

# Sexual Assault Response Center

## Outreach Information

2017



Dear Reader:

At the Sexual Assault Response Center (SARC), our mission is to help empower those who have survived the trauma of sexual violence: to provide hope, healing, and a safe space to help survivors rebuild their lives. We offer individuals affected by sexual assault (and their non-offending family members) medical and legal advocacy services, individual and group counseling, and aftercare/case management. We provide a free and confidential 24/7 helpline that anyone who has been impacted by sexual violence in any way may use to request an advocate after an assault, discuss how to help a friend who's been assaulted, or to simply talk with someone who will listen.

We want to thank you in advance for taking the time to review the following material that we have put together on sexual violence. We have attempted to provide you with all of the important and relevant background information about sexual violence in the most concise manner possible. Our hope is that this will be enough information to allow you to feel more comfortable when talking with a victim or survivor of sexual trauma. We invite you to begin a dialogue with the members of your organization, in order to bring about a much needed larger discussion regarding the sexual violence that is so prevalent in our communities.

In this packet, you will find the following sections:

- I. INTRODUCTION & AWARENESS
- II. PREVENTION
- III. AFTER AN ASSAULT
- IV. RESOURCES

If you need any other information or would like to discuss any of the contents of this packet further with us, please reach out. SARC staff are always more than happy to talk with you.

Sincerely,

SARC Aftercare & Outreach Coordinator



# I.

## INTRODUCTION & AWARENESS

### **Sexual Assault**

*by THE NUMBERS*

**60 percent** of sexual assaults are not reported to the police.

**97 percent** of rapists never spend a day in jail.

There are an average of **237,868** victims of rape and sexual assault each year.

Every **2** minutes, another American is sexually assaulted.

**1 out of every 6** American women have been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime.

**9 out of 10** rape victims are female.

(Source: Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, 2015)

## DEFINITIONS

*Sexual violence* is any type of unwanted sexual contact, including words or actions directed at a person who has not given consent.

*Sexual abuse* is unwanted sexual activity occurring over a prolonged period of time, and it usually involves the perpetrator using force, threats, or other types of manipulation against the victim.

*Sexual assault* is any type of unwanted sexual contact that occurs without explicit consent from the recipient. Sexual assault can include an array of acts, such as rape, child molestation, incest, and fondling.

*Consent* must be given voluntarily by an able-minded individual, and can be withdrawn at any point. Someone who is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs cannot give consent. There are also age restrictions in place to protect minors, who are also unable to legally give consent.



(Source: Stand With Survivors, 2016)

## IMPACT

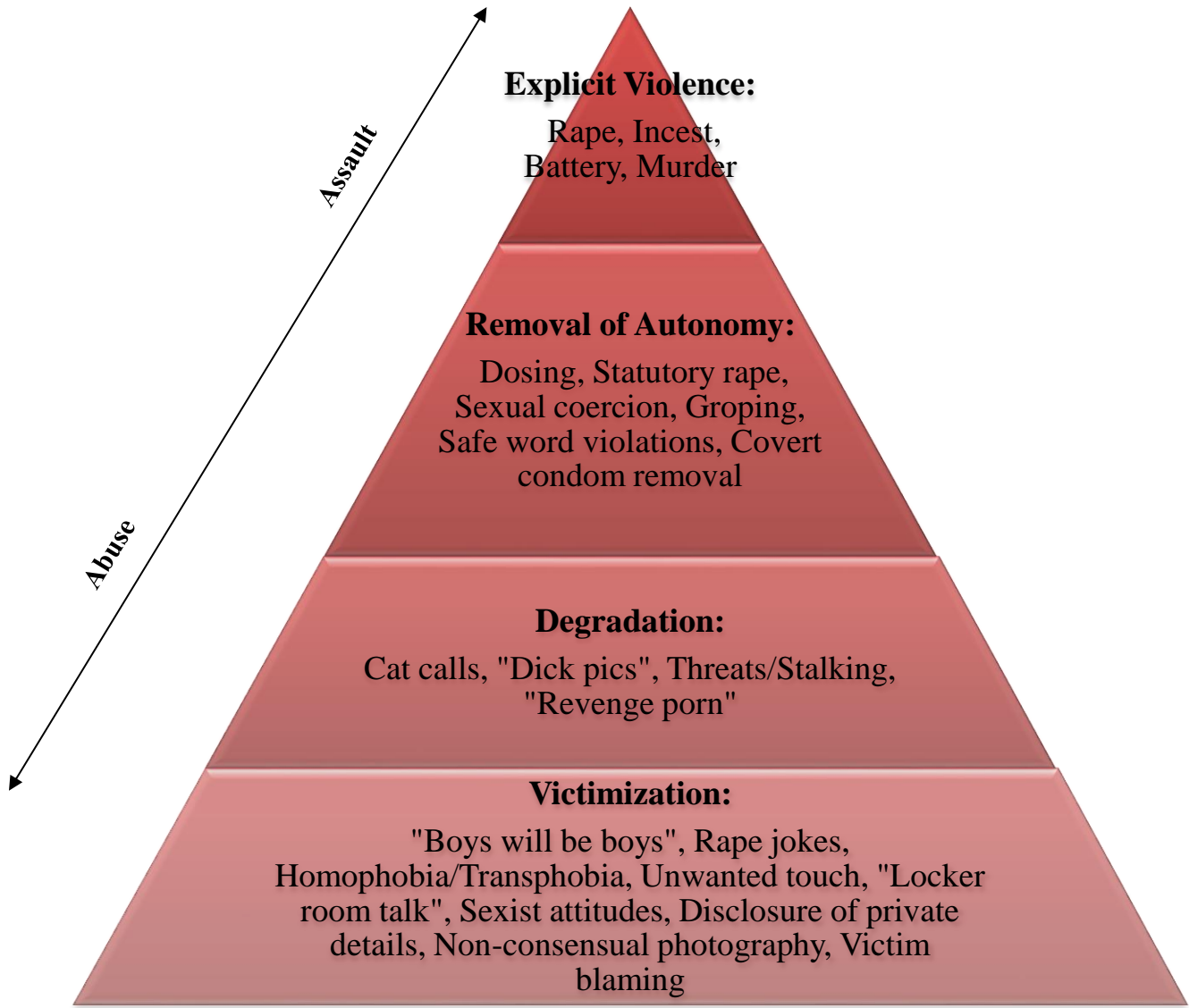
Sexual violence impacts individuals, their friends and family members, and communities. These crimes are about dominance, power, and control, and do impact us as a society.

*For individuals* who are survivors of sexual violence, the impact can be devastating. Physically damaging and psychologically traumatizing, many victims feel scared and helpless immediately following an assault. Anger, anxiety, guilt, and shame are some of the more common emotions felt by survivors as time goes on. But remember that each person is different, and will react differently to the trauma that he or she has experienced.

*Friends and family members* may feel angry, fearful, or helpless upon the disclosure of a sexual assault. Some may feel the need to seek revenge on behalf of the victim. These emotional reactions are certainly valid, but the resulting behaviors must keep the wellbeing of the survivor in mind first and foremost. This often creates an internal conflict for friends and family members, who then become secondary victims.

*Communities* are impacted by sexual violence in many ways. Sexual violence can impact the overall quality of life in a community – think, for example, of the many college campuses where sexual assault is epidemic. Fear becomes the norm, and that can lead to stereotyping, victim blaming, and a general sense of confusion. Medical costs, including ER visits and mental health treatment, and lost productivity, both at work and at home, are other ways sexual violence can affect communities as a whole.

Awareness begins with an awareness of the culture in which we live. It begins with the realization that any one of us, or our friends or family members, could become a victim of sexual violence at any time. Sexual violence does not discriminate. It can – and does – happen too often, and it happens regardless of one’s gender, sexual preference, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, religion, or even age. Sexual violence is real in our society, and in order to stop it from happening, we must first acknowledge that it’s real.



## **This is Rape Culture.**

*These are not isolated incidents. The attitudes and actions on the bottom tiers reinforce and excuse those on the upper. This is systematic.*

**If this is to change, the culture must change.**

**Start the conversation today.**

(Adapted from The Huffington Post, 2016)

## II. PREVENTION



(Source: National Domestic Violence Hotline, 2013)

*Prevention begins when we start challenging the social norms that make sexual violence possible.*



## WAYS YOU CAN HELP STOP SEXUAL VIOLENCE

*Refuse to tolerate sexist, racist, homophobic, or other demeaning comments or oppressive behavior from anyone.* Derogatory innuendo only perpetuates a culture where sexual assault is the norm.

*Take an active role in denouncing gender role norms.* The norms taught by typical American society tell us that certain people have the power, and others simply don't. No one has the right to victimize another person, period. We live in a society that tells each of us that as potential victims of sexual assault, we should alter our behavior, rather than insisting that the assault is the problem.

*If you are a parent or caregiver, socialize your children responsibly.* Teach children from a young age, and repeatedly, to have respect for others.

*Start a conversation.* If you are a member of an agency, religious group, sports team, or other community organization, and you think members might benefit from having sexual assault awareness and prevention information, contact SARC to arrange a workshop or class, or to discuss any other educational opportunities that could work for your group.





### III.

## AFTER AN ASSAULT

### People who are sexually assaulted are:

3 times more likely to experience depression.

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4 times more likely to contemplate suicide.

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6 times more likely to experience posttraumatic stress.

Source: World Health Organization, <https://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/sexual-assault-victims>

## IF SOMEONE DISCLOSES TO YOU THAT THEY WERE ASSAULTED

*Whether the assault happened an hour ago, or ten years ago – it is always important to remain calm and convey to the victim that the assault was in no way her/his fault. Ask about the victim's current safety needs, and allow the victim to make his/her own choices about the next steps to take. Allowing the victim to begin to regain a sense of personal empowerment is especially important in the aftermath of the traumatic experience. Studies have shown that one of the most important components in minimizing the impact of trauma is a survivor's social support network – *be there*.*

### DO

- *Believe them.*
- *Insist that it is not their fault* – victims and survivors often feel guilt and shame, but it is vital that you continue to remind them that they are in no way responsible for the attack.
- *Be there* – let the person know you love and support them, and will continue to do so.
- *Ask about needs* – does he/she need medical attention? Police? An advocate? A friend or relative to stay with them through the night?
- *Listen without judgment* – acknowledge their experience by allowing them a safe space to talk, if they choose to do so.
- *Manage your own reaction* – you may feel angry or helpless after a friend or relative discloses to you and it is very important to be aware of how you convey your personal reactions.

### DO NOT

- *Victim blame* – it doesn't matter what the person had on or where they were or what time of day it was.
- *Ask for unnecessary details* – respect the fact that you do not need to know every aspect of what he/she experienced.
- *Tell the victim what to do next* – instead, support them through their own decision-making process.
- *Expect a certain reaction, or judge the victim based on his or her reaction* – trauma evokes different reactions in different people at different stages. Survivors may react in any number of ways, which may or may not reflect the true impact of the experience.
- *Force the topic* – as this person moves forward, remember to ask about other aspects of his/her life.

*If you still aren't sure what to say in the event of a disclosure, here are some important phrases to keep in mind:*

***“It wasn't your fault.”***

***“If you need someone  
to come with you,  
I will.”***

***“I'll support whatever  
you choose to do.”***

***“What can I do to  
support you?”***

## IV.

# RESOURCES

Working together, we can help to end sexual violence. For more information on the prevention and awareness services SARC offers, please contact:

Amanda Alcaraz, SARC Aftercare & Outreach Coordinator  
(302) 224-4060



(Source: Stanford University, 2016)

The following pages include information on the services offered by SARC, as well as some of the other local resources that are available to you if you or someone you know has been affected by sexual violence.



## **SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE CENTER**

\*All of SARC's services are offered free of charge to victims and their loved ones.

### ***24/7 Helpline***

Call our 24/7 toll-free hotline at 1-800-773-8570 for anonymous and confidential support. You will speak directly with a trained advocate, who can help answer your questions, provide you with options, offer you resources, or who will just listen – if that's what you need. The helpline is open to any caller who has a concern regarding sexual violence.

### ***Advocacy***

An advocate is someone who can be there to help support you emotionally and answer your questions. We offer accompaniments for both medical and legal procedures. At SARC, our first priority is YOU – our responsibility is to make sure that the care you receive is trauma-informed and that your wishes are respected throughout the process. To request an advocate, call our Helpline (listed above).

### ***Individual & Group Counseling***

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about the counseling services SARC offers, please contact our counselor, Ebony Hunter, at (302) 224-4060 ext. 203. We offer counseling services to anyone who is a recent or past victim of sexual violence, and to their immediate family members.

### ***Community Awareness & Prevention Education***

If you are interested in arranging an educational workshop for a group, or to hear more about other opportunities to help stop sexual violence, please contact our outreach coordinator, Amanda Alcaraz, at (302) 224-4060 ext.



## **HOSPITALS OFFERING SANE EXAMS IN DELAWARE**

If you have been sexually assaulted, you may choose to get a SANE exam at one of the following Delaware hospitals. A SANE exam is completed by a nurse who is specially trained in what to do following a sexual assault. During the exam, you will be medically evaluated, and the nurse will collect forensic evidence. In order to get a SANE exam, you must go to the hospital within 72 hours of the time the assault occurred – the sooner, the better.

Christiana Care Health System  
Newark, DE  
(302) 733- 4799

AI DuPont Children's Hospital  
Wilmington, DE  
(302) 651-6901

Bayhealth Medical Center  
Dover, DE

Nanticoke Health Services  
Seaford, DE  
(302) 629-6611 ext. 3910

Beebe Medical Center  
Lewis, DE

## Source Credits

Huffington Post, 2016.

National Domestic Violence Hotline, 2013.

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, 2015.

Stand With Survivors, 2016.

Stanford University, 2016.

World Health Organization, 2016.