

Unit 8: Sexual Assault



Time Required: 2.5 hours

Resources Needed

- OVC *Listen and Learn* DVD (clip: Rape/Debbie)
- *Participant Workbook* (pages 41–51)
- TV and DVD player
- Chalkboard or tearsheets

Prior to the Session

- Consider gathering local and state statistics and newspaper or article clippings for the discussion about sexual assault trends.
- Research your state's statutes related to sexual assault; be prepared to provide information to participants about these statutes.

Objectives

- Define **sexual assault**.
- Provide examples of sexual assault.
- Describe current trends for sexual assault crimes.
- Explain the impact of sexual assault on victims.
- Discuss thoughts and feelings about being held accountable for sexual assault crimes.



Facilitator Tip

- Stop discussions about how the victim behaved or what she or he was wearing.
- Watch for rationalization that sexual assault cannot occur between spouses or partners.
- Make it clear that sexual assault is not about sexual gratification.
- Watch for participants' reaction to their own victimization.

What Is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault includes unwanted sexual touching or penetration without consent, such as rape (vaginal intercourse), forced sodomy (anal intercourse), forced oral copulation (oral-genital contact), rape by a foreign object (including a finger), and sexual battery (the unwanted touching of an intimate part of another person for the purpose of sexual arousal).

Sexual assault is not about love, romance, sex, or physical attraction. It is a violent act. The offender's purpose is to exert power and control, to intimidate, humiliate, punish, or force a victim to do something against his or her will.

Victims of sexual assault usually know the offender, who may be an intimate partner, family member, friend, neighbor, or coworker. While most reported sexual assault cases involve women as victims, men also are sexually assaulted. Being in a marriage or relationship does not mean that consent for sex is automatically given. People who are married or in relationships can commit rape or be raped.

Sexual assault involves physical and nonphysical force. Physical force includes using a weapon, hitting, kicking, choking, or holding someone down. Sometimes, even though force is used, there are no signs of bruising or injuries.

Nonphysical force is called "coercion" and includes verbally threatening a victim into doing something he or she doesn't want to do. If a victim thinks he or she will be in danger by saying "no," this indicates force. Nonphysical force can include the use of peer pressure on a child or teenager.



Have participants read the "Words To Know" aloud.

Delivery options include reading words aloud yourself, writing the words on a chalkboard or tearsheet, selecting participants to read words aloud, or dividing participants into small groups or pairs and having them discuss the terms among themselves. For all delivery options, survey participants to ensure that they understand the terms before moving on.



Words To Know

Coercion: Forcing a person to do something against his or her will.

Consent: The willing and conscious participation in a sexual act. Victims who are under the legal age of consent or who have temporary or permanent mental incapacity are unable to give consent.

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD): Reliving or reexperiencing a traumatic event accompanied by increased arousal and avoidance of anything related with the event. (The National Center for PTSD)

Rape: The carnal knowledge of a person against his or her will and with force, or when a person is incapable of giving consent.

Sex: Physical act between two people with the goal of reproduction and/or enjoyment.

Statutory rape: Nonforcible sexual intercourse with a person who is under the legal age of consent.

Voluntary: Any behavior done of a person's free will; freely chosen.



Group Discussion

After reading selections from the "What Is . . ." section, have participants discuss their thoughts and reactions and identify common themes or patterns.

Delivery options include taking turns with participants in reading the content aloud; dividing participants into small groups or pairs for part of the session; referring back to "Words To Know" as they appear in the unit; covering only a few sentences or paragraphs at a time. Solicit feedback from participants on an ongoing basis to ensure that they understand the material. Ask the following: "Do you understand what we are talking about?" "Talk about the information in your own words." "What do you think?" "What is your reaction?" "What are you feeling?" "Do you know of other examples?" Encourage note taking.



In the News: Sexual Assault Trends

This section offers recent statistics about sexual assaults. If you have gathered local and state statistics, integrate them into your discussion. If you have found relevant newspaper or magazine articles, read them out loud or assign participants into groups of three to discuss and then present the information to the larger group.

When discussing sexual assault trends—

- Select participants to read aloud the sexual assault trends.
- Use local news articles, reviewing them carefully to avoid overly complex issues. Make sure that the articles do not identify offenders in your facility or victims in your community.
- Ask participants which trends bother them most.



Examples of Sexual Assault

The *Participant Workbook*, pages 43–44, offers definitions and examples of sexual assault. Share any state-specific statutes you have found in this section. Remember to use varied delivery options when discussing the examples.



Triad Session

Have participants write down their answers to the questions under each example. Then, in groups of three, have participants share their responses with one another and offer feedback. Finally, bring the larger group back together to review and discuss the participants' responses.



Group Discussion

Have volunteers read aloud the three quotes about sexual assault on pages 43–44 in their workbooks. As a group, discuss the impact of victimization on these individuals. What if the crimes had been committed against participants' friends or family members?



What Is the Impact of Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault has a long-lasting affect on victims. It creates a ripple effect throughout several areas in victims' lives: financial, physical, emotional, and religious/spiritual.

Chalkboard Exercise

Have participants take turns reading from the areas of impact lists. Solicit additional examples from the group, looking for the following:

<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage loss • Purchase of security services or a security system • Legal fees • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight changes • Chronic pain • Bruises • Vomiting • Temporary or permanent damage to sexual organs • Inability to become pregnant because of damage to sexual organs • Broken bones • _____ • _____
<p>Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Embarrassment • Anger • Vulnerability • Guilt • Suicidal thoughts • Flashbacks • _____ 	<p>Religious/Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning the goodness of others • Questioning faith • “Why would my ‘higher power’ let this happen?” • “Why would this happen to a good person?” • Forgiveness issues • _____ • _____ • _____



Facilitator Note

For participants who say they have never committed a sexual assault, ask them whether they or someone they know was ever a victim of sexual assault and what the impact of that assault was.



OVC Listen and Learn DVD

Debbie is the victim of rape; her husband Rob is a police officer.

Consider stopping and starting the video to reinforce key points and then initiate discussion at the end. Possible discussion and answers include the following:

- **What was the emotional impact of the rape on Debbie?**
 - When the attack was occurring, she thought she would “never see my husband or children again.”
 - She was terrified because the rapist said, “I’ll come back and kill you if you tell anyone.”
 - She felt responsible for her husband’s safety, as he was sleeping upstairs at the time the rape occurred.
 - She would “explode” for no reason with her family.

- **What was the physical impact of the rape on Debbie?**
 - She could not eat.
 - She could not “focus.”
 - She seriously considered suicide.
- **What was the “domino effect” of the rape on Debbie’s family?**
 - They lived with Debbie’s fear and anxiety that her rapist would return and harm her daughter.
 - Her son gets very angry when he hears about another woman being raped because he knows firsthand the impact rape has on the entire family.
 - Her husband felt guilty because he was unable to protect his wife—and he is a police officer.
 - Her son was bullied in school because other kids knew what had happened to his mother.

Being Accountable for Your Crimes



Sexual assault victims/survivors may never regain the sense of confidence, self-worth, or dignity they once had. **Remind participants that no one has the right to sexually assault someone, regardless of the circumstances. No one has the right to harm another person.**

Group Discussion



Have participants read the accountability statements and share their thoughts with the group. Ask them what these offenders can do to show they are changing their thoughts and behaviors.

Additional Activities



If time permits after covering the material in this unit, you may conduct the additional activities listed on the next few pages before debriefing participants. You may also want to schedule a guest victim/survivor speaker.

Activity A

Objective: Participants focus on how it feels to be a victim of sexual assault by considering who they would have to tell about the crime and how they would feel about divulging this information.

Note: Not all sexual assaults are reported. When a victim does report, many people will hear the details. There is a difference between a victim **having a choice to tell** family and friends and **having to tell** strangers: police, medical personnel, and others. Participants may argue, “The victim doesn’t have to tell anyone,” which is true. For the purpose of this activity, the victim does choose to report the crime. Based on the dynamics of the class, a male or female victim’s name can be used.

Place a chair at the front of the room. (**Optional:** Have a willing staff member represent the victim by sitting in the chair at the front of the room, but he or she should not give any responses. Attempt to find a staff person who has a very positive relationship with participants so that the activity is more personal and therefore more difficult.)

Read the following scenario to the class:

Mike/Sandra is a senior in high school. Mike/Sandra is not well known and is not considered as part of the “in crowd,” but he/she does have a number of friends. Mike/Sandra is raped on campus by a popular football player.

Have participants think about who Mike/Sandra would have to talk to or inform about the rape. Read the scenario again. Then have each participant come forward, face the chair, and make the statement, "I am Mike's/Sandra's _____ and he/she would have to tell me he/she was raped," filling in the blank with a possible person.

Who will Mike/Sandra have to tell?

Possible Answers:

Responding police officers
Detective
Emergency medical personnel
Emergency room personnel
Personal doctor
Victim advocate
Father
Mother
Brother
Sister
Cousin
Nephew
Niece
Grandfather
Grandmother
Principal
School counselor
Best friend
Friends
Classmates
Acquaintances
Media
Judge
Prosecutor/district attorney
Jury
Football team members attending trial
Strangers attending trial
Future boyfriend/girlfriend/partner
Future husband/wife/partner
Future children

Activity B

Objective: Participants consider the victim in different situations.

Have participants turn to the “Susan” worksheet in their workbooks, read the situations, and describe how the victim might be affected in each situation. The situations and possible effects or responses to each follow.

Assault

Susan is walking to a mall to go shopping and takes a shortcut through an alley. As she nears the end of the alley, a man attacks her. He grabs her, throws her to the ground, hits her in the face, and steals her purse.

Possible effects: Medical bills, black eye, fear, distrust, self-blame

Rape

Susan is walking to a mall to go shopping and takes a shortcut through an alley. As she nears the end of the alley, a man attacks her. He grabs her, throws her to the ground, hits her in the face, and rapes her.

Possible effects: Medical bills, need for counseling, pain, problems sleeping, shock, fear, shame, embarrassment, flash-backs, questioning faith

Acquaintance Rape

Susan is out on a date with her boyfriend. He kisses her and Susan kisses him back. He begins to remove her clothing and she responds with “No!” and struggles with him. He refuses to stop and rapes her.

Possible effects: Medical bills, need for counseling, pain, problems sleeping, shock, fear, shame, embarrassment, flash-backs, questioning faith

Sex

Susan is out on a date with her boyfriend. They talk about whether they are both ready to have a physically intimate relationship with each other and agree that they are. At the end of the evening, they decide to spend the night together and have sex.

Correct response: No criminal act was committed and Susan was not harmed. The sexual activity was consensual.

Also have participants answer the questions at the end of the worksheet.

Activity C

Objective: Participants focus on the impact of sexual assault and understand that sexual assault is not about sex.

Ask participants to turn to the “Mrs. Johnson” worksheet in their workbooks, read the scenario about an older woman who is sexually assaulted, and answer the questions. This activity can be done either individually or in small groups.

Activity D

Objective: Participants consider how a male victim may react to a sexual assault.

Ask participants to read the “Andre” worksheet in their workbooks. Be prepared for male participants to be uncomfortable with this activity. Encourage appropriate responses and confront inappropriate remarks. Statistically, many of the participants may be sexual assault victims who have not reported the crime. This activity can be done either individually or in small groups.

Recommended Speaker

Have an appropriate speaker address the class on the topic of sexual assault. Listening to victim/survivor speakers may be uncomfortable for offenders. Make sure to instruct participants beforehand about appropriate behavior during the speaker's presentation. (See pages 17–22 in "Implementing the Curriculum" for information about recruiting, selecting, and screening speakers and on how to prepare both speakers and participants for the experience.)



Discussion/Wrap-Up

Discuss what participants learned in the Sexual Assault unit. Address any questions they may have.

Unit 8 Participant Worksheets

Activity B – Susan

How might Susan be affected in each of the following situations?

Assault

Susan is walking to a mall to go shopping and takes a shortcut through an alley. As she nears the end of the alley, a man attacks her. He grabs her, throws her to the ground, hits her in the face, and steals her purse.

Will she report this to the police? Yes No

Rape

Susan is walking to a mall to go shopping and takes a shortcut through an alley. As she nears the end of the alley, a man attacks her. He grabs her, throws her to the ground, hits her in the face, and rapes her.

Will she report this to the police? Yes No

Acquaintance Rape

Susan is out on a date with her boyfriend. He kisses her and Susan kisses him back. He begins to remove her clothing and she responds with “No!” and struggles with him. He refuses to stop and rapes her.

Will she report this to the police? Yes No

Sex

Susan is out on a date with her boyfriend. They talk about whether they are both ready to have a physically intimate relationship with each other and agree that they are. At the end of the evening, they decide to spend the night together and have sex.

Will she report this to the police? Yes No

Are the emotions the same or different in each situation? How do you account for similarities or differences?

Define **rape**.

How does society's attitude about sexual assault affect a rape victim?

What is the difference between “giving consent” and “cooperating” in this context?

Activity C – Mrs. Johnson

Mrs. Johnson, age 72, lives with her 76-year-old husband. Both Mr. and Mrs. Johnson are retired. Mr. Johnson has gone to the Laundromat. Mrs. Johnson answers the door and a stranger asks her if she has any yard work for him. Mrs. Johnson tells him that she doesn't.

As Mrs. Johnson is closing the door the man pushes his way in, knocking her to the floor. He kicks her and demands money. Mrs. Johnson begs the man not to hurt her and tells him all of her money is in her purse. The man becomes angry when he discovers only \$13 and tells Mrs. Johnson he is going to teach her a lesson for insulting him. The man beats and rapes Mrs. Johnson.

What is the impact on Mrs. Johnson?

Who else has been victimized? How do you think those people feel?

Do you think the man would have raped Mrs. Johnson if she had given him more money? Yes No

If Mrs. Johnson was your grandmother, would you be embarrassed to talk to her about what happened?

Yes No . . . Why or why not?

What do you think Mr. and Mrs. Johnson's family and friends can do to help?

Who else can help?

Activity D – Andre

Andre, 17, was kidnapped by a man, taken to an abandoned building, and tied up. He was sexually assaulted and lost consciousness. When he regained consciousness, he was in an alley in an unfamiliar area of town.

Will Andre call the police?

Yes No

Will Andre tell his family?

Yes No

Will Andre seek help from a sexual assault center?

Yes No

Imagine you are Andre. What are your thoughts and feelings following the attack? What are you going to do following the attack?

Imagine that Andre is a member of your family. What are your thoughts and feelings after being told of the attack? What are you going to do to assist Andre?
