

VOICES IN ACTION

Speaking Out for Social Justice, Education & Change

SUMMER 2008

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Sexual Assault Training for Criminal Justice System Personnel

by Tracy Simmons-Hart, Director of Training and Education

According to the literature, sexual assault is one of the most underreported violent crimes in the United States. Approximately eighty-five percent of survivors of sexual assault nationwide do not report their sexual assault cases to law enforcement. Of the remaining 15% that do report, 10% result in charges being filed and 40% of those cases result in some type of conviction.¹ Therefore, it raises the question regarding why such a violent crime as sexual assault is so underreported in the Criminal Justice System (CJS). The underreporting may be relevant to how survivors are treated and made to feel that they somehow are the blame for their own victimization. Too often survivors feel that they will be re-victimized by the system if they chose to report the crime. Ultimately, they want to know that their voices are heard, and with reporting, they want to know that the perpetrators are going to be fully processed through the criminal justice system.

Therefore, it is imperative that all components of the CJS have sexual assault training in order to understand the dynamics of sexual assault and survivor behavior. NJCASA's sexual violence training aim is for those individual practitioners in the system to have and maintain a



survivor-centered approach in the handling of sexual assault cases. The survivor-centered approach is "the systematic focus on the needs and concerns of a sexual assault victim that ensures compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner".² If a practitioner displays a compassionate, empathetic, supportive and non-judgmental response, it will instill a level of trust by the survivor,

² New Jersey Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice (1998). Standards: For providing services to survivors of sexual assault.

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¹ Lisak, D. (2002) Rape Fact Sheet. Website: http://www.sexualassault.army.mil/files/RAPE_FACT_SHEET.pdf

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NJCASA

The New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA) is the statewide coalition, representing the collective voice of sexual violence survivors, their loved ones and significant others, 22 Sexual Violence Programs throughout New Jersey, as well as individuals, students and corporations concerned about ending sexual violence. Since its inception in 1981, NJCASA has been acting as an advocate for survivors, their loved ones and significant others statewide, while providing information and education to the public, media and government officials regarding sexual violence issues. NJCASA is dedicated to developing and maintaining programs and services which support our mission of eliminating sexual violence throughout New Jersey and its communities.

Our Mission

The mission of the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA) is to promote the compassionate and just treatment of survivors, their loved ones and significant others, foster collaborative relationships between community systems, and affect attitudinal and behavioral changes in society as we work toward the elimination of sexual violence against all people.

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Letter from the Executive Director

by Andrea Spencer-Linzie

It has been a long held truism in feminism that women integrating into traditionally male dominated work is enough to dismantle stereotypes, shatter glass ceilings, change the culture and equalize the playing field. It isn't.

Let's look at the U.S. military as an example.

After years of struggle, women integrated into the main ranks of the U.S. military. But even before that women served in the military in other roles for literally hundreds of years. Nevertheless, currently it seems that U.S. servicewomen are more likely to be sexually assaulted by a fellow serviceman than killed by the enemy.¹ According to Christine Hansen, Executive Director of the Miles Foundation, many women in the military report that sexual assault is a "rite of passage" and

that reports of sexual assault or other forms of sexual violence are frequently ignored. Women who do report sexual assaults are often ostracized. A recent study in the American Journal of Industrial medicine indicates that 28% of female veterans report being sexually assaulted during their careers. This statistic holds true across the eras for women in military service.²

In 2006, an investigation by the Associated Press uncovered frequent sexual violence by recruiters against females wishing to enlist.³ On March 18, 2006 Sarah Rich, whose daughter served active duty in Iraq, gave an address in Eugene, Oregon. When her daughter was to be redeployed she simply could not go back. Rich said about her daughter:

"She could not handle another deployment, dealing with the daily hour-to-hour sexual harassment that she endured from 99% of her male officers and fellow soldiers. She was always full of anxiety and stress just keeping herself safe when her commanding officers would show up banging on her door in the middle of the night, wanting to have sex with her."

Integrating the ranks is surely not enough.

"Integration" simply is not enough to challenge and transform the cultural and institutional behaviors, attitudes, policies and procedures that allow sexual assault to continue unabated. Sexual assault in the military is, like anywhere else, a tool used in the service of power and dominance to humiliate and denigrate its victims. Without a massive change in the culture, leadership, policies and procedures, women in the service will continue to be assaulted and ostracized.

¹ Dana Goldstein, "War With Ourselves: Sexual Violence in the Military." April 9, 2008. www.realitycheck.org/print/7033. (Accessed 5/22/08)

² Marie Tessier, "Sexual Assault Pervasive in Military, Experts Say." www.refusingtokill.net/rape/sexualassaultpervasive.htm (Accessed 5/22/08)

³ "Sexual Abuse by Military Recruiters." April 20, 2006. www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/08/19/national/printable1913849.shtml. (Accessed on 5/22/08)

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Stalking Bill

by Jennifer Nix, Director of Government and Policy Affairs

Stalking and sexual violence are often linked. Many women who were stalked by a former intimate partner were also sexually assaulted by that partner.¹ Among college women who were stalked, 10.3% of the stalking incidents also included forced or attempted sexual contact.² What starts out as following or harassing phone calls can easily escalate into a physical or sexual assault.

At the urging of a stalking survivor, legislation was introduced last year which would improve New Jersey's stalking law. The legislation did not pass during the 2006 - 2007 legislative session, but was re-introduced in January 2008, and sponsored by Senators Barbara Buono and Jennifer Beck in the Senate and by Assemblywoman Linda Greenstein and Assemblyman Eric Munoz in the Assembly. NJCASA strongly supports these bills.

The two bills which would improve New Jersey's stalking law, Senate No.1106 and Assembly No.1563, would broaden the definition of stalking and allow more cases to be charged as a more serious third degree crime. Being able to charge a stalker earlier could help stop stalking before it escalates to serious injury or death. The following changes are especially favorable to people experiencing stalking.

- Lowering the level of fear to fear for safety

New Jersey's current stalking law fails to catch the possibility of escalation into serious physical injury because it requires that a survivor of stalking be in fear of

bodily harm or death before the crime of stalking has actually occurred. This is too limiting for protection. Many stalking incidents do not reach the level of fear of bodily harm until an injury has already occurred. By then, the criminal acts have moved beyond stalking into assault or battery and too late for a survivor to avoid physical injury or even death. A stalker may follow a survivor, call her constantly, track her movements and otherwise keep her in fear of her safety but this may only be charged as harassment until it escalates to threats of death or serious bodily injury.

- Including emotional distress

The inclusion of emotional distress in the stalking law also broadens its application. Stalking can include behaviors that may not cause the survivor to fear for her safety but is often frightening. For example, one stalker in New Jersey called the survivor's workplace repeatedly, posed as her on instant messenger, and showed up at her workplace repeatedly. These acts alone may not have risen to the level of the survivor fearing for her safety, but they caused her considerable emotional distress.

Another stalking survivor from one of our programs was stalked by a man who was stalking multiple women at the same time. The individual acts would not have risen to the level of fear for safety but the phone calls that this stalker made to the survivor's workplace and the many times she saw him outside her apartment may have. This stalker eventually tried to run another woman he had been stalking over with his car, an escalation that potentially could have been avoided had the law been less narrow.

- Expanding definition of acts that could occur to include technology

Technology has provided stalkers with additional tools to find and track survivors. Many stalkers now use text messaging, instant messenger, and digital photography to stalk and threaten survivors. This provision addresses the issue with the use of remote devices that are used instead of direct confrontation, however, equality as threatening to the survivor.

- Increasing the crime of stalking to a third degree crime

Currently, stalking is a fourth degree crime in New Jersey. If someone is convicted of stalking, he may not be imprisoned for more than 18 months, if prison time is even sentenced. A third degree crime carries a sentence between three and five years. This is a substantial difference in punishment and a statement to stalking survivors that this is a crime to be taken seriously.

The stalking bills have passed the Assembly unanimously and have passed the Senate Judiciary unanimously. The next step is a vote in the Senate. If the bills pass, then they would be sent to the Governor for his signature and the improvements would become law. NJCASA has urged Senator Codey, the Senate President, to schedule the bills for a vote at the earliest opportunity and has asked its supporters to contact Senator Codey's office as well. Stalking survivors need better protection.

¹ Tjaden, Patricia and Nancy Thoennes. Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. National Institute of Justice. April 2008.

² Fischer, Bonnie, et al. The Sexual Victimization of College Women. National Institute of Justice. December 2000.

Confidential Sexual Violence Advocate Certification

by Chrisula Tasiopoulos, MSW, LCSW: Director of Counseling and Support Services Women's Health & Counseling Center & Stephen J. Oreski, MSW: NJCASA Program Development Coordinator

NJCASA has been the collective voice of survivors of sexual violence in New Jersey for over twenty-five years. Through those years, NJCASA and its 22 Sexual Violence Program members have worked to develop state and federal policies affecting survivors of sexual violence on the local, state and national levels. Since the earliest days of the sexual violence movement in New Jersey, advocates have struggled to make certain that survivors received the best care possible, regardless of the system they enter into.

It is evident that sexual violence advocacy has come a long way. The first advocates began meeting in women's homes, in the church basement, or in a community center. From these grassroots efforts rape crisis centers were started and eventually the statewide sexual violence coalition was formed. As a movement, the priority was the development of best practices and policies that centered on the needs of the survivor and aimed towards strengthening our voice on a statewide level. We worked to ensure that the needs of the survivor were addressed, and as a result, created the 1st edition of the NJCASA Advocate Core Training Manual. The manual helped move rape care in New Jersey towards a standardized training and methodology, a step forward in making certain that survivors of sexual violence were receiving the best practices in rape care advocacy.

However, despite the many years of work and effort on behalf of survivors, it is important that those outside of the movement view rape care advocacy as a professional field. The Confidential Sexual Violence Advocates come to the table with the same level of professionalism as the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) and Law Enforcement professionals and

others related to the response of a sexual assault. Although Confidential Sexual Violence Advocates are doctors, lawyers, social workers, and other individuals in the professional world, too often those with whom advocates interact view sexual violence advocacy as less than a full profession. This perspective and the beliefs which embody it, affect not only the advocate, but ultimately the survivor. This impact has led to NJCASA Sexual Violence Programs members' decision to develop a Certification program in order to address this issue.

The Certification Program will provide the opportunity for Confidential Sexual Violence Advocates to gain voluntary certification status through NJCASA. It will encourage and recognize those advocates that have achieved years of experience and training, while honoring the service and training of part-time and volunteer advocates. Certification provides the opportunity to recognize the competency of Confidential Sexual Violence Advocates who have acquired their skills through a combination of standardized training, academic schooling, work and life experience. It will help to ensure on-going professional growth and will increase community and professional awareness that the field of sexual violence is a specialized area whose services are provided by trained and professional staff.

As we work to professionalize and strengthen rape care advocacy in New Jersey we continue to remain cognizant that the needs of the survivor are paramount. The certification process will allow us to examine ourselves and our standards of care to survivors of sexual violence. Moreover, the Certification

process for Confidential Sexual Violence Advocates will help to foster uniformity in the field of sexual violence services throughout the State of New Jersey by ensuring that standards of training and provision of service are consistently high for those working with survivors of sexual violence.

Welcome Our New Team Member:

Gloria Ortiz, Director of Development



I am very happy to have joined the team at NJCASA as the new Director of Development. I am grateful that I can use my experience to help NJCASA fight towards the elimination of sexual violence.

Approximately seven years ago, my work in development began with the writing of my first grant for the Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs. Since then, I have continued to work for great organizations such as the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation, Friends of Jazz and the Arts Council of the Morris Area. I have also served as a Commissioner for the Morris County Human Rights Commission.

I received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Black Studies at Herbert H. Lehman College, located in Bronx, New York. Currently, I am an active member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated and the Association of Fund Raising Professionals. I am also the proud parent of a daughter, Nadia.

Sexual Violence Prevention: Connecting the Dots

by Patricia Barahona, Public Education Coordinator

NJCASA's "Sexual Violence Prevention: Connecting the Dots" Conference will be held on March 26, 2009. The goal is to develop effective strategies for sexual violence prevention. The need to develop strategies to prevent sexual violence perpetration has arisen from the shift to primary prevention (stopping violence before it occurs). The shift is from secondary and tertiary prevention approaches which have traditionally been awareness raising and dealing with violence after it has occurred. We are reminded that stopping violence before it occurs requires an examination of our gender norms, our social norms, and the environment that feeds the problem. This examination must incorporate the ways in which these norms and factors impact the social ecology from the individual level to societal level in order to make effective synergistic change across all levels. Making these connections in the sexual violence prevention field is important, however, it is also vital to examine the overlap related to other public health fields in order to have a larger impact.

In our case, ensuring that survivors of sexual violence are treated compassionately, with dignity and respect is the priority. Our challenge is to incorporate this priority when examining the gender roles, social norms, and environments that create sexual violence perpetrators. The conference will examine overlapping risk and protective factors for sexual violence perpetration. In New Jersey, some of this work has been done by the Primary Prevention Education Committee (PPEC), a subcommittee of the Governor's Advisory Council Against Sexual Violence (GACASV). The PPEC is charged with developing a statewide sexual violence prevention plan and also to examine the risk factors, which increase an individual's potential sexual violence perpetration. The

priority risk factors the PPEC has identified include, hypermasculinity, witnessing family violence, and lack of attachment and/or empathy. In addition, the PPEC has researched the following protective factors, which decrease an individual's potential perpetration, such as attachment, parenting, empathy, the belief in gender equality, and emotional health.

The conference will be based on five tracks which are: Child Abuse, Disability Community, Gender Equity, Media, and Youth Violence. The first workshop of each track will be examining risk and protective factors at the individual level of the social ecology as they relate to other public health issues. The second workshop for each track will focus on the relationship level of the social ecology. It will examine strategies that parents, caretakers, service providers, Criminal Justice providers, prevention professionals and allied professionals can incorporate in their work in order to address sexual violence perpetration and increase protective factors. Recognizing and making the connections between sexual violence perpetration and the impact of media, gender norms, and cultural messages will be necessary when looking at the environment that feeds the problem. The third workshop for each track moves from the individual to the community/society level of the social ecology. Too many times we concentrate on a level that we feel comfortable, such as the individual level – the hope for this conference is to bring that individual knowledge to the community and begin to craft the community and institutional responses that will eliminate sexual violence perpetration. The focus will be on developing strategies at the community/societal level in an effort to present sexual violence prevention strategies which professionals

can incorporate in their fields. The conference is open to all, especially teachers, parents, caretakers, service providers, prevention professionals, Criminal Justice professionals and other allied professionals.

It is understood that sexual violence is primarily committed by individuals, but it is imperative to examine all levels that impact an individual's behavior and foster a world that perpetuates and condones sexual violence. Moreover, individuals from multi-disciplinary areas will be presenting information during the conference regarding the connections between sexual violence and other disciplines. It is expected that participants' knowledge will increase in terms of incorporating sexual violence prevention approaches in their communities. An additional highlight will be the launch of NJCASA's first Training Institute. The Training Institute will provide workshops relating to sexual violence in an effort to enhance practitioners ability to improve service delivery to sexual assault survivors.

In order to be effective in connecting the dots, we recognize that no one group or institution can end sexual violence alone. We know that working on multiple levels will increase our capacity to end sexual violence. Join us to build a stronger sexual violence prevention movement. For more information call 609.631.4450 or visit us on the web at: <http://www.njcasa.org/conference09.htm>.

Sexual Assault Training for Criminal Justice System Personnel

by Tracy Simmons-Hart, Director of Training and Education

Continued from page 1



Tracy Simmons-Hart

which allows the individual to overcome some of the difficulties associated with such a violent crime. This can be achieved by dispelling some of the common myths associated with sexual assault and understanding that individuals handle trauma in a variety of ways. In situations where a survivor appears to be "less emotional", that response should not be viewed as an indication that the crime did not happen, it may simply be the "flat affect". The flat affect is a symptom of trauma whereby the individual appears to have a lack of emotional reactivity.³

Currently, the Training and Education program area at NJCASA is in the process of developing sexual violence training curricula for law enforcement personnel. In order to assist in this endeavor, a law enforcement advisory board has been established for this project. The advisory board is composed of state police officers, a chief of police, a sheriff, a former captain of police, confidential sexual violence advocates, university personnel, a county prosecutor and a deputy attorney general. We are delighted to have a committed group of individuals that understand the importance of being survivor-centered when developing training guidelines.

In addition, NJCASA is making some head

way with this effort given that we recognize the need for collaborative partnerships with all components of the CJS. Recently, we conducted several trainings with the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts on the Fundamentals of Sexual Violence for Judicial and Court Staff in the Criminal Court Division and the Probation Services Division. The training provided an overview of the dynamics of sexual assault, a historical perspective of rape, common myths, rape culture and rape trauma syndrome. Additionally, information was presented specifically on NJCASA and the services provided at our local sexual violence programs.

There were two outstanding keynote speakers for these trainings, first, Veraundra I. Jackson, an attorney, author, trainer and consultant gave a presentation entitled "I have a terrible secret...But if I tell...Nobody will believe me". She shared her story of being raped at the age of 16 and not being believed by her mother and father, who is a minister. The second keynote speaker was Richard Azzaro, who is a licensed clinical social worker at Saint Vincent Center, Baltimore Maryland. He presented "the Illumination Program: Through the eyes of a child, an Intimate and Personal Encounter with Child Maltreatment". This was a display of creative artwork by two male survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

As a part of the training a multidisciplinary panel was formed to discuss and explain the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). Laura Luciano, Assistant Director of the Department of Sexual Assault Services and Crime Victim Assistance at Rutgers University, and President of the NJCASA Board of Trustees, served on the panel as the Confidential Sexual Violence Advocate representative. She stressed the importance and role of the advocate in the SART activation process. She also discussed the importance of providing the survivor with the options that are available so that an informed decision can be made.

As we continue to make strides in fulfilling NJCASA's mission "to promote the compassionate and just treatment of survivors, their loved ones and significant others, ...and affect attitudinal and behavior changes in society as we work toward the elimination of sexual violence against all people," we will continue to stress the importance of training and its impact on the community at large. We have to keep in mind that the survivor is at the heart of the matter and social change is needed.



During Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), NJCASA staff participate in Denim Day in NJ.

From left: Stephen Oreski, Jennifer Nix, Patty Barahona, Tracy Simmons-Hart, Sarah Gaehring, and Andrea Spencer-Linzie

³ MedicineNet.com www.medicterms.com/script/main/artasp?articlekey=26293.

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To Speak FREE and CONFIDENTIALLY
With Your Local Sexual Violence Program

There are 22 NJCASA member Sexual Violence Programs throughout the state of New Jersey that provide the following FREE and CONFIDENTIAL services:

- ❖ 24 hour hotline capability
- ❖ 24 hour crisis response of a Confidential Sexual Violence Advocate
- ❖ Availability of individual and/or group counseling for survivors and significant others
- ❖ SART participation as a Confidential Sexual Violence Advocate
- ❖ Legal, medical, and/or systems advocacy
- ❖ Outreach to survivors regardless of participation in the criminal justice system
- ❖ Information and referral services

Several Programs may also offer additional services, such as long-term counseling.

Please contact your local Program for more information about their services.

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