

Sexual Assault, Harassment, and Alcohol and Other Drug Use

The National College Women Sexual Victimization (NCWSV) study, a 1996 survey of 4,446 women sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, defines rape as follows:

Forced sexual intercourse including both psychological coercion as well as physical force. Forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by the offender(s). This category also includes incidents where the penetration is from a foreign object such as a bottle. Includes attempted rapes, male as well as female victims, and both heterosexual and homosexual rape. Attempted rape includes verbal threats of rape.¹

The NCWSV survey found that 20–25 percent of college women are victims of an attempted or completed rape during their college careers. In 9 out of 10 cases, the perpetrators are known to the victims. According to the survey, 12.8 percent of completed rapes, 35.0 percent of attempted rapes, and 22.9 percent of threatened rapes take place during a date.¹

In most cases, college men who rape are considered quite normal by their peer groups and in their everyday lives.² It should be understood that sexual assault and acquaintance rape on campus result from multiple factors, including perpetrator attitudes toward rape, misperception of verbal and nonverbal cues, and alcohol and other situational risk factors.²

For additional information

The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention
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(800) 676-1730; fax: (617) 928-1537
HigherEdCtr@edc.org

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Perpetrator Characteristics

Research suggests that most college men who commit acquaintance rape or other sexual assaults perceive their behavior as normative and reasonable. Their likelihood of committing sexual assault is associated with certain specific characteristics, such as negative attitudes toward women and a belief that men are entitled to sex under certain conditions (e.g., when the man has paid for the date).²

In a study of attitudes toward rape at one college, male students were asked if they would commit acquaintance rape if they could be assured that no one else would find out and that they would not be punished. Only 40 percent said they were not at all likely to rape a woman if given such an opportunity.³ Other studies on attitudes toward rape have found similar results.⁴

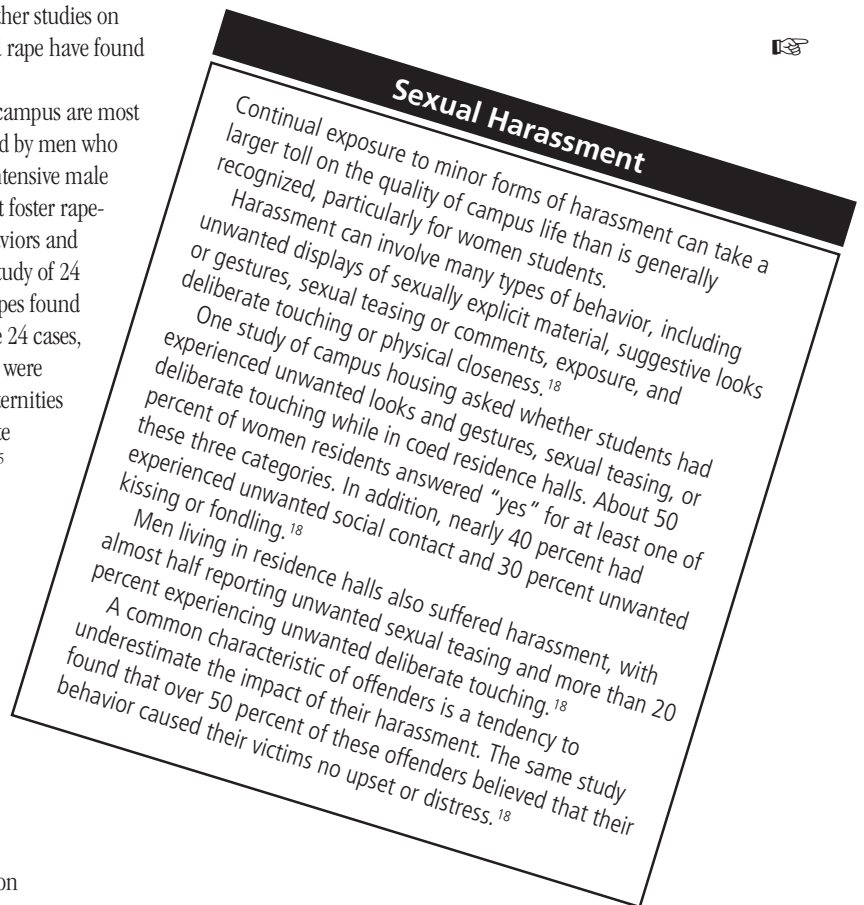
Gang rapes on campus are most often perpetrated by men who participate in intensive male peer groups that foster rape-supportive behaviors and attitudes. One study of 24 alleged gang rapes found that in 22 of the 24 cases, the perpetrators were members of fraternities or intercollegiate athletics teams.⁵ Involvement in these types of

groups may help some men quell doubts about the inappropriateness of their behavior, particularly when their team or fraternity holds prestige on campus.⁵

Misinterpretation of Verbal and Nonverbal Cues

Men and women frequently interpret verbal and nonverbal cues of sexual intent differently, with men often overestimating women's interest in them as sexual partners based on outward signs such as friendliness, attractiveness, and clothing.²

Misinterpretation is an important factor, but in fact most men who commit acquaintance rapes plan their attacks in advance.⁶ A typical scenario is for a perpetrator to pressure his date to drink heavily so that she will be less capable of resisting an assault.⁷



Sexual Harassment

Continual exposure to minor forms of harassment can take a larger toll on the quality of campus life than is generally recognized, particularly for women students. Harassment can involve many types of behavior, including unwanted displays of sexually explicit material, suggestive looks or gestures, sexual teasing or comments, exposure, and deliberate touching or physical closeness.¹⁸

One study of campus housing asked whether students had experienced unwanted looks and gestures, sexual teasing, or deliberate touching while in coed residence halls. About 50 percent of women residents answered "yes" for at least one of these three categories. In addition, nearly 40 percent had experienced unwanted social contact and 30 percent unwanted kissing or fondling.¹⁸

Men living in residence halls also suffered harassment, with almost half reporting unwanted sexual teasing and more than 20 percent experiencing unwanted deliberate touching.¹⁸

A common characteristic of offenders is a tendency to underestimate the impact of their harassment. The same study found that over 50 percent of these offenders believed that their behavior caused their victims no upset or distress.¹⁸

Rape Settings

Most incidents of rape take place in the evening. The NCWSV survey suggests that 51.8 percent of completed rapes occur between midnight and 6 A.M., 36.5 percent occur between 6 P.M. and midnight, and 11.8 percent occur between 6 A.M. and 6 P.M.

Nearly 60.0 percent of on-campus rapes take place in the victim's residence, 31.0 percent in other housing areas, and 10.3 percent at a fraternity.¹

Alcohol Use

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) 2002 report on college drinking estimates that more than 70,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 survive alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape each year.⁸

A national survey of more than 14,000 students found that 1.0 percent of students living in residence halls or fraternity/sorority houses survived alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape during 2001. This study found that 19.5 percent of students experienced an unwanted sexual advance where alcohol was involved.⁹

In a study of students who had been victims of some type of sexual aggression while in college—from intimidation and illegal restraint to rape—the women surveyed reported that 68 percent of their male assailants had been drinking at the time of the attack.¹⁰

Alcohol and other drug use exacerbate the problem of misinterpretation of sexual intent but are also used to justify assault.¹¹ Most college men believe that alcohol increases sexual arousal and legitimizes nonconsensual sexual aggression. Most also believe that women who have two or more drinks are more interested than other women in having sex.⁶

Rape Drugs

Various drugs are used to facilitate rape, including alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB), benzodiazepines, ketamine, barbiturates, chloral hydrate, methaqualone, heroin, morphine, LSD, and other hallucinogens. When combined with alcohol, which they frequently are, such "nonalcoholic" drugs can lead to blackout.¹²

Alcohol is by far the most commonly used date-rape drug. Rohypnol and gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB)

are also well known for their incapacitating effects.¹³

Rohypnol, the trade name for flunitrazepam, is used in some countries to treat insomnia but is illegal in the United States.¹³ Rohypnol has many street names, such as "roofies," "roachies," "forget pill," "whiteys," "roach-2s," "trip-and-fall," "mind-erasers," and "Mexican valium."¹³ The drug is available for less than \$5 per pill.¹⁴

Rohypnol makes users look and act as if they were intoxicated.

Adverse effects include disorientation, confusion, dizziness, drowsiness, impaired motor skills, impaired judgment, and unconsciousness.¹³

The effects are felt within 15 to 30 minutes after use and may persist for many hours. Rohypnol is very

dangerous when mixed with alcohol or other depressants; possible adverse outcomes include low blood pressure, difficulty breathing, coma, and even death.¹³

Victims who were given rohypnol are often uncertain about whether they were sexually assaulted. In addition to causing amnesia, the drug metabolizes quickly and is undetectable 72 hours after ingestion.¹⁵

Gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) underwent clinical trials by the FDA as a treatment for sleep disorders, but the drug was never approved or legalized for consumption. GHB is also known as "liquid ecstasy" and "liquid g."^{13,16}

GHB may cause severe memory loss, disorientation, dizziness, drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, breathing difficulty, seizure, unconsciousness, and coma. As with rohypnol, the drug takes effect shortly after ingestion.¹³

Strategies for Institutions of Higher Education

Because alcohol and other drugs are involved in most acts of sexual assault on campus, college and university administrators are under increasing pressure to acknowledge this connection and take

steps to reduce the consumption of alcohol on campus as part of a comprehensive strategy for rape prevention.

Since research has found that fraternities, athletics teams, and other male peer groups foster rape-supportive norms, some experts have suggested that prevention programs can be most effective when targeting these types of all-male forums.²

Following are five categories and examples of environmental strategies for preventing alcohol and other drug use on campus.¹⁷

Promoting Alcohol- and Drug-Free Social, Recreational, and Extracurricular Options and Public Service

- Sponsor alcohol- and drug-free social and recreational options for students, such as a student center, coffeehouse, or other alcohol-free setting. Marketing efforts for these events must clearly state the alcohol- and drug-free guidelines for the activities.
- Sponsor and publicize volunteer and community service opportunities for students.

Creating a Social, Academic, and Residential Environment That Promotes Healthy Social Norms

- Develop programs targeted to male peer groups, such as fraternities and athletics teams.
- Develop social norms marketing campaigns to correct exaggerated misperceptions of alcohol and other drug abuse.
- Promote a healthy environment through the college admissions procedures.
- Offer core classes in the academic schedule on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.
- Make substance-free residence options available.
- Educate faculty and staff about behavioral indicators, student norms, and cultural attitudes related to high-risk or illegal alcohol and other drug use.
- Encourage faculty to interact more with students.
- Publicize pro-health messages through campus and community media channels.

Restricting Marketing and Promotion of Alcohol

- Restrict alcohol advertising in sports stadiums and on athletics publications.
- Reduce marketing and promotion targeted at athletes. Work with local bar owners to limit such marketing.

Stalking

The NCWSV survey asked students the following question: "Has anyone—from a stranger to an ex-boyfriend—repeatedly followed you, watched you, phoned, written, emailed, or communicated with you in other ways that seemed obsessive and made you afraid or concerned for your safety?"¹ The study found that 13.1 percent of the female students had been stalked during the previous school year. In 10.3 percent of the incidents, the stalker "forced or attempted sexual contact." NCWSV suggests that 80 percent of victims know their stalkers. Perpetrators are most frequently a boyfriend, ex-boyfriend, classmate, acquaintance, friend, or coworker.¹

HEC RESOURCES

The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention ♦ www.edc.org/hec

Limiting Availability and Access

- Work with local law enforcement to stay current with trends related to alcohol and other drug use on campus.
- Ban or restrict alcohol on campus.
- Prohibit alcohol use in public places.
- Prohibit delivery or use of kegs or other common containers on campus.
- Require alcohol servers to be registered and trained.
- Disseminate guidelines for off-campus parties.
- Regulate the number and concentration of alcohol outlets near campus.
- Advocate a rise in the costs of beer and liquor licenses.
- Promote a limit to the hours of alcohol sales.
- Advocate a reduction in the container size of alcoholic beverages.
- Encourage limitations regarding quantity per sale of alcohol.
- Promote required keg registration.
- Encourage an increase in state alcohol taxes.

Enforcing Campus Policies and State and Local Laws

- Communicate campus alcohol and other drug policies clearly and frequently to the community, including possible consequences for violations.
- Require registration of on-campus functions.
- Enforce ID checks at on-campus functions.
- Use undercover operations at campus pubs and on-campus functions.
- Use patrols to observe on-campus and off-campus parties.
- Increase disciplinary sanctions for violation of campus alcohol and other drug policies.
- Increase criminal prosecution of students for alcohol-related offenses.
- Enforce driver's license penalties for minors violating alcohol laws.
- Educate sellers and servers about potential legal liability.
- Advocate enforcement of ID checks at off-campus bars and liquor stores.
- Enforce penalties for sale of liquor to minors.
- Enforce laws against buying alcohol for minors.
- Enforce penalties for possessing fake IDs.
- Use undercover operations at retail alcohol outlets.
- Advocate stringent enforcement of DUI laws.
- Implement roadblocks.
- Establish dramshop laws that apply legal action for serving intoxicated drinkers or minors.



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The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention

The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention provides nationwide support for campus alcohol and other drug prevention efforts (see first page for contact information).

The Center offers training and professional development activities; technical assistance; publications, including *Preventing Alcohol-Related Problems on Campus: Acquaintance Rape*; support for the Network of Colleges and Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse; and assessment, evaluation, and analysis activities.

The Center offers resources for violence prevention on campus at www.edc.org/hec/violence/. The Center's Campuses and Other Drugs Web page includes resources on date-rape and club drugs, found at www.edc.org/hec/drugs/.



Other Organizations

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program

Northeastern University
716 Columbus Avenue, Suite 161 CP
Boston, MA 02120
(617) 373-4025
www.sportsociety.org/mvp.html

In the MVP program, multiracial teams of former collegiate and professional male athletes talk with boys and young men about attitudes toward women, violence, and masculinity. Through the program, researchers seek to reduce men's violence against women by inspiring athletes to challenge and reconstruct predominant male norms that equate strength in men with dominance over women.



RESOURCES

The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention ♦ www.edc.org/hec

An MVP key premise is that male student athletes can help to delegitimize “rape-supportive” and “battering-supportive” attitudes by publicly rejecting the definitions that reinforce them.

National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)

1730 Park Road, NW
Washington, DC 20010
(202) 232-6682; Fax (202) 462-2255
www.try-nova.org

NOVA offers aid, information, and referrals for victims of all types of crime and provides special trainings and technical assistance to support crisis-response programs that address violence on college campuses. Its manual *Responding to Communities in Crisis* includes a section for colleges and universities. NOVA also operates a national 24-hour victim telephone hotline at (800)879-6682.

Rape Treatment Center

Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center
1250 16th St.
Santa Monica, CA 90404
(310) 319-4000
www.911rape.org/

The Rape Treatment Center established the National Campus Rape Program. The program distributes *Sexual Assault on Campus: What Colleges Can Do*, a report outlining policies and programs colleges can adopt to decrease sexual violence and provide support for students who are victimized. It also produced the 20-minute award-winning documentary film *Campus Rape*, which explores the problem of sexual assault and presents prevention information. *Campus Rape* and other center materials address the role of alcohol and drugs such as rohypnol in sexual assault.

Safe Schools Coalition

P.O. Box 1338
Holmes Beach, FL 34218-1338
(941) 778-6652
www.ed.mtu.edu/safe

The Safe Schools Coalition is a network of community, school, student, and other organizations that sponsors annual conferences on various

violence prevention topics, including sexual assault and other violence on college campuses. Its Web site maintains a list of violence prevention resources.

National Interfraternity Conference

3901 West 86th St.
Suite 390
Indianapolis, IN 46268-1791
(317) 872-1112
www.nicindy.org

The National Interfraternity Conference (NIC) represents 63 member fraternities on more than 800 college campuses. The organization provides resources and services to member fraternities and colleges on a range of topics of interest to Greek societies, including the prevention of substance abuse and sexual assault.

NIC distributes the 20-minute video “Playing the Game,” designed as a discussion starter, and “Stop . . . Look . . . Listen,” an experiential game designed to help college men and women candidly discuss male/female relationships, health issues, positive sexual communication, and sexual assault.

NIC also distributes the Our Chapter/Our Choice Program, a peer-led workshop developed by Dr. Jeff Linkenbach and designed to help Greek society chapters reassess alcohol and other drug norms.

Security On Campus, Inc.

601 South Henderson Road
Suite 205
King Of Prussia, PA 19406
(888) 251-7959
www.campusafety.org/

Security On Campus, Inc. (SOC), founded in 1987, is a nonprofit grassroots organization dedicated to fostering safe campus environments. SOC educates prospective students, parents, and the campus community about the prevalence of crime on campus and assists victims and their families with guidance pertaining to laws, victims’ organizations, legal counsel, and access to information. SOC also fosters security improvements through campus community initiatives and provides effective procedures and programs to reduce alcohol and other drug abuse.



Other Internet Resources

Resources for Addressing Sexual Harassment

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
Customer Service Team
Mary E. Switzer Building
330 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20202
(800) 421-3481
www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/sexharassresources.html

This site offers resources on sexual harassment and hate crimes, and includes the publication *Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide for Schools*.

Minnesota Center Against Violence & Abuse

School of Social Work
University of Minnesota
105 Peters Hall
1404 Gortner Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108-6142
(612) 624-0721
<http://www.mincava.umn.edu>

This organization maintains an electronic clearinghouse on the World Wide Web, with access to thousands of Gopher servers, interactive discussion groups, newsgroups, and Web sites around the world. The clearinghouse includes a directory of federal and private funding sources that support violence prevention programs.

Pavnet Online: Partnerships Against Violence

John Gladstone
(301) 504-5462
www.pavnet.org/

Pavnet Online is a federal interagency electronic resource on the Internet created to provide information about effective violence prevention initiatives.

