

TRIGGER WARNING • CONTENT WARNING

37%

**of Lethbridge College students
have experienced some form of
sexual or gender-based violence
since becoming a student**

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This special edition of the Endeavour aims to create awareness, advocacy and support for victims of sexual or gender-based violence. Endeavour staff wish to thank Kristine Cassie, CEO of Chinook Sexual Assault Centre for letting us participate in this meaningful project. Source for above graphic: Leger. (June 2023). Sexual and Gender Based Violence - Lethbridge College Results.

Growing the conversation of consent

Story by Angie Wiebe

Consent is a topic often talked about and addressed but not many people actually understand what consent is. Consent has a general definition of permission for something to happen or an agreement to something. According to an article published by Canadian Women's Foundation in 2022, 55 per cent of Canadians do not fully understand consent in the case of sexual activity. Consent doesn't just apply to sexual activity, it's also part of regular everyday life. It can be seen from a young age with something as simple as saying no to a hug from a relative, or asking before borrowing something someone else owns, as well as permission for sex. Miranda Hargreaves is the system navigation and education specialist at Chinook Sexual Assault Centre (CSAC) and she says consent should be taught from a young age.

"I think it's really important to have those ongoing conversations really early," says Hargreaves.

Consent isn't just a one-time agreement or permission. Someone can change their mind about consent at anytime. Consent has to be ongoing and positive according to Canadian law. An acronym, FRIES, created by Planned Parenthood stands for freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic and specif-

ic. These are all things consent should be. Carmen Guenther, manager of Wellness Services at Lethbridge College, says being enthusiastic is always an important part of consent.

"It should be without question that everyone is good to go. If you are doubting something, it's time to stop," says Guenther.

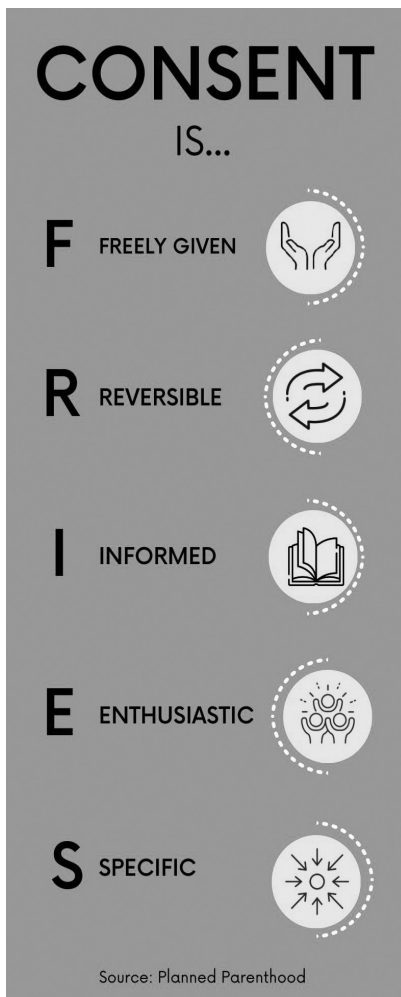
Pressuring someone or convincing someone to have sex counts as sexual assault. Getting consent by coercion is not actually consent. Steps must be taken to ensure consent and make sure it is ongoing throughout. Sex is where most people think about the idea of consent as it is so important, but it can also apply to many other places.

"When we take it out of sex, it actually feels like a more relatable conversation," says Guenther.

There is always more work being done by places such as the college's Wellness Centre, CSAC and other organizations to help make sure the topic of consent and other sexual education is being taught to everyone.

The topic of consent can be difficult to talk about and hear. If you need any support Wellness Services always has someone you can speak to by calling 403-320-3289 or send them an email at wellness.services@lethbridgecollege.ca. CSAC is also there to help by calling 403-694-1094.

See the full story at LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca.



An acronym by Planned Parenthood that is often used to help teach consent. Graphic by Angie Wiebe.

How pop culture creates unhealthy perceptions of sexual health

Story by Jared Vas

Pop culture can impact our behaviours and worldview. It forms what we perceive as cool or normal. From current fashion trends to how we conduct conversations, the media plays a significant role. When pop culture adds a dramatic edge to relationships and sex, it can create unhealthy behaviours that can be seen as normal.

Romance stories often use persistence as a way for the hero of the story to accomplish a battle. The pinnacle of this is "The Notebook." In the drama directed by Nick Cassavetes in 1994, there are countless moments of gaslighting, threatening and even verbal abuse, yet still the film is wildly regarded as a beautiful love story.

A less modern example would be the story of "Sleeping Beauty" and other princess fantasies. The original fairy tale of "Sleeping Beauty," written in the 1600s depicts a prince kissing a sleeping princess.

"And when he saw her looking so lovely in her sleep, he could not turn away his eyes; and presently he stooped and kissed her."

The concept of true love's first kiss saving the princess from the 1959 \$6 million Disney animated movie was not in the original tale. Instead, the idea is that Sleeping Beauty would awake after 100 years. The prince just happened by at the 100th year.

Music has its own number of criticisms. "Blurred Lines" by Robin Thicke, Pharrell and T.I. is based around the idea that singer Robin Thicke can't understand the fact that a girl doesn't want him. The song is pushy, repeating the phrase "I know you want it." The song is still played on the radio and

was number one for 13 weeks on the Canadian hot 100.

When the "Twilight" series kicked off in 2005 its coming-of-age love story was controversial due to the nature of 17-year-old Bella Swan's relationship with centenarian vampire Edward Cullen. Edward was 17 when he was turned into a vampire thus, he appears to be that age. Dismissing the age difference, "Twilight" still has its share of problematic themes. The relationship begins with stalking as Edward watches her sleep without consent then he follows her to another town. Edward isn't the only problematic monster in Bella's life. In the fourth book, Jacob, a past suitor of Bella, discovers he has

imprinted on Bella's just born daughter. In "Twilight" imprinting is a supernatural way shapeshifters discover their soulmates. Over time the shapeshifter, who knows this process, becomes closer and closer with the imprinted individual until it is a full-blown romantic connection. One fan Megan Moline watched the movies and read the books as a teenager.

"People talked all that time about how unhealthy the relationship was, so I had that in mind when I read and I watched it. I didn't realize completely how toxic everything was, but I wasn't ever interested in having a relationship like theirs," she said.

Moline at first romanticized the relationship but was aware of the authors overlooking of the problematic themes.

When consuming media it is important to not romanticize red flags, but to bring a voice to recognizing rape myths and to support awareness about sexual assault, stalking and harassment.

Read the full story at LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca.

"...I didn't realize completely how toxic everything was..."

Megan Moline, *Twilight* fan

Safeguarding your night: Preventing drink spiking

Story by Nakoda Thunderchief

In recent years, reports of drink spiking incidents have raised concerns about the safety of socializing in public spaces. Whether at a bar, club, or party, individuals are increasingly seeking ways to protect themselves from the potential dangers of getting your drinks spiked.

Kelly Russell, a health worker in Stand-off, Alberta emphasizes the importance of awareness and proactive measures when it comes to protecting yourself from drink spiking.

Understanding the risks and being aware of your surroundings are key elements in staying safe. It's crucial to be cautious, especially in crowded or unfamiliar places. Always keep an eye on your drink and if you need to step away, ask a trusted friend to watch it for you."

Russell also stresses the significance of knowing the signs of drink spiking, such as sudden drowsiness, confusion, or loss of consciousness. If you or someone you're with experiences these symptoms after consuming a drink, seek help immediately.

To further protect yourself from getting your drink spiked, you can use the recommend five tips from the Edmonton Police Services best safeguard tips: using drink test strips, which can detect the presence of common drugs like Rohypnol or GHB. These discreet and easy-to-use strips can be carried in a purse or pocket, providing an additional layer of security for those concerned about the possibility of drink spiking.

Avoid situations you are uncomfortable with. Never accept a drink from anyone you do not completely trust. Do not drink something you did not open or see being opened or poured. Do not leave your drink unattended. Remember: drugs can be put in soft drinks, tea, coffee as well as alcohol.

Skylar Thomson, a medical student in Calgary has experienced taking care of a friend who was spiked. "It happened during a girls' night out at a popular club. I was having a great time with my friends when suddenly, I noticed that my friend really got tired out of nowhere and was stumbling, slurring her words. Thomas then bought her to the hospital where she was taken care of by professionals.

See the full story at LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca

#FightTheSpike

30% Of Women get their drink spiked at the bar-
ALCOHOL.ORG



The effects start in 15 to 30 minutes and last three to six hours.

SYMPTOMS



- Feeling drunk despite having limited alcohol
- Blurred vision
- Nausea and vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Loss of control

How to Protect Yourself

- Buy your own drinks and watch them being prepared
- Go out with friends
- Know your limit



What to do if spiked



- Tell someone you trust
- Call for help (Security, Bouncer, Bartender)
- Report to police as soon as possible

Information from:
AlcoholOrg - EdmontonPolice.ca

Despite advocacy, workplace harassment is still under-reported

Story by Zach Robinson

Abuse of power dynamics in the workplace has led to the rise of mass movements to create change.

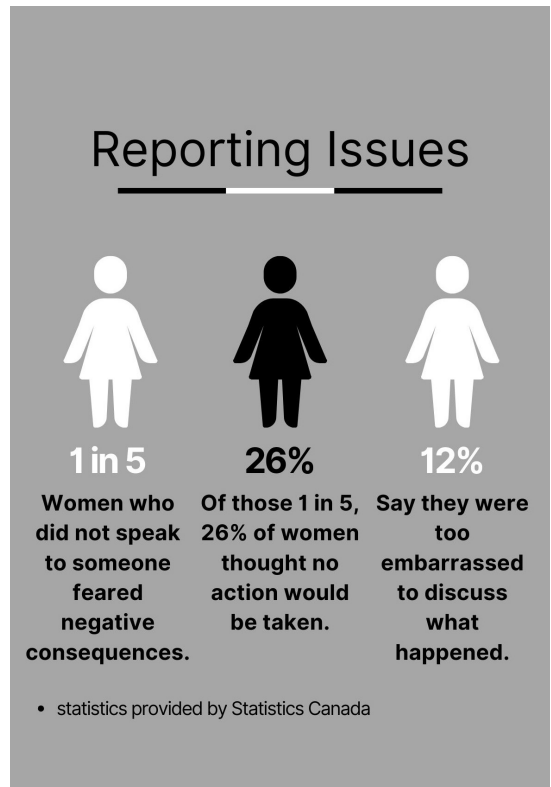
Despite growing advocacy for change, workplace sexual harassment is an issue that persists to this day. Movements Matter is a campaign created by the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services to create a healthier work environment. Sam Brown, the Movements Matter coordinator, says typical training provided by organizations can sometimes miss the mark.

"It's placing a lot of negative framing around this. It's like here's what not to do, here's why you'll get fired. Don't let it happen to you. If it happens, tell someone. But it doesn't really go beyond that. It's not practical, tangible knowledge."

A form of sexual harassment is called "quid pro quo" harassment, which often comes from those in a position of authority who use this power imbalance as a way to force an individual into doing sexual acts with them either by threatening their job security or promising them better opportunities. Kristine Cassie, chief executive officer at the Chinook Sexual Assault Centre, says victims often feel as if they cannot come forward out of fear of retaliation.

"Particularly it's when people are feeling that their job may be threatened, may feel that the person who's harassing them is untouchable or isn't going to be dealt with anyways. If the culture at work isn't supportive, we find that people tend not to come forward in the workplace to actually talk about it at all."

According to a report from Statistics Canada in 2020, one in five women who did not speak to someone about inappropriate communication feared negative consequences, 26 per cent of those women thought that no action would be tak-



Fifty-one per cent of women who experience sexual harassment in the workplace discussed it with someone at work. Graphic by Zach Robinson.

en and 12 per cent said they were too embarrassed to discuss what happened. This fear causes under-reporting which Brown says makes identifying accurate figures difficult.

Movements such as #MeToo aim to empower women to speak out on sexual harassment. If you have experienced any of what has been mentioned in this story, then call or text 1-866-403-8000 to receive support from the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services. To read more, visit LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca.

Rising tide of online harassment

Story by Sarah Mfinanga

The digital age has blurred the boundary between real and virtual worlds. Beneath the connectivity and resources the internet provides us with are victims of online harassment and bullying.

The fast-paced industry was once a platform for freedom of expression and communication but has now allowed tormentors to increase the number of victims online, from online sexual harassment to body shaming and even bullying. These situations have left most people specifically Canadians in a mental health crisis. In February 2022, Public Safety Canada organized a panel titled "Online Dangers, Cyberbullying and Online Child Sexual Exploitation to raise awareness about cyberbullying in Canada."

Both children and young adults who spend time online are most likely to become victims of online harassment. According to Cyberbullying Statistics Canada, 35 per cent of Canadian adolescents experience bullying, 47 per cent of Canadian parents believe their child is being bullied, 17 per cent of Canadians aged 18 to 24 suffer from cyberbullying and 89 per cent of Canadian teachers believe cyberbullying is the number one safety issue in public schools.

Any form of bullying or harassment can be traumatizing, most students fall under the group of chil-

dren and young adults and therefore have a high risk of being victims. Jason Lawrence, Lethbridge College Emergency and Security Manager and Conduct Officer, says the most common form of online harassment, students have reported is through emails and texts.

The conduct office adheres to the Student Rights and Code of Conduct policy, which helps students to have the right to a learning environment that respects freedom of expression and the advancement of human rights.

"When an individual believes that someone has contravened their right to a respectful learning environment, they are able to submit a non-academic misconduct report detailing the alleged incident.

"If a student or students are found to have breached the code of conduct, sanctions may be applied," said Lawrence.

The effects of online harassment and bullying across Canada may include less interest in school activities, absenteeism, depression and anxiety, low grades, increased risk of suicide and even poor eating. These are just some of many effects online harassment can cause.

For more information seek local help and services from Chinook Sexual Assault Centre at csacleth.

ca or call 403-694-1094.

See full story at LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca

BE INTERNET SMART



SAFE

Ensure personal information and passwords are kept safe. Do not put your contact information online.



MEET

Never meet with an online friend (stranger) even if you think you know them well.



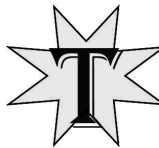
ACCEPT

Do not accept instant messages and friend requests from people you do not know.



RELIABLE

Not all information and people online are reliable. Some people use false identity to trick people.



TELL

Tell a trusted adult if anything online makes you feel uncomfortable



<https://www.highviewprimary.co.uk/year-4-blog/internet-safety-day>

As young people are spending more and more time on the internet, it is quite likely that cyberbullying will only increase in the years to come. Graphic by Sarah Mfinanga

The many faces of sexual predators

Story by Tosin Liadi

Abuse is a common occurrence in modern times and it takes various forms and patterns. In our society, sexual abuse is becoming increasingly prevalent. It is no news that women are prone to sexual assault more than their male counterparts. Statistics Canada in 2018 reports that as of 2017 19 per cent of women aged 15-65 experienced at least one type of harassment in the workplace in the last one year and 41 per cent of all reported incidents of sexual assault were reported by students.

Sexual predators can come from various backgrounds. It can be any gender, socio-economic status is irrelevant and they can exhibit different behaviours. However, there are certain characteristics that can be seen as red flags. According to Cheryl Patterson, Chinook Child and Youth Advocacy Centre Manager, says it may be challenging to profile an abuser, but there are indicators people should be mindful of.

"One of the big red flags is controlling behaviours, so abusers will often try and control victims in a variety of ways, like restricting who they spend time with, where they go, who they are going with and isolating victims

from friends and their community members as well," said Patterson.

In identifying potential sexual predators, not to hold biased assumptions about who might be dangerous or not, it's a path that must be treated with caution. Lynda Church, Student Support Nurse with Wellness Services at Lethbridge College advised.

"A predator could be charming and well liked by everyone who knows them but can still be a predator. It is for this reason that we may have to rely on our intuitions or our discomfort with the person or situation," said Church.

Patterson re-iterated it is impossible to profile a sexual predator, however, one must trust your gut. If you are in a situation, where you are uncomfortable or someone is not respecting boundaries or you are not receiving deserving respect as an individual, it is not healthy and you need to walk away as fast as possible.

The fight against sexual abuse begins with knowledge, self-awareness and a commitment to fostering a culture of respect and empathy. If you are in danger or concerned about a friend or loved one, reach out to csacleth.ca

See the full story at LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca.

Red flags of an unhealthy relationship

- VERBAL ABUSE**: Represented by icons of a speech bubble with a crossed-out 'X', a person with a speech bubble, and a thumbs down.
- FINANCIAL ABUSE**: Represented by an icon of a hand pointing to a target on a head.
- MANIPULATION**: Represented by an icon of a scale of justice.
- CONTROLLING**: Represented by an icon of a person with a raised fist.
- PHYSICAL ABUSE**: Represented by an icon of a person hitting another person.

csacleth.ca

Infographic is to help set boundaries and protect mental stability. Graphic by Tosin Liadi.

Exploring the complex traumatic triggers after sexual assault

Story by Keira Astalos

The discussion around sexual assault is something that can be extremely challenging and a critical aspect that goes along with it is triggers. After a sexual assault, post-traumatic stress disorder can be one of many ways victims need extra support. Something as little as a certain scent or song or even a holiday can trigger someone who has experienced trauma. Angela Miller, a registered provisional psychologist, says anyone who goes through a traumatic event is always on high alert.

"When somebody is going through a traumatic event after an assault or any type of trauma, the person gets stuck in high alert causing them to always be in that flight or freeze mode."

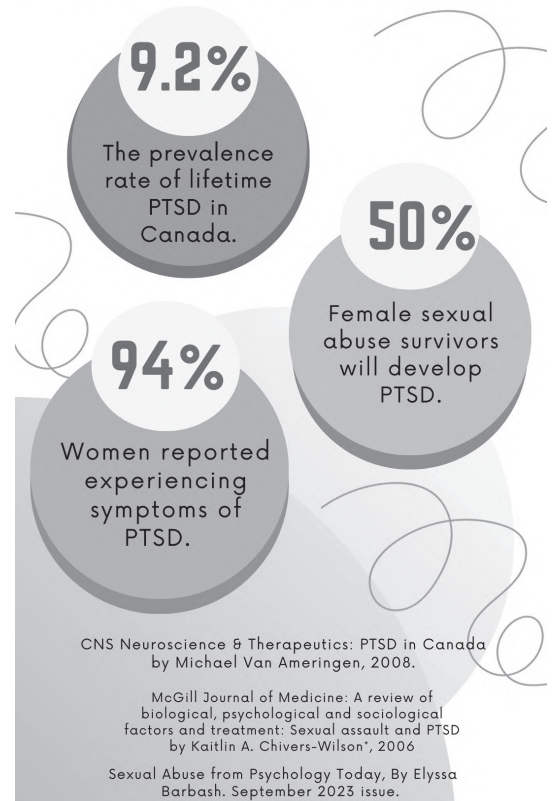
Carmen Guenther, Wellness Service Manager at Lethbridge College, says your body goes under a significant amount of stress when this happens. "Your brain cannot actually differentiate between the fact that this happened in the past and the feeling you're having around it in the moment."

Miller shares why the first step to getting better when it comes to PTSD is seeking help through counselling. "Through counseling you recognize your triggers. You recognize what is happening in your body and then you're using tools to get through all those pieces whether that be internal coping skills or checking for realistic thoughts."

Miranda Hargreaves, a system navigator and education specialist at Lethbridge's Chinook Sexual Assault Centre, shares ways she helps people work through it. "Things like grounding and teaching somebody how to ground when they're feeling overwhelmed when working through trauma. Teaching them the symptoms behind flashbacks, nightmares, and panic attacks and helping them put in those grounding skills they might need to manage the stress."

Triggers and PTSD is not something to be taken

Prevalence of PTSD in Canada



Percentages around PTSD in Canada and how common it is with trauma. Graphic by Keira Astalos.

lightly, but people from the Chinook Sexual Assault Centre and Lethbridge College Wellness Centre want you to know you are not alone and there are ways to work through this: triggers and PTSD do not have to take over your life. Call 403-694-1094 for Chinook Sexual Assault Centre or 403-320-3289 for Wellness Services if your feeling triggered.

See the full story at LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca

The lasting impact of sexual harassment in the workplace in Canada

Story by **Laura Castro**

One in four women have reported experiencing sexual harassment in their workplace. A workplace is a space where individuals complete their work duties, projects and earn income. For 25 per cent of women in Canada, the workplace is a space in which they have experienced sexual harassment or continually experience harassment.

According to a 150 Statistics Canada report, just under half of workers have witnessed inappropriate sexualized behaviour in a work-related setting.

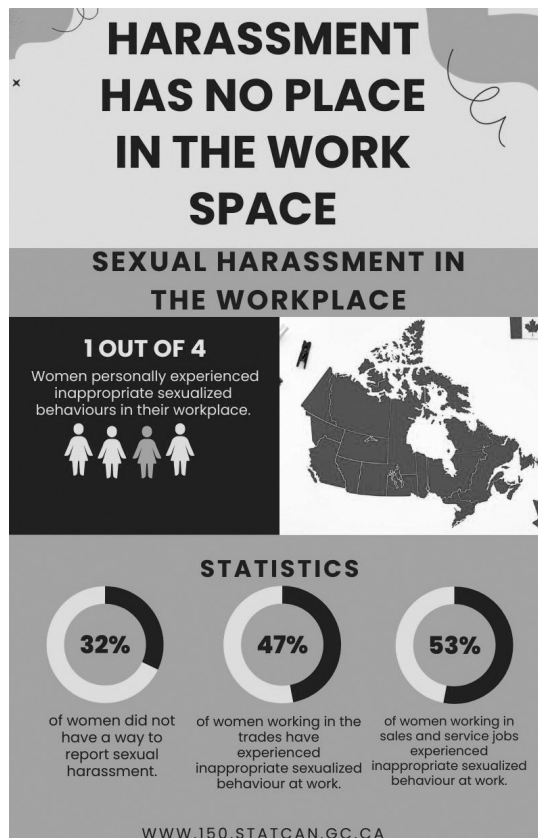
Marla Pasolli, a student at the University of Lethbridge, says the effects of this environment can be lasting on a woman and affect how they perform in the workplace on a day-to-day basis.

"I'm always more concerned about what I'm wearing and about how men are going to perceive me. I am more concerned with what I should be doing differently so that they are okay with how I'm working and less about my actual abilities. They're also generally not thinking that much about my abilities because all they can see is that I'm a woman," said Pasolli.

Kristine Cassie, CEO of Chinook Sexual Assault Centre, says employers should introduce training programs for their staff to educate them and enforce the rule against sexual harassment at work. According to the same report mentioned earlier, 32 per cent of women have said their employer had not provided them information on how or where to report sexual harassment or assault. Pasolli says employers should be doing more to protect their workers on site.

"If you're not being trained to not treat people in a poor manner, especially when it comes to in the workplace, then you don't have a good workplace," said Pasolli.

Many women who have experienced inappropriate behaviour at work have used sick leave and annual leave to avoid their harassers. Mental health



Women suffer mental and financial consequences because of workplace harassment. Graphic by Laura Castro.

issues including depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are prevalent side effects. Sadly, the effects aren't just mental. One in 10 women have suffered negative financial consequences. The same Canadian study shows consistent discriminatory and sexualized behaviour can enforce stereotypes and create a sense of normality.

The Chinook Sexual Assault Centre is here to listen to you about any workplace harassment. Contact them at csacleth.ca or call (403) 694 1094.

See the full story at LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca

Active bystanders help reduce harm

Story by Brett Browne

Being an active bystander is an important role that anyone can play when they encounter incidents of gender-based and sexual violence, according to local experts.

Laura Oviedo-Guzmán, system navigator and education specialist with the Chinook Sexual Assault Centre, says an active bystander is essentially someone who gets involved.

"In the literature, they like to call it being an upstander, because you're not necessary always standing up to someone, but you're rising to the occasion for someone," she explained.

Corrine Janzen, counselling intake coordinator with Wellness Services at Lethbridge College, adds being an active bystander is powerful.

"It's extremely important because if we are not being an active bystander, essentially what we're saying is that those behaviours, those actions that are hurting another person, are okay," she said.

According to Oviedo-Guzmán, there are any number of ways a person can respond as an active bystander when they witness a harmful or potentially harmful situation. These responses are often referred to as the "Four D's", which stands for direct, distract, delegate and delay.

The first "D", "stands for "direct" and Oviedo-Guzmán said this happens when someone directly intervenes in a situation. It may mean confronting the person who is causing harm or calling out inappropriate behaviour.

The second "D" is "distract" which means using distraction as a way to de-escalate the situation.

"It's just to distract from what's happening and disengage the person who is harming the other person," said Janzen

Another strategy is to "delegate" which means soliciting help to deal with the situation This could mean involving friends, family, police, an instructor, security personnel or others.

The final "D" is "delay" which means delaying ac-

BEING AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

THE FOUR D'S

1

DIRECT

Respond directly to a situation.



2

DISTRACT

De-escalate the situation.



3

DELEGATE

Get someone else involved.



4

DELAY

Follow-up with the person.



Source: Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton

The "Four D's" are different strategies for intervening. Graphic by Brett Browne.

tion and revisiting the situation at a later time to offer help or support.

Oviedo-Guzmán said one of the most important things an active bystander can do is just be there for someone and find out the best way to help them in that moment.

"You don't have to be perfect to be helpful."

For more information contact the Chinook Sexual Assault Centre at 403-694-1094, visit www.csa-cleth.ca or contact Wellness Services at 403-320-3206. Full story at LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca.

Navigating the long road to healing from sexual trauma

Story by **Winglee Cheng**

Recovering from sexual trauma is not something that can be achieved overnight. It is a long journey that needs courage and support. Lynda Church, a support nurse at Lethbridge College and Cheryl Patterson, the manager of Chinook Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, have offered valuable advice for survivors of sexual assault and their friends and family.

According to the Government of Alberta, an estimated 1.8 million Albertans have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. When sexual violence occurs around us, how to heal from sexual trauma is a topic worthy of discussion. To understand the methods of healing, we first need to know the psychological trauma that survivors may experience.

Patterson brings a clinical perspective, dissecting the intricate layers of mental health impacted by sexual trauma.

"In the short-term, it can trigger feelings of humiliation, anxiety, distress, emotional turmoil, or uneasiness. In the long-term, it can lead to chronic stress, depression and effects on self-esteem, self-worth, relationships and overall quality of life," said Patterson.

According to a survey conducted by the Government of Alberta, nearly half of Alberta's post-secondary students were victims of gender-based violence in 2022. Support from campus is important in student victims' recovery journey. Letting more people know about campus resources is something that needs to be done.

Church says initiatives such as free counselling through Wellness Services and Gender-Based Violence Support at Lethbridge College and resources like the confidential website www.reescommunity.com offer survivors a safe space to share their experiences at their own pace.

"Students can submit their story anonymously, to

The infographic is a vertical layout with four distinct sections, each with a grey background and white text. The top section features a logo of four interlocking circles and the text 'CHINOOK SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE'. To its right, a rounded rectangle contains the text 'FIND YOUR Local Sexual Assault Centre' and the website 'csacleth.ca'. The second section has a rounded rectangle with 'CONTACT Alberta One-Line 1-866-403-8000' and an illustration of a hand holding a lightbulb. The third section shows a computer monitor with a heart icon and the text 'CHAT ONLINE WITH Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services' and 'aasas.ca/getsupport'. The bottom section features a rounded rectangle with 'REPORT ANONYMOUSLY OR FORMALLY USING REES' and a speech bubble icon with the text 'rees A Safer Community by a Community that Care reescommunity.com'.

Amethyst 24-Hour Crisis Line 403-320-1881 offer immediate crisis support for individuals. Graphic by Winglee Cheng.

keep their detailed record through REES which is a confidential website that gives a student the option of sharing their disclosure to their campus if and when they decide to," said Church.

See the full story at LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca.



Encouraging recovery through understanding and compassion. #IBelieveYou. Graphic by Ma. Janine Doroca.

Healing together: A guide for helping loved ones through sexual assault

Story by Ma. Janine Doroca

In a society where sexual assault is pervasive, experts emphasize the value of friends and family in helping survivors get the care they need. People are urged to educate themselves on how to care for their loved ones in a compassionate and efficient way given this tragedy. Family members and friends are frequently on the front lines and in an unusual position to provide comfort and validation. However, the complexity of this issue demands more than a supportive presence - it demands a deep understanding of the challenges survivors face and the potential consequences sexual assault may have on their mental, emotional and physical well-being.

Cheryl Patterson, the manager of Chinook Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, emphasizes taking the first steps toward getting the right support is educating yourself.

"It's really just about being aware, educating yourself and knowing how you can respond to a friend or a family member who discloses to you that they've been sexually abused or assaulted."

In providing effective support, learning about the complexities of sexual assault comes first. Patterson highlights the harm that comes from victim-blaming, which occurs when survivors are wrongfully blamed for the assault because of their actions or what they were wearing. Instead of emphasizing the victim's decisions, the attention should be on

the offender's actions. Another common misconception is sexual assault only happens in dark alleyways between strangers. Contrary to this belief, a significant number of cases involve recognized perpetrators. According to the Alberta government most cases of sexual assault where the police filed charges, the victims knew the perpetrator. This represents 87 per cent of the cases. Furthermore, the myth that survivors must display specific behaviours—like instant reporting or visible indications of distress—contributes to victim-blaming and discourages reporting.

Lethbridge College's Wellness Services qualified professionals are also available to help support students.

Lynda Church, a registered nurse and Gender-Based and Sexual Violence Support within Wellness Services, emphasizes the importance of establishing a community that supports.

"Supporters don't have to be experts; they just have to show compassion and then help students in the right direction for support if the student is agreeable to it," Church added.

Need help? Reach out to the Chinook Sexual Assault Center by dialing at 403-649-1094 or visit www.csacleth.ca. To receive support from Wellness Services, visit CE1380 or contact them via email at gbsvsupport@lethbridgecollege.ca or by phone at 403-320-3289.

See the full story at LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca.

Fighting sextortion in Canada

Story by Justin Sibbet

A single lapse in judgement can lead anyone down a dark path involving blackmail, the destruction of relationships and ultimately suicide.

While it may appear to be a mostly innocent message meant for a potential sexual partner, a nude photo sent across the internet can be used in horrific ways.

Sextortion, the act of blackmail with lewd photographs, is on a sharp and historic rise in Canada, according to information from Statistics Canada between 2014 and 2022.

In fact, according to the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, in the short time between December 2021 and May 2022, Canada saw a 150 per cent increase in reported cases of the crime. While most victims are men between the ages of 20 and 39, approximately 40 per cent of all victims are under 18-years-old, according to a report by Mount Royal University, "The Cyber Pandemic: Exploring the Financial Sextortion of Young Males", by Prashanthi Rajanikanth on April 21, 2023. This now turns the crime into a more severe form of child abuse and child pornography.

Baylee Schmidt, a child and family advocate at the Chinook Sexual Assault Centre, says many under-aged victims meet future attackers through online games or group chat platforms.

"A lot on Discord and a lot on Snapchat. We see some on Instagram and even Roblox or Minecraft," said Schmidt.

This attack on children in Canada has led to an increase in education for children to ensure they understand the best practices when going online.

"It's important, especially with our youth, to teach them internet safety and encourage them to not send photos," said Schmidt. "Also teaching them that if you have shared a photo and somebody [is using it against you], please talk to someone, please access support."

The adage of "once on the internet, always on

Victims of Sextortion

88%

Number of sextortion victims in Canada who are male.

150%

Increase in reported sextortion cases in Canada between December 2021 and May 2022

93%

Times when a sextortionist increased their demands following payment.

Sources: Prashanthi Rajanikanth, 2023 and the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, 2022.

Sextortion is the act of extortion using sexual material, like a photograph. Graphic by Justin Sibbet.

the internet" rings horribly true in these cases.

Schmidt says an image can be shared easily and without the consent or knowledge of the victim.

"When things are shared, especially over the internet, they quickly fall out of our control," said Schmidt. "We are no longer in charge of who has access to it, who can see it."

She says older boys, 13 and up, are the more common victims when youth are targeted, potentially due to their increased access to cell phones and other online platforms.

However, as 60 per cent of victims are over the age of 18, education and support for adults is paramount when combatting this cyber pandemic.

To read more, visit LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca.

Safe way to protect your children from grooming

Story by Mark Soliman

Child sexual violence is a major global issue that government agencies have until now tried to de-escalate, but the rampancy of cases is far from resolved.

Studies reveal 25 per cent of young females and almost eight per cent of young boys may experience child sexual abuse (CSA) before reaching adulthood. Stopping child sexual abuse is difficult since minors tend to keep silent about the assault and it may take years for them to expose the tragedy. One reason children are reluctant to come forward is because abusers employ sexual grooming techniques.

Elizabeth Jeglic, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist and a professor of psychology at John Jay College, City University of New York who is also an author of "Sexual Grooming, Integrating, Research, Practice, Prevention, and Policy". According to an article by Jeglic on "How to Recognize the Sexual Grooming of a Minor" published on Psychology Today's website on July 7, 2023 she defines sexual grooming as methods and behaviours of abusers use to control children, their guardians and their environment to allow sexual abuse and minimize the chance it would be found or reported.

"It is because of such manipulation of the children, they often feel very confused, guilty, and shameful because they do not know. Like when we think about sexual abuse, we think about people you know yelling out, 'no, no, no.' But because the

process is very gradual, part of the process involves making the children feel guilty and ashamed because they went along with it and they did not protest," said Jeglic.

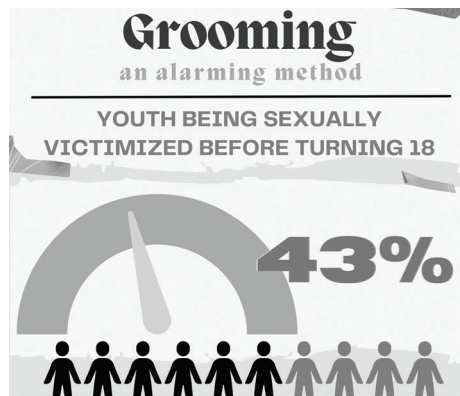
Children's red flag behaviour can be spotted if they are being groomed. Baylee Schmidt, who works as a Child and Family Advocate for the Chinook Child and Youth Advocacy Centre shared some of their experiences.

"All of a sudden, their grades really start to fall in school or (there is) a drastic mood change. There are sleep disturbances such as oversleeping, or they are not sleeping at all anymore or (they may show) excessively, like crying, depression, anxiety, clinging to adults or any sort of important behaviour. (All of this) can all be warning signs or red flags that flags that something is happening," Schmidt said.

She adds that as parents we keep asking ourselves where a safe place for our children is. Many times sexual abuse seems so difficult to imagine

where the offenders are coming from. The surprising element the Chinook Sexual Assault Centre reveals is that a high percentage of the offenders are people the victims know.

"They can be friends or family friends or friends' parents. They can be family members or can be, well, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins. It can really be anyone in that child's life that has access and then uses the access to create the relationship or make it closer," Schmidt said. See the full story at LethbridgeCampusMedia.ca.



Grooming is using patterns of behaviours that allow an offender to make a child believe that what is happening is normal and makes them feel trapped. Graphic by Mark Soliman.