Focus on Campus Sexual Assault: What We Know, How We Know It, and What to Do About It

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Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Congressional Lunch Seminar
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National attention is on campus sexual assault

- White House Task Force
  - Not Alone report and toolkit
- Potential federal legislation to mandate campus climate surveys and other regulations
  - Campus Accountability & Safety Act (CASA)
  - Hold Accountable and Lend Transparency Campus Sexual Violence Act (HALT)
  - Safe Campus Act/Fair Campus Act
  - Teaching Safe Relationships Act
- Survey initiatives
  - AAU campus climate survey
  - HEDS
  - ATIXA
  - ARC3: Administrator–Researcher Campus Climate Consortium
- Various prevention efforts
Integrating Research, Practice & Policy

Policy/advocacy-informed research; Research-informed policy/advocacy

Research

Policy/Advocacy

Meta-Integration

Practice (treatment/prevention)

Practice-informed research; Research-informed practice

Policy/advocacy-informed practice; Practice informed policy/advocacy
### Goals of policies & programs – rape prevention and reduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Policy/Program</th>
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| Prevention of traumatic events                           | - Reducing risk factors for perpetration: Society, community, interpersonal and individual levels  
- Reducing risk factors for victimization                  |
| Prevention of traumatic reactions to sexual assault victimization | - Focus on services for victims to prevent long term, adverse effects  
- Health policies  
- Programs to build resilience                              |
| Treatment of/for perpetrators                            | - Legal and procedural consequences that support justice and attend to survivors’ concerns  
- Therapeutic interventions to reduce future violence       |
Goals for this presentation

- What we know and how we know it
- Campus climate surveys
- Prevention efforts
What We Know
What do we already know about victimization?

- What is sexual assault victimization?
- How common is victimization?
- What are some of the consequences?
  - For victims
  - For institutions of higher education
- Do most victims report their sexual assault experiences?
Sexual contact with another person when she/he did not want the contact or could not consent
  ◦ Contact can range from touching to intercourse
    • State-of-the-art surveys ask behaviorally specific questions about frequency
      • Tactics
        • Manipulation
        • Verbal coercion
        • Use of alcohol or drugs to incapacitate
        • Threat of or use of force
      • Outcomes
        • Unwanted contact
        • Attempted rape
        • Rape
    • Allow for estimates that fit criminal codes, Title IX definitions, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention definitions of sexual violence
Results are reported as the percentage who disclose *any* form of non-consensual sexual contact, and/or

The percentage who experience specific types of sexual assault by each individual tactic and/or outcome

Time frame can vary
Patterns of female sexual victimization by outcome

Adolescence (n = 1,571)
- Rape/Attempted Rape: 20%
- Other Coercive Acts: 29%
- Consensual: 51%

Lifetime (n = 739)
- Rape/Attempted Rape: 30%
- Other Coercive Acts: 37%
- Consensual: 33%

First Year of College (n = 1,389)
- Rape/Attempted Rape: 10%
- Other Coercive Acts: 21%
- Consensual: 69%
Consequences for victims

- Mental health problems
- Physical health problems
- Impaired academic performance, increased likelihood of dropping courses, leaving school, or transferring
- Students incur increased costs
  - Nearly $2 billion for students in a single national graduating class
Consequences for institutions

- Institution perceived as unsafe and an inhospitable learning environment
- University officials’ denial or minimizing the problem may
  - Reflect negatively on campus leaders’ commitment to end campus violence
  - Create distrust among parents and alumni
  - Damage an institution’s standing in the community
Do most victims report their sexual assault experiences?

- Rates are low (>1% –13%)
  - Minority women < White women
- ~59% of victims disclose to family and/or friends
- Most who disclose do *not* do so for the purposes of seeking immediate intervention and assistance
  - Victims need be believed, validated, and supported in order to enhance disclosure, adaptive coping, and control over their recovery
Harms associated with reporting

- Fear
  - Humiliation, retaliation, being ostracized
  - The investigation will be confusing, invasive, re-traumatizing, and futile

- 90% who have post-assault contact with formal systems experience at least one highly distressing secondary victimization behavior

- Negative disclosure and help-seeking experiences:
  - Feeling depressed, anxious, blamed, violated, increased social withdrawal, increased self-blame, decreased sexual assertiveness, less likely to seek further help
What do we already know about perpetration?

- What is sexual assault perpetration?
- How common is it?
- What roles do alcohol use, peer norms, and membership on athletic teams or in fraternities play?
What is sexual assault perpetration?

- Sexual contact with another person when she/he did not want the contact or could not consent
  - Contact can range from touching to intercourse
    - State-of-the-art surveys ask behaviorally specific questions about frequency
      - Tactics
        - Manipulation
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        - Use of alcohol or drugs to incapacitate
        - Threat of or use of force
      - Outcomes
        - Unwanted contact
        - Attempted rape
        - Rape

- Allow for estimates that fit criminal codes, Title IX definitions, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention definitions of sexual violence
How common is perpetration?

- Results are reported as the percentage who disclose *any* form of non-consensual sexual contact, and/or
- The percentage of those who commit specific types of sexual assault by each individual tactic
- Time frame can vary
Patterns of male sexual coercion by outcome

Adolescence (n = 647)
- Consensual: 76%
- Rape/ Attempted Rape: 7%
- Other Coercive Acts: 17%

First Year of College (n = 492)
- Consensual: 86%
- Rape/ Attempted Rape: 9%
- Other Coercive Acts: 5%

Lifetime (n = 145)
- Consensual: 69%
- Rape/ Attempted Rape: 11%
- Other Coercive Acts: 20%
The role of alcohol use, peer norms, and membership on athletic teams or in fraternities

- Alcohol use per se does not cause sexual assault
- Associated with sexual assault:
  - Current alcohol use
  - Alcohol expectations
  - Associating with peers who sexually objective women and encourage casual sex
  - Anger at women
- Alcohol should not be used to blame the victim or excuse the perpetrator
The role of alcohol use, peer norms, and membership on athletic teams or in fraternities

- Increased risk of sexual violence perpetration:
  - Fraternity membership
  - Sports participation
    - Due to peer culture, not membership per se
How We Know It: Campus Climate Surveys
Background

- **Not Alone report**
  - Recommends campus climate surveys by 2016
  - Provides a toolkit, with a sample survey

- **This edict has led to a cottage-industry**
  - "These quick-and-dirty programs online are really good at marketing their product...But I'm not at all convinced that they're effective at doing much of anything except documenting that policy has been met."
    
    -- John Foubert, Oklahoma State University

  - “That scares me...Money is being poured into getting those programs that are homegrown, and usually that's a bad idea.”
    
    -- Charlene Senn, University of Windsor in Ontario
Concern about the integrity of these surveys—
their costliness, validity, reliability

ARC3: Administrator–Research Campus Climate Collaborative

A group of leading sexual assault and harassment researchers, Title IX coordinators, student affairs professionals, campus advocates, students, and campus law enforcement
Twenty-two experts collaborated to create a scientifically sound survey
- Balances the need for scientific standardization with flexibility for individual institutions
- Responsive to the White House Task Force initiatives on Title IX
- Pilot tested on four campuses
  • Updates were released in Fall 2015
Madison Summit for Campus Climate and Sexual Misconduct collaborators who collectively designed the survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antonia Abbey</td>
<td>Professor of Psychology</td>
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<td>Noel Busch-Armendariz</td>
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<td>University of Texas at Austin</td>
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<td>Gretchen Clum</td>
<td>Associate Professor of Public Health</td>
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<td>Sarah Cook</td>
<td>Professor of Psychology and Associate Dean, Honors College</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalia Corby-Edwards</td>
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<td>American Psychological Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilia Cortina</td>
<td>Associate Professor of Psychology and Women’s Studies</td>
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<td>Karol Dean</td>
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<td>Louise Douce</td>
<td>Special Assistant to Vice President of Student Life at The Ohio State University</td>
<td>The Ohio State University</td>
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<td>Bill Plack</td>
<td>Associate Professor of Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Freyd</td>
<td>Professor of Psychology</td>
<td>University of Oregon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jaray Gillespie</td>
<td>Assistant Dean of Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Hedgepeth</td>
<td>Government Relations Manager</td>
<td>American Association of University Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathryn Holland</td>
<td>Doctoral Candidate in Psychology and Women’s Studies</td>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janet Hyde</td>
<td>Professor of Psychology and Gender &amp; Women’s Studies</td>
<td>University of Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Koss</td>
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<td>University of Arizona</td>
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<td>Felicia McGinty</td>
<td>Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs</td>
<td>Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meredith Smith</td>
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<td>University of Connecticut</td>
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<td>Kate Stover</td>
<td>Educational Programmer</td>
<td>Title IX Compliance Institute</td>
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Guiding Principles: Committed to

- Inclusiveness, mutual respect, and collaboration
- Independence and integrity in research
- Use of the best scientific evidence
- Equal focus on victimization and perpetration
- Adoption of a civil rights approach grounded in Title IX
- Sensitivity to the unique issues faced by various diverse populations and institutional types
Goals of Campus Climate Surveys

- Student-focused
- A barometer of the success of policies, procedures, services, and prevention programs
- An educational opportunity and an intervention
- A message to students that their experiences matter
- Provide into reasons for sexual misconduct and the environments that foster it
<table>
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<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ITEMS</th>
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<td>6</td>
<td>SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY STUDENTS</td>
<td>19-23</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>STALKING VICTIMIZATION</td>
<td>10-16</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>STALKING PERPETRATION</td>
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<td>DATING VIOLENCE VICTIMIZATION</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>DATING VIOLENCE PERPETRATION</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>SEXUAL VIOLENCE VICTIMIZATION</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>SEXUAL VIOLENCE PERPETRATION</td>
<td>25-32</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>PEER RESPONSES</td>
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<td>CONSENT</td>
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<td>Bystander Intervention</td>
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<td>CAMPUS SAFETY</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0:30</td>
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What to Do About It
Primary prevention

- Begin early in adolescence
  - Teaching healthy relationships
  - Teaching sexual empowerment
- Focus on changing behaviors of potential perpetrators
Switch from a negative to a positive approach

- Redirecting focus from preventing negative behaviors to environmental and policy approaches that support curricula which promote health, particularly when they reduce:
  - Alcohol use
  - Negative peer attitudes and norms
  - Harassment, assault, and physical aggression
Norm-based prevention efforts based on principles of bystander intervention

- Focus on training individuals to
  - Interrupt situations that have a risk of sexual violence
  - Support victims after an assault
Intervene and Offer Assistance (HELP)

1. Notice the incident
   - yes: Interpret as an emergency
   - no: no

2. Interpret as an emergency
   - yes: Assume responsibility
   - no: no

3. Assume responsibility
   - yes: Know appropriate response
   - no: no

4. Know appropriate response
   - yes: Implement decision
   - no: no

5. Implement decision
   - yes: HELP
   - no: no

EMERGENCY

NO HELP
Bystander intervention programs

- Urge action and provide practice for responses
- Build empathy for rape survivors
- Focus on responsibility to intervene might also change likelihood to perpetrate
- Appeal to men’s self-conceptions as potential helpers
  - By moving away from the “victim–perpetrator binary,” men are more likely to attend to message without being threatened
Bystander intervention program results

- Increased identification of risky situations
- Increased bystander efficacy
- Decreased victimization
- Decreased self-report of perpetration
- Increased willingness to help
- Reduced rape myth acceptance
Based in theory and research on physical resistance as a risk reduction strategy for women

- AAA algorithm
  - Assess the situation as potentially dangerous
  - Acknowledge potential rape situation
  - Act using rape resistance strategies
Sexual Assault Resistance program characteristics

Training content:

- Improvement of women’s assessment of risk
- Problem-solving strategies
- Acknowledging danger
- Overcoming emotional barriers to resisting
- Practice in resisting verbal coercion
- Self-defense training (acquaintances and larger attackers)
- Sexual information
- Safer sex practices
- Strategies for sexual communication
Sexual Assault Resistance program results

- Reduced risk of completed rape
- Reduced incidence of attempted rape
- Reduced risk of attempted coercion
- Reduced risk of nonconsensual sexual contact
Conclusions
## Goals of policies & programs – rape prevention and reduction

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  victimization                                               | • Health policies  
  • Programs to build resilience                                |
| Treatment of/for perpetrators                             | • Legal and procedural consequences that support justice and attend to survivors’ concerns  
  • Therapeutic interventions to reduce future violence       |
Some practical policy implications

- Campus climate surveys should
  - Be based on reliable and valid measures
  - Be flexible enough to meet local concerns
  - Be open to revision as new evidence emerges
  - Focus on perpetration as well as victimization
  - Cover the range of Title IX violations—stalking, sexual harassment, and dating violence, in addition to sexual assault
Some practical policy implications

- Respect victims’ autonomy in deciding when and how to disclose and report
  - Requiring reporting to police before an institution can investigate would be harmful to victims' well-being and result in less reporting

- Education and prevention programming should be part of institutional responses
Thank you

- For more information on ARC3
  http://campusclimate.gsu.edu/