1. Sexual assault is when someone is forced to have sexual activity without consent. According to the Canadian Federation for Sexual Health, only about 6 per cent of sexual assaults are reported to the police.

2. Women are more often assaulted by their partners than strangers.

3. Sexual abuse is more common in casual (short-term or dating) relationships. Psychological and physical abuse are more common in long-term relationships.

4. Violence is more common toward Aboriginal women than other women in Canada. According to Statistics Canada, Aboriginal women are three times more likely than other women to experience violence and spousal abuse.

5. Colonization has changed the way that men and women relate to each other. Traditionally relationships between First Nations men and women were based on values of equality and respect. Women and men in First Nations communities had equally important roles, and rape and sexual aggression against women was extremely rare. You can reclaim these values of equality and respect.

6. Abuse often involves the use of drugs and/or alcohol by the abuser, the victim, or both. Violence in relationships is more likely to happen if the abuser has been drinking. Some abusers blame alcohol for the problem and use it as an excuse for being violent. Sexual and physical violence is never okay.

7. If a person is drunk or high, they cannot give consent and any sexual activity that happens is sexual assault. It is never a person’s fault for being assaulted after drinking or doing drugs. Drug-facilitated sexual assault involves drugs and alcohol. They might be used willingly by the victim or be given to them without their knowing. Most drug facilitated sexual-assaults happen because the victim has been drinking, not because they are “drugged” or “roofied.” If a person is unable to give consent, any sexual activity is assault even if the person willingly drank or took drugs. Being drunk or high is not an invitation for sex.
There are things you can do to protect yourself from drug-facilitated sexual assault.

- Be aware of your surroundings and listen to your gut feelings. If something feels off, it probably is.
- Don’t accept drinks from someone you don’t know or don’t trust.
- Never leave your drink unattended and don’t drink it if it looks, smells, or tastes weird.
- Have a sober friend you trust take you home if you feel like you need to sleep or might pass out.
- Have a buddy system with people that you trust so you can look out for each other.
- Call 911 if you think you or a friend has been drugged.

Sexual violence can cause ongoing physical, mental, and emotional harm. Victims may become depressed, anxious, or even suicidal. They may abuse drugs or alcohol to cope with these feelings. They are also more likely to take part in risky activities like unprotected sex.

If you have been the victim of sexual abuse or assault, talk to someone you trust. This could be a healthcare provider, an elder, a counsellor, or a friend. There are also helplines you can call:

- Kids Help Phone | 1-800-668-6868
- National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-877-799-7233 or 1-800-787-3224

To report sexual assault or sexual abuse, call 911 or have a friend call for you. If you are treated at the hospital you can also ask the staff there to call and report it for you.

learn more...

First Nations Centre at the National Aboriginal Health Organization ➔ www.naho.ca/fnc
(under Publications)
- Sexual health toolkit part I: Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (2011)
- Sexual health toolkit part II: Sexuality and relationships (2011)

Mayo Clinic ➔ www.mayoclinic.com
- Signs of domestic violence against women ➔ www.mayoclinic.com/health/domestic-violence/WO00044

PHAC Clearinghouse on Family Violence ➔ www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf

National Aboriginal Healing Circle Against Family Violence ➔ nacafv.ca/en

Native Women’s Association of Canada ➔ www.nwac.ca
- Sexual Exploitation ➔ www.nwac.ca/programs/sexual-exploitation
- Violence Prevention ➔ www.nwac.ca/programs/violence-prevention
- Sexual Exploitation ➔ www.nwac.ca/programs/sexual-exploitation

Design, Layout and Illustration: EarthLore Communications