

April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month



Defining Sexual Assault: Sexual assault is **conduct of a sexual nature** which is **non-consensual**, and is accomplished through threat, coercion, exploitation, deceit, force, physical or mental incapacitation, and/or power of authority.

Conduct of a sexual nature: Sexual assault includes a wide range of sexual behaviors and sexual activity. Some examples include rape, forcible sodomy, incest, child sexual abuse, unwanted sexual contact or touching, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution and sex trafficking, and sexual harassment.

Non-consensual: Sexual assault occurs when someone experiences sexual activity that she or he *did not consent to or did not want*. Consent cannot be given if a person is underage, drunk, high, unconscious, or physically or mentally incapacitated. A person can change her or his mind about sexual activity at any time and withdraw consent.

The Realities of Sexual Assault:

National Statistics:

- Nearly 1 in 5 women (18.3%) and 1 in 71 men (1.4%) reported experiencing rape at some time in their lives.
- Among female rape victims, perpetrators were reported to be intimate partners (51.1%), family members (12.5%), acquaintances (40.8%) and strangers (13.8%).
- Among male rape victims, perpetrators were reported to be acquaintances (52.4%) and strangers (15.1%).
- 42.2% of female rape victims were first raped before age 18; 29.9% of female rape victims were first raped between the ages of 11-17.
- 12.3% of female rape victims and 27.8% of male rape victims were first raped when they were age 10 or younger.

All statistics from Black MC, Basile KC, Breiding MJ, Smith SG, Walters ML, Merrick MT, Chen J, Stevens MR. *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2011.

Virginia Statistics:

- The total number of violent crimes reported in 2014 includes 4,668 forcible sex offenses involving 4,949 victims.
- Forcible sex offenses reported include forcible rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, and forcible fondling. Of the reported victims of forcible sex offenses, the vast majority (85.5%) were female.
- Nearly two-thirds (59.8%) of reported victims, both male and female, were under the age of eighteen.
- 39% of the reported forcible sex offenses involved offenses committed against family members or intimate dating partners.
- The majority of forcible sex offenses (78%) were committed by perpetrators known by or acquainted with the victim, including a substantial percentage of offenses committed by family or household members or dating partners (39%). Of the remaining offenses reported, 23% were committed by unknown/unreported assailants and 5.7% were committed by strangers.

Source: Virginia State Police, *Crime in Virginia, 2014*.

If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual assault, please contact the

Virginia Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline

1-800-838-8238 (24-hours/day, toll-free)

For additional sexual assault-related information and resources, please visit the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance website at www.vsdvalliance.org.

You may also contact the toll-free **Virginia Crime Victim Assistance Info-Line at 1-888-887-3418**.

Additional information regarding the Info-Line can be found at www.dcjs.virginia.gov/victims.

