

Sexual Violence

- What is sexual violence?
- What is intimate partner violence?
- What is sexual harassment?
- What is stalking?
- What are possible impacts of these situations?
- How can I help a friend?
- What can I do to end the violence?
- What can I do to keep myself safer?

What is sexual violence?

Any non-consensual sexual act.

Sexual violence occurs on a continuum, and includes rape, attempted rape, child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, unwanted sexual touching, and stalking.

Sexual violence is ALWAYS the fault of the perpetrator, and NEVER the fault of the survivor.

If a survivor engages in what some might define as a “risky behavior” (e.g., getting drunk, wearing revealing clothes), a natural consequence might be getting a hangover, not sexual violence. The violence occurred because there was a perpetrator present who was willing to hurt someone else.

How do you define consent?

To willingly engage in a shared sexual act.

Consent is:

- Wanted
- Respectful
- Clear
- Sober
- Mutual
- Shared
- Equal power
- Conscious
- Sexy
- Active
- Feeling positive during the experience

Consent is not:

- Unwanted
- An assumption
- Silence
- Pressure
- Previous sexual acts
- Being wasted
- Physical force
- Intimidation
- Using power to get sex
- How someone is dressed
- Passive

MYTH: If a person does not say no, struggle, or physically resist, then they have not been sexually assaulted.

FACT: If someone was forced to have sex without consent, then they were sexually assaulted, whether or not a struggle occurred. Consent is active, and not passive. Not saying no does not automatically mean yes. Anyone in a threatening situation can be paralyzed by fear.

MYTH: Rapes are usually committed by strangers in dark alleys. If you're home, you're safe.

FACT: There is a common belief that sexual assault usually happens when someone is walking alone at night, by a stranger who jumps out of the bushes. An overwhelming percentage of sexual assaults are committed by someone you know and often trust, such as a friend, dating partner, spouse or classmate.

MYTH: I was drunk, so it is my fault.

FACT: Alcohol is often used during a sexual assault to make someone more controllable. When someone is incapacitated by alcohol or drugs, they are unable to give consent; you don't have to say no or fight back. A survivor is *never* to blame; a natural consequence for drinking too much could be a hangover, not sexual assault.

MYTH: People often make false reports of sexual assault.

FACT: This is a common myth! Oregon data from the Portland Police Bureau reported an unfounded rate of 3 percent in 2002, which indicates that the vast majority of reports are valid.

What is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)?

A pattern of coercive behaviors used to control a partner through fear and intimidation.

IPV can occur in many forms:

Emotional: controlling, blaming, criticizing, manipulation, intimidation, unfounded jealous accusations, not allowing privacy.

Economic: preventing you from working, getting you fired from your job, withholding money.

Physical: throwing objects, shoving, blocking escape, pulling hair, holding you down, hitting, cutting, burning.

Sexual: coercion, having sex with you while you are sleeping, humiliation during sex, forcing sex, refusal to accept “no,” threats of retaliation.

Verbal: name calling, insults, threats.

intimate partner

How is abuse different from healthy relationships?

Healthy relationships are based upon choice, freedom, equality, respect, cooperation, and compromise.

It is estimated that one in three college students has experienced an abusive dating relationship.

(www.ncvc.org, National Center for Victims of Crime)

MYTH: If I was ever hit, I would leave the relationship.

FACT: There are many reasons why victims may choose to stay or return to an abuser. When we ask the question, "Why don't you just leave?" we are placing the blame for the abuse on the victim, instead of holding the abuser responsible for his/her actions.

Reasons for staying include:

- fear (of retaliation, will not be believed, loneliness, failure, change)
- shame
- systematic breakdown of self-esteem
- hope for change
- love
- economic or emotional dependence
- isolation
- family/children
- cultural or religious constraints

MYTH: Only straight women get battered.

FACT: Intimate partner violence is about power and control. IPV happens in heterosexual and LGBTQ partnerships. Anyone can be a victim.

Partner violence

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual or gender-based behavior that occurs when one person has formal or informal power over the other.

Sexual harassment includes **unwelcome*** sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of employment or academic advancement (explicitly or implicitly)
- Submission or rejection to such conduct is used as a basis for employment or academic advancement decisions
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or learning environment; or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work, academic, or residential living environment.

Examples of sexual harassment may include:

- A professor telling you that he will give you a failing grade if you do not go out with him.
- A teaching assistant making sexist jokes while teaching.
- Managers or co-workers making unwelcome sexual advances.

*Employee conduct directed towards a student—whether unwelcome or welcome—can constitute sexual harassment under OAR 580-015-0010(2).

Nearly two-thirds of college students experience some type of sexual harassment (AAUW report, 2006), and less than 10 percent report the harassment.

MYTH: Women who are sexually harassed generally provoke harassment by the way they look, dress and behave.

FACT: Harassment does not occur because women dress provocatively or initiate sexual activity in the hope of getting promoted and advancing their careers. Harassment is motivated by power, not attraction. Studies have found that victims of sexual harassment vary in physical appearance, type of dress, age, and behavior.

LGBTQ students are more likely than heterosexual students to experience sexual harassment, be upset by these experiences, and feel self-conscious, angry, less confident, or afraid (AAUW, 2006).

MYTH: The seriousness of sexual harassment has been exaggerated; most so-called harassment is really trivial and harmless flirtation.

FACT: Sexual harassment can be devastating. Studies indicate that most harassment has nothing to do with "flirtation" or sincere sexual or social interest. Rather, it is often offensive, frightening and insulting. Research shows that victims are often forced to leave school or jobs to avoid harassment; many experience serious psychological and health-related problems.

harassment

What is stalking?

A pattern of repeated, unwanted behavior that would make someone afraid.

Some examples of stalking include:

- Another person following and/or spying on you
- Repeated unwanted and intrusive communications from the perpetrator by phone, mail, and/or e-mail
- Making direct or indirect threats to harm you or to people you care for
- Harassment through the Internet (cyberstalking)

Familiarity and frequency of stalking

- One in 12 women and one in 45 men will be stalked in their lifetime
 - 80 percent of people stalked on campus know their stalker
- (Fisher, Culler, & Turner 2000)

MYTH: If you ignore stalking, it'll go away. If you stop reacting to your stalker, it'll stop—they'll just get bored of it.

FACT: Unfortunately, stalking rarely ends on its own. If you choose to report the stalking situation, a safety plan (created with CARDV or SASS, see back page) should be put into place. This is very important because the risk for violence escalates when the stalker receives notice that their behavior needs to stop.

MYTH: If you meet with the stalker, you can convince them to stop.

FACT: Meeting the stalker may put you in a dangerous situation. Often times the stalker will use this “meeting” to manipulate you for contact, to attempt to control you further, or to weaken your case if you report to the police. A safer option may be to seek support from an advocate or police.

What are possible impacts of these situations?

Every survivor responds to sexual and interpersonal violence in a unique manner. Some effects may occur immediately, while others may show up later.

Common reactions may include (but are not limited to):

- Fear, loss of trust, isolation
- Disbelief, denial, shock, numbness
- Self-blame, shame, humiliation
- Depression, sadness, anger
- Problems sleeping, nightmares, anxiety
- Changes in sexual behaviors and comfort with sex
- Loss of a sense of control, helplessness
- Changes in relationships with other people

How can I help a friend?

BELIEVE the survivor, and never ask questions that may blame them (such as “Why did you go back to his room?” or “Why didn’t you tell me sooner?”).

LISTEN to the survivor, reassuring that it was not her/his fault.

INFORM the survivor about options and resources that are available.

SUPPORT the survivor. Do not give advice, but help her/him regain control by supporting her/his choices about whether or not to report or seek help.

What can I do to end the violence?

Some things that we see or hear, such as a joke about rape, a woman being fondled on a dance floor, or being whistled at while she jogs, may seem minimal on the surface, but can often lead to more extreme behavior. It is important to understand that these things may have a negative impact, and create a culture of fear in which rape is condoned.

Often times, when we witness a behavior that we know is not right, we may not intervene, maybe because of embarrassment or fear of retaliation. Don't let that hold you back! If you feel you are safe to intervene in the situation, do so without using violence, get other safe people involved (such as an RA or a trusted friend).

What can I do to keep myself safer?

People are most often targeted by predators when they are vulnerable, or a situation can be created in which they become vulnerable. Examples of this include being isolated from others, intoxicated, and if there is a power differential.

Here are some things you can do to make yourself safer, but know that no strategies can keep you completely safe.

- Use the buddy system (and stick to it) when going out.
- Monitor your alcohol and other drug intake.
- Limit the information you post online (Facebook, MySpace).

Support resources and reporting options

Center Against Rape & Domestic Violence (CARDV), (541) 754-0110 or 800-927-0197

Provides 24-7 confidential crisis response, hospital and legal advocacy, hotline support, and support groups.

Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS), (541) 737-7604, 5th Floor Snell

Provides confidential support, crisis intervention, and/or counseling for any OSU student who has experienced unwanted sexual contact or relationship violence.

Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, (541) 737-3556

Accepts formal and informal complaints of sexual harassment. Also provides prevention training.

Student Health Services, (541) 737-9355, Plageman Building

Provides services to address both short-term and long-term medical concerns; Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence (SAFE) exams are also offered. SAFE exams are available at Good Samaritan Emergency Department after hours.

Student Conduct & Community Standards, (541) 737-3656, 3rd Floor Snell

Responds to violations of the student conduct code by an internal university disciplinary process (separate from a criminal or civil hearing).

Oregon State Police, (541) 737-7000, or 911

Responds to immediate safety concerns and to violations of Oregon law, including sexual and intimate partner violence, which may lead to criminal proceedings.

To submit an anonymous report of sexual violence, visit the following website:

<http://oregonstate.edu/counsel/sexual-assault-support-services-737-7604/>

For additional information about sexual violence, visit us on the web at:

<http://oregonstate.edu/sexualassault>