

Sexual assault comes in many forms: sexual harassment, incest, rape, exhibitionism, voyeurism, etc.

Sexual assault is an act of domination, of violence and of aggression committed against a woman's will during a forced physical encounter.

All women are potential assault victims, regardless of their age, race, social class or status, appearance or manner of dress.

All men are potential attackers, whether rich or poor, lawyers or taxi drivers.

SEXUAL ASSAULT: A PROBLEM OF UNTOLD PROPORTIONS

Sexual assault has traditionally been perceived as a "crime resulting from a sudden, uncontrollable sexual urge experienced by a solitary maniac which immediately leads to an assault on an unknown woman who, in any case, provoked him and finally consented to the act".

The real picture is somewhat different:

- 70% of all rapes are premeditated;
- the age of the victims ranges from six months to 90 years;
- only 3% of all attackers are mentally ill;
- in 70% of all assault cases, the woman knows her attacker;
- half of all assaults occur in the home of either the attacker or his victim;
- 62% of all women who are sexually assaulted sustain some injuries¹.

The biases surrounding sexual assault are deep-rooted. The public lacks information about this problem and has some misconceptions about the causes, and personal and social repercussions of sexual assault.

¹ Statistics Canada and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.