

Ideas for Reaching Students on Sexual Assault Issues

Awareness Raising Activities

- Organize a self defense and assertiveness training workshop. R.A.D. (Rape Aggression Defense) is an oft-used national program, but others may be available in your area. Your local rape crisis center or police department should be able to provide you with specific options.
- Lead a men's pledge to create a sexual violence-free environment. This might take the form of a giant petition or contract stating the ways in which men will take a stand against sexual assault. Place in a highly visible area of campus.
- Organize a speak-out or candlelight vigil against sexual violence. These are often held outdoors. You might consider lighting a candle during the ceremony for each rape that will have statistically occurred in the United States during the ceremony (about once every six minutes).
- Organize a panel discussion in which students can ask questions of administrators and local authorities about school policy and protocol for dealing with rape and sexual assault. Other potential topics are men's roles in sexual violence prevention, media effects on sexual assault, multicultural issues relating to sexual assault, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered issues relating to sexual assault, and preventative strategies.
- Set up a mock rape trial in which student volunteers stage a criminal trial or campus hearing in which the audience acts as the jury.
- Organize a "Take Back the Night March/Rally." Participants march together through campus and the surrounding community in traditionally "unsafe" areas and chant slogans of empowerment and strength. Originally, "Take Back the Night" marches only included women but more and more are including women and men.
- Set up a table in the student center with brochures, pamphlets, stickers, rape whistles, etc. Consider staffing the table with representatives from the local rape crisis center, counseling center, health center or a peer education group to answer any questions students might have.
- Prepare a bulletin board highlighting the incidence of sexual assault. For example, you could make a series of images that represent people. Each would have a red heart but every fourth or fifth person's heart would be broken to represent the statistic that approximately 1 in 4 college women experience rape or attempted rape in her lifetime.
- Bring a prominent speaker on the issue of sexual assault to campus. A big event with a national speaker can motivate students, faculty, and administrators to keep pushing for positive change and a sexual assault free campus. Get lots of people to attend by partnering with athletics, Greeks, residence life, student groups, women's center, and other groups. Invite the local high school students to attend.
- Hold an event highlighting students' poetic, musical, literary, and artistic responses to sexual assault. Consider using the event as a benefit concert for a local rape crisis center or other charity.
- Have a book display in the library with a wide range of books addressing sexual violence issues and survivor concerns.
- Set up a campus chat-room on the intranet to discuss sexual violence at your school.
- Conduct a "safety walk" from one end of campus to the other at night to bring unsafe areas of campus to the attention of the administration. Make sure to test door alarms, blue lights, and other safety measures every six months.