

Sexualized Violence

Sexual(ized) Violence “is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting” (World Health Organization). Sexualized violence can happen in many ways and does not always involve physical violence or injury – a person may be threatened or pressured into doing something he/she does not want. **SEXUAL ASSAULT IS AGAINST THE LAW.**

**SEXUAL ASSAULT is an act of VIOLENCE.
It is about POWER and CONTROL, not about SEX.**

TYPES OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

- **Acquaintance and Date Rape** – sexual assault between two people who know each other or are in a dating relationship.
- **Marital Rape** – sexual activity that is performed by a legal spouse without the consent of the other spouse.
- **Sexual Harassment** – comments or behaviour of a sexual nature that cause a person to feel embarrassed, humiliated, or afraid.
- **Child Sexual Abuse** – a child is used for sexual purposes or exposed to sexual activity by an adult or adolescent. Includes sexual exploitation, torture, child/youth sex trade, and human trafficking.
- **Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault** – a person uses alcohol and/or drugs in order to sexually assault another person.

FACTS & STATS

- Sexual assault or rape can happen to ANYONE regardless of sex, gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation, or ability.
- 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 6 boys will be sexually assaulted before the age of 16 (Statistics Canada, 2006)
- 80-85% of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim (Statistics Canada, 2010).
- Aboriginal women are 3.5 times more likely to experience violence (including sexual assault) than non-aboriginal women (Statistics Canada, 2006).
- 83% of women with disabilities will be sexually assaulted during their lifetime (METRAC, 2001)
- Sexual assault is the most underreported crime. It is estimated that 9 out of 10 sexual assaults are not reported (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2004)
- Majority of campus sexual assaults involve the use of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Alcohol most commonly used date rape drug. No one can give consent if drunk, high or passed out.
- Over half of sexual assault victims reported to police are children under the age of 18 (Statistics Canada, 2007).

AGE OF CONSENT

As of May 1, 2008 in Canada, the age of consent laws include all forms of sexual activity including kissing, sexual touching and sexual intercourse.

Under 12 years – can never give consent, no exemptions.

Over age 12 – below age 14 – Can consent to sexual activity with a person who is not more than two years older and who is not in a relationship of trust or authority.

Over age 14 - under age 16 – Can consent to sexual activity with a person who is not older than 5 years and who is not in a position of trust or authority.

Age of consent for anal sex – Cannot consent if under eighteen years of age, unless married.

Age of consent is 18 years where the sexual activity "exploits" the young person.

www.justice.gc.ca

CONSENT IS...

- Willing participation
- Voluntary agreement
- Based on choice
- Active not passive
- Based on equal power
- Only possible when a person is not incapacitated due to drug or alcohol consumption
- Is given not assumed
- Is not the absence of a “no” or silence
- Is given during each experience and can be withdrawn at any point

CONSENT IS NOT...

- A drunken “yes”
- Given when a person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Giving in because of fear
- Agreeing to sex because of fear or threats
- Purchased
- Going along in order to gain approval
- Silence or the absence of a “no”
- Possible when someone is asleep or passed out.
- Coercion

WHAT TO DO AFTER SEXUAL ASSAULT

- It is important to seek medical attention after a sexual assault, even if you do not want to report the assault to the police. You can still receive treatment for injuries and have testing for STI’s and pregnancy.
- Try not to urinate, bathe/shower or change your clothes until after the forensic/medical exam. This is to avoid destroying evidence should the survivor decide to make a complaint.
- You may choose to report the assault to the Police. You can do this right away or take some time to think about it.
- Talk to someone you trust and contact a Sexual Assault Centre for information and support.

**IT IS NEVER THE
VICTIM’S FAULT**

MAKING A POLICE STATEMENT

- Some people may choose to report their sexual assault to the police.
- When giving a statement to the police, you will be asked to remember and describe everything about the assault and the attacker. It can be very difficult to do this, but the police need as much information and evidence as they can gather to do the investigation.
- After the police report is made the decision to prosecute belongs to the Crown Attorney. Sometimes cases are not prosecuted. This is usually because of lack of evidence – not because the Crown doesn't believe you.

HOW TO HELP SOMEONE

- Believe what they tell you.
- Listen more, talk less.
- Try not to judge.
- Provide empathy and support.
- Respect their privacy and physical, emotional and sexual boundaries.
- Know your limits.
- Tell them it was not their fault.
- Respect the time it takes to heal.
- Recommend they go to a rape/sexual assault center.
- Support their choices.

**SEX
WITHOUT
CONSENT
is a
CRIME**

EVERYONE has a role in preventing sexual assault!

HEALTHY SEXUALITY is about how we honor ourselves and how we treat others. It is about having knowledge of all the risks and consequences of engaging in sexual behavior and choosing a path that is respectful to everyone involved.

Consent, respect and communication are essential to healthy sexuality.

COMMON RESPONSES

There is no "right" or "wrong" way to respond to sexual assault. Each survivor reacts in his/her own unique way.

A person may experience a few, all or none of the following:

- Fear, anxiety, nervousness
 - Shock, disbelief, numb
 - Helplessness, depression, overwhelmed, unable to make choices, self-hatred
 - Anger, desire to retaliate against
 - Shame, embarrassment, feeling "dirty"
 - Self-blame, guilt
 - Flashbacks (reliving the assault)
 - Isolated – feeling alone or that no one can relate to your experience
 - Changes in sleeping and eating
 - Mood swings, irritable
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Self-injure (cutting, burning, etc)
 - Use drugs or alcohol to cope
 - Have suicidal thoughts or feelings
 - Not want to be touched by anyone or to have sex
- Any or all of these reactions are common and natural.

PREVENTION

Tips for Everyone

- Be alert, aware and assertive.
- Trust your feelings and instincts.
- Always ask before you touch someone.
- Respect a person's right to say NO.
- Educate and empower yourself and others.
- Advocate for more healthy sexuality programs in schools and community.
- Educate yourself and others on the issues, facts and statistics.
- Be aware of and speak out against all forms of violence in media and culture.
- Challenge myths, assumptions and social norms.
- Talk with community members, schools and legislators about ways they can get involved.
- Understand that sexual assault affects us all.
- Work towards eliminating oppression of all kinds.
- Avoid blaming the victim.
- Be aware of and educate others about equality, rights and healthy sexuality.
- Speak up and don't be a bystander.



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