

SEXUAL ASSAULT IN COLLEGE

Statistics

- Nearly 60% of completed rapes occurring on campus take place in a survivor's residence, 31% in other on-campus living quarters, and 10.3% in a fraternity (house). Fisher BS, Cullen FT, Turner MG. The Sexual Victimization of College Women.
- An estimated 20%-25% of college women in the United States experience an attempted or completed rape during their college career. Ibid.
- Of violent crimes reported on college campuses, 18% (485) were forcible rapes. FBI, "Crime in the U.S." 2007.
- 14% of undergraduate women were victims of at least one completed sexual assault since entering college; 5% were victims of forced sexual assault and 8% were sexually assaulted while incapacitated due to voluntary use of alcohol or drugs. Kilpatrick, et al., "Drug-facilitated, Incapacitated, and Forcible Rape: A National Study," NIJ, 2007.
- 90% of victims knew the offender; a classmate, friend, ex-boyfriend or acquaintance. 60% of sexual assaults occurred in the victim's residence, 30% in other campus residences, and 10% at a fraternity. Ibid.
- 16% of forcible sexual assault victims and 8% of incapacitated victims sought help from a crisis, health or victim's center. Krebs et al., "The Campus Sexual Assault Study," NIJ, 2007.
- 13% of forcible assault victims and 2% of victims assaulted while incapacitated reported their assault to a law enforcement agency.

Overview of the Issue

- Colleges have the highest rates for acquaintance/date rapes and alcohol-related sexual assaults.
- Alcohol can increase the likelihood of sexual assault. The offender feels more powerful, misinterprets interest and has an increased tendency to use force; the victim has an impaired perception of danger, decreased potential for self-protection and difficulty communicating desired limits.
- Deterrents for a college student reporting sexual assault include an actual or perceived lack of confidentiality, personal participation in illegal activities (drugs and/or alcohol) and the risk of jeopardizing one's future education.
- The Student Right to Know Act and the Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights insist on colleges providing basic rights to victims and publicly disclosing campus security policies and crime statistics. Some colleges, in efforts to protect the school's reputation, encourage victims to file with the campus justice system instead of the police. This process doesn't provide victims with needed resolution.

What You Can Do

- Educate yourself about campus risks and become familiar with on- and off-campus resources for sexual assault victims. Support training programs for sexual assault awareness on campus.
- Campus men should confront other men with violent or abusive behavior towards women.
- When someone discloses sexual assault, listen and believe without judgment, support their decisions, and encourage them to seek help.

Impact on Survivors

- Survivors of acquaintance rape have their trust violated and blame themselves for misjudging character or being in the situation where the assault occurred. This intensifies feelings of confusion and guilt.
- College student survivors face unique consequences apart from the physical and psychological scars. Missing classes or dropping out of school will impact their professional and personal goals.

Quotable

College should provide an opportunity for young adults to explore, experiment and take chances without being exploited or abused. Support training and awareness programs at your campus. Intervene if you witness assault.