

**2009**

**Selected  
Findings**

**Recent Research on Sexual Violence**



**C A L C A S A**

**CALIFORNIA COALITION  
AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT**

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## Topics

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- [Bullying](#)
- [Counseling](#)
- [Perpetration](#)
- [Prevention](#)

The [California Coalition Against Sexual Assault](#) is committed to keeping our members informed about new research related to sexual violence. We hope that this information is helpful for advocates and counselors as they serve the needs of survivors, for prevention educators as they change the environments and beliefs that promote sexual violence, and for rape crisis center managers as they create and maintain the structures that allow intervention and prevention services to happen.

In accordance with our commitment, CALCASA informs our members about emerging information and research through a variety of media, including email, blogs, podcasts, and our websites. In addition, we periodically release compendiums of research about rape and violence. This document is a supplement to our most recent full report, the [2008 Report: Research on Rape and Violence](#).

In this document, we briefly describe a selection of recent findings in the published academic literature dealing with sexual violence. These selected findings covers topics related to rape and sexual assault on college campuses, men attitudes towards victims of sexual assault, and the use of an empowerment approach to working with survivors. While we have tried to include a variety of sources, this work represents a very small sample of the total amount of research related to sexual violence that has become important in recent years. We encourage anyone trying to answer specific questions about sexual violence to contact us so that we can provide resources tailored to your needs.

Below, you will find brief statements that are supported by the work done for each published article, matched with a citation for each article and a brief description of the work that was done to produce and support these statements. If you are interested in accessing the full text of these articles, please contact us.

## Victimization

Women who experienced coerced sexual activity reported similar symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder as women who experienced "traditional", unwanted sexual experiences that would be socially recognized as rape.

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Women college students who become sick at a party are unlikely to suspect that they have been given a date-rape drug.

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First-year female college students experience higher rates of unwanted touching, attempted unwanted sex and completed unwanted sex when compared to second-year students.

Broach, J., & Petretic, P. (2006). Beyond traditional definitions of assault: Expanding our focus to include sexually coercive experiences. *Journal of Family Violence, 21*(8), 477-486.

**Study Population:** 300 undergraduate college women who had reported experiencing: coerced sexual intercourse; assaults that met the legal definition of rape; childhood sexual abuse; both rape and childhood sexual abuse; and women reporting no victimization experiences.

**Research Question:** Do women who had experienced sexual coercion show symptom elevations on a measure of interpersonal trauma-related symptoms that are more consistent with sexual assault victims than with non-victims?

Crawford, E., Wright, M. O. D., & Birchmeier, Z. (2008). Drug-facilitated sexual assault: College women's risk perception and behavioral choices. *Journal of American College Health, 57*(3), 261-272.

**Data Collected:** 2003 to 2004.

**Study Population:** 400 female undergraduates enrolled in Introductory Psychology at Miami University.

**Research Question:** Do victims of prior sexual assault think that they are less capable of avoiding rape?

Kimble, M., Neacsiu, A. D., Flack, W. F., & Horner, J. (2008). Risk of unwanted sex for college women: Evidence for a red zone. *Journal of American College Health, 57*(3), 331-338.

**Data Collected:** 2004 to 2005.

**Study Population:** An email survey was sent to 200 female students of the 600 female students at a small coeducational liberal arts college on the east coast. Of the 102 female students that responded; 50 were first-year students and 52 were second-year students. Participants were between 18 and 20 years old.

**Research Question:** Do first-year students show increased rates of unwanted sexual experiences in comparison with second-year students?

## *Bullying*

Sexual bullying among children can be a precursor to more advanced forms of sexual and relationship violence in adolescent and adult life.

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## *Counseling*

Among adolescent victims of child sexual abuse, group therapy models can yield significant reductions in self-reported anxiety, and significant increases in self-reported self-esteem.

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For rape crisis center advocates, empowerment means giving a survivor the power and control back to make their own decisions and meeting the client where she or he is. In a rape crisis center setting, a medical diagnosis is not necessary when using a client-centered approach with survivors.

Fredland, N. M. (2008). Sexual bullying: Addressing the gap between bullying and dating violence. *Advances in Nursing Science, 31*(2), 95-105.

This article is a review of current research related to the intersection of child and adolescent bullying, dating violence, and sexual harassment.

Avinger, K. A., & Jones, R. A. (2007). Group treatment of sexually abused adolescent girls: A review of outcome studies. *The American Journal of Family Therapy, 35*(4), 315-326.

**Data Collected:** 1985 to 2005.

**Study Population:** Review of 10 studies that took place between 1985 and 2005 regarding treatment of female adolescent girls 11 to 18 year olds who are survivors of childhood sexual assault and abuse.

Ullman, S. E., & Townsend, S. M. (2008). What is an empowerment approach to working with sexual assault survivors? *Journal of Community Psychology, 36*(3), 299-312.

**Data Collected:** Interviews were collected from November 2002 through May 2003.

**Study Population:** The people in the sample are comprised advocates at rape crisis centers in a metropolitan area. The sample size was 25 female advocates.

**Research Question:** What is an empowerment approach to working with sexual assault survivors?

## Perpetration

Men are more likely to blame victims of an assault if the assailant was of the gender that they are sexually attracted to. For example, heterosexual men are more likely to blame male victims as responsible for acts of sexual violence committed by females. Men also regard female perpetrators in more favorable terms than male perpetrators, regardless of the victim's sexual orientation.

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Fifty-eight percent of male college students in this sample admit that they had made a woman have sex when the woman's consent was unclear, or when the woman was unable to consent.

Men who engage in frequent impersonal sex and hold hostile beliefs about masculinity are more likely to engage in sexually aggressive acts when either sober or intoxicated.

Davies, M., Pollard, P., & Archer, J. (2006). Effects of perpetrator gender and victim sexuality on blame toward male victims of sexual assault. *Journal of Social Psychology, 146*(3), 275-291.

**Data Collected:** 1998 to 2000.

**Study Population:** 161 undergraduates at a British university taking social science courses, the majority of which were psychology students. Aged 16 to 57, 96.3% of which self-identified as heterosexual.

**Research Question:** When participants are presented with various and differing scenarios in which perpetrator gender and victim sexual orientation are varied, how likely are the participants to blame the victim or the perpetrator in the scenario?

Parkhill, M. R., & Abbey, A. (2008). Does alcohol contribute to the confluence model of sexual assault perpetration? *Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology, 27*(6), 529-554.

**Study Population:** 356 men recruited from a large urban university were asked to complete a thirteen-question survey.

**Research Question:** What role does alcohol play in sexual assault within the parameters of the Confluence Model? The Confluence Model has two premises: that perpetrators are emotionally detached in sexual relationships, and that perpetrators are not equitable in their treatment of women (objectify women).

## Prevention

Some community sexual violence prevention programs continue to use a set of educational practices that have not been demonstrated to have a lasting impact on behaviors that would decrease the incidence of sexual violence. These include short, mixed-gender programs that focus on awareness-building.

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A comprehensive women's self-defense and risk-reduction course can be effective at increasing students' long-term use of self-protective behaviors, assertive sexual communication, and sense of self-efficacy at defending against potential attackers.

Townsend, S. M., & Campbell, R. (2008). Identifying common practices in community-based rape prevention programs. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community, 36*(1), 121-135.

**Study Population:** Staff at 10 community rape prevention programs in a Midwestern state were interviewed by telephone.

**Research Question:** What are the practices of community-based rape prevention education programs? Are community-based programs developing alternative approaches to prevention education?

Orchowski, L. M., Gidycz, C. A., & Raffle, H. (2008). Evaluation of a sexual assault risk reduction and self-defense program: A prospective analysis of a revised protocol. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 32*(2), 204-218.

**Study Population:** 300 undergraduate women taking a psychology course at a medium-sized Midwestern university.

**Research Question:** Do women who participate in this risk-reduction program, relative to a control group, demonstrate higher levels of self-protective behavior, assertive sexual communication, self-efficacy in resisting against attack, and lower rates of sexual victimization over a 4-month follow-up period?



## An Introduction to The California Coalition Against Sexual Assault

### MISSION STATEMENT

The California Coalition Against Sexual Assault provides leadership, vision and resources to rape crisis centers, individuals and other entities committed to ending sexual violence.

### WHO ARE WE?

Founded in 1980, the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault is the only statewide organization whose sole purpose is to promote public policy, advocacy, training and technical assistance on the issue of sexual assault. Our primary members are California's rape crisis centers and rape prevention programs. We also have affiliate members that include organizations, businesses, and individuals committed to our mission and our vision of the elimination of sexual violence.

### WHAT DO WE DO?

- **Public Affairs:** We advocate for the needs of sexual assault survivors and our membership on policy and legislative issues on a statewide and national level. We also strive to represent the needs of survivors and the membership through local, statewide and national media. More information can be found at [www.calcasapublicpolicy.org](http://www.calcasapublicpolicy.org).
- **Technical Assistance:** We respond to requests for information, training, and technical assistance from California rape crisis centers, other state coalitions, government agencies, and the general public. We have content specialists in the areas of advocacy, nonprofit management, campus issues, and prevention.
- **Communication:** We facilitate communication and resource sharing between members through email lists, trainings, CALCASA's E-letter, and an annual statewide leadership conference. Our listservs include: Ebridge (for California's rape crisis centers and prevention programs) and ED-talk (exclusively for Executive Director at California's rape crisis centers).
- Provide staff support at CALCASA's region and caucus member meetings through-out the year.
  - **Regions:** Bay, Central Coast, Mid-Coast, North, South, Valley
  - **Caucuses:** Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, Queer Women, Women of Color (North, South)
- **Rape Prevention Resource Library:** Over 8,000 items including books, journals, videos, and more on sexual violence and non-profit management.
- **Other Publications:** We've developed a number of publications for rape crisis centers and allied professionals, covering topics including disability awareness and accessibility, advocate training, media advocacy, and campus violence.
- **MyStrength Campaign:** In partnership with our member agencies, we coordinate a statewide social marketing initiative for high school boys that is focused on preventing the first-time perpetration of sexual violence. We provide an annual training for rape crisis centers committed to developing MyStrength clubs in their local communities.
- **Campus Program:** CALCASA has a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to serve as the national training and technical assistance provider for over 60 campuses in the U.S. and its territories on addressing violence against women in colleges and universities.
- **Prevention Connection:** CALCASA has a grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct the Prevention Connection program, which provides web conferences and other online resources to primary prevention programs for sexual assault and domestic violence throughout the country.

CALCASA'S WEBSITES



[www.calcasa.org](http://www.calcasa.org)



[www.calcasapublicpolicy.org](http://www.calcasapublicpolicy.org)



[www.PreventConnect.org](http://www.PreventConnect.org)



[www.MyStrength.org](http://www.MyStrength.org)

[www.MiFuerza.org](http://www.MiFuerza.org)