

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 473 632

CG 032 256

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TITLE The Realities of Date Rape.
PUB DATE 2003-03-00
NOTE 12p.; Poster session presented at the American Counseling Association Conference (Anaheim, CA, March 21-25, 2003).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Acquaintance Rape; *College Environment; College Students; *Prevention

ABSTRACT

This poster presentation addresses the issue of date rape, specifically in the college environment. Highlighted are date rape statistics, demographics, and date rape drugs. Also discussed are date rape warnings and prevention strategies. It is concluded that college and university administrators must place the issue of date rape and acquaintance rape as a priority on their campus and follow through with funding and university support and commitment to make any difference in helping preventing it. Specifically, educational programming should include three components: rape risk reduction, awareness of the impact of rape, and victim assistance. (Contains 19 references.) (GCP)

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The Realities of Date Rape

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Paper for Poster Presentation
"Date Rape Stinks"
American Counseling Association National Convention
Anaheim, California
March 23, 2003

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The Realities of Date Rape

Defining Date Rape

Over 40 years ago, Kanin, a pioneer in research on rape, argued that one in five women had been a victim of rape or attempted rape. In fact, it wasn't until 1980's with the research of Koss, that they began to see what today we call date rape, as a bigger problem than stranger rape on college campuses (Schwartz, 1999).

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, a woman is raped somewhere in America once every 2 minutes (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, 2002). In order to understand acquaintance or date rape, definitions must be offered. Hughes & Sandler (1987) defined date rape as forced, unwanted intercourse with a person you know. Abramovitz (2001) wrote that the legal definition of rape is when the victim is physically forced, verbally threatened, or under the influence of drugs that make him or her incapable of making a decision or resisting the attack.

According to Gibbs & Monroe (1991), date rape is not about a misunderstanding. It is not a communications problem. It is not about a woman having regrets in the morning for a decision she made the night before. It is not a decision at all. In so many words, rape is rape. The relationship between the rapist and the victim has no bearing on the act itself (Gibbs and Monroe, 1991).

Date Rape Statistics

Due to lack of reporting, the statistics of date rape are not always accurate. The University of South Florida (2002) reported that 35 to 75 percent of women are familiar with their rapist. The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (2002) stated that approximately 68%

of the victims knew their attacker. They also reported that 47% of rapes were by casual dates or romantic acquaintances.

According to Curtis (1997), one of the largest findings on date rape is a result of Mary Koss 1985 research. As a result of this research, women were more able to place a name on some of the experiences that happened to them. Koss findings were published in the *Ms.* Magazine and raised a new awareness of the problem of date rape. Bell (1997) reported that The National Victim Center reports that one of every eight adult women is a victim of rape.

There have been numerous studies conducted regarding the frequency of date and acquaintance rape on college campuses. One statistics estimated that between 15 and 25% of college women have experienced date/acquaintance rape (Cassidy, 1995). Most studies indicate that from 25-60% of college men have engaged in sexually coercive behavior (Holcomb, Savage, and Seehafer, 2002).

A College Student's Story

In an excerpt from a story written by Koh (2001), a female college student told her story of being a victim of date rape:

“Jack seemed like a great guy at first. He’d send me flowers and shower me with affection. But then he began to change. Within a month we were dating. I was flattered that Jack wanted to pursue me and excited about the way he showered me with his affection. When we first started dating he loved everything about me the way I dressed, my laugh, my relationship with God, the way I interacted with my girlfriends. But it wasn’t long before he started to pick on small things. At that point I realized I couldn’t take it anymore. I had tried to change everything about myself to please him, and now with something I couldn’t

change, insecurity overwhelmed me. After five long months, I decided to end our relationship. Jack was angry over my decision. He felt God had told him we were to be married. I wanted to go to my girlfriends for support, but I had given them up months ago to please Jack. I suddenly felt very alone. A few weeks later, Jack called and invited me out for dinner as friends. Our time in the restaurant was awful. He was loud and obnoxious to the waiters and to me. When he asked to drive me back to my dorm after dinner, I didn't object. I was more than ready for the evening to end. Unfortunately he didn't intend to drive me home. He took me to a deserted parking lot and raped me. I remember very few things about the actual rape, the car windshield covered with fog, the struggle, and the moment I felt too overpowered to resist any longer. In that instant I realized there was nothing I could do to stop what was happening. He was simply too strong. When it was over, Jack took me back to my dorm, told me he would give me a call, and simply left. I was in shock. All I remember about those following hours is standing in the shower with all my clothes on, sobbing uncontrollably, desperately wanting the water to wash away the evening's events (Koh, p.60, 2001)".

Demographics

The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (2002) reported that rape demographics are different with rape victims. Eighty one percent of all rape victims are Anglo and approximately 18% of all victims are African American. All other races make up about one percent. They also noted that most people assume that rape only happens to women. Although

women are the primary victims of rape, over thirty thousand males were reportedly victims in 1995. Today, that number has increased a great deal.

Date Rape Drugs

According to Drink Safe Technology (2002), date rape can also be appropriately called Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault. The current trend of date rape drugs has been increasing in frequency at an alarming rate. As with most rape, it is difficult to ascertain the true extent of this crime.

According to Abramovitz (2001), three drugs are usually thought of as the major date rape drugs. They were all introduced to the United States in the early 1990s. The two used most often are Rohypnol and Gamma Hydroxybutyrate (GHB). A third, lesser-used drug, is called Ketamine Hydrochloride (Ketamine). All of these drugs are illegal in the United States. Often these drugs are commonly called club drugs because of their prevalence at dance clubs, raves, and fraternity parties.

Ketamine has several street names. It can be referred to as Special K, K, vitamin K, Kit Kat, Keller, super acid, and super C. When taken in small doses, a person may experience hallucinations, memory loss, slurred speech, increased blood pressure, numbness, dreaminess, paralysis, paranoia, and feelings of being outside the body. This out of body feeling is sometimes called entering a K-hole. Higher doses can lead to death (Abramovitz, 2001).

Rohypnol is a popular date rape drug with several street names such as: roofies, forget pills, the drop drug, rope, LaRocha, ropies, Mexican valium, roples, R-2, row-shay, rib, ruffies, roachies, ruffles, roche, wolfies, and rophies. It takes about 10-30 minutes to take effect and the blackouts can last up to 24 hours. This drug causes muscle relaxation, sleepiness, dizziness, hot or cold feelings, nausea, trouble speaking or moving, drop in blood pressure, vision problems,

and difficulty urinating. The after effects cause those who have taken it to feel shaky, memory loss, anger, aggression, or hallucinations. Because of the number of people misusing Rohypnol as a date rape drug, manufacturers are now making it to dissolve slower and to turn the liquid blue (Abramovitz, 2001).

According to Raphael (2002), Gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) is the most lethal date rape drug used. Other names for GHB are liquid ecstasy, somatomax, scoop, grievous bodily harm, liquid x, Georgia home boy, goop, gamma-oh, and G. The worst part of GHB is that it is nearly impossible to detect. Once induced, the effects can start as soon as 10 minutes or can start an hour after taken. According to Abramovitz (2001), low doses of GHB can cause users to experience euphoria, an out-of-body high, sleepiness, increased sex drive, memory loss, hallucinations, headache, loss of reflexes, sweating, and lowered blood pressure. When taken in higher doses, it can cause nausea, vomiting, difficulty breathing, seizures, unconsciousness, coma, and death. This drug is becoming the most popular because it leaves the body within 12 hours.

Dip and Sip (2002) noted that the newest item of interest in the battle against these drugs is the 'Date Rape Drink Coasters.' These coasters, manufactured by such companies as Drink Safe Technology, are aimed to help combat the increasing numbers of young people who have been victims of date rape drugs. According to Bernbaum (2002), this product is a paper coaster to place drinks that can be used to test whether or not the drink contains one of the date rape drugs. The coasters have places in which an individual can put a splash of their drink. If the drink has been drugged, then the spot should turn dark blue in approximately 30 seconds. The companies who produce them also claim 95% accuracy in testing (Bernbaum, 2002).

Date Rape Warnings

Women need to be informed of the warning signs of date rape. There are several ways to know about the potential danger before anything can happen. A list from the Koh (2001) recommends that women be wary of guys who exhibits the following characteristics: acts immaturely, acts macho, shows little empathy or feeling for others, exhibits physical and verbal aggressive towards others, and tries to separate you from your friends and family.

According to Sawyer, Schulken & Pinciaro (1997), one group on college campuses that seem to get attention because of members involved in date rape is the Greek system. Fraternity members are portrayed as users and abusers of alcohol and drugs and live in an environment that encourages sexual victimization in women. Sorority members are portrayed to be at greater risk of being a victim as well as having more accepting beliefs about sexual coercion (Sawyer, Schulken & Pinciaro, 1997).

Holcomb, Savage, and Seehafer (2002) suggest that student athletes are a population largely ignored as far as preparing specific prevention programs. Student athletes are a particularly important group to target for prevention programs on date rape. For many athletes, aggressive behaviors are reinforced in their athletic training. They also are particularly in need for education due to their high social status on campus, the behavior they are faced with from women fans, alcohol and drug use prevalence, as well as the large amount of peer pressure present in athletes' social structure (Holcomb, Savage & Seehafer, 2002).

Prevention

For those who have been a victim of rape, there is help. "The Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) is a non-profit organization based in Washington D.C. that operates a national toll-free hotline for victims of sexual assault". Tori Amos, also a survivor, founded

this organization in 1994. Reportedly, it has since helped over 350,000 survivors (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, 2002).

Sampson (2002) stated in her report that the more date rape remains hidden, the less incentive schools have to invest in its prevention. Stranger rape normally brings unwanted publicity, whereas acquaintance rape does not bring that. As a result, most institutions spend far more money on prevention programs for stranger rape than acquaintance rape, even though it is much more frequently occurring on almost all college campuses (Sampson, 2002).

Earle (1996) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of three different types of prevention programs (for first year college men) in changing their attitudes towards women and sexual assault. The results of his study indicated that one of his three models did show significant positive change in the attitudes of the men in the study. This program was designed to be small single sex groups that utilized peer facilitation and interactive techniques. This goes against most theories on educating first year men which has predominately been to educate in coed sessions (Earle, 1996).

Sampson (2002) suggested that most prevention programs on college campuses hold these weaknesses: lack of clear goals, focus on changing attitudes instead of behaviors, lack of specific programming for targeted groups, and a lack of follow-up assessment. It is suggested that campuses should take the following into consideration: target high risk groups, use scenarios and role-playing models, and avoid mixed gender (Sampson, 2002).

Campus programs should include in their educational program the risks associated with alcohol consumption, especially binge drinking; locations or circumstances such as parties associated with an increased vulnerability to date rape; factors that influence miscommunication between men and women (Dunn, Vail-Smith & Knight, 1999).

Conclusion

Sampson (2002) believes that the most vulnerable period for college women is during the first few weeks of the freshman and sophomore years. Colleges and university administrators must place the issue of date and acquaintance rape prevention as a priority on their campus and follow through with funding and university support and commitment to make any difference in helping preventing it. Some colleges and universities are at risk for more occurrences of date and acquaintance rape. Factors such as frequent unsupervised parties, easy access to alcohol, students living on their own, and the availability of private rooms could contribute to higher rates. Mandatory education for all students is just the tip of the iceberg (Sampson, 2002).

According to Dunn, Vail-Smith & Knight (1999), educational programming should include these three components: rape risk reduction, awareness of the impact of rape, and victim assistance. Most importantly, educational programming by the institution should go beyond raising awareness among potential victims. Some programs have even considering joint efforts with school districts to help educate youth at a younger age in their areas.

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