



The Advocate Aspect

Family Support Center and Kids First Children's Advocacy Center – March 2011
Programs of Rural Resources Community Action – a non-profit agency



Sexual Assault in the Context of Domestic / Dating Violence

Helping the Hidden Survivors
by Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs

We pass these people on the streets of our communities:

The young mother who is afraid to refuse sex because her partner is so intimidating when he drinks, the teen boy whose girlfriend ridicules him when he says he isn't sure he is ready for sex, the immigrant who has been taught that marital sex is obligatory, the college student whose dating partner takes nude pictures without consent and threatens to post them online after an argument, and the older woman who has endured a lifetime of sexual aggression from her physically abusive husband.

Sixty-eight percent of women who are being physically abused also report sexual violence in their relationship with the abusive partner. Yet Intimate Partner Sexual Violence (IPSV) is still something of a hidden issue. Why is it so important to identify this issue? First, so we can begin to address and prevent this highly damaging and traumatic form of sexual violence. Second, so that survivors can feel understood and receive appropriate services, whether they approach a sexual assault program or a domestic violence program. Third, because the presence of sexual violence in an abusive relationship heightens the risk of murder by the abusive partner. There are many other reasons to pay attention to IPSV, including the possibility of reproductive health consequences and the impact on children.

What can we do about this form of sexual violence?

- Educate ourselves. We need to become informed and aware of this issue.
- Build partnerships to raise awareness and coordinate services. Other victim service providers, schools, parents, community members, law enforcement, health care providers, and other systems partners need to know about IPSV.
- Learn how to ask appropriate questions and train others to do so. A recent study showed that having healthcare providers simply ask about reproductive coercion reduced the likelihood of reoccurrence by 70%
- Incorporate inclusive language and activities into our prevention and intervention services so that the full range of IPSV victimization is addressed – from teen sexual coercion to marital or partner sexual assault to elder abuse.

Appalling October

Johnson Hostler, President of the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence



It's been over 20 years since Robin Warsaw published her historic book, "I Never Called it Rape," to raise awareness about the reality of acquaintance rape. It's also been over 20 years since the brutal Pike gang rape at Florida State University ended in the first known successful prosecution of a fraternity gang rape.

Despite two decades of advocacy, prevention, awareness, Marches and testimonials, campuses continue to be a dangerous place for young women, acquaintance rape remains a very real threat, and young men continue to act out the violent and sexist messages they've absorbed from the culture since birth.

On October 8, 2010, 12 young people, most of them young women who attend Central Washington University, were rushed to the hospital after a mass overdose on rohypnol. None of the young women had more than one or two drinks before becoming violently ill. Detectives are now investigating whether they were given spiked drinks to render them defenseless against a sexual assault.

On October 14th, Yale's Broad Recognition Magazine reported an incident that happened the night of the 13th: *Beginning around 9:30pm, members of the DKE fraternity marched with their pledges around Yale's Old Campus (the home of almost all of Yale's freshman women) chanting slogans such as "No means yes, yes means anal" and "My name is Jack, I'm a necrophiliac, I f--- dead women, and fill them with my semen."*

The fraternity has since apologized and cooperated with the Women's Center at a forum on sexual assault. But women still had to experience horribly abusive language making light of real fears and the traumatic experiences of survivors.

And it's not like fraternities have room to joke. In her 1992 book, *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood and privilege on Campus*, Peggy Reeves Sanday pointed out that the culture of sexual violence around fraternities has been very real as evidenced by both past and recent events. In fact, the Gainesville Sun reported earlier in October that University of Florida police were investigating an alleged rape at the fraternity house of Tau Epsilon Phi.

This behavior of college men is a symptom of a larger societal problem – we have not agreed as a nation that women must have sexual autonomy. Advocates are exhausted and hoarse from saying it, but our nation must make a collective decision to take a long hard look at the underpinnings of sexual violence.

The Office of Violence Against Women has made sexual assault and prevention top priorities. And for the first time, the President of the United States has an advisor on violence against women, Lynn Rosenthal, who has also spoken of the Administration's commitment to ending sexual violence. Maybe against this backdrop of appalling events, and with all we've learned along the way, ending sexual violence will finally become a national priority.

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The Real Story of Sexual Assault on Campus

Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs

College administrators and the media are talking about safety on campus. The message often consists of advice for students to be aware of their surroundings, to walk in groups rather than alone after dark, and to learn self-defense skills. This is all valuable advice – but it has very little to do with the reality of sexual assault on campus.

According to the Department of Justice study *The Sexual Victimization of College Women*, 9 out of 10 campus sexual assault victims know their attackers. The most frequent offenders were classmates or “friends”, but boyfriends or ex-boyfriends accounted for nearly a quarter of all perpetrators. Students assaulted by intimate partners often do not define these incidents as rape or sexual assault, and they rarely seek outside help.

What are the true messages we need to provide college students and their parents about sexual violence on campus?

- Students are at risk from people they know, including dating partners.
- All students need to be educated about healthy relationships and consent issues.
- Students have the right to say no to any sexual act at any time, even with an intimate partner.
- Students should learn the communication skills to explicitly ask for consent before moving forward with sexual activities, and to discuss birth control and safer sex prior to putting themselves at risk.
- Students who are in dating relationships characterized by physical or verbal abuse are also at risk of sexual assault.
- Alcohol is the number one “date rape” drug, and is a risk factor for sexual assault. Intoxicated victims are still victims, and not to blame for being raped.
- Colleges and universities need to have proactive policies and approachable staff, and to take intimate partner victimization as seriously as any other crime.

*“It is not the world that needs peace; it is people.
When people in the world are at peace within,
the world will be at peace.”*

Family Support Center &
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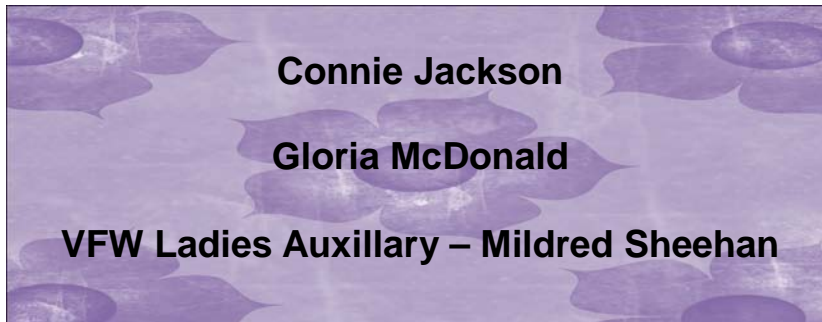
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Family Support Center Volunteer Training begins May 2nd.

We have a few specific areas that need help, such as our Help Line, Office Advocate, and Receptionist. We will be interviewing for those positions over the next couple months, We also are always looking for Safe Homes in Stevens County.

Please contact Shamra at 685-6092 or scoy@ruralresources.org for more information. You can download an application and background check form at www.ruralresources.org.

