

While some forms of sexual violence aren't illegal, such as sexist jokes, catcalling or vulgar gestures, this does not make them any less threatening or harmful to the person being victimized. These behaviors contribute to a culture that accepts sexual violence. Bystanders can speak up when they witness these actions to foster healthy sexuality and safer communities. Many opportunities exist in daily life through which society can prevent behaviors that promote sexual violence.

WHAT IS AN ENGAGED BYSTANDER?

An engaged bystander is someone who intervenes before, during or after a situation when they see or hear behaviors that promote sexual violence. It is common for people to witness situations where someone makes an inappropriate sexual comment or innuendo, tells a rape joke, or touches someone in a sexual manner. Bystanders might also witness other forms of sexual violence. Bystanders can intervene in a way that will help create a safer environment. Research has shown that bystander programs can produce positive results by increasing participants' knowledge of sexual violence, decreasing participants' acceptance of rape myths, and increasing the likelihood that they will intervene (Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante, 2007). Engaged bystanders help create healthy communities and help others build safe and respectful environments by discouraging victim blaming, changing social norms that accept sexual violence and shifting the responsibility to prevent sexual violence to all community members (Tabachnick, 2009).

WHEN AND HOW TO INTERVENE

Every situation is different and there is no universal response when intervening to prevent sexual violence. Safety is key in deciding when and how to respond to sexual violence. Every person must decide for themselves the safest and most meaningful way to become an engaged bystander. Some ideas on how to maintain safety while being an engaged bystander:

- If you witness sexual violence, get support from people around you. You do not have to act alone. If you do not feel safe, contact the police.
- Practice with friends and family about what you would say and how you would say it.
- When intervening, be respectful, direct and honest.
- Contact your local sexual assault center to see if they offer resources or trainings. For contact information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/lkdsbd8>.
- Download a free copy of NSVRC's *Engaging Bystanders to Prevent Sexual Violence Information Packet*: <http://tinyurl.com/n92ze24>.

WHEN ALCOHOL IS INVOLVED

Unfortunately, bystanders are less likely to intervene when alcohol is involved, particularly when both the victim and offender have been drinking. However, alcohol is never a cause of rape or an excuse for committing a crime; consent cannot be obtained when someone is incapacitated due to alcohol or other substances.

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

During and after acts of sexual violence, social media and online anonymous spaces could provide venues for harmful comments and abusive behavior toward others. This might include threatening to distribute photos or videos of the assault. Responsible bystanders play a powerful role in showing support for survivors, challenging disrespectful comments, and changing the culture to end violence (Bluett-Boyd, Fileborn, Quadara, & Moore, 2013).

CHECKLIST FOR BYSTANDERS

- Is there a problem? Does someone need help?
- Is it safe to intervene? What are my options?
- What should I do? Should I call on others to help?

BYSTANDER INTERVENTION EXAMPLES

Some common scenarios and possible reactions:

At work: Someone overhears a female supervisor say that she wishes her boyfriend had a butt like one of her male employees. An engaged bystander could talk with the supervisor directly or report the incident based on the workplace's sexual harassment policy.

Online: There are comments posted in regard to a story about a sexual assault that imply that the victim deserved to get raped because of how they were dressed and how much they had to drink. An engaged bystander could respond to the comments by posting that it is never the survivor's fault if he or she is sexually assaulted, and that the responsibility lies with the person who chose to commit sexual violence.

At a party: A friend starts flirting with someone. The other person is not interested, but the friend will not leave them alone. An engaged bystander could approach the friend and start a conversation to distract them from the uninterested person.

At school: A group starts making sexual gestures and comments to another student. The student tries to ignore the comments, but becomes upset. An engaged bystander could tell the group to stop harassing the student, or ask the student if they want to leave and tell a teacher or principal.

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CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT

One in 5 women and one in 16 men are sexually assaulted while in college (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007). The majority of these crimes (90%) on college campuses are never reported (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Several national initiatives are underway, including the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault and the *It's On Us* campaign, to change cultural norms and engage the campus community in prevention (White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault, 2014).

STATISTICS

- Among college women, nine out of 10 victims of sexual assault knew the person who sexually assaulted them (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000).
- In a nationally representative survey of adults, 37.4% of female rape victims were first raped between ages 18-24 (Black et al., 2011).
- 27% of college women have experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact (Gross, Winslett, Roberts, & Gohm, 2006).
- 40% of colleges and universities reported not investigating a single sexual assault in the previous five years (U.S. Senate Subcommittee, 2014).
- 30% of colleges and universities offered no training on sexual assault to students nor law enforcement officers (U.S. Senate Subcommittee, 2014).
- 70% of colleges and universities did not have a protocol for working with local law enforcement (U.S. Senate Subcommittee, 2014).

- Of the self-reported perpetrators, 75% reported that they had used alcohol prior to their most recent perpetration incident. Incidents involving alcohol were much more likely to include attempted or completed rape than incidents without alcohol (Kingree & Thompson, 2014).
- Nearly two-thirds of college students experience sexual harassment, and less than 10% of these students tell a college or university employee (Hill & Silva, 2005).

CONSENT

Consent is understood as an affirmative agreement to engage in various sexual or non-sexual activities. Consent is an enthusiastic, clearly communicated and ongoing yes. One can't rely on past sexual interactions, and should never assume consent. The absence of "no" is not a "yes." When sex is consensual, it means everyone involved has agreed to what they are doing and has given their permission. Nonconsensual sex is rape. A person who is substantially impaired cannot give consent.

TITLE IX

According to the U.S. Department of Education, "Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities which receive federal financial assistance." It states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

For the purposes of Title IX, sexual violence falls under the definition of sexual harassment. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for enforcing Title IX and provides guidance to schools/agencies to assist them in complying with the law. If someone is a victim of discrimination, they may file a complaint with OCR under Title IX (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

CLERY ACT

The Clery Act is a federal law enforced by the U.S. Department of Education that requires colleges and universities in the U.S. to disclose information about campus crime. As part of the law, schools must publish an annual security report, maintain a public crime log, release crime statistics, issue timely alerts about crime, implement an emergency response plan, and have procedures for handling missing persons cases.

CAMPUS SEXUAL VIOLENCE ELIMINATION (SAVE) ACT

In March 2013, the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act was signed into law as part of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

Reauthorization. The SaVE Act is an amendment to the Clery Act and requires that all institutions of higher learning must educate students, faculty, and staff on the prevention of rape, acquaintance rape, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. This legislation increases standards of campus response, disciplinary proceedings, and prevention education.

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WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

Child sexual abuse is a crime and an abuse of trust, power and authority that could contribute to serious short- and long-term problems for a child. One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old (Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990). Children who have been sexually abused might also experience verbal, emotional or physical abuse (Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, Hamby, & Kracke, 2009).

FORMS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

A person sexually abuses a child when he or she exposes the child to sexual acts or behavior. Forms include (Finkelhor, Hammer, & Sedlak, 2008):

- Sex acts that involve penetration
- Touching a child's breasts or genitals
- Making a child touch the perpetrator's breasts or genitals
- Voyeurism (when a perpetrator looks at a child's naked body)
- Exhibitionism (when a perpetrator shows a child his or her naked body)
- Showing a child pornography or using a child in the production of pornography (Putnam, 2003).
- Child sexual exploitation, such as trafficking
- Internet-based child sexual abuse, such as creating, depicting, and/or distributing sexual images of children online; or stalking, grooming, and/or engaging in sexually explicit behaviors with children online.

WARNING SIGNS THAT A CHILD MAY HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ABUSED

- Bodily signs (bed-wetting, stomach aches, headaches, sore genitals)
- Emotional signs (fear, sadness, mood changes, acting out, refusing to be left alone with certain people)
- Sexual signs (inappropriate sexual behavior with objects or other children)
- Verbal signs (knowledge about sexuality that is not age- or developmentally appropriate)

Evidence shows that child sexual abuse is not always obvious and the majority of cases are never reported (Finkelhor et al., 2008). Children often love and/or trust the people who sexually abuse them, creating further barriers in coming forward. Some fear the consequences of a disclosure and the ramifications it will have on their family. People who sexually abuse children might use force or, more commonly, manipulation to abuse a child and keep him or her from telling others.

VICTIMS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Gender: Boys and girls are vulnerable to sexual abuse. Girls are abused three times more often than boys, whereas boys are more likely to die or be seriously injured by their abuse (Sedlak & Broadhurst, 1996).

Age: Children of all ages, from birth to age 17, can be sexually abused. Adolescents ages 14 to 17 are the most likely to be abused; more than one in four (27.3%) had been sexually victimized during their lifetimes (Finkelhor et al., 2009).

WARNING SIGNS THAT A PERSON MAY BE SEXUALLY ABUSING A CHILD

- Person exhibits an unusual interest in a particular child or particular age or gender of children
- Person socializes more with children than with adults, and attempts to be alone with children
- Person insists on hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, wrestling with or holding a child even when the child does not want this affection
- Person encourages a lack of privacy around the home and on the part of children and expresses voyeuristic behaviors such as watching them bathe
- Person discusses inappropriate topics with a child
- Person exhibits lack of interest in normal adult sexual relations but is overly interested in the sexuality of a particular child or teen

PEOPLE WHO SEXUALLY ABUSE

Gender: Based on law enforcement reports, 96% of people who sexually abuse children are male (Snyder, 2000).

Age: Most perpetrators are adults. Law enforcement reports show that 76.8% of those who perpetrate sexual assaults are adults; 23.2% are juveniles who sexually abuse children, and 19.5% of perpetrators are between the ages of 12-17 (Snyder, 2000).

Relationship to the child: Children are most often sexually abused by people they know and trust. People who sexually abuse children can be in positions of authority and esteemed by the community. Family members are the perpetrators in 34% of reported cases against juveniles (Snyder, 2000).

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CRIME REPORTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Understanding victim behavior and its social context is critical to understanding the obstacles victims face in reporting. Research shows that rates of false reporting are frequently inflated, in part because of inconsistent definitions and protocols or a weak understanding of sexual assault. Misconceptions about false reporting rates have direct, negative consequences and can contribute to why many victims don't report sexual assaults (Lisak, Gardinier, Nicksa, & Cote, 2010).

REPORTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The majority of sexual assaults, an estimated 63%, are never reported to the police (Rennison, 2002). The prevalence of false reporting cases of sexual violence is low (Lisak et al., 2010), yet when survivors come forward, many face scrutiny or encounter barriers.

VICTIM EXPERIENCE

Some reasons a victim might not choose to report abuse may include:

- Victims fear that they will not be believed or fear retaliation. Often, victims are pressured by others not to tell.
- Often, victims who do report will delay doing so (Archambault & Lonsway, 2006) for a variety of reasons that are connected to neurobiological and psychological responses to their assault (D'Anniballe, 2010).
- Victims might worry about how reporting will affect them or their family/friends (Campbell, 1998). Further, they might be fearful of family

fracture if the person sexually assaulting them is a family member (Campbell & Raja, 1999).

- Some victims distrust law enforcement.
- Completing the forensic exam or "rape kit" can be difficult for victims.

DEFINITIONS

Since 1929, crime data, such as reported rapes, has been submitted voluntarily by police departments regarding certain crimes. The data becomes a part of the FBI's *Uniform Crime Report (UCR)*.

From the 1920s until 2011, *UCR* defined rape as "carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will." This definition covered only penetration of a woman's vagina by a penis, and excluded other forms of sexual violence. In 2012, the *UCR's* definition was revised to be more inclusive of all victims and forms.

The current definition is "penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim." (FBI, 2012).

Through the *UCR*, the FBI issues guidelines and definitions related to processing sexual assault cases. Although not all police departments follow these guidelines, they do seek to process and clear cases from their active case log.

The *UCR* identifies three main ways to clear a case: cleared by arrest, cleared by exception, and unfounded (Archambault & Lonsway, 2007). Each category has subdivisions. An unfounded report has two subdivisions: False allegations and baseless.

- **Unfounded report:** A case that is investigated and found to be false or baseless. The “unfounded” classification is often confused with false allegations, in part because the definitions may seem similar. For example, unfounded cases include those that law enforcement believes do not meet the legal criteria for rape. It does not mean that some form of sexual violence did not occur, but only that from the legal perspective, in that jurisdiction, the case does not meet the legal criteria or it is baseless.
- **False report:** A reported crime to a law enforcement agency that an investigation factually proves never occurred.
- **Baseless report:** A report in which it is determined that the incident does not meet the elements of the crime, but it is presumed truthful.

UNSUBSTANTIATED REPORTS

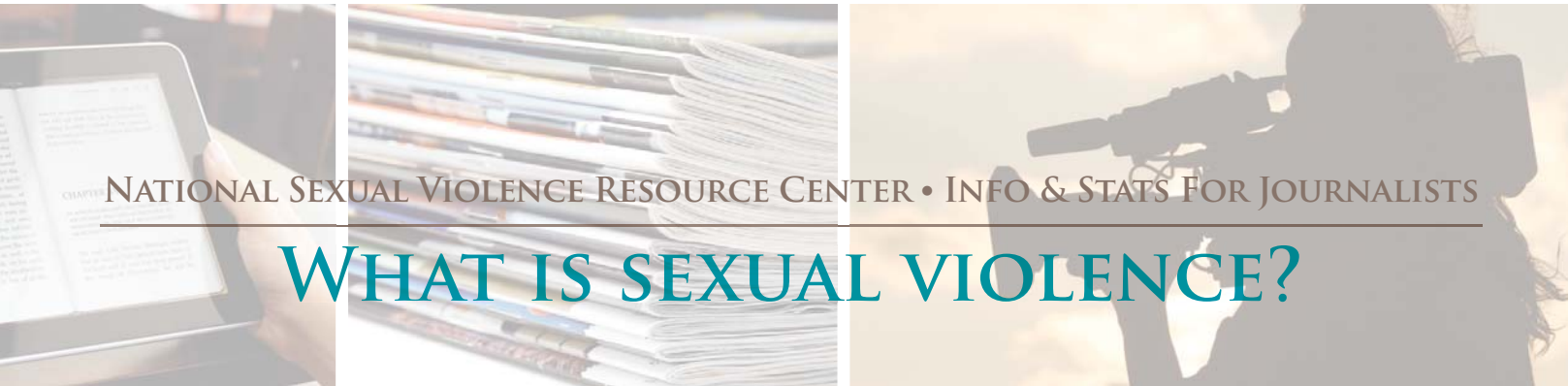
The term “unsubstantiated report” is not generally used for *UCR* purposes, but is often used in reporting child abuse. To be unsubstantiated, a report must “provide insufficient evidence to determine whether or not crime occurred” (Archambault, n.d.).

RECANTING

Recanting doesn't mean nothing happened. It can occur for a variety of reasons. For example: A victim may worry about how media scrutiny will impact their lives/families, some feel pressured to recant, and others face retaliation or fear for their safety.

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WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Sexual violence occurs when someone is forced or manipulated into unwanted sexual activity without their consent. Consent, by definition, means permission for something to happen or agreement to do something. Reasons someone might not consent include fear, age, illness, disability and/or influence of alcohol or other drugs. Anyone can experience sexual violence, including children, teens, adults, and elders. Those who sexually abuse can be acquaintances, family, trusted individuals or strangers; of these, the first three categories are most common.

FORMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is a broad term and includes rape, incest, child sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, unwanted sexual contact, sexual harassment, exposure and voyeurism.

Sexual violence is a social justice issue that occurs because of abuse, misuse and exploitation of vulnerabilities. It is a violation of human rights and can impact a person's trust and feeling of safety. Acts of sexual violence are not only about control and/or sex. Rape culture exists, in part, because of disparities in power that are often rooted in oppression.

Sexual violence happens to people of all ages, races, genders, sexual orientations, religions, abilities, professions, incomes and ethnicities.

IMPACT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

On survivors: Each survivor reacts to trauma and sexual violence in her/his own unique way. Some

may tell others what happened right away, while others will remain silent. Many will wait weeks, months or even years before discussing the assault. Trauma impacts the way memory is stored and how victims recall events. Lapses in recollection and delayed disclosures are common.

On individuals: In addition to survivors, sexual violence can affect families, friends, partners, children, spouses and/or coworkers. In order to best assist the survivor, it is important for those close to them to get support. Local social service providers offer confidential services to anyone impacted by sexual violence.

On communities: Schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, colleges, the military and cultural or religious communities can feel fear, anger, or disbelief. There are financial costs to communities. The economic costs of sexual violence ranges from \$87,000 to \$240,776 per rape (White House, 2014b). These costs include medical services, criminal justice expenses, health service fees and the lost contributions of individuals affected.

WAYS TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Risk-reduction and prevention are different things. Primary prevention approaches acknowledge that prevention is possible, and this approach addresses the root causes of sexual violence and aims to change cultural norms. Risk-reduction approaches seek to decrease a particular person's risk for victimization, such as self-defense classes. Some primary prevention approaches:

- Be a role model for respectful relationships
- Speak up when hearing harmful comments or witnessing acts of disrespect or violence
- Create policies at workplaces and schools
- Talk with legislators and ask them to support prevention programs

FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Victims are never at fault for a sexual assault. Often, the media may unintentionally imply a victim is to blame by mentioning, for example, what the victim was wearing and if the victim was drinking. These comments lead to victim-blaming.
- People who sexually assault usually violate someone they know, and they often use coercion, manipulation or "charm." They may use force, threats or injury. An absence of physical injuries to a victim does not mean that a victim consented.
- Societal conditions that allow sexual violence to continue include tolerance of sexual harassment, restrictive ideas about gender, believing that women should be responsible for keeping themselves safe, rape jokes, violent pornography, the belief that alcohol will make sexual encounters better, and beliefs that certain groups are better than others (sexism, racism, heterosexism, etc.)

VICTIM REACTIONS & HEALTH IMPACTS

- Depression, nightmares and/or flashbacks
- Difficulty concentrating, anxiety and/or phobias
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Eating disorders
- Substance use and/or abuse

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Cohen, M. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2009). New evidence on the monetary value of saving a high risk youth. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 25, 25-49. doi:10.1007/s10940-008-9057-3

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STATISTICS ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE U.S.

- One in five women and one in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives (a)
- 46.4% lesbians, 74.9% bisexual women and 43.3% heterosexual women reported sexual violence other than rape during their lifetimes, while 40.2% gay men, 47.4% bisexual men and 20.8% heterosexual men reported sexual violence other than rape during their lifetimes. (p)
- Nearly one in 10 women has been raped by an intimate partner in her lifetime, including completed forced penetration, attempted forced penetration or alcohol/drug-facilitated completed penetration. Approximately one in 45 men has been made to penetrate an intimate partner during his lifetime. (b)
- 91% of the victims of rape and sexual assault are female, and 9% are male (o)
- In eight out of 10 cases of rape, the victim knew the person who sexually assaulted them (l)
- 8% of rapes occur while the victim is at work (e)

COST AND IMPACT

- Each rape costs approximately \$151,423 (d)
- Annually, rape costs the U.S. more than any other crime (\$127 billion), followed by assault (\$93 billion), murder (\$71 billion), and drunk driving (\$61 billion) (l)

- 81% of women and 35% of men report significant short-term or long-term impacts such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (a)
- Health care is 16% higher for women who were sexually abused as children (m)

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

- One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old (f)
- 34% of people who sexually abuse a child are family members (n)
- 12.3% of women were age 10 or younger at the time of their first rape/victimization, and 30% of women were between the ages of 11 and 17 (a)
- 27.8% of men were age 10 or younger at the time of their first rape/victimization (a)
- More than one-third of women who report being raped before age 18 also experience rape as an adult (a)
- 96% of people who sexually abuse children are male, and 76.8% of people who sexually abuse children are adults (n)
- 325,000 children are at risk of becoming victims of commercial child sexual exploitation each year (m)
- The average age at which girls first become victims of prostitution is 12 to 14 years old, and the average age for boys is 11 to 13 years old (m)

CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT

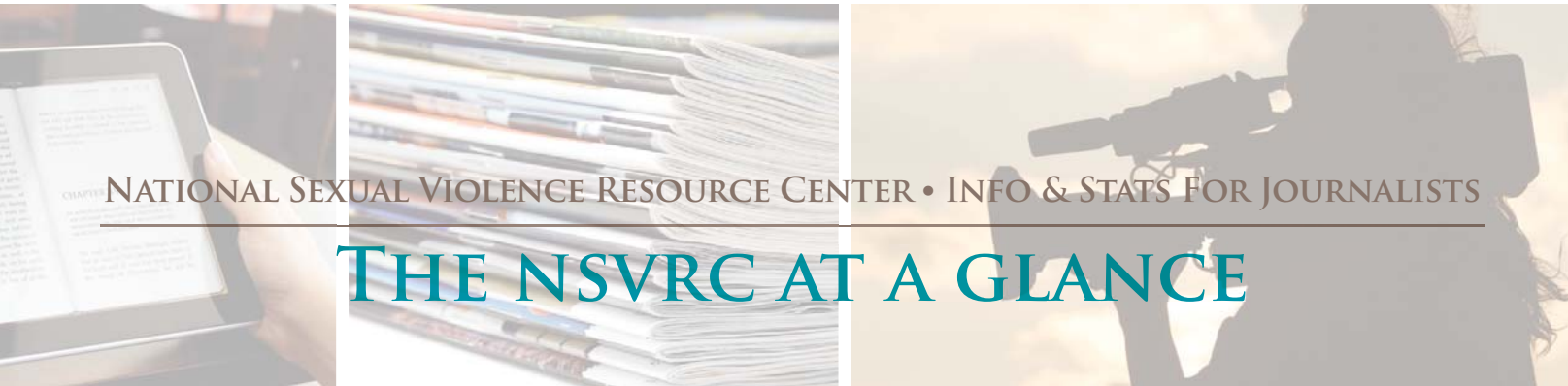
- One in 5 women and one in 16 men are sexually assaulted while in college (i).
- More than 90% of sexual assault victims on college campuses do not report the assault (c)
- 63.3% of men at one university who self-reported acts qualifying as rape or attempted rape admitted to committing repeat rapes (j)

CRIME REPORTS

- Rape is the most under-reported crime; 63% of sexual assaults are not reported to police (o). Only 12% of child sexual abuse is reported to the authorities (g).
- The prevalence of false reporting is between 2% and 10%. For example, a study of eight U.S. communities, which included 2,059 cases of sexual assault, found a 7.1% rate of false reports (k). A study of 136 sexual assault cases in Boston found a 5.9% rate of false reports (j). Researchers studied 812 reports of sexual assault from 2000-03 and found a 2.1% rate of false reports (h).

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NATIONAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESOURCE CENTER • INFO & STATS FOR JOURNALISTS

THE NSVRC AT A GLANCE

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Founded by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) in 2000, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) is a communications hub, connecting people with the information, resources, tools and expertise needed to effectively address and prevent sexual violence. Funded in part by grants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Justice, NSVRC coordinates Sexual Assault Awareness Month and has the world's largest library collection related to sexual violence.

PCAR partners with a network of rape crisis programs to bring help, hope and healing around issues of sexual violence to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Each year, the network of rape crisis programs provides services to nearly 30,000 individuals impacted by sexual violence.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Teal is the color of sexual violence prevention and the symbol is a teal ribbon.
- April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM).

Visionary Voice Awards, distributed annually in April, recognize individuals across the U.S. in various professions who are exceptional at working to end sexual violence.

FREE COURSE FOR JOURNALISTS

NSVRC teamed up with The Poynter Institute and News University to create a free, online course for journalists to learn more about reporting on sexual violence. The self-directed course provides necessary context to understanding crimes of sexual violence and offers guidance for accurate language, reporting, headlines and visuals. To take the course, visit <http://tinyurl.com/svcourse>.

ADDITIONAL PARTNERS & RESOURCES

- AEquitas: The Prosecutors' Resource on Violence Against Women, www.aequitasresource.org
- National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, www.endsexualviolence.org
- PreventConnect, www.preventconnect.org
- National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, www.preventtogether.org
- Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA), www.atsa.com
- Berkeley Media Studies Group, www.bmsg.org
- The Poynter Institute and News University, www.poynter.org and www.newsu.org
- The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, <http://tinyurl.com/prz79zz>

CONTACT NSVRC

- 123 North Enola Drive, Enola, PA 17025
- Email requests to: resources@nsvrc.org
- Online: www.nsvrc.org
- Call toll-free: 877-739-3895



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instagram.com/nsvrc

Scan the following QR codes with your mobile device or visit www.nsvrc.org to access NSVRC resources:



NSVRC
website



Sexual Assault
Awareness Month:
English site



Sexual violence
in disasters



Child Sexual Abuse
Prevention
Info Packet



Sexual Violence
& the Workplace
Info Packet



NSVRC
Library



Sexual Assault
Awareness Month:
Spanish site



Housing and
Sexual Violence
Info Packet



Sexual Violence
in Later Life
Info Packet



Engaging
Bystanders
Info Packet



NSVRC
publications



Sexual Violence
in the Military



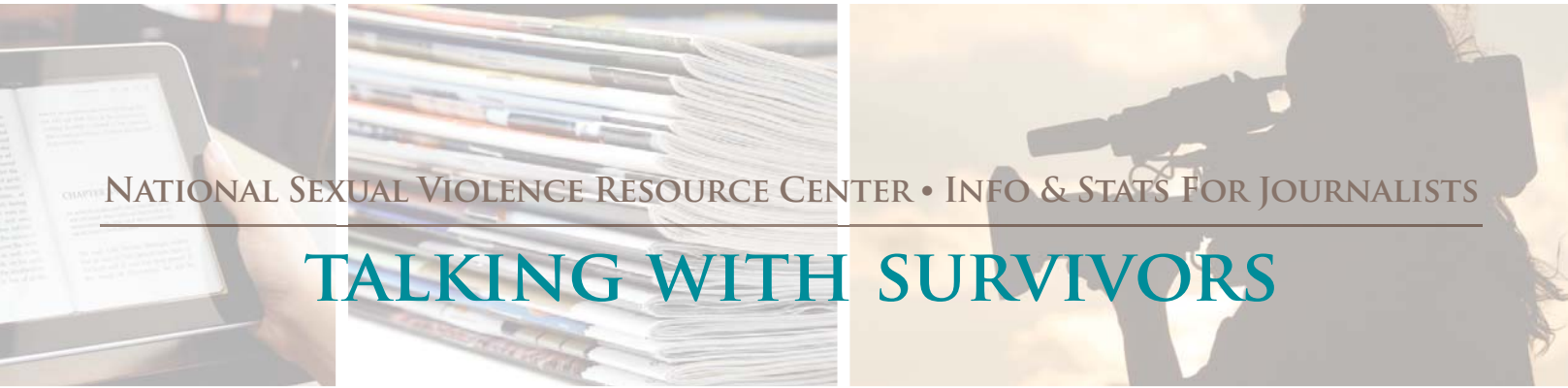
Sexual Violence
& Individuals Who
Identify as LGBTQ



Human
Trafficking
Info Packet



Guide about
sexual violence
& homelessness



Sexual violence is a complex topic, and journalists reporting on it should be aware that it can be different from other crime-related stories. Some survivors might want to talk with the media, while others might not. This is a social justice issue, so there are plenty of story angles and not all of them include interviewing survivors. Regardless of the angle, statistics and background information can add context to stories.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Traditionally, victims' names – regardless of age – are not revealed in order to protect their privacy. According to The Associated Press Stylebook Online (2014), privacy means reporters “do not identify juveniles (under 18) who are accused of crimes, even if other news media do so or police release names. Also, do not transmit images that would reveal their identity. Do not identify, in text or through images, juveniles (under 18) who are witnesses to crimes. Do not identify, in text or through images, persons who say they have been sexually assaulted, and use discretion in naming victims of other extremely severe abuse. ... Sometimes a person may be identified by AP in an abduction or manhunt situation, and it develops later that – because of a sexual assault or other reason – the name should not be used. ... AP may also consider identifying the victim of a sexual assault if the individual comes forward publicly and agrees to be identified.”

Media outlets need policies on privacy, and journalists should be mindful of accidentally revealing a survivor's identity through details such as photos, addresses or names of family/relatives.

THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMA

Survivors of sexual violence have experienced trauma, and each person reacts differently to trauma. Many never talk about what happened to them, or they could wait months or years to talk about it. On the other hand, some survivors will disclose immediately. Be mindful of the resilience, strength and uniqueness of each person's response. The effects of sexual violence and trauma also can impact loved ones, communities, institutions, workplaces and schools. People working closely to this topic can experience secondary trauma.

POTENTIAL TRIGGERS

Certain situations, photos, words, sounds and smells can trigger memories from a survivor's assault, and this can be traumatizing. For example, a survivor could see a photo of the place where they were assaulted, and the photo becomes associated with the events that occurred there. Be mindful not to intentionally trigger victims of sexual violence.

INITIAL CONVERSATIONS

Before you begin reporting, talk with victim advocates and staff at local rape crisis centers to gain insight. Many trained sexual assault counselors/advocates want to talk with reporters, because they know this issue is much more than a crime story. Be proactive and cultivate relationships with experts. Actively maintain these relationships for insight and story ideas throughout the year. Be adaptable. Talking routinely with advocates and service providers could reveal new story angles that are worth exploring.

Some survivors might want to speak with a reporter, while others will not want to be interviewed by the media. If a survivor wants to tell their story, allow them to do so in their own way, in their own words, and in their own time.

Ask how the survivor would like to be identified. Sometimes people want to be fully identified. Sometimes they don't want to be known as a victim, but as a survivor.

It is important to have multiple conversations with survivors and get to know them. Listen and build a rapport with each other. Let the survivor share the amount of information that they are comfortable with sharing. It takes bravery to share these details.

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Talk with survivors to determine when and where the interview will take place. Be flexible if they change their minds. Be transparent and answer questions that arise, such as: "When will the interview air/publish?" "Will photos/video be taken?" "How long will coverage last?"

During the interview, journalists can support survivors by having a therapist or a trained sexual assault counselor/advocate present. Reporters can

help survivors feel more comfortable by explaining the interview process. If the survivor wants to do an on-camera interview, introduce him/her to the staff that will be assisting with the recording. Allow the survivor time to meet everyone and get comfortable.

As you're reporting, check in with survivors to update them of changes and inform them when the interview will air/publish. After the interview publishes/airs, follow up with survivors to see how they're doing since the media coverage.

QUESTIONS & LANGUAGE CHOICES

While it is important to provide context for an incident, a reporter needs to be aware that the way a setting or a person's clothing are described can unintentionally assign guilt to the victim. Avoid questioning "why," because this can be viewed as victim-blaming and suggest that the victim somehow provoked the incident. Be mindful of this, because victims of sexual violence are never to blame for what happened to them. Instead, ask open-ended, nonjudgmental questions that allow survivors to share their stories.

Often in news stories, the words are too vague or can imply things that didn't happen. A victim of sexual violence doesn't "perform oral sex." A victim doesn't "kiss" a perpetrator. These phrases suggest that the victim willingly participated.

Be mindful when describing people who sexually abuse. Labeling sex offenders as "monsters" set them apart from the rest of society, and it implies a "them versus us" dynamic. Such labels can hinder people from reporting suspicions they may have about someone, because it challenges their belief that a "good people" wouldn't do bad things. In reality, human beings are complex, and no one is 100% good or 100% bad.

PEOPLE WHO COMMIT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Often in efforts to prevent and eliminate sexual violence, the focus is on individuals who commit sexual violence and have been prosecuted. In those cases, the main focus shifts to their punishment. Not all offenders end up arrested; 63% of sexual assaults are not reported to police (Rennison, 2002). There are many people who commit sexual violence but are never caught, and it will take a unified community strategy to prevent sexual crimes. With supervision and treatment, many sex offenders can live productive and offense-free lives (Tabachnick & Klein, 2011).

WHO COMMITS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

There are common misconceptions and stereotypes about people who sexually abuse. It is not helpful when these stereotypes are reinforced in media coverage. Here are some facts about people who sexually abuse:

- Not all offenders are the same. Some are more likely to reoffend than others, and there are different motivations for offending.
- They can have strong social ties in the community. People who sexually abuse can be male or female, and span a variety of backgrounds and ages. Some individuals are married with stable relationships, employment and lack a prior criminal history.
- The majority of sexual violence is committed by someone the victim knows – a family member, intimate partner, coworker, classmate or acquaintance.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIORS IN ADULTS

The presence of risk factors does not mean that abusive behaviors will happen. It is a balance of risk factors and protective factors that can impact the development of behaviors and affect the likelihood that an individual will sexually abuse. (Tabachnick & Klein, 2011).

- **Some individual-level risk factors:** Poor coping skills, low self-esteem, and sexual attraction or sexual preoccupation. (Tabachnick & Klein, 2011).
- **Some family-level risk factors:** Difficulty establishing and/or maintaining appropriate intimate relationships and/or a chaotic, unstable, or violent home environment (Tabachnick & Klein, 2011).
- **Some community-level risk factors include:** May have difficulty developing meaningful peer networks or a community presence (Tabachnick & Klein, 2011).

STATISTICS

- About 12% to 24% of known or adjudicated sex offenders will reoffend. When people who sexually abuse do commit another crime, it is often not sexual or violent. (Rates might be low because sex offenses are often not reported.) (Center for Sex Offender Management [CSOM], 2008).
- The longer (known or adjudicated) offenders remain offense-free in the community, the less likely they are to reoffend sexually. The average 10-year recidivism rate from time of release is 20%, the 10-year recidivism declines to 12% after five years offense-free and to 9% after 10 years offense-free (Harris & Hanson, 2004).
- Annually, there are nearly 2,200 juveniles arrested for rape and nearly 9,200 arrested for other types of sex offenses (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2005). Treatment programs can effectively reduce sexual re-offense; adolescents and children are more likely than adults to stop their abusive behaviors (Finkelhor, Ormond, & Chaffin, 2009).
- About 150,000 adult sex offenders are currently in state and federal prisons throughout the United States. Between 10,000 and 20,000 are released into the community each year (CSOM, 2007).
- More than 700,000 registered sex offenders live in communities throughout the U.S. (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2014).

BARRIERS & CHALLENGES

- Often, people who sexually abuse are portrayed publicly as “monsters.” Because of this, people might be less likely to recognize the warning signs of a sexual behavior problem in loved ones or others with whom they are close, because they

do not see them as “monsters” (Tabachnick & Klein, 2011). Someone who suspects abuse within a family could be less likely to ask for help and subject family members, including victims, to public exposure (Tabachnick & Klein, 2011).

- Once a convicted abuser returns to the community, he/she is subjected to many of the current legislative policies. The resulting housing and job instability, loss of income, and isolation could increase the risk to re-offend. The instability might also reduce the system’s ability to monitor the offender and hold him/her accountable (Tabachnick & Klein, 2011).

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