

creating safer campuses



Sexual violence has lasting effects on individuals and communities. When someone experiences sexual violence, it can affect their ability to concentrate on schoolwork, their job, and their relationships. Sexual violence can also damage a campus community's sense of safety and togetherness. Schools demonstrate their commitment to a safe and healthy learning environment when they invest in proactive and intentional efforts to address violence.

WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Sexual violence is any type of unwanted sexual interaction, ranging from personal attitudes and comments to sexual assault. A person may use force, threats, manipulation, or coercion to commit sexual violence. Sexual violence can happen to anyone regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, geography, ability, appearance, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS

It is estimated that **around 20 percent of college women and 7 percent of men experience sexual violence** over the course of their college career.¹ A majority of the time (near 80 percent), individuals know the person who harmed them.² People who sexually assault others often select someone within their social network, build trust, and may use manipulation, alcohol, and/or drugs to commit an assault.

Campus sexual violence is notoriously underreported – survivors of sexual violence on campus are less likely than nonstudents to report their assault to police.³

▶ campus connectedness:

every campus community has the ability to **create positive change** and **address harmful norms** that support sexual violence.

20%

of women experience sexual violence during their college career.

(BJS, 2016)

CREATING SAFER CAMPUS COMMUNITIES

Reducing rates and eventually preventing perpetration of sexual violence means changing attitudes and social patterns. This is a long-term process that includes informing people about the problem, helping everyone practice new skills and behaviors, and developing thoughtful policies. **Campus communities have strengths and values that support effective interventions.** Lasting campus change is a multifaceted effort that includes:

- **Trauma-sensitive policies and practices** to ensure that reporting procedures, investigations, and misconduct processes take into account the realities of sexual violence. This means learning about the effects of trauma and how these factors could impact

a survivor's behaviors. Taking a "one size fits all" approach is not effective.

- **Comprehensive prevention strategies** that encourage full participation in changing norms, behaviors, and expectations. For example, asking students, faculty, and staff about campus climate and then developing programs based on responses and needs.^{4,5}
- **Meaningful collaboration** between campus administration, staff, students, and local community-based organizations that promotes the sharing of expertise and resources and provides a network of support for survivors, their family and friends, and the campus community as a whole).
- **Clear communication of policies and resources** in place to support survivors and address harmful behaviors.

YOU CAN CREATE A SUPPORTIVE SPACE FOR A SURVIVOR BY:

- Recognizing any personal biases or misconceptions – we all have room to grow and learn!
 - Saying "I believe you" when a survivor shares their experience with you.
- Visibly (and respectfully) challenging harmful comments or jokes about sexual assault.

LEARN MORE, CREATE CHANGE

Know Your IX is a campaign that aims to educate all college students in the U.S. about their rights under Title IX. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, which includes sexual violence. www.knowyourix.org

End Rape on Campus works to end campus sexual violence through direct support for survivors and their communities; prevention through education; and policy reform at the campus, local, state, and federal levels. <http://endrapeoncampus.org/>

The Center for Changing Our Campus Culture provides the latest research, sample campus policies, protocols, best practices, and information. <http://changingourcampus.org/>

New Jersey's College Consortium is a group of committed representatives from colleges across the state trying to identify best practices, respond to emerging issues, and support necessary services for survivors. To learn more about the Campus Consortium, contact the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault at info@njcasa.org.

REFERENCES

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- ² Sinozich, S., Langton, L. (2014). *Rape and sexual assault victimization among college-aged females, 1995-2013*. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/rsavcaf9513.pdf>
- ³ Lisak, D., & Miller, P.M. (2002). "Repeat Rape and Multiple Offending Among Undetected Rapists." *Violence and Victims*, (17/1), 73-84.
- ⁴ Peterson, A. & Singh, S. (2017). *The Know Your IX State Policy Playbook. Know Your IX*. Retrieved from <https://www.knowyourix.org/statepolicy-playbook/>
- ⁵ White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault. (2014). *Not Alone: The first report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault*. Washington DC: White House. Retrieved from <https://www.notalone.gov/assets/report.pdf>

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The New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA) is the statewide organization representing 21 county-based rape crisis centers and Rutgers University's Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance. NJCASA elevates the voice of survivors and service providers through advocacy, training, and support for efforts to create safer communities for all people.

nj coalition
against sexual assault