What is SEXUAL ASSAULT A Cappella North 2?

A Cappella North 2 (ACN2) is the name of a study done in late 2001 on behalf of the Government of Yukon Women's Directorate and the Department of Education. It expands on two previous surveys: A Cappella 1991, a national study and A Cappella North 1995, a Yukon-based study. While both of these surveys explored the lives of young women, ACN2 broadened its mandate to study young men, as well.

To help us understand the attitudes, beliefs and priorities of young people in the Yukon, we asked questions ranging from how much time they spend on the Internet and what kind of music they enjoy, through to their reasons for disagreeing with parents, their sense of safety at school, and the degree to which they feel treated as an equal by the opposite sex.

We will present the answers to the survey questions in a series of bulletins over the next year. We hope the information will help enhance policy and program development, educate youth and parents, and inform Yukoners about the young people in the territory.

A detailed methodology is available on the Women's Directorate web site at http://www.gov.yk.ca/depts/eco/women/index.html, as is the survey itself. Copies of the methodology and the survey are also available by calling the Women's Directorate at (867) 667-3030.





WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY?

We distributed over 800 surveys to students in school and to youth groups, and held focus groups in Whitehorse and in rural areas (table 1). There was an excellent response rate (84%) to the study. The results provide valuable information for policy makers, program developers, organizations, youth, parents and all Yukoners about young people in the territory. With this first bulletin, released during Sexual Assault Prevention Month, we concentrated on aspects of youth sexuality.

TABLE 1: SURVEY RESPONSE RATE

	URBAN	RURAL	TOTAL
TOTAL DISTRIBUTED	530	288	818
In schools	500	260	760
In youth groups	30	28	58
TOTAL COMPLETED	445	225	689
RESPONSE RATE	84%	78%	84%

(there were 19 completed surveys for which urban/rural is unknown)

Due to small numbers, we combined Asian, Black, Hispanic, Indo-Asian, and Metis youth with Caucasian/White youth to form the ethnic group "Non-First Nations." Ninety (90) young people said they did not know their ethnic group; they have been excluded from the analysis of questions by ethnicity (table 2).

TABLE 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

		ALL		FEMALE		MALE	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
All		689	100	368	55	302	45
Educational Grade grade 8		176	26	87	24	88	30
	grade 9	137	20	72	20	64	22
	grade 10	148	22	94	26	52	17
	grade 11	101	15	53	14	48	16
	grade 12	107	16	60	16	44	15
Ethnicity	First Nations	134	21	73	21	60	21
	Non-First Nations	450	70	242	70	204	71
	Don't Know	55	9	31	9	24	8
Home Community	Whitehorse	445	66	252	68	188	62
	Rural Areas	225	34	116	32	114	38
First Language	English	622	93	341	93	276	92
	French	27	4	15	4	12	4
	Other	23	3	10	3	13	4

(the numbers in each category do not always total 689 due to missing data)

Of the ten focus groups, seven took place in Whitehorse. One was held in a youth centre and the remainder in schools. Group sizes ranged from five to 17 people. A total of 86 people participated in the focus groups: 42 young women and 44 young men.

ACN2 differs from previous A Cappella surveys in using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The quantitative data has been analyzed statistically and the results are shown in tables and in bar and pie charts. When there are statistically significant differences between social groups, such as between young women and men, they are mentioned in the text. The qualitative data was analyzed thematically and the results are shown as quotes in order to highlight and to add detail to the statistics.

CONCERNS ABOUT VIOLENCE

In 1999, the rate of sexual assault was four times higher in the Yukon compared to the whole of Canada (Statistics Canada 1999). However, national agencies believe that only 10% of sexual assaults are ever reported to the police and therefore reflected in the crime statistics (CRIAW).

- In the first A Cappella North study, young women told us they were concerned about violence against women, sexual harassment, assault and rape (ACN 1995).
- In the ACN2 focus groups discussions, these issues surfaced again: "Everybody's got to worry about violence. It's like we all live here, we've got to all take care of each other... there are some of us who have to walk around and be worried about what's going to happen to us when we walk down the street" (young woman, youth group).

We did not ask young people to tell us whether they had been sexually assaulted. Instead we asked a number of related questions about violence, harassment, abuse, feeling safe at school and elsewhere, and about their first sexual experience.

VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT AND ABUSE

Violence, harassment and abuse concern young Yukoners. We asked them about their attitudes toward violence, their experience of harassment and their close friends' experience of abuse.

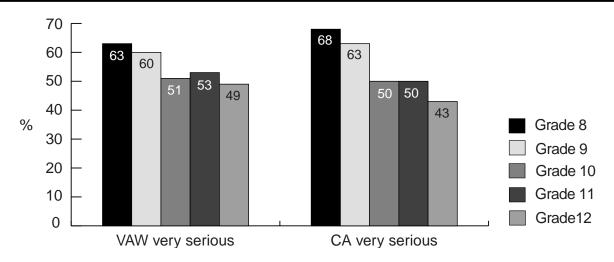
Attitudes

We asked young people how concerned they are about a range of issues, including violence. We asked: "Do you think violence against women and child abuse in the Yukon are 'very', 'fairly' or 'not very' serious issues?" The answers revealed differences between young women and men, between school grades and ethnic groups.

A higher proportion of young women (62%) than young men (49%) said violence against women is "very serious." Child abuse is "very serious" to 62% of young women and 50% of young men.

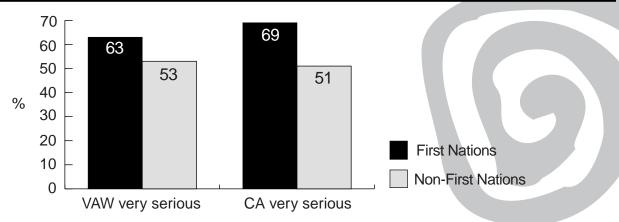
The percentage of young people who say violence against women and child abuse are "very serious" in the Yukon fell as school grades rose (chart 1).

CHART 1: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW) AND CHILD ABUSE (CA) RATED AS 'VERY SERIOUS' (shown by grade)



First Nations youth are more likely to say that both violence against women and child abuse are "very serious" issues in the Yukon (chart 2).

CHART 2: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW) AND CHILD ABUSE (CA) RATED AS 'VERY SERIOUS' (shown by ethnicity)





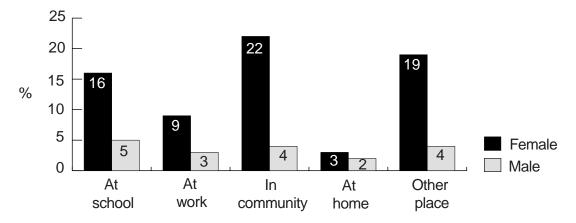


Sexual Harassment

We asked young people if they had been sexually harassed at school, in the workplace, in their community, at home, or anywhere else. (The definitions used on the survey are included at the end of this bulletin.)

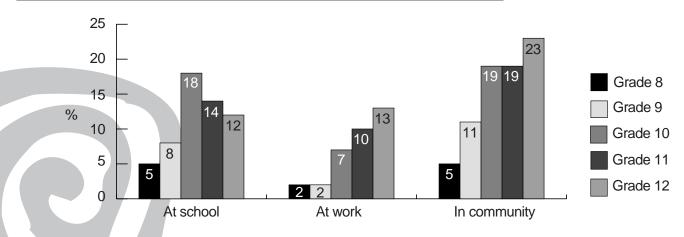
Most young people said they had not been sexually harassed. Those who had were more likely to be young women, in the higher school grades, and from Whitehorse (chart 3).

CHART 3: HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY HARASSED (shown by sex)



In all the situations listed, young people in higher grades were more likely than those in lower grades to say they have been sexually harassed (chart 4).

CHART 4: HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY HARASSED (shown by grade)



Young people in Whitehorse were twice as likely as those in rural areas to say they had been sexually harassed in their community (17% in Whitehorse and 9% in rural areas) and in their workplace (8% in Whitehorse and 3% in rural areas).

A higher proportion of non-First Nations youth said they had been sexually harassed in their community (15% of non-First Nations compared to 9% of First Nations youth).

"My boss pretty much asked me if I would sleep with him. And I can't quit because I need the money. If I went to the work board or whatever, they'd probably just laugh at me, they're not going to believe me" (young woman, Whitehorse school).

Physical, Sexual and Emotional Abuse

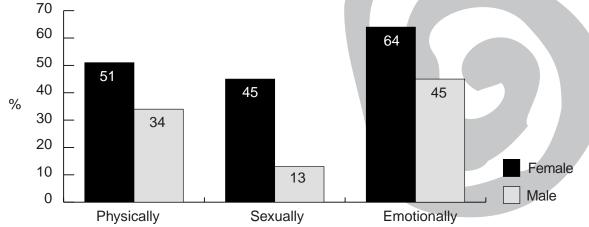
We asked young people if they had a close friend who had been abused physically, sexually or emotionally. (Terms are defined at the end of the bulletin.)

"A partner might provoke an argument, because of the way they're feeling. But still, it shouldn't provoke anyone to hit someone. It's supposed to be a relationship – that's not supposed to happen" (young woman, Whitehorse school).

Many youth said they had a close friend who had been abused, most commonly emotionally (55%). There were differences by sex and geography. Some caution should be used when interpreting the results because 23% of young people did not answer these questions.

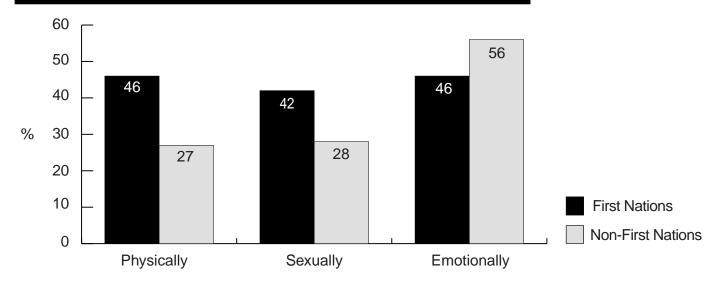
About half of the young women said they had a close friend who had been abused (chart 5). Young men were much less likely to know of a close friend who had been abused. This difference was particularly distinct with sexual abuse.





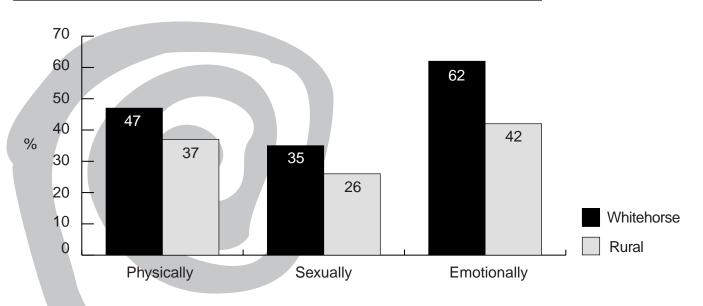
First Nations youth were more likely to say they had a friend who had been physically or sexually abused, while non-First Nations youth were more likely to have a friend who had been emotionally abused (chart 6).

CHART 6: CLOSE FRIEND HAS BEEN ABUSED (shown by ethnicity)



Young people in Whitehorse were more likely than those in rural areas to say they had a close friend who has experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse (chart 7).

CHART 7: CLOSE FRIEND HAS BEEN ABUSED (shown by geography)



It was pointed out in a focus group that emotional abuse can also be verbal: "It's more common for people to be verbally violent, there's a lot of verbal abuse" (young woman, Whitehorse school).

Support

We wanted to identify the main sources of support and reporting for young people, so we asked where they would turn to for help if they were hurt. Young people said they would turn to a friend (62%), a parent (58%) and a trusted adult (37%). "I personally would just talk to my friends. I wouldn't talk to anyone at school. I don't feel too comfortable with those counsellor people" (young woman, Whitehorse school).

There were differences in the answers given by sex, grade and ethnicity. These differences may indicate varying patterns in whom young people trust or they may be based on the availability or accessibility of those sources of support.

Young women were more likely than young men to turn to a friend or to another trusted adult (chart 8).

CHART 8: WHO WOULD YOU TURN TO IF YOU WERE HURT IN SOME WAY? (shown by sex)

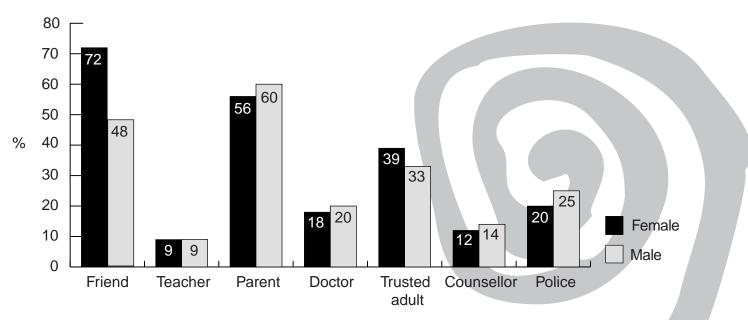
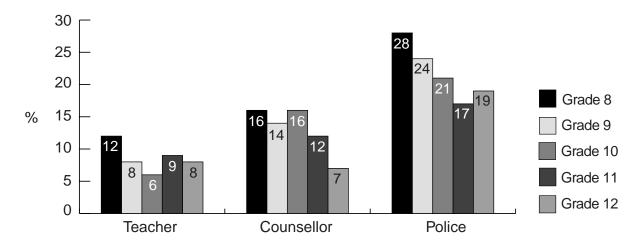


Chart 9 shows that students in all grades were most likely to turn to a friend, parent or trusted adult. However, students in lower grades were more likely than higher-grade students to turn to a police officer, a counsellor or a teacher. "Even if they [teachers] are nice they'd still tell other people, other teachers" (young man, rural school).

CHART 9: WHO WOULD YOU TURN TO IF YOU WERE HURT IN SOME WAY? (shown by grade)



First Nations youth were more likely to turn to a parent (66% First Nations compared to 56% non-First Nations) and to a doctor (27% First Nations compared to 17% non-First Nations).

PERSONAL SAFETY

Safety at School

When asked if they felt safe in their school, 59% answered "yes" and a further 31% replied "usually."

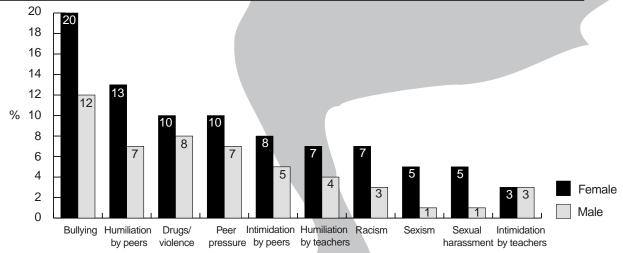
Table 3 lists the reasons why young people don't feel safe at school. It indicates the numbers of students who checked each reason, and ranks the reasons in order of frequency. The most common reason cited was bullying.

TABLE 3: IF YOU DON'T FEEL SAFE AT SCHOOL, WHY NOT?

REASONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	REASONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	
Bullying	113	Racism	38	
Humiliation by peers	71	Sexism	26	
Drugs/violence	64	Sexual harassment	25	
Peer pressure	63	Intimidation by teachers	24	
Intimidation by peers	47	Cultural differences	24	
Humiliation by teachers	39	Homophobia	12	

In chart 10, the major reasons for not feeling safe at school – bullying, humiliation by peers, racism and sexual harassment – are analyzed by sex of respondents.

CHART 10: IF YOU DON'T FEEL SAFE AT SCHOOL, WHY NOT? (shown by sex)



According to one focus group participant, young women and men demonstrate violent or bullying behaviour differently. "Girls can be violent at school too, but you don't see it as much. It's often guys who are getting in fights, we use our brains more than our fists" (young woman, Whitehorse school)

Safety out of school

The questionnaire asked, do you feel safe at home, in your own community, and walking alone in the dark? Over a third said they rarely or never felt safe "walking alone in the dark." Twelve young people (3%) said they never or rarely feel safe at home.

Focus group participants discussed the causes and effects of violence in the home. "When you grow up and watch your mom and dad fight all the time and your mom get beat up, it makes you depressed inside and then you'll go beat up everybody else. If you grew up in a violent family then you're going to be violent" (young woman, rural school).

There were differences in the answers given by sex, grade, ethnicity and geography.

A much greater proportion of young women feel unsafe walking alone in the dark compared to young men (53% of young women and 15% of young men).

Non-First Nations youth were more likely to feel unsafe walking alone in the dark (38% of non-First Nations and 22% of First Nations).

Young people in Whitehorse were more likely than those in rural areas to feel unsafe walking alone in the dark (43% of Whitehorse youth compared to 22% in rural areas).

Attitudes to safety

We also asked, do you feel that women, men and children are safe in your community? A higher proportion of young people said that women (23%) and children (18%) were rarely or never safe compared to 4% who said men were not safe in their community.

Thirty (30) per cent of young women said women are not safe in their community, compared to 13% of young men. Similarly, 22% of young women said children are not safe, while 11% of young men felt the same way. "Some streets are safe [but] not most streets, not alone at night" (young woman, Whitehorse school).

Students in grade 10 (27%) were more likely to say women are not safe than were students in other grades (18% of grade 8, 21% of grade 9, and 23% of grades 11 and 12).

Ten (10) per cent of First Nations youth, compared with 25% of non-First Nations, said women are not safe in their community.

Whitehorse youth (22%) are more likely to say that children are not safe their community, compared to youth in rural areas (9%).

Feeling Unsafe

An open question asked, where don't you feel safe? The responses ranged from feeling safe everywhere to nowhere. The most common places people felt unsafe were: in the bush, in parts of Whitehorse, around people using drugs or alcohol, and being or feeling alone. A few mentioned feeling unsafe at home or at school. Alcohol was the most common contributing factor to feeling unsafe.

In the bush:

"Walking in the bushes any time of day" (young woman, grade 11, Whitehorse).

"In the woods when it's dark" (young man, grade 9, Whitehorse).

"Walking alone on a trail to get home" (young woman, grade 12, Whitehorse).

In parts of Whitehorse:

Qwanlin Mall was mentioned frequently, as well as downtown in general and the areas around 2nd Avenue and Main Street bars, particularly at night.

"When I'm walking home in the dark or by Qwanlin Mall where all the drunks hang out" (young woman, grade 8, Whitehorse).

"In the downtown area near the waterfronts or bars at night" (young man, grade 10, Whitehorse).



Around people who are high or drunk: many young people said they feel unsafe being around adults and their peers who are drunk.

- "I don't feel safe around drunk people I don't know" (young man, grade 11, Whitehorse).
- "Where there are drunks or people out of control" (young woman, grade 10, Whitehorse).
- "Usually at a party or somewhere where there's a lot of crazy people" (young woman, grade 12, Whitehorse).
- "At the house of someone I don't know or someone who is drinking" (young man, grade 10, rural area).

Being alone:

- "Alone by myself with no one I know around me" (young woman, grade 9, rural area).
- "I don't feel safe if I'm alone in a house with a bunch of men" (young woman, grade 12, rural area).
- "Night time in the pitch black walking alone" (young woman, grade 8, Whitehorse).
- "Walking down my driveway in the morning when it's dark and being home alone" (young woman, grade 10, rural area).

At home or with family:

- "Around my dad" (young woman, grade 9, Whitehorse).
- "At home and somewhere new" (young woman, grade 10, rural area).

At school:

- "At school sometimes if a teacher isn't able to see me if I think something might happen (young woman, grade 8, rural area).
- "At school where I'm bullied" (young man, grade 9, rural area).
- "Sometimes at school when teachers get mad at me" (young woman, grade 9, rural area).

September 11: the survey was carried out soon after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre, on September 11, 2001. Consequently, the fears of some young people were associated with feeling unsafe in airplanes, or in the United States, in New York and in large Canadian cities.

SEXUALITY

We asked a number of questions about sexuality. In this bulletin, which coincides with Sexual Assault Prevention month, we report answers to questions that may have a bearing on sexual assault. We looked at the reasons given for first having sex, the influence of drugs and alcohol on sexual behaviour and the comfort level surrounding discussions of sexuality.

Reasons for First Having Sex

We asked young people if they had ever had sexual intercourse and/or sexual activities they would describe as "having sex." Table 4 shows the numbers and percentages that answered yes to one or both questions. A third of young people said that they have had sex.

TABLE 4: NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD SEX

	NO. OF RESPONSES	NO. "HAD SEX"	% "HAD SEX"
All	574	191	33%
Young women	320	105	33%
Young men	246	82	33%
Grade 8	135	13	10%
Grade 9	115	30	26%
Grade 10	125	38	30%
Grade 11	92	47	51%
Grade 12	91	54	60%
Whitehorse	390	122	31%
Rural Areas	172	64	37%
First Nations	96	42	44%
Non-First Nations	391	121	31%

One hundred and ninety one (191) young people stated they had had sex. Of these, 56% were female and 44% male. We asked these young people why they first had sex. The most frequent answer, from 65% of those who had had sex, was "I just wanted to" (chart 11).

CHART 11: REASONS FOR FIRST HAVING SEX

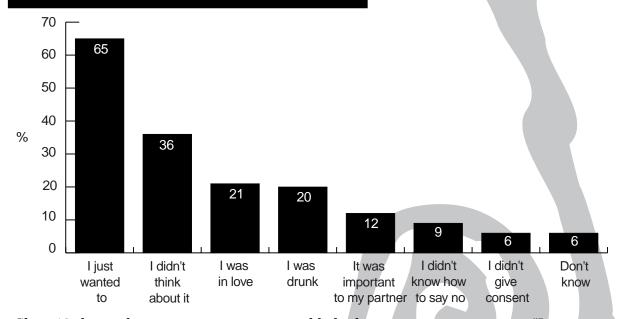
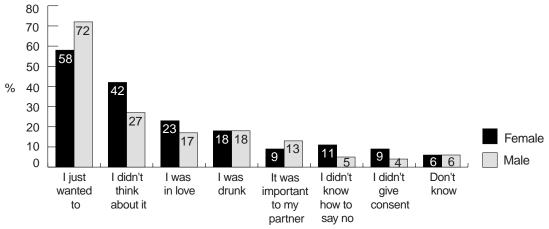


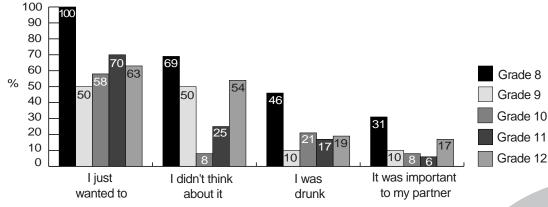
Chart 12 shows that young men were more likely than young women to say, "I just wanted to." While young women were more likely to say "I didn't think about it." Around 10% of young women said they "didn't know how to say no" or "I did not give consent."

CHART 12: REASONS FOR FIRST HAVING SEX (shown by sex)



Compared to other grades, grade 8 students were more likely to say, "I just wanted to," "I didn't think about it," "I was drunk" and "it was important to my partner" (chart 13). However, as shown in Table 4, the number of youth in grade 8 who have had sex is small, only 13 young people.

CHART 13: REASONS FOR FIRST HAVING SEX (shown by grade)



Influence of drugs and alcohol

We asked everyone if being drunk or high influences people's choices when deciding whether or not to have sex. Ninety-one (91) per cent thought that it "often" or "sometimes" did. There were no differences found between groups.

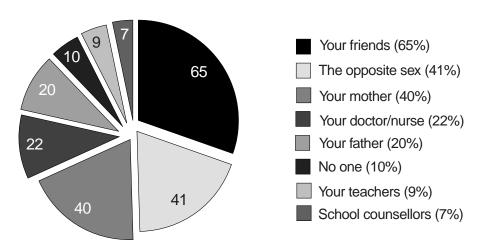
"You go to a party and you see people all over each other. You wouldn't see them do that if they were sober" (young woman, Whitehorse school).

"It's kinda like rape if she doesn't want to have sex, and he wants to get her drunk so she'll go through with it" (young woman, rural school).

Discussing sexuality

Again, everyone was asked who they felt comfortable discussing sexuality with. The most common response, as shown in chart 14, was with friends. Ten (10) per cent of respondents were not comfortable discussing sexuality with anyone.

CHART 14: WHO DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING SEXUALITY WITH?



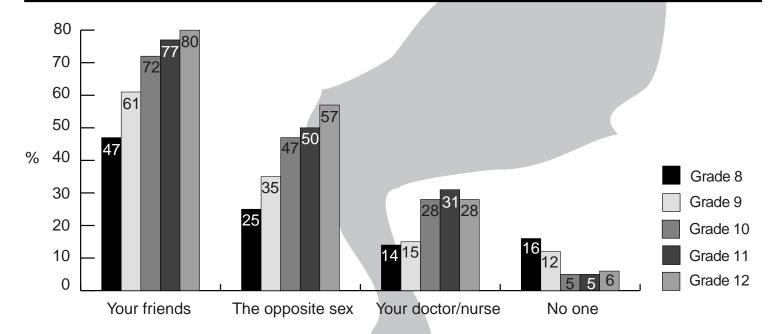
As shown in chart 15, young women were more likely to feel comfortable discussing sexuality with friends, their mothers and health professionals. Although young men were more comfortable talking about sex with their fathers than were young women, both sexes were more comfortable discussing sexuality with their moms than with their dads. Young men were twice as likely to say they weren't comfortable discussing sexuality with anyone.

CHART 15: WHO DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING SEXUALITY WITH? (shown by sex)



Compared to young people in lower grades, senior students were far more comfortable discussing sexuality with their friends, members of the opposite sex and health professionals (chart 16).

CHART 16: WHO DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING SEXUALITY WITH? (shown by grade)



Non-First Nations youth were more likely to discuss sexuality with their friends, as compared to First Nations youth (70% of non-First Nations; 57% of First Nations). As well, non-First Nations youth were more comfortable discussing sexuality with the opposite sex (43% of non-First Nations; 34% of First Nations).

Whitehorse youth (71%) were more likely than those in rural areas (60%) to feel comfortable discussing sexuality with their friends.

SUMMARY

The survey shows that:

- sexual harassment and physical, emotional and sexual abuse is a fact of life for a significant number of young people in the Yukon;
- sexual harassment of young people, principally young women, takes place in their communities, their schools, their work places and their homes, as well as other places;
- the majority of young women surveyed said they have a close friend who has been abused physically, emotionally or sexually; and
- nearly half of First Nations youth stated that they have a close friend who has been physically or sexually abused.

Of the young people surveyed:

- most are very concerned about violence against women and children;
- a significant proportion feel that women and children are not safe in their communities;
- many are concerned about their own personal safety. Young women, in particular, feel unsafe walking alone in the dark and feel unsafe at school because of bullying; and
- some also identified areas in Whitehorse where they do not feel safe, areas largely associated with people consuming alcohol.

So where do young people turn for help when they have been hurt?

- Primarily to friends. This is especially true for young women.
- Young people also turn to their parents or other trusted adults.
- They are far less likely to turn to professionals such as teachers, doctors, counsellors or police officers.

This bulletin also looks at different aspects of sexual behaviour. A third of young people surveyed stated that they have had sex. Most did so the first time because they "just wanted to." A few statistics raise serious concerns:

- a fifth of young people said they had sex for the first time because they were drunk;
- about 10% had sex for the first time because it was important to their partner;
- although only 13 young people in grade 8 stated that they had had sex, they were the most likely grade to give the two preceding reasons for first having sex;
- a further 9% of young people said they didn't know how to say no; and
- six (6) per cent said that they had not consented to having sex.

These figures reflect the fact that some young Yukoners' first sexual experience was against their will.

The Women's Directorate recently published *Free From Fear: Sexual Assault Prevention for Teens*. The booklet provides youth with important and useful information that can help keep them safe. Copies have been distributed in schools and communities and are available from the Directorate. The Hot Peach Page, on page 4 of the new Yukon telephone directory also has important information about where to get help.



Definitions

The following definitions were provided on the survey form:

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: to be offended, embarrassed, scared or intimidated by an interaction that is sexual in nature.

PHYSICAL ABUSE: abuse that includes hitting, shoving, slapping, kicking, choking, using a weapon and threatening to assault.

SEXUAL ABUSE: abuse that includes forcing someone to have sex against their wishes, any unwanted touching, kissing, fondling and sexual threats.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: abuse that includes insulting, name-calling, blaming, threatening suicide if s/he leaves, keeping her/him from friends and relatives.

References

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Statistics Canada (1999) Canadian Crime Statistics. StatsCan cat.no. 85-205.

Women's Directorate (2002) <u>Free From Fear: Sexual Assault Prevention for Teens.</u> Yukon: Government of Yukon.

Women's Directorate and Department of Education (1995) <u>A Cappella North – A Survey of Teenage Girls</u> in the Yukon, Yukon: Government of Yukon.

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our grateful thanks to all the young people who completed the survey and joined in the focus groups; to all the teachers and schools who helped deliver the survey; to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics for their advice on the survey questions and for entering and analyzing the survey data; to Dr. Reginald Bibby at the University of Lethbridge for permission to use questions from his Project Teen Canada 2000 survey; and to the Northern Research Institute, and particularly Kirsten Madsen for facilitating and transcribing the focus group discussions.

Further Information

The bulletins and a more detailed methodology are available on our web site. An Executive Summary of the study will be available towards the end of 2002. It will summarize the results and include tables of most of the data.





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For further information about the study and this bulletin please contact:

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