

**Pembroke Diocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Spring Meeting, Mar 4, 2023, Oral Report  
Terry Hodgson, Community Life Chair**

**Sexual Violence**

Sexual violence is a broad term that describes any violence, physical or psychological. It can include rape, incest, sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, trafficking, stalking, indecent or sexual exposure, and childhood sexual abuse. It crosses all sexual boundaries and affects people of all ages and cultural backgrounds. It has debilitating impacts on survivors and their families. It is a serious public health problem and has a short term and long term affect on mental health, an increased risk of suicide or HIV infection. One in three Canadian women and one in eight Canadian men experience sexual violence. After sexual assault, survivors may feel their bodies are not their own and often report feelings of shame, terror and guilt. Many blame themselves for the assault. Section 271, 272 and 273 of Canada's Criminal Code define and categorize the crime of sexual assault on three different levels:

Level one addresses sexual assault

Level two address sexual assault that causes bodily harm

Level three covers aggravated sexual assault. It is one of the most serious crimes in Canada. Sentences range from one to ten years if convicted.

If you think someone might at risk of sexual violence, you can help them by getting them to a safe place or direct them or take them to a sexual assault center.

Respectfully submitted