January 2015

The Advocate

The Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center newsletter

Sexual violence and next steps

Kathy Williams *Executive Director*

Many national and local stories of rape, as well as other forms of sexual violence, became significant headlines in 2014. Nationally, we heard one survivor's story at a White House briefing on campus rape, Rolling Stone featured an article of rape at the University of Virginia, and allegations against Bill Cosby. People are talking about rape.

Locally, high profile cases of rape were among some of the feature stories. Some of those reports included: a woman who was 100 years of age raped in her home during a breakin and a young woman who was 37 weeks pregnant raped. Most recently, a woman was beaten, raped and set on fire in a local park. Not only have these heinous crimes happened in the Wichita community, but the continuous news reports of these attacks can be re-traumatizing to survivors.



Talking about sexual violence is a step in taking this crime out of the shadows and examining it for what it is. One challenge in having these conversations is that stories and information we hear continue to blame victims for the crime and not those who are committing the crime. The following are some key points shared from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) when talking about sexual violence.

Stop victim blaming:

If it was any other crime, we would not blame the victim. Yet, when it comes to rape, victims face many barriers. It takes an incredible amount of courage for a victim to come forward. High profile cases make it even harder, because a victim may worry about how the media scrutiny will impact their lives/families, or some fear that they will not be believed. Others may face retaliation or fear for their safety. We need to support survivors everywhere. This case could impact whether other victims will come forward in future cases.



Trauma impacts memory:

Each survivor reacts to sexual violence in her/his own unique way. Trauma impacts the way memory is stored and how victims recall events. Alcohol and other drugs also impact memory. Some victims may tell others what happened right away, while others will remain silent. Many will wait weeks, months or even years before discussing the assault.

False reporting is rare:

The prevalence of false reporting is low between 2% and 10%.

http://nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/nsvrc-publications-talking-points-bill-cosby-accused-multiple-sexual-assaults-3critical-points-1.pdf

SOURCES:

Heenan, M., & Murray, S. (2006). Study of reported rapes in Victoria 2000-2003: Summary research report. Retrieved from the State of Victoria (Australia), Department of Human Services: http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/644152/StudyofReportedRapes.pdf

Lonsway, K. A., Archambault, J., & Lisak, D. (2009). False reports: Moving beyond the issue to successfully investigate and prosecute non-stranger sexual assault. The Voice, 3(1), 1-11. Retrieved from the National District Attorneys Association: http://www.ndaa.org/pdf/the_voice_vol_3_no_1_2009.pdf





How do we have these conversations in a meaningful way, which is respectful and supportive of victims? How do we move away from blaming victims? Examine your thoughts and beliefs about sexual violence. Are you repeating what has historically been the victimblaming view of sexual violence or are you armed with correct information and facts? Are you taking into account that when you speak to even a small group of people, someone in that group has likely been a victim of sexual violence? Are your comments respectful? If someone tells you that they have been a victim, how will you respond?

There are many sexual violence resources and training avaiable on-line. In addition, WASAC offers education and outreach programs intended to educate the public about WASAC services while challenging cultural myths about sexual assault. Programs offered to the community are provided free and are confidential. Presentations can range from 15 minutes during a neighborhood meeting to a two-hour parenting class, each designed to fit the needs of the hosting organization. Educational programs can be arranged throughout Wichita and Sedgwick County in English and/or Spanish. For more information or to arrange for a program please contact our offices at 316-263-0185.



Confronting the Reality of Sexual Violence in Wichita

Thursday, January 22nd, 6:30 – 8 PM

Fairmount Park Community Building 1647 N. Yale, Wichita KS

(East of Hillside between 15th and 16th street North)

Free and open to the public. All are welcome.







Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center presents



Creating Self-Compassion

Art & Writing Workshops for Survivors of Sexual Violence

Free and confidential

6 week groups

All supplies provided

Art workshop

Monday evenings 5:30 - 7 PM February 16 - March 23

Writing workshop

Wednesday evenings 5:30 - 7 PM February 18 - March 25

Pre-registration is required for all groups. Group size is limited.

If you are interested in one or both groups, please call Mary or Kathy at (316) 263-0185 or email advocate@wichitasac.com. These groups are for adult female survivors. Once you are confirmed for the group, we will send you details about the location of the group and meeting space. If you are interested in other services offered by the Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center, visit us at www.wichitasac.com.

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Upcoming Events

January 12-January 16: 8:30 a.m. New volunteer advocate training

January 19: WASAC office closedMartin Luther King, Jr. Day

January 21: 6:00-7:30 p.m. Protective parenting class

January 22: 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Sexual Violence community forum
Fairmount Park community building

January 23: WASAC office closed
Winter staff retreat

February 16-March 23: 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Art workshops for survivors

February 18-March 25: 5:30-7:00 p.m. Writing workshops for survivors

March 27:
Change the Rules Creative Showcase

April 24:
Take Back the Night



Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center

Adult women (18+)

- TuesdayEvening group5:30 6:30 pm
- TuesdayTrauma-sensitive yoga6:30 7:30 pm
- ThursdayDaytime group11:30 am 12:30 pm

Teen girls (13-17)

- Monday
 Evening group
 5:30 6:30 pm
- MondayTrauma-sensitive yoga6:30 7:30 pm

Parents and caregivers

Monday6:30 - 7:30 pm

WASAC also offers short-term individual therapy for women, men, and children. To schedule an appointment, please call our office between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm.

wasac support groups are confidential, free, and open to survivors at any point in their healing. All groups meet weekly and are open-ended, with no appointment necessary to participate. At this time, child care is not available.

WASAC office

355 N Waco, Suite 100

SW corner of 3rd/Waco

316-263-0185