

**What is Sexual Assault?** Sexual assault can be defined as any type of unwanted sexual contact, ranging from sexist attitudes and actions to rape and murder. Sexual assault can include words and actions of a sexual nature against a person's will.

**Who is NSVRC?** The [National Sexual Violence Resource Center \(NSVRC\)](#) coordinates the national Sexual Assault Awareness Month campaign each year. NSVRC leads the U.S. in promoting comprehensive prevention of sexual violence through research, resources and collaboration. NSVRC provides access to information and tools that make communities safer and leads partnerships to develop effective policies and programs that can affect meaningful and lasting change.

**What is SAAM?** [Sexual Assault Awareness Month \(SAAM\)](#) occurs annually in April to raise public awareness about sexual violence and to educate communities on how to prevent it. Celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the theme "Prevention is possible," this campaign promotes actions that individuals, communities and the private sector can take to promote safety, respect and equality to stop sexual assault before it happens.

### **Why is prevention important?**

Sexual assault is a serious and widespread problem. Nearly 1 in 5 women in the United States have experienced rape or attempted rape in their lives, and 1 in 71 men have experienced rape or attempted rape. Nearly 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men have experienced sexual violence victimization other than rape at some point in their lifetime (Black et al., 2011).

Sexual assault is a public health issue affecting women, men, children, families and communities. Victims of sexual assault often experience short-term consequences including guilt, shame, fear, numbness, shock and feelings of isolation. Victims may also experience long-term health risks and behaviors such as PTSD, eating disorders, depression, pregnancy and STIs.

But the good news is that prevention is possible and it's happening. By promoting safe behaviors, thoughtful policies and healthy relationships, we can create safe and equitable communities where every person is treated with respect.

### **How to support our work during SAAM and every day:**

Sexual assault prevention requires many voices and roles. This year's campaign helps individuals, communities and the private sector understand what role they can play. By promoting safe behaviors, thoughtful policies and healthy relationships, we can create safe and equitable communities where every person is treated with respect. These changes will help to make the cultural shift necessary to eliminate sexual violence once and for all.

### **Learn more:**

- NSVRC's [media packet](#) provides in-depth information and statistics on the complexities of this issue.
- Individuals, communities and businesses can check out NSVRC's SAAM materials at [www.nsvrc.org/saam](http://www.nsvrc.org/saam) to learn how everyone can play a role in preventing sexual violence.
- [Contact us!](#) We can connect you with the appropriate expert at NSVRC or a local field expert. The NSVRC team is available for interviews and is a resource for [reporting on sexual violence](#).

Black, M. C., Basile, K. C., Breiding, M. J., Smith, S. G., Walters, M. L., Merrick, M. T., ... Stevens, M. R. (2011). National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 summary report. Retrieved from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs\\_report2010-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf)