

# Sexual Assault

## Background:

- “Sexual assault is any forced, unwanted and non-consensual sexual contact or activity including touching, kissing exhibitionism, and intercourse – anal, vaginal or oral. Sexual assault is a crime of violence, the purpose of which is to overpower, control and/or humiliate another person. It is a crime of violence using sex as a means of assault.” (CASE, 2008)
- “Sexual assault is also defined as a brutally destructive attack on the victim’s sense of personal integrity and competence, as well as their basic trust in others.” (CASE, 2008)
- “In most instances of reported sexual assault occurs with women between the ages of 14 and 25; however all people are potential victims regardless of their sex, race, class, religion, occupation, or physical appearance.” (CASE, 2008)
- “75% of sexual assaults occur at home or in a vehicle and the attacker is most likely someone the victim knows.” (CASE, 2008)
- “Sexual assault happens to more people than generally reported. For every case reported to police it is estimated that ten more go unreported.” (CASE, 2008)
- “At some time in their lives, about one in two females and one in three males are victims of one or more unwanted sexual acts. These acts include being exposed to, being sexually threatened, being touched on a sexual part of their body, attempted assault, or assault.” (CASE, 2008)
- “About four in five of these unwanted sexual acts occur when the victim is a child or youth. One in four assailants is a family member or a person in a position of trust; about half are friends or acquaintances and about one in six is a stranger. While most assailants are male there are studies, which reveal more females, offended than previously thought; most females offend against children and youths.” (CASE, 2008)
- Men, women, and children of all ages, races, religions, and economic classes can be and have been victims of sexual assault. Sexual assault occurs in rural areas, small towns, and larger cities. (CONNSACS, 2008)

## Statement of the Problem:

- “Anytime someone is forced to have sex against their will, they have been sexually assaulted, regardless of whether or not they fought back. There are many reasons why a victim might not physically fight their attacker including shock, fear, threats, or the size and strength of the attacker.” (CONNSACS, 2008)
- “Victims of sexual assault experience a state that resembles acute grief because of their severe psychological losses. Their basic feelings of wholeness, strength, trust, and self-control are lost, and with them a person loses confidence in their abilities. The victim’s attempts to stop the attacker did not work – they were powerless. This feeling of powerlessness can be devastating to the victim’s sense of trust and control. Many victims are unable to talk about their experience unless they are directly asked about it.” (CASE, 2008)
- “Sexual assault is a crime of violence and all victims suffer. Male victims experience the same reaction to the crime as female victims. Some of these reactions include self-blame, fear, anger, relationship problems, questions about sexuality, addictions, and trust issues. Not everyone will experience all of these nor to the same extent.” (CASE, 2008)
- “The sexual orientation of the victim is not changed by such an attack. A straight male assaulted by another male does not become homosexual any more than a gay man assaulted by a female would become heterosexual. This myth causes many male victims to avoid telling anyone for fear of being labeled gay. It is not uncommon for others, including some police and family members, to believe this and to act negatively.” (CASE, 2008)
- “Many statutes, including New Hampshire’s, now define sexual assault as nonconsensual sexual penetration by physical force, by threat of bodily harm, or when the victim is incapable of giving consent by virtue of mental illness, mental retardation, or intoxication. Legally acquaintance rape carries the same penalties as sexual assault committed by a stranger.” (NEWBEGINNINGS, 2008)
- “Sexual assaults can and do occur within marital relationships. Most often, these assaults occur within a context of on-going domestic violence. While reports and prosecutions of spousal rape are fairly infrequent, some convictions have occurred.” (NEWBEGINNINGS)
- Sexual assault is motivated by hostility, power, and control. Sexual assaults are not motivated by sexual desire. Unlike animals, humans are capable of controlling how they choose to act on or express sexual urges. (CONNSACS, 2008)
- “Reported sexual assaults are true, with very few exceptions. FBI crime statistics indicate that only 2% of reported rapes are false. This is the same rate of false reporting as other major crime reports.” (CONNSACS, 2008)

## Epidemiologic Picture of the Problem

- “Sexual assault has always been a problem in our society and it is getting worse. Reported assaults account for only 10% of all such crimes.” (CASE, 2008)
- Of convicted sexual assaulters, 50% repeat their crimes. (CASE, 2008)
- “The Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) defines Intimate Partner Violence as a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors that may include inflicted physical injury, psychological abuse, sexual assault, progressive social isolation, stalking, deprivation, intimidation and threats. These behaviors are perpetrated by someone who is, was, or wishes to be involved in an intimate or dating relationship with an adult or adolescent, and are aimed at establishing control by one partner over the other.” (ENDABUSE, 2008)
- “The majority of offenders are heterosexual males; only few are homosexual men. Females can also assault males, as young children and/or in dating relationships using coercion or threats to enforce compliance. Most offenders are known to the victim beforehand, and therefore often the victims are not expecting an attack or do not label the attack as sexual assault. Eighty percent of offenders fall into the category of acquaintances, such as friends, relatives, coworkers, classmates, etc.” (CASE, 2008)
- “An estimated 683,000 adult American women are forcibly raped each year. Every minute in the US there are 1.3 forcible rapes of adult women; 78 women are forcibly raped each hour. Everyday, 1871 women are forcibly raped, equal to 56,916 forcible rapes each month.” (NEWBEGINNINGS, 2008)
- “Many victims of sexual assault develop a post-traumatic stress syndrome that has been referred to as Rape Trauma Syndrome. Symptoms can include fear, helplessness, shock and disbelief, guilt, humiliation and embarrassment, anger, self-blame, flashbacks of the rape, avoidance of previously pleasurable activities, avoidance of the place or circumstance in which the assault occurred, depression, sexual dysfunction, insomnia, and impaired memory.” (NEWBEGINNINGS, 2008)
- “Male victims of sexual assault experience the same reactions as women, as well as an increased sense of vulnerability, damaged self-image, and emotional distancing. These reactions are often a result of the cultural belief that a male should be capable of defending himself. Consequently, males often blame themselves for the attack.” (NEWBEGINNINGS, 2008)

- “Sexual offenders come from all educational, occupational, racial, and cultural backgrounds. They are “ordinary” and “normal” individuals who sexually assault victims to assert power and control over them and inflict violence, humiliation, and degradation.” (CONNSACS, 2008)
- 68% of rapes occur between the hours of 6pm and 6am. (SARP, 2008)
- An estimated 91% of the victims of rape and sexual assault are female and 9% are male. (SARP, 2008)
- Nearly 6 out of 10 sexual assaults occur in someone’s home. (SARP, 2008)
- 83% of victims of sexual assault are under the age of 25. (SARP, 2008)
- Nearly 99% of the offenders are male. (SARP, 2008)
- “The Badgely Royal Commission on “Sexual Offenses against Children” states that approximately one in two females and one in three males will be sexually assaulted before they are 18 years old. Males and females are both vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Since males are expected to take care of themselves, they are less likely to report sexual assault or talk about it. In ever increasing numbers, men are coming forward to acknowledge the occurrence of recent assaults on them as adults.” (CASE, 2008)
- “Seven percent of girls in grades five to eight and twelve percent of girls in grades nine through twelve said they had been sexually abused according to the 1998 Commonwealth Fund Survey of the Health of Adolescent Girls.” (RAINN, 2008)
- “Three percent of boys in grades five through and five percent of boys in grades nine through twelve said they had been sexually abused according to the 1998 Commonwealth Fund Survey of the Health of Adolescent Boys.” (RAINN, 2008)

## Solutions:

- “One goal of the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC, is to increase the ability of health care providers to identify and treat cases of intimate partner violence and refers the victims to agencies that can assist them further. For this reason, and because they receive so many requests from health care providers for information training programs and training materials, they produced a guide to help individuals and organizations find appropriate group-training or self-training materials.” ([www.cdc.gov/ncoppc/pub-res/ipvasa.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncoppc/pub-res/ipvasa.htm))
- “April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). During this month, 59 state and territorial rape prevention and education programs, other partners, and CDC

will highlight activities that increase awareness about sexual violence. One of six US women and one of 33 US men have been victims of rape or attempted rape as a child or as an adult.” (CDC, 2008)

- “This year’s theme for SAAM is “Decide to End Sexual Violence.” Materials, including posters, postcards, pins, and stickers, are available from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.” (CDC, 2008)
- “In 2004, RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network) announced that the US Congress passed the Justice for All Act (H.R. 5107), which incorporates the Advancing Justice through DNA Technology Act and the Debbie Smith Bill. The President signed the legislation into law. The bill provides funding to analyze the DNA evidence from 221,000 open rape and murder cases.” (RAINN, 2008)
- “The National Sexual Assault Online Hotline provides live, secure, anonymous crisis support for victims of sexual assault, their friends, and families over RAINN’s website. The hotline is free of charge and is available 12 hours per day. Using a secure and anonymous instant-messaging type format, the Online Hotline allows sexual assault victims to communicate directly with trained crisis support volunteers.” (RAINN, 2008)
- “Sexual assault is a very traumatic experience, and with help victims do recover. The important thing is that help is sought. Healing from a sexual assault is a long, sometimes painful process; dealing with it alone is very difficult. Talking to others who have had similar experiences, or with someone who is supportive, can help the victim cope with the emotional responses to the assault.” (CASE, 2008)
- “There’s No Excuse for Domestic Violence generated more than \$100 million in donated time and space in 22,000 media outlets across the county, and in 2002, the FVVPF launched one of the largest, most successful public service campaigns targeted to men –Coaching Boys into Men – which inspires men to teach boys that violence does not equal strength.” (ENDABUSE, 2008)
- “For the last ten years the FVVPF – in partnership with The Advertising Council – has sponsored campaigns to raise awareness of family violence. The campaigns encourage communities as well as friends, family members, and coworkers of victims to join the effort to stop the violence.” (ENDABUSE, 2008)

### Additional Internet Sources:

<http://www.sexualassault.army.mil/>

<http://www.cccd.edu/students/sexualAssault/default.aspx>

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## Sexual Assault Handout

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