other people might tell you that you should or shouldn't report, but your opinion is what really matters. There are different possible outcomes of reporting and not reporting, and what these will mean for your life is the key factor.

### What are my options if I want to report?

You can report sexual violence to police in two ways. The first is what you are probably imagining that reporting to police involves: going to the police station or having police come to visit you and telling them in detail about what happened; this is called making a **statement**. If you want the police to investigate and potentially bring criminal charge(s) against the **perpetrator(s)**, this is the way to report what happened. Doing this doesn't guarantee the perpetrator(s) will be charged, but it is an essential step towards charging.

If you want the police to know what happened but you don't necessarily want to give a formal statement, you can use an **alternative reporting option (ARO)**. This involves filling in a form with details about what happened. Police keep the form on file to use either in gathering evidence against a perpetrator who has been reported by another person or to try to prevent future sexual violence. This can be anonymous.

### Do I have to report to police if I want evidence to be collected?

Generally, yes. However, if a person who has experienced a very recent sexual assault has physical evidence collected from their body, this can **sometimes** be stored while the person makes a decision about whether to report to police.

If you think you might report in the future, you can create a written or electronic record (e.g., in a file on your phone or computer) of what happened, including who was involved, what they did, and when it happened. If you make a record like this soon after a sexual assault, you will have the information to give to police if you decide to report later.

### Can I have a support person with me?

Yes! You can have a support person with you if you speak to police or have physical evidence collected. You can also have one with you if you speak to a sexual violence service, counsellor, or other support provider.

### Tricky Terms

There are a few tricky terms when it comes to understanding your reporting options.

**Statement:** A formal document police create as you tell them about a crime. It is very detailed and involves having a long conversation. Statements are usually taken at police stations.

**Perpetrator:** A person who has committed an act of sexual violence.

**Evidence:** Things that police or lawyers can use to show that a crime occurred or to show that it is likely a crime occurred. Evidence can include:

- Statements
- Photographs or video footage
- Physical evidence collected by medical professionals
- Messages, emails, letters, etc.

