

## The Impact of Sexual Violence



### ***The effects of sexual assault can be very traumatic.***

A woman may be in a state of shock or disbelief, scared, angry, depressed, numb or deny/minimize the effect of the assault. Some women feel ashamed or undeservedly blame themselves for the assault. Many survivors of sexual violence experience long term effects, which may affect many aspects of their lives. All of these effects are adaptations to a very abnormal situation and many arise out of the survivors best attempts to cope with an impossibly stressful situation. Some of these may include: eating disorders, substance abuse, sleep disturbances, self-injury, fear/anxiety, dissociative experiences, suicidal thoughts and depression. **These reactions are all common.** Counselling and therapy may help you cope with these issues.

### ***What can I do to help someone who has been sexually assaulted?***

If a friend, relative or acquaintance discloses that he or she has been sexually assaulted it is critical that you let her

know that you believe her. This is the first step in helping her begin to heal. Let her know that she is not alone. One in three women will experience at least one incident of sexual violence in her lifetime. Surviving a sexual assault can be an isolating and lonely experience, and this information can help alleviate this.

### ***Support any decision that the woman makes.***

Whether she chooses to go to the police or not, whether she chooses to go to a sexual assault centre or emergency room or not, it is important that she feels that she has made the right decision for her, without judgment from others. Sexual assault can leave a woman feeling out of control and powerless and allowing her to make the final decisions regarding her care helps to restore some sense of power again.

**Sea to Sky Regional Police Services:** Contact to report sexual assault. After report is made, no obligation to follow through on charges. Whistler RCMP: 604 932-3044 Pemberton RCMP: 604 894-6634 Squamish RCMP: 604 892-6100 Stl'atl'imx Tribal Police: 604 894-6124 Squamish Nation Peacekeepers: 604-892-9411

**RCMP Victim Services:** Crisis intervention, reporting options, police/court information, referrals, practical assistance, info re financial compensation. Whistler/Pemberton: 604 905-1969 Squamish: 604 892-6141

**Health Care/Emergency Departments:** Assessment/treatment, forensic exam discussion and most appropriate place to have the exam done. Whistler: 604 932-4911, Pemberton: 604 894-6939, Squamish General Hospital: 604 892-5211

**VGH Emergency Dept. Sexual Assault Services:** Comprehensive medical services, forensic exam, counselling, referral by specially trained female doctors/nurses. Go to VGH Emergency at 920 West 10th Ave, Vancouver.

**Women Against Violence Against Women Rape Crisis (WAVAW)** Support, advocacy, accompaniment to sexual assault service, third party reports, counseling, 24 hour crisis line. 1-877-392-7583

**VCH Mental Health and Addiction Services:** Crisis support, referral, assessment, counseling. Access/urgent response phone line Whistler: 604 698-6455, Pemberton/Mt Currie: 604 698-5861, Squamish: 604 892-6365

**Pearls Place Transition House/Safe House and Howe Sound Women's Center:** Safe accommodation for survivors and their children, emotional support, advocacy, resources, referrals, financial info. 24 hr 1-877-890-5711 or 604-892-5711 Howe Sound Women's Center: 604 892-5748

**SSCS Women's Counseling and Outreach:** Counseling/advocacy for women. Whistler/Pemberton: 1-877-894-6106 or 604 894-6101 Squamish: 1-877-892-2022 or 604 892-5796

**SAFE Clinic:** Drop in for testing and treatment for STI, pregnancy options, birth control, ECP. Whistler: 604 932-3202 Squamish: 604 892-2293

**Whistler Community Services Female Youth Outreach:** Emotional support, referrals. Compensation may be available. 604 902-0670

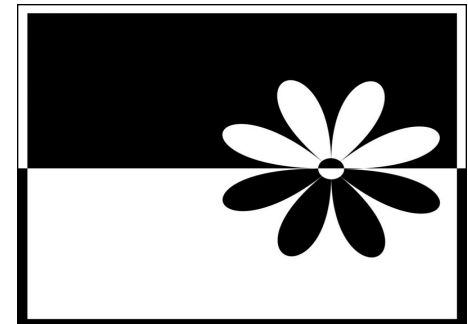
### **SEA TO SKY WOMEN'S SAFETY NETWORK SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM (SART)**

*Howe Sound Women's Centre Society, RCMP Victim Services, Sea to Sky Community Services Society, Sea to Sky Regional Police Services, Squamish Nation, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Whistler Community Services Society*

## **SEA TO SKY WOMEN'S SAFETY NETWORK SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE**

*To reduce trauma, provide support and empower female survivors of sexual assault in the Sea to Sky Corridor.*

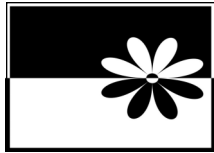
*If you have been sexually assaulted, there is help...*



**MYTH** If a person is drunk or passed out from drinking too much it is okay to have sex with them.

**REALITY** If a person is unconscious or their judgment is impaired by alcohol or drugs, legally, they are unable to give consent and having sex with them is sexual assault.

# *If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted, there is help...*



## WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

### SEXUAL ASSAULT

is any form of unwanted sexual contact. It can include *unwanted kissing, touching, grabbing or forced sexual intercourse.*

**Sexual assault** is a crime of violence committed primarily against women and children, although men and boys can also be victims. In the majority of cases **the perpetrator is known to the victim.** He could be an employer, co-worker, doctor, boyfriend, husband, caregiver, acquaintance, friend or relative. Whether the man is a stranger or someone you know, **he never has the right to sexually assault you.** Regardless of the degree of force or physical threat, or whether a weapon was used, the survivor's personal integrity, her sense of safety, and most importantly her sense of self and the world as she knows it is violated.

It is estimated that a woman is sexually assaulted every 6 minutes in Canada: fear of sexual assault is a reality for all women. Reporting to the police may prevent others from being victimized.

## IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT

**Get to a safe place** and call a friend, family member, the police or go to your local emergency department or hospital. It is important that you be treated for any physical injuries from the assault and receive preventative treatment for sexually transmitted diseases and/or pregnancy.

**MYTH** If a person consents to having sex at the start of making out with their partner — then changes their mind — but their partner keeps going, then it is not an assault.

### WHAT THE RCMP CAN DO

**If you decide** to report to the police the following information may help to anticipate what will be required. A **Victim Service** worker can also help with making this decision and support you through the process. **If you decide** to report to the police, do not shower, change, or throw out your clothes, or straighten up the area where the assault occurred as this may destroy important evidence. Making a police statement involves the police conducting an audio visual statement at the police station and may also require a written statement in your own words. Once you make a statement to the police, the investigation and direction of the case is in the hands of the police. Based on the evidence, the **Crown Counsel** (a lawyer representing the province) decides to proceed with the case or not. If the case proceeds to court, you will be called as a witness.

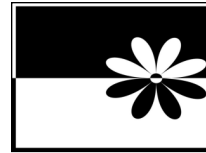
**There is no time limit** on reporting sexual assault; however, **the sooner a report is made, the better the chances are the police will find evidence linking the offender to the crime.**

### THIRD PARTY REPORTS

If you do not wish to make a direct report to the police initially but would like to give them information about the assault, a sexual assault worker at **WAVAW( Women Against Violence Against Women) 604 255-6344** can file a third party report on your behalf.

- You will not be identified.
- The police cannot arrest the assailant.
- The police will keep this information on file in case they have other reports about the man who assaulted you.

**REALITY** Legally, a person has a right to change their mind about having sex at any point of sexual contact. If a sexual partner does not stop at the time a person says “no”, this is a sexual assault. If a person is in a relationship with someone or has had sex with a person previously, this does not mean they cannot be assaulted by that person. Consent must be given every time two people engage in sexual contact.



To access to a safe house where you can stay, call toll free 1-877-890-5711

### CRIME VICTIM ASSISTANCE (CVAP)

Sexual assault is a crime and any victim may be eligible for compensation of expenses incurred because of this crime through CVAP. You may be able to recover expenditures for counseling, medical/dental, wage loss, ambulance and other costs. A victim service worker can assist you in filling out this form. Relevant receipts must be kept and re-mitted to receive compensation.

### GETTING MEDICAL ATTENTION

is one of the most important actions you can take even if you do not have apparent injuries. Your medical care includes any necessary treatment of injuries both internal and external, tests for sexually transmitted infections, and treatment for pos-

**Women are never to blame** for sexual assault. If a woman has been sexually assaulted, she is the victim of a violent crime.

It has nothing to do with what she wore, where she was, who she was with, or whether she was under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the assault.

sible pregnancy. You may choose a forensic examination to gather evidence that may be used in court regardless of whether you report the assault to the police at this time. To seek medical attention, please go to your local emergency department, hospital or family doctor. If you require an ambulance for transportation, call 911. Vancouver General Hospital has a Sexual Assault Service that is a group of women doctors and nurses who have training in providing sensitive care to survivors of sexual assault. **Your local emergency department can help you in accessing this service.**