

YOUR SAFETY MATTERS TO US



Any type of unwanted sexual contact – from touching to intercourse is a sexual assault.

Sexual assault is a violent crime, a hostile attack, an attempt to hurt and humiliate.

Know that you are not alone. Anyone can be a victim.

You can be safe in OUR/YOUR city

The first line of defence against sexual assault occurs when a woman admits to herself that she is a potential victim regardless of age or socio-economic status.

The more informed all citizens are about the crime of sexual assault, the better prepared they will be to prevent it. It is important to remember that women are not the only victims. 8% of adult victims were men. (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics 2003)

When you feel uncomfortable in an elevator in a car, in your home or in a social setting – trust your instincts.

Assaults can occur anytime and anyplace. Those who commit an assault can be anyone – strangers, neighbours, spouses, partners, co-workers, classmates, family members and even friends.

According to Statistics Canada, 2003, in cases reported to police, 80% of sexual assault survivors knew their abusers. About 10% were assaulted by a friend and 41% were assaulted by an acquaintance, 28% were assaulted by a family member, while the remaining 20% were assaulted by a stranger.

The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women found that 38% of sexually assaulted women were assaulted by their husbands, common-law partners or boyfriends. Don't put up with abuse. You deserve better.

INCREASING YOUR SAFETY FACTORS

Remember 38% of sexual assaults are domestic related. Since January 1983, the Criminal Code of Canada recognizes that sexual assault occurs even within a marriage. Sexual assault is a crime, regardless of the past or present relationship to the offender. Most sexual assaults are committed by a

man known to the victim who is likely to use verbal pressure, tricks and/or threats during an assault. These Sexual Assaults are no less a crime than those committed by strangers.

IT TAKES TWO.....

- Set sexual limits and communicate those limits.
- Tell your partner clearly what you intend. Establish that any sexual activity will be a mutual decision.
- Speak up if you're getting confusing messages from your partner.
- Be forceful and firm: don't worry about being polite.
- Don't fall for lines such as "you would if you loved me".
- Be assertive.
- Just because you are in a relationship, your body is your body and **only you have the right to consent to sexual relations.**
- Don't put up with abuse. You deserve better.

Stranger Rapists tend to take advantage of opportunity. Members of the public continually request preventative measures from the Sex Crimes Unit. These measures are only suggestions for your personal safety. The decision is your's to make.

The following information provides a good start for raising your awareness.....

Social settings....

- Don't let drugs or alcohol cloud your judgement
- When first meeting a new friend, exchange phone numbers, not addressees
- Keep someone apprised of your whereabouts when dating someone for the first time

- It is a good idea to refrain from going to bars and clubs alone. However, should you choose to do so, have your own transportation available, and use it
- If someone persists in asking for your phone number, and you feel it would cause a problem should you refuse, give them a phoney number
- Know what your personal standards are and stick to them. Don't allow your judgement to be overruled by an aggressive pursuer.
- Don't accept beverages from someone you don't know and trust
- Always watch your drink and never leave it unattended
- If you need to call a friend to escort you home, don't hesitate to do so
- Don't leave a social event with someone you have just met or don't know well.

Be alert.....

- Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you.
- If you can, try to avoid walking alone
- Plan your route ahead of time
- Try to stay in well-lighted areas
- Avoid shortcuts, bushy areas and alleyways away
- Walk confidently, directly, and at a steady pace
- Walk on the side of the street facing traffic
- If a driver stops to ask directions, avoid getting near the vehicle
- Don't hitchhike
- If a car appears to be following you, turn and walk in the opposite direction
- Carry a whistle
- If you sense you are being followed, immediately cross to the opposite side and of the street and head for the nearest open business or occupied dwelling.
- If you are in trouble, attract help any way you can. Yell, call for help, shout out, break a window, and use any means necessary to draw attention to the situation.

At Home....

- List only initials and last name on your mail box
- Keep all entrances where you live well-illuminated
- Install deadbolt locks and door viewers.
- Do not give personal information to a stranger on the phone such as your name, address or phone number.
- Ask repair/delivery personnel for the ID. If you are uncomfortable, have them wait outside while you call the company for verification.
- If a stranger asks to use your phone in an emergency, make the call for them.
- Never leave keys under door mats, in mail boxes or any other predictable locations.
- Don't rely on chain latches and screen doors for security as they are no barrier to intruders.

Safety in and around your car.....

- Have your keys in your hand when going to and from your car
- Lock the doors and roll up the windows whenever you leave your car
- Keep the doors and the windows locked whenever you are in your car
- Prior to entering your car, always check both under the car and behind the front seat
- If your car breaks down, raise the hood and turn on the emergency flashers. Remain in your locked car until help arrives. If someone stops to offer assistance, ask them to send a tow truck or to contact local law enforcement. Talk through the window
- If you are being followed, don't turn into your own driveway. Head for the nearest populated area or open business
- Park in well lighted areas
- Avoid isolated roads and shortcuts
- Keep your vehicle in good repair. Make certain you have enough fuel

- When dropping someone off, wait until passengers have safely entered their residence or destination
- Park close to your destination

Again these measures are only suggestions. The decision is yours to make.

If you or someone you know is a victim of a sexual assault report it to the police. Try to remember points of identification about the attacker (e.g., complexion, body build, height, weight, age, type of clothing). If possible, write down the information while it's still fresh in your memory, and do not dispose of any physical evidence, such as clothing, hair or skin samples. Do not bathe or shower prior to reporting.

Know that you can get help from professionals like the police, rape crisis centers, health services, counselling centers, or your family health care provider. Talk to someone.

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre
www.trccmwar.ca
 416-597-8808
 24 hour support

Sexual Assault Care Centre
<http://www.sacc.to>

Toronto Police Service
 40 College Street,
 Toronto, Ontario
 M5G 2J3
 Non emergency 416-808-2222

EMERGENCY 911

