

Assault

*“There is no difference
between being raped
and going head first
through a windshield
except that afterward
you are afraid not of cars
but half the human race.”*

-Marge Piercy



INFORMATION PACKAGE - SEXUAL ASSAULT

What is sexual assault?

Sexual assault is a crime and is against the law. It is any unwanted sexual attention or contact without consent through the use of force, pressure, threats, or coercion.

This includes:

- Touching, grabbing, or kissing
- Sex of any kind
- Any sexual attention or sexual contact with a child whether the child consents or not

Sexual harassment is also against the law, but is not considered to be a crime. It is spoken or written sexual comments, threats, gestures or looks that make you feel uncomfortable, violated, scared or under attack.

Examples of this are:

- Rape
- Child sexual abuse
- Unwanted sexual contact (kissing, fondling, etc.)

Where can it occur?

- In the home
- On a date
- In a relationship
- In a church
- On the street
- At a party
- Anywhere

The sexual abuser could be your:

- Spouse
- Date
- Minister/Priest
- Family member
- Acquaintance
- Doctor
- Therapist

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- Neighbor
- Friend
- Stranger
- Anyone

Emotional Effects of Sexual Assault

- Powerlessness and loss of control
- Emotional numbness
- Denial
- Flashbacks
- Guilt
- Embarrassment
- Shame
- Loss of confidence
- Mood changes
- Low self-esteem
- Depression
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Hostility
- Anger
- Problems concentrating
- Loss of trust in people
- Stress

Physical effects of Sexual Assault

- Disturbed sleep
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Aches and Pains (i.e. headaches, stomach aches, backaches, etc.)
- Addictions
- Colds/Sore throats
- Ulcers
- Acne

What to do if you are sexually assaulted:

If the assault occurred recently:

- Go to a safe place.
- Do not wash, douche, or change clothes. This could be difficult, but you may destroy evidence that may be needed if you decide to report the crime to the police.

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- Call someone (no matter how late it is). Call a friend, or a sexual assault crisis line (KW Sexual Assault Support Center 741-8633) they have volunteers who can accompany you to the hospital), or the police.
- Conceder getting medial attention as soon as possible, for both internal and external injuries as well as STD's, pregnancy test, etc. you can get medical attention from a private doctor, clinic, or hospital emergency room.
- You should bring a change of clothes when seeking medial services after an assault, because the police may want to keep your clothes for evidence.

If the assault happened some time ago:

- You may still just be realizing that you still have options available to you.
- You may still need medical attention for treatment of injuries or symptoms related to the abuse.
- Consider seeking counseling.
- Unresolved experiences of sexual assault can have long-term psychological and social effects.

Why don't people report?

Many people don't report because they are scared, ashamed, or embarrassed. They may not know that what they have experienced is a crime (i.e. new Canadian women).

How can you help a Survivor?

Believe the survivor.

Listen respectfully to the survivor's truth. Some experiences of sexual assault may seem unbelievable to you. Don't ask for details or be concerned about getting the story straight. Remember that you are supporting the survivor's experience of trauma- believe her even if it sounds unbelievable to you.

Join with the survivor in validating the damage.

All abuse is harmful. Even if it's not violent, overtly physical, or repeated, all abuse has serious consequences. There is no positive or neutral experience of sexual abuse.

The survivor is never to blame.

Affirm that the survivor is not responsible for the sexual assault. The perpetrator is solely responsible for the sexual assault- regardless of the circumstances. There are no exceptions.

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Educate yourself about sexual abuse and the healing process.

If you have a basic idea of what the survivor is going through, it will help you to be supportive.

Don't sympathize with the abuser.

The survivor needs your absolute loyalty.

Validate the survivor's feelings: her anger, pain, and fear.

These are natural, healthy responses. She needs to feel them, express them, and be heard.

Express your Compassion.

If you have feelings of outrage, compassion, pain, do share them. There is probably nothing more comforting than a genuine human response. Just make sure your feelings don't overwhelm hers.

Respect the time and space it takes to heal.

Healing is a slow process that can't be hurried.

Support the survivor in seeking appropriate help.

Know the appropriate resources that are available in your community. Support the decisions a survivor makes with regard to her own healing. She knows what is best for her.

Get help if the survivor is suicidal.

Most survivors are not suicidal, but sometimes the pain of childhood abuse is so devastating that women want to kill themselves. If you are close to a survivor who is suicidal, get help IMMEDIATELY!

Resist seeing the survivor as a victim.

Continue to see her as a strong, courageous woman who is reclaiming her own life.

Explore your own history and fears regarding sexual assault.

Whether you are a survivor or know a survivor, you live in a society that condones sexual violence against women. Think about what this means for you.

Take Care of Yourself.

In order to be a good support person to a survivor, you need to state clearly how much, and what kind of support you can offer, for example: how much time you

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can spend with her, what you are willing or not willing to do for her. Remember that you cannot take away her pain.

Why Does Sexual Assault Occur?

We live in a rape supportive culture.

What does this mean?

It means that:

- A woman has to worry about what she wears when she goes out, in fear of bringing an assault on.
- Many women feel that it is their fault that they have been attacked.
- Women are afraid to report when they have been assaulted in fear that they won't be believed, or that they will be made to feel like it is their fault, by others, that they were attacked.
- A display of women as sex objects is a common thing.
- Some segments of male culture feel that forcing a woman to have sex is Okay.
- Women feel that they have to keep their guard up even when they are with men that they know.
- Society accepts violence being displayed in media—from children's cartoons to the movies.

What you can do to prevent sexual assault?

- Ask that management of restaurants and businesses too remove materials depicting women as sexual objects.
- Do not frequent restaurants that exclusively hire women based on physical characteristics.
- Discourage friends from eating or doing business in such places as well.
- Report catcalling men at workplaces to the management
- Pay attention to the words you use in reference to women.
- Pull friends and associates aside and correct them of their usage.
- Do not refer to women with dehumanizing words.
- Reflect on your own behavior and work on changing any sexist, controlling or abusive behaviors of your own.
- Women—You need to respect each other and stick up for other women.
- Men—ask women how they would like you to help to prevent sexual assault.
- Make a donation to your local sexual assault support center's
- Take a self-defense class

Taking these kinds of steps demonstrates to others that a sexually charged atmosphere in the wrong context is damaging to men and women alike.

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Myths and Facts about sexual assault:

Our society supports many myths about sexual assault. These myths create an atmosphere that makes survivors of this crime apprehensive about telling others about what happened to them. These are some of the myths that are most damaging to survivors of sexual assault.

Myth: Sexual assault is an infrequent crime that affects a small number of people in the United States.

Fact: One out of two women will be confronted by a sexual predator in their lifetime. One will get away, one will not. This means that 1 in 4 women will be the victim of a completed act of sexual assault in their lifetime. If you know more than 4 women, chances are you know someone who has been sexually assaulted.

Myth: Women need to take responsibility for their actions. She was dressed provocatively, she was drunk, and she went to his apartment. Maybe she didn't deserve to be raped, but what was she thinking. What happened to her was her fault.

Fact: No one deserves to be sexually assaulted. Someone may use bad judgment in our opinion, but what happened to her wasn't her fault. She may have chosen to go to his apartment, but he chose to sexually assault her. No matter what she did in the time leading up to the assault, he made a conscious choice to do what he did, and he should be held responsible for his actions.

Myth: Sexual assault can't be as big of a problem as some people make it out to be. If sexual assault was such a huge problem, then why don't we hear about all of these sexual assaults?

Fact: Sexual assault is one of the most under reported crimes in the United States. Only 30 out of 100 women who are sexually assaulted by someone they know will report.

Myth: Sexual assault is when a stranger jumps out of the bushes and attacks a woman who is walking by herself late at night.

Fact: Although this scenario does occur, in 85% of all sexual assaults the person who is assaulted knows their attacker.

Myth: Women lie about being sexually assaulted. They usually want to get back at the guy for something so they "cry rape".

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Fact: FBI statistics show that 92-96% of all reported sexual assaults are true reports. Only 4-8% are false accusations. This is the same fact is the vast majority of the time when someone tells you that they have been sexually assaulted, they're telling the truth.

Myth: Sexual assault isn't that big of a deal, especially if you're not a virgin. Its just sex.

Fact: 30% of all survivors of sexual assault will contemplate suicide. Many survivors will develop eating disorders, substance abuse, or other destructive behaviors. Survey research shows that the only event that is more traumatic than being sexually assaulted is the unexpected death of a spouse or a parent.

Myth: Men shouldn't care about sexual assault. It's a women's issue that doesn't affect men and women need to deal with it.

Fact: Not only does it affect men's lives when women they love are sexually assaulted men are also sexually assaulted. Up until puberty, boys become less controllable, so adult victims of sexual assault are usually female. The fact is that men are sexually assaulted and people they love are sexually assaulted. This issue affects people of all races, creeds, and gender and it's time that we all recognize sexual assault as the huge problem that it is.

Myth: If someone I know was sexually assaulted, I would know about it because they would have told me.

Fact: If you have supported any of the above myths in the past why do you think that someone who has been sexually assaulted would feel comfortable coming to you for help? Think about all of the times you have been with your friends and you've made comments about women lying about sexual assault, or about how she was stupid for going to his room and that you would never do something like that. If one of our friends in that group has been sexually assaulted they certainly aren't going to confide in you what happened to them. You never know who is around you at any particular time, every time a survivor hears someone supporting a sexual assault myth they think to themselves, "Well, there's another person who doesn't care." We need to stop supporting these myths and educate ourselves about what sexual assault really is. Once we start doing this, more people who have been sexually assaulted are going to get the help they need and perpetrators of this crime will no longer get away with preying on other human beings.

What about “Date Rape Drugs”?

- **Rohypnol** (Roofies, Rope, R2, Ruffles, Roche, Forget-pill)
- **Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate** (GHB, Liquid Ecstasy, Liquid X Scoop, Easy Lay.)
- **Ketamine Hydrochloride** (‘K’. Special K, Vitamin K, Ket)

Rohypnol

It is a potent tranquilizer which produces a sedative affect, amnesia, muscle relaxation and slowing of psychomotor response. The pill is distributed in 0.5, 1.0 to 2.0 milligram form (Restrictions have been placed on the 2.0 mg form.) it is colorless, odorless and tasteless and dissolves without leaving traces. It takes effect approximately 10-20 mins after ingestion. Rohypnol can be added to any liquid (effect lasting 2-8 hours) but when added to alcohol it produces disinhibition and amnesia (effect lasting 8-24 hours) Rohypnol can be detected in the blood for 24 hours and in the urine for 48 hours. Some individuals use Rohypnol as an alcohol extender for a rapid and dramatic high. This is something to watch for in social settings if individuals seem extremely intoxicated after consuming only a small amount of alcohol. Hoffman-La Roche is working on changing the formula so trace particles or a color would appear when Rohypnol is dissolved.

Street names: Roofies, Rope, R2, Ruffles, Roche, Forget-pill.

Cost: Less than \$5.00 per pill.

GHB

It is an odorless, colorless, liquid depressant with anesthetic qualities. It is also used as an amino acid by bodybuilders. GHB is usually distributed as a sodium salt in powder or tablet form commonly dissolved in water. This drug gives a feeling of relaxations, tranquility, sensuality, and loss of inhibitions (especially for women). The drug takes effect 10-15 min after ingestion and lasts 2-3 hours unless combined with alcohol, where effect may last 20-30 hours. Large doses can induce sudden sleep within 5-10 min.

Street names: Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate, Liquid Ecstasy, Liquid X Scoop, Easy Lay.

Cost: \$5.00-\$10.00 per dose.

Ketamine

It is a new drug that has been added to the predator drug category. It is a powerful anesthetic used as animal tranquilizers. It is available in liquid, powder or pill form. Ketamine causes hallucinations, amnesia and dissociation (a feeling where the mind seems to separated from the body) making it attractive for a potential date rapist.

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Street name: 'K'. Special K, Vitamin K, Ket.

Cost: \$20.00 per dose.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF:

- Don't drink anything out of a punch bowl.
- Monitor the behavior of friends who seem more intoxicated than the amount of alcohol would warrant.
- Never accept a drink from someone you don't know and trust.
- If you hear someone "kidding" about date rape drugs, pay attention.
- That should be a warning to leave that party or individual.

Legal Definitions:

The new sexual Assault Laws (1983-1992)

The following is a synopsis of the law (Criminal Code of Canada, R.S, c. c-34[1993]) related to sexual assault adult survivors:

Level one: Sexual Assault

- **Any form of unwanted sexual contact.**
- **No physical violence or threats of violence.**
- **10 years max. Prison term.**

Level two: Sexual Assault with a Weapon

- **Use of a weapon to coerce.**
- **Other person present.**
- **Treating to harm someone or something.**
- **14 years max. Prison term.**

Level three: Aggravated Sexual Assault

- **Use of a weapon causing injury.**
- **Injuries sustained by other means.**
- **Life sentence max. Term.**

Three things must be proven:

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Occurrence: The Assault actually occurred (hospital evidence is best)

Identity: The accused person who did it.

Consent: Until 1992 “consent was defined in terms of the woman’s responsibility to get across her lack of consent to the man in a way that convinced him”. He could claim that he had an honest belief that she consented. In 1992, a new bill was passed which defines consent as the voluntary agreement of the complainant (survivor) to engage in the sexual activity in question.

Statistics

To establish a national perspective on sexual assault, the Canadian Advisory council on the Status of Women compiled a set of statistics in the fact sheet entitled “Sexual Assault” (1985).

These were some of their findings:

- A woman is sexually assaulted by forced intercourse every 17 minutes in Canada; a woman is sexually assaulted in many other ways every 6 minutes.
- Sexual Assault happens to 1 in 4 Canadian women at some point in their lives.
- Survivors of sexual assault involving forced intercourse have ranged in age from four months to 92 years.
- Nearly 50% of all assailants who force women into sexual intercourse are married or living common law at the time and are considered responsible members of the community.
- 25% of all sexual assaults involving forced intercourse begin with a “legitimate” contact with the woman—requesting information or posing, as maintenance people are common ploys.
- 49% of all sexual assaults and 18% of sexual assaults involving forced intercourse occur in broad daylight.
- 62% of victims of assault involving forced intercourse are physically injured in the attack; 9% are beaten severely; 12% are threatened with a weapon; 70% experience verbal threats.
- Studies reveal that only 1 in 10 sexual assaults are reported to police.

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Resources- for more information on Sexual Assault

Fisher, Bonnie ET. Al: **the sexual victimization of College Women**
Washington D.C. Dept. of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.
(LC 212.862.157 2000) <http://ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/182369.pdf>

Bass, Ellen & Davis, (1988) Laura: **The Courage to Heal** New York:
Harper and Tow

Feminist Majority Foundation-Sexual Assault Resources
<http://feminist.org/911/assaultlinks.html>

Faulkner, Nancy: **I am Not a Victim** (1999)
<http://www.prevent-abuse-now.com/notvict.html>

Sexual Assault Information Page
<http://web.archive.org/web/20011015014945/www.cs.utk.edu/~bartley/salInfoPag>

Faulkner, Nancy (1996): **Pandora's box: the Secrecy of Child Sexual Abuse.**

Published in Sexual Counseling Digest.
<http://prevent-abuse-now.com/pandora.htm>

Russell, Diana, E.H (1990): **Rape in Marriage.** Indiana University Press

Rutten, Peter (1989): **sex in the forbidden Zone: When Men in Power-**

Therapists, Doctors, Clergy, Teachers and Others- Betray Women's Trust.

New York: ST. Martin's Press