When a woman is sexually assaulted, the impact on her life can last for months—even years—and it can affect her education, employment, and long-term well-being. Society pays, too. In Canada, the annual costs of sexual assault and related offences for the criminal justice system, social services, and employers add up to an estimated $200 million. When you include the medical costs, lost productivity, and pain and suffering of victims, the cost skyrockets to $4.8 billion. The problem is huge. In a 2009 Statistics Canada survey, 472,000 people in Canada reported they had been sexually assaulted. Supports such as counselling and legal advice help victims re-establish a sense of safety and control over their lives, and reduce the long-term collective costs. But to stop the violence—for good—we also need to invest in violence prevention programs that teach young people to understand how to give and receive consent, and how to create healthier relationships.

THE FIGURES IN FOCUS

The aftermath of sexual assault amounts to an estimated $4.8 billion per year. Here are some of the costs incurred:

COSTS TO VICTIMS
- Medical: $113 Million
- Lost Productivity: $211 Million
- Pain and Suffering: $4.3 Billion

COSTS TO SOCIETY
- Criminal Justice System: $150 Million
- Social Services: $32 Million
- Employer Losses: $18 Million

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CANADA, 2009

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