



PREVENTION
is possible

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

APRIL 2016

**Kent County Sexual Assault Prevention Action Team
Annual Newsletter**

WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS...

FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Nearly 1 in 5 women in the United States have experienced rape or attempted rape some time in their lives.
- In the United States, 1 in 71 men have experienced rape or attempted rape.
- An estimated 32.3% of multiracial women, 27.5% of American Indian/Alaska Native women, 21.2% of non-Hispanic black women, 20.5% of non-Hispanic white women, and 13.6% of Hispanic women were raped during their lifetimes.
- Nearly 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men have experienced sexual violence victimization other than rape at some point in their lifetime.

NOT ALWAYS A STRANGER

- Nearly 3 out of 4 adolescents (74%) who have been sexually assaulted were victimized by someone they knew well. One-fifth (21.1%) were committed by a family member.
- In 2005-10, about 55% of rape or sexual assault victimizations occurred at or near the victim's home, and another 12% occurred at or near the home of a friend, relative, or acquaintance.

UNDER-REPORTING LEADS TO LACK OF PUNISHMENT

- The majority of sexual assaults, an estimated 63%, are never reported to the police.
- The prevalence of false reporting cases of sexual violence is low, yet when survivors come forward, many face scrutiny or encounter barriers.

These statistics and more can be found and www.NSRV.org/SAAM.

Sexual violence happens in every community and affects people of all genders and ages. The impacts of sexual violence affect individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole. You can learn the facts about sexual violence and play an active role in changing misconceptions.

WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Sexual violence is any type of unwanted sexual contact. This can include words and actions of a sexual nature against a person's will and without their consent.

Consent is voluntary, mutual, and can be withdrawn at any time. Reasons someone might not consent include fear, age, illness, disability, and/or influence of alcohol or other drugs.

A person may use force, threats, manipulation, or coercion to commit sexual violence. Anyone can experience sexual violence, including children, teens, adults, and elders. Those who sexually abuse can be acquaintances, family members, trusted individuals, or strangers.

FORMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Rape or sexual assault
- Child sexual assault and incest
- Sexual assault by a person's spouse or partner
- Unwanted sexual contact/touching
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual exploitation and trafficking
- Exposing one's genitals or naked body to other(s) without consent
- Masturbating in public
- Watching someone in private acts without their knowledge or permission

THE VICTIM IS NEVER AT FAULT

It doesn't matter what someone is wearing or how they are acting, victims are never to blame. A person may use force, threats, manipulation, or coercion to commit sexual violence. An absence of injuries to the victim does not indicate consent.

WHY NOT REPORT?

There are many reasons why someone may choose not to report to law enforcement or tell anyone about an experience.

Some include:

- Concern about not being believed
- Fear of the attackers getting back at them
- Shame or fear of being blamed
- Pressure from others not to tell
- Distrust of law enforcement
- Belief that there is not enough evidence
- Desire to protect the attacker

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS PREVENTABLE

We can all help create a culture of empathy, respect, and equity. Prevention starts with challenging victim-blaming and believing survivors when they disclose. In your personal life, you can model supportive relationships and behaviors and speak up when you hear sexist, racist, transphobic, or homophobic comments. Each of us is essential in challenging harmful attitudes and the societal acceptance of rape.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

For free and confidential sexual assault crisis services, contact the 24-hour YCWA West Central Michigan hotline: 616.776.7273 (RAPE).

When everyone is involved PREVENTION IS POSSIBLE



nsvrc.org/saam



Sexual Assault
Awareness Month

"PREVENTION IS POSSIBLE" IS THE THEME OF THIS APRIL'S SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH. IT TAKES MANY VOICES AND ROLES TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE. THIS APRIL, WE'LL FOCUS ON DIFFERENT WAYS TO TAKE ACTION TO PROMOTE SAFETY, RESPECT, AND EQUALITY. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT NSRVS.ORG/SAAM OR CHECK OUT #SAAM

WHAT IS PREVENTION?

Prevention aims to stop sexual violence before it has a chance to happen. It is possible to create communities where everyone is treated with respect and equality. This can be done by promoting safe behaviors, thoughtful policies, and healthy relationships.

Prevention strategies that address the root causes and social norms that allow sexual violence to exist in the first place are the most effective. This means making the connection between all forms of oppression (including racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, adultism, ageism and others). Oppression creates a culture in which inequality thrives and violence is seen as normal.

Many communities are already reducing the risk of sexual violence through efforts that promote safety, respect, equality, and accountability.

BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION

The time for prevention is now. Join us in promoting safe behaviors, thoughtful policies, and healthy relationships. Your efforts are important and necessary. Together, we can create safe and equitable communities where every person is treated with respect.

Sexual violence is a widespread problem, but the good news is that it is preventable.

PREVENTION IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

WHAT YOU CAN DO

As individuals, all of us have a role to play in creating safe environments. We can all:

- Intervene to stop problematic and disrespectful behavior
- Promote and model healthy attitudes, behaviors, and relationships
- Believe survivors and assist them in finding resources.

WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO

Communities and organizations also have a role to play in serving as leaders on this issue by:

- Creating and strengthening policies to promote safety, equality, and respect
- Assessing the risks in their environment
- Promoting respectful behaviors
- Providing support for survivors
- Holding those who harm others accountable and ensuring that appropriate treatment options are available.

WHAT BUSINESSES CAN DO

- Promote prevention and support for survivors through policies and education
- Model healthy attitudes and relationships with clients and consumers
- Promote positive messages and behaviors through marketing campaigns and advertising content
- Invest funding to make sexual violence prevention a social responsibility priority.

EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

A LOOK AT SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE AT LOCAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

BY KATIE ELGERSMA, KENT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT COLLEGE INTERN

1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men in the United States are sexually assaulted while attending college. Both male and female sexual assault is not reported a staggering 90% of the time, leaving the perpetrator unpunished, while the victim faces the life-altering aftereffects of the assault. Colleges (public, two-year, and private) in the Grand Rapids area show statistics no different than the national averages of sexual assault, while the crime remains underreported. In the past few years, there has been a major growth in campus-wide sexual assault education and awareness.

Locally, students at Grand Valley State University (GVSU), Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC), and Calvin College receive education about sexual assault through various outlets offered by the schools. These include online training modules, peer education theater groups, faculty and staff orientation sessions, student leader trainings, and posters, brochures, and videos circulating the campuses. In order to organize these efforts, the campuses employ Title IX Coordinators to work with students, faculty, staff, and others who take action and start the discussion about sexual assault on campus. Each campus faces unique challenges with sexual assault prevention and awareness, which the coordinators must take into account in their work.

At GVSU, Title IX Coordinator Theresa Rowland has observed a larger number of sexual assault cases, with fewer stalking or dating domestic violence. She believes that the increased rate in specifically sexual assault reporting is due to the amount of awareness created by on-campus education in regards to sexual assault. Stalking and dating domestic violence, however, are often dismissed by college students as problems that don't exist at the university, or if they do, they aren't really a big deal. This false mindset, along with the hesitation a victim might have to report someone they have been in a relationship with, leads to an underreporting of relationship violence. Because of this, there continues to be an emphasis on all types of violence prevention education for both victims and bystanders at the university, as well as continued development of a crisis response system on campus. Theresa hopes that Grand Valley "can do everything [they] need to do to make sure everyone is supported" and encourages "community members to let students know that there are advocates on campus who are always available to students".

CALVIN

Calvin College, a four-year, private college with religious affiliation, faces unique challenges in its approach to sexual assault prevention. According to the institution's Title IX Coordinator, Deirdre Honner, there has been some pushback from the Calvin community against the need for trainings and there are some that believe that sexual assault does not exist on a Christian campus. Deirdre and other Calvin employees have focused on a holistic approach and "a mindset of compassion, grace, and respect" in sexual assault prevention and education at Calvin. Through the use of online training modules, residence hall programming, and staff and student leader workshops in a "teach the teacher" format, Dierdre believes that Calvin is making steps in the right direction.

GRCC

As Title IX Coordinator at a college with a high turnover rate and an all-commuter student body, Grand Rapids Community College's Kimberly DeVries focuses on connecting with as many students as possible to get the word out about resources available. Trainings must be developed for a nontraditional student audience, which in the past have included online videos, healthy relationships trainings, and working with the leaders of student organizations and athletics. Typically, GRCC's reporting involves a situation off campus with a nonstudent perpetrator, so Kimberly stresses the need for many members of the community to be involved. "I am increasingly seeing the need for all of us to work together... To work cross-cultural, cross-campus, cross-everywhere. Expand your focus as much as possible. Bring in as many voices as you can, because if we're not helping students develop healthy relationships on the ground level, they're more likely to reach unhealthy places later on."

Although each of these campuses faces different challenges when approaching the issue of sexual assault, all three Title IX Coordinators report a common theme in their work: the need for more voices to encourage the reporting of assault, violence, and harassment. Resources and advocates are available to students, but the victim must come forward in order for them to be used. That step forward is a scary one for a victim to make, but with more people available for support, resources can be utilized and work toward future prevention can be possible.

GVSU

gvsu.edu/itsonus

CALVIN

calvin.edu/broene/groups/sapt

GRCC

theredflagcampaign.org/campaign

CHECK IT OUT!

CALL ANYTIME.



616.776.7273 (RAPE)

The confidential sexual assault hotline at the YWCA West Central Michigan is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Offering survivors shelter, advocacy, support groups, counseling, and 24-hour medical-forensic exams (rape exams).

eliminating racism
empowering women

ywca

west central michigan

Be an Advocate

The YWCA's Nurse Examiner Program offers free medical-forensic exams (or "rape exams") to anyone who has experienced sexual assault in the last 120 hours. Patients are referred through hospitals, law enforcement, and the sexual assault hotline. Examinations are available 24 hours a day by appointment at the YWCA with a forensic nurse and advocate, but exams occurring after business hours and weekends are accompanied by the nurse as well as a specially trained volunteer advocate.

Volunteer advocates serve on an on-call basis two weeknights per month and/or one weekend per month, with a required one-year commitment of service. Volunteers provide crisis intervention to survivors of sexual assault as well as information and support via telephone and outreach at the YWCA's Nurse Examiner Program and at Kent County area hospital emergency rooms.

If you are interested in becoming a sexual assault volunteer advocate, please contact Suzanne Katerberg at 616.426.3746 or skaterberg@ywcawcmi.org.

THE POWER OF YOUTH ACTIVISM



Students (high school to college freshmen) encouraged to join!

Applications for 2016-17 accepted June 2016.

Visit ylav.org or email stopviolencegrteens@gmail.com for details.

Young Leaders Against Violence (YLAV) is a local youth-led coalition focused on increasing awareness and preventing relationship and sexual violence. Being part of YLAV provides the opportunity to be a leader and energize your community to take a stand against violence. For more information, visit ylav.org.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- 1 in 3 teens will experience physical, emotional, or sexual abuse from someone that they are in a relationship with before they become an adult
- Teens that are abusive or experience abuse in their early relationships are more likely to be abusive or be abused in their adult relationships.

For more statistics and information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

YLAV IS MENTORED BY:

Family Futures, Kent County Health Department, Safe Haven Ministries, and YWCA West Central Michigan



JUST FOR TEENS!

SAFE DATES PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS

Family Futures – Resources Against Violent Encounters (RAVE):
Trinity Clemens, 616.454.4673
rave@familyfutures.net

Safe Haven Ministries:
Danielle Lucksted,
dlucksted@safehavenministries.org
616.452.6664.

Kent County Health Department:
Amy Endres Bercher
amy.bercher@kentcountymi.gov
616.632.7217

80%

OF SEXUAL ASSAULTS ARE COMMITTED BY A FRIEND, ACQUAINTANCE, OR FAMILY MEMBER OF THE VICTIM

Don't wait for others to act!

RECOGNIZE that non-consensual sex is sexual assault

IDENTIFY situations in which sexual assault may occur

INTERVENE in situations where consent has not or cannot be given

YouTube: **"Kent County Real Heroes"**

IT'S ON US Sexual Assault Awareness Month

LET'S CHAT...

...WITH TEENS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA:

What is the best thing about social media?

- To stay connected
- Share things with family and friends
- Talk to new people
- Learn new things
- Connect with celebrities
- Prevent boredom
- Express yourself
- Plan and coordinate



...and the worst thing?

bullying +
harassment +
stalking +
rumors =

DRAMA

How would you react if someone you shared personal information with posted it online?

- #1. Be upset and angry
- #2. Delete/report the post
- #3. Tell an adult
- #4. Do nothing

How often are you chatting online with people you may or may not know?

24/7

Do your parents monitor your online activity?



Approximately 75% of responding teens said NO

TOP 6 APPS USED BY TEENS



1. FACEBOOK 2. INSTAGRAM 3. SNAPCHAT 4. TWITTER 5. KIK 6. VINE

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

WWW.STOPBULLYING.GOV

Tips on how to prevent cyberbullying



WWW.THATSNOTCOOL.COM

An interactive website for teens that provides videos and other resources about cyberbullying in a fun and engaging way

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT BODY SAFETY

By Misti DeVries,

**Children's Assessment Center:
Hearing the Story,
Healing the Pain,
Halting the Cycle**

We've all heard the term "stranger danger", but did you know that approximately 90% of child sexual abuse survivors know their offender? It is often someone known, loved, and trusted by the family. With that in mind, here are some tips on talking to your students/patients about child sexual abuse:

1 "Private parts are the parts of our bodies that are covered by a swimsuit." This is a great way of introducing to children where the private parts of their bodies are.

2 Begin talking to your students/patients at a young age. It is important for children to know that their bodies belong to them, and that they have the right to speak if they feel uncomfortable.

3 Use the proper names for their body parts, not "cute" names. This will allow them to use the proper names if someone is hurting them, and it helps to avoid any confusion if they are using "cute" names.

4 Let your students/patients know that they should never keep secrets from a safe adult, especially when it comes to their bodies. Encourage them to share with you or another safe adult if someone is telling them to keep a secret. Keeping secrets about our bodies is NEVER safe.

5 Let them know that if anyone asks them to touch his or her private parts, this is NOT ok. This is something they should report to you immediately, as well.

6 Finally, let your student/patient know that you BELIEVE them. Thank them for telling you, tell them that they did the right thing and it is not their fault, and let them know how proud you are of them for telling you.

Most importantly, keep these conversations ongoing, consistent, and open. Paying attention, listening and responding accordingly can significantly reduce the risk of your child being harmed.

The 2016 Oscars will be remembered for generating a lot of awareness on the issue of sexual and gender-based violence. The 'Best Picture' Academy Award winning film, "Spotlight", exposes the issue of child sexual abuse within the Catholic Church in Boston. Vice President Joe Biden introduced Lady Gaga's anthem "Till it Happens to You," from the documentary, "The Hunting Ground", and it was powerful to have the stage filled by survivors of college sexual assault. Best Actress went to Brie Larson, for her role in the film "Room" as a young mother held captive, and assaulted for years before finding a way to escape. Best Documentary Short was won by Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy for her film "Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness" about honor killings in Pakistan. The message from the Oscars was loud and clear: no more silence, expect pressure from many fronts to change any law, institution, societal attitude or behavior that condones sexual and gender-based violence and doesn't support the children, women and men that have been harmed.

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE



Lady Gaga performs "Til It Happens to You" at the 2016 Academy Awards surrounded by sexual assault survivors.

Photo provided by USA Today, Hollywood, CA, February 28, 2016

KIDZ HAVE RIGHTS SEES SUCCESS!

KIDZ Have Rights (KHR), the Children's Assessment Center's (CAC) sexual abuse prevention program, has pioneered educating children in body safety since 2004. Implementing a three-pronged approach, KHR reaches teachers, parents, and students ensuring not only that the expectations of Erin's Law are met, but that children and the adults in their lives are informed and equipped to keep kids safe.

Since the inception of KHR, the partnership between school staff, principals, social workers, and counselors has grown and consequently had a significant and positive impact on the children of Kent County. Teachers have become more aware of the signs and indicators of child sexual abuse, and their comfort level with the subject has increased. When students identify their Safe Adults at school, (those adults they would seek out for help), over 90% select their current classroom teacher or a teacher from a previous year. When teachers are given the tools they need to correctly respond to a disclosure from a student, the healing process begins. Students are listened to, believed, and helped.

Child sexual abuse can be a difficult topic for parents to discuss with their children, so much so, that parents might avoid the discussion altogether. For the six week period following the KHR classroom presentation, parents are sent educational materials that empower and encourage them in their commitment to keeping their children safe. KHR also offers to send monthly eblasts/newsletters to parents who are interested, enabling parents to continue to broaden their knowledge base and engage their children in meaningful discussions about body safety.

KHR begins seeing students in kindergarten and continues through 4th grade. Throughout these sessions, students learn about their "8 Rights", three types of touch, and what to do if they receive a touch that is unsafe, along with identifying safe adults in their family, school, and community. The presentation meets students where they are intellectually and developmentally and creates a safe environment in which students can learn. This connection with students is evident in the questions they ask, such as, "What if you tell a safe adult someone is touching your private parts and they don't believe you?", or, "What if it's a friend who touches your private parts, and they say they won't be your friend anymore if you tell?"

Recently, a child shared with a KHR educator that her step dad was touching her private parts as well as her younger sister's. She didn't know what to do because he would yell at them, and she was scared he might hurt them or their mom. For this brave little girl, the abuse stopped the day a KIDZ Have Rights educator came to talk to her class. She is one of many children who have shared with us over the last twelve years. Many times students choose to share with safe adults in their life. It is reassuring to be a part of the multidisciplinary team at the CAC, knowing these children are now getting the help they need.

In 2004, KIDZ Have Rights began seeing third grade students in Kent County. That year 108 children heard our message. Every year since, the program has grown by over 20%. This school year, four educators will talk with over 23,000 children throughout Kent County about keeping their bodies safe. Through the years and the program's growth, our goals remain the same. We believe children mustn't be frightened or nervous when it comes to the safety of their bodies. When children know what feelings to look for and whom the safe adults are in their lives, they can tell if a touch makes them feel confused, nervous, sad, or afraid--it empowers them. We embrace the words of Helen Keller: "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

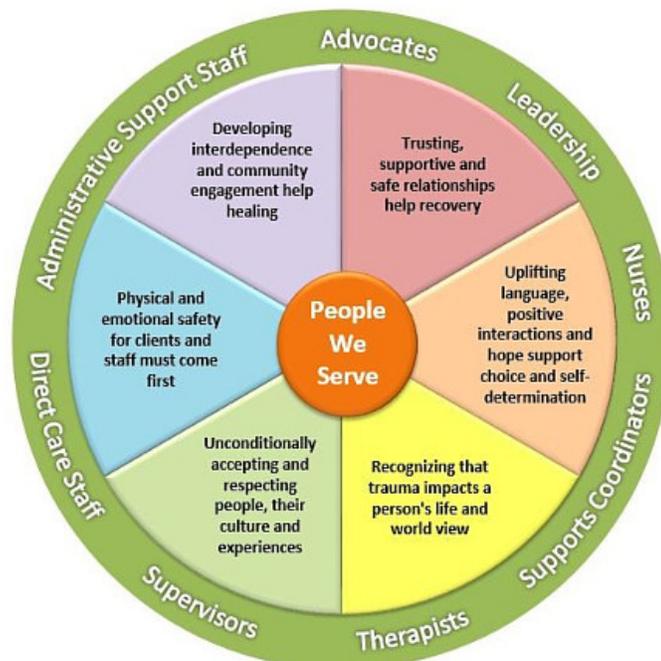
COLLABORATING FOR CHANGE

Individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) are at significantly greater risk of sexual assault, compared to people without identified disabilities. As many as 83% of women and 32% of men with IDD will be sexually assaulted within their lifetime. Yet, individuals with IDD are underrepresented in population of survivors seeking sexual assault services.

Working to End Assault and Violence for Everyone (WEAVE) is a collaboration between the YWCA West Central Michigan and four major disability providers in Kent County - MOKA, Hope Network, Thresholds and Spectrum Community Services. This collaboration was created to increase identification and reduce barriers to victims of sexual assault who have intellectual and developmental disabilities. The WEAVE partners worked to integrate the philosophical approaches of both service arenas. Trauma-informed principles, used by sexual assault providers, were melded with with foundational elements of the Culture of Gentleness, used by disability providers, to generate the "WEAVE Perspective."

Over the last three years, WEAVE has conducted a Needs Assessment, developed an action plan, and generated resources now being used. There is a "Guide for Staff" providing information on sexual assault, how to recognize symptoms and grooming behaviors, and how to respond to victims with IDD. There is also an "Introduction to the Nurse Examiner Program" providing information on the medical-forensic exams to answer questions and reduce anxiety about this service. A Healthy Relationships Group is being piloted those with IDD. The sessions cover a variety of topics designed to help clients distinguish between safe and unsafe relationships, and have a comfort level in disclosing abuse. WEAVE also developed a Safety and Access assessment tool to evaluate physical accessibility and welcoming nature of sites. To support long-term institutional change, a policy assessment template based on the WEAVE Perspective has been developed to help streamline policy/procedure review at each agency.

WEAVE continues to work on developing cross-training plans for all professionals who interact with victims of sexual assault who may have a developmental or intellectual disability. Looking to the future, WEAVE anticipates including more community agencies and systems in our growth.



The WEAVE Perspective

*Interested in the WEAVE resources for your group?
Contact Tom Cottrell at 616.459.4681 or tcottrell@ywcawcmi.org.*

Stop This Traffic

by the
**Kent County
Human
Trafficking
Task Force**

The Kent County Human Trafficking Task Force convened its first meeting on March 10, 2015 and was hosted by the YWCA West Central Michigan. The goal was bringing together community organizations, law enforcement, and medical personnel to assess interest in forming a body to coordinate local efforts. There were 25 organizations present and all were eager to begin work on changing the approach to trafficking in Kent County. Since that time, we have seen tremendous growth and now have 38 social and victim service agencies; 13 state and local law enforcement offices; three educational institutes; and five medical facilities represented on the task force, as well as concerned citizens.

In April 2015, the YWCA of West Central Michigan secured a \$50,000

grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health and Human Services to create the structure of the task force, run a local awareness campaign, and develop a local resource guide. During the first year, the task force established an organizational structure, a mission, a goal for the year, an elected seven-member leadership team, a professional website, a Facebook following of over 500 people, a 24/7 local hotline, and a monthly meeting. In September the task force launched a media blitz to generate discussion about the issue and involved local news stations in a "red flags" campaign around the county, city bus signs, and ads in movie theaters.

The mission of the task force is to build awareness, collaboration, and investigative capacity to address sex and labor trafficking in Kent County. The goal of the task force for the first year is to create a community of ready first responders. One important step toward that goal was hosting a "Train the Trainer" event in December 2015. The event took place at HQ with Andy Soper as the speaker. The training was well attended with 11 law enforcement agencies from Kent County, 11 social service organizations, and nine medical centers represented. We now have 41 trained instructors to deliver human trafficking awareness and practical training to medical facilities, social service agencies, schools, law enforcement offices, churches, community groups or businesses. If you are interested in scheduling a training, email kentcountyhumantraffickingtf@gmail.com. If you want to get involved, consider attending one of our bi-monthly meetings. Visit stopthistraffic.org for more information.