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July 29, 2019

**Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) responds to
Statistics Canada, *Incident-based crime statistics*:
Almost 19% year over year increase in Sexual Assault in Ontario**

Last week, Statistics Canada released recent findings of *Incident-based crime statistics*¹ in Canada. In these statistics, we can see that the prevalence of sexual assault in Ontario rose from 7,434 police-reported incidences in 2016 and 8,782 in 2017 to 10,634 in 2018 —revealing a year over year increase of almost 19%.

The *Incident-based crime statistics*² draws on data³ on police reported crimes, and is designed to measure the incidence of crime in Canadian society and its characteristics. More, as many sexual violence survivors choose *not* to engage in the criminal justice system⁴, this means that the prevalence of sexual violence in Ontario is in fact higher than the numbers shown here.

While Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) is troubled to learn of the many Ontarians that reported sexual assault in 2018 -- over 74 individuals per 100,000 according to Statistics Canada, up from about 62 per 100,000 in the previous year – we are in no way surprised.

Since 2014, sexual assault centres across Ontario have seen a significant influx of new referrals, crisis line calls and intake for counselling services. Awareness of sexual violence is increasing —a significant and positive achievement. With the rise of the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements in the last year, community-based sexual assault centres have seen a significant upswing in calls and requests for support too. More people are talking about sexual violence, and more people are identifying themselves as survivors. In one year alone, Ontario's sexual assault centres responded to *over 50,000* crisis line calls⁵ —up from 30,000 recorded in 2009.

The Statistics Canada findings and other recent research on sexual violence prevalence in Ontario merely confirms what we already know: survivors of sexual violence exist in great numbers in our communities; in addition, more survivors seek to disclose their experiences. We know, too, that when survivors get a positive response to their disclosure, the benefits of talking about sexual violence include improved psychological health, increased comfort, support, validation, and other “outcomes such as penalizing the perpetrator and protecting others”⁶.

¹ Statistics Canada. *Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas*. Data release - July 22, 2019. Online:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510017701&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.16&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.16>

² Ibid

³ The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), in co-operation with the policing community, collects police-reported crime statistics through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR). The UCR Survey was designed to measure the incidence of crime in Canadian society and its characteristics. See [this link](#) for more information on the data collected in the survey.

⁴ Patel, A. October 30, 2014. for Huffington Post Canada. 460,000 Sexual Assaults In Canada Every Year: YWCA Canada. Online:

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/10/30/sexual-assault-canada_n_6074994.html

⁵ Ministry of the Attorney General, 2016. In 2019, our member Centres' statistical data indicated a comparable number of calls to their crisis lines: approximately 50,000 calls in one year.

⁶ Violence against Women Learning Network, Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children, Western University. May 2012. Overcoming Barriers and Enhancing Supportive Responses: The Research on Sexual Violence Against Women A Resource Document: 25.



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Ontario's ability to listen, believe and respond to survivors of sexual violence can make a big difference in the lives of survivors.

Here's how we can do this:

1. **Believe survivors:** when survivors feel believed and reassured that they are not to blame for what happened, it promotes healing⁷ and works against **rape culture**
2. **Connect survivors with safe places that offer support and information** in the community. For example, you can **get in touch with a sexual assault centre in your community**.
3. **Ensure that supports for survivors are adequately resourced in Ontario.** We want this province to be safe and supportive to survivors, and we believe that no survivor of violence should **face a wait for services** or to find support. **Ask your MPP** what they are doing to support increased funding to Ontario community-based sexual assault centres and other services that support survivors of sexual violence.

Sexual violence affects every community in Ontario from rural to Northern to urban communities.

A community response to those impacted by violence -- survivors, children and perpetrators – fosters safe and healthy communities.

Together, we will make a difference.

Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) is a network of community-based sexual assault centres in Ontario. Member centres have been supporting survivors of sexual violence and offering prevention education since 1977: services include counselling to survivors of recent and historical sexual violence, accompaniment to hospital, police and court, advocacy and crisis support.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence, go to <https://sexualassaultsupport.ca/support/>.

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⁷ Violence Against Women Learning Network. *Overcoming Barriers and Enhancing Supportive Responses: The Research on Sexual Violence Against Women, A Resource Document*. 2012: 27