Sexual Violence Basics

How Big a Problem is Sexual Violence?*

National Statistics on Sexual Victimization

# Every 6 minutes, one rape is reported in the United States (compared with one murder every 27 minutes).¹

# An estimated 1.1 million people over age 12 were victims of rape and sexual assault in 1992. This compares with approximately 500,000 people who were physically injured by drunk drivers.²

# Nearly 18% of American women, and 3% of American men, report having been victims of completed or attempted rape during their lifetimes.³

# In one national survey, 84% of women who disclosed that they had been raped never reported their rapes to the police.⁴

# In a national study of college students, 27.5% of the females reported that, since they were 14 years old, they had experienced an act that could be considered rape (based on the legal definition of rape).⁵

# Only 3 out of 10 reported rapes/sexual assaults reported to law enforcement are committed by strangers (compared to 7 out of 10 robberies).⁶

# While most rape victims are female, men and boys are also victimized by this crime. In 1995, 31,979 males age 12 and older reported being victims of rape, attempted rape or sexual assault.⁷

# Every year approximately 1 million women and 371,000 men are victims of stalking.³

# In 1997, 15,889 charges of sexual harassment were filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and with local and state Fair Employment Practices Agencies around the country.⁸

# In a nationwide survey, 56% of women responding had received at least one obscene phone call, 16% within the last six months.⁹

*Although statistics can help us understand the problem of sexual violence, they have some limitations. Statistics should be considered and used carefully.

Sexual Violence is the use of sexual actions and words that are unwanted by and/or harmful to another person.
National Statistics on Child Sexual Abuse

- **At least 20%** of American women and **5%** to **10%** of American men have experienced sexual abuse as children. ¹⁰

- Most child sexual abuse is committed by men (**90%**) and by persons known to the victim (**70%** to **90%**). ¹⁰

- Family members constitute **30%** to **50%** of the perpetrators against girls, and **10%** to **20%** of the perpetrators against boys. ¹⁰

- The vast majority of child sexual abuse victims are not arrested for perpetrating sex crimes, or any other crimes, as adults; however, they are at higher risk for committing crimes than people who were not abused or neglected as children. ¹¹

- Children who are sexually abused are about 30 times more likely to be arrested for prostitution as adults, compared to non-abused children. ¹¹

National Statistics on Perpetration

- About half of all adult sex offenders committed their first sexual offense during adolescence. ¹²

- In a national study of college students, 7.7% of male respondents reported that, since they were 14 years old, they has committed an act that could be considered rape (based on the legal definition of rape). ⁵

- On a given day about **234,000** offenders convicted of rape or sexual assault are under the care, custody, or control of corrections agencies. ¹³
National Statistics on Attitudes about Sexual Violence

# In a survey of 432 male and female adolescents, aged 14 through 19, 72% of respondents initially said that force is never justified in order to have sexual intercourse. However, when presented with nine specific scenarios, 76% of the males and 56% of the females responded that force was acceptable in at least one of those scenarios. The scenarios included "when a girl gets a guy sexually excited," "when she says she's going to have sex, then changes her mind," and "when she's led him on."14

# By age 16, most Americans have already witnessed 200,000 acts of violent crime on television.15

# Among teenagers between ages 12 and 17, 8% reported that the most important problem facing them is violence and crime in school. Another 8% reported that sexual issues are the most important problem facing them.16

Minnesota Statistics

# Every day in Minnesota:

6.7 rapes are reported to law enforcement.
5 people are arrested for prostitution.
10.8 other sex offenses are reported to law enforcement.17

# Sex offenders make up the largest single group of inmates in Minnesota adult and juvenile correctional facilities (approximately 20.5%).18

# In 1997, 956 people were arrested for rape in Minnesota. 1,129 people were arrested for other sex offenses.18

# Only 9% of victims receiving services from Minnesota sexual assault programs did not know their perpetrators. 37% of the perpetrators were acquaintances, friends, or dates, 33% were parents, step-parents, siblings, or other relatives, and 8% were spouses.19
1998 Minnesota Student Survey results *

Young people in the Minnesota public schools reported the following rates of sexual victimization in 1998 (Chart 1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Sexual Violence</th>
<th>6th Grade</th>
<th>9th Grade</th>
<th>12th Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse by family member</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse by someone outside family</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date rape</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating violence</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1995 Minnesota Student Survey Results *

Young people in the alternative settings listed below reported the following rates of sexual victimization in 1995 (data for 1998 not yet available) (Chart 2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Sexual Violence</th>
<th>Juvenile Corrections Facilities</th>
<th>Residential Behavioral Facilities</th>
<th>Alternative Learning Centers</th>
<th>Chemical Dependency Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child sexual abuse</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence on a date</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: Due to differences in methodology, results from the 1998 survey of Minnesota public schools (Chart 1) cannot be directly compared with the results of the 1995 survey of the alternative settings (Chart 2).

1 Federal Bureau of Investigations (1997)  
2 Miller, Cohen And Wiersema (1996)  
3 Tjaden and Thoennes (1998)  
4 Kilpatrick, Edmunds, and Seymour (1992)  
5 Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski (1987)  
6 Bureau of Justice Statistics (1996)  
7 Rand (1998)  
9 Katz (1994)  
10 Finkelhor (1994)  
11 Widom (1995)  
13 Greenfield (1997)  
14 Goodchilds et al. (1988)  
15 Cohen and Swift (1993)  
16 National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (1997)  
17 Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (1998)  
18 Minnesota Department of Corrections (1998)  
19 Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services (1998)  
20 Minnesota Department of Children Families and Learning (1998)  
21 Minnesota Department of Human Services (1996)