

Assault





ssault

WORDS TO KNOW

assault

simple assault

aggravated assault

stalking

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this lesson you should be able to:

- define assault according to your state law
- know the difference between simple and aggravated assault
- explain the impact of assault on victims

3. Can a person go to prison if he forces his spouse to have sex?

4. Would other family members be upset? Who?

5. Since your father would no longer be able to work, how would your family make it financially?

TRUE/FALSE

Place a "T" to the left of statements you believe are primarily true and an "F" to the left of statements you believe to be primarily false.

1. _____ Of all the violent crimes listed by the FBI, assault is the crime committed most often.
2. _____ About half of the assaults in the United States involve use of a weapon.
3. _____ Assaulting someone with a weapon is called "simple assault."
4. _____ More people are assaulted with guns than with hands or fists.
5. _____ Twelve to seventeen-year-olds are the age group most likely to become victims of aggravated assault.
6. _____ Young people are more likely to be assaulted by strangers than are older adults.
7. _____ Some people who have injured someone else because of drunk driving have been convicted of aggravated assault for their crime.

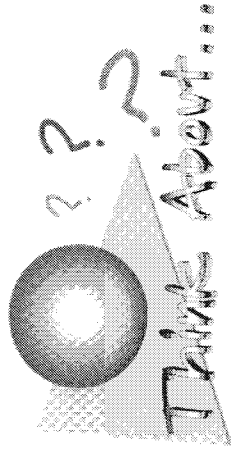
8. _____ More people are assaulted with knives or other cutting instruments than with hands or fists.
9. _____ While it is not acceptable to assault most people, it is acceptable to hit your wife or girlfriend if you think she is seeing someone else.
10. _____ It is never acceptable to hit a child.

DEFINITIONS

There are two types of assault: aggravated and simple.

Aggravated assault is an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe bodily injury. It is generally called "aggravated" because a weapon was used which could have caused death or serious harm to the victim. You can be convicted of aggravated assault even if your victim was not actually harmed. The fact that the gun, knife, or other weapon used could have resulted in serious personal injury if the crime were successfully completed is enough evidence to convict you. In a number of states, driving drunk and injuring someone has resulted in aggravated assault convictions because the court has considered the vehicle a deadly weapon. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1994.)

Simple assault is the attempt or intentional threat to inflict less serious bodily injury without a weapon.



Read the following and answer the question below.

Scars From Assault Sometimes Mark Innocent Victims Forever

(WASHINGTON) People stare at the scars on his throat as he waits in grocery store check-out lines. Sometimes they ask if he fought in Vietnam. He never served in Vietnam, but he tells people he did, because he knows from experience that they won't want the truth.

The truth is, eight years ago a stranger jammed a knife into his gut, spilling the intestines out of his slight frame, then split his throat as he lay calling for help. It's those details people don't want to hear ---- details that still rattle him, causing his hands to shake uncontrollably, calling attention to nails bitten down to nothing.

The sandy-haired young father is just one of several million people victimized by aggravated assault in the past decade. The attack swept away his optimism and trust, his devil-may-care fearlessness. Taking its place is fear ---- fear so real that after telling his story, he asked that his real name and hometown be kept secret.

"We live with the realization that it doesn't happen to somebody else," said the boyish, 33-year-old we'll call Larry Roberts. "We know that people will hurt you." Murders may steal the headlines, but the number of serious assaults dwarfs the number of killings. Assault victims survive, but often are changed forever. "The

trauma of having looked at the jaws of death is something that is very rough to deal with,” said John Stein, deputy director of the National Organization for Victims Assistance.

More than half-a-million people — roughly the number of people who live in a moderately large city, — were injured in aggravated assaults last year alone, according to the National Crime Survey. The survey found that 1.1 million others were victims of an attempted aggravated assault with a weapon — a gunshot flew by them, for example.

On a warm June evening, Roberts was on leave from the Navy and interested mainly in getting in a last day of scuba diving before his aircraft carrier departed in two days. He was pitching a tent in a park when two strangers struck up a conversation. They seemed friendly enough. Then without warning, one of them stabbed Roberts in the abdomen and ran off with his scuba gear, wedding ring and \$4 in cash.

“When I thought he was gone, I started to holler for help,” Roberts said, a catch in his now-raspy voice. “He came back through the woods and he tilted my head back and slit my throat twice. Then he tied my feet together and my hands back to two trees.”

Roberts eventually worked free, dragged himself 250 feet to a dirt road, holding in his intestines and pressing his chin toward his chest to keep the blood from spurting out. Help finally arrived the next morning. He spent 10 months in the hospital, undergoing at least 10 operations.

The fear took over when he emerged from the hospital the following April. “I used to take a gun with me wherever I went,” he said. “I was scared to death.” In the next two years, Roberts moved his family six times. “Something would happen, something would trigger me, and we’d be gone,” he said. They stopped

running in rural Maryland so their elder daughter could start school and enjoy the semblance of a normal life. The next year, Roberts and his wife had a second daughter.

In the meantime, his attacker pleaded guilty to attempted murder and served six years of a 10-year sentence before being freed as a model prisoner. Roberts still fears him — even though he believes his fear is irrational. He also insisted that the assailant's name not be used, in part because he doesn't want to antagonize him.

The Roberts don't employ baby-sitters because they don't trust strangers. Their home is guarded by a large, loud dog nicknamed Norad, after the nation's early warning system for nuclear attacks. At night, the home is awash in light. Two sheriff's deputies live across the street.

The attack destroyed Robert's career plans. The Navy discharged him because he could no longer perform his job. He has had a drinking problem. He spent two months in a psychiatric hospital last year.

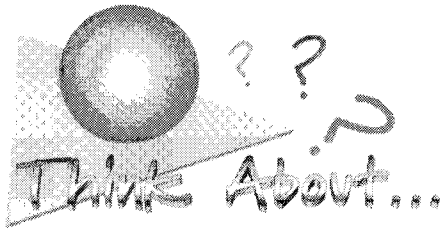
Today, he takes things more slowly, teaching scuba diving only part time while attending college. And after years of shying away from the world, he now tells his story to police groups, hoping to sensitize officers to victims' needs. It is important to Roberts that he controls the impact of the attack and not the other way around, but he conceded, "It has given my life a different direction."

By Carolyn Skorneck

Associated Press

Imagine yourself as Larry Roberts today. Name some of your feelings.





Watch the video segment of the attempted murder victims from "How It Feels" and answer the following questions:

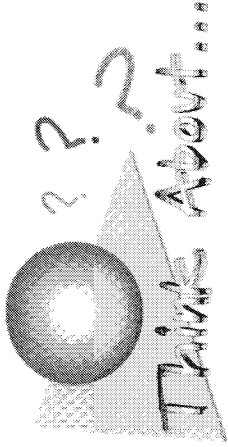
1. Describe the physical injuries suffered by the victims?

Ellen:

Virginia:

2. Virginia describes the impact of her physical injuries on herself and others - what does she say?

3. What do you think are some of the emotions experienced by these victims?



Read the following true story and then jot down your reactions to the questions.

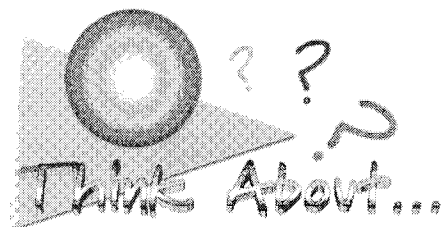
Too weak to eat, but able to stand with help, the piano teacher beaten nearly to death on June 4, 1996 in Central Park, New York City, has been moved from a hospital bed to a rehabilitation center. Doctors at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center say she has made remarkable progress. Her next step is to gain strength and undergo therapy at a facility specializing in traumatic brain injury. Once there, she will be told what happened to her.

Police say John Royster, 22, has confessed to attacking the piano teacher and other women. Royster has also been charged with killing a woman at her dry-cleaning establishment on Park Avenue, severely bashing a woman near an East-Side heliport, and beating another woman into a coma on a bridge in Yonkers.

1. Why do you think John Royster is attacking women?

2. Does he have any realistic reason for assaulting them?

Assaults on juveniles have nearly doubled during the past few years and the perpetrators have generally been family members, friends or acquaintances. Many juvenile assault victims say the first assault they remember was in their own homes.



1. Do you remember the first time you saw an adolescent or adult hit someone else? Who was it and what do you remember about it? What were your reactions?

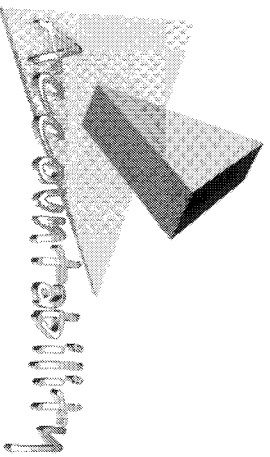
2. When was the first time you remember being hit? Who hit you and what do you remember about it? How old were you? What were your reactions?

3. Have you recently hit someone about the same age you were when you first remember being hit? How do you think he or she felt?

4. Do you remember the first time you hit someone else hard enough to hurt them? Do you remember why you did it? How did you feel afterward? Did you make any decisions about hitting in general at that time?

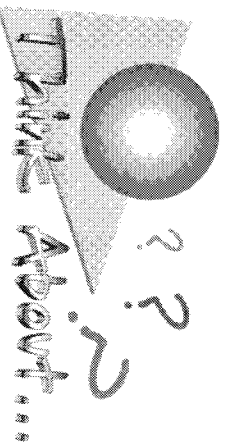
DEFINITION

Stalking is the term often used now to describe willful, malicious and repeated following and harassing of another person (NJ, 1993). Anti-stalking laws now have been passed in all fifty states and the District of Columbia.



Stalking often results in assault to the victim. The underlying factor in stalking is the exercise of control and power — perceived or actual — over another individual. Most stalking victims are former lovers, former spouses, and spouses; however, some stalking victims are co-workers, neighbors, celebrities, political figures, or even strangers. The nature of control varies from offender to offender and the offender's relationship to the victim.

Stalking behavior ranges from hang-up phone calls to more focused direct threats. As the behavior escalates over time and the residence of the victim is visited, the likelihood of assault increases. **No one has the right to stalk or assault a person, regardless of how the offender feels he has been wronged by the victim.**



In Indiana, a man was incarcerated for spouse abuse which also included verbal threats to kill his wife. He was later released on work furlough as a result of his good behavior in jail. He was instructed not to go near his now-former wife. The victim, who had requested notification in any change in her former husband's status, was not notified that her husband had been freed. Within two hours of his release, he went directly to her home and, in front of neighbors, beat her with the butt of a rifle. She died a few days later.

Jot down your reactions to the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.

1. If you had been one of this couple's children, do you think you would have taken your father's threats to kill your mother seriously? Why or why not?

2. Whose fault is it that this woman was killed?

Following is a list of things the woman might have done to try to protect herself. Put an "X" beside those you think may have worked.

_____ Change the locks on her house and install dead bolt locks.

_____ Install outside lighting.

_____ Maintain an unlisted phone number.

_____ Treat all threats as legitimate and call the police.

_____ Vary routes traveled and not walk anywhere.

_____ Inform a trusted neighbor about the situation. Provide neighbors with a photo of him and possible vehicles he may drive.

_____ Have co-workers screen calls at work.

Let's assume that she took none of the above precautions. Whose fault is it that the woman was assaulted and killed?



GUEST SPEAKER NOTES



