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Introduction

ICASA was founded in 1977 and consists of 34 rape crisis centers. For more information on ICASA's history visit www.icasa.org. Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) activities have been planned by centers since the 1980s and the first Take Back the Night march in Illinois occurred in 1972.

However, the designation of April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month is a relatively new phenomenon. April became the designated month in Illinois following a proclamation by then Gov. George Ryan in 1999. Prior to that proclamation, ICASA centers had picked random months to focus their attention, often sharing October with Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

April is the consensus Sexual Assault Awareness Month for most state coalitions. A 2000 survey by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center found 37 state coalitions recognizing April.

The NSVRC has also worked with state coalitions to formulate a general theme across the country, promoting the use of teal as the official color, which ICASA has recommended to its centers for the past two years.

Activities

Sexual Assault Awareness Month features a range of public events that attract attention to the issue of sexual violence. Centers have been creative in developing new ideas and have created a variety of time-tested events that draw emotion and passion to the cause. In order to achieve maximum success, any event your organization chooses to use must be publicized through flyers, press releases and public announcements. The more people participating in an event the easier it is to attract attention. Descriptions of some typical activities follow:

“A Day to End Sexual Violence”

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center has declared April 20, 2004 as a day for all rape crisis centers and coalitions to hold an event that will raise awareness about sexual assault. The event may be as simple as an open house or as elaborate as a Take Back the Night March, but the NSVRC is encouraging all organizations to take part. Tying into a national campaign could allow centers to receive more media coverage.

Clothesline Project

The Clothesline Project is one of the most effective ways to bring attention to sexual assault. The project involves a survivor turning a T-shirt into a work of art representing the impact sexual assault has on a person and the community. The T-Shirts are then hung on a clothesline and displayed at an event. The project was initiated in Massachusetts in 1990. It is now a core part of many awareness activities, including use by several ICASA centers. The project is best used in conjunction with another event.



Denim Day

Break out the blue jeans for this event, which asks sexual assault centers to sponsor a day for everyone in their community to wear jeans to work. Centers need to contact local government and businesses to work on achieving a Denim Day. The event was created in response to an Italian Supreme Court's decision to dismiss rape charges because the victim was wearing jeans. The court decision stated, "It is common knowledge ... that jeans cannot even be partly removed without the effective help of the person wearing them ... and it is impossible if the victim is struggling with all her might."

Denim Day can be effective because it make a visual impact and brings attention to a variety of venues that normally don't discuss sexual assault. It also makes each person participating pause to momentarily consider sexual assault issues as he/she gets dressed in the morning.

Hands Banner

The Hands Banners is similar to the AIDS quilt. The banner includes patches representing the hands of rape and incest survivors. Each hand is decorated in a personal way. Like the Clothesline Project, the banner creates an impressive visual display that forces people to notice and can be of great use in generating media coverage. The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault initiated the project.

Map Project

Centers can enlarge a map of their county or city area and insert a pin into the map marking where sexual assaults occurred in the area. The map should be placed in a high-traffic area, like a student union, so that the public can become aware of the frequency of rapes. An information table can be placed near the map that would allow others to add a pin indicating the site of a sexual assault. In order to be most effective, this project needs to remain visible for several days.

Mock Trials

Staging a mock sexual assault trial is an excellent way to educate communities about the legal process and address the difficulties facing victims of sexual assault. It can provide a dramatic, real-life feel that many citizens never experience. A mock trial can also help build collaborations with different organizations including law enforcement and judges. A large amount of planning is necessary to produce a mock trial. A center must find scripts; locate a host site, preferably a real courtroom; select actors and garner the cooperation of a variety of groups. Also, a large amount of pre-event publicity is needed in order to attract an audience. The trial is a unique and interesting event that should draw media attention before and during the activity.

Open House

It is always a good public relations move to invite the public into your building for free cake and cookies. The event draws attention to your work and makes your office more personal to others, helping build visibility and a network of relationships.

Proclamations

Centers or Coalitions use proclamations to add a government voice to creating notice of sexual assault. In 1999, ICASA worked with then Gov. George Ryan to declare April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The declaration is a sure-fire media draw, especially if it occurs with the help of powerful politicians. It can also be used at the local level with mayors and school officials. ADV & SAS, ICASA's member center in Streator, recently had success incorporating proclamations at the school and city level. Sample proclamations are included at the end of this chapter.

Public fundraising

Sexual Assault Awareness Month is an excellent time to work with a business to raise additional funds. Several companies, most notably Barnes and Noble and Borders book stores, will donate a percentage of their sales on a certain day from people holding a special coupon naming the organization as the beneficiary. The event is an easy way to garner funds and increase overall attention. It relies heavily on a center spreading the word and getting people into the business at the proper time. Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault based in Springfield has used this event.

Shine a Light on Sexual Violence

This event entails selecting a day when community members utilize the shining of lights, candles, car headlights and flashlights to illuminate the public about sexual assault. The continual lighting forces the public to take into consideration an issue usually hidden in the shadows. This is an event that would need heavy publicity prior to initiating in order to make people aware of why the lights have been left on. The event originated with the YWCA of Greater Los Angeles Sexual Assault Crisis Center and the center should be credited.

Speak Outs

Let the voices be heard. This event welcomes people to come and voice their feelings about sexual assault. It is usually held in conjunction with another event (i.e. Take Back the Night). A center needs to line up two or three speakers to set the tone for the evening, while welcoming those from the audience that want to speak. The event can be an empowering experience for victims.

Stand in Silence

Used effectively by Rape Victims Advocates in Chicago, this event features people standing in public areas in silent tribute to rape victims. Participants are encouraged to wear matching shirts and stand in groups to create an unusual but constant visual reminder. Participants do not speak during the event, instead letting their silence and the signs speak for them. When promoting the event, remind newspapers and television stations about the striking visual opportunity available.

Take Back the Night

This longstanding and most publicized event is a staple in drawing attention to sexual assault. The event includes a march through a major public area with the marchers chanting anti-rape slogans and holding signs or other symbols. A keynote speaker and possibly a speakout usually follow the march. Planning for this event needs to begin early in order to get as many marchers as possible. A center needs to have a significant turnout for this event, to ensure public and media interest.



Volunteer Dinners

Sexual Assault Awareness Month is an excellent time to honor your volunteers. A recognition dinner can foster good will and increase the notoriety of those helping your center, thereby encouraging others to join. Centers can tie in a volunteer dinner with an award ceremony for a local official or volunteer of the year. By adding the award component, the chances of receiving media coverage increases. Most newspapers provide a section where honoree information can be submitted and the center can garner free publicity.

Walk Outs

This event makes the public confront the pervasiveness of sexual assault and its impact. A day and time is selected when all victims of sexual assault or their friends and family would walk out of wherever they are and meet for a rally at a predetermined setting. This event takes enormous courage from the participants to leave work, school or other public settings and then meet. An event of this nature also needs to be heavily publicized, so that the participant's co-workers and other members of the public realize why they are leaving.

Wreath Project

Place a wreath in a public place and invite people to tie a colored ribbon onto the wreath for every sexual assault victim they know. The wreath would need to be displayed for a lengthy period. This display would coincide with an information booth.



Proclamation

Whereas, sexual assault continues to be a major social crisis in our schools and our communities; and

Whereas, sexual assault is a serious youth issue in which, one out of every three girls and one out of every six boys in this school may be a survivor of sexual violence before the age of 18; and

Whereas, this experience can be devastating for not only the survivor, but also for the family and friends of the survivor; and

Whereas, the voices of those who survive sexual violence must be heard through public awareness and education programs, and

Whereas, this school recognizes the vital importance of designating a time devoted to increase student awareness of sexual violence and the services available to help victims; and

Whereas, we hold forth a vision of this school being free from sexual violence;

Now, Therefore, I, _____, as principal proclaim the week of April 6, 2003 to April 12, 2003 as **TEAL RIBBON - SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS WEEK**. I urge all students to take part in working toward the elimination of all forms of sexual violence.

**State of Illinois
Executive Department
Proclamation**

Whereas, 1.3 sexual assaults occur every minute; and

Whereas, one out of three girls and one out of five boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18; and

Whereas, in Illinois, 4,033 adults reported sexual assault to law enforcement officials in 1997 and 9,664 children were identified by the Department of Children and Family Services as sexual abuse victims between July 1996 and June 1997; and

Whereas, up to 92 percent of all women have been sexually harassed in the workplace or school; and

Whereas, 84 percent of rapists are relatives, friends, neighbors or acquaintances of the victim; and

Whereas, only seven percent of sexual assault victims report the crime to law enforcement officials or child protective services; and

Whereas, sexual assault, sexual abuse and sexual harassment are overwhelming moral, economic and public health burdens; and

Whereas, support and counseling for sexual assault survivors are necessary to recover from the trauma of victimization; and

Whereas, education about crimes of sexual assault, sexual abuse and the impact of sexual harassment is essential to end sexual violence and advance equality, safety and respect among all individuals;

Therefore, I, George Ryan, Governor of the State of Illinois, proclaim April 1999 as SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH in Illinois.

Promotional Materials

Freebies, giveaways, toys, fun stuff - it's the promotional material. The things you can give to people to help them remember your message. Brochures, posters, stress balls, pens, lanyards and many other tools and toys can help your audience retain the information you give them and remind them how to reach you. None of its bad as long as people enjoy it for the moment and beyond.

ICASA Material

Brochures

- A Guide to Civil Lawsuits
- A Guide to Advocacy Services
- Acquaintance Rape (Spanish)
- After Sexual Assault (Spanish, Korean, Polish)
- How Can I Help? (Spanish, Korean, Polish)
- Male Survivors (Spanish)
- Men Responding to Sexual Assault
- Parent Pamphlet (Spanish)
- Sexual Abuse and The Church (Spanish)
- What Do I Need to Know?

Manuals

- By the Numbers: Sexual Violence Statistics
- The Law Book: Illinois Criminal Sexual Assault Act & Related Statutes

Posters

- Five Girls (center specific, 9x11 or 16x24)
- Just a Rapist (16x24)
- Real Men Don't Rape (8x10 or 16x24)
- Six Minutes (center specific, 9x11 or 16x24)

Radio PSAs

- A Few Words About Rape
- A Poem About Rape (center specific)
- Reality Check
- Rapist in Your Neighborhood
- Silent Epidemic
- Women Speak Together (center specific)

Television PSAs

- Just a Rapist
- The Gauntlet

Other Material

- Bill Tracker Legislative Update
- Cell Phone Cards (center specific)
- Coalition Commentary Newsjournal
- Emergency Contraception Informational Cards
- Friend of ICASA forms
- ICASA Informational Card
- “Hold the Line” postcards

Order Information

Orders can be made from the Publications section at www.icasa.org. Or contact Sean Black at 217-753-4117 or sblack@icasa.org. Publications are free.

Outside Sources

A brief synopsis of material available from selected organizations.

California Coalition Against Sexual Assault

CALCASA produces a variety of material including recently redesigned “Speak Out Against Sexual Violence” posters, bookmarks and T-Shirts. For more information go to www.calcasa.org or call 916-446-2520.

Lifetime Television

The national network has created a pin and business cards featuring its logo of “Stop Violence Against Women.” For more information contact www.lifetime.org.

National Sexual Violence Resource Center

The NSVRC has a wide variety of material available including teal ribbon pins, window clings and newly produced posters and postcards featuring the “Faces of Rape and Sexual Abuse” photos by Nobuko Oyabu. The posters are available in English and Spanish. For more information call 877-739-3895 or visit www.nsvrc.org.

Texas Association Against Sexual Assault

TAASA completed a media campaign in 2003 featuring posters, radio PSAs and television PSAs in English and Spanish. For more information contact www.taasa.org.

Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault

WCASA has a variety of posters available from its 2003 "Real Men Respect" campaign. The posters are available in multiple languages and sizes.

Toys/Fun Stuff

A variety of products have been used in the past to provide information. The list includes:

- Calendars
- Fans
- Hack-a-sacks
- Key chains
- Lanyards
- Pens
- Magnets
- Ornaments
- Palm Cards
- Pencils
- Pens
- Ribbons
- Rulers
- Stress balls
- T-Shirts
- Twisty ropes
- Whistles

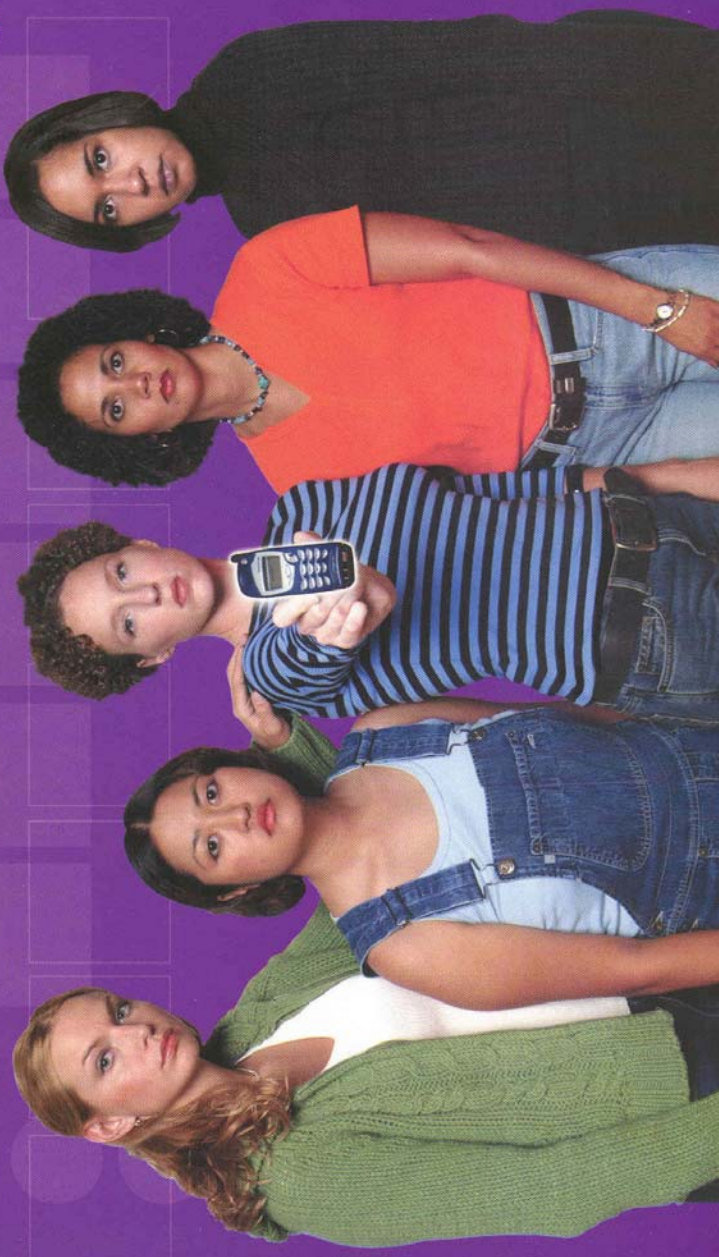
Rape Happens. Confidential
Rape Happens. Confidential
Rape Happens. Confidential
Rape Happens. Confidential
Rape Happens. Confidential
Rape Happens. Confidential
Rape Happens. Confidential

Rape

support
free support
private

Do You Know Where To Get Help?

Call
618-397-0975



Every 6 Minutes A Woman Is Raped

Do You Know Where
To Get Help?
Call the Rape Crisis Center

630-897-8383

10:06 10:12 10:18 10:24 10:30 10:36



Real Men Don't Rape



"Taking a girl out doesn't mean she owes you sex."

"When she says no, she means it. Always stop."

"How a girl dresses has nothing to do with sex."

"Show respect. Ask questions. Listen to her."

"Her silence doesn't mean she wants it."

Nothing gives you the right to force sex. Ever. It doesn't make you cool, powerful, or a man. Just a rapist.

ILLINOIS COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT



The Media

Sexual Assault Awareness Month was established to increase awareness about sexual assault issues. The media is a crucial element in achieving this goal. The media can provide free and important advertising. They can help frame the event in the manner of your choosing. In order to achieve this, you must be willing to help the media with promotion, press releases, advisories and other tactics.

Handling the Media: General Tips

Working with the media can be satisfying, frustrating or somewhere in between. The following are tips for working with the media.

- **Follow Through.** If you tell the media you will do something, do it. Whether that means calling them back or hosting an event, keep your commitments.
- **Be prepared.** Prepare yourself for the questions you will be asked. Have a co-worker conduct a mock interview and work to define your answers. This is an opportunity to relay your center's message and you need to be clear. Prior to a press conference you can prepare talking points to study before answering questions. Talking points help you think through the issue. Often you will unexpectedly be called to respond to an issue with little warning. At these moments, if you need time to prepare, ask the reporter for a few minutes and then call him back. You don't want to answer a question while your mind is debating the fallout.
- **Be concise.** There is nothing wrong with a short answer. A sharp two-sentence answer will come across better than a lengthy dissertation on society. Remember, all that usually will appear is two sentences or 15 seconds of your answer. If you provide a lengthy answer, it will be edited and it's always best to edit your own work first.
- **Be Aware.** Deadlines are everything in the media. If you need to call someone back, make sure you know when the deadline for the story is and always return the call at least 30 minutes before the deadline. If you miss a deadline or push the time, your side of an issue will be underplayed or omitted.
- **Be Fresh.** Attempt to provide a new look at an issue. Explain what the new information on the subject is. This is especially important if you are trying to get the media to cover an event. The media is looking for new and innovative ways it can deliver the story, provide it for them.
- **Don't exaggerate.** If you embellish what you are doing, the media will catch you and either turn the story into a negative portrayal or decide that your issue doesn't warrant future coverage because they can't trust you.

- **Don't make it personal.** There are times when the media's coverage of an event is going to irritate you. Do not hold a grudge against the media outlet. If you call and berate a media outlet or refuse to work with a certain member of the press, your center will suffer. The media always has the last word in an event and can frame the issue in the manner of their choosing. You can be direct in your criticism but do not let it affect future dealings with the media.
- **Don't go off the record.** There is no such thing as "off the record." Comments that you believe are off the record tend to appear in the media at a later date. The comments might not be attributed to you but if you don't want a comment to appear, don't say it.
- **No comment is your friend.** There is never a reason not to call the media back. You can always call and tell them that you don't have a comment. If you do this, you still establish a relationship with the press and they know that you will give them the courtesy of a call back. If you don't call back, you might never be called again.
- **Looks matter.** In television, the way you look affects your message. It's unfortunate but it's true. Before doing a television interview, have someone double-check your appearance. You should also apply makeup, especially blush and lipstick. You don't want appear washed out on the evening news. It is also helpful to have a spare dress wardrobe in your office. Sunglasses, scarves, flashy jewelry and print clothing should be avoided if possible.

The Press Release

Press releases are used to inform the media about your organization's stance on an issue or an event that your center is planning. Press releases must include the following:

- Who you are;
- What your stance is;
- Why it is important;
- Why the issue is important;
- Time of the event;
- Contact information.

The best press releases are:

- Factual;
- Concise;
- Engaging;
- Timely.

It is important to tie the theme of your press release to the issue. A press release for a fundraiser or open house needs a different tone than a protest press release. Don't make all your press releases the same. There is nothing wrong with having fun with or being confrontational in a press release. But if you are confrontational on paper, be prepared to keep the same tone during interviews and for the media to portray your emotion about the subject.

Sample press releases are included at the end of this chapter.

Media Advisory

Media advisories are the sisters of press releases. An advisory is specific for an event you are planning/hosting. The advisory will include time, date, place, who and why the media should attend. It should provide a brief synopsis of the speakers involved and can include possible coverage ideas/storylines for the media to pursue.

A sample media advisory is included at the end of this chapter.

Media Packet

When holding a media event, your center needs to prepare an informational packet, which should include the event agenda, press release, media advisory and brochures or other material outlining your center's activities.

Letters to the Editor

Free publicity can be found in the opinion/editorial section of your newspapers. Letters to the editor provide an opportunity for your center to state its case on an issue in a no-cost venue. Also, letters to the editor often spark public debate on an issue, providing more opportunities for you to educate and inform. Prior to writing a letter, make sure you read the paper's policy on length of letters and notification information.

A sample letter to the editor is included at the end of this chapter.

Opinion Pieces

Many media outlets, most notably newspapers, provide time/space for the paper's opinion column or a guest opinion piece. This is a great opportunity for you to provide information on sexual assault. The op-eds are usually reserved for timely subjects. By using recent current events with sexual assault awareness month activities, you should be able to stake a viable claim to receiving this valuable space. You need to contact the paper's editorial board to learn what the process for submitting an opinion piece is or to discuss having the paper write an editorial. If the newspaper doesn't want to run your piece, you should attempt to work with them on their own opinion column.

A sample opinion piece is included at the end of this chapter.

Public Service Announcements

Radio and television stations are required to play a specific number of public service announcements. ICASA has produced radio and television PSAs that can be used in this manner. Centers must work with local stations to be included the PSA rotation. Often a station will air timely PSAs, therefore, April is a good opportunity to remind/introduce a station to your material. Building a relationship now will also help during other times of the year. For copies of ICASA's PSAs, contact Sean Black.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 14, 2001

CONTACT: Sean Black
(217) 753-4117

ICASA decries Grammy's decision to honor Eminem

There is no honor in hate.

But, apparently the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences does not agree. They have chosen to honor Eminem and his hate-filled, violence-provoking "Marshall Mathers LP" with four Grammy nominations and an appearance on the nationally televised show Feb. 21. The Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault and its 29 community-based rape crisis centers are outraged by his nominations and vehemently oppose Eminem's appearance on the show.

This isn't about the standard musical mantra of sex, drugs and rock & roll. This is about hate. The hate extolled by Eminem on his "Marshall Mathers LP" CD that has been nominated for "Album of the Year." This is a recording that has songs entitled "Kill You" and "Bitch Please II" as well as a song, "Kim," about murdering his wife.

We implore people to take a stand against Eminem's message of hate and violence. We urge CBS not to legitimize Eminem's message by allowing him to perform in front of a nationwide television audience. Eminem endorses rape, murder and hate. His work is dangerous and he does not deserve a public platform.

- MORE -

According to the 1998 National Violence Against Women Survey, there are more than 1.1 million sexual assaults in the United States each year. Almost 18% of American women have been raped or been a victim of attempted rape in their lifetime. There is a violent crime every 23 seconds in America. Yet, the Grammys are prepared to honor a person who glorifies rape, glorifies abuse and glorifies violence.

It is grossly irresponsible for CBS to give Eminem time on national television. It debases the integrity of the network and is an affront to all of us throughout the country who work every day to mend the wounds of such violence

We are distressed by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences' decision to honor him with four Grammy nominations, "Album of the Year," "Rap Album of the Year," "Rap Solo Performance," and "Best Rap Performance by a Duo or Group." It is a reprehensible decision. If Eminem performs during the Grammys, CBS will be complicit in promoting the rape, battery, violence and murder of women and gay people. CBS should not surrender to the pressure for ratings and profits at the cost of human decency.

There is no defense for honoring Eminem's work. He extols murder, wife beating and rape. Every time he wins an award and garners acclaim the message to women is clear: hate-filled, degrading and disempowering speech is condoned in our society.

Eminem does not deserve honor; hate never does.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 17, 2003

CONTACT: Sean Black
(217) 753-4117

ICASA welcomes Safe Passage

The Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault is pleased to welcome Safe Passage of DeKalb into the coalition. ICASA consists of 34 rape crisis centers located throughout the state.

“We are very excited to have Safe Passage join ICASA,” ICASA Executive Director Polly Poskin said. “Safe Passage will provide crucial counseling and advocacy services to victims of sexual assault in DeKalb County. ICASA is dedicated to providing services to every county in Illinois and the addition of Safe Passage is a step toward that goal.”

ICASA centers provide counseling, medical and court advocacy and prevention education programs throughout the state. All services are free and confidential. In FY 03 ICASA centers provided counseling and advocacy services to 10,527 victims of sexual assault and 2,821 friends or family of sexual assault victims. The centers’ presented prevention education programs to 396,886 people in FY 03.

ICASA was established in 1977 and is dedicated to ending sexual violence. For more information visit www.icasa.org.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 11, 2003

CONTACT: Sean Black
(217) 753-4117

ICASA supports “No means no” legislation

“No means no.” Whenever it is said. It’s that simple.

For that reason the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault supports SB 406, which explicitly protects a person’s right to withdraw consent to sexual activity at any time. Therefore, a person can be charged with sexual assault if the victim says “no” at any time during the sexual activity and the perpetrator does not stop. This bill is a major boost for victim’s rights. SB 406 affirms that force during sexual activity constitutes criminal behavior. The bill clarifies that consensual sexual activity does not give permission for sexual activity that is not consented to.

“This bill is an important step in recognizing the rights of women to control their own bodies and ensure their safety. Women must have the right to withdraw consent to sexual activity and it is a crime if that right is violated,” ICASA Executive Director Polly Poskin said. “We are pleased that Senator Rutherford and Senator Radogno have stepped forward to introduce this important piece of legislation.”

ICASA believes this law will enable State’s Attorneys to increase the prosecution of acquaintance rape cases. Acquaintances account for at least 80 percent of sexual assaults.

The Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault is a coalition of 29 rape crisis centers located across the state.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 25, 2003

CONTACT: Sean Black
(217) 753-4117

ICASA, Survivors Network celebrate signing of SB 1035

The children are better protected.

Gov. Rod Blagojevich helped the children by signing into law SB 1035. The law extends the civil and criminal statutes of limitations for childhood sexual abuse. The Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Survivors Network Illinois on the behalf of sexual abuse victims across the state fully supported this bill and applaud the Illinois legislature and Gov. Rod Blagojevich. Rep. Jim Brosnahan and Sen. Jacqueline Collins sponsored the bill in the legislature.

“This is a landmark victory for childhood sexual abuse victims,” ICASA Executive Director Polly Poskin said. “This law is a cornerstone in the fight against childhood sexual abuse.”

The bill is sensitive to victims. SB 1035 permits a victim of child sexual abuse to file a civil suit against her/his perpetrator up to 10 years after the victim reaches the age of 18, or five years after the victim discovers the abuse and understands that she/he was harmed by the abuse.

“Childhood sexual abuse creates lifetime struggles for many victims. With this law victims have the necessary time to seek justice in our courts,” Poskin said.

The law also enables prosecutors to file criminal charges against child sex offenders up to 20 years after the victim reaches the age of 18 years. Current laws permit criminal actions only until the victim reaches the age of 28. The increased prosecutions of child molesters are critical to preventing further child abuse. Studies have shown that a child sex abuser averages at least 76 victims.

“One of the first steps in healing is to ensure that the cycle of violence stops with us,” said Barbara Blaine of Chicago, a social worker who heads Survivors Network Illinois. “That’s why we fought for this bill to protect children.”

NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MEDIA ADVISORY

NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE PRESENTS MESSAGE TO THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS IN DALLAS, TEXAS

- WHAT:** The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence will discuss the recommended steps the Catholic Church should take to handle sexual abuse cases by priests.
- WHO:** The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence is a national organization dedicated to developing and promoting national policy for sexual assault prevention and services to victims of sexual assault. The Alliance works with state sexual assault coalitions and related professionals to end sexual violence.
- WHEN:** 1 p.m. Thursday, June 13, 2002.
- WHERE:** Dan Moody Room, Adolphus Hotel, Dallas, Texas.

AGENDA

- Polly Poskin, Executive Director of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, will discuss an eight-point plan brought forth by the Alliance on behalf of 42 state sexual assault coalitions. The plan's central point is that there should be zero tolerance for any cases of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy and that the Catholic Church should work with rape crisis centers to provide counseling for victims of sexual abuse and prevention education programs for clergy and parishioners.
- Gail Burns-Smith, Executive Director of the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, will describe resources from the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, state sexual assault coalitions and rape crisis centers that can be used by the Catholic Church.
- Leigh Ebbesmeyer, Education/Training Coordinator of the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault and a former Dominican Sister, will respond to a report by the Catholic Church's Ad-Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse.
- Questions from the media.

For information, contact Sean Black, Communications Coordinator, Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault at 217-753-4117 (work), 217-414-8225 (cell) or sblack@icasa.org.



Aug. 12, 2003

To Managing Editor Leah DeSpain:

Dear Editor,

I was appalled by Allan Seiler's commentary, "Sex by any other name," that appeared in the Aug. 6 edition of the Pike Press. Seiler is off base in his comments and showed a frightening lack of regard for victims of sexual assault.

SB 406 is a clarification of the law that I hope empowers victims of sexual assault. I do not understand why anyone would oppose or find humor in a law that further cements a person's right to withdraw sexual consent at any time. A person should always have the right to withdraw sexual activity. If a person asks for sexual activity to stop, it must stop. If it doesn't, it is rape. It doesn't matter if the sexual activity was consented to at the beginning. No means no, whenever it is said.

Mr. Seiler is under the misconception that rape victims routinely falsify their stories. In a society where only three of every 10 rapes are reported to law enforcement, unfounded rape allegations are a rarity. One study in Portland, Or., determined only 1.6% of rape allegations were unfounded in comparison to 2.5% of stolen car allegations.

Jurors currently deal with the issue of consent in rape cases. This law does not change the difficulty surrounding this issue. The law does provide the judge and prosecutors another device in showing the jury that no means no whenever it is said

And while Mr. Seiler apparently found humor in his story of a woman that was raped throughout the summer, I did not. Mr. Seiler's depiction of a confused victim undermines the severity of the trauma that rape victims endure.

I hope the next time Mr. Seiler writes about sexual assault he will choose to treat victims with dignity instead of choosing to criticize a person's right to withdraw consent and make fun of them after they have done so.

Sincerely,

Sean Black
Communications Coordinator
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Communities must demand better

The crisis in the Catholic Church demands community action. We all need to sit up and pay attention to the magnitude of the abuse. If we know or suspect a child is being abused, we must report the crime and refer the victim to services.

We need to recognize that the daily news reports of sexual abuse by priests are the tip of the iceberg. Research tells us that one in 10 victims report sexual abuse and sex offenders who abuse children average 76 to 117 victims.

The recent unveiling of sexual abuse by Catholic priests has brought the issue of child sexual abuse to the public's attention. But it is the victims, not the priests that should be thought of first, last and during every moment in between. It is the victim that must be supported. The effects of childhood sexual abuse are devastating and can cause mental and physical trauma that shadows the victim across his or her life. Belief in the victim is key to recovering from sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse is a nationwide epidemic. According to national studies, 1 in 3-4 girls and 1 in 6-10 boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18. The spotlight focused so intently on the Catholic Church should be expanded to illuminate every institution that attempts to hide the sexual misconduct of its members. This is not a problem related to one institution. Every institution should reevaluate its handling of sexual misconduct by authority figures.

The Catholic Church has provided a blueprint on how not to handle cases of sexual abuse. In doing so, leaders of the church chose not to prevent further abuse. They shielded and coddled perpetrators, allowing them to turn more and more children into victims of abuse. The church leaders' actions are reprehensible. As a result of this

bunker mentality, more innocent children were victimized and forced to deal with the traumatic effects of the abuse. The clergy and society should be concerned about the effects the abuse has on the victims and not the protecting the institutionalized secrecy of the Catholic Church.

We support instituting Clergy as mandated reporters under the same guidelines outlined in the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Clergy should not be able to avoid reporting by claiming that they heard the disclosure in their capacity as a “spiritual advisor.” This change would help prevent the widespread secrecy that leads to continued abuse by certain clergy.

If you know a victim of sexual abuse, please send them to a sexual assault crisis center. The 30 member centers of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault provide free and confidential counseling and advocacy services to female and male victims of all ages. The centers are available 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week and provide an immediate response that supports the victim’s needs.

In this crucial time of facing the epidemic of child sexual abuse, it is important to never waver from working to help the victims.

Polly Poskin
Executive Director
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Presentations

Sexual Assault Awareness Month is an opportunity to do multiple presentations. The following are tips for doing and preparing presentations.

Tips for Effective Presentations

Before the Training

- Know who the contact person is and how to contact her/him.
- Clarify goals and objectives with contact person.
- Prepare and review the presentation. Put your own notes on colored paper or note cards for easy retrieval if you put them down.
- Be familiar with handouts, case studies, role-plays, videos, PowerPoint slides and other training tools.
- Discuss audiovisual needs and room arrangement with the contact person.
- Know the location of the training and make sure you have directions.

Day of Training

- Have directions and all contact information with you.
- Be rested and dress professionally and comfortably.
- Arrive early enough to prepare audiovisuals, write a greeting on the flip chart, etc.
- Start and end on time.
- Be aware of breaks and lunchtime.
- Wear your nametags, it's good modeling.

Speaking and Movement

- Mix in humor and serious moments.
- Do not have anything in your mouth.
- Do not cover your mouth with notes or your hand when speaking.
- Modulate your voice for emphasis.
- Vary the pace of the presentation.
- Avoid or at least explain all acronyms.
- Avoid using slang.
- Clarify regional particulars.
- Use personal anecdotes to illustrate a point.
- Try to speak/face all parts of the group equally.
- Don't speak with your back to any participant.
- Don't block one participant's view.
- If you must read, keep it short.
- Don't pace, but don't stand frozen in one place.

Workshop Design Process

Perform a Needs Assessment

What do folks know; how do they feel about this topic? Where should you start? What are the sponsor's objectives? Do the sponsors have an "agenda" of their own?

Establish Objectives

Write each objective in terms of the outcomes you want. What is the purpose of this training? What do you want the participants to know, feel, practice, experience?

Develop content and process objectives for the entire training, as well as each individual activity. Consider the individual participant's and the entire group's spirit and body, in addition to their minds.

Examples:

- **Content Objectives** - What concepts, information, definitions, skills do you want participants to learn? (e.g. Participants will learn the difference between subject and problem centered teaching.)
- **Experience Objectives**- What energy level, emotional or physical experience, interaction with self or others, do you want folks to have? (e.g. Participants will have some fun.)

Write out your design

- Identify Key Concepts, Essential, Foundational Information. What terminology, concepts, skills are necessary to meet the learning goals?
- Determine the logical, sequential, developmental order which will best meet your content and process objectives.
- Choose an appropriate modality for each activity.
- Create discussion or process questions for each activity.
- Design an opening, closing for each activity and a transition to the next activity.
- Assign time allotment for each part of workshop. Do you have too many objectives or too much information to present in the time you have?

Review and Practice

- Be sure you meet your objectives and training principles. Review each activity, as well as the total design.
- Anticipate “hard questions” or difficult points. Prepare more than one explanation for each difficult point.
- Write an evaluation for participants based on your objectives.
- Practice and time your presentation. Always add extra time for questions and the unexpected.

Evaluate All Aspects of Your Training

- Perform a self-evaluation: include all activities, media used, logistics, your preparation, delivery, platform skills and handling of difficult moments. Review the participants' evaluations. Make any changes necessary.

Using Visual Aids Effectively

Purpose

Both the quality and number of visual aids should enhance, not distract from message.

Ask yourself: Can the audience quickly and easily grasp what they see?
Are they spending time reading and not listening?

- Consider displaying or distributing an outline to help audience follow long or group presentations.
- Use variety to increase interest and remember the value of pictures, graphs, symbols and objects.

Flip Charts

- Flip charts are best used for small groups of 20-25 or less.
- Use bold tip markers on flip charts. Avoid chemical smells. Use non-toxic.
- Use no more than 3 colors. For important text, use dark, bold colors: black, dark blue or greens. Use red only to highlight, not for text. Avoid yellow or orange for text.
- Put small pieces of masking tape on the back of the easel – ready for use.
- Have pages marked somehow so you can find them easily and quickly.

- If you post the day's agenda, do not show times for each section. Show only starting and ending times and lunch. (Folks want to know when they'll eat!) This will give you a little more flexibility.
- Leave a blank page on the chart between each page you use so marker will not bleed through and obscure the visual.

Properly Design Transparencies

- Transparencies and PowerPoint presentations are better for larger audiences of more than 20-25.
- Use plain, high quality lettering of 18 font or more.
- Use a mixture of small and capitol letters. It is easier to read.
- Use bullets and underlining for highlighting and enhancing memory.
- Limit the number of slides used; allow at least 1-2 minutes per overhead.
- Make one and only one key point per visual unless the audience is very familiar with the subject. Use handouts for details.
- Organize material into natural categories and use contrast: (i.e. before versus after, problem and solution, advantages versus disadvantages, beginning to end; cost versus benefits.)
- Include no more than three or four points under one heading.
- Don't use whole sentences or paragraphs.
- Use bulleted words or short phrases only, except for quotes.
- A well-designed diagram or chart can often make your point more quickly and clearly than words.

Format of graphs

- No more than three curves on a line chart or graph using bullets.
- Don't use a page full of numbers.
- Translate complex numbers into representative pie charts or bar graphs.
- Use diagrams or models to present complex concepts.
- Use multiple charts illustrating different stages or parts of the full model.
- Start with simple framework and build components successively into the full model or process.

Using Questions as a part of your Presentation

Questions can be a good way to get the audience involved in a presentation and generate discussion. However, questions should not be introduced casually without considering their purpose and anticipating the response. Below are some tips for using questions in presentations.

- Ask friendly questions. Don't use questions to embarrass or badger.
- Avoid asking questions that may imply lack of knowledge or intelligence.

- Make the interchange a mutually satisfying experience. Give respondents time to think and phrase their answer. Help people save face by summarizing what they have said so far and asking if anyone else has something to add.
- Don't let respondent wander or attempt to take control of the presentation. A polite "thank you, that's what I was looking for" can get you back on track.
- Avoid isolated one-on-one dialogues with specific individuals.
- When challenged, be candid and firm but avoid overresponding.
- Maintain control of the session.
- Be firm and assertive without being aggressive or defensive.
- Don't let interruptions disrupt your composure or divert your plan.
- Avoid circumstances that require an apology.
- Anticipate questions and prepare responses.
- If necessary, offer to obtain additional information and follow up.
- Use questions to strengthen your main arguments.
- Avoid rhetorical questions. Ask interesting questions that are thought provoking but not too difficult to answer.
- Make questions relevant to the audience's personal experience.
- Prepare key questions prior to the presentation. It is difficult to think of good questions on your feet.

Guideline for Answering Questions

- Always repeat the question. It makes sure you understood the question, gives you a chance to value the question and think of an answer, and assures that other people heard the question.
- Anticipate questions.
- Understand the question; paraphrase it if necessary, repeat if it needed. Reinterpret loaded questions to meet your purpose.
- Do not digress.
- Have a pencil and paper available for you to write down questions you can't answer. You may even elect someone to record the questions on paper. This way, you can properly follow up.
- Be honest: if you can't answer the question, say so.

Presenting with a Co-Trainer

- Know or meet your co-trainer in advance.
- Discuss the goals and objectives for the training, and your mutual training styles.
- Review the presentation and decide on the training design.
- Present as a united front.
- Pay attention to your partner at all times; be ready to jump in to reinforce but not to rescue.
- Refer to your partner for reinforcement or clarity.

- Don't interrupt your partner.
- Unless called upon by name, let the current trainer field questions.
- Wear your nametags.
- Practice together to gain an ease with each other.
- Help each other stay on track with training objectives.
- "Stage manage" when your partner is on and handle logistical needs.
- Pay attention to the cultural backgrounds of training teams.
- Decide in advance who will take hard questions.
- Trainers are role models all the time, whether it is intended or not.

Podium Panic

- Your audience understands your nervousness, they know what you are feeling and will forgive it. Similarly they will forgive honest mistakes.
- Nervousness is usually invisible. Most will not notice the small changes in your voice or occasional mistakes. Most speakers who describe themselves as nervous appear confident and calm to the audience.
- Be yourself. Let the real you come through; relax, practice some deep breathing techniques.
- Begin in your comfort zone. Practice with friends. Share your fears with friends.
- Check out the room first; check out the space, the equipment and the lights.
- Concentrate on the message.
- Use focal points. Look just above the audience's head. Or, better, pick out the members that appear friendly and interested and make eye contact with them.

Presenting a Dynamic Presentation

Getting Your Audience's Attention

- Convey controlled enthusiasm for your subject. The audience will forgive a lot if the speaker is enthusiastic.
- Have good posture, tone; don't lean.
- Your audience will mirror your attitude – radiate confidence without preaching.
- Don't confuse enthusiasm with loudness (i.e. try to convey a range of emotions from concern, anticipation, excitement, dismay.)
- Where appropriate, candidly discuss pros and cons; explain advantages first; present risks or challenges.
- Do not pace, pound the podium, jingle change in your pockets, or do other things that can focus attention on you rather than the subject; sometimes this can be done for effect, but more often it is inadvertent and distracting.

- Emphasize the lower registers of your voice (both men and women) and avoid dramatic variations in the pitches of your voice. Occasionally this rule can be broken for effect.
- Begin with a slow, well-prepared introduction; have a confident and clear conclusion.
- Most importantly: be prepared and practice.

Keeping Your Audience's Interest

Once you obtain attention, you must retain it. Audience members drift in and out, without giving complete attention all the time.

- Provide variety and relief if possible; novelty and uniqueness will increase the impact.
- Alternate moving and standing still, speaking and listening, doing and thinking, use physical space and body movement to enhance your message.
- Try to add stories, anecdotes, testimonials, analogies, and demonstrations.
- Use humor appropriately and in good taste.
- Presentations are movies not snapshots; prepare the space for movement.
- Try to position yourself to enhance rapport with the audience.
- Eye contact is your primary tool for establishing audience involvement; look at your audience in random rotating order.
- Use your natural hand gestures but try to minimize any nervous, repetitive habits such as jingling change, twirling things in your hand, playing with your hair, shifting from one foot to another, etc.

Periodically you need to help the audience refocus.

The following are some examples:

- "I will give the three basic reasons why change is needed."
- "Now that we have analyzed the problem, we need to look at the possible solutions."
- "The discussion so far leads to this final thought ..."
- "If you enact this program, three basic benefits will result..."

General Statistics

Rapes Reported to police

Nationally

Data from the FBI Uniform Crime Reports:

1998: 93,144

1999: 89,107

2000: 90,178

2001: 90,491

2002: 95,136

Illinois

Data from the Illinois State Police Uniform Crime Reports:

1998: 6,156

1999: 6,286

2000: 5,688

2001: 5,619

2002: 6,037

(It is estimated that only 3 in 10 rapes are reported)

ICASA Centers

In **FY 2003**, 10,527 adult, adolescent and child survivors of sexual assault, child sexual abuse and sexual harassment and 3,243 significant others were served by the sexual assault crisis centers of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault. In addition, 9,669 anonymous contacts were served.

In **FY 2002**, 10,407 adult, adolescent and child survivors of sexual assault, child sexual abuse and sexual harassment and 3,243 significant others were served by the 29 sexual assault crisis centers of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault. In addition, 8,688 anonymous contacts were served.

In **FY 2001**, 10,073 adult, adolescent and child survivors of sexual assault, child sexual abuse and sexual harassment and 3,083 significant others were served by the 29 sexual assault crisis centers of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault. In addition, 8,490 anonymous contacts were served.

In **FY 2000**, 9,574 adult, adolescent and child survivors of sexual assault, child sexual abuse and sexual harassment and 3,008 significant others were served by the 29 sexual assault crisis centers of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault. In addition, 8,980 anonymous contacts were served.

For more statistical information visit the Stats and Facts section at www.icasa.org.

Trends and Issues

Framing the discussion of sexual assault topics is crucial in shaping the public's view of sexual assault. In order to effectively do this, it is important to be informed about recent events capturing the public's attention. In the past year, sexual assault issues have been at the forefront of the national media. Among the topics are the Kobe Bryant sexual assault case, Michael Jackson child molestation case, R. Kelley rape case, the Air Force Academy and University of Colorado rape scandals and the ongoing sexual abuse scandal of the Catholic Church.

When hosting a Sexual Assault Awareness Month event, it is imperative that center staff be ready to discuss current events. Center staff needs to be up to date on local and national incidents, whether it is the arrest of a local person on child-pornography charges or a serial rapist haunting a city's North Side. Centers can develop talking points on these issues to share with staff and the public. If a presentation is being prepared, make sure the staff member is up to date with the latest news. News on sexual assault issues is updated regularly in the News section of www.icasa.org or contact Sean Black at sblack@icasa.org or 217-753-4117 to discuss an issue. Current events provide teaching moments that are necessary to take advantage of.

The following are a sample of talking points developed for discussing recent topics.

Kobe Bryant Sexual Assault Case

Talking Points

The following are talking points that you can use when discussing the Kobe Bryant sexual assault case with the media or in the public. Information on the case will be updated on the ICASA website as the case unfolds. If you have any questions, please contact Sean Black or Polly Poskin.

1. No means No

A person has the right to withdraw consent to sexual activity at any time in the relationship. You can discuss the recently passed legislation, SB 406, to further clarify this point. It is the law in Illinois that consent to sexual activity can be withdrawn at any point.

The Bryant case is reported to have begun with some consensual sexual activity, therefore this question will likely arise and you need to cement that people have the right to say no at any time.

2. A Teaching Moment

Use this case to educate the public about sexual assault. This is a high profile event in our country and rape crisis centers need to be ready to use it as an educational tool.

Stay on top of the events in the case because you are likely to be asked about it whenever you are representing the center at public events, especially as the trial draws near. Information will be updated on the ICASA website as events unfold. You can refer people to the website to read a variety of national columns and other information on the case.

3. Acquaintance Rape is common

Acquaintance Rape accounts for approximately 80% of sexual assault, rebuffing the myth that all rapes are made by strangers.

4. Unfounded Reports are rare

False rape allegations are a rarity. Women are not the vindictive rape accusers that certain aspects of the media portrays. A study in Portland, Ore., found that only 1.6% of rape allegations were unfounded compared to 2.5% of stolen car reports.

If someone asks a question in reference to athletes being extorted for money by women claiming rape, please ask them to cite examples. If they can't (which they won't be able to or at most only one or two), explain to them that this belief is a myth and that it is degrading to women.

Members of the public and media seem to be confusing the number of paternity suits against professional athletes with rape allegations. As we know, these are very different things.

5. Law Enforcement's role

Remind people that the victim did not have Kobe Bryant arrested and charged. The local law enforcement and State's Attorney studied the evidence and decided to press charges against Kobe Bryant - not the victim. Only law enforcement can bring a case forward to where the Bryant case now stands. There has to be evidence, and likely not only the word of the victim, to have Bryant arrested.

6. Rape victim being named/Rape shield laws

Rape victims should not be named in the media. Naming victims causes secondary trauma. Because of a lapse by certain "media" outlets (Internet sites), the victim in the Bryant case has received numerous phone and e-mail communication disparaging her.

Three men have been arrested after leaving multiple messages threatening to kill the victim because she went to the police. If the victim's name had been withheld, the vast majority of this harassment wouldn't have taken place.

Also, Bryant's defense team has constantly attacked Colorado's rape shield laws. Be prepared to discuss the importance of rape shield laws and how their presence allows cases to be judged on the merits of the incident in question and not a victim's previous experiences.

7. The unstable victim

The victim's past is not at issue in this case. The issue is what took place in the hotel room between Bryant and the victim.

8. Kobe character

There have been multiple statements from Bryant's teammates and others about how this incident is out of Kobe's character and they can't believe he would do this because it was out of his character. However, you must remember that Bryant is paid millions of dollars to physically dominate his opponent every night. He makes a living forcing his way on someone. While this does not make him guilty, physically imposing his way is not out of his character.

Catholic Church Sex Scandal

Talking Points

The following are talking points that you can use when discussing the sexual assault scandal in the Catholic Church.

1. Rape Crisis Services

ICASA rape crisis centers are not just for women and girls. ICASA centers provide services to male victims of all ages. The center's counseling, advocacy and education services are available to all victims and family members 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, 365-days-a-year. All services from ICASA centers are free and confidential. The crisis center will help the victim and family report the abuse, assist with criminal justice procedures and provide ongoing counseling to alleviate the trauma of sexual abuse.

2. The Progress Report

The special panel started by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops recently issued a report that said almost all of the Dioceses are in concurrence with the Charter to Protect Children and Young People. This charter is a step in the right direction. However, the report is from the Church's point of view, and it is based on information provided by the diocese. It does not include conversations with victims on how they feel they've been treated recently and it does not include ways for services to victims to improve.

3. Sex Offenders

Most sex offenders do not abuse one child. According to national studies, sex offenders who abuse children average between 76 and 117 victims. The recent reports of abuse by priests many years ago does not mean the priests only abused children in the past or stopped several years ago. It is much more likely that a priest who abuses children has sexually abused numerous children across several decades. A priest who has allegedly sexually abused a child is more likely to be like John Geoghan than the Catholic Church wants to admit.

4. Abuse of Power

The sexual abuse of a child by a clergy is an abuse of power. The sexual abuse of a child by an authority figure is an abuse of power. The victim is not on equal level with the perpetrator. The Catholic Church has also abused its institutional power with its handling of the sexual abuse allegations. If the church had chosen to unveil the allegations to law enforcement and taken appropriate action to remove priests from positions of authority/trust, additional sexual abuse could have been reduced.

5. Female victims

Despite statements from a high-ranking Catholic official, the sexual abuse of teenage females by clergy is still sexual abuse. If a victim is under the age of 18 and sexually involved with an authority figure, sexual abuse is taking place.

6. Catholics aren't alone

Every other religious affiliation must evaluate their handling of sexual abuse allegations.

7. Homosexuality

Clergy abuse is not about homosexuality. The vast majority of sex offenders who sexually abuse children describe their sexual orientation as heterosexual.

8. Training and Education Programs available

ICASA centers and the ICASA administrative office provide training and educational programs on sexual abuse. ICASA can provide training on how to handle disclosures of sexual abuse, how to teach children about sexual abuse, how to help people in authority recognize the indicators of a child that is being sexually abused and related topics. For information on training programs contact your local ICASA center or the ICASA administrative office.

University of Colorado Sexual Assault Scandal

Talking Points

The unveiling of alleged sexual assaults committed by members of the University of Colorado football team have produced national headlines and the suspension of coach Gary Barnett. Since 2001, seven women have come forward alleging players sexually assaulted them. A female kicker who played at the school also said she was sexually harassed and raped while a member of the team. Also, it has been revealed that the team uses “sex” parties in the attempt to lure high school recruits to come to the school. The reports have generated conversation from coast to coast. The following are talking points that can be used when discussing the situation.

1. Sex as a “Right”

Nobody has the right to demand sex from anyone. It’s against the law. It’s against human decency. Sex must be consensual from start to finish. The Colorado incidents are a prime example of high profile young men expecting women to provide them with sex upon demand. It is part of a society that worships athletes and in many instances provides a sense of entitlement among men and athletes in particular. Women aren’t the playthings of men. There needs to be a renewed societal effort to ingrain this in the consciences of all people. There also needs to be a renewed effort to teach men that a woman who is incapacitated through drugs or alcohol cannot consent to sexual activity. Being unconscious is not an invitation to degrade.

2. It Happens Everywhere

Attempting to lessen the consequences for your bad behavior by saying others behave as badly is a poor rationale for the victimization that has taken place in Colorado. It shouldn’t be acceptable for any institution to have Colorado’s track record of incidents. At least seven victims have come forward in the past three years saying a Colorado player raped them. It is estimated by the Bureau of Justice Statistics that only 3 out of 10 victims come forward, so by the national average there are several more victims of the Colorado football team that haven’t stepped into the harsh media spotlight.

Using sex to draw people to a place, men feeling that women should comply to their sexual desires no matter what - these are not new things. But that doesn’t make it right and shouldn’t be an excuse. If it happens everywhere, it is wrong everywhere.

3. Institutional barriers

Coming forward as a victim is never easy. It is increasingly difficult when a powerful institution protects the rapist and blames the victim. The victims in Colorado have faced the pressure of challenging a popular, powerful group. Several of the women didn’t report their rapes to law enforcement; one didn’t

after coach Barnett assured her that he would support the player “100-percent.” This type of pressure leaves the victim alone and reinforces the rapist’s behavior. Institutions must step forward to stop the acceptance of sexual assault and impose accountability on the rapist and the system that protects and reinforces this conduct. It is the duty of an institution to protect all of its members, not just men.

4. Review Boards

Colorado’s Board of Regents instituted a review board to investigate the scandal. However, similar to the review boards instituted by the Catholic Church and the Air Force Academy, this board is comprised of those who do not understand sexual assault and its impact. Joyce Leonard, co-commissioner of the board, was quoted as saying, “she wanted to know why some of the alleged victims attended an alcohol-fueled party”. This is a classic victim-blaming statement. Bishop Phillip Porter is tied to the conservative religious group, Promise Keepers, founded by former Colorado football coach Bill McCartney. It seems impossible for this review board to enter into an investigation that will take into account victim’s rights. Creating review boards of this nature are a public relations move that rarely bring any accountability to the university. To institute real change, review boards must bring a victim-sensitive perspective to the process or they will serve in the role of protector of the institution instead of protector of the victims.

5. Harassment

If you don’t stop harassment when you see it, you are condoning its use. It is crucial that bystanders step forward to help end sexual harassment when they see it. Stopping harassment early can help stop rape.

6. Alcohol and Drugs

According to a national survey, 75% of sexual assaults involving college women come after the victim has been using alcohol. Alcohol is the No. 1 date-rape drug. Being drunk does not make you available for sex. A person that is incapacitated can’t provide consent. And the public must remember that being drunk is not against the law - raping someone is.

7. Prosecutorial Apathy

Sexual assault cases are difficult to prosecute. Boulder County District Attorney Mary Keenan built a reputation for taking on these difficult cases. However, when faced with attempting to prosecute the alleged rape committed by Colorado football players, the state buckled under the well-used phrases, “insufficient evidence” and “difficulty.” Prosecutors must take the challenge of sexual assault cases to reinforce that it is against the law. It is difficult to debunk the myths surrounding sexual assault cases if prosecutors continue to refuse to bring the cases public.

Air Force Academy Sexual Assault Scandal

Talking Points

The United States Air Force Academy was forced to look into its handling of sexual assault cases in 2003. The Academy proved to be unfriendly to victims and instead helped promote an atmosphere of hostility toward women. The scandal showed that 143 reported being sexually assaulted between 1993 and 2003.

1. Degradation and Power

The incidents at the Air Force Academy are a prime example of the way rape is used to degrade and disempower women. Females must have exemplary credentials to be accepted into the Air Force Academy, but those same successful women can be traumatized and forced into the shadows by sexual assault and harassment.

2. Victim Backlash

Victims face enormous backlash, especially in a closed setting like the Air Force Academy. The victims aren't supported by the institution and if they come forward must face the taunts and smear campaigns by the established male power base.

A panel reviewing the scandal revealed that 12% of female cadets were the victims of rape or attempted rape during their four years at the Academy. The vast majority of the victims did not report the crimes. The victims who did come forward reported being reprimanded repeatedly for minor violations, while their attackers were not punished for the assaults.

The Academy took steps to guarantee backlash by eliminating a victim's confidentiality when reporting a sexual assault. The Academy said this was done to help speed up the investigative process and to help force out rapists. Those things might be accomplished, but it is guaranteed that the victim will be known throughout the Academy and harassment will be a staple of her life.

3. Reporting Barriers

Institutions must remove the barriers facing victims in reporting sexual assault. There must be a victim-sensitive system in place to help through the traumatic time. The Academy requires the victim to come forward, report through a multi-layered chain-of-command, where any person could help crush the charges, and sacrifice her anonymity when reporting. If an institution wants true reporting and accountability it must protect and support victims.

4. Review Board

While the civilian commission in charge of investigating the scandal produced a scathing report of the Academy, outlining a variety of cover-ups by staff, the commission has not had any power to institute changes. It presented a list of 21 recommendations to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who will decide what to do with the reports. Review commissions need to hold real power in order to make real change. Also, the civilian review board is one of four investigations initiated by the Academy. The first internal review by the Air Force's top lawyer found no "systematic acceptance" of sexual assault. These contrasting reports provide an excuse for non-action.

5. Nothing new

Sexual Assaults in the military are a longstanding problem. The military has taken few steps to stop the conditions that would end the assaults. Recently, the Department of Defense set up a 90-day review of allegations of sexual assaults against female soldiers stationed in Iraq and Kuwait. The review comes after more than 80 reports of sexual assault by female personnel and with the knowledge that most of the victims have been forced to remain in the same units as their attackers.

The Academy scandal shows also that the prevailing culture is not only in the enlisted portion of the military but also among its future leaders. Military leadership needs to step forward and educate its personnel if this hostile climate is going to end.