

Sexual Assault Discussion Information & Resources



For Residence Life Staff

This debriefing packet was developed by the Peer Health Advocates of WesWELL to assist Residence Life staff members and other students in discussing issues of sexual assault and relationship violence with their peers. While it is not the definitive source on the subject, we hope it will help provide you with ideas, discussion questions & resources to guide your efforts.

Two especially appropriate times to have a discussion on these issues is after students have attended "Unspeakable Acts" (during New Student Orientation) or after Take Back the Night.

**For more information, contact
WesWELL, the Office of Health Education
Davison Health Center, 2nd floor
X2466 • www.wesleyan.edu/weswell**

Tips for discussion facilitation & creating a safe space for discussion on sexual assault

- Recognize that your role as discussion facilitator is not to be the expert, but rather to guide the discussion and keep it focused on the most relevant issues that the group wants to discuss.
 - Observe the mood of the group. Try not to push questions onto the group or put anyone on the spot.
 - Establish confidentiality within the space. (“What is said here, stays here”)
 - Establish ground rules by brainstorming with the group. Some examples include (but are not limited to):
 - Using ‘I statements’.
 - ‘Step up, step back’. Don’t let one or two people dominate the conversation.
 - Keep it respectful, etc.
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Sample discussion questions

These questions are only meant to be used as a guide. Feel free to add or subtract any based on the feeling of the group or direction of the conversation.

- What are your feelings after seeing Unspeakable Acts/Take Back the Night? Are there any thoughts, feelings or reactions that someone would like to share?
- Have your views on these issues changed at all?
- Why do you think sexual assault is so pervasive?
- Do you think sexual assault is a problem at Wesleyan?
- What role do alcohol and other drugs play in sexual assault?
- What can the Wesleyan community do to prevent sexual assault?

Facts & Statistics

Rape/Sexual Assault General Characteristics

- According to the U.S. Department of Justice, victims of rape and sexual assault report that in nearly **3 out of 4** incidents, the offender was not a stranger. Based on police-recorded incident data, in **90%** of the rapes of children younger than 12, the child knew the offender. **Two-thirds** of the victims 18 to 29 years old had a prior relationship with the rapist. (Greenfield, et al, 1997. *Sex Offenses and Offenders: An Analysis of Data on Rape and Sexual Assault*. Department of Justice.)
- **91%** of the victims of rape and sexual assault are female and 9% are male. Nearly **99%** of the offenders they described in single-victim incidents are male. (*Violence Against Women*, Bureau of Justice Statistics, USDOJ, 1997.)
- In **29%** of rapes, the offender used a weapon. (Ibid.)
- Around the world at least **1 woman in every 3** has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Most often the abuser is a member of her own family. (*Population Reports: Ending Violence Against Women, 2000. Population Information Program*, Center for Communications Programs. Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and Center for Healthcare Gender Equity.)
- Only **16%** of rapes are ever reported to the police. (Kilpatrick et al., 1992. *Rape in America: A report to the nation*. National Victim Center.)

Perpetrators

- At least **45%** of rapists were under the influence of alcohol or drugs. (U.S. Department of Justice, 1994. *Violence Against Women*, Bureau of Justice Statistics.)
- Only **2%** of rapists are convicted and imprisoned. (U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee: *Conviction and Imprisonment Statistics*, 1993.)
- In the 1994 Ms. Report on Recognizing, Fighting, and Surviving Date and Acquaintance Rape, college aged men were asked about their sexual behavior. Without using the word "rape", men were asked if they had participated in specific acts that met the definition of rape, attempted rape, sexual coercion, and unwanted sexual contact, for example, "Have you ever engaged in sexual intercourse with a woman when she didn't want to by threatening or using some degree of physical force?" The results showed that the **2,971** college men reported committing: *187 rapes, 157 attempted rapes, 327 episodes of sexual coercion, 854 incidents of unwanted sexual contact*. (Warshaw, 1994.)

- In the same report, **84%** of the men who committed rape said what they did was definitely not rape and 1 in 12 of the male students surveyed had committed acts that met the legal definitions of rape or attempted rape. (Ibid.)

Acquaintance Rape

- **77%** of completed rapes are committed by someone who is known to the victim. (Bureau of Justice Statistics. Sex Offenses and Offenders, 1997. U.S. Department of Justice.)
- In a study surveying more than 6,000 students at 32 colleges and universities in the U.S., **84%** knew their attacker, and **57%** of the rapes happened on dates. (Warshaw, 1994.)
- **13.3%** of college women indicated that they had been forced to have sex in a dating situation. (Johnson, et al, 2000. "Forced Sexual Intercourse Among Intimates," Journal of Interpersonal Violence.)

Sexual Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgendered Individuals

- In a sample of 412 university students, **16.9%** of the subjects reported that they were lesbian, gay, or bisexual; the remainder identified themselves as heterosexual. Of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual subjects **42.4%** (30.6% female and 11.8% male) and **21.4%** of the heterosexuals (17.8% female and 3.6% male) indicated they had been forced to have sex against their will. (Duncan et al., 199. "Prevalence of Sexual Assault Victimization Among Heterosexual and Gay/Lesbian University Students." Psychological Reports, 66.)
- In a study of 162 gay men and 111 lesbians, **52%** reported at least one incident of sexual coercion by same-sex partners. Gay men experienced **1.6** incidents per person, while lesbians experienced **1.2** incidents per person. (Waldner-Haugrud, et al., 1997. "Sexual Coercion in Gay/Lesbian Relationships: Descriptives and Gender Differences." Violence and Victims, 12 (1))
- **15%** of men who lived with a man as a couple reported being raped/assaulted or stalked by a male cohabitant. (Saltzman, et al., 1999. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Intimate Partner Violence Surveillance: Uniform definitions and recommended data elements.)

Male Victims of Sexual Assault

- An estimated **92,700** men are forcibly raped each year in the United States. (Tjaden and Thoemmes, 1998.)
- Male rape accounted for about **8%** of all rapes. Crimes including rapes that occurred in an institutionalized setting (such as prison, hospital or the military)

were not measured in the survey. (National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice, 1992.)

- Estimates suggest that males account for **25% to 35%** of child sexual abuse victims. (Finkelhor, "Current Information on the Scope and Nature of Child Sexual Abuse," 1994.)

Sexual Violence Against Women of Color

- **1 in 4** women residents of Los Angeles County reported at least one incident of an attempted or completed rape since the age of 18. (Koss and Harvey, 1991. The Rape Victim: Clinical and Community Interventions.)
- **44.8%** of African-American women, **38%** of white women, **25.6%** of Latinas, and **21.1%** of Asian-American women had a history of child sexual abuse. The rates for adult rape show African-American women disclosing the highest rate 37.9%, followed by white women (25.5%), Latinas (17.9%), and Asian-Americans at 10.5%. More than half (61.5%) of the African-American women who were sexually abused in childhood reported rape as an adult, white women (44.2%), Latinas (40%) and Asian-Americans (25%). (Urquiza and Goodin-Jones, 1994.)

Partner Rape

- Nearly **25 million women** and **7 million men** are raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner in their lifetime. (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998.)
- Sexual assault is reported by **33% to 46%** of women who are being physically assaulted by their husbands. (American Medical Association, 1995.)
- A study of a random sample of 930 women age 18 or older indicated that nearly **14%** of the women who had ever been married were the victims of at least one completed or attempted rape by their husbands or ex-husbands. (Russell, 1990. Rape in Marriage.)

Campus Sexual Violence

- **22%** of all rape victims are between the usual college ages of 18-24. (Kilpatrick, et al., 1992.)
- **75%** of male students and **55%** of female students involved in date rape had been drinking or using drugs. (Koss, 1998. "Hidden rape: Incident, Prevalence and descriptive characteristics of sexual aggression and victimization in a national sample of college students." Rape and Sexual Assault, Vol.2.)

- In a study surveying more than 6,000 students at 32 colleges and universities in the U.S:
 - **1 in 4** women had been victims of rape or attempted rape
 - **84%** of those raped knew their attacker, and 57% of the rapes happened on dates
 - Only **27%** of the women whose sexual assault met the legal definition of rape thought of themselves as rape victims
 - **42%** of the rape victims told no one about the assault, and only **5%** reported it to the police (Warshaw, 1994.)

Physical Violence

- About **85%** of victimizations by intimate partners in 1998 were against women. Women were victims of intimate partner violence at a rate about 5 times that of males. (Rennison and Welchans, 2000. Intimate Partner Violence, Bureau of Justice Statistics)
- In 1998, there were **1,932 females** murdered by males in single victim/ single offender incidents:
 - More than **12 times** as many females were murdered by a male they knew than were killed by male strangers.
 - **60%** percent of female homicide victims were wives or intimate acquaintances of their killers. (FBI Supplemental Homicide Report, 1998.)

Above facts and statistics from:

www.wvu.edu/chw/preventionandwellness/casas/Statistics.html

Women's responses to assault facts

- Only 27% of the women whose sexual assault met the legal definition of rape thought of themselves as rape victims
- 42% of college women who are raped tell no one about their assault
- 42% of the women who were raped said they had sex again with the men who assaulted them
- 42% of raped women said they expect to be raped again

Men's responses to rape facts

- 84% of college men who committed rape said that what they did was definitely not rape
- 55% of the men who raped said they had sex again with their victims
- One in fifteen male students reported committing a rape or attempting to commit rape during the preceding year

- Nearly one third of college men said they were likely to have sex with an unwilling partner if they thought they could get away with it

Reporting facts

- 5% of college women who are raped report the rape to the police
- 5% of college women who are raped seek help at a rape crisis center

Above facts & statistics from " I Never Called It Rape", by Robin Warshaw

Controversial Topics

You may run into individuals who become defensive. Their concerns are often:

- What about false accusations?
- What about the responsibility of the victim?
- What about the "gray area" surrounding consent?

False Accusations

It is a major trap in a discussion to get hung up on the myth that victims, for any number of reasons, often "cry rape". Dealing with the notion of false accusations is fairly straightforward because, according to the FBI, there are no more false accusations of rape than there are false accusations of any other crime. The actual figure is somewhere between 2 and 3%.

When they do occur, false accusations hurt all of us, especially the real victims of this crime who have to face disbelief. The vast majority of rapes are not reported and the tendency of the media is to draw focus to the exceptions, to the rare instances of false accusations, and with a focus on the "devastating effect" on the accused.

Responsibility

From a feminist perspective, the reason people are focused on the victim's responsibility is because it lets sexual coercers off the hook for their predatory behavior. If you can blame the victim, you don't have to take responsibility for your own actions. It is best to steer conversations away from this pitfall. Instead, ask, "How does this fit into the larger picture?" Ideally, we can look at the larger picture of rape, outside of the "he said, she said" debate.

- What does it mean that we try to hold the victim responsible for her rape?
- Does this mean we believe that women can't wear tank tops and short skirts?
- Does this mean we are saying women can't go out at night?
- Are we saying that anyone who goes to a bar and meets someone gets what he or she deserves?
- Are we saying that we don't have the right to drink and be safe from sexual assault and rape?
- Are we saying that being drunk is a form of consent?

Consent

Consent is another huge area of controversy, yet, in the eyes of the law, is usually the determinant of whether a sexual assault has occurred or not. What does "consent" mean? People project a great deal of fear into the consent debate. If you don't blame the victim it leaves the accused perpetrator vulnerable to the criminal justice system and other sanction -- the alternative to blaming the victim is making a criminal out of the accused perpetrator. How does blaming the victim maintain the balance of power in social relations?

Antioch College developed a very thorough consent protocol to stop date rape (<http://www.antioch-college.edu/Campus/sopp/index.html>). It requires that the person initiating sexual contact receive affirmative verbal consent at each level of intimacy:

Consent is defined as the act of willingly and verbally agreeing to engage in specific sexual conduct. The following are clarifying points:

- *Consent is required each and every time there is sexual activity.*
- *All parties must have a clear and accurate understanding of the sexual activity.*
- *The person(s) who initiate(s) the sexual activity is responsible for asking for consent.*
- *The person(s) who are asked are responsible for verbally responding.*
- *Each new level of sexual activity requires consent.*
- *Use of agreed upon forms of communication such as gestures or safe words is acceptable, but must be discussed and verbally agreed to by all parties before sexual activity occurs.*
- *Consent is required regardless of the parties' relationship, prior sexual history, or current activity (e.g. grinding on the dance floor is not consent for further sexual activity).*
- *At any and all times when consent is withdrawn or not verbally agreed to, the sexual activity must stop immediately.*
- *Silence is not consent.*
- *Body movements and non-verbal responses such as moans are not consent.*
- *A person can not give consent while sleeping.*
- *All parties must have unimpaired judgement (examples that may cause impairment include but are not limited to alcohol, drugs, mental health conditions, physical health conditions).*
- *All parties must use safer sex practices.*
- *All parties must disclose personal risk factors and any known STIs. Individuals are responsible for maintaining awareness of their sexual health.*

These requirements for consent do not restrict with whom the sexual activity may occur, the type of sexual activity that occurs, the props/toys/tools that are used, the number of persons involved, the gender(s) or gender expressions of persons involved.

Antioch's policy generated significant media ridicule. Why do you think there was so much negative reaction to this policy? Would you participate in a similar dialogue? Why or why not? What are important components of a campus sexual assault policy?

[Original source: <http://www.rapeis.org>]

Wesleyan's Sexual Misconduct Policy

The Wesleyan Sexual Misconduct Policy can be found in the Student Handbook and online at: www.wesleyan.edu/studenthandbook/3_sexual_misconduct.html

Sexual misconduct is an umbrella term that Wesleyan uses to describe behaviors ranging from intimidation and coercion to sexual harassment and sexual assault; it includes any sexual activity for which consent is not given. Sexual misconduct in any form is a violation of University policy.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual conduct within the context of employment or education. It encompasses a wide range of behaviors that have a negative effect on employees or students. Coercion is any action (including a verbal or physical threat) used by one person to compel another to participate in unwanted activity. Sexual assault is any unwanted, coerced, manipulated, or forced sexual contact or intercourse. This includes acts of date rape, acquaintance rape, stranger rape or gang rape.

Cases of sexual misconduct reported to the University will be referred to the Student Judicial Board for adjudication. For information about Wesleyan Judicial Resources and Processes, refer to The Code of Non-Academic Conduct, found online at www.wesleyan.edu/studenthandbook/

In it's introduction, the policy states:

All members of the Wesleyan community should be treated with respect and be free from all forms of harassment and abuse. Sexual misconduct is a violation of University policy and encompasses harassment, coercion, intimidation and/or sexual assault. Sexual misconduct includes any sexual activity for which consent is not given. The sexual harassment policy defines and addresses incidents of harassment and can be found in its entirety in the student handbook.

The policy also offers resources and action steps for a student to take whether they have been victimized, accused, witness an act of sexual misconduct, or are a supportive friend.

See the list below and the enclosed brochure for a variety of resources on sexual assault.

Web Resources

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
<http://www.ncadv.org/>

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network
1-800-656-HOPE (24 hour crisis line)
<http://www.rainn.org>

Project GHB
<http://www.projectghb.org/>

Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services (ConnSACS)
1-888-999-5545 (English)
1-888-568-8332 (Español)
<http://www.connsacs.org>

See It and Stop It
<http://www.seeitandstopit.org>

The New York Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project
<http://www.avp.org/>

Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project
1-800-832-1901 (24 hour crisis line)
<http://www.gmdvp.org>

Network for Battered Lesbians and Bisexual Women
(617) 423-7233 (Hotline Number)
<http://www.thenetworklared.org/>

Transgender Sexual Violence Project
FORGE
<http://www.forge-forward.org/transviolence/>

Rainbow Hope
<http://www.rainbowhope.org/>

Community United Against Violence
(415) 333-4357 (24 hour crisis line)
<http://cuav.org>

INCITE: Women of Color Against Violence
<http://www.incite-national.org/>

Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence
<http://www.apiahf.org/apidvinstitute/default.htm>

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community
<http://www.dvinstitute.org/>

Alianza Latina Nacional para erradicar la violencia domestica
National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence
<http://www.dvalianza.org/>

Sister's of Color Ending Sexual Assault
<http://www.sisterslead.org/>

Sakhi for South Asian Women
<http://www.sakhi.org/>

Men Can Stop Rape
<http://www.mencanstoprape.org/>

Male Survivor
<http://malesurvivor.org>

Additional web-based resources can be found on the WesWELL website at www.wesleyan.edu/weswell under "Sexual Assault & Relationship Violence".

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