

Sexual Violence (SV) is defined as 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.¹ SV is a serious social problem that affects the lives of men, women, and children. It can affect the physical, mental, social, and emotional wellbeing of survivors, and is associated with a number of health consequences including gynecological issues, sexually transmitted infections, depression, and suicidal ideation.²

Sexual Violence Facts, Virginia³

- In Virginia, 1 in 10 adults reported being the victim of rape or attempted rape at some point during their lifetime.
- The life time prevalence of rape or attempted rape was over four times higher among women (15%) than men (3.5%). Among women, prevalence was higher among whites (16.5%) than other (16%), Hispanics (13%), or blacks (10%).
- 87% of victims reported that their perpetrator was male.
- 80% of SV was perpetrated by someone the victim knew well such as a friend, relative, date, acquaintance, or current or former boy/girlfriend or spouse/partner. Only 9% were complete strangers and 11% were noted as other.

PREVENTION TIPS:

Preventing sexual violence is different than taking precautions to decrease an individual's risk of sexual assault. Primary prevention does not focus on the potential victim's behavior, but addresses the behaviors and attitudes of the potential offender.

- Speak up when other males say degrading things to or about females.
- Teach boys and girls about healthy relationships. Role model this behavior in the home.
- Do not support the images of males being violence females, or degrading images of females that can be found in movies, music videos, video games, and advertising.
- Speak up when you see other adults or juveniles exhibiting warning signs of sexually abusive behaviors.

It is important to remember that no one is ever to blame or at fault for being a victim of sexual violence. The offender is always responsible for that behavior. There are, however, things people can do that might reduce the risk of becoming a victim.

Trust your instincts! If a situation or behavior makes you uncomfortable, it is okay to leave.

RESOURCES:

- Virginia Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline
1-800-838-8238 (V/TTY)
www.vsdvalliance.org
- The RAINN Network
1-800-656-HOPE
www.rainn.org
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center
717.909.0710
www.nsvrc.org

1. Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance.
2. Krug, EG et al., eds, World Report on Violence and Health. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002.
3. This data was collected from phone surveys conducted in 2005 and 2006 as part of the Virginia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey.

Division of Injury and Violence Prevention
Virginia Department of Health
1-800-732-8333
www.vahealth.org/injury