

TEEN HEALTH WEEK 2017: SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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What is sexual violence?

- Any unwanted sexual activity involving force or manipulation without consent

Forms of sexual violence:

- Rape or sexual assault
- Child sexual assault / incest
- Intimate partner sexual assault
- Unwanted sexual contact/ touching
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual exploitation
- Showing one's genitals / naked body to others without consent
- Public masturbation
- Watching someone in a private act without their consent

Facts about sexual violence

- Affects people in all demographic categories; however vulnerable groups are at greater risk.
- By age 18, 1 in 4 girls have been assaulted and 1 in 6 boys have been assaulted.
- At some time in their lives 1 in 6 women have experienced attempted or completed rape, >50% before age 18 and >22% before age 12.
- At some time in their lives, 1 in 33 men have experienced attempted or completed rape, 75% before age 18 and 48% before age 12.
- Most victims know their assailant.

Facts, continued

- Approximately 1 in 20 women and men experience sexual violence other than rape, such as being made to penetrate someone else, sexual coercion, unwanted sexual contact, or non-contact unwanted sexual experience within a one year period (CDC, 2012).
- 11.8% of high school girls and 4.5% of high school boys from grades reported that they were forced to have sexual intercourse at some time in their lives (CDC 2011).
- Victims are **never** at fault.

REPORTING AND PROSECUTION

- Rape is the least reported and convicted violent crime in the United States, because:
 - Concern about not being believed
 - Fear of retaliation
 - Embarrassment / shame
 - Pressure from others not to tell
 - Distrust of law enforcement
 - Belief there is not enough evidence
 - Desire to protect attacker
- Probability of arrest after report is 50.8% and probability of a rapist being sent to prison is 16.3%.

Teen Dating Violence

- This refers to physical, sexual, psychological or emotional violence within a dating relationship, including stalking.
- Can be in person or via electronic technology.
- Can involve a current or past dating partner.
- 23% of girls and 14% of boys who ever experienced sexual violence first experienced some sort of partner violence between ages 11 and 17 (CDC 2011).

CDC study of physical dating violence (PDV) among high school students (2003)

- 8.9% of males and 8.8% of females report that their girlfriend / boyfriend hit, slapped, or physically hurt them within the past year.
- Victimization was greater among blacks than whites and Hispanics; among lower grade levels; and among students with poor grades.
- PVD was associated with self-report of episodic heavy drinking, being currently sexually active, attempted suicide, and physical fighting.
- There was no relationship of PDV to geographic location.

Risk factors for dating violence:

- Belief that dating violence is acceptable
- Depression, anxiety or other symptoms of trauma
- Aggression toward peers
- Use of drugs or illegal substances
- Early sexual activity and have multiple partners
- Have a friend involved in dating violence
- Have conflicts with partner
- Witness or experience violence in the home

Warning signs for teens:

- Unusual weight gain or weight loss
- Unhealthy eating patterns, loss of appetite or excess eating
- Signs of physical abuse, e.g. bruises
- Sexually transmitted or other genital infections
- Signs of depression
- Anxiety or worry
- Failing grades
- Changes in self care
- Self-harming behavior
- Expressing suicidal thoughts or behavior
- Drinking or drug use

Warning signs about the partner that a teen may be in an abusive relationship

- Evidence the partner has tried to coerce them sexually
- Sexual assault
- Refuses to use contraception or protection against STIs during sexual activity
- Hits or harms the teen in any way
- Doesn't want the teen spending time with family or friends
- Makes threats or controls the teen's actions
- Uses drugs or alcohol to impair the teen's judgment
- Harasses using digital technology

Consequences of teen dating violence

- Depression / anxiety
- Unhealthy behaviors such as tobacco or alcohol use
- Antisocial behaviors
- Suicidal thoughts
- Increased risk for victimization in college

Teens: how to get help for sexual assault:

- Seek immediate medical attention preferably at an emergency room where personnel are trained to perform a “rape kit exam”, test for pregnancy, and treat STIs.
 - Do not shower, change clothes, or clean up before going
- Tell a trusted friend or adult; see if someone can go along to get medical treatment.
- Call a local victim service provider such as a rape crisis center; the National Sexual Assault Hotline can provide direction.

Teens getting help, continued

- If teen wants to report the assault, call the police.
- Know that some adults (teachers, counselors, medical care providers, social workers, in some cases coaches or activity leaders) are mandated reporters. Ask people if they are mandated reporters before deciding to tell them.
- If teen needs help deciding whom to tell, call an anonymous crisis line, or a trusted family member or other trusted adult.

Teens: helping themselves

- Try to avoid being alone, especially with the attacker, and be alert to your surroundings.
- Think about a safety plan and getting help.
- Make sure they have a safe place to stay.
- Think about talking to a rape crisis center or a victim assistance counselor to clarify options.

Teens helping someone else:

- **Bystander intervention**

- Watch out for each other at social events.
 - Communicate with each other if one of the group changes plans.
 - It's OK to lie in a situation in which a teen feels uncomfortable.
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- If a friend says he or she has been assaulted, help him or her get to a safe place.
 - Offer encouragement in getting help.
 - Talk to the friend about getting medical attention and talking to an adult.
 - Offer to go with the person.
 - If the person is badly injured, call 911.
 - Encourage the friend to have a rape kit exam.
 - Report the assault to a trusted adult.

Sexual violence in among college-age men and women

- Women age 18-24 are at elevated risk of sexual violence, and it is greater among women not in college
 - 11.2% of all students experience rape or sexual assault on campus
 - 23.1% of females and 5.4% of males experience rape or sexual assault as undergraduate students
 - Male college students are 78% more likely than non students of the same age to experience rape or sexual assault
 - 8.8% of females and 2.2% of males experience rape or sexual assault in graduate / professional school
 - 4.2% of students have experienced stalking while in college

College-age, continued

- Sexual violence is more prevalent than other crimes at college.
- Freshman year is the period of greatest risk.
 - For freshmen women, the first six weeks is known as “the red zone.”
- Over half of campus assaults occur in the fall semester.
 - “Football culture” is associated with an increase in sexual violence.

Reasons college-age victims do not report to law enforcement:

- Belief it is a personal matter
- Not important enough to report
- Did not want to get perpetrator in trouble
- Believed police would not / could not do anything about it
- Reported but not to police
- Other

Staying safe on campus:

- Know your resources – whom to contact, where to go
- Stay alert
- Be careful about posting your location
- Make others earn your trust
- Think about Plan B in potentially sticky situations
- Be secure

Safe on campus, continued

- Bystander intervention: Go to a party with people you trust; watch out for each other and leave together; communicate if plans change
- Protect your drink
- Know your limits
- It's OK to lie in a situation in which you feel uncomfortable
- Be a good friend

After an assault:

- Make use of campus resources such as security escorts, psychological services, sexual assault services, health centers
- Request a schedule or housing change (Campus SAVE Act)
- Access off-campus sexual assault resources
- Seek a civil protection order
- Create a safety plan

Title IX:

- 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.
- Title IX is a 1972 extension of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Sexual harassment is sex discrimination.
- Resource: The Association of Title IX Administrators
 - <https://atixa.org>

Sexual violence is preventable

- Model supportive relationships and behaviors with friends and family
- Stand up for victims and believe them
- Speak up when you hear harmful comments or witness violent acts
- Create policies in workplaces and schools to stop sexual violence and help victims
 - Training
- Coordinate community events to raise awareness
- Talk with legislators and ask them to support prevention and victim services

Prevention of teen dating violence

- Promotion of healthy relationships and prevention of patterns of dating violence
- School-based programs that address norms, problem-solving, bystander intervention, and dating violence
- Programs that address other youth risk behaviors
- Training of parents, teachers, coaches, caregivers to prevent dating violence
 - The Boy Scouts of America is one organization that is a model in its youth protection training of scouts and all adult volunteers / staff

Education: What consent looks like

- Laws vary state by state and by situation.
- Consent is an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity; it does not have to be verbal, but verbal consent clarifies boundaries.
- Consent is about communication.
- Consent is about one activity, one time.
- You can change your mind at any time.

What consent does NOT include:

- Refusing to acknowledge “no”
- Assuming that any behavior is an invitation for anything more
- Someone being under legal age of consent
- Someone being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Pressure
- Assuming permission based on past experience with the person

Open communication is key:

- Keep lines of communication open
- Make sure your teens know they can trust you
- The National Sexual Assault Hotline is a source of guidance at 800-656-HOPE or online at online.rainn.org

Help is available

- In a crisis contact RAINN at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or online at online.rainn.org (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)
- Local rape crisis centers
- Certified Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFE)

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