

EDUCATOR RESOURCE—CANADIAN STATISTICS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT

- According to Statistics Canada, about one in ten sexual assaults is reported to police (Taylor-Butts, 2008). When asked why they did not tell the police about the sexual assault, some cited shame, fear of reprisals, and fear of not being believed or being blamed for what happened; many felt that the situation was not important enough, or that it was a personal matter; some also felt the police or court system could not or would not do anything (Sinha, 2013).
- Similar to survivors of other forms of violent crime, sexual assault survivors commonly experience anger, confusion, and frustration as a result of their victimization (Brennan and Taylor-Butts, 2008).
- 34 out of every 1,000 women aged 15 and older reported being sexually assaulted during the course of a year. Over the same period, 15 in every 1,000 men reported being sexually assaulted (Perreault & Brennan, 2010).
- Police are more likely to be notified in cases of severe violence (Sinha, 2013).
- Most sexual assaults involve unwanted sexual touching (81%) rather than more “severe” sexual attacks (19%). Among incidents reported to police in 2007, the large majority (86%) were level 1, the “least serious” form of sexual assault (Brennan and Taylor-Butts, 2008).
- Sexual assaults result in fewer charges than other violent offences. The exception is the offence of aggravated sexual assault, the most serious type of sexual assault but also the rarest (Boyce, 2015).
- Despite legislative changes and efforts to better support victims, sexual assault conviction rates remain the second lowest among violent crimes tracked in Statistics Canada’s *Adult Criminal Court Statistics for 2010–2011*. There are many reasons survivors choose not to report and/or pursue legal action, including myths and stereotypes that discourage testifying and the legal strategy of attacking the credibility of survivors.
- Testimony from the survivor is generally crucial for the prosecution of a sexual assault case as there may be no witnesses and little other evidence. “Rape kits” were developed as a way of collecting evidence but their effectiveness has been questioned, especially when trying to determine whether or not sexual activity was consensual.