

Oregon Sexual Violence Prevention Connection



An E-Newsletter of the Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

Greetings From the New Prevention Coordinator

Brie Akins, Prevention Coordinator, Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

I am excited to present to you the first issue of our quarterly e-newsletter which focuses on sexual violence prevention. This newsletter will provide information for both prevention workers and interested community members. It will highlight current research and promising practices, and prevention activities around Oregon.

In addition to this newsletter, I am also pleased to announce the launch of a new website focusing on sexual violence prevention in Oregon. The

website is the brain-child of the Prevention & Education Committee of the AGSATF.

The website includes sections with information for specific populations, including advocates, campuses, professionals, teens, parents, and other interested community members.

Additionally, the site provides information on sexual violence, getting help, how to take action, a calendar of events around Oregon, prevention resources, and links.

There is also a new listserv which is intended to serve as a forum for discussion, news and information related to sexual violence prevention.

To subscribe to the listserv, send an email to: svprevention-request@oregonsatf.org and type "Subscribe" in both the subject and message areas.

Please feel free to contact me, briekins@oregonsatf.org or call 541-284-8275, if you have any questions or needs.

Spring 2005

Volume 1, Issue 1

Inside this issue:

Campus Conference	2
Oregon's Prevention Plan	2
Consent is Sexy	3
Socio-Ecological Model	3
Prevention at the UO	4
Program Spotlight	5

3rd biennial Sexual and Domestic Violence Awareness Day

- Monday, April 25th, 9am-3pm @ the State Capitol in Salem

Contact Claudia Weber at Claudiaaw@bandwidth.net for more information.

www.EndSexualViolenceOregon.org

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)

Many communities host activities for SAAM in April to raise awareness about sexual violence. Check with your local sexual assault/domestic violence program for events in your area.

Page 5 of this issue spotlights three programs and what they are doing related to prevention and Sexual Assault Awareness Month.



The AGSATF will be sending out SAAM packets to local SA/DV programs and campuses which will include the Governor's Proclamation and other useful information and items.

Conference: Addressing Sexual Violence on Oregon Campuses

The Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force, Campus Response Committee is pleased to present Oregon's first statewide campus sexual assault conference.

The conference will be held on **April 11th and 12th** at the Hilton Hotel and Conference Center in Eugene. The first day of the conference will focus on response, and the second day will focus on prevention.

The conference will feature two nationally recognized keynote speakers: Nadia Telsey, MS., and Dr. David Lisak, PhD.

The cost of the conference is \$25.00 for one day or \$40.00 for both days, *students are FREE*, and lunches are included.

Oregon's first statewide campus sexual assault conference.

Workshops were developed specifically for:

- Public Safety/Law Enforcement
- Judicial Response
- Health/Medical
- Advocacy
- Counseling
- Prevention/Education

For more information and to register form, visit our website: www.oregonsatf.org or call 541-284-8275.

Oregon's Sexual Violence Prevention Plan

After many hours of hard work on the part of many people, the Oregon Sexual Violence Prevention Plan is almost ready for unveiling.

This important document places prevention in the context of what has happened in the past and is occurring in the present, and sets the stage for future sexual violence prevention efforts in Oregon. The plan outlines the need for a systematic approach to prevention, which includes the modeling of programs on promising practices and the use of evidence-based evaluation.

Key to the plan is the focus on *primary* prevention, or stopping violence before it occurs. The plan outlines eight recommendations for prevention efforts.

To help programs put the plan into practical action, the SATF will be holding three regional trainings between July and September 2005. Keep an eye out for announcements about dates and locations.

If you have any questions, you can contact Brie Akins, the SATF Prevention Coordinator at 541-284-8275 or briekins@oregonsatf.org.

Recommendations

- Increase the capacity to prevent sexual violence.
- Increase the recognition that sexual violence is preventable.
- Increase prevention efforts that address the unique cultural aspects of specific communities and groups.
- Build upon existing expertise and support community organizing issues related to sexual violence.
- Encourage healthy, non-violent interactions and dismantle aspects of society that promote and support sexual violence.
- Use evidence-based strategies, promising practices, and model programs.
- Create broad partnerships to address the causes of sexual violence.

Definitions

Primary Prevention: *prevention strategies designed to stop sexual violence before it occurs by addressing the behaviors and conditions that support, condone and lead to sexual violence.*

Secondary Prevention: *prevention strategies designed to decrease the risk of those identified as more or most likely to become victims or offenders and assist in recognition and avoidance; also known as risk-reduction.*

Consent is Sexy

Jenny Mei, AmeriCorps Community Educator
Sexual Assault and Violence Education (SAVE) Program, Oregon State University

In September of 2004 I joined the Women’s Center at Oregon State University as the AmeriCorps Community Educator. My AmeriCorps program is sponsored by the Oregon Commission for Women and is called Communities in Partnership to Stop Violence Against Women and Children (CPSVAWC). The CPSVAWC mission is to end the tolerance and ignorance of violence through advocacy and education. My area of focus as the member at the University is sexual violence prevention. I speak to and facilitate programs primarily with college students in Women’s Studies and Health Classes, in sororities, fraternities, and residence halls.

After testing out different approaches to sexual violence education (using empathy-building exercises and lecture formats) I found that the most effective way to talk about sexual violence with college students was by starting with consent. Consent is commonly misperceived in sexual interactions and is typically defined by what it is not. For example, we all seem to understand that when someone says “no” they have not given their consent.

However, it is necessary to move away from the “No Means No” model and redefine consent as an active, voluntary, sober, informed agreement. Just because some-

one doesn’t say “No” does not mean that they have said “Yes”. There are many fun and interactive ways to illustrate the misperceptions and the inadequate communication we as a society have around sexual intimacy.

I will often ask students to participate in a commonly used activity called the “Circle Exercise”. At the beginning of the exercise I give a simple description of the activity and it goes like this: Stand in a circle, turn to the person on your right and ask them to have sex with you. This continues around the circle like a chain reaction until everyone has asked

(Continued on page 6)

Socio-Ecological Model—Looking Beyond the Individual

- The socio-ecological model recognizes the interwoven relationship that exists between the individual and their environment.
- While individuals are responsible for instituting and maintaining the lifestyle changes necessary to reduce risk and improve health, individual behavior is determined to a large extent by social environment, e.g. community norms and values, regulations, and policies.
- Factors at each level may increase or decrease an individual’s risk of becoming a

victim or perpetrator of violence.

- Barriers to healthy behaviors are shared among the community as a whole. As these barriers are lowered or removed, behavior change becomes more achievable and sustainable. It becomes easier to “push the ball up the hill”.
- The most effective approach leading to healthy behaviors is a combination of efforts at all levels—individual, relationship, community, institutional and societal.

The Oregon Sexual Violence Prevention Plan uses a modified version of the ecological model used by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The model recognizes that no one group or institution can end sexual violence alone and that change needs to take place at each level to truly impact the problem. Using a comprehensive model allows individuals and groups to identify where they can participate in prevention efforts given their strengths, resources and experience.

Sexual Violence Prevention & Education at the UO

Megan Thompson, Project Coordinator,
Alliance for Sexual Assault Prevention, University of Oregon

In my work for the Alliance for Sexual Assault Prevention (ASAP) at the University of Oregon, I work primarily with two programs: a peer theater program and a community engagement program. Both programs are student-driven and highly successful in creating campus dialogue about sexual and dating violence.

The Sexual Wellness Advocacy Team (SWAT) consists of about fifteen peer educators using theater techniques as tools to spark dialogue with our audience. As SWAT's advisor, I teach their weekly 2-credit class on sexual and dating violence, oppression, and facilitation/theater.

I also design workshops in a collaborative process with the students and Michael Rohd, our theater consultant. A typical 90-minute workshop on consent includes warm-up games loosely related to issues of consent, a visual demonstration leading the audience to create a basic definition of consent, and small-group monologues representing sexual situations college students might encounter.

In small groups, audience members question the actors in character to learn more about their situations and give advice.

SWAT members then come out of character and facilitate a discussion about the issues brought up by the small-group dialogues.

Rather than lecturing our audiences or telling them what to think, SWAT members guide our audiences in creating their own definitions of consent and deciding what accountability and healthy sex means for them and their communities.

“Nearly a month later... residents are still talking about the issues raised.”

The Community Engagement Project (CEP) is a new approach for campus organizing, adapted from community models. We identify a community - for example, a residence hall, fraternity/sorority, or student organization - find natural leaders in the community, and give them tools to create their own sexual violence prevention projects.

For example, this year I worked for two terms with residents of Hamilton, a large, first-year residence hall. I identified natural

leaders by accepting nominations from professional staff, student staff, and residents, and found twelve talented students who were highly committed to the CEP.

Over two terms, the leaders created a creative, innovative project. They filmed interviews with residents of their hall, asking, “how do you define...” and listing several words related to sex and relationships, including sex, cheating, consent, rape, love, lust, and long-distance relationships.

A volunteer videographer compiled the results into a 10-minute video, which we showed at a hall-wide movie night. Over fifty students attended the movie night, where they watched themselves and their neighbors in the video and participated in hour-long small-group discussions about the issues it raised.

CEP student leaders and SWAT members co-facilitated the small-group discussions. Nearly a month later, CEP leaders tell me that residents are still talking about the issues raised at the movie night; I can't imagine a better project for sparking dialogue among a community.

Megan is happy to talk with other schools and programs about starting or enhancing student-driven programs. She can be contact at mgt@uoregon.edu or (541) 346-1198.

Program Spotlight

Columbia County Women's Resource Center

Deborah Holton, Sexual Assault Victims' Advocate

Prevention education regarding sexual violence in Columbia County is diversifying as our understanding grows of what prevention might look like. While we continue to provide education through traditional avenues, such as school-based presentations on sexual assault and outreach to local media, the resource center is changing its approach and beginning new initiatives to prevent sexual assault.

For example, school-based presentations now include materials which explore gender stereotypes and privilege in an effort to begin addressing men's responsibilities as potential perpetrators and bystanders. Recruiting male allies to directly address peers about sexual violence and gender privi-

lege is part of that effort.

The resource center has invited service providers for seniors and people with developmental disabilities to join the county's recently rejuvenated SART as part of a long-term initiative to build effective local prevention efforts for elders and the developmentally disabled.

We are also educating adults about their responsibility to prevent the sexual abuse of children and teens.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month activities focus this year on distributing informational materials to the above community partners to broaden the scope of awareness and prevention efforts.

Siuslaw Outreach Services

Marti Wicks, Advocate

Siuslaw Outreach Services in Florence submitted an article to the local newspaper, *The Siuslaw News*, to be printed the first week of April to make readers in the community aware of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. It informs readers of this year's SAAM campaign theme as set by the NSVRC, "Build Healthy, Respectful Relationships" and also explains the five-year CDC initiative to involve the healthcare community in sexual assault prevention as it relates to the

impact of sexual assault on the subsequent health of survivors.

Additionally, we ordered posters and palm cards from NSVRC and added our agency's contact information to distribute to the local hospital, clinic, mental health clinics, schools in Florence and Mapleton, and other locations. We have additional materials and teal ribbons at the agency and our satellite office to distribute to the public during SAAM.

Sexual Assault Support Services

Emilee Thompson,
Advocacy Program Coordinator

Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS) is organizing several annual events for Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Lane County.

Throughout April, SASS is hosting a Survivor Art Exhibit: "Breaking the Silence: Images of Healing" at the Circle of Hands gallery on 1030 Willamette Street. The opening night reception is 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Friday, April 1st during the First Friday Art Walk.

The 7th Annual Poetry of Survival open poetry reading will be at Tsunami Books from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 21st. Survivors of sexual assault, abuse and harassment are welcome to read original or favorite poetry and song lyrics.

In addition, SASS is organizing displays of the Clothesline Project and co-sponsoring Lane County's Take Back the Night March on Thursday, April 28th.

All events are free, open to the public, and held in Eugene.

For more information, please contact SASS at

541-484-9791 (business)

or

800-788-4727 (toll-free crisis/support).

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The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force.

If you have an article that you would like to contribute, please contact:

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The Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

History

Seeing a lack of improvement in sexual assault response as a concern, a group of victim advocates organized a 1999 statewide multidisciplinary gathering to assess how Oregon addresses adolescent and adult sexual assault. In May of 1999, 130 people spent two days at the Sexual Assault Summit assessing needs and identifying strategies for meeting them.

Mission

The mission of the Task Force is to develop and support an effective, consistent and collaborative approach to the response to and reduction of adult and adolescent sexual assault in Oregon. (For its purposes, the Task Force defines "sexual assault" of adolescents as acts of forced or coerced sexual conduct by perpetrators over 14 years of age against victims over 14 years of age.)

The Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force is a non-profit organization.

(Continued from page 3)

the person next to him or her to have sex. After everyone has asked, we reverse the order and they each get a turn to respectfully decline the offer. I ask the students to be creative and have fun.



**"Do you want to go
into the back of my
Ford Escort?"**

The last time I did this exercise was with 15 students in a residence hall. After they

went around the circle asking, only one person had explicitly asked for sex. Everyone else used what I would call "sex euphemisms". They said things like "Hey, do you want to come back up to my room later?" "How about you and me over on the couch?" "Want to go into the back of my Ford Escort" or even the crude "Do you want to bump and grind?"

While all of these statements have strong implications, none of them is clear in intent. As a result, when it was time for the students to decline the offers, only one student said "No, I don't want to have sex with you." Others made excuses about not wanting to hurt the friendship, they apologized, some diverted the

question, and one woman said, "I have no idea what you mean by bump and grind".

With confusing attempts to obtain consent, it becomes obvious how misperceptions of intent occur. It also goes to show that saying "No" can be much more challenging when you are unsure of what you are saying "No" to!

The root of the problem of sexual violence lies in the fact that it is a nonconsensual act. The Circle Exercise is one effective, interactive and fun way to address the complexity of consent and the barriers that exist to even being able to talk about sexual intimacy in a college relationship.
