



Northland Family Help Center

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In a national survey, 28% of college women reported a sexual experience since age 14 that met the legal definition of rape or attempted rape; 8% of college men reported perpetrating aggressive behavior which met the legal definition of rape.ⁱ

In the 2004 Uniform Crime Report, Arizona reported 1,896 completed rapes.ⁱⁱ

In the years 2002-2004, Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff received 62 reports of sexual violence.ⁱⁱⁱ

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, fewer than 5% of completed and attempted rapes were reported to law enforcement officials.^{iv}

In recent years, concern over the issue of violence against women has grown. As statistics illustrate, the problem of sexual violence is tremendous. However, the true concern cannot be represented by numbers or by charts, especially with the issue of under-reporting. The true concern can be seen in the eyes of all the women around us, heard in the laughter of the little girls playing down the street or can be felt as we send our daughters away to University. These numbers represent real people, with real tears and with real sorrow~ but the numbers also represent the possibility of learning how to prevent sexual violence from occurring in the first place.

It is in the spirit of promoting laughter and of healthy~ loving~ respectful relationships, Northland Family Help Center is going to promote the beginning of a M.A.R.S. (Men Against Rape and Sexism) Program at Northern Arizona University. MARS was originally founded in 1995 by a former advocate of the Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education in Minnesota. The original goal of MARS was to educate men about the relationship between rape and sexism. Since then, the organization has

expanded its goals to include all violence against women and its affects on the community.

The acronym: MARS was chosen for Northern Arizona University for several reasons. To begin with~ it has an undeniable ring to it! Secondly, Flagstaff is a dark city due to the presence of the Lowell Space Observatory~ Planets hold a special place in the heart of the Flagstaff community. Finally, MARS is an organization that focuses on the education of men and allows men to take a vital role in their community.

Men play an important role in every aspect of the prevention of sexual violence. Men are fathers, brothers, boyfriends, lovers, husbands, friends, sons, doctors, lawyers, clergy, teachers and so forth. In contemporary society, men hold positions of power that can determine if prevention and intervention programs receive funding or not. Men are the other half of humanity. Their day to day reality is affected by the treatment and living conditions of the women who are in their lives. It is unfair to leave men out of the hoop of healing. It is unfair to think that men are not interested in the health of the whole community. Men are compassionate, loving, intelligent beings that are capable of understanding the vital role that they must play in the prevention of sexual violence. To include men is to believe in men.

Further, men have a direct connection to sexual violence in that they are the primary perpetrators of all violent acts. “Many people reflexively consider rape to be a women’s issue. But let’s take a closer look. What percentage of rape is committed by women? Is it 10 percent, 5 percent? No. Less than 1 percent of rape is committed by women. Let’s state this another way: over 99 percent of rape is perpetrated by men. Whether the victims are female or male, men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators.”¹ In order for primary prevention of sexual violence to be successful, we must include men in the preventative process~ and we must include them in an open honest way. It is impossible to shift community paradigms without bringing certain truths into light. Further, we must believe that men are strong enough to handle the truth as it does not apply to most men.

¹ Katz, Jackson. (2006). *The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women And How All Men Can Help*. Sourcebooks Inc.,Naperville, Illinois.

The primary purpose of the MARS Program is to prevent rape and attempted rape from happening in the lives of NAU students. The program seeks to promote individual and community accountability to challenge social beliefs and behaviors that encourage sexual violence. With this mind, our programs are to be designed to increase awareness about sexual violence and to provide prevention education to all university communities willing. Further, MARS will actively work towards the increase of resources to sustain sexual violence prevention and education at Northern Arizona University.

The MARS Program will be a peer education program that works with men to strengthen attitudes that prevent and interrupt sexual violence. We will offer educational workshops, coordinate community awareness events, host poster campaigns, and develop prevention strategies that are focused on Flagstaff culture. Through awareness-to-action education and campus organizing we will engage men as allies in an effort to transform cultures that support sexual violence.

Eventually, we would also like to form alliances with other campus organizations. The MARS peer educators will seek to network with Residential Life, PRISM (LGBT organization), ASWI (Associated Students for Women's Issues), Women's Studies, Greek Life, the Athletic Department, Students of Color organization, campus ministry, and some faculty. In the inception of the MARS Program, there is an understanding that Northland Family Help Center or the peer educators of the MARS Program are not going to succeed in the prevention of sexual violence *alone*. We must pull our community together and rally support for an issue that touches all our lives in a very real and personal way. The possibilities are endless.

“After hundreds of years of anti-racist struggle, more than ever before non-white people are currently calling attention to the primary role white people must play in anti-racist struggle. The same is true of the struggle to eradicate sexism- men have a primary role to play... in particular, men have a tremendous contribution to make... in the area of exposing, confronting, opposing, and transforming the sexism of their male peers.”

~bell hooks

10 THINGS MEN CAN DO TO PREVENT GENDER VIOLENCE

1. Approach gender violence as a MEN'S issue involving men of all ages and socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. View men not only as perpetrators or possible offenders, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers.
2. If a brother, friend, classmate, or teammate is abusing his female partner -- or is disrespectful or abusive to girls and women in general -- don't look the other way. If you feel comfortable doing so, try to talk to him about it. Urge him to seek help. Or if you don't know what to do, consult a friend, a parent, a professor, or a counselor. **DON'T REMAIN SILENT.**
3. Have the courage to look inward. Question your own attitudes. Don't be defensive when something you do or say ends up hurting someone else. Try hard to understand how your own attitudes and actions might inadvertently perpetuate sexism and violence, and work toward changing them.
4. If you suspect that a woman close to you is being abused or has been sexually assaulted, gently ask if you can help.
5. If you are emotionally, psychologically, physically, or sexually abusive to women, or have been in the past, seek professional help **NOW.**
6. Be an ally to women who are working to end all forms of gender violence. Support the work of campus-based women's centers. Attend "Take Back the Night" rallies and other public events. Raise money for community-based rape crisis centers and battered women's shelters. If you belong to a team or fraternity, or another student group, organize a fundraiser.
7. Recognize and speak out against homophobia and gay-bashing. Discrimination and violence against lesbians and gays are wrong in and of themselves. This abuse also has direct links to sexism (eg. the sexual orientation of men who speak out against sexism is often questioned, a conscious or unconscious strategy intended to silence them. This is a key reason few men do so).
8. Attend programs, take courses, watch films, and read articles and books about multicultural masculinities, gender inequality, and the root causes of gender violence. Educate yourself and others about how larger social forces affect the conflicts between individual men and women.
9. Don't fund sexism. Refuse to purchase any magazine, rent any video, subscribe to any Web site, or buy any music that portrays girls or women in a sexually degrading or abusive manner. Protest sexism in the media.
10. Mentor and teach young boys about how to be men in ways that don't involve degrading or abusing girls and women. Volunteer to work with gender violence prevention programs, including anti-sexist men's programs. Lead by example.

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ⁱ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Injury Fact Book 2001-2002. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2001

ⁱⁱ Adapted from Crime in the United States 2004: Uniform Crime Reports provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice.

ⁱⁱⁱ Northern Arizona University Crime Report: October 2005
<http://www4.nau.edu/police/G57407%20Police%20Report.pdf>

^{iv} Fisher, Bonnie, Cullen, Francis and Turner, Michal. The Sexual Victimization of College Women. U.S. Department of Justice. December:2002.