



change  
starts with me!

# GLOSSARY OF CONCEPTS



Association for  
**Struggle** against  
Sexual Violence

# GLOSSARY OF CONCEPTS

**Contents:** The team of Association For Struggle Against Sexual Violence

**Preparation for Publication:** Merve Karabulut, Nurgül Öztürk, Özge Özgüner

**Graphic Design:** Özge Özgüner, Hilal Esmer

First Turkish edition: October 2019

Second Turkish edition: November 2020

First English edition: September 2022



info@cinselsiddetlemucadele.org  
www.cinselsiddetlemucadele.org

We compiled the terms and concepts we encountered in **Sexual Violence Concept Discussions** we held in 2017 within the scope of "**Sexual Violence Thrives in Silence, Let's Talk and Take Action!**" Project under Glossary of Concepts. We improved and published the content in 2019.

## WHY GLOSSARY OF CONCEPTS?

Only one type comes to mind when we mention sexual violence is mentioned, although it covers many types of violence as an umbrella term. Certain patterns emerge in mind from the gender, age, species of individuals to the way how the perpetrator and survivor relate to each other. This standardization causes us to think that other types of sexual violence are not violence, to define only certain types as violence, not to give importance to others, and eventually to establish a hierarchy between the types of violence.

Just as certain patterns come to mind when sexual violence is mentioned, we talk about it with a few limited concepts. The fact that the issue of sexual violence is always handled with the same concepts makes us always look at the issue from the same point of view and always get stuck at the same points; causes us to be unable to make new discussions,

produce solutions, and our awareness to remain at a certain level. For example, ignoring the support the survivor might need, while discussing only the punishment to be given to the perpetrator after each incident of violence. Moreover, these concepts that we constantly use serve false beliefs about sexual violence and reinforce the social perception that needs to be changed. Using empowering concepts instead of the usual myth-reproducing concepts when talking about sexual violence is an important step in changing the language that blames and victimizes the survivor. Concepts can also help the person to make sense of the violence they are exposed to by naming it and to ask for support.

For all these reasons, we have brought together the concepts that we use, recommend and strive to disseminate while combating sexual violence.

**Because change starts in language!**  
**Change Starts with Me!**

**WARNING:  
THE GLOSSARY CAN  
BE TRIGGERING.**

Some concepts and definitions that you will come across in this glossary may remind you of a traumatic event you have experienced in the past, which is still effective, which you are aware of or not; can increase your anxiety and cause you to experience violence again in your mind. For this reason, we recommend that you prepare yourself before starting to read the glossary; take a break to read the concepts, take a break if you feel triggered, and continue with someone you trust to read when you feel ready.



# triggering stimuli

Refers to stimuli that activate a response structure created by a traumatic event.

To be triggered refers to remembering, feeling, and reliving similar feelings at different levels of a traumatic event that we have experienced through stimulation of our senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, or touch. The triggering event or object does not have to be traumatic in itself; it is just enough to be a reminder. For example, a certain sound, smell, landscape, color, a specific day, etc., can also be triggering.

Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, flashbacks, loss of reality or anxiety, and restlessness can occur with the effect of the triggering stimuli. Instead of using a pessimistic, helpless, victimizing language that can trigger negative emotions in violent narratives and posts, the use of a language/approach that empowers, addresses the event with its social components, demands rights and emphasizes solidarity reduces the risk of triggering / of being triggered.

# sexual violence

Defines all kinds of attitudes, actions, interventions entailing attempts, and threats towards sexuality without the explicit and apparent consent of the person, or by manufacturing consent or that occur in cases where the person cannot give consent.

The action may be actual, attempted, or threatening act or behavior. Those are unwanted, realized, attempted, threatening actions or behaviors where sexuality is used as a tool while targeting one's sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, gender, or gender expression, without consent. Those acts are directed at one's sexuality using coercion which may involve intimidation, blackmail, or other threats. It may include interfering with someone's physical and/or sexual integrity.

For example; an intervention that threatens sexual health and hinders access to medical treatment and services related to reproductive health; mandatory gender-reassignment surgeries against intersex persons.

\* If the individuals are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, physically or mentally inadequate to give consent, their resistance is challenged by medications, substances, etc.; if these are children (under 18); if these are animals, it is not arguable and not possible to talk about the concept of concern.

# sexual harassment and assault

**Disturbing sexual acts, words, and behaviors not involving physical contact, and performed without the explicit consent of the person.**

For example, sending sexual messages without consent, words, jokes, showing photographs or cartoons, persistently offering intercourse, showing the genitals, telling about sexual experiences, humiliating the person about their sexuality.

**Any sexual act involving physical contact without the consent of the person is a sexual assault.**

Sexual assault can also occur with a single, sudden movement. For example, pinching, kissing, or sexual intercourse in a public transport vehicle without consent. Sexual assault can also occur within a relationship or marriage. For example, removing condoms without consent during intercourse (stealth), using sex toys or other objects without consent.



# gender

A term used by referring to social or cultural distinctions and roles being a man or a woman, often assumed to be matched up with the cultural expectations of the sex assigned at birth\*.

Persons learn and internalize gender norms through interaction and socialization in social environments such as family, school, workplace, and media. Gender roles are not fixed, unchangeable, and unquestionable. The concept of gender; also includes concepts such as gender identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression. Sexual identity is complex, fluid, and distinctive. Therefore, just like the binary gender system, the unequal and hierarchical relationship established between men and women is itself artificial; it is questionable, changeable, and transformable.

When gender stereotypes and roles become sharp and distinct, so do the prejudices, oppression, and violence against those who do not fit into these stereotypes.

\***Sex Assigned at Birth/Assigned Gender:** A gender label assigned to the baby after pregnancy or after birth based on external genital characteristics being born with it. Although it expands in some countries/cultures, it is mostly restricted to a binary gender, i.e., girl and boy or woman and man. Although expressions such as "biological sex" or "birth sex" are oftused, it is more politically correct to use the term "sex assigned at birth" as it is assigned by both healthcare authorities and others without asking the persons' gender identity and expression regardless of the match with gender identity.



# survivor

Refers to the person subjected to any form of sexual violence at some point in life.

For individuals subjected to sexual violence, it may be preferable to use the term "survivor" as the more empowering word rather than "aggresed" or "victim." The persons themselves decide which definition to use for themselves.

To survive means that, regardless of the violence experienced and the extent of the trauma it led to, we can find healing by holding on to ourselves and getting support from acquaintances and can live a more satisfying and productive life.

If you do not allow the trauma experienced to take over your life, if you have somehow reached this text and read it, then you have already survived from the worst. You are a survivor, not a victim.

# consent

Defined as expressing the desire to experience a certain sexual behavior clearly and explicitly through verbal or physical expression.

The moment the sexual behavior starts differs from person to person. Consent is a practical application to prevent the violations of boundaries.

It is valid for one time. Consenting a sexual behavior does not mean that this behavior will always be accepted. Consent can be withdrawn. Giving consent to initiate a sexual act does not necessarily mean that consent is given for the whole process.

The concept of consent is included in the law as well. The condition of "lack of consent", which is the criterion for determining sexual crimes, is limited to acts such as shouting, asking for help, showing physical resistance, and the current conditions are ignored. Being silent in the face of a sexual act is not a sign of consent. Consent cannot be arguable in conditions in which there is a constant sexual demand or threat involving pressure, or in situations in which the person is not able to make a decision.

Regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, the concept of consent is for everyone.

# consent-building

(coercing/manufacturing/constructing consent)

Defined as manipulating a person's decision-making ability to gain consent for any sexual behavior that the person does not approve of.

Acts not involving physical coercion such as insistence, lying, emotional threat, persuasion processes (gifts, financial support, and hospitality), emotional pressure (making the person feel guilty), anxiety reduction (assurances provided regarding relationship) might be gotten used for consent-building. Desire and consent should not be confused. Desiring a person or sexual behavior does not mean that you give consent to that behavior.

Each individual chooses to give or not give consent to the sexual behaviors regardless of their gender/sexual identity. Consent-building can cause these choices to blur, and the survivors to realize the violence to which they had gotten subjected much later.

Just as we can ensure consent-building on others, we can do so on ourselves as well through the roles imposed by society. Questioning consent-building is a process of empowerment and liberation based on listening to ourselves and each other, communicating, understanding, expressing our feelings rather than our knowledge, and respecting the boundaries.



# dating violence

**Harmful behaviors in which one partner tries to gain power and control over the other—or each other—in an emotional, romantic, or sexual relationship or after the relationship ends.**

Dating violence and insecure behaviors can be observed in any form of relationships such as serious or ordinary, short- or long-term, between heterosexual, bisexual or gays, monogamous or polygamous persons; and can be identified or lived in different ways. Although the concept of dating violence is widely known in the field, others such as "in the name of love violence", "romantic partner violence", "intimate partner violence", "relationship violence", "domestic relationship violence" can also define this type of violence.

Harmful behavior can occur in many different ways, where verbal, emotional, digital, physical, or sexual violence is perpetrated or used as a threat to control the partner.

# the cycle of violence

## Continuation of violent behavior in a certain cycle in violent relationships.

Violent partners often apologize for the initial violent behavior and promise that this behavior will never happen again, persuading the partner to stay in the relationship. However, research shows that; if violent behavior occurs once in a relationship, it is likely to reoccur.

The cycle of violence can consist of several stages. **The first stage** is "rising tension" which involves an interruption in communication, increased fear, and anxiety. **The second stage** is "violence" with insult, threat, verbal/emotional/physical/ sexual/economic violence. **The third stage** is "reconciliation" which involves an apology, justification of violence, a promise of change, and gifts. **The fourth stage** is "calmness" which involves ignoring what happened and nonviolent communication.

Although each relationship is unique, it is a common feature of insecure relationships that violent behaviors increase over time and become more harmful for the living. This situation makes it more difficult for the person to realize the violence they have been experiencing and get out of this violent relationship. Therefore, it is important to know how the cycle of violence works and take action against it.

# gaslighting

It is a type of emotional violence that we can define as constantly manipulating someone in a way that makes them doubt their perception and memory.

It emerged with the movie "**Gaslight**" in 1944 and later started to be used as the concept of "**gaslighting**" in psychology. The criterion is that the perpetrator acts consciously to obtain an emotional/financial benefit.

The manipulation methods that can be applied can vary widely. Gaslighting certainly causes persons to "constantly doubt their reality, perception and memory" when they become exposed to violence. Some situations such as making someone feel guilty and forcing them to apologize while trying to express the problem can also be described as gaslighting regardless of the conscious or unconscious act of the perpetrator. For many individuals who feel that they have been subjected to emotional violence but cannot describe what it is, this concept has been a guide in making sense of their experiences.



# stalking

Following physically or by digital means, narrowing the person's safe space by attacking the private sphere and boundaries, and applying persistent and systematic violence in a way that creates threats and fear by not accepting the "no" as an answer.

It is an act of unwanted and/or repeated stalking and surveillance against another person by an individual or group. Persistent stalking behavior is associated with harassment and intimidation and may include being followed or stalked.

For example; disturbing persons with persistent messages and calls, waiting in front of their home/school, following the places they visit and the persons they meet, identifying the places they visit frequently and calling them to account for their actions, etc.

As a result of the persistent stalking, a protection order may be requested under Law No. 6284.

# stealthing

**It refers to acts that make protected sexual intercourse risky by removing a condom without consent or by taking actions that will damage the condom before/during sexual intercourse.**

It is the act of removing the condom without consent by someone, who agreed to use the condom during (or just before) sexual intercourse with mutual consent of the partners. This situation creates the risk of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection and disrupts the sexual agreement of the partners. Sexuality becomes unsafe and violates the right to make and maintain decisions about the person's body and health. It is also one of the behaviors that constitute the crime of sexual assault.

In sexual behaviors, the persons determine the conditions under which they consent to these. If one of the partners violates one of these conditions without the consent of the other, it is no longer sexuality but a form of power/control exercise over someone else's body. Stealthing can happen in all kinds of relationships. Talking about boundaries and establishing a relationship of mutual trust can reduce the risk.

\* Although it is a frequently used form of sexual violence, it has not yet been translated into Turkish.

# digital violence

**It is perpetrated via technological tools and/or social media networks for oppression and control.**

For example; frequently calling and sending messages, asking to send location, posting private information and/or photos, posting insulting and intimidating comments under the others' posts and photographs, requesting the passwords of social media accounts, checking the phone with/without permission, demanding to remove some friends from social media, to interfere with the posts, to send sexting messages without consent, to force to share sexually explicit photos.

These behaviors cover many different forms of violence and fall under various definitions of crime (harassment, disturbance and blackmail/threat, etc.). Sending messages involving sexual content through any means of communication tools is defined as a crime of sexual harassment under the Turkish Penal Code.



# sexual abuse of animals

Defines the abuse and exploitation of animals by a human being(s) through sexual acts or by interfering with their sexuality.

Sexual abuse of the animal is perpetrated in many different ways as vaginal, anal, oral penetration; penetration using an object; artificial impregnation to control the reproduction and continuously obtain milk; injuring or killing the animal for sexual satisfaction.

The abuse or rape usually is perpetrated secretly; no statistics on how many animals have ever been abused could not be kept, as persons are covered up based on various false beliefs and culturally legitimized. Sexual violence and all kinds of exploitation against animals, such as cows, sheep, and chickens used as goods and resources, are regarded as normal and natural through the belief that they exist for human beings. In the male-dominated system, when the doctrine says that every person who is not "male" should be subjugated by "men" and the anthropocentric perception, sexual violence against animals becomes legitimate.

Recognition of human beings as an animal species as well; that all animals, regardless of species, are sentient creatures; that their bodies only belong to themselves, and the spread of this awareness around us are significant first steps to combat all kinds of violence against animals.

# rape rack

A narrow, gutter-like device that restricts their mobility to allow animals to be raped by “artificial impregnation”.

**Artificial impregnation**, called artificial insemination in the livestock industry, is carried out through rape racks. During this act, the worker inserts one arm into the rectum of the cow forced into submission with the other arm pushing a metal rod filled with semen samples\* forcefully stolen from the bull through the cow's vagina until it reaches the entrance of the uterus. It allows fertilization by pressing it with the arm in the rectum. This act is the restriction of freedom, the violation of bodily integrity, sexual abuse of the animal forced into pregnancy by interfering with sexuality. (See. The concept of sexual violence)

The life expectancy of cows that can live 20-25 years without human intervention under natural conditions is reduced to 4-5 years when the cows are constantly imprisoned and kept on milking machines so that people consume more milk. When cows can no longer be exploited, they are sent to another exploitation center, the slaughterhouse for persons to consume “meat”. This “artificial” method which is mostly applied on cows, sheep, goats, and monkeys used in animal experiments; is carried out not only in industry but also in small family businesses and animal production centers.

\* Specially selected bulls are forcibly ejaculated by the **electroejaculation** method by giving electric current to the pelvic nerves.

# victim-blaming

An approach that acquits the perpetrator by attributing the fault/crime to the survivor for various reasons in case of an incident.

In cases of sexual violence, the blame and fault are attributed to the survivor through victim-blaming that would claim that the victimization itself emerges as a result of that fault. It is implicitly or explicitly suggested that the survivor deserves the violence. The presentation of various moral and social grounds that tries to prove that the survivor does not deserve sexual violence is indirectly victim-blaming because it feeds the same approach.

It is one of the reasons why individuals have to hide the violence when they get exposed to it. It causes sexual violence to be discussed through the survivor, and the perpetrators get ignored. Everyone who talks and comments on sexual violence must question whether the victim is blamed in their and others' approach and raise awareness against it.



# rape culture

**It is the normalization of rape through patriarchal norms and false beliefs in cultures with high rates of rape and sexual violence.**

In English, "rape culture" is an actively used concept. However, it is not localized in Turkish. Since the concept of "culture", which means "to produce, to cultivate", is attributed to more neutral meanings in English but more positive and belonging-oriented meanings in Turkish, its use with the word 'rape' is problematized from different points and for different reasons. We can say that the reasoning that the concept legitimizes and normalizes rape is one of them and that it is said that there is no culture as meaning is another reason.

Although rape is not a culture, the expression rape culture is used critically in that it organizes and nurtures the patriarchal perception that has been deeply rooted in society for centuries and normalized male rape. It is coded not through individual ownership, but the general acceptance and unfamiliarity in the society. When the approach that rape is normal ("Men do it", "Women wag their tails", etc.), the perception that women are unreliable ("Women's word cannot be trusted; women are cheating, they are devil", etc.), the belief in men's natural innocence (the claim that men's hormones, brains, sexual impulses are uncontrollable) are socially constructed and transmitted in every aspect of life, we call it rape culture.

# consent culture

**The establishment of a form of communication in a society where consent is considered and spoken in all relationships based on emotions and sexuality.**

Consent culture does not mean consenting to sexual behavior at all times and under all circumstances. Instead, it means to question whether there is affirmative consent for sexual behavior at all times and under all circumstances and to establish communication based on people's respect for each others' boundaries in the culture of that society.

Consent culture reflects a culture in which children get raised to discover their boundaries and listen to themselves when they say no or yes, individuals do not get suppressed in expressing or hiding their desires by being segregated in line with the gender roles, the sexual behaviors without consent are not encouraged and violence is not taught to people by justifying it with various excuses and false beliefs.

# rape crisis centers (rcc)

**These are community-based civil organizations to provide support services for those who have been subjected to rape, sexual abuse, and sexual violence.**

It is generally called in Turkish as Tecavüz Kriz Merkezi (TKM). As there is no current Rape Crisis Center in Turkey, different names are used by human rights defenders for these centers such as "Tecavüz Kriz Merkezleri (Rape Crisis Centers)" or "Cinsel Şiddet Kriz Merkezleri (Sexual Violence Crisis Centers)".

Rape Crisis Center services can be categorized as providing support to survivors and their relatives in the legal-judicial process, receiving and following up applications with the emergency crisis line service, social support protective-preventive programs, and awareness-raising training programs for the society. There are different models of RCCs in several countries like the USA, Japan, European countries, Canada, Thailand, New Zealand, and Peru. These are not always as a unit within the hospital.

They can work countrywide or provide local services as a part of a national network. They can work independently or as organizations having strategic partners. They can work as a unit within a shelter or a women's counseling center. They can serve as a center under a ministry or municipality. There are such examples of Governmental/ Non-governmental (State-affiliated/Non-State) RCCs abroad.



# rape kit

This is a single-use toolkit designed to facilitate collecting evidence from the body for a forensic examination performed after rape or sexual assault on bodily integrity and to preserve them for a long time without any harm.

The rape kit contains the tools and materials to collect and store evidence obtained during the physical examination. It can be in a box or a large paper envelope.

After collecting the evidence like the DNA of the perpetrator, etc., rape kits can be sealed and stored for years. Its purpose is to preserve the evidence that will prove the crime until the survivor, who has been attacked but does not want to file official reporting or complaints due to various reasons, feels safe and ready to report the crime. Unfortunately, there is no such practice in Turkey for forensic examinations without official complaint and for the records of rape kits to be stored anonymously without disclosing the survivor's name.

# self help

**The support individuals need to overcome a problem on an emotional, psychological and concrete basis with their efforts, resources, and will.**

It is in the sense of self-help, self-support, self-empowerment. In our post-traumatic healing process, discovering and applying things good for ourselves or protecting us from secondary traumas are part of self-help.

As much as we need support and solidarity from someone else or professional help, we can also support, love and take care of ourselves. We can both find out by trying the methods that make us feel good and heal us or enjoy the recommendations provided by various sources. Taking care of the garden, going for a walk, shouting at the seaside, listening to music, chewing gum, spend time with people, being alone, etc. These might be some of the countless actions that will be good for our spirits and psychology that can heal us.

# support system

This refers to a network of people we can communicate with and seek support from after sexual violence.

This concept explains that everyone can have a network of people, small or large, from whom they can get support and ask for help. One of the significant steps towards healing after sexual violence is to seek support.

The support system refers to a communication network of people we trust whom we choose for ourselves. While the persons in this network may be experts like our psychologist or psychiatrist, they do not necessarily have to be experts. This network can also consist of trusted friends, family members, or someone who shares the same opinions or approaches as us. Apart from our support system, there are also "organizational support systems" or "support units" which are the support network consisting of NGOs and public institutions working in coordination in the country we live in.



# self-defense

It means protecting oneself against violent attacks by using physical force when necessary.

Used as "**justifiable defense**" or "**self-defense**" in law, it expresses the legal legitimacy of physical acts performed for self-protection.

Self-defense is also a method we use to protect, defend and strengthen ourselves as part of the self-help process. These methods can be both physical and mental. Embracement of our lives, co-resilience, and solidarity are also part of self-defense.

# preventive-protective approach

This term is used in the field of especially health, education, and law regarding an approach that prioritizes preventing neglect, abuse, and violence from occurring and protecting individuals from the negative consequences of abuse and violence.

Sexual abuse and violence cases come to the agenda in society, mostly after such cases emerge. However, many measures and programs/practices can be used/developed before violence occurs. These practices can include a large population or can be planned for a specific group. Protection and prevention is policy and system study. Raising financial resources, implementing, supervising and reporting these services are the responsibility of policy- and program-developers and holders of decision-making positions. A comprehensive and inclusive preventive-protective practice can be possible by taking into account need assessment and risk analysis, cultural structure, problem identification, determination of environmental and institutional resources, interdisciplinary approach, and inter-organizational cooperation. However, all professionals should adopt and internalize a preventive-protective approach to effectively combat sexual violence.

# upstander / bystander

Upstander is who intervenes in the incident when someone around them is exposed to violence behavior, supports the persons subjected to violence or bullying, calls for help when necessary, and take responsibility in the struggle by not being silent to the violence they witness.

Upstanders can react against the forms of violence that they witnessed in digital environments, and they can combat violence directly or indirectly.

**Bystander is who watch or do not interfere with the violent behavior when witnessing a situation of violence and bullying.**

After the violence, bystanders can be seen on social media or similar channels. Those who are bystanders may cause the perpetrator to continue the violent behavior and the justification of the violence, consciously or unconsciously. Some bystanders may support the violence by laughing or making supportive comments.



## valuable sources

---

[csdestek.org](http://csdestek.org)

[oyledegilboyle.org](http://oyledegilboyle.org)

[hayattayim.org](http://hayattayim.org)

[kaosgl.org](http://kaosgl.org)

[tabukamu.org](http://tabukamu.org)

[bizimaramizda.org](http://bizimaramizda.org)

[40tilkiblog.wordpress.com](http://40tilkiblog.wordpress.com)

[www.morcati.org.tr](http://www.morcati.org.tr)

[hayvanhaklariizleme.org](http://hayvanhaklariizleme.org)

[csgorselarsiv.org](http://csgorselarsiv.org)

[rinn.org](http://rinn.org)

[www.cinselsiddetlemucadele.org](http://www.cinselsiddetlemucadele.org)

[f cinselsidde+Lemucadele](#) [🐦 cs\\_mucadele](#) [📷 cinselsidde+LemucadeleDernegi](#)