

With over a third of university women having had unwanted sexual experience,

Sexual assault a problem on campus

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THE BRUNSWICKAN

Over one third of university women have experienced unwanted sexual activity.

This is according to a study prepared by Larry Finkelman of Counselling Services in October of 1992, following a mail out survey to students of UNB and STU. 35.2% of women and 16.8% of men said that they had had one or more unwanted sexual experiences, a total of 28.6% of the survey's respondents. These students need not feel alone.

Who is affected?

Finkelman's survey, "Report of the Survey of Unwanted Sexual Experiences Among Students of UNB-F and STU," found that women were victimized more than men, younger students (18, 19, or 20) were victimized more than older students, and that students who did not live with a romantic partner were more likely to be victimized than those who did (33.2% compared to 12.8%). However, the survey also found that victims knew their attackers in nearly all instances of sexual assault, with attacks by strangers comprising only 7.2% of the reported incidents.

While victims felt comfortable enough to respond to the anonymous survey, the majority (50.4%) indicated that they had not told anyone about the incident, because they felt that it wasn't serious enough to report (72.3%) or that it was a private matter (68.1%). Other victims didn't speak out because they felt partly to blame (50.9%) or embarrassed (46.5%), or wanted to protect their reputation (38.1%) or the aggressor (28.7%). Some were worried that others would find out (32.5%) or that the aggressor would retaliate (15.7%) if it were reported.

Of those who did tell, the majority

told a friend (92.1%), while few reported the incident to the police (1.6%) or university security (1.6%). Perhaps the low incidence of making reports to officials among those who spoke out can be explained through the responses of those who chose not to: 27.5% believed the incident was unprovable, 22.7% believed the authorities would be uninterested, and 18.3% were afraid of court proceedings.

What help is there for victims?

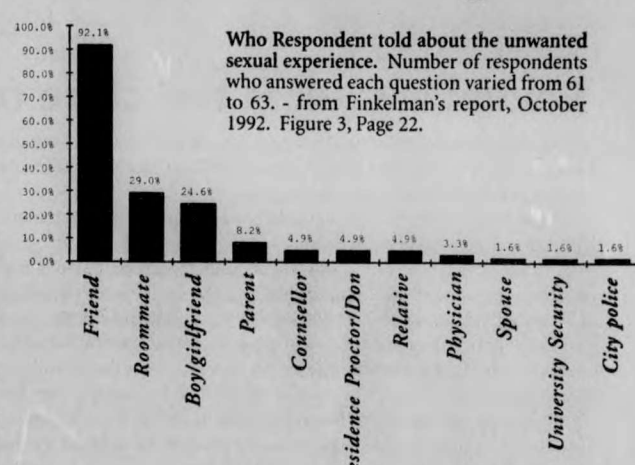
Depending on what action the victim wants to take, there are several resources available, both on and off campus. For counselling, the Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Centre (454-0437) and UNB's Counselling Services (453-4820) both have 24 hour phone lines. "We see students who've been assaulted 24 hours a day, on call from Security (453-4830) and from residence," said

Finkelman. He added that professional help, by female counsellors if preferred, is available and important.

For medical attention, which is important even if the victim does not intend to press charges, the DECH hospital (452-5400) and the UNB Health Centre (453-4837) both have physicians on call 24 hours a day.

If the victim would like to press charges, the Fredericton Police must be contacted. The police will take a statement from the victim, and will gather physical evidence, such as torn clothing. Following this, the victim will be taken to the hospital to procure more evidence, and to get medical attention. A physical exam, including a pelvic exam, will be administered. Evidence to be used in court will be collected by a physician equipped with a rape evidence kit.

"The woman's clothes will be taken for evidence, in which case they will be put in bags and will be kept for some time," according to material provided by the Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Centre. "The doctor will take samples from the vaginal area. Several swabs and cultures are taken to use in determining the presence of semen sperm. Oral and anal swabs will also



be taken. As well, samples of pubic and scalp hairs will be gathered."

According to Dr. Myers of the UNB Health Centre, this process takes about an hour and must be done in the presence of a police officer. Evidence collected may be used against the (alleged) aggressor in legal proceedings.

What is being done to prevent sexual assault?

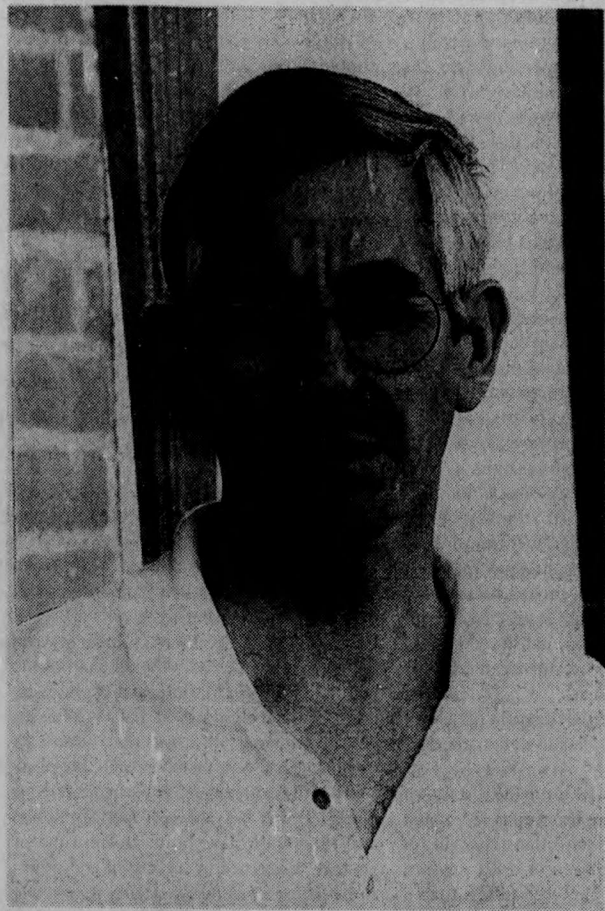
UNB has educational, awareness, and safety programs in place to help reduce the rates of occurrence of sexual assaults. Julie Troost, who volunteered for two years at the

it on your keychain it's a way of spreading awareness."

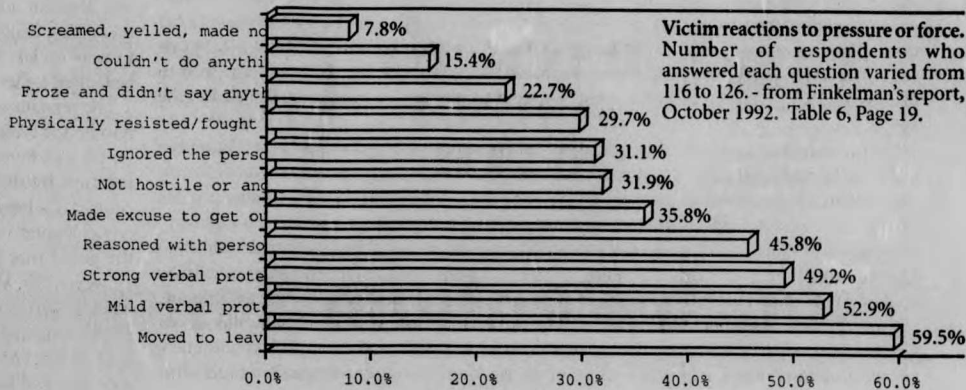
As well, the sound of the whistle could draw help, or alert the aggressor as to his/her actions. "It sends a clear message," Troost explained. "A lot of times it is miscommunication, so that would definitely say 'I'm saying no.'"

Male frosh received a frisbee in their kits, with the Safewalk number on it. "It's a good way of getting awareness out there, because they'll use them," Troost added that there will be pamphlets in the kits as well.

Sexual assault's inclusion in the Student Disciplinary Code (SDC) is another way to heighten awareness,



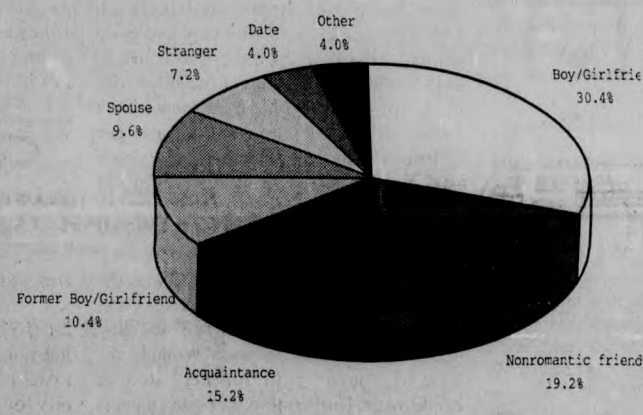
Pat FitzPatrick
Larry Finkelman: a survey of UNB and STU women shows that less than ten per cent of sexual assaults are attacks by strangers.



What can I do to protect myself?

Be careful. According to a pamphlet made by Sexual Assault/Campus Safety Coordinator Julie Troost, the most dangerous time for university students is the first year between the first day and the first break, while the campus is unfamiliar and students are insecure and lonely. 63.6% of aggressors and 48.4% of victims had consumed alcohol and/or drugs prior to the incident. In fact, 16% of victims reported that they had been drugged or given too much to drink as a means of being forced to engage in unwanted sexual activities.

Be assertive. Explain your wishes clearly to avoid miscommunication. Attend a self-defense course and awareness programs. Don't assume you're overreacting; stand up for your feelings and for your right to say no.



Types of relationships with aggressors, based on a sample of 125 respondents - from Finkelman's report, October 1992. Figure 2, page 16.

Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Centre, is the Campus Safety/Sexual Assault Coordinator. The position was created this year due in part to the findings of Finkelman's 1992 survey, she said.

Troost has created a pamphlet entitled "Preventing Sexual Assault at UNB," which contains important phone numbers and information, as well as a definition of sexual assault. The pamphlet is available in the Student Resource Centre, room 114 of the Student Union Building.

In conjunction with Orientation, Troost arranged to have whistles put in the frosh kits of incoming female students. She believes that the whistles will serve many purposes. "They say Safewalk on them, so just by putting

Troost said, "If it's in the Code, people are going to recognize it as a problem." The SDC committee has agreed to the addition, but it has yet to be approved by the Board of Governors.

Troost is also working on providing self-defense courses, workshops for couples, and a mock trial about the issue of consent.

Men can help prevent sexual assault through Men Against Sexual Aggression (MASA). Volunteers are trained to educate their peers about what is appropriate within the context of a relationship. Students interested in either becoming an educator or in attending a workshop should contact Larry Finkelman (see story on MASA, below).

Men Against Sexual Aggression

CYNTHIA KIRKBY

THE BRUNSWICKAN

MASA is looking for a few good men.

The acronym stands for Men Against Sexual Aggression, a program started last year and coordinated by Larry Finkelman of Counselling Services.

Following the appearance of a letter by Finkelman in local newspapers, 9 students applied to become peer educators. "In our 1992 survey, it found that 96% of aggressors were known by the woman," he explained. "The biggest single category of that was boyfriends, so I think some relationship education is needed."

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After applying and being interviewed, potential peer educators receive three days of training, which includes information about sexual aggression and the laws. They also participate in the workshops that they will be holding for others, and get practice teaching. "It's clear by the end of the three days whether the person will do well."

Peer educators will then be involved in awareness weeks and sessions, and in holding workshops for groups that request them. "Really, any organized group can invite in two peers to hold a session for an hour and a half."

Proctors, Academic Resource Persons, and House Presidents will receive information and training, too.

The ultimate goal of the program, Finkelman said, is to prevent unwanted sexual experiences by women through the education of

men.

"We're hoping that starting with a small group of men. They can educate others who'll either say 'yes, I need help' and then get it, or say 'yes, I want to be an educator,'" he said. "Then there'll be an ever-widening circle of men committed to ending sexual aggression."

MASA held twelve sessions last year, reaching 115 men. "The response has been positive, from peer educators and from men at the sessions. The students said there were good leaders, and good discussions, and it really forces them to look at and evaluate their own attitudes and beliefs."

This is one of the reasons why the sessions are for men only. "Men can be more honest talking to other men. In co-ed sessions, they know what to say and are politically correct, but with men only, they can talk about their beliefs."

He cited the idea that women who visit a man in his bedroom, or who wear tight clothes, are communicating that they want sex as examples of things that men will discuss amongst themselves. "We're trying to challenge these attitudes, but to do that, we have to talk about them, and it's easier when it's all men."

Finkelman would like to see the program have even more volunteers. "I think twelve new peer educators was our goal, and we have five returning." Any male students interested in either becoming a peer educator or attending a session can contact Finkelman at 453-4820 or by e-mail at lfinklem@unb.ca.

However, MASA will soon be looking for a student coordinator, who will become the contact person. "I coordinated it last year, so with a student coordinator dedicating ten hours a week to the program, it will certainly make a big difference this year."

The Brunswickan is always looking for fresh faces... staff meeting, today at 12:30, room 35 of the SUB

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