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PITTSBURGH ACTION AGAINST RAPE

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April 2009



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Join PAAR and Allegheny County's Men Against Sexual Violence (MASV) to promote respect and stop sexual violence during April, Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

If you hear:

Why did she go there?

Why did she wear that?

Why did she go to his room?

What did she think was going to happen?

Was she drinking?

Did she know him?

Issue: 5

In This Issue

[Hope and Healing Corner](#)

[PAAR in the community!](#)

[Legal Link: Expert Testimony
in rape trials](#)

Legal Link:

Did you know that Pennsylvania is the only state that does not allow expert testimony about a rape victim's behavior in a trial?

Legislative changes may be on the horizon though:

[Read this article!](#)

Educate others and support victims, respond with:

"It's never the victim's fault"

"No one asks to be raped."

"I'm sorry that happened to you."

"I believe you. I'm really glad you told me."

"It doesn't matter what you wear, where you went or what you did - sexual violence is wrong."

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)**Bystanders in ACTION**

Have you been out with your friends and witnessed something that made you feel uneasy? It could have been something a stranger did or said, or even something one of your friends did. Sexism, sexual harassment, and gender stereotypes happen on a daily basis.

Do you speak up?

You might be thinking, "That's none of my business," or, "I don't want to call my friend out." However, if you choose to stay silent, you may be part of the problem.

The only wrong thing to do is to do nothing.

Hope and Healing Corner

Learning to Manage Feelings

Many survivors feel that they need to shut off awareness of certain feelings in order to survive. Here are some ideas about feelings.

What are feelings?

1. All humans have a wide range of feelings. It is impossible to be human and not have feelings.
2. Feelings are valuable tools. They provide us with important information about our safety, about our needs and wishes, about another person's effect on us, and about our comfort and discomfort.
3. Feelings are the primary way we respond in the world.
4. Feelings are a bodily experience: our emotions communicate with us through our bodies.

5. Feelings are energy-pure energy on which we put a name and a meaning.
6. Feelings are separate from actions. We can learn to talk about and feel our feelings without acting on them. When you can feel your feelings without acting on them, you can use these feelings as information and still make choices about your actions.
7. Feelings pass in time if they are felt and allowed to move.
8. Feelings can be scary, but they can not and will not kill us.

PAAR can help survivors work towards feeling safe enough to feel all feelings and to talk about them with safe people.

How do we begin to recognize our feelings?

Body: Noticing feelings often begins with noticing the body. Reconnecting to your body is a part of managing feelings.

1. Learning to pay attention to your breathing is a good way to begin body awareness.
2. Can you take a moment and notice how your body feels?
3. Ask yourself where you feel an emotion in your body.

Words: Put names to feeling states.

1. Elaborate and expand your awareness of your feelings by learning to talk about them. Sensations (emotions, physical experiences, thoughts, surrounding situations) become more real when put into words.

Activities:

1. Use feeling cards
2. Use art to draw feelings
3. Read a children's book on feelings.
4. Read a book or watch a movie while paying attention to your feelings.
5. Make a habit of checking in with yourself-noticing how your body is feeling, what emotions are connected.

Help is available at PAAR. If you or someone you know is in need of help, please call us to talk about services at 1-866-END-RAPE.

Adapted from Sidran Foundation's Risking Connection

PAAR in the community!

For Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), the Center for Victims of Violence and Crime (CVVC) in conjunction with New Voices Pittsburgh (NVP), Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR) and Urban League Young Professionals (ULYP) will host a free community film screening of [NO! The Rape Documentary](#) by Aishah Shahidah Simmons on Friday, **April 24, 3-6pm** at CVVC, 5916 Penn Avenue in East Liberty.

RSVP is required for security reasons. RSVP to 412.482.3240 ext. 109 or lmayes@cvvc.org. The deadline to RSVP is April 22. Space is limited. This film is appropriate for ages 14+. All are welcome. Refreshments will be served.

PAAR will be helping with La Roche College and Shaler High School's Take Back the Night on May 7th. Please join us in speaking out against sexual violence and supporting victims. Stay tuned for further information!

PAAR in the Community in April

Look for PAAR out and about providing education and prevention services in the following locations:

Allerdice High School, Pittsburgh Public Schools
Light of Life Ministries
Cove Forge
La Roche College
Duquesne University, School of Nursing
Westinghouse High School, Pittsburgh Public Schools
Children's Hospital
Kingsley Family Health and Wellness Expo
Chatham University
Circle C Youth and Family Services
State Training for PCB in Harrisburg
Carlow University, School of Nursing
Rogers CAPA, Pittsburgh Public Schools
Chartiers Middle School

Pittsburgh Action Against Rape

TAKE ACTION

Thanks for all who participated in last month's Take Action Test yourself.

The correct answer is:

d. all of the above (sexual harassment in the workplace, rape, any unwanted sexual behaviors)

PAAR defines sexual violence as any unwanted sexual behavior that can involve non-touch activities as well as touch. For more information on the prevalence of sexual violence in our community, risk reduction strategies for you and your friends and the primary prevention of sexual violence visit our website.

April Test yourself: *Recognizing sexual violence.*

To prevent and eliminate sexual violence we must first recognize incidents of sexual violence. Using the definition of sexual violence provided above, become more aware of incidents of sexual violence you witness.

- *Pay attention to the shows on television you tune into and watch for incidents of sexist comments, gender stereotypes, victim blaming and degrading sexual comments.*
- *Pay attention to the songs you hear on the radio and listen for incidents of sexist comments, gender stereotypes, victim blaming and degrading sexual comments.*

Email your observations to PAAR's Education & Training Program Director, Julie Evans at juliee@paar.net. Be the 10th individual to email your observations and receive the Bystander prize pack; free Engaging Bystanders in Sexual Violence Prevention book, stadium cup, Bystander Handout, What Will You Do? Action sheet and PAAR brochure. When emailing your observations please remember to include your address so we can send your prize!

Accept the challenge...Take Action and intervene when you witness acts of sexual violence.

This Affects Everyone. **What will U do about it?** www.paar.net

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