

## What is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault is any type of unwanted sexual activity by someone to whom you have not given your consent. A sexual assault may include use of physical force, touching, kissing, or intimidation. Sexual assault is a crime under the Criminal Code of Canada.

## Who could this happen to?

Women, men, children and youth in all walks of life can be sexually assaulted. Sexual assault is an act of power and control where sex is a weapon – it is not an act of overwhelming sexual desire. Sexual power and control can include the telling of jokes, name-calling and referring to parts of the body in a suggestive or belittling way. The majority of offenders are known to the victim.

## Age of Consent

In May 2008 the legal Age of Consent to sexual activity in Canada became 16. Sexual activity where the age of one person is less than 16 and the age of the other person is 5 years or more above the younger party, can not be consented to by the younger person – making it a sexual assault.

The law includes a "close-in-age exception," meaning 12 & 13-year-olds can have **consensual** sex with someone who is less than 2 years older, and 14 and 15-year-olds can have **consensual** sex with someone who is less than five years older than they are, without it being a crime in Canada.

For more information and support:

**Specialized Victim Assistance**  
@Northern Society for Domestic Peace  
**250-847-9000**  
Confidential emotional support and information

**Passage Transition House**  
**Crisis Line: 250-847-2595**  
Safe housing for women and children who are victims of violence. Open 24/7.

**BV District Hospital**  
**250-847-2611**

**Options for Sexual Health**  
@ Smithers Health Unit  
**(250) 847-6400**  
Tuesdays 3 pm to 6 pm: Doctor on site, birth control, pregnancy tests, STD testing, information, etc.

**Smithers RCMP**  
**250-847-3233**

**RCMP Based Victim Assistance**  
**250-847-9374**

**Victim Link**  
**1-800-563-0808**  
Crisis Line staffed 24 hours per day  
Information, support and referrals

***YOU***  
***Can Help***  
***Prevent***  
***Sexual***  
***Assault***



**Both men and women are  
part of the solution.**

## What Can Men Do?

- \* **Take** responsibility for what you have done, and what you are going to do, sexually.
- \* **Talk** to both men & women about how sexual assault touches people's lives & what can be done to stop it.
- \* **When** using drugs or alcohol, know your limits and how these substances may affect you.
- \* **Establish** willing verbal consent before engaging in sexual activity.
- \* **It's never okay** to use force or pressure.
- \* **Talk** with your partner about sex. Listen to, and respect, what she says.
- \* **Submission** does not equal consent.
- \* **Challenge** actions, comments or jokes that support violence. Hold your male friends accountable.
- \* **Be a friend** and an ally. Support survivors of sexual assault. Speak out against violence.
- \* **Educate** yourself, and examine your own attitudes. Learn how sexual stereotypes influence behaviors. For example, do you think men are aggressive while women are submissive? This is a stereotype.
- \* **Take no** for an answer. It is a myth that 'no' means 'yes.'
- \* **Support** women to feel safer, but don't assume they want or need your protection. Ask them what they would like from you.

## What Can Women Do?

- \* **Take** responsibility for what you have done, and what you are going to do, sexually.
- \* **Talk** to both men & women about how sexual assault touches people's lives, and what can be done to stop it.
- \* **When** using drugs or alcohol, know your limits and how these substances may affect you.
- \* **Speak** clearly, expressing what you want. You have the right at any point to say NO and be heard.
- \* **Be a friend** and an ally. Support survivors of sexual assault.
- \* **Educate** yourself, and examine your own attitudes. Learn how sexual stereotypes influence behavior. For example, do you think that men are in charge and women do what they are told? This is a stereotype.
- \* **Make** a plan in advance when you will be attending a party or event where there may be risks, such as alcohol or drugs.
- \* **Establish** personal boundaries, and remember it is your right to express them.
- \* **Trust** your instincts and your intuition. Remove yourself from a situation that makes you uncomfortable or uneasy.
- \* **Challenge** actions, comments or jokes that support violence. Hold your friends accountable.

## Statistics from STATSCan 2002:

- 80% of those reporting a sexual assault to the RCMP were female.
- Population surveys show that 16 in 1,000 people aged 15 and older experience sexual assault each year in Canada.
- It is estimated that only 8% of sexual assaults are reported to RCMP.
- About 50% of sexual assault victims who reported to RCMP were assaulted by a friend or acquaintance, 28% by a family member, and 20% by a stranger.
- Children under 12 were most often victimized by family members, especially in the case of girls (51%).
- Parents (20%) were less likely than other relatives (29%) to be identified as suspects.
- Youth aged 12 to 17 and adults were most frequently victimized by acquaintances (47% and 40%, respectively).