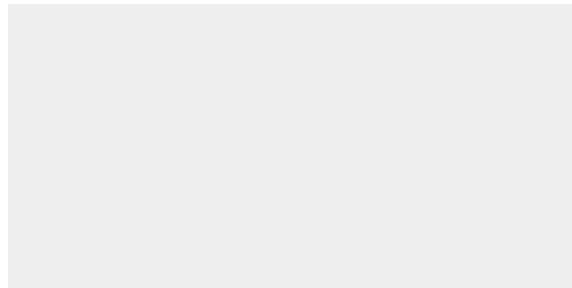


Sexual Assault is any unwanted or non-consensual act(s), or the threat of action of a sexual nature, that is imposed on another person. This may include, but is not limited to: kissing, fondling, or vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse and/or penetration. Women and men from all age groups, racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, socio-economic classes, religions, ability levels, and professions experience sexual assault.

Your Local Resources



Reprinted with the permission of the Peel Committee on Sexual Assault
 Telephone: 905-273-4100
 Fax: 905.273.4101
 info@sexualassault-peel.com

Copies can be ordered from:

English Version

Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children
 Phone: 416.392.3135 | Toll Free: 1.877.558.5570 | Fax: 416.392.3136
 e-mail: info@metrac.org | www.metrac.org | www.owjn.org

French Version

Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes
 Telephone: 613.241.8433 | Fax: 613.241.8435
 aocvf@francofemmes.org | www.francofemmes.org/aocvf

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assault



SEXUAL ASSAULT FACT SHEET

Help

Call 911 or your local police immediately if you are in danger.

The Assaulted Women's Helpline
(24 hours)

1-866-863-0511 (toll-free)

1-866-863-7868 (TTY)

416-863-0511 (Toronto)

Sexual Assault/
Rape Crisis Centre of Peel
905-273-9442 (24 Hour Crisis Line)
905-273-3337 (Business line)

Sexual Assault Treatment/
Care Centres
Go to www.satontario.com/centres/centres.shtml/ or look in your local telephone book.

Women's Shelters
Go to www.shelternet.ca or look in your local telephone book.

Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centres
Go to www.sacha.on.ca/other.htm or look in your local telephone book.

Statistics:

- Two out of three women have experienced sexual assault (Based on Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993).
- An estimated 572, 000 women in Canada were sexually assaulted in one year alone. That's more than one per minute (Based on the *Violence Against Women Survey*, Statistics Canada, 1993).
- One in three women victims of sexual assault were assaulted by a friend or casual acquaintance; one in four by a family member including a spouse or ex-spouse (Tremblay, 1999).
- Young women between the ages of 16 and 21 are at the highest risk of sexual assault (Women's Safety Project, 1993).
- An estimated 83 per cent of women with disabilities will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime (Stimpson and Best, 1991).
- One in six boys is sexually abused before age 17 (Bagley, 1994).

Who Commits Sexual Assault?

- Women are twice as likely to be assaulted by a man they know than by a stranger (Statistics Canada, 1993). They can include friends, acquaintances, boyfriends, co-

workers, or relatives.

- Offenders come from all ages, classes, sexual orientations, professions, and ethno-cultural backgrounds.

Effects of Sexual Assault:

Sexual assault may create emotional and physical health difficulties in someone's life. A survivor may be feeling overwhelmed by many different emotions, but it is important to know that once they are able to express their feelings with supportive helpers, these emotions will lessen over time. While some survivors may experience all of the reactions described below, others may experience only a few.

Some emotions/feelings survivors may experience are:

- Shock, disbelief, numbness, confusion
- Self-blame, shame, guilt
- Fearfulness, insecurity, nervousness
- Nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety, panic
- Sadness, loss, depression
- Loss of trust in self and others
- Feeling a loss of control, powerlessness, helplessness
- Anger, feeling betrayed.

Some physical reactions survivors may experience are:

- Changes in eating (loss of appetite, nausea) and sleeping patterns (i.e. nightmares)
- Headaches and fatigue
- Possible symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases or injuries related to the assault
- Body pain (soreness, backache, bruising).

Myths and Realities:

Myth: Sexual assault is not a common problem.

Reality: Every day women and men, girls and boys experience sexual assault at home, at school, at work, and on the street. In 1993, the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women estimated that two out of three women have experienced sexual assault.

Myth: Women lie about being sexually assaulted, often because they feel guilty about having sex.

Reality: Women rarely make false reports about sexual assault. In reality, sexual assault is an under-reported crime. Only six per cent of sexual assaults are ever reported to police (Statistics Canada, 1993) and only one per cent of date/acquaintance rapes are reported to police (Russell, 1984).

Myth: Sexual assault is most often committed by strangers.

Reality: Women are twice as likely to be assaulted by a man they know than by a stranger (Statistics Canada, 1993). Women face the greatest risk of sexual assault from men they know, not strangers. When a woman knows the man who sexually assaults her, it is less likely that it will be recognized as a crime, even by her.

Whether a sexual assault is committed by someone you know, or by a stranger, it is still a crime.

Myth: Women who are sexually assaulted "ask for it" by the way they dress or act.

Reality: No woman ever "asks" or deserves to be sexually assaulted. Whatever a woman wears, wherever she goes, whomever she talks to, "no" means "no." It is the law. The idea that women "ask for it" puts the blame on the victim/survivor for the crime, instead of the offender.

What To Do If You Have Been Sexually Assaulted

- Take whatever steps are necessary to make yourself safe.
- Seek medical attention.
- Decide whom you want to tell.
- Do not blame yourself.
- Allow yourself to feel and express the variety of emotions that are commonly experienced.
- Remember that you are not alone.
- There are many people willing to help you through this.

How To Support People That Have Been Sexually Assaulted

- Respect whatever choices they make. It is important that they have control over their own life and the decisions they make.
- Believe them.
- Be supportive by listening.
- Find out what help is available in your community. Provide them with the information and accompany them when they access services.