

## The **COST** of rape

A magnifying glass with a black handle and a silver rim is positioned over the word 'COST' in the title. The lens of the magnifying glass is focused on the word, making it appear larger and more prominent. The background is a solid orange color.

Sexual violence hurts us all, and it can be prevented.

**It pays to invest in prevention.**

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This publication was supported by Cooperative Agreement 6 NUF2CE002359-05-05 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or NSVRC.



## ABOUT THE COVER

**W**e know that it pays to invest in prevention — and now, thanks to research from the CDC's Division of Violence Prevention, the numbers help back us up. Learn more about how the CDC applied an economic burden estimate to determine the cost of rape on page 4.

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FALL 2018

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## CONTRIBUTORS



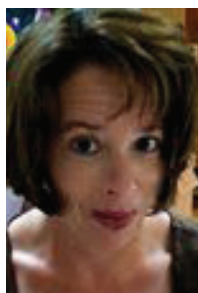
**Sarah DeGue, Ph.D.** is a Senior Health Scientist in CDC's Division of Violence Prevention. Dr. DeGue's primary research interests concern perpetrators and victims of interpersonal violence, with an emphasis

on sexual violence. At CDC, her work has focused on the development and evaluation of strategies to prevent sexual and teen dating violence perpetration. She also leads CDC's Dating Matters® Initiative. She earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



**Joshua King** serves as the Grants Coordinator at the Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault (MOCSA). He has worked in the nonprofit sector in grant writing, project management, quality assurance, and

evaluation for over ten years. His work spans domestic and sexual violence and environmental advocacy, while consulting clients across the United States. Mr. King holds a Master of Arts in Sociology from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.



For over 25 years, **Susan Gilbert** has developed health communications campaigns and coalitions, both in the U.S. and internationally, to promote sexual health, HIV prevention, and family planning. Currently, she serves as Co-Director of

the National Coalition for Sexual Health (NCSH), which consists of 114 members. Previously, Susan was as a Senior Vice President at Ogilvy Public Relations, where she created national communications campaigns for clients including CDC and USAID. While living in Africa for eight years, she developed HIV prevention campaigns for Population Services International, Johns Hopkins University, and Columbia University.



**Rene McCreary** is the Counseling Director at the Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault (MOCSA) and has worked in the field of sexual violence for almost three decades.

She oversees the provision of counseling to both children and adults, and has presented on topics related to sexual abuse in a variety of settings over the years to school personnel, caregivers and therapists. Rene speaks regularly on the topic of sexual behavior problems in children.



### YOLANDA EDRINGTON, NSVRC DIRECTOR

It's an honor to introduce my first issue of *The Resource* as NSVRC's Executive Director. This is especially true during a time when there has never been more public attention to sexual harassment, abuse, and assault. We know how critical this time is for our partners across all facets of our field, and this issue seeks to highlight the breadth of the sexual violence prevention work that is happening all across the country.

This issue touches on prevention topics of all kinds, from the cost of sexual violence to understanding sexual health and centering the needs of communities of color. Our cover story on the economic impact of sexual violence by Dr. Sarah DeGue from the Centers for Disease Control explains the latest research estimating the economic burden of rape and how the numbers can advance investment in prevention.

As you read, you'll also learn more about how the National Coalition for Sexual Health is bringing a focus to healthy relationships through their Five Action Steps to Good Health. In our program spotlight, a local program in Missouri shares how funding from RALIANCE enabled them to work with youth with sexual behavior problems in the foster system.

We are excited to offer a sneak peek into our upcoming Sexual Assault Awareness Month Campaign. Next April's "I Ask" campaign will focus on prevention through messages that highlight asking for consent, respecting boundaries, and building healthy relationships.

We're also proud to highlight two new online toolkits available at [nsvrc.org](http://nsvrc.org). The Evaluation Toolkit helps preventionists increase their capacity to evaluate prevention programs – to learn what is working in their communities. The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Toolkit contains thousands of resources for multidisciplinary teams

working to respond to and prevent sexual assault.

We continue to see the broad scope of prevention by looking at NSVRC's library shelves. In this issue, we highlight memoirs, anthologies, and exposés ranging in topic from consent to child sexual abuse to law enforcement response to sexual assault.

For those interested in learning more about my history and background before joining the team at NSVRC, you can read the details in our milestone section.

Again, it is with great pleasure to welcome our partners working across all aspects of prevention to another edition of our biannual newsletter. Thank you to all of our authors who contributed to capture such a robust range of prevention efforts, and as always, we invite you to share your successes and insights with us.



In partnership,



## THE COST OF RAPE

# Applying an economic burden estimate to advance prevention

**BY SARAH DEGUE** • Division of Violence Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The findings and conclusions in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**S**exual violence exacts a high toll on survivors, their loved ones—and, ultimately, on all of us. Although decades of research demonstrate the harmful, and costly, impacts of sexual violence on the physical, psychological, social, and economic well-being of survivors, few studies have attempted to quantify the total lifetime economic burden of sexual violence on the United States (US) economy.



## CDC'S STUDY ESTIMATING THE ECONOMIC BURDEN OF RAPE

In 2017, CDC published a study, “Lifetime Economic Burden of Rape Among U.S. Adults,” in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* to address this gap in our knowledge (Peterson, DeGue, Florence, & Lokey, 2017). This study uses mathematical modeling to estimate the lifetime per-victim and total population economic burden of rape among adult men and women in the US. Data sources include previous sexual violence research, administrative data systems (e.g., health care, criminal justice), and surveillance data from CDC’s 2011 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS). Due to limitations of the available research literature and data, the estimate is limited to the costs associated with rape, specifically, and does not include other forms of sexual violence.

This study has two key advantages over prior estimates of the economic burden of rape. First, the costs included are more comprehensive. While prior research was often limited to criminal justice-related expenditures, CDC’s estimate includes costs for 14 categories of health conditions (e.g., injuries, depression, PTSD, substance abuse, cervical cancer, rape-related pregnancy) linked to rape victimization

based on a systematic review of the sexual violence research literature. In addition, costs associated with criminal justice response (i.e., investigation, adjudication, incarceration), victim and perpetrator lost work productivity, and property loss/damage during the offense are included for a more complete estimate of the impact on the economy. Second, while prior studies often based the total burden estimate on the number of rapes reported to law enforcement, CDC’s estimate uses national surveillance data from NISVS, identifying many more individuals as victims—based on self-report—than past research using official reports. Details of the study’s methods and limitations are available in the published article.

## THE PER-VICTIM COST AND TOTAL LIFETIME ECONOMIC BURDEN OF RAPE IN THE US

Using these methods, CDC estimates that the per-victim lifetime cost of rape is \$122,461. We can also interpret this estimate as the costs averted for each potential victim who does not experience rape. When this per-victim cost is multiplied by the estimated 25 million reported adult victims of rape in the US, we find that rape will cost the economy approximately \$3.1 trillion dollars over the



Image source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *The Economic Burden of Rape*. [https://www.communitysolutionsva.org/files/Cost\\_of\\_Rape\\_Factsheet\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.communitysolutionsva.org/files/Cost_of_Rape_Factsheet_FINAL.pdf)



## THE COST OF RAPE

lifetimes of those 25 million victims. Of this total, government sources pay an estimated one-third (\$1.1 trillion) of the lifetime economic burden.

### APPLYING CDC'S ESTIMATE TO ADVANCE SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Understanding and quantifying the cost of rape can inform and advance our efforts to prevent sexual violence by helping communities convey the importance of the problem, educating partners and decision-makers on the need for prevention, and conducting cost-benefit analyses to identify the best use of prevention resources.

#### *Communicating the importance of the problem to the public and others*

The public and other stakeholders may not always recognize the scope and impact of sexual violence as a public health problem. Communicating the high economic burden of rape may provide another avenue for expressing these impacts in ways that resonate with different audiences.

Below are some example key messages communities could use to convey the importance of sexual violence as a public health problem, using findings from CDC's economic burden estimate of rape:

#### **Example messages:**

- Sexual violence is a serious and costly public health problem in the US.
- Rape results in more than \$122,000 in costs per victim and nearly \$3.1 trillion to the economy over the lifetimes of all 25 million victims in the US population.
- With about 25 million rape survivors in the US right now, we can expect to spend more than \$3 trillion over their lifetimes on health care, criminal justice response, lost productivity, and other costs.

- The impacts and costs of sexual violence extend well beyond the direct effects on victims and perpetrators. Sexual violence hurts us all, and it can be prevented.

#### *Educating partners and decision-makers about the importance of investing in prevention*

Communicating the need for prevention — and investments in prevention — is often a critical aspect of work in communities to engage potential partners and gain support for prevention efforts from various decision-makers. Knowing the

economic costs of rape to survivors, and to society as a whole, can help prevention partners and decision-makers understand, in economic terms, both the costs of rape and the benefits of preventing it. These

estimates can help communities make informed decisions about their allocation of resources, particularly to effective prevention strategies.

Below are some example key messages communities could use to convey the potential costs and savings associated with effective comprehensive sexual violence prevention:

#### **Example messages:**

- Not preventing sexual violence results in substantial costs to the economy, in addition to the direct short- and long-term harms to individuals.
- For every rape prevented, more than \$122,000 in lifetime costs are averted.
- About one-third of the costs of rape are paid by government sources, including the health care, social services, and criminal justice systems.
- Investing in prevention may ultimately save money and, more importantly, can improve health and lives.

“Sexual violence hurts us all, and it can be prevented.”



***Conducting cost-benefit analyses to guide prevention decision-making***

Cost analyses can help communities make the best decisions about allocating resources to programs that work and are cost-effective. Cost-effectiveness here refers to the cost of an intervention for preventing rape compared to the cost of consequences of rape. Knowing the cost-effectiveness of an intervention can help communities advocate for investment in prevention and invest resources wisely.

Prevention is not always cost-saving; as a society, we can expect to pay for interventions that keep us healthier, safer, and happier. Understanding the cost of rape is one more way we can understand what those costs are and ensure they are invested in prevention strategies that work. ■

**For further reading...**

\$ Read “Lifetime Economic Burden of Rape Among U.S. Adults” at  
<https://bit.ly/2mh3H50>

\$ Find NSVRC’s talking points on this study at  
<https://bit.ly/2LdR86d>

\$ Download an infographic with the study data at  
<https://bit.ly/2uxBnJn>

Peterson, C., DeGue, S., Florence, C., & Lokey, C. N. (2017). Lifetime economic burden of rape among U.S. adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 52, 691-701. Retrieved from [https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(16\)30615-8/pdf](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(16)30615-8/pdf)



# The Five Action Steps to Good Sexual Health: A new, practical roadmap for the public

BY SUSAN GILBERT

National Coalition for Sexual Health

Americans are eager to improve their sexual health, but they face many challenges to doing so, including valuing themselves, treating partners well, building positive relationships, and communicating openly about sex and sexual health, according to research conducted by the National Coalition for Sexual Health (NCSH).

In response, the NCSH, which consists of over 100 leading health and medical organizations and experts, including NSVRC, launched the “Five Action Steps to Good Sexual Health” in 2018.

This innovative framework addresses the key barriers to sexual health, and equips Americans of all ages – from teens through older adults – with the practical information and skills they need through a mobile-friendly website: <http://fiveactionsteps.org/>.

## THE NEED

How we feel about ourselves and how we interact with others has a big impact on our sexual health, and the choices we make. Yet, traditional approaches to sexual health have often been narrow in scope, negative, and aimed at disease avoidance. As a result, we lack access to a positive, comprehensive framework for taking action to improve our sexual health.

Good sexual health is much more than biology, mechanics, and disease prevention. “Being sexually healthy means being able to enjoy a

healthier body, positive relationships, a satisfying sex life, and peace of mind,” according to NCSH’s consumer-friendly definition.

## HOW DID WE CREATE THE “STEPS?”

Based on a literature review and consultations with leading sexual health experts, the NCSH developed the “Steps,” which include compelling reasons to take each step, practical tips and advice, conversation starters, and resources to learn more.

## WHAT ARE THE “STEPS?”

They are a practical roadmap for taking action to improve your sexual health. They include:

**#1. Value who you are and decide what is right for you.** Loving everything about yourself – on both the inside and outside -- can be challenging. But, you can get comfortable in your own skin, embrace your special qualities, and learn how to stand up for yourself. Get advice on improving your self-esteem and body image, embracing your sexual identity, and advocating for yourself.

**#2. Get smart about your body and protect it.** Sex – expressed in many different ways – can bring you pleasure, intimacy and joy, but it can also bring unwanted things like sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unplanned pregnancies, and fear. But you can take steps to improve your sex life, while also protecting you and your partner. Learn about your body and

sexual expression, safer sex, choosing lower risk sexual activities, condoms, and birth control.

**#3. Treat your partners well and expect them to treat you well.** Everyone has the right to be treated with respect, whether it's a short-term hook-up or a long-term relationship. This step will help you give and get the respect you deserve, and talk openly about desires, boundaries, consent, and safer sex.

**#4. Build positive relationships.** For most people, good relationships are essential to a happy and healthy life. Yet, when it comes to building romantic relationships, we are often unprepared. But with time, attention, and practice, it is possible to do so. Learn about the key ingredients of healthy, romantic relationships, get tips for building and maintaining one, and identify the warning signs of abuse.

**#5. Make sexual health part of your healthcare routine.** Preventive health services, such as vaccines, STI screening, and birth control, can help you prevent cancers, plan pregnancies, detect STIs, and safeguard fertility. Learn about the services recommended for you, and get tips on talking openly with your healthcare provider.

## HOW DID THE PUBLIC RESPOND TO THE "STEPS?"

To assess the appeal, clarity, and relevance, we held focus groups with 49 women and men ages 15-54. Most participants strongly identified with the content; considered it practical, positive, and nonjudgmental; and highly valued the conversation starters and real-life scenarios.

The content of greatest appeal centered on advocating for yourself in both sexual and non-sexual situations, prompting strong positive reactions across diverse groups. Similarly, participants welcomed content on talking openly about sexual desires and boundaries since many of them often struggle to do so.

The "good reasons" to take each step were well received by the public, and the primary motivators

## Five Action Steps to Good Sexual Health

1

Value who you are and decide what's right for you

2

Get smart about your body and protect it

3

Treat your partners well and expect them to treat you well

4

Build positive relationships

5

Make sexual health part of your health care routine

[fiveactionsteps.org](http://fiveactionsteps.org)

included the following statements: 1) "Get respect. Don't settle for less than you deserve;" 2) "Help put your mind at ease. Worry and fear can put a damper on your sex life," and, 3) "Be more confident talking about sex."

## HOW CAN YOU PROMOTE THE "STEPS?"

Americans highly value their sexual health, and are eager for practical, positive advice. We hope you will join us in promoting this new resource to your public and professional audiences. The easy-to-use, scrolling website is mobile-friendly: <http://fiveactionsteps.org/>.

Also, we offer promotional tools, such as social media content for Twitter and Facebook, brief articles for newsletters, and graphics. For more information, please contact [Jaclyn.fontanella@altarum.org](mailto:Jaclyn.fontanella@altarum.org) or [Susan.gilbert@altarum.org](mailto:Susan.gilbert@altarum.org). ■



## COMMUNITY VOICES

For every issue of *The Resource*, we reach out to you, our partners and community members, to learn more about your work in the movement.

### WE ASKED

**How can organizations ensure that the needs of communities of color are at the center of sexual violence prevention and response?**

“

Hire people of color into leadership and decision-making positions within your organization. If you're a non-profit, place these individuals on your board. If you're designing programs or initiatives targeted to serve POCI [people of color and indigenous] communities, include them in the design process, not just at the end as some faux community engagement strategy. When POCI community members give feedback, listen... Compensate POCI residents for their time and their intelligence. It's just as valuable as any consultant you'll hire.

Joy Marsh Stephens

”

“

By centering the leadership of communities of color in all planning and resource development for resources and programs intended to have an impact on these communities. And also by having clear communication channels with and ways of being accountable to communities of color.

Cyndi Simpson

”

“

The best way to achieve the objective is to give them a seat at the table. If we give voice to communities of color then any policy development and attendant action plans will reflect their interests and concerns.

Angie's House Inc.

”

“

Include women of color on leadership teams! We have a great deal to say to help heal our communities in multiple ways.

Debra Warner

”

“

Our local hospital conducted a needs assessment (!) & we collaborated with them to add questions @ DV and sexual violence & stalking needs to learn what the communities really need rather than assuming. Attend all local festivals, churches, events, etc. celebrating diversity to network & learn! Collaboration!

Sarah Higgins

”

### BE A FEATURED VOICE!

We want to hear your response to our next Community Voices question:

#### **How do you build partnerships with other community organizations?**

Tweet your answer to @NSVRC or email [resources@nsvrc.org](mailto:resources@nsvrc.org) using the subject line "Community Voices."



## IN MISSOURI

# Turning midstream changes into a roaring river: How RALIANCE and MOCSA pivoted to help more children

BY JOSHUA KING AND RENE MCCREARY

Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault (MOCSA)

In 2017, the Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault (MOCSA) partnered with RALIANCE through a Category 2 grant to provide therapy for Youth with Problematic Sexual Behaviors (YPSB). This at-risk population is often mislabeled as “sex offenders,” and research shows they can benefit greatly from counseling. However, families, caregivers, and service providers are often uninformed about how or where to get help. As a national leader providing treatment for YPSB, MOCSA sought to expand the program for families and youth who are currently in the foster system in Kansas City.

A local agency specializing in foster care worked with MOCSA during this stage, which began with community outreach. Over 4,000 case managers, social workers, and caregivers were contacted through printed newsletters and were offered training regarding problematic sexual behaviors. Four live workshops and one webinar was conducted, and participants learned how to respond and where to find resources and treatment. This outreach initiative not only increased awareness and knowledge about YPSB, but also resulted in numerous referrals to MOCSA. Families who might not otherwise have

received services were provided effective, evidence-based counseling, free of charge.

However, this success did not come without challenges. In the midst of the project, staffing changes occurred at both agencies, leaving us without a primary conduit to the target population and a lack of professionals adept at conducting PSB-CBT (Problematic Sexual Behavior Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy) treatment protocol. Despite having exceeded nearly all our objectives by that time, we were now struggling to provide services and engage foster kids and caregivers.

As any program manager knows, these types of obstacles are expected during project implementation, especially in the field of sexual violence prevention. But what happened in this instance was different. MOCSA and RALIANCE agreed that we could, and should, strive to continue our efforts. RALIANCE gave us the encouragement and flexibility to innovate and pivot. Together, we explored new ways to connect with foster families and discussed potential service enhancements. Additionally, we wanted to gain first-hand knowledge from caregivers who were living with and helping foster youth manage their



One of the focus groups MOCSA conducted with foster parents.

behavior effectively.

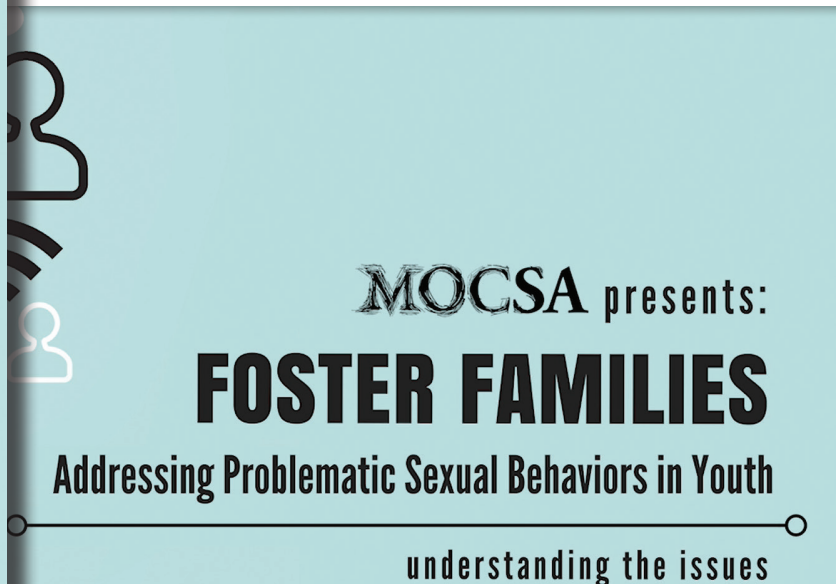
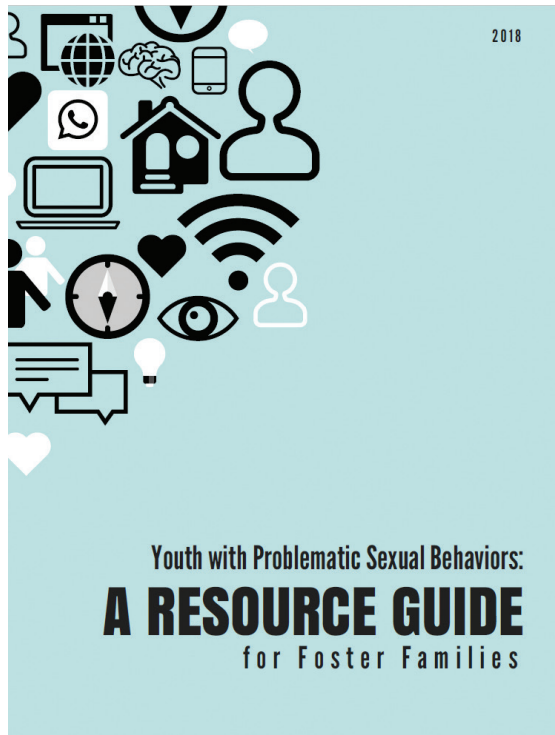
From this came a complete project revision that preserved the original outcomes while adding new goals. We conducted a focus group of foster parents and case managers to field their perspectives on problematic sexual behaviors among youth in their foster care. We contracted with a videographer to record their discussion, and MOCSA's counseling team analyzed the insights, needs, and resources of the participants, while the development team edited the video for promotion. At the same time, MOCSA's Director of Counseling reached out to other partner agencies and successfully conducted additional trainings for their staff based on high demand in the community and the lack of knowledge about how to address these issues for kids "in the system."

These efforts resulted in impactful deliverables: MOCSA produced two six-page Resource Guides — one for caregivers and one for professionals — and distributed 250 hard copies throughout the Kansas City metro. We also generated four videos

for online distribution, titled "Insights from Foster Parents – Addressing Problematic Sexual Behaviors." These short, two-minute PSAs include personal stories about the issues, reactions, and support networks for foster families. Shared through a social media campaign on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn, these videos achieved 254,952 impressions and 718 clicks.

**“Overall, the additional outreach, training, and collaborative efforts allowed MOCSA to reach vastly more people than we originally intended.”**

Training materials produced a sharable webinar to give more professionals access to YSBP training. Additionally, the focus group generated two critical insights: 1) foster caregivers are hesitant to seek services for PSBs out of fear of losing their licenses as foster parents, and 2) professionals have limited capacity to implement the full therapy model of the PSB-CBT treatment protocol. Both these insights have shaped how MOCSA conducts outreach to parents in the system as well as training and implementing therapy for clients. Overall, the additional outreach, training, and collaborative efforts allowed MOCSA to reach vastly more people than we originally intended.



As a result of the project, MOCSA produced two resource guides (left) as well as a series of videos (right).

Throughout this project, RALIANCE's commitment and support was unwavering. As a partner invested not just in the stewardship of funding, but in the lives of people "on the ground," they offered a rare collaboration that aligned with MOCSA's passion and service to youth and families. As is all too familiar in the

field of sexual violence, we often hear the phrase, "if only our funders would...." This project was a testament to the fact that RALIANCE is a funder who does — and it showcases the success MOCSA and agencies around the country can have in healing children and families when we work together to prevent sexual violence. ■

## Learn more!

Watch MOCSA's video series at <https://bit.ly/2srRNJ1>  
Find their resource guides at [mocsa.org](https://mocsa.org)

Learn more about RALIANCE grantees at [www.raliance.org/grant-program/](https://www.raliance.org/grant-program/)



# Welcoming Yolanda Edrington, NSVRC's new director

BY NSVRC STAFF

Since its opening in 2000, the National Sexual Violence Center was under the direction of Karen Baker — until April 2018, when Yolanda Edrington was named the new NSVRC Director.

Edrington first started working at NSVRC in 2017 as associate director, and then served as interim director before being officially promoted to director earlier this year. Edrington has more than 15 years of experience in leadership and community engagement.

Being NSVRC Director involves managing NSVRC's operations, including collaborating with national partners and creating and sharing resources on sexual violence prevention.

Edrington has worked at Hamilton Health Center in Harrisburg, PA and the American Cancer Society. She also serves as the Vice President of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Harrisburg Chapter, and advocates for HIV/AIDS awareness. Edrington brings with her a commitment to social change and a focus on diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppression.

"I believe a bright light is being shone on sexual violence, harassment, and abuse," said Edrington, "from the entertainment industry to workplaces across the country. I'm excited for this incredible opportunity to lead NSVRC into our next phase."

Edrington's background in community engagement has already been made evident, as she's worked to bring members of the community to NSVRC for "lunch and learns" on various topics.

In just the short time she's been at the helm of NSVRC, Edrington has already inspired us, and we're thrilled to see where her leadership takes us!



**Yolanda Edrington,**  
*NSVRC Director*

Karen Baker, the previous NSVRC Director, was recently promoted to CEO of PCAR/NSVRC. Learn about her tour across the state at <http://www.pcar.org/crossing-commonwealth>



# All the resources you need — online!

BY NSVRC STAFF

**N**SVRC's newly designed website is now home to two new online toolkits. If you're a preventionist who wants to learn more about evaluation or a member of a sexual assault response team (SART) that needs some direction, these resources will help get you started!



## Evaluation Toolkit



### EVALUATION TOOLKIT

The process of evaluating a sexual violence prevention program can be overwhelming — there are so many different methods and types of evaluation. The Evaluation Toolkit is here to help. Full of tools to help prevention workers increase their capacity to do evaluation work, this toolkit provides accessible, reasonable, and effective methods for evaluating prevention.

Broken into easy-to-digest sections, the Evaluation Toolkit covers such topics as how evaluation connects to social justice, how to analyze and interpret data, and even doing evaluation when you're strapped for resources. Throughout the toolkit, you'll find handouts, self-study guides, and worksheets to guide your evaluation journey.

Find the Evaluation Toolkit at  
[www.nsvrc.org/prevention/evaluation-toolkit](http://www.nsvrc.org/prevention/evaluation-toolkit)

## SART TOOLKIT

Sexual Assault Response Team Toolkit



### SART TOOLKIT

The multidisciplinary approach to responding to sexual violence involves communities forming sexual assault response teams, or SARTs. These teams typically include sexual assault advocates, medical forensic examiners, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers. Together, SARTs serve victims and work to change the system's response to sexual violence.

NSVRC's SART Toolkit includes thousands of resources on over 80 topics — everything from the basics on sexual assault, meeting tips, and team-building resources to advice for working with the media and helping victims from underserved populations. Many sections include links to other resources from the field, making this toolkit a wealth of information from all across the anti-sexual violence field. ■

Find the SART Toolkit at  
[www.nsvrc.org/sarts/toolkit](http://www.nsvrc.org/sarts/toolkit)



# Lend a hand when disaster strikes

BY NSVRC STAFF

Last year's hurricane season was the most destructive in the history of the United States. Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria devastated parts of Texas, Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Houses and businesses were left without power, flooding drove people from their homes, and infrastructure was destroyed. Even now, in many areas, that damage has still not been fixed.

Along with the dangerous weather conditions and effect on communities, natural disasters also bring with them a heightened risk of sexual violence. Factors like crowded conditions, being housed with strangers after evacuating, delayed police response times, and other vulnerabilities make people more likely to be sexually victimized during times of crisis. And when advocacy organizations — like state or territory coalitions or rape crisis centers — are dealing with the same effects of the disaster as their constituents, it can become nearly impossible to offer help and services to survivors.

But thanks to contributions from supporters like you, NSVRC's Relief Fund for Sexual Assault Victims provided help when organizations and individuals needed it most. Over the last year, we were able to provide funds to eight advocacy organizations in Texas, Puerto Rico, Florida, and the U.S. Virgin Islands — as well as individuals who work at those organizations who were dealing with the effects of the hurricanes.

Funds were used for home repairs, evacuation costs, new equipment to replace items damaged by the storm, food and supplies for shelter programs, the cost of relocating staff and equipment, and more. Even something as simple as a battery-powered fan makes it easier and more comfortable for advocates to serve survivors.



The 2018 hurricane season has already proven to be devastating, and we need your help. The Relief Fund has been significantly depleted following last year's storms. One hundred percent of donations go directly to victims and programs. Last year, the Relief Fund helped keep organizations up and running so they could provide help to survivors — as well as providing the assistance that coalition and program staff needed to care for themselves and their families.

You can make a difference by donating to the Relief Fund today. Visit [nsvrc.org/donate](https://nsvrc.org/donate) for more information, or send your donation by mail to:

*National Sexual Violence Resource Center  
2101 N. Front Street  
Governor's Plaza North, Building #2  
Harrisburg, PA 17110*

Let's look out for each other, this hurricane season and always. ■



# Get the inside scoop on Sexual Assault Awareness Month 2019

A CONVERSATION WITH SUSAN SULLIVAN, PREVENTION CAMPAIGN SPECIALIST AT NSVRC

**A**pril may feel like it's a long time away, but now is the perfect time to start planning for Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) 2019. Get a sneak peek at the upcoming campaign from Susan Sullivan, NSVRC's Prevention Campaign Specialist.

## **Can you give a quick rundown of what the 2019 theme involves?**

The 2019 theme focuses on consent, and the slogan is "I Ask." The campaign will champion the power of asking — whether it be asking to hold someone's hand, for permission to share personal information with others, or if a partner is interested in sex.

## **How did you decide on the theme?**

At its heart, Sexual Assault Awareness Month is about more than awareness — our ultimate goal is prevention. Since consent is a clear, concrete example of what it takes to end sexual harassment, abuse, and assault, it only made sense that this year's theme center on empowering all of us to put consent into practice. Additionally, at the end of each SAAM campaign, we conduct a feedback survey to hear from folks in the field about their ideas for the upcoming campaign. When we asked what topic would be most helpful to center the 2019 campaign around, the answer was almost unanimously consent.

## **How does this theme differ from past years?**

In the past, I think there's been more of a focus on

targeting certain segments of the population — and reaching certain audiences. But "I Ask" is more universal. Everyone can and should ask for consent, even if it isn't in sexual situations, since we know that consent is really about respecting the emotional and personal boundaries of those around us.

Another change for the campaign in 2019 is that one of the main focuses will be on digital consent, which I think is really necessary, since so many intimate moments occur online. We'll be providing a resource on how to ask for digital consent when it comes to setting norms around texting, pressuring others to send photos, and more.

## **How will "I Ask" transform the conversations happening around consent?**

While the conversation around consent has been on-going, and we often hear phrases like "no means no" or "yes means yes," it's clear that there is still a need not only to normalize these conversations, but also to empower people to have them. "I Ask" is a demonstrative statement that folks can use to show that they place value in asking their partners for consent and implicitly states how they expect to be treated as well. So, using the words "I Ask" as a hashtag on Twitter, for example, is a great conversation starter — but also a call to action for others.

My hope is that it's also memorable, which is important because it's one thing to read about consent on a website or on a poster while you're waiting for your coffee. It's another thing to

recall it in the heat of the moment before intimacy. But if the phrase “I Ask” sticks in folk’s minds and they act on it when they may not have before, then that’s a huge step forward.

### **What else can we expect from the campaign?**

Well, we know that consent is about more than just asking — it is about listening to and accepting the answer without pressuring someone to change their mind. Last year, our *Everyday Consent* resource focused on how to practice consent in everyday situations, such as asking permission before posting photos of someone on social media. This year, we wanted to expand on that idea and think of all the nuanced ways that asking for consent shows up in our lives. The campaign resources will discuss: how and when to ask for consent, how to practice consent in digital and online interactions, how parents can model asking permission and other healthy behaviors for children, and how power dynamics can impact consent.

### **How can people get involved in the upcoming campaign?**

The best way to learn how to get involved is by signing up to receive our free SAAM Action Kit. You can do that by visiting [bit.ly/SAAM2019](https://bit.ly/SAAM2019) and signing up. The kit includes everything you need to get your community or campus engaged in raising awareness about preventing sexual assault and harassment. Each kit comes with a campaign sticker, event planning guide, social media toolkit, poster, and merchandise overview.



### **What is your biggest hope for Sexual Assault Awareness Month 2019?**

My biggest hope is that more folks get involved! You don’t have to be a big organization to plan a really effective event. Last year, we heard from individuals who encouraged their local libraries to create a book display around books which explore the topic of sexual assault for SAAM. They left some of NSVRC’s palm cards at the display for folks to take with them. The thing is, you never know the impact that might have on someone in your community. For a survivor to see that they’re being supported by someone in their community can be incredibly uplifting. Or for someone to find resources and learn more about consent can be a transformative moment — and you just can’t measure the repercussions of that. There are so many ways to commemorate SAAM — from poetry readings to painting the town teal to tabling, and more. If you’re not sure what an event might look like or you’d like to hear words of encouragement from other SAAM planners, check out some of the events that took place this past April at [bit.ly/SAAMEvents](https://bit.ly/SAAMEvents). ■



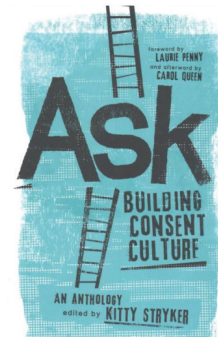
## 4 resources worth checking out

**T**he National Sexual Violence Resource Center library is overflowing with great materials, containing more than 44,000 unique titles and growing every day. NSVRC staff members share four of the collection's resources you might want to grab for your own library. Looking for research materials? Search the database at [www.nsvrclibrary.org](http://www.nsvrclibrary.org).

1

***Ask: Building Consent Culture*** edited by Kitty Stryker

What is consent? How do we ask for it, how do we give it, and what would a consent culture look like? This anthology works to answer those questions, serving up various perspectives on consent. *Ask* groups topics by setting such as schools, workplaces, jails, and more. The authors represent a broad range of experiences and perspectives, including trans folks, people in polyamorous relationships, Black mothers, and people with disabilities.



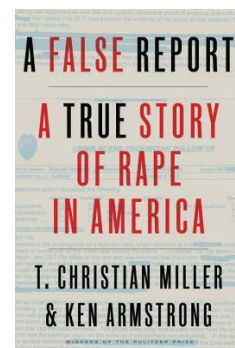
*Ask: Building Consent Culture* edited by Kitty Stryker. (Thorn Tree Press, 2017). 212 p.

2

***A False Report: A True Story of a Rape in America***

by T. Christian Miller and Ken Armstrong

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists Miller and Armstrong first told the story of Marie, a rape survivor who was charged with lying about what happened to her, in their article "An Unbelievable Story of Rape." *A False Report* takes an even deeper dive into Marie's story, gripping the reader like a thriller or a mystery novel. The detailed and descriptive prose transports the reader into the case, and as the story shifts perspectives, the audience gets a glimpse into the lives of the other victims and investigators.



*A False Report: A True Story of a Rape in America* by T. Christian Miller and Ken Armstrong. (Crown, 2018). 281 p.

3

***Protecting Children and Adults from Abuse After Savile: What Organisations and Institutions Need to Do*** edited by Marcus Erooga

The impetus for this book was the discovery that British television personality Jimmy Savile had sexually abused hundreds of children during his career. Featuring a chapter co-authored by PCAR's own CEO Karen Baker, *Protecting Children and Adults from Abuse After Savile* provides insights into how this abuse was perpetrated for so long, what keeps survivors of child sexual abuse silent, and what can be done to prevent incidents like it in the future.

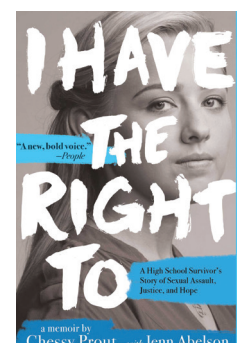


*Protecting Children and Adults from Abuse After Savile: What Organisations and Institutions Need to Do* edited by Marcus Erooga. (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2018). 320 p.

4

***I Have the Right To: A High School Survivor's Story of Sexual Assault, Justice, and Hope*** by Chessy Prout with Jenn Abelson

Chessy Prout first went public with her experience of sexual assault on The Today Show in 2016 while simultaneously launching a campaign to support survivors called #IHavetheRightTo. In this memoir, Prout tells the story of her life leading up to the assault, including her childhood in Japan and adjusting to prep school. She then delves into the personal emotional and mental impact of sexual assault. *I Have the Right To* is told from a first-person perspective with a genuine, honest voice, recapping the meaningful events in Chessy's life.



*I Have the Right To: A High School Survivor's Story of Sexual Assault, Justice, and Hope* by Chessy Prout with Jenn Abelson. (Margaret McElderry Books, 2018). 404 p.

## RECOMMEND A RESOURCE

Read something interesting? Let us know! We could add it to our library and feature it here. Tweet suggestions to @NSVRC, share them on NSVRC's Facebook page, or email [resources@nsvrc.org](mailto:resources@nsvrc.org) using the subject line, "From the Library."



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