

# Rape prevention education: Towards closing the gap between theory & practice

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## Objectives

- I. To discuss current scholarship on factors related to rape vulnerability & risk
- II. To examine recent college based rape prevention education efforts (most published evaluations)
- III. To identify possible future directions in rape prevention education & stakeholder opportunities for primary prevention partnerships

## I. Vulnerability & Risk

-Vulnerability: A combination of societal, institutional, dyadic, & individual, level influences thought to heighten a woman's risk for victimization

-Risk: A combination of societal, institutional, dyadic, & individual, level influences that lead to perpetration

Research on vulnerability can be classified according to three overarching models:

- (VC) Vulnerability- creating traumatic experiences model
- (SP) The social- psychological characteristics model
- (VE) The vulnerability- enhancing situation model

Can we predict vulnerability?

- No evidence supports a link between attitude & personality characteristics & increased vulnerability to rape
- The relationship between alcohol/ drug use and SA is complex
  - Kilpatrick, Acierno, Resnick, Saunders & Best, (1997).
  - Abbey & Harnish, (1995)
  - Norris, Nurius, & Dimeff, (1996)

Koss & Dinero (1989)

-Past victimization, multiple sexual partners, & sexual values fail to present a practical improvement over using using random chance to predict victimization (19% vs. 15%).

-**Conclusion**: While a small subset of women (10%) can be classified based on the after affects of childhood Sexual Assault (SA), including influences on sexual values, drinking, & level of sexual activity appears to increase the risk of rape. SA is generally not predictable

Points to Ponder...

- Can we help prevent rape perpetration by focusing on vulnerability factors?
- Can we help women to avoid rape by focusing on vulnerability factors?

Risk factors that have been studied at the:

- Individual Level
  - Dyadic Level
  - Institutional Level
  - Societal Level
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- Majority of risk research based single factors
  - When talking about risk important to look at the “Big Picture”
  - Patterns of risk factors examined together may predict perpetration

The Confluence Model – (Malamuth et al, 1991, 1995 & Malamuth 1998)

- Two components
    - A man's stance towards sexual behavior
    - Hostile masculinity in supporting sexual aggression & influences human relationships
- Shaped by early life experiences, especially harsh formative experiences.

The Confluence model

- Incorporates factors from societal to individual levels
- Utilizes a developmental perspective focusing on factors that contribute to sexual & nonsexual aggression
- Posits that the likelihood of a factor occurring depends on whether previous factors have occurred
- Hypothesizes that when certain factors occur in combination perpetration is more likely than when only some factors occur

**II. College Rape Prevention Education**

- Most prevention education programs are not published
- A recent literature review yielded 16 articles focused on college based prevention education programs published between 1994 & 1999
- Programs were developed for
  - Mixed- sex audiences (8)
    - Men ( 5)
    - Women( 3)

-Programs vary with respect to

- Length
  - 60 minutes to semester length
- Approach
  - Mixed sex, men only women only
  - Lecture, theater, video, vignettes
- Content
  - Attitudes, empathy, knowledge, supportive behaviors

-Evaluation results are reported along five broad categories

- Attitudes
- Behavioral intention
- Behaviors (self reported & observed)
- Knowledge
- Incidence of self- reported victimization

### -Results

- Mixed Sex Programs
- Programs Targeting Men
- Programs Targeting Women

### -Issues to consider

- Few published evaluations
  - What are the promising practices?
- Few longitudinal studies
  - Time, labor & \$\$\$
  - Short term out comes easier & expedient
- Utility of mixed- sex programs
  - Mutually exclusive goals

### **III. Future Directions for Prevention**

#### -When should we do prevention education?

- Life span approach

#### -Where should interventions occur?

- Important to develop partnerships in areas that have been avoided or underserved such as the juvenile justice system, alternative high schools, job training programs, junior colleges & programs for teen mothers

#### -Are there institutions we could be partnering with?

- With youth - other anti violence, & positive communication programs
- With teen & adults - Link drug, alcohol & tobacco programs with rape prevention education

#### -Who should we target

- Prevention efforts must be directed at men & informed by research on factors that place males at risk for perpetration
- Work with women
  - Focus on **Resistance**

### **Conclusions**

- Women's behaviors are not causally related to rape
- Perpetration must be viewed as the product of many causal influences
- Factors related to the behavior of perpetrators must be used to inform prevention efforts
- Important to create partnerships to present rape prevention & avoidance training in new contexts.
- Important to validate how much work has been done
- It is only through previous efforts that future efforts are possible.

## How did I do?

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