



Illinois Center for Violence Prevention

Fact Sheets

Chicago and Illinois Violence Statistics

There is an epidemic of violence in Chicago, in the state of Illinois, and throughout the rest of the United States. This epidemic has devastating consequences for families, communities and society. The following facts help to illustrate the severity of the violence problem in Chicago and in the state of Illinois as a whole.

- In 1997 there were 1,096 murders in Illinois, 757 of these occurred in Chicago. (Illinois State Police)
- In Chicago, young African-American and Hispanic men suffer the highest murder victimization rate. [Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)]
- In 1997, in Chicago firearms were the cause of death in 75% of all homicides. (ICJIA)
- In Illinois, 6,578 sexual assaults were reported in 1997. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of them occurred in Chicago. (ICJIA) The FBI estimates that only one in ten sexual assaults is reported.
- It is estimated that 4% of older persons are abused, neglected or financially exploited. There were 5,883 elder abuse cases reported to the Illinois Department on Aging in FY 97. Approximately 80% of the abusers were relatives of the victim (adult children, spouses or other relatives.) The city of Chicago had 1,024 reports of elder mistreatment, suburban Cook County had 896 reports, the Peoria area had 458, and the Southern 13 counties had 762 reports in FY 98. The southern 13 counties had the highest percentage increase in reporting of all areas compared to FY97 statistics. (Illinois Department on Aging)
- More than 38,985 adults (97% women) sought shelter and related services from Illinois domestic violence programs in FY 97. A total of 16,570 women and children were turned away from domestic violence shelters in FY 97 due to lack of space. In 1996, the Chicago Police Department received an average of 655 domestic violence calls per day. Experts estimate that only 8 to 10 percent of domestic violence victims seek help from domestic violence programs or the courts. (Illinois Department of Human Services and Mayor Daley's Office on Domestic Violence.)
- A total of 44,916 children were found to be victims of neglect and/or abuse in Illinois in FY 96. Of the 82 cases of child abuse and neglect deaths in FY 96, 49% occurred in the Chicago Region, 27% in the Northern Region (Aurora/Rockford), 15% in the Central Region, and 10% in the Southern Region. (Illinois Department of Children and Family Services)
- The Chicago Police Department reported 212 hate crimes to the Chicago Commission on Human Relations in 1997. Between 1986 and 1995, 2,237 hate crimes were reported to the Chicago Police, accounting for an average of 224 reported incidents per year. Crimes motivated by racial hatred accounted for 67% of all hate crimes investigated by Chicago police in 1996. The majority of hate crimes (63%) reported in Chicago in 1996 were crimes of violence. In 1997, hate crime reports in Chicago indicate a dramatic increase in hate crimes; racial hate crimes were up 19% in 1997. (Chicago Police Department, Chicago Commission on Human Relations, and Chicago Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law)

- An adolescent health survey of 4,305 freshmen in 38 randomly selected Illinois high schools revealed that one-third of the females and two-thirds of the males had been in a physical fight during the previous 12 months, 10% of the males reported being in ten or more fights. Eight percent (8%) of the males (but few females) reported carrying a gun to school one or more times during the year. (Illinois Department of Public Health)
- There are more than 20,000 students living in Chicago's five poorest neighborhoods, which are also Chicago's five most violent neighborhoods. (Community Mental Health Center, Chicago)
- A survey conducted by the Community Mental Health Center (Chicago) of 203 African American high school freshmen at a typical Chicago public high school located in one of the five poorest neighborhoods revealed that:
 - 45% had seen someone killed
 - 66% has seen a shooting
 - 38% had seen someone stabbed
 - 49% , mostly boys, had been shot at
 - 7%, mostly girls, had been raped
 - 6% had been shot
 - Approximately 9% had been stabbed.
- In 1997, 448 hate crimes were reported in Illinois. Forty-nine percent of these crimes involved simple or aggravated assault. Seventy-three percent of these crimes reflected a racially-based bias. (Illinois State Police)
- The 1995 Illinois Youth Risk Behavior Survey (grades 9-12) produced the following results:
 - 'One fifth (20%) of Illinois students surveyed (24% in Chicago) reported having carried a weapon within the last 30 days; 8 percent (11% in Chicago) reported having carried the weapon to school;
 - 'Thirty-seven percent (37%) of Illinois students surveyed (42% in Chicago) had been in a physical fight in the last 12 months. Approximately one-third said the last fight was with a friend or acquaintance; and
 - Seventeen percent (17%) of Chicago students surveyed and 3 percent of Illinois students surveyed reported that they did not attend school within the last 30 days due to fear of being harmed.
- A total of 38,134 crimes against children were reported in 1997; seventy-three percent of these crimes were of a violent nature. (Illinois State Police)
- At least one child in Illinois is shot and killed unintentionally every month (National Center for Health Statistics, 1994). A child is killed by gun violence every day in Illinois. (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 1996)

Violence in the United States

- From 1973 to 1991, 36.6 million people were injured by violent crimes. Of these, 6 million sustained serious injuries. Roughly 2 million people are injured by violent crime every year.(1)
- In four-fifths of all violent crimes, victims and offenders are of the same race. (2)
- In 1993, 94 percent of African American murder victims were slain by African American offenders and 84 percent of white murder victims were killed by white offenders. (3)
- In 1995, citizens of the US experienced one violent crime every 18 seconds and one murder every 24 minutes. (4)
- There was one aggravated assault every 29 seconds and one robbery every 54 seconds in 1995. (5)
- There were an estimated 1.8 million violent crimes reported in the United States in 1995, that's about 1 violent crime for every 134 inhabitants. (6)
- Of the 22,434 murder offenders in 1995 where supplemental data was available, only 1 percent involved persons over the age of 65 and 10 percent involved a person under the age of 18. (7)
- In murders where the age of the assailant is known, 68 percent of the offenders are between 17 and 34 years of age. (8)
- Of the elderly murdered in 1993, 593 (55%) were men and 485 (45%) were women. There were 732 white elderly murder victims in 1993 while 331 African American elderly individuals were murdered.(9)
- Men are far more likely to commit murder than women are. In murder cases where sex of the assailant is known, males were responsible 91 percent of the time. (10)
- A firearm was the weapon used in about 7 out of 10 murders in the United States in 1995. (11)
- Arguments led to 29 percent of the murders committed in 1995, while 17.5 percent occurred during commission of other felonies like robbery. (12)

Information Sources

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Girls and Violence

National and state studies indicate a link between violence, teen pregnancy and substance abuse among girls and the violence they experience in the home or at the hands of their partners.

- Forty-four percent of girls and 13.83% of boys arrested for murder or non-negligent manslaughter killed a parent, stepparent, or other family member. This is most likely related to the high incidence of abuse, especially sexual abuse, girls experience in the home.
- Homicide is the second leading cause of death for all young women aged 15 –24, and the single leading cause of death of African American young women aged 15 – 24.
- One-half to two-thirds of the teen mothers surveyed in three major studies reported being sexually molested before their first pregnancy.
- According to the Chicago Tribune, in Illinois the average age of fathers of babies born to teenage mothers is over 21 years.
- The rate of STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) among teenage girls is low and one half times the rate of teenage boys, thus indicating that disease is being spread from the adult male population to teenage girls.
- 'Twenty-six Percent of pregnant teens reported that their partners physically hurt them and 40 – 60 percent said that the battering began or escalated after their boyfriends learned they were pregnant.
- Being abused or neglected in childhood increased the likelihood of arrest for women by 77 percent.
- In 1986, forty-one percent of incarcerated women said that they had been sexually and physically abused.
- More than half of the adolescent girls who reported being sexually assaulted were assaulted in a dating situation.
- In a study of gang members in Hawaii, sixty-two percent of girl gang members had been sexually abused or assaulted.
- Being female and being a gang member increase the risk of having made a suicide attempt.
- Between 1991 and 1995, the rate of girls arrested rose 35%--more than double the rate for boys. This increase is fueled mostly by a growth in violent crime. However, the total number of boys arrested is still much greater than the total number of girls arrested.

Violence Against Women

- A forcible rape occurs in the United States once every five minutes. (1)
- Over the five years from 1989 to 1993, the occurrence of forcible rape has increased 11 percent. (3)
- The occurrence of forcible rape decreased 5 percent from 1994 to 1995 to 102,216. That means that almost 300 rapes are committed every day in the United States. (2)
- While women living in cities are statistically the most often victimized by forcible rape, the greatest increase in the occurrence of rape has taken place in cities outside standard metropolitan areas. In those communities, the rate of occurrence has increased 90 percent in the last decade. (4)
- Four in every ten persons arrested for forcible rape is under 25 years of age.(5)
- In 1995, a woman was murdered during a forcible rape once every 4.5 days.(6)
- Women between the ages of 12 and 24 are most often victimized by rape.
- Women in this age group are nearly three times more likely to be raped than women in older age groups. (7)
- Nearly 2 in three female victims of violence were related to or knew their attacker.(8)
- About half of all rapes of women involved an assailant known to the victim (9), and over two thirds of all violent victimization of women is committed by someone the woman knows.(10)
- Almost 6 times as many women who are victimized by someone known to them did not report their violent victimization to police because they feared reprisal from the offender.(11)
- Among all female murder victims in 1995, 26 percent were slain by husbands or boyfriends, while three percent of male victims were killed by wives or girlfriends. (12)
- An estimated 4 million women in the US are severely abused every year by their spouse or partner. That translates into seven incidents of spousal or partner abuse every sixty seconds. (13)
- It is estimated that between 20 and 30 percent of the adult women visiting hospital emergency rooms are there due to battering. There are about 1,200 battered women's shelters nationwide, but demand far outpaces supply and women in rural areas have little or no access to such shelters. (14)
- More than 700,000 women aged 45 to 65 were physically abused by spouses in 1993, and nearly 400,000 older women in institutions were victims of physical or sexual abuse. (15)

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(10-11) Bachman, R. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Violence Against Women: A National Crime Victimization Survey Report. US Department of Justice, January, 1994.

(12-14) Violence Against Women class presentation. Nancy Isaac, SC.D and Deborah Prothrow-Stith, MD Harvard School of Public Health.

(15) Christian Science Monitor, July 28, 1994 top

Family Violence: Child and Elder Abuse

- Almost half of the people murdered in 1995 were either related to (11 percent) or acquainted with (34 percent) their assailants. (1)
- The incidence of elder abuse is rising. In 1986, 117,000 cases were reported; in 1987, there were 128,000 reports and in 1988, there were 140,000 reports nationwide. By 1991, incidents increased to 227,000. That's a 62 percent increase from 1988. (2)
- As many as 1.5 million older citizens of the United States suffer from some form of mistreatment every year. That is about 5 percent of the elderly population. (3)
- Congressional investigators report that while 1 out of 3 cases of child abuse gets reported to authorities, only 1 out of 8 cases of abuse of the elderly is reported. (4)
- Neglected and abused children are far more likely to be arrested for property and violent crimes as juveniles are, and much more likely to be arrested at a younger age. They can be expected to commit nearly twice as many crimes and to be arrested more often than children raised in a more healthful environment. (5)
- At least three children die every day in the US because of abuse and neglect. From 1985 to 1995, the rate of child fatalities due to abuse and neglect increased 39 percent.(6)
- In 1995, 1,215 children died of abuse and neglect: 85 percent were under the age of 5 and 45 percent never celebrated their first birthday.(7)
- In 1995, over to 3 million (3,102,000) youngsters were reported to child protection advocates as possible abuse victims. Nationally, the total number of reports of child abuse and neglect rose 45% between 1986 to 1995 (8).
- In the past 5 years, 13,587,000 American children have become victims of abuse. That is an average of five children per minute. (9)

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(4) Elder Abuse: A Decade of Shame and Inaction. Select Committee on Aging, US House of Representatives, May 1990.

(5) The Cycle of Violence, US Department of Justice. October, 1992.

(6-8) Current Trends In Child Abuse Reporting and Fatalities. National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse. Chicago, 1996.

(9) Current Trends In Child Abuse Reporting and Fatalities. National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse. Chicago, 1994.

Violence In Our Schools

- Overall, 22 percent of all teenaged students have been in a fight in the past year. Thirty-four percent of those fighting were boys while only 11 percent were girls. (1)
- More than one in six teenaged students (17 percent) have been robbed at gun or knifepoint, and 8 percent say they have had their lives threatened. (2)
- One out of six teenaged students (17 percent) knows someone who died in a violent incident. (3)
- The US Department of Education estimates that each year an estimated three million thefts and violent crimes occur in or near schools. That is an average of 16,000 such incidents per school day. (4)
- In a survey of 720 school districts nationwide, 82 percent reported an increase in violence in their schools over the last five years. (5)
- In a survey of 700 cities nationwide, one-quarter reported that within the last year, their schools had recorded violent incidents resulting in student deaths or injuries requiring hospitalization. (6)
- In 1993, 29 percent of high school age students nationwide cited worry over other students bringing guns or knives to school as a "very big" or "fairly big" concern. In urban areas 37 percent of the students expressed similar levels of concern. (7)
- More than one-half of all violent crimes against teenagers ages 12 to 19 took place in school buildings, on school property or on the street. Offenders in street crimes are three times more likely to be using a weapon than those committing crimes in school buildings. Twenty-two percent of high school students in the US surveyed in 1993 said they feared for their safety while in school. (8)
- One in fifteen students said they avoided certain places at school because they feared being attacked. Students of about 12 years were twice as likely to avoid certain places in schools than students aged 18. (9)
- In a 1993 survey, 13 percent of US students in sixth through twelfth grade reported that someone else had seriously threatened to shoot them. (10)
- Fear of attack is prevalent among students going to and from school. One in eight students generally reported such concerns and in central cities, one in five students are worried about being attacked. (11)
- Gang and drug disputes lead the list of causes of school gun violence at 18 percent of all incidents. Accidents accounted for 13 percent of all school gun violence. (12)
- Fifteen percent of students report that gangs are present at their school. Of these students, 35 percent reported fearing attack at school while 24 percent feared attack going to or from school. Where gangs are present, 13 percent of students avoided certain areas inside schools out of fear of attack. (13)
- Fifteen percent of gun violence at school erupts over long-standing arguments with 12 percent caused by romantic disagreements and 10 percent caused by disputes over possessions. (14)

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(6) National League of Cities Study, August-September 1994; "41% of large US Cities in Poll Report Serious School Violence," Boston Globe, Nov. 2, 1994

(7-8) Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1993, US Department of Justice. 1994.

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(10) Mercy and Rosenberg. *Children, Guns, and School*. A paper prepared for the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 1995.

Youth Violence

- Between 1979 and 1991, firearms killed 40,000 youngsters between the ages of 15 and 19 years. (1)
- While the young are committing violent crimes at a rate similar to ten years ago, the violence has intensified and is causing more deaths. (2)
- From 1986 to 1991, the juvenile violent crime arrest rates for youths from 10 to 17 years-rose 48 percent. In 1991, 130,000 young people were arrested for rape, robbery, homicide or aggravated assault. That's 42,000 more than in 1986. (3)
- Firearm deaths among teenagers 15 to 19 rose 77 percent between 1985 and 1990 while the firearm murder rate for African American teenaged boys nearly tripled. (4)
- Youth in the United States are being killed in record numbers. Teenage boys in all racial and ethnic groups are more likely to die from gunshot wounds than from all natural deaths combined. Perhaps the single most important impact on youth violence and murder has been the increased availability of firearms. (5)
- African American males between 16 and 19 years of age face a huge risk of death by murder in comparison with African American females. African American males in this age group are killed at the rate of 54.3 per 100,000 while African American females in this age group are killed at the rate of 12.6 per 100,000. (6)
- Teenagers are the group most often victimized by crime in the US. Although teens aged 14 to 19 comprise just 14 percent of the population aged 12 and over, they are the victims in three out of ten violent crimes and one out of four thefts. (7)
- There was a 79 percent increase in the number of 10 to 17 year olds who used guns to kill between 1980 and 1990.(8)
- Juveniles now account for a very high and growing share of homicide offenders and victims. The number of juvenile arrests for murder and non-negligent manslaughter rose 93 percent between 1982 and 1991. During a similar period, the arrests of adults for the same offenses rose just 11 percent. (9)
- Juvenile arrests for violent crimes rose five percent in 1992 but declined 1 percent in 1993. (10)
- The main reason given by adolescents for obtaining or carrying guns is self-protection. Research suggests that this explanation is an oversimplification. Additional motivational factors for carrying a gun include involvement in delinquent activities, such as drug dealing, and a propensity for aggressive behavior. (11)

Information Sources

(1-3) Kids Count Data Book. Annie E. Casey Foundation. Greenwich, CT, 1994.

(4) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Department of Health and Human Services, 1993.

(5) Images and Reality. National Center on Crime and Delinquency. San Francisco, CA, 1994.

(6-7) Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice, 1991.

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(11) Webster, D.W., Gainer, P.S., and Champion, H.R. (1993). Weapon Carrying Among Inner-City Junior High School Students: Defensive Behavior Versus Aggressive Delinquency. *American Journal of Public Health*, 83, 1604 – 1608.

Violence and Television

- The average youngster in the United States aged 2-5 years is watching about 27 hours of television per week or most four hours a day (1) and a typical child will watch 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence on television before completing elementary school(2)Young violent offenders report that, as children, they were watching an average of 6 hours of television per day.(3)
- Approximately half of parents in the US have given up setting limits on what their children watch on television or how much (4), and 24 percent of US households keep a television set in the child's bedroom.(5)
- In two surveys of young male felons imprisoned for committing violent crimes like homicide, rape and assaults 22 percent to 34 percent reported having consciously imitated crime techniques learned from television programs. Those with a more savage history of violence were more likely to report such imitation. (6)
- Popular music videos tend to make heavy use of violent depictions. There is more violence on MTV than on three major TV networks combined. Music video violence has increased over time and features an average of 20 violent acts per hour. (8) More than 60 percent of the videos contain violent or suggestive scenes. (9)
- Public opinion indicates there is too much violence on television. A 1990 Gallup Poll showed 63 percent of people in the US believing television depicts too much violence. A Times Mirror poll in early 1992 showed 72 percent of Americans viewed TV as too violent.
- More than 3,000 studies worldwide in the last 40 years have looked at the impact of television violence, and the consensus is that there is a 3 to 15 percent likelihood of increased violent behavior among those viewing excessive television violence. Damage caused by television violence goes beyond prompting increased aggression among some viewers. It also increases fearfulness among young viewers and tends to desensitize viewers to violent behavior.(11)
- During one day of television viewing in 1992, the Center for Media and Public Affairs reported that there were 1,846 scenes containing violent episodes with serious assaults occurring in 21 percent of the scenes. Gun play was featured in 20 percent of the scenes followed by isolated punches and pushing which each appeared in 15 percent of the scenes. Menacing threats with weapons were made in 12 percent of the scenes observed.(11)
- In 1980, the most violent television shows in the nation tended to portray 15 to 20 violent incidents per hour. By 1992, twenty-five percent of the prime-time shows in the schedule were "very violent" and many programs were showing 40 or more violent incidents per hour. One program "Young Indiana Jones" led the field with 60 incidents in an hour.(12)

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(7-9) Center for Media and Public Affairs. Analysis of Violence Depictions in Music Videos. Washington, DC, 1992.

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Gun Violence

- In 1992, 5,262 of five to nineteen-year-olds in the United States died from gunshot wounds. Of these:
- 62 percent of the violent acts were homicides
- 27 percent of the violent acts were suicides
- 9 percent of the violent acts were unintentional injuries
- 2 percent of the violent acts were the result of undetermined causes
- Twice as many children in the United States under ten years of age died as the result of firearm injuries in 1991 as US soldiers were killed in the Persian Gulf and Somalia combined.(1)
- A child under the age of 15 in the US is 15 times more likely to be killed by gunfire than a child growing up in Northern Ireland.(2)
- A child dies of gunshot wounds every two hours in the US while a police officer is killed by a gun every five days.(3)
- The overall firearm-related death rate among US children less than 15 years of age is nearly 12 times higher when compared to children in 25 industrialized countries (4)
- The FBI's stolen gun file contains over 2 million reports, 60% of which are reports of stolen handguns, while handguns represent only one third of all firearms privately owned in the US. (5)
- The number of murders committed by handguns has risen steadily since 1985, paralleling the increase in the rate of firearm production. (6)
- Of the 20,043 reported homicides in 1995, 82 percent were committed with a firearm. Nearly 56% of all firearm-related homicides were committed with a handgun in 1995. (7)
- Suicide is nearly 5 times more likely to occur in households where a gun is present (8) with approximately 60% of all suicides in the United States involving guns.(9)
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that in 1995 for every firearm-related homicide, there were 3.3 nonfatal firearm injuries (10).
- Approximately 80 percent of the medical cost for treatment of firearm-related injuries is paid for by taxpayers (11), and the average cost of a patient with firearm-related injuries is estimated to cost \$32,000 per hospital admission.(12)
- African American males age 15-24 are most at risk of firearm-related death. If the rest of the US population were being killed at the same rate as young African American males, over 460,000 people would die of gunshots every year.(13)

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The Cost of Violence

- Violence costs Americans, both directly and indirectly, \$425 billion each year. (1)
The \$425 billion estimate breaks down as follows:
- **Criminal Justice**--\$90 billion on police, courts and prisons;
- **Private Protection**--\$65 billion on alarms, private guards, and security systems;
- **Urban Decay**--\$50 billion on lost jobs and fleeing residents;
- **Property Loss**--\$45 billion on stolen and damaged goods;
- **Medical Care**--\$5 billion on the cost of treating crime victims;
- **Shattered Lives**--\$170 billion on the costs of productivity losses and lost quality of life (1)
- For persons age twelve and older who are injured due to rape, robbery, assault, arson and murder the lifetime costs in any single year are estimated to be \$178 billion. (2)
The \$178 billion estimate is as follows:
- **Total Monetary \$23.8 billion**
- Medical--\$2.3 billion
- Emergency Services--\$219 million
- Productivity--\$20.6 billion
- Administrative--\$730 million
- **Total Mental Health \$76.6 billion**
- Mental Health Medical--\$7.2 billion
- Mental Health Productivity--\$2.7 billion
- **Quality of Life Lost to Psychological Injury--\$66.8 billion**
- **Quality of Life \$77.9 billion (3)**

Information Sources

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- (3) Ibid.

Sexual Assault

1. Eighty-four percent of all sexual assaults are committed by an acquaintance of the victim, and 57% of all sexual assaults occur during a date.
2. One in three girls and one in six boys are sexually abused before the age of 18.
3. In 1990, about 5,600 cases of sexual harassment were filed with the EEOC, up 27% since 1986.
4. The National Victim Center found that 683,000 adult women were sexually assaulted in 1990 -- 78 rapes per hour, 1.3 rapes per minute, 1,871 rapes per day.
5. A national study of sexual aggression on college campuses revealed that 25% of college women are victims of rape or attempted rape; over half have suffered some form of sexual victimization.
6. Research has established that alcohol is widely associated with rape and that violent pornography supports and perpetuates cultural norms that promote rape.
7. Data from the National Survey of Children reveal that approximately one in five young women ages 17 and under who have had intercourse were forced at least once to do so.
8. Adolescents with a history of childhood sexual abuse are significantly more likely to engage in later alcohol and drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, and criminal behavior than other adolescents. Studies have shown that a significant percentage of rapists and pedophiles were sexually abused in childhood.
9. Major survey findings indicate that sexual harassment is pervasive in secondary schools, affecting over 85% of female students; that two out of three incidences occur in public places; and that students have difficulty getting help.

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