

December 8, 2014



THINGS TO KNOW

Aftermath of the Rolling Stone article: 3 critical points

High-profile cases in the media are an important opportunity to educate the public about the realities of sexual assault. Specifics of each case are different, but our role as advocates is always to support survivors and help everyone understand sexual violence.

1. SEXUAL ASSAULT IMPACTS CAMPUSES ACROSS THE U.S.

- **Everyone needs to work together to make campuses safer:** It takes courage for victims to come forward and talk about what happened to them. We hope the fallout from the *Rolling Stone* article doesn't discourage victims from speaking out. Jackie is not alone. Research shows that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men will be victims of sexual violence while in college. We want people to know that support and services are available, and that prevention is possible. Sexual Assault is a widespread problem that impacts campuses across the country, and that is why in 2015, we'll be focusing on making colleges safer during April's Sexual Assault Awareness Month campaign.

SOURCE: Krebs, C. P., Lindquist, C. H., Warner, T. D., Fisher, B. S., & Martin, S. L. (2007). *The campus sexual assault (CSA) study: Final report*. Retrieved from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/221153.pdf>

2. TRAUMA IMPACTS MEMORY

- **Trauma impacts memory:** Survivors of sexual violence have experienced trauma, and each person reacts differently to trauma. Trauma impacts the way memory is stored and how victims recall events. It is common for details to be delayed or blurry, but it does not signify that the entire story is inaccurate, and in fact, lapses in recollection may be indicators that something very traumatic did happen.

SOURCE: D'Anniballe, J. (2010, February). *Understanding the neurobiology of trauma: The impact on children and adults*. Presentation at the Deepening Our Roots: Growing Meaningful & Sustainable Sexual Assault Services in Rural Communities conference, San Diego, CA.

- **False reporting is rare:** The prevalence of false reporting is low, between 2% and 10%. To learn more, download an overview about this topic at <http://tinyurl.com/NSVRCoverview>.

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

3. THERE ARE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO HELP REPORTERS WRITING ABOUT THIS TOPIC

- **Responsible media coverage can help bring awareness to this topic.** We want the media to accurately report on sexual violence, because their reporting can shed light on not only the prevalence, but also the prevention of these crimes. That is why the National Sexual Violence Resource Center partnered with The Poynter Institute's NewsU to create a free, online course for journalists. Since debuting last year, nearly 1,000 people have taken the course. To take the course, visit <http://tinyurl.com/svcourse>.
- **Sexual violence is a complicated topic to understand, but there are resources that can help.** Well-written, well-researched stories that place a particular incident in a broader context can go a long way toward educating the public. NSVRC has created a packet for journalists about reporting on sexual violence that contains facts and statistics about the topic. To download a free copy, visit <http://tinyurl.com/mediapacket>.