

# LIVINGSTON COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES COLLABORATIVE BODY

## Health and Human Service Needs FACT SHEET

### Sexual Assault

May 2019

#### What is “Sexual Assault”?

Sexual assault is any action of a sexual nature which is perpetrated against another person who is unwilling or unable to give consent. A person may be unable to consent due to a physical, intellectual, or developmental disability, or because they are unconscious, impaired by drugs or alcohol, or are underage (the age of consent in Michigan is 16).

According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center in 2018, approximately 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men will experience some form of sexual assault in their lifetime.

Sexual assault can include the following:

- Rape (unwanted vaginal, oral, or anal penetration) or attempted rape
- Child sexual abuse and child pornography
- Unwanted sexual contact/touching
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual exploitation and trafficking
- Exposing one’s genitals or naked body to other(s) without consent
- Masturbating in public
- Watching someone engage in private acts without their knowledge or permission
- Nonconsensual image sharing/forcing someone to watch pornography
- Using force or threatening harm as a means to making someone perform a sexual act on/with another individual

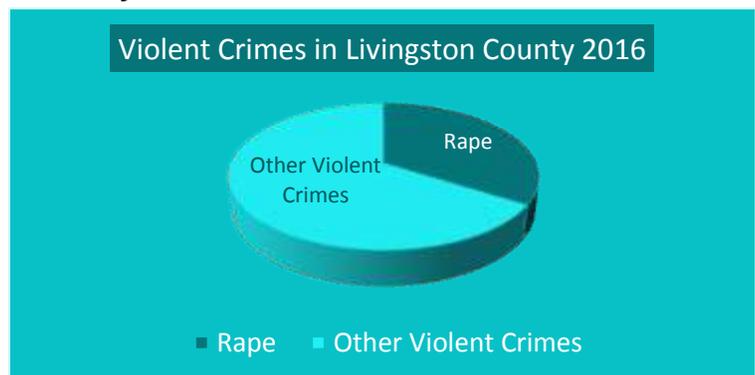
#### Who are the perpetrators?

The most frequent perpetrators are intimate partners, family members, caregivers, friends, and acquaintances. Only a small percentage of sexual assaults are perpetrated by strangers. This includes child sexual abuse, where over 90% of perpetrators are known to their victims.

#### Why is this issue so important to Livingston County?

Sexual assault is a pervasive issue in our world today, and our community is no exception. During 2016 there were 147 reported violent crimes in Livingston County, and 34% of these crimes were reported as rape (50 cases).

In 2018, the Livingston County Prosecutor’s Office reviewed 46 criminal sexual conduct cases (CSC) and 1 attempted CSC. Of those cases, 24 were closed during the year (8 due to insufficient evidence, 6 because the victim did



<sup>1</sup> National Sexual Violence Resource Center. (2018). Sexual assault in the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.nsvrc.org/statistics>

not want to pursue, and 10 charged by the prosecutor's office), 2 were transferred out of town, 7 pleas to charges, and 1 defendant suicide.

Unfortunately, most sexual assaults go unreported because survivors often feel that no one will believe them or that it is their fault. Sexual assault is **NEVER** the victim's fault.

In 2018, LACASA provided the following services:

- ❖ 26 Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) examinations (all female)
- ❖ 251 survivors received clinical services (205 female, 45 male, 1 transgender)

### **How can you be supportive when a survivor discloses their assault?**

It takes courage for a survivor to disclose their assault even to someone they trust. Often they are feeling vulnerable and experiencing shame or guilt. Remember, it is never the survivor's fault. The use of supportive phrases can play a critical role in their willingness to access support services from LACASA or report the assault to police.

- Use the following supportive phrases:
  - "I believe you"
  - "You are not alone"
  - "It's not your fault"
  - "Thank you for trusting me with this information"
  - "I'm here for you"
- Avoid judgment/never blame the survivor or ask "why" questions
- Offer **LACASA** as a resource
- Let the survivor decide what action to take



### **What services are available?**

LACASA – 24 Hour Helpline – (866) 522-2725

- 24-hour helpline
- SANE examinations
- emergency shelter
- legal advocacy services
- additional legal and medical support when needed
- individual counseling and group support services
- services are provided with no cost to the survivor

Livingston County Central Dispatch – Non- Emergency Number – (517) 546-4620

St. Joseph Mercy Hospital - Howell at 620 Byron Rd – (517) 545-6000

St. Joseph Mercy Hospital - Brighton at 7575 Grand River Ave - (810) 844-7511

### **What can the community do to help?**

Preventing sexual assault is challenging because we live in a culture that normalizes sexual violence against women. However, there are still things you can do to help.

- Talk with your children and teens about healthy relationships.
- Encourage your school, employer and faith community to provide educational opportunities and training on sexual assault.
- Get involved in Livingston County's Community Response Team to address the systemic response to sexual assault. For more information, contact LACASA at 517-548-1350