

Violence Against Women Programming and Education on Campus: The Tide of Challenges



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Presenter Disclosures

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(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

“No relationships to disclose”



Overview/Objectives

- This presentation will provide an overview of:
 - Background & Purpose
 - Project Activities
 - Outcomes
 - Findings
 - Public Health Impact
 - Conclusions
 - Questions



Background

- College-aged women fall into the group at greatest risk of sexual assault (those ages 16-24)
- 1 in 5 women in college are assaulted before they graduate
- 75% of victims know their attackers
- The vast majority (90%) of sexual assaults on campus involve alcohol
- 1 in 12 women and 1 in 45 men will be stalked in their lifetime
- 1 in 3 college students has experienced abuse in a dating relationship



Study Shows Widespread Intolerance at the University Level

- Specific findings of Campus Tolerance's George Washington University's campus revealed:
- 60% of students have witnessed or been victims of bias incidents (verbal insult, graffiti, physical threat or physical assault);
 - 73% of female students had experienced or witnessed sexual harassment; and
 - 43% of female students had been a victim of or personally knew a victim of serious sexual harassment (forced sex, attempts to force sex, kissing or fondling).



Project Purpose

- In response to those startling statistics:
 - SSI created GWU C.A.R.E.S. (Campus Access to Resources and Educational Services)
 - Four-part approach: training, educational programs, creation of a university task force, creation of a resources website and resources sheets for the campus

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Training Components

- Healthy Relationships
 - Violence in dating relationships can take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, or economic abuse
 - Jealousy is a sign of abuse in relationships
- Realities of Violence on Campus
 - Sexual assault/rape, stalking, dating abuse, and hate crimes are all experienced on college campuses, often disproportionately among women and students of color
- Consent on Campus
 - Non-consensual sex is the same as sexual assault
 - Consent means a verbal "yes," and until then, it should be assumed that the answer is "no"

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Groups Trained

- Trainings Utilizing Specifically Developed Curriculum
 - University Police Department
 - Housing Personnel
 - Summer Orientation Staff
 - Student Ambassadors
 - Athletes (Women's Soccer, Tennis & Volleyball; Men's Baseball & Rowing)
 - Fraternities & Sororities

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Campus Resource Development

- Development of a Campus Resource Library (including websites, books, toolkits, brochures, etc)
- Development of Website and Brochure for Students on Victim Services and Consent



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Campus Events

- Campus Events Held/Participated In
 - Student Focus Group
 - Healthy Relationships Valentine Making Brown Bag Lunch
 - Healthy Relationships for Asian Women "It Stops Here"
 - VDAY: Support for the Vagina Monologues, Clothesline Project
 - UPD Rape Aggression Defense Trainings



The Clothesline Project & cast of the Vagina Monologues.

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- Spring Break Safety Training "But Before You Go"
- Gender & Violence Group Presentations
- Take Back the Night
- Denim Day
- Sexual Assault & The Military
- Back to Campus post-break event



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Training Outcomes

- UPD Training
 - 96% aware of need to be sensitive, 95% felt the issue was important, and 88% felt more confident addressing it.
 - 76% of respondents who named resources named 2 or more resources. On average these respondents named 4.1 resources.
 - There was a 40% increase from pre to post-test in the number which identified SACC as a resource
- Housing Training
 - 92% identified 2 or more resources.
 - 100% of respondents knew SACC as a resource. Noted a 33% increase in number of resources staff named.
 - Prior to training 33 felt well educated or very well educated whereas after the training 76 felt very well educated or well educated, an increase of over 100%



Event Outcomes

- Campus Events
 - Victims' Services Coordinator reports increase in VAW reports
 - GW Athletics, recruits from organization fairs, and advisor are on board for 2009-2010 year trainings
 - SACC usage was at an "all time high" in the Spring 2009 semester



Public Health Impact

- Discussions of healthy relationships, alcohol, and enthusiastic consent
- Steps to address alcohol as a deterrent to reporting, especially in underage students
- Development of a nationwide enthusiastic consent education initiative
- Development of a nationwide same-sex relationship violence prevention component
- Programs must be implementable and replicable



Findings

- Need for education/training; one time training insufficient
- Debunk rape myths among students & staff
- Define enthusiastic consent
- Student knowledge of/survivor access to resources
- Engaged concerned community members
- Administrator reluctance to add training for fear of misperception of crime, litigation
- Include women in same sex relationships in IPV discussions
- Cultural sensitivity for multicultural students



Findings

- Universities are concerned about enrollment, endowment and litigation.
- The statistics on sexual violence do not necessarily reflect the actual reality of that occurring on campus.
- The Clery Act requires universities to submit the numbers of reported crimes. Universities may be routing cases through other means to prevent high numbers of cases.



School Priorities

- Schools often put their image above the health of their students, "but their responsibility is for making sure their students are safe, part of which means making sure their students know the realities of what is happening on campus."



The Importance of Reframing the Issue

Four ways to frame the issue of sexual violence on college campuses:

- 1) Promote the problem as one of resource provision
- 2) Explain that having a protected student population will in turn increase enrollment
- 3) Explain that happy and protected students are more likely to donate to school
- 4) Demonstrate that having a knowledgeable staff and well-resourced campus may decrease litigation



Conclusion

- While campus police/security numbers may demonstrate nearly zero sexual assaults, many occur and are either not reported or are reported outside the police/security system and therefore do not "count"
- The self-protective tendencies of schools negatively affect victims/survivors of sexual violence
- Victims' needs must be placed higher on the agendas of college administrators
- Working in the language of administrators increases the likelihood of access to students and staff
- Increasing student knowledge of university resources is paramount to reducing sexual violence and increasing access to resources



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Questions and Thank you

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