

Interpersonal Violence Prevention and Policy in U.S. Higher Education

Annie E. Clark
Commission on the Status of Women – United Nations
Sponsored by WomenNC
22 February 2011

Why this matters:



Outline of Presentation

- Facts, statistics, basic information
- Policies and Best Practices
 - Federal legislation
 - Campus policy
 - Barriers
- Moving Forward

The Facts

- Over the course of a college career (now 5 years), the percentage of completed or attempted rape victimization among women in higher educational institutions is between **one-fifth and one-quarter (20%-25%)**.
- **Fewer than 5%** of completed and attempted rapes were reported to law enforcement officials.

Top reasons victims do not report

- Do not define the crime as rape or sexual assault/ “not serious enough to tell”
- Shame, embarrassment, and self blame
- Perceived lack of proof
- Fear of reprisal by the assailant
- Fear of being treated with hostility, and anticipation of not being believed
- Not reporting instances of homosexual assault for fear of being “outed”

Who are the offenders?

- Most survivors know the person who sexually victimizes them.*
 - a boyfriend, ex-boyfriend, classmate, friend, acquaintance, colleague
- For both completed and attempted rapes, about **9 in 10 offenders were known to the victim.**

*With replication across different populations, we find that 80-90% of victims know their assailant.

Campus Policy Best Practices



- Clery Act compliant
- Includes statement on why policy matters
- Defines sexual assault and offers scenarios as examples to clarify
- Defines consent (actively)
- Provides campus specific information, resources for survivors (rape kit funding info), and consequences for offenders

Best Practices, Continued

- Rights of both survivors and offenders
- Confidentiality clause
- Reporting
 - Blind/anonymous option
- Immunity
 - Survivors
 - Good samaritans
- Training
 - Prevention
 - Ally

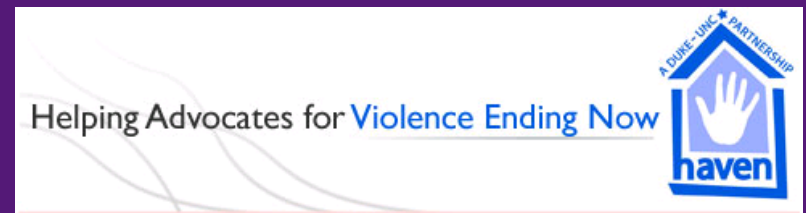
Blind Reporting Box and Resources



Training

- Type I: Resource Awareness, Survivor Support

- Ex: Duke/UNC: HAVEN



- Type II: Prevention and Bystander Intervention

- Ex: One Act, Green Dot, other peer education programs



Examples of poor policy

- Not having a policy at all
- Expected Abstinence = No Sexual Assault
- Single gender school = No Sexual Assault
- Including punishments for “false reporting” if can’t prove case
- Types of schools that have traditionally had poor anti-violence policies:
 - Religious schools
 - Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
 - Community Colleges

Overcoming Barriers

- Lack of reporting often results in lack of funding; education is required
- Identify allies in the administration—where is support?
 - Dean of Students
 - Campus Health Center
 - Departmentally?
 - A Women's Center?
 - An anti-violence prevention coordinator?

Moving forward

- What to do?
 - Check your school's (or firm's or country's) policy
 - 1) Does one exist?
 - 2) Is it sound? If not:
 - 3) Identify major areas of weakness
 - Reporting?
 - Immunity?
 - Unclear about resources?
 - 4) Identify allies and advocate for change
 - 5) INCREASE AWARENESS!
 - 6) Don't give up.