

Hitchiking is a risky way to travel. When you place yourself in a stranger's car you increase your chances of being raped. If you do hitchhike:

- 1) Know the license number of the car.
- 2) Check the back seat before entering. Never get in the back seat of a two-door car.
- 3) Know where the door handle is and do not hesitate to get out if necessary.
- 4) Never accept a ride with more than one man.
- 5) Don't feel embarassed about refusing a ride if you aren't comfortable.

When driving alone, make sure all doors are locked. Check the back seat before entering and lock your doors when you park.

AWARENESS IS THE BEST OFFENSE

Call the Victoria Rape/Assault Centre
Business: 383-5545 Crisis: 383-3232

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON:

Violence against women
Criminal compensation
The court and trial procedure
The law and sexual assault
Alternatives to the legal system
Referrals: medical, psychological and legal
Becoming a member of the Centre

It takes all of us to make a change. Join our fight against violence against women.

Printed courtesy: The Victoria Opti-Mrs. Club.

WOMEN HELPING WOMEN

Victoria Rape/Assault Centre

383 3232

Member of the B.C. Coalition of Rape Centres

Nanaimo	758 0022
Terrace	638 8388
Vancouver	732 1613

Violence against women takes many forms: rape, sexual assault, incest, wife battery, sexual harassment on the job, exposure, indecent remarks from acquaintances and strangers, violent pornography, etc. All women experience one or more of the above at some point in their lives.

WHAT IS A RAPE/ASSAULT CENTRE?

The Rape/Assault Centre is a group of concerned women providing support and information to survivors of rape and sexual assault.

The Rape/Assault Centre offers support whether or not you decide to report the rape.

THE RAPE/ASSAULT CENTRE:

gives support and counselling to women who have been raped/sexually assaulted, be it recently or long ago.

is available in crisis situations on a 24-hour, 7 day a week basis.

will accompany a woman through the police investigation, medical procedure and/or the court process if she so desires.

will provide information about police investigations, medical needs and legal procedures.

has an extensive educational program with information available about all forms of violence against women: wife battery, incest, sexual harassment on the job, etc. Speakers and reading materials are available.

will provide medical and therapeutic referrals.

Will file "third party" reports. In this case, a report of the crime is made to the police, but the woman's name is not mentioned.

will give information on alternatives to the legal system.

offers self-defense information and courses.

will provide information on emergency refuge.

WHO RAPES/WHO IS RAPED?

Any woman is a potential rape victim and any man is a potential rapist.

A woman is raped every 17 minutes in Canada.

Age, appearance, social standing and marital status are not barriers to being assaulted. The oldest victim on record is a 93 year-old woman, the youngest, a two week-old infant.

More than half of all victims are raped by men they know: acquaintances, family and friends.

Almost half of the women who report were forced into acts other than intercourse, usually oral and anal sex.

Men who attack women are almost all under 30 years of age and more than a third are married.

Few rapists go to trial for their crime. Of the very few who do go to prison, over half rape again when they get back into society.

FIGHTING BACK/NOT FIGHTING BACK:

There is no one answer to this question. Every rape situation is unique, as are the individuals involved. Some women are prepared to fight back either physically or verbally, while others are not. Whatever a woman chooses to do, it is important that she establish in the rapist's mind that it is not an act that she is willing to go along with. Too often a rapist can "mistake" a woman's mute fear for compliance. Even a simple statement to the effect that "this is rape" removes the possibility of the woman's actions being misinterpreted.

Studies have shown that women who attempt verbal or physical self-defense make a much better psychological recovery from the assault. Those who attempt some form of assertiveness or self-defense also stand a chance of escaping from the assailant.

It is up to each woman to decide what is the best course of action in an assault situation.

Awareness is the key; once we are aware we are not nearly as vulnerable.

IF YOU WANT TO REPORT A RAPE:

Preserve the evidence. Until you have had a medical exam, do not wash, brush your teeth, drink, change your clothes, bathe or douche. Save torn clothing and leave the scene of the assault untouched.

Call the police and/or the Rape/Assault Centre immediately. The sooner you call after the assault, the better your chances of obtaining a conviction should you go to court.

Write down the details. It may take some time before the rapist is caught and brought to trial.

ALWAYS:

call a friend and/or the Rape/Assault Centre for support.

get medical attention. It is important that your body be checked for injuries. As well, it is vital that you be tested for V.D., both syphilis, (4-8 weeks after the assault) and gonorrhoea, (4-7 days after the assault). Lastly, if you are not on any form of continuous birth control (the pill or an I.U.D.), pregnancy is a possibility and should be tested for 6 weeks after your last period. If you are pregnant, the Rape/Assault Centre can assist you in examining your options via counselling and referrals to the appropriate agencies.

TAKING STEPS TO PROTECT OURSELVES:

Whenever possible, wear non-restrictive clothing so that you can run.

Yell loudly: "FIRE" is the most effective. Many people ignore a simple scream or call for help on the basis of non-involvement. Fire is a common threat.

Note the license number of any vehicle of which you are suspicious.

Take an emotional/physical self-defense course. Self-defense can be used to give you an opportunity to escape.