

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

*A Look at
THE LAWS
- Old and New*

*Where to go
for Support and
Counselling*



U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

98123

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*about the
Realities
Are You?*

REDUCING RISKS!

What we CAN do to Protect Ourselves

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This booklet is dedicated to all women in the hope that the information provided here will increase their personal awareness and contribute to them leading safer lives.

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Introduction

Sexual assault is a touchy subject — something we don't like to talk about or even think about. But ignoring the problem will not make it disappear. The more we know and understand about sexual assault, the better chance we have of dealing with it and hopefully preventing it.

In this booklet we set out to increase our awareness of sexual assault — what it is, what can be done should it happen to us, why it happens, and most important, what measures we can take to reduce the chances of sexual assault happening in the first place.



A Brief History

Attitudes toward sexuality survive from a time when women's roles were much different from today. In those days, there was no question of where a woman belonged — she belonged in the home. She was the property of either her husband or her father. She couldn't vote; she couldn't own property — independence was unheard of! Women were daughters, mothers, and wives dependent on their husbands or fathers for financial support, respectability and safety. Men were the breadwinners and their work outside the home was considered to be more important. Society expected a man to support his wife and children and a woman to care for her children and to please and serve her husband.

Society determines what is "feminine" and what is "masculine". As times change, so do the values of society and ideas of what is and what is not socially acceptable.

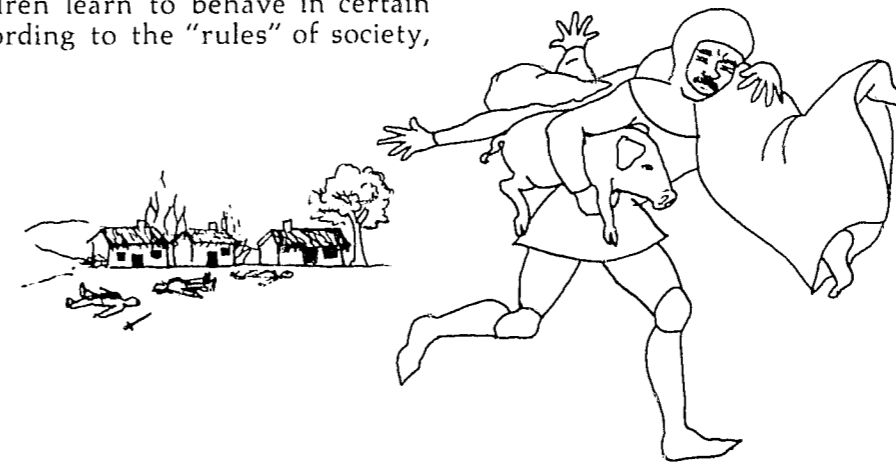
Our parents courted, married and lived in ways that were fitting for their generation. They learned their ways of thinking and behaving partly through living in a different era, and partly through what their parents taught them. In turn, they applied what they believed to be right and wrong in the way they raised us.

All children learn to behave in certain ways, according to the "rules" of society,

and the values and beliefs of their parents. As we grow up we learn what we can and can not do, and what we should and should not do. We wish to emphasize that what is learned is DIFFERENT for girls than it is boys.

Little girls learn to be GOOD: little girls are made of "sugar and spice and everything nice". We grow up believing that if we are good, and do just as we are told, then everything will be all right, and we will be taken care of. We learn to be passive, gentle, dependent, nurturing, kind, soft and polite. Little boys learn to be BRAVE: little boys are made of "snakes and snails and puppy dogs' tails". They grow up believing that they must be strong and brave, and never show any weakness. They learn to be aggressive, dominant, tough, independent, adventurous and forceful. If we conform, we are rewarded, if not, we are labelled. If a girl prefers climbing trees to playing house, she is labelled a "tomboy". If a boy cries when he falls down, he is labelled a "sissy".

These factors can lead to attitudes and ways of thinking that allow and encourage aggressive behaviour on the part of males and acceptance of it by females. Taken to furthest extremes, these attitudes can lead to sexual assault.



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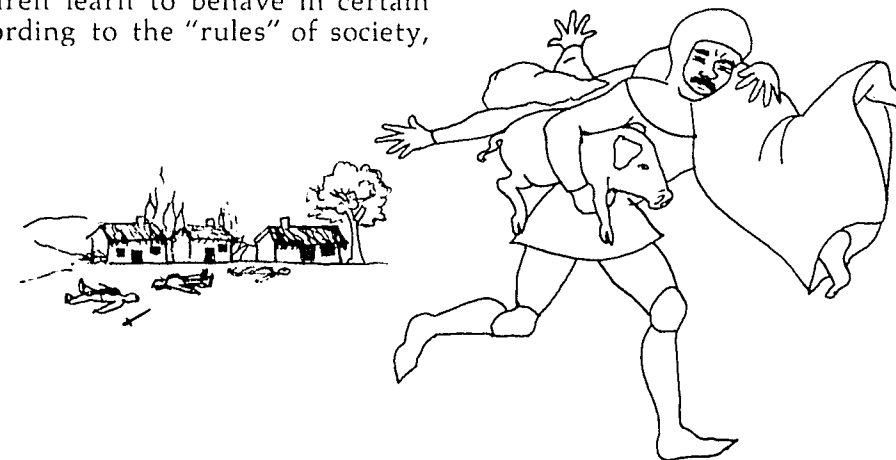
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15% OF ALL YOUNG GIRLS WILL BE
SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY AGE
15
10% OF BOYS
WILL BE SEXUALLY
ABUSED BY
AGE 15
EVERY 29 MINUTES
A WOMAN IS
RAPPED
IN CANADA
10% ARE THREATENED
WITH A WEAPON
A WOMAN IS
SEXUALLY
ABUSED
99% ARE
DAILY BEATEN
EVERY 10
MINUTES
OUT OF
100
REPORTED
RAPE
VICTIMS
BECOMES
PREGNANT
50% OF THE
WOMEN
WAS
SOMEONE
THEY
KNEW
IN CANADA
3,388
WOMEN
WERE
REPORTED
RAPPED
IN 1979
SINCE 1969
REPORTED
RAPE
CASES
HAVE
INCREASED
BY 125%

A QUIZ About the Myths and Realities ✓ How Aware Are You?

COULD THIS HAPPEN TO ME?

There are many myths about sexual assault. If we believe these myths and are assaulted, we might say to ourselves, "Oh, I could have done this", or "Oh, I should have done that". Whatever the situation, it is important to remember that while each situation varies, we as girls and women are not to blame for the assaults upon us. We can, however, understand the facts and change our own attitudes. To change our society, we first have to change ourselves. Why don't you share this information with some people you know and see how aware you are?

Answer the questions TRUE or FALSE.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 IT COULD NEVER HAPPEN TO ME.
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE | 8 SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN SELDOM HAPPENS.
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE |
| 2 RAPE IS A SEXUAL CRIME.
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE | 9 IF PEOPLE STAY INSIDE AFTER DARK, THEY ARE GENERALLY SAFE FROM RAPE.
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE |
| 3 "NICE" GIRLS DON'T GET RAPED.
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE | 10 RAPE IS A RARE OCCURRENCE IN OUR SOCIETY.
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE |
| 4 WOMEN SECRETLY WANT TO BE RAPED.
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE | 11 RAPISTS RARELY REPEAT THEIR CRIMES.
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE |
| 5 RAPISTS ARE CREEPY LOOKING MEN WHO HANG OUT IN DARK ALLEYS.
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE | 12 A WOMAN CANNOT CHARGE HER HUSBAND WITH RAPE.
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE |
| 6 WOMEN "ASK FOR IT" BY THEIR DRESS OR ACTIONS.
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE | |
| 7 THE RAPIST IS A SEXUALLY UNFULFILLED MAN CARRIED AWAY BY A SUDDEN UNCONTROLLABLE URGE.
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE | |

Turn the page for answers, and give yourself 2 points for each one you got right.

ANSWERS:

- 1. FALSE Women from ages 14-24 are the biggest "target group". All women are potential victims and could at some time be sexually assaulted. Females from ages 6 months to 96 years have been assaulted, regardless of race, class, religion, occupation or physical appearance.
- 2. FALSE Rape is a violent assault against women, acted out in a sexual way. It violates not only our bodies, but also our integrity, safety and the right to control our lives.
- 3. FALSE Anyone may be sexually assaulted, whether we are "nice" or "not nice".
- 4. FALSE Some of us might have fantasies about being raped, but that does not mean that we really want to be. Fantasies are far from the real thing, which is often violent, terrorizing, and humiliating. Do you really think people want to be abused, hurt, or humiliated?
- 5. FALSE In 75% of sexual assaults, the attacker is someone you already know: a friend, husband or relative. Rapists seem normal, just like any other man or boy. Most are married, and of any race, class, religion, occupation or physical appearance.
- 6. FALSE No person asks to be hurt or degraded. Most rapes are planned and when a man wants to rape, it doesn't make any difference what a woman looks like, or how she is dressed.
- 7. FALSE Rape is a question of power, not passion, and men can control themselves.
- 8. FALSE Statistics show that one in four girls and one in ten boys will be sexually molested by the time they are 18 years old. 75% of reported sexual abuse experiences were with older persons known to the child.
- 9. FALSE 75% of rapes occur at home or in a vehicle.
- 10. FALSE Rape has always been a problem in our society and it's getting worse. In Canada, since 1969, reported rapes have increased 125%.
- 11. FALSE Of convicted rapists, 50% repeat their crimes.
- 12. FALSE Until January of 1983, this was true. The law has now changed and it is no longer legal for a husband to have such rights over his wife. Read on; in the next section we'll talk about the law.

EVALUATION:

- 21 - 24 Good for you! You seem to have a really good understanding of the problems we face in today's world.
- 16 - 20 You are fairly aware, but could think about doing some more reading.
- 12 - 15 Oh, Oh, you have a lot of your information confused! Please read on.

THE LAW

On January 4th, 1983, the Canadian Government introduced changes to the Criminal Code for dealing with sexual offences. Offences known as Rape and Indecent Assault were changed to include three levels of Sexual Assault. These changes reflect the following principles which are generally accepted in our society:

- no one has the right to physically harm another person
- women and men have the right to equal treatment
- sexual offences should be treated like any other serious crime
- survivors of sexual assault should not be harassed in court

Rather than putting the emphasis on the sexual nature of these crimes, the emphasis is now put on the violence. The deciding factor in choosing which charge to lay will be the nature of evidence, including personal injury caused to the survivor. Below we can compare some of the changes:

OLD LAW	NEW LAW
1. According to the old law, a man could not be raped.	1. All sexual acts are now being recognized under the new law, including a sexual assault upon a man.
2. It was not against the law for a husband to rape his wife.	2. A husband can now be charged with the rape of his wife.
3. A woman testifying in court often felt she was on trial because her past sexual history and character came into focus.	3. The intention of the new law is to prevent this from happening. Previous sexual history and character can no longer be routinely examined in an open courtroom. (However, the judge may allow this information in special cases where the defense counsel has shown, at a private hearing prior to the trial, that the woman's character is relevant to that particular case.)
4. If there was no penetration, i.e. a penis entering a vagina, it was not considered rape.	4. The term Rape is no longer used. There are now three levels of Sexual Assault which include everything from forced kissing to forced sexual intercourse.

As with any of the laws in our society, understanding them seems to be the hardest part. In this section we are not including all the sexual offences dealt with in the Criminal Code, but only the most important ones in understanding the new law. If you have any trouble understanding the law or would like more information, please contact your nearest Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre or Law Centre.

THE LAWS

ASSAULT

IT'S A CRIME IF:

- force is intentionally applied to another person without that person's consent (and without legal justification, e.g. self-defense)
- someone attempts or threatens to apply force, by act or gesture to another person and that person believes that they have the ability to carry out that threat
- while openly wearing or carrying a weapon, or imitation of a weapon, someone accosts, impedes, or begs another person (see definitions)

SEXUAL ASSAULT LEVEL 1 -- SIMPLE SEXUAL ASSAULT

IT'S A CRIME IF:

- someone kisses, fondles, or has sexual intercourse with you without your consent (no sign of injury or physical abuse)

SEXUAL ASSAULT LEVEL 2 -- SEXUAL ASSAULT WITH A WEAPON

IT'S A CRIME IF:

- you are sexually assaulted by someone who has a weapon or threatens to use a weapon (imitation or real)
- the offender threatens to cause bodily harm to a third person, i.e. a child or friend you are with
- the offender causes bodily harm to you
- more than one offender assaults you in the same incident

SEXUAL ASSAULT LEVEL 3 -- AGGRAVATED SEXUAL ASSAULT

IT'S A CRIME IF:

- while being sexually assaulted you are:
 - * wounded, maimed, disfigured, or brutally beaten up
 - * in danger of losing your life

PERSONS UNDER 14

IT'S A CRIME IF:

- someone sexually assaults a person under 14 years old (above offenses apply but consent is not a defense here because a person under 14 is considered too young to consent -- unless the accused is less than 3 years older than the victim)

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH A FEMALE BETWEEN 14 AND 16

IT'S A CRIME IF:

- a male person has sexual intercourse with a female person who:
 - * is not his wife
 - * is of previously chaste character
 - * is between 14 and 16 years old

INCEST

IT'S A CRIME IF:

- a blood relation has sexual intercourse with you, i.e. parent, brother, half-brother, grandparent or as the case may be

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH A STEP-DAUGHTER

IT'S A CRIME IF:

- any male person has sexual intercourse with his step-daughter, foster daughter or female ward

These are just a few of the laws set down by the Federal Government regarding sexual assault. If you have any questions or need more information, call your local Crown Counsel office, Law Centre or Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre.

Did You Know?

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Did You Know?

REPORTING:

Under the Child Protection Laws in Canada, every adult person has the responsibility to report any abuse of a person under 19 to the police or ministry responsible for human services and child protection. This legislation has different names in every province, e.g., British Columbia — "Family and Child Service Act", Ontario — "Child Welfare Act", etc. In fact, it is a CRIME if someone having reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection does not report that situation to the appropriate authorities.

CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION:

If you have been hurt physically or emotionally as a result of a crime, you could apply for Criminal Injuries Compensation and possibly receive money for losses. At present, most provinces including the two territories have legislation called The Criminal Injuries Compensation Act. This act is generally the same throughout Canada, but it is administered provincially so it could vary from province to province. A police report will have to be made but the outcome of your getting an award (money) from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board does not depend on the outcome in the Courts. In fact, even if the offender is not found, you can still apply. Criminal Injuries Compensation awards for such things as lost wages and medical bills, as well as emotional pain and suffering. Please contact your nearest Ministry of Attorney-General or Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre for more information.

Emotional Self-Defense (Assertiveness)

Many of us may not fully understand the word ASSERTIVENESS. We may confuse "assertiveness" with "aggression", and see it as a forceful type of behaviour, only suitable for boys and men. Assertiveness simply means standing up for your rights and expressing your feelings directly and honestly in a way that doesn't violate the rights of someone else.

If we are not assertive, and put a lot of energy into being "nice", avoiding conflicts and trying not to hurt other people's feelings, not only are we being unfair and dishonest to ourselves and to others, but we may also be setting ourselves up to be taken advantage of or abused.

As young women, most of us have been taught to bow to the wishes of others, often against our own interests. We need to learn and practice assertiveness. There are a number of books available on assertiveness, and training courses where we can learn and practice assertiveness with others.

Consider this situation:

Your best friend wants to borrow a new sweater that you haven't yet had a chance to wear yourself. She promises to take good care of it and return it tomorrow. You would rather she didn't borrow it, because she can be careless sometimes and it is a brand new sweater. You don't want to hurt her feelings, and she is your best friend.

How would you respond?

You could be:

Passive: You say O.K., but you really want to say "no". You resent not being direct enough to say "no" and you feel uptight.

Aggressive: You yell at her. "You're always borrowing things and never looking after them!" She yells back! You have an argument.

Indirect Aggression: You start out by saying "no", but she persuades you and reminds you of all the things she's done for you. You give in and lend the sweater to her, but you still feel resentful, like you've been taken advantage of. You complain about it to another friend.

Assertive: You clearly and directly explain to your friend that no, she may not borrow your brand new sweater, as you haven't worn it yourself yet. (There is no need to make excuses or apologize).

Now consider this situation:

You are riding home on the bus. A man sits beside you and tries to make a pass. He starts asking you questions: Where are you going? Where do you live? Can I have your telephone number? Would you like to go out sometime?

How would you respond?

You could be:

Passive: You feel uncomfortable but are not too certain what you should do. You don't want to offend him, or embarrass him or yourself by making a scene and drawing attention to his advances.

Aggressive: You yell at him: "Bug off, you creep! Get out of here!"

Indirect Aggression: You start out by discouraging him, but he persists and you don't know how to put him off. You give him dirty looks and hope another passenger on the bus might take notice and help you.

Assertive: You deal with the situation directly: "I'm not interested in you, I don't want to go out with you. Go away and leave me alone."

Your response to these two situations may be different. You may feel comfortable in one situation and uneasy in another. Assertive behaviour can make you feel good about yourself but it takes practice.

Perhaps you could imagine some other examples and identify how assertive you are, and think of how you could be more assertive.

If what we say does not match the tone

of our voices and our physical posture, it will have little impact. What type of body image do you have? When talking with someone else, do you look down or away? Do you find it easier to smile and be pleasant than to express anger? When you walk, is your stride confident and positive or is it timid and shy? What about the sound of your voice? With practice we can look assertive, sound assertive, and be assertive!

Sexuality and Relationships

For many girls, love, romance and sex are closely tied together. Caressing, cuddling and intimate conversation are important parts of sexuality. Sometimes what we want is just to be close. For many boys, sex need not be accompanied by love and romance. Boys tend to be more goal oriented in their sexuality. They will often try to "conquer" a girl, or "win her over". We all feel pressured to play certain roles: boys are supposed to make the advances, and girls are supposed to take the responsibility for how far these advances go.

It is important to be clear and honest about what we want. We all have our own values, and when the time comes, it is up to each of us to decide for ourselves what we really want. Whatever we decide, we should always remember that no one has the right to force sex on us. If we give clear and straightforward messages about what we expect and what our limits are, if we use assertiveness in our relationships, we won't be taken advantage of and we will develop a stronger sense of personal power over our bodies and our lives.

Sometimes we have fantasies about sex being forced on us. Sexual fantasies are safe

ways for us to explore feelings that are new and sometimes scary to us, and to imagine ourselves having sex. If, in our fantasy, sex is forced on us, we don't have to feel guilty about it. Sexual fantasies are very normal, but this does not mean that we want to be raped or brutalized.

Times are changing. Young women today have more sexual freedom than ever before, and yet, double standards still exist. There are two sets of values: one for girls and one for boys. A boy who "makes it" with lots of girls is respected and admired. A girl who "sleeps around" is not necessarily given the same respect and admiration. We are pressured to be less inhibited and sexually free, but often this means that we wind up having sex when we really don't want to. A lot of boys don't believe us when we say "no". They still feel that when a girl says "no", she can be coaxed or persuaded. Or, we might want to say "yes", but we don't want to be thought of as "easy", so we say "no" and the game continues.

All this will stop only when we are clear and assertive about our wants and needs.

Physical Self-Defense

REDUCING RISKS



Look Strong!! Act Strong!! Be Strong!!

There is no way to guarantee that sexual assault will never happen, but there are ways we can reduce the risks, and give ourselves more options. It is unfortunate that we have to worry about the possibility of an assault, but this is a part of reality. Let's look at some different situations, and see if we could change them by THINKING, BEING AWARE and BEING ASSERTIVE.



MEETING PEOPLE:

Be careful about people you don't know very well. Someone might seem really nice, but give your friendship a chance before you put your trust in that person. As we said before, a great number of sexual assaults are carried out by an acquaintance.



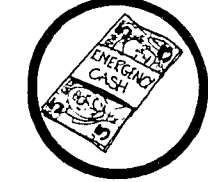
BEING CLEAR:

You can't expect anyone to know how you are feeling unless you tell them. If you feel uncomfortable in any situation, tell the person you are with. Don't let yourself get cornered into an uncomfortable situation. If you don't like what's happening, say so in a strong and assertive voice. I DON'T LIKE WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND I WANT YOU TO STOP!



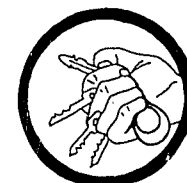
ALCOHOL AND DRUGS:

Alcohol and drugs are part of life these days. Aside from the fact that some are unhealthy and illegal, they can also cause a great loss of control over our bodies and minds. If you are going to use them, THINK: "Am I in control?" "Can I take care of myself?" Our best defense is our mind, and if that's not together, then we don't have much of a chance.



POCKET MONEY:

Whether you are out on a date, with friends, or by yourself, make sure you have some pocket money to get home. You never know what might happen, and it's a good way to be independent.



ON YOUR WAY HOME

Don't broadcast that you might be walking home alone. You can never tell who might hear you and follow you. If it's not possible to get a ride from someone you know well, stop and THINK: "What is the safest way home?"



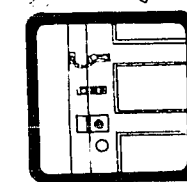
DESERTED AREAS:

Do you think that the places you walk are safe? Are there houses close by? Is the area well-lit? Nobody wants to walk around in fear, but it's a good idea to THINK ahead and maybe change some of your routes so that you feel safe. This might lessen the chance of an assault.



HITCHHIKING:

As everyone knows, hitchhiking is a dangerous way to get around. It leaves you in a very vulnerable position, with not too many options. If you do hitchhike, THINK before taking a ride! You don't have to take a ride with anyone who stops. Go with your feelings and trust them. If the situation doesn't look safe, say "NO". There are some things to think about: What is the licence number of the car? Are there door handles? Are there any signs of drugs or alcohol? Is there more than one man in the car? Are you alone? (If you are a driver, give another woman a safe ride).



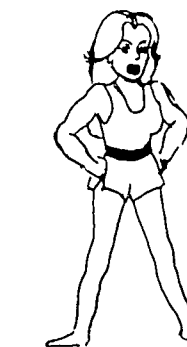
AT HOME:

Women have been attacked in the "safety" of their own homes, so make sure yours is safe. Lock the windows and doors, and don't let anyone in that you don't know. If someone wants to use your phone, offer to make the call for them. A number of reported rapes were committed by men posing as service people. Ask for identification; don't be afraid to trust your feelings. Talk with your police department for advice on making your home or apartment secure.



DON'T PANIC:

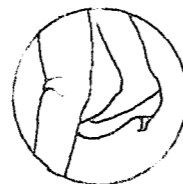
Our best defense is our own intelligence. If you panic, you will be confused and won't be able to think. If you try to keep "cool", as hard as it may be, you will be able to THINK, wait for the right moment, and make the right move to get away. It's sometimes possible to talk your way out of a situation by looking someone straight in the eye and voicing how you feel assertively.



PHYSICAL TRAINING:

As women, we were not taught to talk back, let alone fight back. In some situations, we really have no choice but to defend ourselves, and there is nothing wrong with that. Just because we might not be as strong doesn't mean we are powerless. With the right training, we can learn skills in self-defence to make the right move in a threatening situation and get away. Remember that every situation is different, so knowing **if and when** to fight back is important. Call your local Sexual Assault/ Rape Crisis Centre to see if there is a course on self-defense they can recommend.

Vulnerable Targets



Natural Body Weapons



These drawings are just a few examples of what you can learn by taking a self-defense course. The purpose of learning to defend yourself is **not** to beat someone up. In any situation where you are in danger, what is your first thought? You want to get away from the person who is attacking you to a place where you feel safe. In self-defense you can learn how to kick, punch, and break a hold. You can also learn not to panic and how to be clear with people you know and those you don't know. By learning self-defense you will not only be able to handle yourself in dangerous situations, but you will also learn to be a more assertive and stronger individual.

WHAT TO DO

IF YOU HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED:



Since being sexually assaulted is such a horrible experience, you might think it easier to put what you've gone through out of your mind. As hard as it may seem, think about what has happened to you. Write down details that you remember, like the attacker's looks, type of car and licence plate (if there was one), the time, place, etc. You might not want to report the assault now, but at some later date you could change your mind. Every little detail would be to your benefit, to the police for their investigation and to the prosecution if you go to court. By remembering and detailing the assault, it will not only help the legalities of your case, but more, it will help you get a grasp on reality. "Yes, I have been sexually assaulted and I will deal with this the best way I can".

If you feel okay about talking to your parent or guardian about what has happened, do so. If not, talk to someone you can trust. It is very important to talk about how you are feeling at this point.

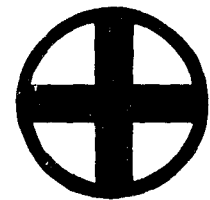
If you have been assaulted by a member of your family, you are protected by the "child protection laws" in Canada. This legislation has different names in every province, e.g. B.C. — Family and Child Service Act, Alberta — Child Welfare Act, Nova Scotia — Children's Services Act. These acts not only give us rights but make abuse of anyone under 19 illegal. Being abused is by no means your fault, and you have every right to report it. Call your local government ministry responsible for human services (e.g. B.C. — Ministry of Human Resources, etc.), to get in touch with someone who can help you.

Also:

1. Call your nearest Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre for immediate support and information. These centres have a 24-hour crisis line with women who really care and want to help you. You can phone just to talk, or have someone go to the hospital, police, or through the court system with you.
2. Report the assault to the police. Only fast action will enable the police to find the attacker and stop him from hurting others.
3. Go to the hospital for immediate medical attention. If you are injured they will take care of you and they will also run tests to check for diseases or pregnancy. Bring a change of clothes.
4. Do not change or throw out your clothes. If at some point you want to report the assault, these will be evidence.
5. Do not clean yourself, particularly in the area of attack — vagina, anus or mouth. The hospital has certain tests they can do to come up with proof that will add to your case.
6. Do not take any medicine, drugs or alcohol to calm yourself. This will not only confuse you and your story, but it might cause the police to think you are confused about what happened.

What To Expect

AT THE HOSPITAL:



When you go to the hospital, the first things the people there will need to know are your name, address and age. If it is known that you are under 19, they will need consent from your parent or guardian before you receive any treatment.

It's important to tell the nurse or doctor exactly what happened to you in order to receive the correct medical attention. If at any time you have any questions, or want the doctor to stop, say so! You can also ask that someone be with you throughout the examination, maybe a friend, family member or Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis counsellor. At this point, you might be undecided about going to the police, but the hospital will collect and record all evidence if you should decide to do so. The examination involves tests for venereal diseases, pelvic infection, internal damage and pregnancy. If you are bruised or wounded, the doctor might take pictures to add to the evidence. The entire examination generally takes about 15 minutes, even though it might seem like hours. These hospital procedures will not only provide you with the treatment you need, and lessen any fears you might have about pregnancy and infections, but more, they will be the first steps toward regaining control over your life.

FROM THE POLICE:



Each Police Department has different policies on how to proceed with different situations, and each police officer is likely to react to you in different ways. There is no need to feel uptight about going to the police because they are there to help you, not to

judge you. You can bring a friend, family member or Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis counsellor to the police interview for support. If you feel uncomfortable talking to a male police officer, you can ask to see a female officer. If you have been assaulted by a parent or guardian, the police are likely to refer your case to the Ministry responsible for human services in your area.

The first step will be telling the officer exactly what happened to you. You **MUST BE TRUTHFUL** in everything you say. The officer will ask you a few questions about yourself: your name, address and phone number. She/he will then want a detailed report: the date and time of the assault, where it happened, what sexual acts were forced on you, and any other details you remember. The police are trying to collect evidence so they may contact you many times. If they ask you questions that you feel don't have anything to do with the assault, ask the officer why she/he is asking you for that information. If you still feel uncomfortable, write those questions down and talk them over with someone knowledgeable, like a Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis counsellor. Making a police report doesn't always mean that you will go to court. You can make the report and go no further. (In extreme cases, however, the prosecution could decide that the case is too serious or dangerous to let the offender free). Most departments have Third Party Reports, where a friend or Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis counsellor can report the assault for you. This procedure is not highly recommended, because in order to find the offender and put a stop to him assaulting someone else, the police need all the details. However, this is better than no report at all. Only when we begin reporting sexual assault will others understand how widespread and serious this crime is.

IN THE COURTS:



Not all reported sexual assaults result in a court case. Those that do can take up to a year for the trial to take place. While these proceedings can be lengthy and emotionally draining, a number of women have found this process a helpful way to resolve their feelings.

Our society appoints a lawyer, known as "Crown Counsel", to present each case in court. You are considered a witness in these proceedings and the Crown Counsel will schedule meetings in order to inform you about the courtroom and the questions you may be asked. If you wish to have someone with you during this time, it's up to you. For example, a Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis counsellor would be willing to accompany you to the meetings, to the trial and help prepare you for your role as a witness.

Although all this sounds like it could be complicated, it can be a very positive step in doing something about the injustice that has been done to you, and it will lessen the chance of the rapist assaulting someone else. We must remember, however, that in any given case, it is up to the Crown Counsel to **prove beyond any reasonable doubt** that a sexual assault took place. If there is not a verdict of guilty and a conviction handed down by the Judge, the reason could be that there just wasn't enough evidence. If you have any questions about the law you could contact your nearest Crown Counsel office, Law Centre or Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre.

FROM YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS:



Being sexually assaulted may be the most horrible thing that has ever happened to you. At this time you will need lots of support and understanding. While your family and friends could be of great comfort to you, its

possible that some of them might have trouble helping you because of their own feelings. Sometimes they, too, are in shock and may blame themselves or you for what has happened. If those closest to you are supportive, it will help you a lot in dealing with the assault.

Whether they are supportive or not, a third person, like a Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis counsellor, could help you, your family, and your friends understand what has happened, what will happen (legal procedures, etc.) and how all of you may react over time. It is important for you to realize that how some people react to you could be upsetting. Don't give up! You can call a Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre at any time to get the information, support and care that you need.

FROM YOURSELF:



If you have been sexually assaulted, you can expect to go through a period of adjustment.

Immediately following the assault everything will seem all mixed up. You will be shocked and scared, and often there will be physical pain. Women usually respond either by acting out their state of shock: crying, laughing, showing fear or anger; or by being very calm and controlled. During the first few days after the attack, you will go through a wide range of emotions. Here are some of the feelings and thoughts many survivors have.

ANGER: I wish I could kill him!
SHAME: I don't want anyone to know.
GUILT: Was it my fault?
SHOCK: I feel totally numb.
FEAR: What if he comes back?
POWERLESSNESS: I feel destroyed.
DEPRESSION: I can't stop crying.

After two to three weeks you may attempt to pull your life back together.

How we do this will be different for each of us. Supportive family and friends can help us with this process.

The intense emotions that you felt immediately after the assault should ease up, and you will be making moves to recover from what happened. Common activities are: turning to your family for support; moving; changing your telephone number; having nightmares; developing extreme fears. All these things are what you might go through to recover.

If the attacker was already known to you and you thought you could trust him, it will probably be harder for you to tell someone about it. Your feelings of guilt will likely be stronger, because you might be thinking of all the things you could have done to avoid being assaulted. However, it happened, and it is important to remember that it was not your fault.

Realize that it is normal to go through a certain range of emotions following an assault. Don't push yourself by hurrying these feelings along. It is important to let yourself express them fully. If you have done this, and these feelings persist, or earlier, unsolved personal issues surface and interfere with your daily life, then you should consider talking to a counsellor. Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis counsellors are trained to help you.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN ASSAULTED BY A FAMILY MEMBER:



If you have been fondled, molested or made to participate in sexual activity by someone you trusted, you are not alone. This problem is called Child Sexual Abuse and affects people from every age, race, class and religion. Child Sexual Abuse in any form is against the law.

The person who has abused you is called an offender and is responsible in every way

for what he has done to you or made you do. He could be your uncle, stepfather, grandfather, father, babysitter, neighbor or "friend" of the family. He has a serious problem and needs help. If he has stopped abusing you, he is most likely abusing another child or teenager.

You did not cause him to do these things, in no way is it your fault! It's likely that the offender got you to go along with him by using tricks or bribes or by scaring you. Do any of the following statements sound familiar?:

"I am doing this to help you."
 "It's a father's role to teach you about sex."
 "I love you so much, I just want to show you."
 "If you do this, I won't touch your little sister."
 "I need this, do it to make me feel better."
 "I'll hurt you if you don't go along with me."
 "If you're good to me, I'll buy you that that you've been wanting."

He has probably told you not to tell anyone, by saying that no one would believe you, that you would get into trouble, or that by telling it would break up the family. It could be that the offender didn't say anything at all, you just felt something awful would happen if you told.

Telling someone about what happened to you could be frightening and very difficult. Some people do not understand the problem of sexual abuse, so if the person you tell doesn't believe you, tell someone else. Try to choose someone that you like and trust, for example, your mom, a friend's mom, a teacher or the school counsellor. If you don't feel you are being heard, getting the help that you need or being believed, there are many other people in your community who will believe you, talk with you, and do whatever they can to make sure the offender stops. Some of these people are the police, social workers at child protection and welfare offices, and Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis counsellors.

It is very important to tell someone about being sexually abused for many reasons:

- No one deserves to be touched or abused in this way — it is a crime!
- The offender needs to be stopped from abusing you and/or others.
- A lot of other kids felt a great relief by telling. It's very hard to carry a secret, especially one that is hurting you.
- In order for you to grow up feeling good about who you are, it's important to sort out those things in your life which can cause you to feel badly.

If you are or have been sexually abused and haven't told anyone it's quite likely that a lot of your feelings are confused and all mixed up. It's important that you get help to sort them all out. Some of these feelings might be:

Fear:
 "I don't know what would happen if I tell."
 "He told me if I tell anyone, I will be blamed for it."
 "My mother couldn't handle it; she would fall apart."

Guilt:
 "I've let it go on so long now, who would believe me?"

Shame:
 "What would my friends think?"
 "I feel so dirty."

Sadness:
 "I feel so alone; no one would understand."
 "I thought he loved me; I feel betrayed."

Anger:
 "How could he do this to me!"

After you have told someone, and it is reported, a social worker from the agency responsible for child welfare and protection will come and talk to you. Every situation is handled differently so it is difficult to say exactly what steps will be taken in your area. The first concern in any situation is your safety. If the social worker suspects you may be assaulted again, action could be taken to prevent it. These actions could include your worker: talking to the person who assaulted you; finding you a safe place to stay for a while (with a friend, neighbour or group home); or removing the person who assaulted you from your home. All of these actions would be temporary until the investigation is over. At that point, you and your social worker would decide what is best for you. Because this has happened within your family, all of these proceedings will be complicated and difficult, so you must remember that your social worker wants to do what is best for you. Remember that what has happened is not your fault and you are not to blame.



- Turn the page for more information about sexual abuse.

WARNING SIGNALS OF
SEXUAL ABUSE:

We all need to learn to trust our feelings and if any situation feels weird, confusing or unsafe, tell someone. Here are a few of the things we should watch out for:

If someone older is:

- treating you differently from other kids
- accidentally-on-purpose touching your private parts — brushing against breasts while wrestling, rubbing their body against yours
- looking at or touching your body and saying it is an inspection or to see how you are developing
- putting lotion or ointment on when mother or others are not around or when nothing is wrong
- accidentally-on-purpose coming in your room while you are undressed or in the bathroom when you are there
- not respecting your privacy, coming in your room without knocking, not allowing you to close doors to bedroom or bathroom
- asking questions or making accusations about sexual things between you and boyfriends
- teaching sex education by showing pornographic pictures, showing his body or touching yours
- saying sexual things about your body or how you dress
- talking to you about sexual things he has done

- telling you not to tell your mother or other people about things that happen between you
- accidentally-on-purpose letting their robe come apart, walking without clothes on

Thanks to Sexual Assault Centre, Harbour Medical Centre, 325 Ninth Avenue, Seattle, WA, USA.

If any of these situations are happening remember:

- IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT
- TRUST YOUR FEELINGS
- TELL SOMEONE!

*Support
and
Counselling*

Talking to someone about your experience of sexual assault is very important. If you do not talk about your feelings and instead hope to forget about what has happened, these feelings may keep recurring throughout your life. If there isn't a Women's Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre in your area, you can call a crisis line, Mental Health Centre, or Women's Centre. If you are one of the many women who have kept silent for months or years about sexual assault, you too can benefit from calling a Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre to talk it through. Please do not hesitate to call: these centres are there to assist you as much as they can. (On the back cover are a number of Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis centres in Canada.)

DEFINITIONS

ACCOST: to invade someone's privacy by talking to them (although not every uninvited conversation can be classified as accosting)
ACQUAINTANCE RAPE: sexual intercourse that is forced upon you by someone you know, e.g. date or a 'friend'
AGGRESSION: An attitude of hostility, usually arising from feelings of inferiority or frustration, expressed with violence (verbal or physical)
ASSERTIVENESS: stating thoughts and feelings, clearly and directly without attack, excuse or apology
CHASTE CHARACTER: A decent and upstanding citizen
COERCION: force
COMPENSATION: something given to make up for a loss, e.g. money for emotional or physical injury
CONSENT: to give permission
FANTASY: a daydream

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