

MIYKIWAN TOOLKIT
FACT SHEET

**SEXUAL
VIOLENCE**

WHAT IS

Sexual violence means any sexual activity being forced upon someone without their consent. It can be anything from unwanted touching to rape. Even if they are married or engaged, a person's partner cannot force them to engage in any sexual activity that is not wanted. Sexual violence can happen to anyone: women, men and children.



“I found myself left lying on the floor trying to remember how to breath [sic], wrap my mind around what just happened, and asking myself the unfor-gettable question,

“What did I do to set him off this time.”

The sound of his voice when he would say, “Look what you made me do...”

KEY THINGS TO KNOW

- In 2009, Aboriginal people who had a spouse or common-law partner during the last five years were more likely to report being the victim of a sexual or physical assault by their spouse as opposed to non-Aboriginal people
- In addition to the above, Aboriginal people stated that they were being victimized multiple times
- 7 in 10 Aboriginal women who had been victims of domestic abuse (including sexual violence), did not end up report any such incidents to the police (2004–2009)
- One of the most common reasons for not reporting a violent incident (including sexual violence) to the police was that the victim had decided that in the end, the incident was a personal matter
- Between 2009 and 2013, the rates of police-reported sexual assaults against female intimate partners climbed 17%
- 98% of those who reported being the victim of a sexual offence were female (2013)

FORMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

While there are many forms of family violence, these are the most common:

- Touching another person in a sexual way without their permission
- Any sexual activity with a person who has not given their consent
- Any sexual activity that continues despite the instigator being asked to stop what they are doing
- Forcing another person to commit any unsafe or humiliating sexual acts

WARNING SIGNS

There are several signs that can make you aware of someone who is being sexually abused. Here are some of the most significant ones:

- Person has physical injuries which they have difficulty explaining
- Person starts to have major changes in their behaviour and attitude
- Person ends up making excuses for their partner's behaviour and conduct
- Person begins to lose contact with their family and friends
- Person seems to give up any sense of control around their partner

STRATEGIES AND NEXT STEPS

Being the victim of sexual violence brings with it many painful experiences such as hurt, fear, confusion and depression. Please remember:

People care about you: reach out and tell someone you trust; family members, friends, elders, co-workers, Aboriginal groups, service providers; they will be ready to help you

It is not your fault: no matter what, you do not deserve to be victimized in any way; you have the right to live freely and safely

SEXUAL VIOLENCE: MYTHS AND FACTS

MYTH: The majority of victims of sexual violence are able to prevent the assault from taking place by resisting

FACT: An abuser seeks to gain power and control of their victim through physical threats. Some victims, particularly in a family environment, may not be able to fully understand that they are being abused

MYTH: Most sexual violence is committed by strangers and not by family members

FACT: Statistics clearly show that the majority of sexual violence is committed by someone close to the victim, often one of their own family members

MYTH: Victims can "get over" the effects of sexual violence without much difficulty

FACT: The damaging effects of sexual violence are far reaching and can severely im-

If you need help or someone to talk to please contact the National Office for Victims Services Center, toll free at: **1-866-525-0554** or Kids Help Phone, toll free at: 1-800-668-6868, www.kidshelpphone.ca

To obtain more information regarding the CAP Family Violence Prevention Awareness Toolkit, please contact the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples at www.abo-peoples.org or call 1-613-747-6022.
