Violence Against Women
On Campus

A Guide for Assisting Victims

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DEAR UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA FACULTY AND STAFF...

Sexual assault and relationship violence are pervasive problems on our campuses and in our communities. The victims of these crimes (who are overwhelmingly women) suffer psychological, physical, and sexual violations, or a combination. Although we know that women of all ages are victims of both types of crime, in 1995 the Bureau of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control reported that compared to other groups, women age 19 to 29 reported more violence by intimates. The following statistics demonstrate the extent of the problem for college students:

- 13.3% of college women indicated they had been forced to have sex in a dating situation. (Johnson, I., Sigler, R., 2000)
- 22% of all rape victims are between the usual college ages of 18-24. (Kilpatrick, 1992).
- 85% of victimizations by intimate partners in 1998 were against women. Women were victims of intimate partner violence at 5 times the rate of men. (Rennison, C., Welchans, S., May 2000)

In many instances, students, faculty, and staff come to our campus as survivors of these crimes while others will become victims during the time they spend here. The Women’s Resource Center is committed to creating a safe campus environment, in which we all can live, learn and work. We have developed comprehensive prevention, education, and advocacy services. It is our goal to reduce the number of women who become victims, while at the same time providing services to those already victimized. While many members of our campus community seek assistance from the Women’s Resource Center, as seen in the statistics above, many victims try and face their problems alone. In order to reach these people, we need help from the entire University community. As an integral part of this community, we are asking that you become involved. As a faculty or staff member, you have an opportunity to interact with students on a daily basis, and may be able to recognize behaviors that signal a need for help. You also can help colleagues and co-workers at the University who may be unaware of our services.

This brochure was created especially for your use—to suggest some effective strategies for identifying and assisting a student or colleague who may need help and to acquaint you with the services and resources offered by the Women’s Resource Center.

Please take a few moments to read through this brochure, and keep it on hand for future reference. Feel free to call if you have questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Melanie L. Miller
Director, Women’s Resource Center
HOW TO HELP END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Everyone agrees that violence against women must be stopped. With your help, and the help of the entire University community, we can work towards this goal. Here is how you can become involved:

Enlist Support:

• Recruit and recommend students to join our advocacy and peer education groups.
• Offer extra credit for participation in awareness activities sponsored by the Women’s Resource Center.
• Post information about violence against women and the Women’s Resource Center on websites and in emails and newsletters of departments, clubs, and organizations in which you are involved.

Act Against Violence:

• Attend a Harbor training and become a participant.
• Attend Women’s Resource Center sponsored events.
• Volunteer your services.
• Walk students who are in need of services over to the Women’s Resource Center.
• Challenge people who use sexist language and jokes that degrade women.
• Work towards long-term solutions by supporting policy change and legislation that addresses violence against women.
Raise Awareness:

- Request speakers from the Women’s Resource Center for classes or organizations.
- Build non-violence into course curriculums.
- Send students to the Frances S. Summersell Library at the Women’s Resource Center for current information and research.
- Co-sponsor a speaker or program with a focus on violence against women.
- Observe awareness months by wearing ribbons, posting flyers, and encouraging class participation in special events: October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, January is Stalking Awareness Month, and April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Enhance Resources:

- Donate books, tapes, and videos to our library.
- Sponsor a fundraiser.
- Adopt a project like The Clothesline Project, These Hands Don’t Hurt, Healing the Wounded Heart, or Take Back the Night.
- Coordinate a research project on the issue of sexual assault, stalking, relationship violence, or other areas of violence against women.

This is a call to action. We all have a responsibility to work towards prevention and social change. We must examine the role that each of us will take in eradicating violence against women.
The Role of Alcohol and Other Drugs

Alcohol...

There are many myths surrounding the role of alcohol in relationship violence as well as sexual assault. One of these is that drinking causes abuse.

The fact is...

- Alcohol does not cause relationship violence.
- Alcohol is involved in a little over 50% of relationship violence according to a 1993 study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Removing alcohol does not stop battering.

However...

- Alcohol is linked to sexual assault.
- 72% of sexual assault victims on college campuses were under the influence of alcohol or other drugs when they were attacked (Journal of Alcohol Studies, 2004).
- According to a national study in 1998, 75% of male students involved in date rape were under the influence of alcohol or drugs when committing the crime.
- Binge drinkers were three times more likely than other students to be sexually assaulted.

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug to facilitate rapes. Alcohol decreases the victim’s ability to assess her own danger, communicate effectively, or to defend herself, leaving her more vulnerable to attack. It also lowers the perpetrator’s inhibition of inappropriate behavior and decreases his ability to accurately judge a situation or to determine whether someone is giving consent. A person who is too drunk to drive is too drunk to give consent.
OTHER DRUGS...
Drugs such as rohypnol and GHB are now used to facilitate rapes on campuses across the U.S. These drugs are used because they sedate a victim and often produce an amnesiac effect, so the victim may have no memory of the assault, making detection and prosecution more difficult. When put into victims’ drinks both of these drugs are colorless, odorless, tasteless, and undetectable to the victim.

GAMMA HYDROXYBUTYRIC ACID (GHB, Liquid G, Super Scoop): A central nervous system depressant easily manufactured, typically a clear liquid kept in small dropper bottles.

EFFECTS...
- Severe adverse effects for even small increases in dosage, including: unconsciousness, seizure-like activity, anxiety, nausea, dizziness, hallucinations, loss of peripheral vision, coma, and sometimes death.
- Effects may appear within 15 minutes after ingestion of the drug and acute symptoms appear to decrease after three to four hours.
- Risks increase sharply when mixed with alcohol or other drugs.

ROHYPNOL (roofies, rufynol): A benzodiazepine, in the same drug family as Valium, and typically a small white tablet. Tablets manufactured most recently are blue in color and turn a drink blue for easier detection.

EFFECTS...
- Sedating effect that is enhanced by dosage, individual sensitivity to medication, and the presence of alcohol.
- Usually begin within 20-30 minutes after ingestion. The overall sedation can last six to eight hours following a 2 mg dose.
- Impaired ability to remember details is more likely to occur with higher dosages, especially when combined with alcohol.

Victims who suspect they may have been drugged should be sure to tell the doctor at the hospital so that a urinalysis can be done as soon as possible.
HOW TO HELP A VICTIM OF RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE

Relationship violence is a pattern of behaviors including emotional, verbal, psychological, economic, physical, and sexual abuse within an intimate relationship. It is “domestic violence” when the couple is living together, and “dating violence” when they are not. Violence is an effective means for batterers to create and maintain power and control over their partners.

1. Advise her that if she feels her safety is in danger, she should get out of the situation immediately.

2. Do not confront the abuser.

3. When speaking to the victim, assure her that she is not the cause of the violence. Victims of abuse often blame themselves.

4. Be prepared for the victim to minimize or deny the abuse.

5. Help the victim identify strengths and possible resources:
   • Family and friends that she can stay with and be safe.
   • Immediate access to police or legal assistance.
   • Contact the Women’s Resource Center for assistance with detailed safety planning, safe housing, counseling, support, and legal advocacy. Have the phone number available (348-5040) or offer to make the call for her.

6. If she is living with an abuser, develop a safety plan to aid her if she leaves. The plan might include such things as:
   • Know where she can go for safety and how to get there.
   • Have any extra cash, and leave checkbook and savings account information hidden with a friend.
   • Pack an extra set of clothes for herself (and her children), an extra set of keys to the car and house, toiletries, and medications.
   • Put in a secure place all forms of identification for herself.
   • Take things of special meaning.
   • Take important financial records.
**How To Recognize A Victim Of Relationship Violence**

The following behaviors, especially in combination, may signal that someone is in an abusive relationship:

**If a student or colleague:**
- Has visible bruises
- Has unexplained and frequent absences from class/work
- Withdraws from organizations, committees, or other activities
- Begins to decline in work/class performance for no apparent reason
- Appears fearful, depressed, anxious
- Leaves the room or cries during discussions related to abuse
- Has friends that report that she is in a bad relationship
- Has frequent, unexplained medical appointments
- Receives frequent calls during the day from boyfriend/husband
- States she needs to report all activities to boyfriend/husband
- Has a boyfriend/husband who frequently appears at class/work site unexpectedly or is waiting for her

**Behavior Patterns In A Violent Relationship**

The following are some examples of behaviors used by batterers to gain power and control over their partner:
- Intimidation – making her afraid by using looks and gestures.
- Emotional Abuse – humiliating her, playing mind games with her.
- Isolation – controlling what she does, contact with friends and family, using jealousy to justify actions.
- Minimizing, Denying & Blaming – blaming others for all his problems, minimizing violence, saying she makes him hit her.
- Male Privilege – treating her like a servant, defining male and female roles.
- Economic Abuse – controlling finances, limiting access to money.
- Coercion and Threats – threatening to leave her and take the children, commit suicide, coercing her to drop charges, etc.
HOW TO HELP A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Faculty and staff members are likely to be one of the first points of contact for a student who has experienced a sexual assault. Sexual Assault is traumatic, and those who survive often have severe stress responses. There are generally four stages of reaction that a victim of sexual assault may go through. These stages are fluid and may not occur in order. Below are the stages and behavior indicators you should be aware of to help a victim of sexual assault.

1. Crisis Stage - happens in the hours and days following an assault and may include such things as:
   - Shock and denial
   - Fear: of being alone, of attacker returning, etc.
   - May show strong emotions/no emotions at all
   - Eating and sleep disturbances

2. Denial Stage - may deny any effects from the assault and pretend that everything is fine
   - Wants everything to get back to ‘normal’
   - May believe that everyone is tired of hearing about the assault
   - May change lifestyles, jobs, residences
   - May turn to alcohol and drugs to numb things

3. Suffering Stage - when the assault really starts to sink in and depression and feelings of loss are predominant
   - Reactions include fear, nightmares, physical pains, sexual problems, difficulty concentrating, loss of interest in activities
   - Very painful stage and mood swings are common.
   - Misdirected anger toward loved ones or self

4. Resolution Stage - when victim starts process of resolving feelings about the assault, the attacker and herself
   - Goal is to move from ‘victim’ to ‘survivor’
   - Integrate the assault as an accepted but painful event

Sexual Assault is any sexual contact or sexual attention committed by force, threats, coercion, or violence. It includes rape, attempted rape, child molestation, incest, and some types of sexual harassment. Rape may include stranger rape, acquaintance/date rape, marital rape, or multiple rape.

Rapists use sexual violence as a means to control, humiliate, and hurt their victims. Victims are not chosen for their attractiveness, behavior, or appearance, but rather their vulnerability to attack. Although stranger rape is the most feared, 9 out of 10 student victims state that they knew their attacker prior to the assault according to the National College Women Sexual Victimization Study (2000).
WHAT TO SAY TO SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN RAPED

It is best for the victim if you can empower her instead of trying to rescue her. Try to be strong, supportive, and accepting. Use of effective responses can validate the feelings of the victim and empower her at the same time. Examples of effective responses would be:

- What happened? You have really had a tough time.
- Tell me more about that....
- It's frightening to think that you might have been hurt worse.
- You really handled the situation well.
- Is your mom calming down? It must be hard for you to be so upset and have her upset too.
- You must have been very scared. It took a lot of courage to tell someone about what happened.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE THE FIRST PERSON TOLD ABOUT A SEXUAL ASSAULT

If you are the first person that the assault has been reported to, you may be most helpful by encouraging the victim to:

- Contact the Women’s Resource Center Victim Advocate or offer to make the contact for the victim if desired.
- Seek medical services through the Student Health Center or the DCH Emergency Room (the Victim Advocate at the Women’s Resource Center can provide hospital accompaniment).
- Strongly consider counseling services provided by the Women’s Resource Center or other appropriate treatment center.
- Consider filing a police report with the appropriate law enforcement agency or taking action through Student Judicial Affairs.
- Ask if the victim has a safe place to go. If not, the Women’s Resource Center can assist with housing arrangements.
WOMEN’S RESOURCE CENTER SERVICES

The Women’s Resource Center at the University of Alabama has developed a comprehensive prevention, education and advocacy program for students, faculty and staff who have been or may become victims of violence against women.

EDUCATION SEMINARS

The Women’s Resource Center designs and implements a wide variety of programs and workshops on a full range of issues related to violence against women. Seminars can be customized to provide a broad overview or can be tailored to cover a special topic for a specific audience. Suggested topics available upon request include:

- Healthy Relationships
- Domestic Violence 101
- Domestic Violence in the Workplace
- Sexual Harassment
- Alcohol, Drugs, and Dating
- Customized Topics

VICTIM ADVOCACY

A Victim Advocate provides 24 hour on-call response to crisis situations related to sexual assault or relationship violence, harassment, and stalking. Advocacy services include hospital accompaniment, academic intervention, court accompaniment, arrangement for safe housing on or off-campus, and referral for other appropriate services. The Women’s Resource Center has also established a multi-disciplinary Campus Violence Task Force to strengthen violence against women prevention and service programs, address the needs of traditionally underserved populations, and provide a coordinated community response to violence against women.

COUNSELING

A Staff Therapist at the Women’s Resource Center provides confidential counseling free of charge to students, faculty, and staff on victimization issues such as emotional, psychological, or physical abuse in a relationship, acquaintance or stranger rape, and incest. Although the primary focus of the services provided is violence against women, the Women’s Resource Center will provide services to male victims of relationship violence or sexual assault as well as for friends and family members of a victim who may be experiencing difficulty related to the victimization.
SUPPORT GROUPS
Separate groups are available for faculty/staff and for students. Examples of groups available include Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Assault, Survivors of Relationship Violence, and Sexual Assault Survivors.

MEN AGAINST VIOLENCE
Men Against Violence is a group of University of Alabama students, faculty, and staff dedicated to helping bring about social justice by ending violence against women through increasing awareness, education, personal development, promotion of diversity, and partnership.

INTERACTIVE THEATRE: UNSCRIPTED
Using the power of theatre, student peer educators address a variety of issues related to social justice including violence against women and other forms of oppression. Using a socially conscious, highly interactive and improvisational theatre model, the group, called Unscripted, presents to classes, residence halls, organizations, and community groups upon request. Selected male and female students are extensively trained in presentation techniques and violence against women issues.

FRANCES S. SUMMERSSELL LIBRARY
The Frances S. Summersell Library provides an extensive and ever-expanding collection of brochures and pamphlets, books, videos, and current research. Many brochures and pamphlets are distributed free. Topic areas include:

- Gender Issues
- Women’s Health
- Fiction
- Race, Class, and Culture
- Body Image
- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Assault
- Women’s History

OTHER WOMEN’S RESOURCE CENTER PROGRAMS
- Breast Cancer Awareness
- Young Women Leaders
- Women’s History Month
- Women’s Empowerment Conference
- Women Involved in Living & Learning (WILL)
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