

Reporting Issues

Facts to Consider

The majority of sexual assaults are not reported to police.

- ⇒ According to Statistics Canada, only 6% of all sexual assaults are reported to police.
- ⇒ Only 1% of women who have been sexually assaulted by an acquaintance report to police.
- ⇒ An Alberta study on sexual assault against people with disabilities found that while 88% of offenders are known to the victim (family members, friends, acquaintances, and caregivers), 80% are never charged and less than 10% are convicted.
- ⇒ In one study, women gave the following reasons for not reporting incidents of sexual assault:
 - ♀ Belief that the police could do nothing about it (50% of women gave this reason)
 - ♀ Concern about the attitude of both police and the courts toward sexual assault (44%)
 - ♀ Fear of another assault by the offender (33%)
 - ♀ Fear and shame (64%)
- ⇒ Women who have been sexually assaulted often fear that if they report a sexual assault, they will be revictimized by the justice system.
 - ♀ For women of color, and immigrant and refugee women that fear is compounded by racism.
 - ♀ The credibility of women with disabilities has often been questioned when they report sexual assault, particularly in the case of women with developmental, psychiatric and learning disabilities.
 - ♀ The credibility of sex trade workers is also often questioned.
 - ♀ Incidents of sexual assault are often questioned by police, doctors, courts, even family and friends.
 - ♀ If a woman is raped by a man she knows, it is often perceived that she “asked for it” in some way. Women often hear, and may tell themselves, messages such as “what did you think he wanted,” “you drank with him didn’t you,” or “you should have expected something like this was going to happen.”

Source: Ontario Women’s Directorate- Reporting Issues.

Statistics Canada, “ The Violence Against Women Survey,” The Daily, Nov 18,1993

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