

## LEARN MORE 7

### Sexual violence is gender-specific and gender-based.

- Gender is the most significant predictor of sexual violence. Women are targets of sexual violence at an alarming rate. The vast majority of perpetrators are men. While both men and women experience sexual violence, the vast majority of victims/survivors are women and children.
- 94% of police-reported adult sexual assault victims were female in 2008. 42% of these victims were women aged 18 through 24.<sup>1 2</sup>
- 97% of those accused in police-reported assaults were male in 2007.<sup>3</sup>
- In one study, 60% of male college students admitted that they would sexually assault someone if they knew they would not get caught. <sup>4</sup>
- A one-time, 1993 Canadian study, showed that half of all Canadian women have experienced physical or sexual violence.<sup>5</sup>  
“Sexual force is a pervasive process of intimidation that affects all women.” <sup>6</sup>
- Gender inequality exists at the macro level (bureaucracies, government, law, market, religion), as well as the micro level (interactions, families, organizations, patterned behavior between intimates).<sup>7</sup> Read more on pg 8 of *Overcoming Barriers: Roots of Sexual Violence*
- While men are the primary perpetrators of sexual violence, men and boys are also survivors. The myth that the sexual violence does not happen to men and boys is based on a very narrow interpretation of gender and makes it difficult for men to come forward.
- Society prescribes a restrictive binary of gender norms which constrain gender expression to either male or female, as well as expressing heterosexuality in socially accepted ways. Highly gendered misrepresentations of how we should act as sexual beings have strong influences in our society. [LEARN MORE](#)
- Misrepresentations about gender also skew the way we understand sexual violence in the context of people’s additional identities.  
A prevailing mythology holds that women living with disabilities are not sexual beings and therefore are not sexually active. Rape myths tell us that disabled women are not “real targets” of sexual assault. The lived experience of disabled women who are sexually assaulted is that when such crimes are reported to authorities, our credibility is called into question, particularly those of us who live with the label of intellectual impairment, who have been psychiatrized, or who have learning differences. <sup>8</sup>
- Further to this anyone who varies from the normative<sup>9</sup> dominant culture view<sup>10</sup> of gender and sexuality faces considerable social stigma generally, and particularly when they experience sexual violence. People who identify as transgendered, queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or who simply express gender variance outside of social norms without necessarily identifying this to others, all experience a higher rate of sexual violence as well as stigma when they seek remedy and support.

---

<sup>1</sup> Vaillancourt, R. (2010). *Gender Differences in Police-reported Violent Crime in Canada, 2008*. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Industry. Retrieved April 1, 2012 from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85f0033m/85f0033m2010024-eng.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Brennan, S. & Taylor-Butts, A. (2008). *Sexual Assault in Canada, 2004 and 2007*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, Minister of Industry. Retrieved January 20, 2012 from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85f0033m/85f0033m2008019-eng.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Brennan, S. & Taylor-Butts, A. (2008). *Sexual Assault in Canada, 2004 and 2007*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, Minister of Industry. Retrieved January 20, 2012 from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85f0033m/85f0033m2008019-eng.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> OWD 1995 in Penwill – find the source?

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada (1993), Violence Against Women Survey (archived unavailable)

<sup>6</sup> Susan Brownmiller, S.(1975) *Against Our Will*, Ballantine Books

<sup>7</sup> Hunnicutt, G. (2009). Varieties of patriarchy and violence against women: Resurrecting “patriarchy” as a theoretical tool. *Violence Against Women*, 15(5), 557

<sup>8</sup> Odette, F, Sexual Assault and Disabled Women: Ten Years after Jane Doe, in *Sexual Assault (2012)*, in Canada: Law, Legal Practice and Women’s Activism, ed. Sheehy, E. University of Ottawa.

<sup>9</sup> Glossary definition to add

<sup>10</sup> Dominant culture views gender as binary, meaning that male or female are two fixed options. Cisgender refers to someone who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth (based on the sex they were perceived to be). A great many people do not identify on this way. Sex and gender, while used interchangeably, are different.