



ISSUES IN PREVENTION

Gender-Based Violence Prevention

Preventing Gender-Based Violence: An Overview

by Linda Langford

The 1993 United Nations (UN) [Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) defined gender-based violence (GBV) as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”

College women are at particularly high risk for these forms of violence. The 2000 U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) report [The Sexual Victimization of College Women](#) found that college women had experienced either completed (1.7 percent) or attempted (1.1 percent) forcible rape over the previous seven-month period, suggesting that nearly 5 percent might be victimized annually and one-fifth to one-quarter during their college years. When the researchers included 12 types of sexual victimization, including contact, coercion, and threats, 15.5 percent had been victimized. In addition, 13.1 percent of college women were stalked over the seven-month period. A 2007 [DOJ study](#) found that even more college women experience drug- or alcohol-facilitated rape than experience the forcible rape measured in 2000. In addition, [data reported by the Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) indicate that females aged 20 to 24 are at the greatest risk of nonfatal intimate partner violence.

These acts have serious consequences. Short- and long-term [psychological effects of sexual violence](#) can include depression, social isolation, and post-traumatic stress disorder, which may result in social and academic difficulties. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s [2011 Fact Sheet: Understanding Intimate Partner Violence](#) reports both physical and emotional harms, including trauma symptoms such as flashbacks, panic attacks, and trouble sleeping. The National Center for Victims of Crime [Stalking Fact Sheet](#) documents similar psychological symptoms experienced by stalking victims and notes their risk for physical harm, including physical assault and forced sexual contact. The World Health Organization report [Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women: Taking Action and Generating Evidence](#) further outlines the array of serious consequences resulting from sexual and relationship violence, including physical, psychological, social, educational, and vocational effects.

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Federal law requires institutions of higher education (IHEs) to take certain steps to address GBV. Below is a brief overview of applicable policies:

- The [Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act](#), which includes the Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights, requires IHEs to compile and report crime statistics and security policies annually; maintain open crime logs; summarize and publicize their sexual assault prevention and response policies and procedures; ensure victims their basic rights; and inform students of their options to report sexual assaults and receive assistance.
- The [Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act of 2000](#) requires registered sex offenders to notify the state of enrollment, employment, or carrying on vocation at an IHE. Institutions must inform the campus community how to obtain this information.
- [Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972](#) prohibits sex discrimination in education, including rape and other sexual violence. U.S. Department of Education [guidance](#) states that educational institutions are responsible, as a condition of receiving federal financial assistance, to take immediate and effective steps to end sexual harassment when it occurs, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects. An April 2011 [press release](#) and [Dear Colleague Letter](#) clarifies IHEs' legal obligations under *Title IX*.

No single program or policy will successfully address the complex problems of GBV. Effective violence prevention efforts require a comprehensive, coordinated set of programs, policies, and services that are research-based and adapted to local circumstances. The Higher Education Center's violence prevention framework, [Preventing Violence and Promoting Safety in Higher Education Settings: Overview of a Comprehensive Approach](#), provides recommendations to help

campuses foster multiple, coordinated, and collaborative efforts to prevent violence on campus.

Federal agencies have undertaken numerous initiatives to address GBV, many of them led by the U.S. Department of Education. In addition to the Dear Colleague Letter mentioned above, the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) offers technical assistance related to Title IX discrimination through their [12 regional offices](#). The Department of Education also funded the [Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting](#), which provides detailed guidance to help IHEs meet the requirements of the *Clery Act*. Recently, the DOJ-supported Stalking Resource Center released its [Model Campus Stalking Policy](#). In addition, on April 6–7, 2011, several federal agencies participated in the [National Summit on Gender-Based Violence Among Young People](#). Hosted by the U.S. Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services, the summit brought together federal, state, and local leaders, organizations, educators, researchers, prevention practitioners, youth, and other stakeholders to provide input into research-based recommendations on the future direction of federal policy and programming addressing GBV. These efforts exemplify the kind of interdisciplinary dialogue that is leading the way to more effective programs and policies addressing GBV at IHEs nationwide.

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Q&A With Amelia Cobb

Amelia Cobb is president of the Wright Group (TWG). In this capacity, Cobb leads the development of new public health and community demonstration projects for underserved populations. She is the director for the Partnership to Reduce Intimate Partner Violence and HIV. Before founding TWG, her experience included serving as a services fellow/public health adviser for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; a health policy fellow at Harvard Medical School, where she conducted research on clinical effectiveness and quality improvement measures in urban community clinics; and as an AmeriCorps project manager for the Mid-Atlantic AIDS Education and Training Center at Howard University Hospital.

Q: How did the Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) Project get started?

A: EVAW was an initiative that was funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as a pilot project for small businesses. The Wright Group is a health and human services philanthropic organization with a nonprofit arm called Giving Chance. The goal of EVAW: The HBCU Project is to help spread awareness about sexual violence prevention by educating students and HBCU communities with relevant and insightful information. The project started at Howard University in 2008. While working on this first campus we realized that there was a great need for this project on other campuses. We were contacted by other campuses once they found out what we were doing and learned about our EVAW model. In 2009 we requested additional funds from HHS to reach more campuses. In that second year of pilot funding we worked with three more campuses. After the HHS funding ended the Wright Group used its funds to continue the project. The Wright Group does consulting for corporations like Kaiser Permanente, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Molina Healthcare. We give a portion of those consulting fees back into the community or give scholarships to students who attend HBCUs.

We work with campus administrators by providing training and mini-grant funding between \$5,000 and \$10,000 to support training, capacity building, and organizational change with their policies either throughout multiple departments or within one department on campus. So for example, we gave Hampton University [Virginia] a mini grant to work with 13 student organizations for campus mobilization around sexual assault prevention. Some campuses, for instance Prairie View A&M University [Texas], want to work on domestic violence and sexual assault. The project now reflects the innovation and design of the Wright Group even though it had pilot funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the first two years.

Q: What activities and services does the EVAW project support?

A: Originally the project trained campus police and resident life and health services staff on knowledge, perceptions, and understanding of violence against women as a whole. We have no real baseline information on that. While campus police are not mandated to be trained in that area, they are required to respond to it. It's the same with resident life and the universities, which often do not have policies and procedures specific to violence against women. Most policies and procedures focus on sexual harassment and a little bit on sexual assault but they do not really deal with domestic violence, stalking, dating violence, or other student-to-student harassment. In addition to training campus staff we developed a campus task force that was student-driven. While administrators were also part of the task force we found that with a student focus we got student engagement. Our motto is "student advocacy to student leadership to campus change." Such student engagement puts pressure on universities to be responsive to the problem of violence against women.

Now the project works a little differently. We do an assessment on what the university needs.

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Earlier, when we had more funding, we were able to require that the staff get trained as a condition of participation in the project. But we no longer have the dollars to require extensive training. We ask them to identify the most immediate help that they need. It might be training for one department instead of four. In addition, we use mini-grant funding to get student organizations and student leaders to infuse this project into their existing activities. Such activities include Homecoming, which is something that students on HBCU campuses look forward to every year, or programs at fraternities and sororities, which are really the leaders on campus. We get applications during the summer from student organizations that want to engage and do something to end violence against women during the next academic year.

Q: How is the project being evaluated? Do you have any early data?

A: The program is currently evaluated on an independent basis by the Wright Group in partnership with a university. For example, to evaluate the impact of the Denim Days awareness project [see sidebar] in April 2011 we sent out e-mails to students at eight participating HBCUs regarding their perception of violence against women, related services, and what should be done on campus to reduce violence against women. We followed up a few days after the event to determine what students learned. Did they learn where to go for sexual assault services? Are they more likely to refer a friend for services? We saw a 30 percent increase in students reporting that they will be more likely to make such a referral. We have a report coming out in September on our evaluations that we have framed as a blueprint for HBCUs on how they can work with judicial boards, health services, and campus police to start to address these issues.

Q: What would you recommend that colleges and universities do to end violence against women on their campuses?

A: Every campus needs to conduct a baseline assessment of the perception of violence against women among their students. That's because it varies regionally. For example, there are different

perceptions in the South than in the Midwest and the East. Some of the cultural aspects, particularly for HBCUs, are very different in the South. It's also important to assess services that are available to students. Do campuses know their protocols for campus police, screenings for counseling centers and health services? How does the campus connect health to prevention and ending violence against women? About 70 percent of HBCU students are women. We have to begin to tailor not only violence against women prevention and services for women but also health services as a whole. We need to engage men as leaders not only in preventing violence against women but also in being advocates for ending violence against women, particularly in African American communities. We also need to help HBCUs understand that changing their policies and protocols little by little is very achievable and will result in progress in preventing violence against women.

Editor's Note: For additional information regarding the Wright Group, visit

<http://00e9b03.netsolhost.com/index.html>.



Denim Day was launched in 1999, in protest of an Italian High Court ruling that overturned a rape conviction because the victim was wearing "tight" jeans. In 1992, an 18-year old girl is picked up by her married 45-year old driving instructor for her very first lesson. He takes her to an isolated road, pulls her out of the car, wrestles her out of one leg of her jeans, and forcefully rapes her. Threatened with death if she tells anyone, he makes her drive the car home. Later that night she tells her parents, and they help and support her to press charges. The perpetrator gets arrested and is prosecuted. He is convicted of rape and sentenced to jail. He appeals the sentence. The case makes it

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all the way to the Italian Supreme Court. Within a matter of days the case against the driving instructor is overturned, dismissed, and the perpetrator released. The statement released by the chief judge declared, “because the victim wore very, very tight jeans, she had to help him remove them. . . . and by removing the jeans . . . it was no longer rape but consensual sex.”

The HBCU movement for Denim Day is organized by Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW): The HBCU Project, an initiative funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women’s Health and the Wright Group. The Wright Group and EVAW are sponsors of Denim Day in USA 2011. Denim Day is a project of [Peace Over Violence](#)—a nonprofit, feminist, multicultural, volunteer organization dedicated to building healthy relationships, families, and communities free from sexual, domestic, and interpersonal violence.

On April 27, 2011, 3,500 students at eight HBCUs—Clark Atlanta University (Georgia), Coppin State University (Maryland), Howard University (District of Columbia), Lemoyne-Owen College (Tennessee), Morehouse College (Georgia), Morgan State University (Maryland), Norfolk State University (Virginia), and Prairie View A&M University (Texas)—participated in the third Denim Day at HBCUs. In April 2010, more than 2,000 students on six HBCU campuses participated in Denim Day at HBCUs and included celebrity e-card messaging from Howard University alumnae Wendy Raquel Robinson and Malaak Compton-Rock and radio personality Olivia Fox for the No Violence Against Women (NO VAW) Pledge Campaign.

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Dear Colleague Letter

On April 4, 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) Office for Civil Rights issued a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) (DCL) as a “significant guidance document” to assist schools address sexual harassment of students, including sexual violence, which interferes with students’ right to receive an education free from discrimination and, in the case of sexual violence, is a crime. [Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 \(“Title IX”\), 20 U.S.C. Sec.1681](#), et seq., prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. ED issued the DCL to explain that the requirements of Title IX cover sexual violence and to remind schools of their responsibilities to take immediate and effective steps to respond to sexual violence in accordance with the requirements of Title IX. In the context of the letter, sexual violence means physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person’s will or where a person is incapable of giving consent. A number of acts fall into the category of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, and sexual coercion. The letter says that institutions must adhere to a three-part protocol: distributing a notice of nondiscrimination to students, employees, and others on campuses; designating a Title IX coordinator to oversee complaints; and adopting and publishing grievance procedures that provide “prompt and equitable resolution” of complaints. In addition, the DCL:

- Provides guidance on the unique concerns that arise in sexual violence cases, such as the role of criminal investigations and a school’s independent responsibility to investigate and address sexual violence.
- Provides guidance and examples about key Title IX requirements and how they relate to sexual violence, such as the requirements to publish a policy against sex discrimination, designate a Title IX coordinator, and adopt and publish grievance procedures.
- Discusses proactive efforts schools can take to prevent sexual violence.

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- Discusses the interplay between Title IX, [FERPA](#), and the [Clery Act](#) as it relates to a complainant’s right to know the outcome of his or her complaint, including relevant sanctions facing the perpetrator.
- Provides examples of remedies and enforcement strategies that schools and the Office for Civil Rights may use to respond to sexual violence.

The DCL helps schools understand their obligations under Title IX regarding sexual violence. According to an [ED fact sheet](#) on the DCL, those obligations include the following:

- Once a school knows or reasonably should know of possible sexual violence, it must take immediate and appropriate action to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred.
- If sexual violence has occurred, a school must take prompt and effective steps to end the sexual violence, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects, whether or not the sexual violence is the subject of a criminal investigation.
- A school must take steps to protect the complainant as necessary, including interim steps taken prior to the final outcome of the investigation.
- A school must provide a grievance procedure for students to file complaints of sex discrimination, including complaints of sexual violence. These procedures must include an equal opportunity for both parties to present witnesses and other evidence and the same appeal rights.
- A school’s grievance procedures must use the preponderance of the evidence standard to resolve complaints of sex discrimination.
- A school must notify both parties of the outcome of the complaint.

Russlynn H. Ali, assistant secretary for civil rights, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, told the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) that the goal of the DCL is to shed light on guidelines that have been previously highlighted in individual letters but never acknowledged in a single, comprehensive document.

“There is no cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach to our enforcement,” Ali said. “What gives rise to the hostile environment and students not feeling safe at one institution may not be the same at another.”

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ED Grants for Violence Prevention

In FY 2009, the Department of Education awarded grants for violence prevention to the University of California, San Diego; Washington State University; and the University of Arizona.

Building on previous research in this area, University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Sexual Assault Research Center ([SARC](#)) launched a new campaign for preventing sexual violence. Titled, “Every Little BIT (Bystander Intervention Training) Counts . . . It Starts With You,” the campaign is a positive, inclusive, and empowering program that encourages and teaches students bystander intervention strategies.

[Washington State University](#) has adopted an entertainment education strategy to enhance its Campus Campaign Against Sexual Assault. It works by including health promotion messages in entertainment formats with messages that are equally entertaining and educational. The strategy is based on Bandura’s social cognitive theory and uses specific aspects of message construction to encourage viewers to model the healthy behavior shown in the entertainment program. It has been used successfully to change behavioral intentions about sexual health, family planning, and domestic violence.

The University of Arizona’s [STEP UP! Be a Leader. Make a Difference](#) is a pro-social behavior and bystander intervention program that educates students to be proactive in helping others. Teaching people about the determinants of pro-social behavior makes them more aware of why they sometimes don’t help. As a result they are more likely to help in the future.

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Higher Education Center Resources

Publications

- [Catalyst](#) (Spring 2006) Vol. 7, No. 3: Violence Prevention
- [Catalyst](#) (Summer 2010) Vol. 11 No. 3: Mental Health, Violence Prevention, and Alcohol and Other Drug Issues
- [Interpersonal Violence and Alcohol and Other Drug Use](#)
- [Preventing Violence and Promoting Safety in Higher Education Settings: Overview of a Comprehensive Approach](#)

- [Sexual Violence and Alcohol and Other Drug Use on Campus](#)
- [Strategic Planning for Prevention Professionals on Campus](#)

Prevention Updates

- [Intimate Partner Violence](#)
- [Primary Prevention of Violence: Stopping Campus Violence Before It Starts](#)
- [Violence Prevention among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender College Students](#)

Web Page

- [Violence](#)

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