SEXUAL ASSAULT

PRESENTED BY:
LINDSEY GREEN
Sexual Assault

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this module participant will be able to:

- Define sexual assault, discuss current trends and facts.
- Discuss barriers to reporting for sexual assault victims.
- Describe dynamics of sexual assault and review its mental/physical health impact on victims.
- Discuss ways of responding to primary and secondary sexual assault survivors.
SEXUAL ASSAULT
Lindsey Green
Client Services Coordinator
Sexual Assault Support Services

Learning Objectives

- Define sexual assault, discuss current trends and facts.
- Discuss barriers to reporting for sexual assault victims.
- Describe dynamics of sexual assault and review its mental/ physical health impact on victims.
- Discuss ways of responding to primary and secondary sexual assault survivors.

What is Sexual Assault?

- Any sexual activity without the consent of all involved
- Key to the crime is CONSENT.
**What Is Consent?**

**CONSENT** is more than simply saying “Yes.”
Consent is when the people involved want and freely choose
Whatever the contact is.
Being able to freely choose means
WITHOUT PRESSURE
WITHOUT THREAT
WITHOUT MANIPULATIONS
WITHOUT FORCE
If a person says “yes” under pressure,
They aren’t consenting at all.
-Judy Cyprian

**Definition of CONSENT**

Saying YES when no force or power is being used.

- Examples of Force or Power:
  - Tricks or bribes
  - Age
  - Position of Authority
  - Weapon

**Legal Age of Consent:**

NH = 16
Maine = 14

**Sexual Violence Force Continuum**

- Emotional Coercion or Bribes
  - when one person convinces another to do something that s/he does not want to do.

- Implicit Coercion or threats
  - Social Position: Professor to student, tutor to student.
  - Size and strength of aggressor

- Verbal Threats
- Physical Force without a weapon
- Physical Force with a weapon

Maine/New Hampshire Victim Assistance Academy, March 21 - 26, 2010
Sexual Assault
Sexual Assault Quiz

How much do you know?

National Research on Sexual Violence

Age of Victims
- 15% under 12
- 29% between 11-17
- 26% between 18-24
- 70% under age 25

Relationship of Offender
- 22% were strangers
- 9% husbands or ex's
- 11% father or step-dad
- 10% boyfriends or ex's
- 16% other relatives
- 29% acquaintances
  - Rape in America 1992 Study

69% of all victims and 93% of juvenile victims knew their attacker

SA Victims/Offenders

- Who can be a victim of SA?
- Who are the offenders?
- Why do people commit the crime of SA?

MYTH VS. FACT
FACTS

- Sexual Assault is a crime of violence, power and control.
- Sexual Assault knows no boundaries.
- Poor judgment choices are not crimes punishable by sexual violence.
- No one asks to be sexually assaulted.

What is the function of myths?

Susan’s Story

Some Options for Sexual Assault Survivors

- Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (within 72 hours)
- Seeking other medical attention
- Telling a friend or family member
- Reporting to police (town where it happened, crime against state)
- Calling a crisis center
- Telling no one or delayed reporting
Scenarios

- A 16-year-old girl was walking home from a friend’s house at 9:30pm when a boy from her neighborhood caught up to her and began walking with her. He told her about a shortcut through a vacant lot and while walking, he forced her on the ground and sexually assaulted her. She was a virgin and was physically hurt.

  What are some concerns she might have about telling someone?
  Do you think she will go to the hospital or report the sexual assault to the police?

- A 30-year-old male just bought a new house and invited a friend from work over to see it. When he arrived, he gave the friend a tour of the house and while in one of the bedrooms, the friend forced him onto the bed and sexually assaulted him.

  What are some concerns he might have about telling someone?
  Do you think he will go to the hospital or report the sexual assault to the police?

Reasons a Sexual Assault Survivor Might Not Report

- Shame
- Fear of telling anyone - even family
- Reliving the experience
- Fear s/he won’t be believed
- Fear of retaliation
- Lack of trust in the system
- Loss of control over the process

Maine/New Hampshire Victim Assistance Academy, March 21 - 26, 2010
Some Other Concerns of Sexual Assault Survivors

- Family knowing s/he was raped
- People thinking it was her/his fault
- Other people finding out
- Name being made public in the media
- Becoming pregnant
- Contracting a sexually transmitted disease
- Getting HIV/AIDS

Some Potential Sexual Assault Survivor Reactions

- Non-resistance
- Dissociation
- Friendly behavior toward assailant
- Delayed reporting
- Calm, non-emotional appearance
- Gaps in memory

Some Potential Affects of Sexual Assault

- Fear and Anxiety
- Depression
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Hypervigilance
- Isolation
- Self-blame, Guilt, & Shame
- Nightmares
- Anger
- Behavior changes
Potential Mental Health Impact

- PTSD
- Major depression, anxiety, panic
- Suicidal ideation
- Higher rates of alcohol/other drug use and problems

Potential Healing Process

- Acute Crisis
  Can last days-weeks, Can be re-triggered, Can include a wide range of emotions
- Outward Resolution
  Emotions from acute phase seem to disappear, seems “normal” on the outside
- Re-Integration
  Can take months-years-lifetime, incorporate the experience of the assault into life
  *There is no set time frame for the healing process.*

Responding to Sexual Assault Survivors
VES
- Validate
- Educate
- Support

Scenarios
- Joe was sexually assaulted three months ago by a neighbor and tells you that ever since he has felt extremely unsafe. He is unable to relax and is startled by any noises and is continuously checking his doors and windows to make sure they are locked. He is upset that his life has been completely disrupted since the assault.

  How might you respond to Joe?

Scenarios
- Amy is a 37 year-old incest survivor who has only recently regained memories of her abuse. She feels like she is starting to fall apart physically lately. She has stomach aches and headaches that won't go away. She has started to miss days at work and when she does go to work she has difficulty concentrating. Her doctor has told her that she is in 'perfect health' and that there is nothing wrong with her. She is confused and upset.

  How might you respond to Amy?
Other Ways to Support a Survivor

- Help the survivor regaining control
- Empowering the survivor
- Believing the survivor
- Validating feelings as ‘normal’
- Educate the survivor that you do not believe myths, that it is not his/her fault
- Don’t project your own feelings - be objective. Don’t lecture about poor judgment choices or show anger at offender.
- Never say you ‘understand’, even if you have been through it.

Secondary Survivors

- Parents, Partners and Friends
  - Examine thoughts about SA
  - Give Survivor as much Control over the situation as possible
  - Be willing to Listen and Believe
  - Don’t Blame the Survivor
  - Be Patient
  - Get Support for Yourself

Scenarios

- Mike tells you that his wife is a survivor of child sexual abuse and is in therapy to try to deal with it. He tells you that since she has been getting help she has rejected all of his sexual advances and doesn’t even let him touch her. He wants to know how long it takes for people to get over this and get back to normal.

  How might you respond to Mike?
**Scenarios**

- Diane tells you that her daughter was raped two years ago while on a date and has not gone out with a man since. Before the rape, her daughter dated a lot and seemed to have a healthy attitude towards men. She then tells you that now she is concerned that her daughter might be gay and may never be ‘normal’ again.

**How might you respond to Diane?**

**How Might You Respond To The Following Statements**

- “I shouldn’t have gone to his place for a drink.”
- “I shouldn’t have walked home alone.”
- “What is my partner going to think?”
- “My mother is going to kill me when she finds out I went to that party.”
- “I was a virgin.”
- “I liked him and thought he was cute. We danced at the party and he told me I led him on.”

**See Sexual Assault in the Larger Context**

Sexual Violence affects not only the survivor, but the survivor’s family, friends and the community.
Questions?
Susan’s Story

Susan really wanted to go to a party that her friend, Jill, was having tonight. However, Susan was grounded because her parents had caught her drinking last weekend. But, Susan’s parents were going out to dinner and Susan decided that she would leave the house after her parents and go to the party for a few hours. Susan really wanted to go to the party because Jill’s older brother was planning to attend with some of his friends from the local university. As soon as Susan’s parents left, she got dressed up and called another girlfriend and asked for a ride to the party. Susan and her friend made plans to meet in 15 minutes at a store about three blocks from Susan’s house.

Susan quickly got ready and walked to the store. After Susan had been waiting about 20 minutes, a guy came out of the store. He walked up to Susan and said, “I’ve noticed you have been standing here for a while – can I help you?” Susan looked up and said she was waiting for a friend. The guy then said, “I’m Mike. I’m a friend of Jill’s brother. I’ve seen you at their house.”

Susan and Mike talked for a few minutes and then Susan mentioned that she was waiting for a ride to Jill’s party. Mike said that he had been thinking about going to the party, and offered Susan a ride.

Susan didn’t know what to do. It looked like her girlfriend wasn’t going to show-up. She knew she shouldn’t take rides from strangers, but this guy wasn’t really a stranger and he didn’t seem like the type who would do anything. Susan said, “OK.”

They got into Mike’s car and he started towards Jill’s house. Suddenly Mike turned the car in the opposite direction. Susan said something to him, and he said he wanted to stop by his apartment to pick up a jacket. Mike pulled up to a house that looked dark and empty. He reached over and put his arm around Susan and pulled her towards him. Susan pushed away and slid close to the door. Mike then slid over to Susan and again put his arm around her and kissed her. Susan pulled away and moved to the edge of the seat. Mike then held Susan down on the seat and raped her.

How much responsibility does Susan have for the rape?

Copyrighted Rhode Island Rape Crisis Center, Inc., 1991