

Sexual Assault Presentation Key Points

- ❑ Police Departments can have more of an impact on sexual assaults than previously thought by using a problem-solving approach. As a first step, police departments should analyze their sexual assault data and, at a minimum, look to see if there are patterns by age, relationship, and type of location, for type of assault.
- ❑ As a result of the large portion (often the overwhelming majority) of reported rapes that are non-stranger, police agencies must re-think investigation methods for these types of crimes. Most police agencies still conduct interviews of non-stranger rape victims and gather evidence at non-stranger rape scenes as if they were stranger rape victims or crime scenes involving stranger rape. The evidence of non-stranger rape is different from evidence of stranger rape and investigations by first responders and follow-up investigators must reflect these dynamics.
- ❑ An important component of impacting the problem of non-stranger sexual assault is re-educating the affected populations, including potential victims and offenders, police officers, victim advocates, healthcare and public health professionals, prosecutors and judges.
- ❑ Police, public health, and healthcare professionals must develop age specific information (e.g. high school level, college level) addressing the real life possible sexual assault situations potential victims and offenders find themselves in. This information should be based on an in-depth analysis of the problem in your locality.
- ❑ Police departments, if at all possible, should enlist the help of a public health, healthcare or criminal justice researchers to assist in a detailed analysis of the local problem. There are many benefits from this type of collaboration, most of all, security in the accuracy of the data findings.

Key Points for Addressing Sexual Assault Involving College Students

- ❑ Review national data, school data, and any surveys done of your college's students regarding sexual assault. Additional surveys may need to be done to gain a more accurate picture of the problem involving your students. Review confidential data (number of victims not names) of students who reported the problem to campus counseling services as well.
- ❑ Ensure that there is a reporting form for the campus counseling center to complete (containing key information about type of location, age of victim and offender, stranger status, influence of alcohol or drugs, whether the person reported the assault) so that police have a more accurate picture of the problem for prevention purposes.
- ❑ Know the research on sexual assault and college students, such as, 20 – 25% of college women experience some form of sexual assault. The highest risk time for sexual assault is from the first day of freshman orientation until the first vacation (usually Thanksgiving). Examine whether spring break is also a vulnerable time for your particular college.
- ❑ Assess whether your college programs aimed to prevent sexual assault actually match what the problem is on campus or off-campus involving your college students. For instance, are the programs more focused to prevent stranger assault or non-stranger assault? As well, for a variety of reasons, at some schools campus athletes and fraternity members may have a higher risk of sexual assault offending on campus, so review whether your prevention programs are tailored to the vulnerabilities of special populations? Also are your prevention efforts timed to match the most vulnerable time frames of sexual assault (first day of freshman orientation until Thanksgiving)? Also, review whether sexual assault programming provided during college orientation time for freshman is mandatory.
- ❑ Many college students simply do not know the law when it comes to sexual assault and clinical descriptions of the law or of sexual assault may not clarify understanding. Scenario based material tailored to your campus may be more effective.
- ❑ The college should decide if it is willing to hold students accountable who sexually assault another student (or even a non-student) but the assault was not done on college grounds or at a college-sanctioned event.
- ❑ Develop assessment measures for all prevention efforts to determine impact of efforts so changes can be made if they would be more effective.