



Mindful
Continuing Education

Rape and Sexual Assault





President Barack Obama signs S. 47, the “Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013,” (VAWA) in the Sidney R. Yates Auditorium at the U.S. Department of Interior in Washington, D.C., March 7, 2013. (Official White House Photo by Chuck Kennedy)

It is up to all of us to ensure victims of sexual violence are not left to face these trials alone. Too often, survivors suffer in silence, fearing retribution, lack of support, or that the criminal justice system will fail to bring the perpetrator to justice. We must do more to raise awareness about the realities of sexual assault; confront and change insensitive attitudes wherever they persist; enhance training and education in the criminal justice system; and expand access to critical health, legal, and protection services for survivors.

President Barack Obama, April 2012

Executive Summary

This report analyzes the most recent, reliable data about rape and sexual assault in our country. It identifies those most at risk of being victims of these crimes, examines the cost of this violence (both to survivors and our communities), and describes the response, too often inadequate, of the criminal justice system. The report catalogues steps this Administration has taken to combat rape and sexual assault, and identifies areas for further action.

An overview of the problem:

- **Women and girls are the vast majority of victims:** nearly 1 in 5 women – or nearly 22 million – have been raped in their lifetimes.¹
- **Men and boys, however, are also at risk:** 1 in 71 men – or almost 1.6 million – have been raped during their lives.
- **Women of all races are targeted, but some are more vulnerable than others:** 33.5% of multiracial women have been raped, as have 27% of American Indian and Alaska Native women, compared to 15% of Hispanic, 22% of Black, and 19% of White women.
- **Most victims know their assailants.**
- **The vast majority (nearly 98%) of perpetrators are male.**
- **Young people are especially at risk:** nearly half of female survivors were raped before they were 18, and over one-quarter of male survivors were raped before they were 10. College students are particularly vulnerable: 1 in 5 women has been sexually assaulted while in college.
- **Repeat victimization is common:** over a third of women who were raped as minors were also raped as adults.

Other populations are also at higher risk of being raped or sexually assaulted, including people with disabilities, the LGBT community, prison inmates (of both genders), and the homeless. Undocumented immigrants face unique challenges, because their abusers often threaten to have them deported if they try to get help.

¹ Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In calculating the prevalence of rape, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) counts completed forced penetration, attempted forced penetration, or alcohol/drug facilitated completed penetration. Like other researchers, the CDC considers attempted forced penetration to fall within the definition of “rape” because that crime can be just as traumatizing for victims. As the CDC further explains, the most common form of rape victimization experienced by women was completed forced penetration: 12.3% of women in the United States were victims of completed forced penetration; 8% were victims of alcohol/drug-facilitated completed penetration, and 5.2% were victims of attempted forced penetration. These are lifetime estimates and a victim might have experienced multiple forms of these subtypes of rape in her lifetime.

The Impacts of Rape and Sexual Assault. Rape and sexual assault survivors often suffer from a wide range of physical and mental health problems that can follow them for life – including depression, chronic pain, diabetes, anxiety, eating disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder. They are also more likely than non-victims to attempt or consider suicide.

The Economic Costs. Although hard to quantify, several studies have calculated the economic costs of a rape, accounting for medical and victim services, loss of productivity, decreased quality of life, and law enforcement resources. Each used a slightly different methodology, but all found the costs to be significant: ranging from \$87,000 to \$240,776 per rape.

Campus Sexual Assault: A Particular Problem. As noted, 1 in 5 women has been sexually assaulted while she's in college. The dynamics of college life appear to fuel the problem, as many victims are abused while they're drunk, under the influence of drugs, passed out, or otherwise incapacitated. Most college victims are assaulted by someone they know – and parties are often the site of these crimes. Notably, campus assailants are often serial offenders: one study found that of the men who admitted to committing rape or attempted rape, some 63% said they committed an average of six rapes each. College sexual assault survivors suffer from high levels of mental health problems (like depression and PTSD) and drug and alcohol abuse. Reporting rates are also particularly low.

The Criminal Justice Response. Despite the prevalence of rape and sexual assault, many offenders are neither arrested nor prosecuted. A number of factors may contribute to low arrest rates – but police biases (e.g., believing that many victims falsely claim rape to get attention, or that only those who've been physically injured are telling the truth) persist, and may account for some officers' unwillingness to make an arrest. Also, the trauma that often accompanies a sexual assault can leave a victim's memory and verbal skills impaired – and without trauma-sensitive interviewing techniques, a women's initial account can sometimes seem fragmented.

Even when arrests are made, prosecutors are often reluctant to take on rape and sexual assault cases – and, in some jurisdictions, the backlog of untested rape kits can also be a factor in low prosecution rates. Rape kits – which collect forensic evidence of a rape or sexual assault, including the perpetrator's DNA – can be vital to successful prosecutions. Once tested, an offender's DNA can be matched with other offender samples in the FBI's national database, thus identifying assailants and linking crimes together. Unfortunately, however, many rape kits are still sitting on the shelves, either ignored or waiting to be tested.

Breaking the Cycle of Violence

Responding to the President's 2010 call to action, the Administration is aggressively working to combat rape and sexual assault on many fronts. For example:

- Last year, the President signed the third reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act – the backbone of our nation's response to violence against women, authored and pioneered by then-Senator Joe Biden – which commits unprecedented resources to breaking the cycle of sexual violence. Among other measures, VAWA 2013:
 - Includes set-aside funding for multidisciplinary sexual assault teams; these are specially trained units of detectives, prosecutors, healthcare providers and victim advocates, all working together to support sexual assault survivors and increase the odds of successful prosecutions. These teams have a proven track record of winning convictions and helping survivors get back on their feet.
 - Provides new funding for sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs), who are specially trained to provide respectful and supportive care while collecting forensic evidence after a rape or sexual assault. Here, too, research shows that the work of these nurses both improves victim care and increases rates of successful prosecutions.
 - Funds specialized training for law enforcement officers and prosecutors – so they can learn how to conduct trauma-informed interviews and investigations, and more effectively bring offenders to justice.
 - Includes new protections for LGBT, immigrant, and Native American victims, as well as for those who live in low-income or subsidized housing.

The Administration has also:

- Undertaken a major effort to make our colleges and universities safer – by issuing guidance to help schools understand their obligations to prevent and respond to campus sexual assault, and by stepping up federal compliance and enforcement actions.
- Adopted a series of Executive Actions to address sexual assault in the military – including measures to improve command accountability, expand victims' rights within the military justice system, increase training across the ranks, and provide new support for victims. Notably, Secretary Hagel directed each service to provide all victims of sexual assault with legal counsel, who will be at a victim's side at every step of the process.

- Successfully called on Congress to double funding for VAWA's Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP), the first funding stream to focus specifically on rape and sexual assault. SASP provides for a wide array of services, such as crisis intervention, counseling, rape crisis centers, medical and social services, 24-hour sexual assault hotlines, and medical and legal advocacy.
- Launched the **1 is 2 Many** Campaign to focus on teen and young-adult sexual violence. Among a number of other initiatives, the Campaign inspired creation of the "Circle of 6" app – which puts a group of friends instantly in touch with each other, so someone in trouble can send a "come and get me" message, complete with a GPS location map. The Campaign also developed best-practices resources on teen dating violence for schools, and convened a series of forums to enlist men in the effort to end violence against women.
- Secured funding for the National Dating Abuse Helpline to expand to digital services, which lets teens and young adults reach out for help in a way that they are most comfortable – via text messaging and online "chats."
- Modernized the definition of "rape" for nationwide data collection, ensuring a more accurate account of the crime.
- Developed a national, best-practices protocol for conducting sexual assault forensic examinations.
- Developed a five-year strategic plan to address the tragedy of human trafficking, especially as it impacts runaway, homeless and LGBT youth.
- Funded projects to reduce the rape kit backlog, with some impressive results.
- Directed all federal agencies to develop polices to address domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking in the federal workforce.
- Implemented a series of major initiatives to protect American Indian and Alaska Native Women, including more resources for tribal law enforcement, court systems, and victim services; new penalties for spouse and intimate-partner violence; and expanded jurisdiction to allow both federal and tribal authorities to hold domestic abusers, whether Indian or non-Indian, accountable.
- Developed a 56-point action agenda for federal agencies to address the link between violence against women and HIV/AIDS.
- Promulgated new guidelines requiring prisons and other detention facilities to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual assault.

A Renewed Call for Action

The Administration is committed to redoubling the work it is already doing. At the same time, it is also exploring new frontiers.

Continuing to Focus on Campus Sexual Assault. To make our campuses safer, change still needs to come from many quarters: schools must adopt better policies and practices to prevent these crimes and to more effectively respond when they happen. And federal agencies must ensure that schools are living up to their obligations. To accomplish these and other goals, the President today is establishing a White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. The Task Force will:

- Provide educational institutions with best practices for preventing and responding to rape and sexual assault.
- Build on the federal government's enforcement efforts to ensure that educational institutions comply fully with their legal obligations.
- Improve transparency of the government's enforcement activities.
- Increase the public's awareness of an institution's track record in addressing rape and sexual assault.
- Enhance coordination among federal agencies to hold schools accountable if they do not confront sexual violence on their campuses.

Increasing Arrest, Prosecution and Conviction Rates. Across all demographics, rapists and sex offenders are too often not made to pay for their crimes, and remain free to assault again. Arrest rates are low and meritorious cases are still being dropped – many times because law enforcement officers and prosecutors are not fully trained on the nature of these crimes or how best to investigate and prosecute them. Many new and promising interviewing, investigative and prosecution protocols are being developed, with cutting-edge science about victim trauma informing the enterprise. We need to further develop these best practices and help get them out to the field.

We can also help local jurisdictions move rape kits off the shelves and into crime labs for testing – so more rapists can be identified through DNA and brought to justice.

Committing Vital Resources. This Administration has made an unparalleled commitment to getting victims and survivors the many services they need – from crisis intervention, counseling, legal advocacy, medical help, social services, and job and housing assistance – and with a special eye on particularly vulnerable populations. We cannot retreat, but must recommit to getting these vital resources to those who need them.

Changing the Culture. Sexual assault is pervasive because our culture still allows it to persist. According to the experts, violence prevention can't just focus on the perpetrators and the survivors. It has to involve everyone. And in order to put an end to this violence,

we as a nation must see it for what it is: a crime. Not a misunderstanding, not a private matter, not anyone's right or any woman's fault. And bystanders must be taught and emboldened to step in to stop it. We can only stem the tide of violence if we all do our part.



Introduction

The numbers alone are stunning: nearly 1 in 5 women – or almost 22 million – have been raped in their lifetimes.

And the numbers don't begin to tell the whole story. They don't tell of the physical, emotional and psychological scars that a victim can carry for life. They don't speak to the betrayal and broken trust when the attacker is a friend, a trusted colleague, or a family member. And they don't give voice to the courage of survivors who work every day to put their lives back together.

Twenty years ago, then-Senator Joe Biden authored the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to bring the problem of domestic violence and sexual assault out from the shadows and into the national spotlight. In the intervening decades, help has come: rape crisis centers have been built; hotlines are up and running; dedicated activists, advocates and service providers have more resources; states have passed tough new laws; and more abusers and sex offenders have been put behind bars.

In 2010, President Obama called upon all federal agencies to make domestic and sexual violence a priority. And in March 7, 2013, he signed the third reauthorization of VAWA, which provides states, tribes, and local communities with unprecedented resources to combat sexual assault. This and other federal programs put federal dollars where they are most needed and effective: for crisis intervention, counseling, criminal justice advocacy, forensic evidence-gathering, medical and social services, law enforcement training and prosecutorial resources. In 2012, President Obama directed federal agencies to develop policies to address domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking in the federal workplace.

Federal agencies have heeded the President's call to action in many innovative and wide-ranging ways. Among other initiatives, the Administration has issued new guidance to help schools, colleges and universities better understand their obligations to prevent and respond to sexual assault on their campuses; promulgated a series of executive actions to better protect our service members from military sexual assault; developed a national, best-practices protocol for conducting sexual assault forensic examinations; modernized the definition of "rape" for nationwide data collection, ensuring a more accurate accounting of the crime; launched new technologically-advanced ways for young women to get help; and enlisted men and boys to take an active stand against sexual violence. And today, the President is establishing a White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault – which will go even further to make our schools safer for all students.

More of the Administration's efforts are catalogued in this report – and they are making a real difference.

But despite all the progress, too many of our friends, wives, sisters, daughters and sons are still raped or sexually assaulted every day.

A new generation of anti-rape activists, both women and men, are having a national conversation about rape and sexual assault – and about attitudes toward victims and the role of the criminal justice system in holding offenders accountable.

This report aims to be part of that conversation. It provides an overview of the scope of the problem, identifies those most at risk, describes the costs of this violence (both to survivors and society as a whole), and takes a look at the response of the criminal justice system. The report discusses steps this Administration has taken to address rape and sexual assault, and identifies challenging new fronts on which we should set our sights.²



² The terms “survivor” and “victim” are both used to describe individuals who have been raped or sexually assaulted. Many of these individuals and the advocates who work with them have come to prefer “survivor,” as they regard the term as more empowering. The term “victim,” however, is still in widespread use in research studies and in the criminal justice context. In this report, the terms are used interchangeably and always with respect for those who have suffered from these crimes.

An Overview of the Problem

Anyone can be a victim of rape or sexual assault. But some are more at risk than others:

- **Women and girls are the vast majority of victims:** as noted, nearly 1 in 5 women has been raped in her lifetime.³
- **Men and boys, however, are also at risk:** 1 in 71 men – or almost 1.6 million – have been raped during their lives.⁴
- **Women of all races are targeted, but some are more vulnerable than others:** 33.5% of multiracial women have been raped, as have 27% of American Indian and Alaska Native women, compared to 15% of Hispanic, 22% of Black, and 19% of White women.⁵
- **Most victims know their perpetrators:** 51% of female victims were raped by a current or former intimate partner, and 41% were raped by an acquaintance. Stranger rape, in contrast, accounts for 14% of the total.⁶ Of men and boys, 52% report being raped by an acquaintance and 15% by a stranger.⁷
- **Repeat victimization is common:** over a third of women who were raped as minors were also raped as adults.⁸
- **The majority of perpetrators are male:** 98% of female and 93% of male rape survivors report that their assailants were male.⁹
- **Young people are especially at risk:** nearly half of female survivors were raped before they were 18, and over one-quarter of male survivors were raped before they were 10.¹⁰

³ Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Hereafter cited as NISVS (2010)] In calculating the prevalence of rape, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) counts completed forced penetration, attempted forced penetration, or alcohol/drug facilitated completed penetration. Like other researchers, the CDC considers attempted forced penetration to fall within the definition of “rape” because that crime can be just as traumatizing for victims. As the CDC further explains, the most common form of rape victimization experienced by women was completed forced penetration: 12.3% of women in the United States were victims of completed forced penetration; 8% were victims of alcohol/drug-facilitated completed penetration, and 5.2% were victims of attempted forced penetration. These are lifetime estimates and a victim might have experienced multiple forms of these subtypes of rape in her lifetime.

⁴ NISVS (2010)

⁵ NISVS (2010); Asian or Pacific Islander (API) women are also assaulted. However, the NISVS does not report the prevalence of sexual violence for API women due to a high standard error or low number of responses.

⁶ Some women are raped by multiple perpetrators in different relationships. Because a woman may be raped both by an intimate partner and a stranger, the overall percentages do not sum to 100.

⁷ NISVS (2010)

⁸ NISVS (2010)

⁹ NISVS (2010)

¹⁰ NISVS (2010)

A Closer Look at the Demographics

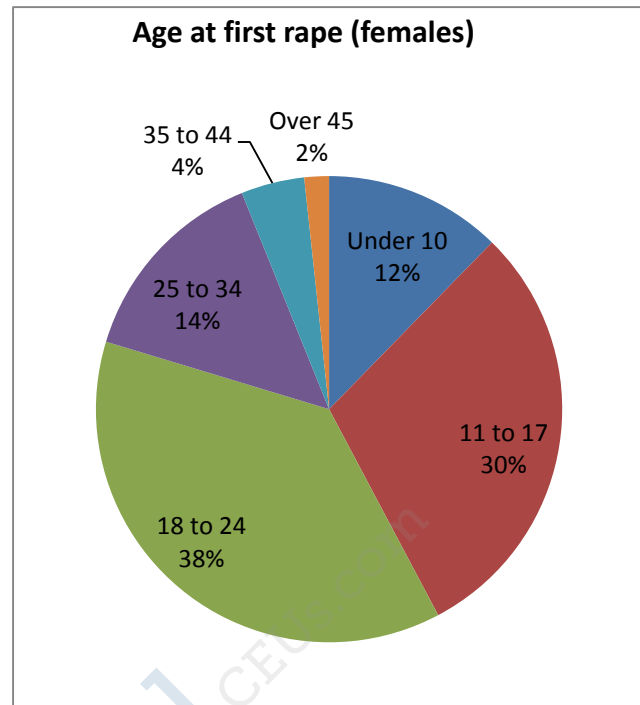
Teens and young adults. The majority of rape and sexual assault victims are young – between the ages of 16 and 24. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that 80% of female victims were raped before they turned 25, and almost half were raped before they were 18.¹¹ Among men, 28% were raped before they were 10.¹²

Some 12% of high school girls report having been forced to have sexual intercourse.¹³ And up to 38% of runaway teens say that sexual abuse is one of the reasons they left home.¹⁴

College students are especially at risk: 1 in 5 women has been sexually assaulted while in college.¹⁵

People with disabilities. People with physical or mental disabilities may also be at increased risk. A study found that in the mid-1990s, women with severe disabilities were four times more likely to be sexually assaulted than women with no disability.¹⁶ A more recent study made similar findings, reporting that individuals with a disability were three times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than individuals without a disability.¹⁷

LGBT community. People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) are also uniquely vulnerable. One study found that 13.2% of bisexual men and 11.6% of gay men were raped in adulthood, compared to 1.6% of heterosexual men.¹⁸ According to the CDC, 46% of bisexual women have been raped, compared to 13% of lesbians and



¹¹ NISVS (2010)

¹² NISVS (2010); "Age at first rape (females)" chart is derived from NISVS (2010). A comparable breakdown for males is not available because NISVS (2010) does not report any age categories for males, other than "under 10."

¹³ *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance*. (2011). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

¹⁴ Greene, J., & Sanchez, R. (2002). *Sexual Abuse Among Homeless Adolescents: Prevalence, Correlates and Sequela*. The Administration on Children, Youth and Families.

¹⁵ Krebs, C. P., Lindquist, C. H., Warner, T. D., Fisher, B. S., & Martin, S. L. (2007). *The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) Study* (221153). Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice. [Hereafter cited as CSA (2007)].; Krebs, C. P., Lindquist, C. H., Warner, T. D., Fisher, B. S., & Martin, S. L. (2009) College Women's Experiences with Physically Forced, Alcohol- or Other Drug-Enabled, and Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault Before and Since Entering College. *Journal of American College Health*, 57(6), 639-647.

¹⁶ Casteel, C., Martin, S. L., Smith, J. B., Gurka, K. K., & Kupper, L. L. (2008). National study of physical and sexual assault among women with disabilities. *Injury Prevention*, 14(2), 87-90.

¹⁷ Harrell, E. (2012). *Crime Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009-2011 – Statistical Tables*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

¹⁸ Balsam, K. F., Beauchaine, T. P., & Rothblum, E. D. (2005). Victimization over the life span: A comparison of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual siblings. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73(3), 477-487. [Hereafter cited as Balsam (2005)]

17% of heterosexual women.¹⁹ Another study found that more than 25% of transgender individuals had been sexually assaulted after the age of 13.²⁰

Incarcerated individuals. Sexual assault is a problem in our nation's prisons. Among former state prisoners, 14% of females and 4% of males were sexually assaulted by another prisoner. Incarcerated gay and bisexual men are at particular risk: 34% of bisexual males and 39% of gay males report being sexually assaulted by another prisoner, compared to 3.5% of heterosexual males.²¹

Undocumented immigrants. While numbers are difficult to estimate, undocumented immigrants face unique difficulties. Abusers often threaten to have their victims deported if they try to seek help, making immigrant survivors less likely to report these crimes.²² Immigrant survivors may also be unaware or confused by the services that are available, particularly if service providers lack linguistically or culturally appropriate resources.²³

People who are homeless. There's a correlation between homelessness and sexual violence. One study found that 13% of homeless women had been raped in the previous year, and half of these women were raped at least twice.²⁴ This compares to 1% of women nationally who reported being raped in the previous year.²⁵ Additionally, up to 43% of homeless women were abused as children.²⁶

¹⁹ Walters, M.L., Chen, J., & Breiding, M.J. (2013). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

²⁰ Testa, R. J., Sciacca, L. M., Wang, F., Hendricks, M. L., Goldblum, P., Bradford, J., & Bongar, B. (2012). Effects of Violence on Transgender People. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 43(5), 452-459.

²¹ Beck, A.J. & Johnson, C. (2012). *Sexual Victimization Reported by Former State Prisoners, 2008*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved from

<http://www.preadsourcecenter.org/sites/default/files/library/sexualvictimizationreportedbyformerstateprisoners2008.pdf>.

²² Orloff, L.E. & Dave, N. (1997) Identifying Barriers: Survey of Immigrant Women and Domestic Violence in the D.C. Metropolitan Area. *Poverty and Race*. 6(4) 9-10

²³ Mindlin, J., Orloff, J.E., Pochiraju, S., Baran, A., & Echavarría, E. (2013). *Dynamics of sexual assault and the implications for immigrant women*. National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project. Retrieved from: <http://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/cultural-competency/dynamics-of-violence-against-immigrant-women>.

²⁴ Wenzel, S.L., Leake, B.D., Gelberg, L. (2000). Health of homeless women with recent experiences of rape. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 15(4).265-269.

²⁵ NISVS (2010)

²⁶ The National Center on Family Homelessness (2007). *Violence in the lives of homeless women*. Retrieved from: http://www.councilofcollaboratives.org/files/fact_violence.pdf.

The Impacts of Rape and Sexual Assault

Rape and sexual assault can take a profound toll on survivors, who often suffer from a wide range of physical and mental health problems that can be long-lasting.

Physical Health

According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, between 2005-2010, 58% of all female victims of sexual assault sustained an injury.²⁷ Women who are raped or stalked by any perpetrator or physically assaulted by an intimate partner are more likely to have asthma, irritable bowel syndrome, and diabetes, and are also more likely to suffer from chronic pain, frequent headaches, and difficulty sleeping than non-victims.²⁸ A study of women in North Carolina indicated that survivors of sexual assault were more likely to smoke, to have high cholesterol and hypertension, and to be obese.²⁹ African American women ages 18-24 who are sexually assaulted are nearly five times more likely to test positive for a high-risk HPV infection. Also, survivors of intimate partner rape or sexual assault are more likely than non-victims to contract sexually-transmitted infections, and are also more likely to report HIV risk factors, such as unprotected sex, injection drug use and alcohol abuse.³⁰

Mental Health

Survivors also suffer from a wide range of mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).³¹ One study found that over half of survivors who were forcibly raped while under the influence of alcohol or drugs developed lifetime PTSD. These victims were also almost five times more likely to have lifetime major depressive episodes than non-victims.³²

²⁷ Planty, M., Berzofsky, M., Krebs, C., Langton, L., & Smiley-McDonald, H. (2013). *Female victims of sexual violence, 1994-2010*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. [Hereafter cited as Planty (2013)]

²⁸ NISVS (2010)

²⁹ Cloutier, S., Martin, S. L., & Poole, C. (2002). Sexual assault among North Carolina women: prevalence and health risk factors. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 56*(4), 265-271.

³⁰ Wingood, G. M., Seth, P., DiClemente, R. J., & Robinson, L. S. (2009). Association of sexual abuse with incident high-risk human papilloma-virus infection among young African-American women. *Sexually Transmitted Disease, 36*(12), 784-786.; Bauer, H. M., Gibson, P., Hernandez, M., Kent, C., Klausner, K., & Bolan, G. (2002). Intimate partner violence and high-risk sexual behaviors among female patients with sexually transmitted diseases. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases, 29*(7), 411-416.; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2008) Adverse Health Conditions and Health Risk Behaviors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence --- United States, 2005. *MMWR, 57*(5): 113-7. Retrieved from: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5705a1.htm>; Lang, D.L., et al. (2011) Rape victimization and high risk sexual behaviors: longitudinal study of African-American adolescent females. *Western Journal of Emergency Medicine, 12*(3), 333-342.

³¹ Many people with PTSD have flashbacks, repeatedly reliving the traumatic event in their thoughts or sleep. People with PTSD also may startle easily, lose interest in things they used to enjoy, or become more aggressive. National Council on Disability (n.d.). *Section 3: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2009/March042009/section3>; National Institute of Mental Health (n.d.). *Anxiety Disorders*. Retrieved from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml>

³² Zinzow, H., Resnick, H., Amstadter, A., McCauley, M., Ruggiero, K., & Kilpatrick, D. (2012). Prevalence and risk of psychiatric disorders as a function of variant rape histories: Results from a national survey of women. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 47*(6), 893-902. [Hereafter cited as Zinzow (2012)]

Survivors of sexual assault are also more likely than non-victims to engage in risky behavior – such as substance and alcohol abuse, smoking, and high-risk HIV behavior.³³ Experts believe these are a means of coping with the trauma, or that victims are otherwise self-medicating. One study found that when controlling for previous substance abuse history, sexual assault survivors were more likely to abuse alcohol than women who were not assaulted.³⁴ Another study found that female veterans who experienced sexual trauma in the military were twice as likely to report substance abuse, PTSD, and anxiety than female veterans who were not assaulted.³⁵

Sexual assault survivors are also more prone to developing eating disorders: one survey of undergraduates found that victims were seven times more likely to vomit or use laxatives to lose weight than non-victims.³⁶

Survivors of rape and sexual assault are also more likely to attempt or consider suicide. Research has found that men who were sexually abused in childhood are twice as likely as non-victims to attempt suicide.³⁷ One study found that high school students who were raped were more likely to report suicidal ideation in the past 12 months than their non-victimized counterparts.³⁸ Another study reported that almost half of female veterans who were sexually assaulted in the military report suicide ideation.³⁹

Today, victims may be further traumatized by social media – through which the details of an assault can “go viral.” While this is an unresearched issue, a number of high profile sexual assault cases have drawn attention to this relatively new and disturbing dynamic.

³³ Cloutier, S., Martin, S. L., & Poole, C. (2002). Sexual assault among North Carolina women: prevalence and health risk factors. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 56*(4), 265-271.; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Adverse Health Conditions and Health Risk Behaviors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence --- United States, 2005. *MMWR, 2008; 57*(5): 113-7. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5705a1.htm>; Lang, D.L., et al. Rape victimization and high risk sexual behaviors: longitudinal study of African-American adolescent females. *Western Journal of Emergency Medicine, 2011; 12*(3); Kilpatrick, D.G., Acierno, R., Resnick, H., Saunders, B.E., Best, C.L. (1997). A 2-Year Longitudinal Analysis of the Relationships Between Violent Assault and Substance Use in Women. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 65*(5), 834-847.

³⁴ Kilpatrick, D.G., Acierno, R., Resnick, H., Saunders, B.E., Best, C.L. (1997). A 2-Year Longitudinal Analysis of the Relationships Between Violent Assault and Substance Use in Women. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 65*(5), 834-847.

³⁵ Kimerling, R., Street, A., Pavao, J., Smith, M., Cronkite, R. C., Holmes, T. H., & Frayne, S. (2010). Military-related sexual trauma among veterans health administration patients returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. *American Journal of Public Health, 100*(8), 1409–1412.

³⁶ Fischer, S., Stojek, M., & Hartzell, E. (2010). Effects of multiple forms of childhood abuse and adult sexual assault on current eating disorder symptoms. *Eating Behaviors, 11*(3), 190-192.; Gidycz, C. A., Orchowski, L. M., King, C. R., & Rich, C. L. (2008). Sexual Victimization and Health-Risk Behaviors. A Prospective Analysis of College Women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 23*(6), 744-763.

³⁷ Dube, Shanta R. (2005). Long-Term Consequences of Childhood Sexual Abuse by Gender of Victim. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 28*(5), 430 - 438-438.

³⁸ Basile, Lynberg, Simon, Arias, Brener, & Saltzman (2006). The Association between self reported lifetime history of forced sexual intercourse and recent health risk behaviors: Findings from the 2003 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 39*(5), 752.e1-752.e7 (available on-line only).

³⁹ Suris, A., Link-Malcolm, J., & North, C. S. (2011). Predictors of suicidal ideation in veterans with PTSD related to military sexual trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 24*(5), 605-608.

Campus Sexual Assault: A Particular Problem

Sexual assault is a particular problem on college campuses: 1 in 5 women has been sexually assaulted while in college.⁴⁰ The dynamics of college life appear to fuel the problem, as many survivors are victims of what's called "incapacitated assault": they are sexually abused while drunk, under the influence of drugs, passed out, or otherwise incapacitated.⁴¹ Perpetrators often prey on incapacitated women, and sometimes surreptitiously provide their victims with drugs or alcohol.⁴² Perpetrators who drink prior to an assault are more likely to believe that alcohol increases their sex drive – and are also more likely to think that a woman's drinking itself signals that she's interested in sex.⁴³

Most college victims are assaulted by someone they know, especially in incapacitated assaults.⁴⁴ And parties are often the site of the crime: a 2007 study found that 58% of incapacitated rapes and 28% of forced rapes took place at a party.⁴⁵ Notably, campus perpetrators are often serial offenders. One study found that 7% of college men admitted to committing rape or attempted rape, and 63% of these men admitted to committing multiple offenses, averaging six rapes each.⁴⁶

College survivors suffer high rates of PTSD, depression, and drug or alcohol abuse, which can hamper their ability to succeed in school.⁴⁷ Depression and anxiety are linked to higher college dropout rates, as is substance abuse.⁴⁸

Reporting rates for campus sexual assault are also very low: on average only 12% of student victims report the assault to law enforcement.⁴⁹

⁴⁰ The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) Study (2007); The Campus Sexual Assault Study was conducted by RTI International and funded by the National Institute of Justice. Data were collected using a web-based survey from undergraduate students (5,466 women and 1,375 men) at two large, public universities.; Krebs, C. P., Lindquist, C. H., Warner, T. D., Fisher, B. S., & Martin, S. L (2009) College Women's Experiences with Physically Forced, Alcohol- or Other Drug-Enabled, and Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault Before and Since Entering College. *Journal of American College Health*, 57(6), 639-647.

⁴¹ Kilpatrick, D. G., Resnick, H. S., Ruggiero, K. J., Conoscenti, L. M., & McCauley, J. (2007). *Drug facilitated, incapacitated, and forcible rape: A national study* (NCJ 219181). Charleston, SC: Medical University of South Carolina, National Crime Victims Research & Treatment Center. [Hereafter cited as Kilpatrick (2007)]

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Zawacki, T., Abbey, A., Buck, P. O., McAuslan, P., & Clinton-Sherrod, A. M. (2003). Perpetrators of alcohol-involved sexual assaults: How do they differ from other sexual assault perpetrators and nonperpetrators? *Aggressive Behavior*, 29(4), 366-380.

⁴⁴ The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) Study (2007)

⁴⁵ The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) Study (2007).

⁴⁶ Lisak, D., & Miller, P. M. (2002). Repeat Rape and Multiple Offending Among Undetected Rapists. *Violence and Victims*, 17(1), 73-84. [Hereafter cited as Lisak (2002)]

⁴⁷ Kilpatrick (2007)

⁴⁸ Eisenberg, D., Golberstein, E., & Hunt, J. B. (2009). Mental Health and Academic Success in College. *B E Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*, 9(1), 1-35.; Arria, A. M., Garnier-Dykstra, L. M., Caldeira, K. M., Vincent, K. B., Winick, E. R., & O'Grady, K. E. (2013). Drug use patterns and continuous enrollment in college: results from a longitudinal study. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 74(1), 71-83.

⁴⁹ Kilpatrick (2007)

The Economic Costs

Although the economic costs of rape and sexual assault are hard to quantify and the data is limited, the existing research indicates that the costs are great. Various research studies have examined the quantifiable cost per rape, accounting for such costs as medical and victim services, loss of productivity, and law enforcement resources. Researchers also generally agree that intangible costs, such as decreased quality of life, though difficult to monetize, are also a necessary part of the cost calculus for sexual assault. (Many researches, in fact, believe the intangible costs are especially high in cases of sexual assault, due to the serious physical and mental health consequences for survivors.) Each of the studies we examined used a somewhat different methodology, but all found the costs to be significant – ranging from \$87,000 to \$240,776 per rape.⁵⁰

In another study, the National Crime Victimization Survey found that between 2005-2010, 58% of female sexual assault victims were injured, 35% of whom received medical treatment.⁵¹ For women who are raped by an intimate partner, about 36.2% are physically injured and, of those, 31% receive some type of medical care.⁵² The injuries for intimate-partner rapes range from scratches, bruises, or welts to lacerations, broken bones, dislocated joints, head or spinal cord injuries, chipped or broken teeth, or internal injuries.⁵³ Nearly 80% of those who receive medical care are treated in a hospital, and 43.6% of those victims spend one or more nights there.⁵⁴

A 2003 CDC report on the costs of intimate partner violence found that the average medical cost for victims who received treatment was \$2,084 per victimization. In half of these cases, private or group health insurers were the primary source of payment; survivors bore most of the financial burden one-fourth of the time.⁵⁵ Many survivors incur at least some out-of-pocket costs for their medical care.

Also among intimate-partner rape survivors, more than one-fifth lose time from paid work, with an average loss of 8.1 days. Additionally, over one-eighth report losing time from household chores, with an average of 13.5 days lost. Nationally, rape survivors lose an estimated 1.1 million days of activity each year.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Miller, T.R., Cohen, M.A., & Wiersema, B. (1996). *Victim costs and consequences: A new look*. National Institute of Justice. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/victcost.pdf>; Delisi, M. (2010). Murder by numbers: Monetary costs imposed by a sample of homicide offenders. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 21, 501-513.; Cohen, M. A., and Piquero, A.R. (2009) "New Evidence on the Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 25(1), 25-49. French, Michael T., Kathryn E. McCollister, and David Reznik (2010) The Cost of Crime to Society: New Crime-Specific Estimates for Policy and Program Evaluation. *Drug Alcohol Dependence*, 108(1-2), 98-109.

⁵¹ Planty (2013)

⁵² NCIPC (2003). Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 2003. [hereafter referred to as NCIPC (2013)].

⁵³ NCIPC (2003)

⁵⁴ NCIPC (2003)

⁵⁵ NCIPC (2003)

⁵⁶ NCIPC (2003)

The Criminal Justice Response

According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, between 2005-2010, only 36% of rapes or sexual assaults were reported to the police.⁵⁷ Male survivors report their assault at even lower rates than women.⁵⁸ But even when sexual assaults are reported, many assailants are not arrested and many cases are not prosecuted.

Arrests

Arrest rates for sexual assault cases are low. According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, approximately 12% of the 283,200 annual rape or sexual assault victimizations between 2005-2010 resulted in an arrest at the scene or during a follow-up investigation.⁵⁹

Many factors may contribute to low arrest rates, and these cases can be challenging to investigate. However, research shows that some police officers still believe certain rape myths (e.g., that many women falsely claim rape to get attention), which may help account for the low rates.⁶⁰ Similarly, if victims do not behave the way some police officers expect (e.g., crying) an officer may believe she is making a false report⁶¹ – when, in reality, only 2-10% of reported rapes are false.⁶²

Sexual assault cases can also be difficult to investigate because of the effects of the trauma itself. Victims of rape and sexual assault sometimes have difficulty recalling the event, and scientific research has found that the trauma after a crime like rape can damage the parts of the brain that control memory.⁶³ As a result, a victim may have impaired verbal skills, short term memory loss, memory fragmentation, and delayed recall.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Planty (2013)

⁵⁸ Hart TC, Rennison CM. (2003). *Reporting crime to the police: 1992-2000*. Washington DC: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

⁵⁹ Planty (2013); The National Crime Victimization Survey is an annual survey of 90,000 households, comprising nearly 160,000 people. Respondents are asked about the frequency, characteristics, and consequences of criminal victimizations. For more information, visit www.bjs.gov.

⁶⁰ Page, A. D. (2008). Judging Women and Defining Crime: Police Officers' Attitudes Toward Women and Rape. *Sociological Spectrum*, 28(4), 389-411.

⁶¹ Bollingmo, Guri C. (2008). Credibility of the emotional witness: A study of ratings by police investigators. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 14(1), 29-40.

⁶² Lisak, D., Gardinier, L., Nicksa, S. C., & Cote, A. M. (2010). False allegation of sexual assault: An analysis of ten years of reported cases. *Violence Against Women*, 16(12), 1318-1334.

⁶³ Bremner, J.D., Elzinga, B., Schmahl, C., & Vermetten, E. (2008). Structural and functional plasticity of the human brain in posttraumatic stress disorder. *Progress in Brain Research*, 167(1), 171-186.

⁶⁴ Nixon, R. D., Nishith, P., & Resick, P. A. (2004). The Accumulative Effect of Trauma Exposure on Short-Term and Delayed Verbal Memory in a Treatment-Seeking Sample of Female Rape Victims. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 17(1), 31-35.

Trauma-related memory loss can also mean cases get dropped: preliminary evidence suggests that victims who viewed themselves as giving incoherent accounts to law enforcement were less likely to proceed with their cases.⁶⁵

Whatever the reasons, many victims have lost faith in the system, and believe they were ill-treated by those who should be on their side. Some victims report that law enforcement officers actively discouraged them from reporting, asked questions about their sexual history and dress, and overemphasized prosecution for false reports.⁶⁶ Survivors who encounter victim-blaming responses from officials have significantly higher levels of post-traumatic stress than those who do not.⁶⁷

Prosecutions

While national prosecution data is not available, some research suggests that prosecution rates remain low in many jurisdictions.

One study indicated that two-thirds of survivors have had their legal cases dismissed, and more than 80% of the time, this contradicted her desire to prosecute.⁶⁸ According to another study of 526 cases in two large cities where sexual assault arrests were made, only about half were prosecuted.⁶⁹ Prosecutors were more likely to file charges when physical evidence connecting the suspect to the crime was present, if the suspect had a prior criminal record, and if there were no questions about the survivor's character or behavior.⁷⁰

Rape kit testing. In some jurisdictions, the backlog of untested rape kits may also factor into low prosecution rates. After an assault, victims may seek a forensic exam – called a rape kit – that includes the collection of the perpetrator's DNA and documentation of injuries or other evidence of rape or sexual assault. Although there is not reliable national data, in recent years, media reports have revealed that thousands of rape kits have either not been forwarded to crime labs or are backlogged at the labs waiting to be tested.

⁶⁵ Hardy, A., Young, K., & Holmes, E. A. (2009). Does trauma memory play a role in the experience of reporting sexual assault during police interviews? An exploratory study. *Memory*, 17(8), 783-788.

⁶⁶ Campbell, R. (2006). Rape Survivors' Experiences With the Legal and Medical Systems: Do Rape Victim Advocates Make a Difference? *Violence Against Women*, 12(1), 30-45. [Hereafter cited as Campbell (2006)]; Logan, T., Evans, L., Stevenson, E., & Jordan, C. E. (2005). Barriers to Services for Rural and Urban Survivors of Rape. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20(5), 591-616.

⁶⁷ Campbell, R., & Raja, S. (2005). The sexual assault and secondary victimization of female veterans: Help-seeking experiences in military and civilian social systems. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 29, 97-106.

⁶⁸ Campbell, R., Wasco, S.M., Ahrens, C.E., Sefl, T., & Barnes, H.E. (2001). Preventing the "Second Rape": Rape Survivors' Experiences with Community Service Providers. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 16(12).; Campbell, R. (1998). The community response to rape: Victims' experiences with the legal, medical, and mental health systems. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 26(3), 355-379.

⁶⁹ Spohn, C. & Holleran, D. (2004). *Prosecuting sexual assault: A comparison of charging decisions in sexual assault cases involving strangers, acquaintances, and intimate partners* (NCJ 199720). Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Testing of rape kits can be vital for the prosecution of cases. When a rape kit is tested, a unique DNA profile can often be identified and submitted to the FBI's Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). This software platform includes nationwide DNA samples from crime scenes, convicted offenders, and arrestees. In this way, crimes like rape and sexual assault can be matched to other samples in the database, identifying assailants and linking crimes together.

Law enforcement policies governing which kits should be prioritized for testing are inconsistent. In a survey of over 2,000 law enforcement agencies, 44% reported that one reason they did not send forensic evidence to a laboratory was because the suspect had not been identified; 15% said they did not submit the evidence because a prosecutor didn't request it, and 11% cited the lab's inability to produce timely results.⁷¹ Even when law enforcement submits the kit to a crime lab, in some jurisdictions, the evidence remains untested for many months.

Crime labs have struggled over the past decade to meet the demand for DNA testing for all types of crimes. And while labs were able to process 10% more cases in 2011 than in 2009, they also received 16.4% more requests for DNA testing.⁷² And with demand continuing to outpace capacity, the rape kit backlog may continue to grow.

⁷¹ Ritter, N. (2011). *The road ahead : unanalyzed evidence in sexual assault cases*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice. [Hereafter referred to as Ritter (2011)]

⁷² Nelson, M ,et. al. (2013). *Making Sense of DNA Backlogs: Myths Vs. Reality*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Dept. of Justice.

Taking Action to Break the Cycle of Violence

On October 27, 2010, the White House Council on Women and Girls and the Office of the Vice President held the first national roundtable on sexual assault. Advocates, researchers, survivors, and federal officials came together to discuss the problem and the federal government's role in helping bring an end to this violence. As a result of the roundtable, federal agencies have undertaken unprecedented efforts to address rape and sexual assault.

The White House Council on Women and Girls and the Office of the Vice President also co-host an interagency working group on violence against women. This is a first-of-its kind forum for collaboration and information-sharing among key federal agencies about best practices to prevent sexual assault and to provide support for victims. This interagency group formulated recommendations for reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act and developed other initiatives to respond to President Obama's call for action.



Vice President Joe Biden speaks at the National Domestic Violence Hotline, in Austin, Texas, Oct. 30, 2013. (Official White House Photo by David Lienemann)

The Violence Against Women Act

The Violence Against Women Act forms the backbone of our nation's response to domestic violence, dating violence, rape, sexual assault and stalking. Authored by then-Senator Biden, and first enacted in 1994, VAWA addresses the problem on multiple fronts: among its many original provisions, VAWA created new, tough penalties for abusers, sex offenders and stalkers (and prompted many states to revise their codes); strengthened victims' abilities to get and enforce protection orders; provided incentives

for more arrests, investigations and prosecutions of these crimes; gave survivors new access to legal representation; encouraged communities to develop special multidisciplinary domestic violence response teams; and provided unprecedented resources to states, local, and tribal governments and non-profit organizations to provide services for survivors. Since passage of VAWA, annual rates of domestic violence have dropped by 64%.⁷³

In recent years, VAWA has expanded to focus even more particularly on sexual assault. In 2005, VAWA created the Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP), the first funding stream to focus specifically on direct services and advocacy for victims of rape and sexual assault. And in March 2013, President Obama signed the third reauthorization of VAWA, which made additional changes in the law, and brought new resources to bear on the problem.

VAWA 2013 includes set-aside funding and new purpose areas for multidisciplinary sexual assault response teams, sexual assault nurse examiner programs (SANE), specialized law enforcement units, and training for criminal justice professionals. This new focus will encourage states and local law enforcement agencies to adopt practices that have proven effective in holding sexual assault offenders accountable. The Justice Department provides technical assistance and support to states as they work to scale up these practices.

The Obama Administration also worked with Congress to ensure that VAWA addresses the needs of victims who have historically been overlooked. VAWA 2013 included new protections for LGBT victims and encourages states to develop services for LGBT communities. Despite opposition from some in Congress, the Administration also successfully fought to protect the U visa program that allows immigrant victims to safely report crimes, including sexual assault. VAWA 2013 also included a landmark provision recognizing the authority of tribes to prosecute domestic violence crimes committed on tribal lands regardless of the race of the perpetrator.

To address the link between violence and housing instability, VAWA 2013 included new protections for sexual assault survivors in public and other subsidized housing. Among other housing protections, the law requires that survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking be permitted to transfer to other available housing if necessary. Since most sexual assaults occur in or near the survivor's residence, this provision can be essential to helping survivors reestablish a sense of safety and security. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has issued a notice to

⁷³ Catalano, S. (2012). Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2010. U.S. Department of Justice. Bureau of Justice Statistics.; Additionally, VAWA has reduced crimes and the subsequent costs to the criminal justice and health care systems. One study found that VAWA saved an estimated \$12.6 billion in net averted social costs in its first 6 years alone. Clark, K. A, Biddle, A., & Martin, S. (2002). A cost-benefit analysis of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994. *Violence Against Women*, 8(4), 417-428; Erratum. *Violence Against Women*, 9(1), 136.

housing providers participating in HUD programs covered by VAWA about these new protections and is engaged in rule-making to implement them.

VAWA 2013 also recognized that certain populations – notably teens and Native American women – are particularly vulnerable to sex trafficking, and authorizes funds to serve these victims.

Supporting Victims/Survivors

Over the past four years, and at the Administration's urging, Congress doubled funding for VAWA's Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP). Under SASP, and among other services, local rape crisis centers, mental health professionals, and social service providers help survivors navigate the criminal justice system. This approach is supported by research: survivors who have assistance from an advocate are more likely to have police reports taken and less likely to be treated poorly by officers.⁷⁴ Survivors also report less distress after contact with the legal system and upon receiving medical care.⁷⁵

SASP also reaches well beyond the criminal justice system – for its grantees serve victims whether or not they choose to report a crime. Even at its best, the criminal justice system is a limited remedy for the harm many victims have suffered. Thus, SASP grantees also provide the emotional and practical support survivors need to rebuild their lives – such as crisis intervention, counseling, 24-hour sexual assault hotlines, and advocacy at various steps of the road to recovery. Notably, a growing number of survivors served by this program are adults who were victimized as children and who are only now able to disclose what happened to them and find help.

Local rape crisis centers report that the current demand for services is outpacing their ability to serve those in need. According to the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, one-third of rape crisis centers have waiting lists for counseling services, and in some cases the wait is as long as two months.⁷⁶

With VAWA funding, DOJ's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) has launched the Sexual Assault Demonstration Initiative in six sites to improve victim services in areas where there is not a specialized rape crisis center. By 2015, this project is expected to provide lessons and models that can be replicated in other communities.

In addition to VAWA funding, the Administration makes important investments in direct services for victims under the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance and Victim Compensation programs. These funds support delivery of crisis intervention, counseling, criminal justice advocacy, and compensation for victims of many types of

⁷⁴ Campbell (2006)

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ "2013 Rape Crisis Center Survey." National Alliance to End Sexual Violence. Accessed from: <http://endsexualviolence.org/where-we-stand/2013-rape-crisis-center-survey>.

crimes, including rape and sexual assault. The Justice Department's Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) prioritizes sexual assault, and approximately 15% of VOCA Victim Assistance funding supports direct services to sexual assault victims.

Improving the Criminal Justice System

To reduce rape and sexual assault, offenders must be held accountable. Otherwise, a broad cycle of violence continues: perpetrators of sexual assault are commonly repeat offenders, who commit both multiple rapes and other crimes.⁷⁷ The strongest predictor of sexual assault is a previous sexual assault, which makes rape a particularly crucial crime to prosecute.⁷⁸

Among other measures, the Department of Justice is working to increase arrest and conviction rates by supporting multidisciplinary sexual assault teams; these are specially trained law enforcement officers, detectives, prosecutors, healthcare providers and victim advocates, all working together to support survivors and increase the odds of successful prosecutions. These specialized units have proven effective in combatting domestic violence and are a promising model for addressing sexual assault. The evidence collected by specialized units is more likely to be useful for prosecution, leading to higher rates of prosecution, conviction, and sentencing.⁷⁹ In VAWA-funded specialized units, sexual assault conviction rates are much higher than average, from 60-80%.

Specialized training for law enforcement and prosecutors. The trauma caused by a sexual assault can affect a victim's ability to interact with law enforcement, recall events, and manage emotions. When law enforcement officers understand the physiological effects of trauma, they can better elicit information from victims and understand their behavior. OVW is partnering with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to provide training for law enforcement agencies on how to conduct trauma-informed sexual assault interviews and investigations.

Training for prosecutors is equally important. Through a cooperative agreement with the organization AEquitas ("The Prosecutors' Resource on Violence Against Women"), OVW supports a range of technical assistance and training to help prosecutors better take on sexual assault cases. AEquitas hosts several national training events, conducts legal research, and provides prosecutors with around-the-clock case consultation.

⁷⁷ Abbey, A., Parkhill, M., Clinton-Sherrod, A. M., Zawacki, T. (2007). A Comparison of Men Who Committed Different Types of Sexual Assault in a Community Sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(12), 1567-580.; Lisak, D., & Miller, P (2002). Repeat Rape and Multiple Offending Among Undetected Rapists. *Violence and Victims*, 17, 73-84.

⁷⁸ Loh, C., Gidycz, C., Lobo, T., Luthra, R. (2005). A Prospective Analysis of Sexual Assault Perpetration Risk Factors Related to Perpetrator Characteristics. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20(10), 1325-348.

⁷⁹ Jolin, A., Feyerherm, W., Fountain, R., & Friedman, S. (1998). *Beyond arrest: The Portland, Oregon domestic violence experiment, final report* (No. NCJRS 179968). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice

Sexual assault forensic evidence. A key factor in improving prosecution rates for rape and sexual assault is the proper collection of forensic evidence – and the Administration has made significant advances on several fronts.

In April 2013, the Justice Department released a revised version of the National Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations (SAFE Protocol, 2d). The SAFE Protocol provides a best-practices guide to conducting medical forensic examinations and promotes high-quality, sensitive, and supportive exams for survivors of rape and sexual assault. The updated SAFE Protocol includes information on assisting populations with special needs such as survivors with limited English proficiency; survivors with disabilities; American Indian and Alaska Native victims; military personnel; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender victims. The SAFE Protocol is available at the National Criminal Justice Reference Service website at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ovw/241903.pdf>.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) can also be key to effective evidence collection. These nurse examiners are trained to provide respectful and supportive care while collecting forensic evidence after a rape or sexual assault. In addition to improving victim care, SANE programs (like those funded by OVW's STOP Program) enhance the quality of forensic evidence, improve law enforcement's ability to collect information and file charges, and increase rates of successful prosecutions.⁸⁰ VAWA rural grants are also funding SANEs to conduct forensic exams, collect evidence, and provide health care to victims in rural communities.

The Justice Department is also using telemedicine technology to improve the collection of evidence. Its Office for Victims of Crime partnered with the National Institute of Justice to establish a National Sexual Assault TeleNursing Center at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The Center will provide 24/7, year-round remote expert consultation by SANEs to clinicians caring for adult and adolescent sexual assault patients. The three-year cooperative agreement will establish pilot projects at two military medical facilities to perform telemedicine consultation during sexual assault forensic exams. The Center is expected to be fully operational in 2015, and the project will be expanded to include telemedicine sites in Indian country, rural communities, and prisons.

Rape kit backlog. Once forensic evidence has been collected, it needs to be tested for DNA – and this Administration has worked proactively to address the nation's backlog of rape kits.

⁸⁰ Campbell, R., Patterson, D., & Bybee, D. (2011). Using mixed methods to evaluate a community intervention for sexual assault survivors: A methodological tale. *Violence Against Women, 17*(3), 376–388.; Campbell, R., Bybee, D., Ford, J., & Patterson, D. (2008). *Systems change analysis of SANE programs: Identifying the mediating mechanisms of criminal justice system impact* (No. NCJRS 226497). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.; Nugent-Borakove, E., Fanflik, P., Johnson, N., Burgess, A., & O'Connor, A. L. (2006). *Testing the efficacy of SANE/SART programs: Do they make a difference in sexual assault arrest and prosecution outcomes?* Washington, DC: Department of Justice.

Through its DNA Backlog Reduction Program, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) funds 120 state and local crime labs to conduct DNA testing from crime scenes and convicted offenders. Rape kits are included in this testing program, but, as noted, law enforcement investigators sometimes don't prioritize these kits for forwarding to a lab. Time has shown, however, that DNA is a powerful tool to link crimes together and create new investigative leads in rape cases.

In 2011, NIJ funded pilot projects in Detroit and Houston to inventory their untested kits and develop protocols for submitting these kits to crime labs. Final reports are due later this year, but preliminary results from Detroit show what can happen when old rape kits are tested: from a sample of 569 kits, 32 serial offenders were identified and five prosecutions initiated. One of the lessons from this project, however, is that testing alone is not enough; when jurisdictions test large volumes of rape kits, they also need the resources to follow-up on the leads – which means having trained detectives, victim advocates, and prosecutors available and working together to successfully pursue the new cases.

Other cities have taken on their untested kits with mixed results, and NIJ continues to study the causes of backlogs and effectiveness of testing programs. NIJ is examining the value of testing rape kits from various types of crimes, including stranger, acquaintance, and intimate partner rapes. In some of these circumstances, the DNA evidence may not be the key to solving that specific crime, but it can create new investigative leads in cold cases and help identify serial offenders. The NIJ research projects are designed to examine the efficacy and criminal justice outcomes of testing rape kits from various types of assaults.

Another lesson learned from the pilot projects is that survivors have different feelings about having their rape kits tested. Survivors have often worked hard to overcome the effects of a rape and put their lives back together. The prospect of having an old kit tested can bring a flood of emotion: some survivors may still be interested in pursuing justice, while others find the toll of reopening old wounds too high. NIJ and OVW are researching and exploring approaches to reducing rape kit backlogs that account for survivors' rights, needs, and preferences – and specifically, how to notify survivors and involve them in the criminal justice process.

Combating Sexual Assault on Campus

The Federal Government enforces several laws that oblige educational institutions to combat campus sexual assault. Title IX requires schools receiving federal funding to take necessary steps to prevent sexual assault on their campuses, and to respond quickly and effectively when an assault occurs. The Clery Act requires colleges and universities that participate in federal financial aid programs to report annual statistics on crime on or near

their campuses, to develop and disseminate prevention policies, and to ensure victims their basic rights.⁸¹

This Administration has undertaken a major effort to better enforce the laws addressing rape and sexual assault at educational institutions. In 2011, Vice President Biden and Education Secretary Duncan announced new guidance to help schools, colleges and universities understand their obligations under Title IX. As a result of the guidance, students also have a better understanding about their schools' responsibilities – and, not coincidentally, Title IX complaints are on the rise and student activists are increasingly holding schools more accountable.

The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is charged with administratively enforcing Title IX in schools. OCR may initiate an investigation either proactively or based on a student's formal complaint. If schools are found to violate Title IX, they can be denied federal funds – although OCR must first seek to voluntarily resolve the non-compliance before terminating funds. Through this voluntary resolution process, OCR has entered into agreements that require schools to develop, among other things:

- Comprehensive plans for educating students and employees about sexual assault;
- Policies and practices for responding to allegations of sexual violence;
- Adequate training for school officials charged with responding to complaints; and
- Policies to ensure that survivors are given the remedies and resources they need to continue their educations.

The Department of Justice, upon referrals from other agencies, can initiate litigation to require schools to better address campus sexual assaults. As noted, the Department has a number of tools in its toolbox – including Title IX, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act, and the Safe Streets Act – that it can use to bring all facets of a school, as well as local police departments, into compliance with the law.

VAWA 2013 amended the Clery Act to mandate that schools develop new initiatives to respond to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. The new law also strengthens existing provisions in the Clery Act, requiring institutions to bolster prevention education programs for students and employees, and to establish procedures for responding to incidents of sexual violence on campus. To implement these changes, the Department of Education is engaging in negotiated rule-making with the goal of publishing a final rule by November 2014. The Department is committed to transparency in the rule-making process, and has included advocacy groups and educational associations in this endeavor.

⁸¹ Several other laws also authorize the Justice Department to investigate campus sexual assaults and to help schools adopt comprehensive policies and practices to address the problem. These include Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. § 14141 ("Section 14141"); and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, 42 U.S.C. 3789d ("Safe Streets Act").

The Department of Education's Federal Student Aid (FSA) office is responsible for enforcing the Clery Act, and conducts on-site reviews to ensure schools' compliance with the Act. If an institution is found to have violated the Clery Act, FSA directs it to take steps to come into compliance and can impose fines for violations.

The Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women administers VAWA grants that help colleges and universities create holistic responses to sexual assault on campus, including offering victim services, implementing prevention programs, training campus law enforcement, and working with school administrators to improve the student disciplinary process.

Because campus sexual assault is the subject of intersecting federal laws, policies, and grant programs, it is a key area for improved interagency collaboration. And it is in that spirit that, on January 22, 2014, President Obama created the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. The objectives of the task force are to:

- Provide educational institutions with best practices for preventing and responding to rape and sexual assault.
- Build on the federal government's enforcement efforts to ensure that educational institutions comply fully with their legal obligations.
- Improve transparency of the government's enforcement activities.
- Increase the public's awareness of an institution's track record in addressing rape and sexual assault.
- Enhance coordination among federal agencies to hold schools accountable if they do not confront sexual violence on their campuses.

Reaching Teens and Young Adults

In 2011, Vice President Biden developed the **1 is 2 Many Campaign** to focus on dating violence and sexual assault suffered by teens and young women. As part of this initiative, the Vice President solicited ideas from college students nationwide about how to prevent violence on campus. An overwhelming number of respondents said one thing: get men involved. Consequently, in a series of regional forums, federal agencies and communities came together to engage men in the effort to end violence against women.

The **1 is 2 Many Campaign** also recognizes that technology can be a powerful tool to help prevent dating violence and sexual assault. In 2011, Vice President Biden and Health and Human Services Secretary Sebelius issued an "app challenge" that inspired two award-winning mobile apps especially geared toward young people. One of these apps – Circle of 6 – puts a group of friends instantly in touch with each other – so someone in trouble can send a "come and get me" message, complete with a GPS map to show her exact location. This app has been downloaded in 27 countries and was recently adapted for use in India.

Also in 2011, in response to the Vice President's call to action, the Justice Department funded the National Dating Abuse Helpline, which gives teens and young adults access to services (such as counseling and information about where to turn) in a way that they are most comfortable – via text messaging and online “chats.” The Justice Department continues to support these digital services.

Working with schools. As part of **1 is 2 Many**, Vice President Biden also convened parents, teachers, educational associations, youth groups, and school counselors to raise awareness about teen dating violence and sexual assault. These groups were eager to help, but asked for additional guidance on what schools could do. In response, the Department of Education sent a “Dear Colleague” letter in 2013 to school districts across the country, urging them to address gender-based violence, including sexual assault, and to provide training to school personnel – from bus drivers to school nurses – who may witness such violence. The letter included a resource packet on teen dating violence with information on school-based policies and practices that have proven effective. New research has found that school and classroom-based intervention programs can reduce the incidence of teen dating violence and sexual harassment by up to 50 percent.⁸²

Working with men to change social norms. Social norms research reveals that men often overestimate other men's acceptance of abusive behavior towards women and underestimate other men's willingness to intervene when a woman is in trouble.⁸³ When men and boys believe that their peers accept sexist and abusive behavior, they are much less likely to help. That, in turn, can lead perpetrators to think their actions are acceptable – which, of course, perpetuates the violence. Research additionally shows that peer attitudes toward sexual aggression have a significant influence on men's willingness to intervene – which means that when men speak out against abuse, other men are more likely to step in to neutralize a risky situation and prevent an assault.⁸⁴

Bystander intervention training seeks to engage men and boys as allies rather than would-be perpetrators. It acknowledges that most men are not assailants and that everyone can help stop the violence. This sort of training also builds men's confidence and ability to take action – like preventing or interrupting an assault; speaking out against rape acceptance myths (e.g., women want to be raped and “ask for it”); and supporting survivors. Bystander intervention is integrated throughout the U.S. military's prevention activities, and is also increasingly being taught on college campuses.

The CDC's Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) program also funds efforts by states and territories to prevent sexual assault. RPE grantees are currently engaged in a range of

⁸² Taylor, B, Stein, N.D., Woods, D., Mumford, E. (2011) *Shifting Boundaries: Final Report on an Experimental Evaluation of a Youth Dating Violence Prevention Program in New York City Middle Schools* No. NCJRS 236175). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

⁸³ Berkowitz, A.D. (2010) “Fostering Healthy Norms to Prevent Violence and Abuse: The Social Norms Approach.” Accessed from: <http://www.alanberkowitz.com/articles/Preventing%20Sexual%20Violence%20Chapter%20-%20Revision.pdf>

⁸⁴ Brown, A.L. & Messman-Moore, T.L. (2010) Personal and Perceived Peer Attitudes Supporting Sexual Aggression as Predictors of Male College Students' Willingness to Intervene Against Sexual Aggression. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 25(3) 503-517.

activities, including implementing culturally relevant prevention strategies based on best practices, conducting training, and expanding the prevention message through creative partnerships. Grantees are working with coaches, boys, men, and the entertainment industry to develop innovative prevention strategies. CDC is also funding research grants to rigorously evaluate promising practices, strategies, and policies for their impact on rates of sexual violence.

In 2011, the Department of Justice launched the VAWA Engaging Men in Preventing Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence program – which funds multi-faceted strategies to engage men as allies and influencers of other men. Using social media combined with hands-on mentorship, the program aims to develop new male leaders willing to speak up about violence against women and girls.

Addressing sex trafficking. Young people are among those most vulnerable to human trafficking, and runaway, homeless, and LGBT youth are at particular risk.⁸⁵ In January 2014, the Administration released the Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States. This five-year plan lays a path for further coordination, collaboration, and capacity across governmental and nongovernmental entities to support survivors of human trafficking, including youth. The Federal Strategic Action Plan is available here:
<http://www.ovc.gov/pubs/FederalHumanTraffickingStrategicPlan.pdf>

Addressing the intersection between HIV/AIDS, violence against women, and gender-related health disparities.

Over half of women living with HIV in the United States have been raped, assaulted, or stalked by an intimate partner – which is considerably higher than the national rate among women overall (56% vs. 36%).⁸⁶ Recognizing that violence against women and girls is a driving factor in the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic, President Obama created an interagency Federal Working Group in 2012 to study this issue, as well as gender-related health disparities. Co-chaired by the White House Advisor on Violence Against Women and the Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy, the Working Group developed 56 action items for agencies across the Federal government – including ways for agencies to better respond to the health needs of women who have been raped or sexually assaulted, and linking primary prevention strategies for intimate partner violence with efforts to prevent the transmission of HIV. The Working Group Report can be accessed here:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/vaw-hiv_working_group_report_final_-_9-6--2013.pdf

⁸⁵ Clawson, H.J., Dutch, M., Solomon, A., & Goldblatt Grace, L. (2009). Human Trafficking Into and Within the United States: A Review of the Literature. Washington, DC.: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

⁸⁶ Machtinger, E.L., et al. Psychological trauma and PTSD in HIV-positive women: a meta-analysis. *AIDS Behavior*. 2012; 16(8): 2091-2100. ; NISVS (2010)

Responding to Sexual Assault in the Military

Our military members continue to face the threat of sexual assault within their ranks and the Administration bears a unique responsibility to protect the women and men in uniform who dedicate their lives to protecting our nation. The President is committed to addressing this corrosive problem, which destroys trust among our troops and undermines our readiness. Over the past year, the Department of Defense (DOD), in collaboration with the White House, has developed a set of executive actions, legislative proposals, and training programs to more effectively prevent and respond to sexual assault in the military.

Secretary Hagel has directed a series of executive actions that will improve command accountability, expand victims' rights within the military justice system, and improve victim treatment by their peers, co-workers, and chains of command. Most notably, Secretary Hagel directed each service to provide legal counsel for all victims of sexual assault. This landmark reform will ensure that victims are provided with personalized legal advice and representation throughout the legal process. DOD has also developed a new curriculum for sexual assault prevention and response training. This training is being provided to new recruits, officers preparing to assume command, and senior enlisted personnel, and is now expanding to reach all members of the force.

DOD developed and submitted to Congress two legislative proposals aimed at reforming the Uniform Code of Military Justice. These proposals – which were included in the National Defense Reauthorization Act – will limit the ability of commanders to overturn court-martial findings and reform the pre-trial investigation process to provide greater protections for victims.

In December 2013, President Obama instructed Secretary Hagel and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Dempsey to continue their intensive focus on this issue and directed them to conduct a full-scale review of their progress by December 2014. Based on the results of this report, the President and DOD will consider additional reforms that may be required to eliminate this crime from the ranks and protect the men and women who serve our nation.

Protecting American Indian and Alaska Native Women

President Obama is committed to improving safety in Indian country. In 2009, the Department of Justice launched a new effort to reduce the high rates of crime on Indian reservations, with a particular focus on violence against women. In July 2010, the President signed the Tribal Law and Order Act, bringing new resources to build infrastructure for tribal court systems and encouraging the hiring of more law enforcement officers for Indian lands. Also, the law enhances tribes' authority to prosecute and punish criminals, and authorizes new guidelines for handling sexual assault and domestic violence crimes, from training for law enforcement and court officers, to

boosting conviction rates through better evidence collection, to providing better and more comprehensive services to victims.

Prosecuting crimes in Indian country. The Tribal Law and Order Act also encourages United States Attorney's Offices (USAOs) to designate tribal prosecutors as Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys (SAUSA). As a result, many USAOs with Indian country responsibility now have tribal SAUSAs who may prosecute cases in federal court. And in 2012, OVW launched a Tribal Special Assistant United States Attorney Pilot Project, funding eligible tribal prosecutors to pursue violence against women cases in both tribal and federal courts and to enhance collaboration between tribal officials and federal prosecutors. Tailored to meet the particular needs of each participating tribe, this pilot project is designed to improve the quality of cases, the coordination of resources, and the communication of priorities both within and between the various law enforcement agencies working in these jurisdictions. The Justice Department's prioritization of Indian country crime has made a difference: from FY2009-FY2012, prosecutions have increased nearly 54 percent.⁸⁷

VAWA protections. VAWA 2013 also contains provisions that significantly improve the safety of Native women by, among other things, giving federal and tribal law enforcement agencies more authority to hold perpetrators of domestic violence accountable. The tribal provisions in VAWA closed three significant legal gaps by: (1) recognizing certain tribes' power to exercise concurrent criminal jurisdiction over domestic violence cases, regardless of whether the defendant is Indian or non-Indian; (2) clarifying that tribal courts have full civil jurisdiction to issue and enforce protection orders involving any person, Indian or non-Indian; and (3) creating new federal laws to address crimes of violence, such as strangulation, committed against a spouse or intimate partner and providing more robust federal sentences for certain acts of domestic violence in Indian Country.

Leading by Example in the Workplace

For some survivors, the effects of sexual assault can follow them to their jobs. If the perpetrator was a co-worker or the assault occurred near the workplace, the survivor may have ongoing safety concerns. Survivors may need time off from work to attend court hearings, go to counseling, or address other issues related to the assault. Employers can help by developing policies that address safety, use of leave, and other assistance that survivors may need to get their lives back on track.

In April 2012, President Obama directed federal agencies to develop policies to assist victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking in the federal workforce. Led by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), an interagency workgroup evaluated how sexual assault affects victims in the workplace, and worked closely with agencies to

⁸⁷ www.justice.gov/tribal/tloa-report-cy-2011-2012.pdf

develop responsive policies. In February 2013, OPM issued “Guidance for Agency-Specific Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Policies,” which provides agencies with guidance to fulfill the goals identified by the President.⁸⁸

Reducing Rape in Prisons

In accordance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA), the Department of Justice released a final rule in May 2012 that requires prisons and other detention facilities to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual assault. Four types of facilities are covered: adult prisons and jails, lockups, community confinement facilities, and juvenile facilities. This regulation is the first federal effort to set standards for all facilities at the local, state, and federal levels to protect incarcerated individuals from sexual abuse. Facilities must develop and maintain zero-tolerance policies regarding sexual abuse, and must also make sure that at-risk populations, including youth, LGBT, and female prisoners, are protected. The Justice Department also released a protocol to improve responses to sexual assault in prisons and other correctional facilities, which is available at: <http://ovw.usdoj.gov/docs/confinement-safe-protocol.pdf>.

Improving Data Collection

Collecting data on sensitive issues like rape and sexual assault can be challenging. Language, definitions, and survey methods all make a difference in how individuals understand and disclose what has happened to them. The federal government uses various measures to capture the extent of rape and sexual assault, and each takes a different approach. The Administration has been working for several years to enhance and improve data collection in this area.

Uniform Crime Report. The FBI collects data on rapes that are reported to law enforcement through the Uniform Crime Report. Until recently, the definition of rape used to collect this data was very narrow and outdated, and covered only forcible male penile penetration of a female vagina. Nearly all criminal codes have broader definitions, but states have only been required to report crimes meeting this narrow definition. In 2012, the Justice Department modernized its definition to include the various forms of assault now understood to be rape. Among other things, the new definition covers instances where a victim is incapable of consent (e.g., because of drugs or alcohol), is not gender-specific, and includes oral and anal penetration. Because the new definition is more inclusive, reported crimes of rape are likely to rise in future years. As Vice President Biden noted at the time: “Rape is a devastating crime and we can’t solve it unless we know the full extent of it.”

⁸⁸ Office of Personnel Management, “Guidance for Agency-Specific Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Policies,” Retrieved from: <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/worklife/reference-materials/guidance-for-agency-specific-dvsas-policies.pdf>.

National Crime Victimization Survey. A second measure of rape comes from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Through in-person interviews and follow-up phone calls, this survey collects information about various types of crimes the participants may have experienced in the prior six months. Official estimates of rape in the NCVS have typically been lower than estimates from other governmental surveys and academic research. A panel of experts recently studied NCVS and identified possible reasons for this, including lack of privacy for interviews and the fact that questions are framed in terms of criminal acts rather than behaviors.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), which has responsibility for NCVS, has committed to a multiyear project to better understand the possible reasons for the underestimation of rape and sexual assault in the NCVS. Toward that end, BJS is undertaking a major effort to develop and test survey designs for collecting data on rape and sexual assault. This study of 18,100 respondents will compare methods for collecting data about rape and sexual assault on the phone, in-person, and by computer. Data collection will begin in July 2014 and the project is expected to be completed by December 2015.

National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey. In 2010, CDC launched the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS). This random-digit-dial survey uses a public health approach in which respondents are asked about specific behaviors they may have experienced in their lifetimes and over the past year. The survey collects lifetime and 12-month prevalence data on sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence. In addition, the survey collects information on the age at the time of the first victimization, demographic characteristics of respondents, demographic characteristics of perpetrators (age, sex, race/ethnicity) and detailed information about the patterns and impact of the violence by specific perpetrators. The survey also gathers information on long-term physical and mental health consequences that may be associated with violence.

Conclusion

Despite the important and unprecedented work being done, there is much more to do. And the problems outlined in this report also provide a roadmap for further action.

As noted, women at our nation's colleges and universities are at particular risk of being sexually assaulted. To make our campuses safer, change needs to come from many quarters: schools must adopt better policies and practices to prevent these crimes and to more effectively respond when they happen – both by holding offenders accountable and giving victims the help they need to physically and emotionally recover. And federal agencies must better ensure that schools are living up to their obligations.

Across all demographics, rapists and sex offenders are too often not made to pay for their crimes, and remain free to assault again. Arrest rates are low and meritorious cases are still being dropped – many times because law enforcement officers and prosecutors are not fully trained on the nature of these crimes or how best to investigate and prosecute them. Many new and promising interviewing, investigative and prosecution protocols are being developed, with cutting-edge science about victim trauma informing the enterprise. We need to further develop these best practices and help get them out to the field.

We can also help local jurisdictions move rape kits off the shelves and into crime labs for testing – so more rapists can be identified through DNA and brought to justice.

This Administration, as noted, has made an unparalleled commitment to getting victims and survivors the many services they need – from crisis intervention, counseling, legal advocacy, medical help, social services, and job and housing assistance – and with a special eye on particularly vulnerable populations. Even so, the demand for these services continues to outpace the supply. We cannot retreat, but must recommit to getting these vital resources to those who need them.

And, of course, we must – and can – continue to change our nation's attitudes about these crimes. Sexual assault is pervasive because our culture still allows it to persist.

According to the experts, violence prevention can't just focus on the perpetrators and the survivors. It has to involve everyone. And in order to put an end to this violence, we as a nation must see it for what it is: a crime. Not a misunderstanding, not a private matter, not anyone's right or any woman's fault. And bystanders must be taught and emboldened to step in to stop it. As then Senator Biden said when he was first drafting the Violence Against Women Act:

“Through this process, I have become convinced that violence against women reflects as much a failure of our nation's collective moral imagination as it does the failure of our nation's laws and regulations. We are helpless to change the

course of this violence unless, and until, we achieve a national consensus that it deserves our profound public outrage.”

The Vice President’s words ring as true today as they did then.



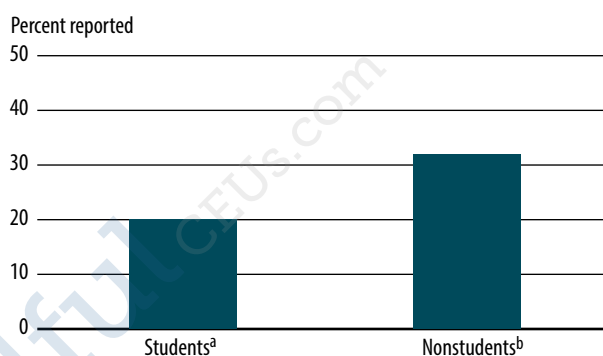
Rape and Sexual Assault Victimization Among College-Age Females, 1995–2013

For the period 1995–2013, females ages 18 to 24 had the highest rate of rape and sexual assault victimizations compared to females in all other age groups. Within the 18 to 24 age group, victims could be identified as students enrolled in a college, university, trade school or vocational school or as nonstudents. Among student victims, 20% of rape and sexual assault victimizations were reported to police, compared to 32% reported among nonstudent victims ages 18 to 24 (figure 1).

This report describes and compares the characteristics of student and nonstudent female victims of rape and sexual assault, the attributes of the victimization, and the characteristics of the offender. The findings are from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which collects information on nonfatal crimes reported and not reported to police against persons age 12 or older. Rape and sexual assault are defined by the NCVS to include completed and attempted rape, completed and attempted sexual assault, and threats of rape

FIGURE 1

Rape or sexual assault victimizations against females ages 18 to 24 reported to police, by post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013



Note: Includes only reports to the police, not to other officials or administrators. See table 8 for estimates and appendix table 9 for standard errors.

^aIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

HIGHLIGHTS

This report uses the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) to compare the rape and sexual assault victimization of female college students and nonstudents. For the period 1995–2013—

- The rate of rape and sexual assault was 1.2 times higher for nonstudents (7.6 per 1,000) than for students (6.1 per 1,000).
- For both college students and nonstudents, the offender was known to the victim in about 80% of rape and sexual assault victimizations.
- Most (51%) student rape and sexual assault victimizations occurred while the victim was pursuing leisure activities away from home, compared to nonstudents who were engaged in other activities at home (50%) when the victimization occurred.
- The offender had a weapon in about 1 in 10 rape and sexual assault victimizations against both students and nonstudents.
- Rape and sexual assault victimizations of students (80%) were more likely than nonstudent victimizations (67%) to go unreported to police.
- About a quarter of student (26%) and nonstudent (23%) victims who did not report to police believed the incident was a personal matter, and 1 in 5 (20% each) stated a fear of reprisal.
- Student victims (12%) were more likely than nonstudent victims (5%) to state that the incident was not important enough to report.
- Fewer than 1 in 5 female student (16%) and nonstudent (18%) victims of rape and sexual assault received assistance from a victim services agency.

Comparing the NCVS and other surveys that measure rape and sexual assault in a college-age population

The NCVS is one of several surveys used to study rape and sexual assault in the general and college-age population. In addition to the NCVS, the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) and the Campus Sexual Assault Study (CSA) are two recent survey efforts used in research on rape and sexual assault. The three surveys differ in important ways in how rape and sexual assault questions are asked and victimization is measured. Across the three surveys, the measurement differences contribute, in part, to varying estimates of the prevalence (the number of unique persons in the population who experienced one or more victimizations in a given period) and incidence (the number of victimizations experienced by persons in the population during a given period) of rape and sexual assault victimization.

Although conducted at different times, with different samples and reference periods, both NISVS and CSA produced prevalence rates that were substantially higher than the NCVS victimization and prevalence rates. Based on 2011 NISVS data, 2% of all females experienced unwanted sexual contact during the prior 12 months.¹ The 2007 CSA findings suggested that 14% of females ages 18 to 25 who were enrolled in two colleges and surveyed in the United States had experienced a completed sexual assault since entering college.² In comparison, in 2010 the NCVS showed that 1% of females age 12 or older experienced one or more rape or sexual assaults in the prior year.³ For the period 2007–13, the NCVS victimization rate was 4.7 per 1,000 for females ages 18 to 24 who were enrolled in post-secondary schools (not shown).

Several of the key measurement differences that contribute to the different estimates include (see *Appendix 1*)—

- **Survey context and scope.** The NCVS is presented as a survey about crime, while the NISVS and CSA are presented as surveys about public health. The NISVS and CSA collect data on incidents of unwanted sexual contact that may not rise to a level of criminal behavior, and respondents may not report incidents to the NCVS that they do not consider to be criminal.

¹Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Basile, K.C., Walters, M.L., Chen, J., & Merrick, M.T. (2014). Prevalence and characteristics of sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence victimization — National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Surveillance Summaries*, 63(8), 1–18. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6308a1.htm?s_cid=ss6308a1_e#Table1

²Krebs, C.P., Lindquist, C.H., Warner, T.D., Fisher, B.S., & Martin, S.L. (2007). The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) study. Final report to the National Institute of Justice, grant number 2004-WG-BX-0010, document number 221153. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/221153.pdf>

³*Measuring the Prevalence of Crime with the National Crime Victimization Survey*, NCJ 241656, BJS web, September 2013.

- **Definitions of rape and sexual assault.** The NCVS, NISVS, and CSA target different types of events. The NCVS definition is shaped from a criminal justice perspective and includes threatened, attempted, and completed rape and sexual assault against males and females (see *Methodology*). The NISVS uses a broader definition of sexual violence, which specifically mentions incidents in which the victim was unable to provide consent due to drug or alcohol use; forced to penetrate another person; or coerced to engage in sexual contact (including nonphysical pressure to engage in sex) unwanted sexual contact (including forcible kissing, fondling, or grabbing); and noncontact unwanted sexual experiences that do not involve physical contact.⁴ The CSA definition of rape and sexual assault includes unwanted sexual contact due to force and due to incapacitation, but excludes unwanted sexual contact due to verbal or emotional coercion.⁵

- **Question wording.** The three surveys use different approaches to asking about experiences with rape and sexual assault. The NCVS uses a two-phased approach to identifying incidents of rape and sexual assault. Initially, a screener is administered, with cues designed to trigger the respondent's recollection of events and ascertain whether the respondent experienced victimization during the reference period. The screener questions are short and worded specifically about experiences with rape and sexual assault. For instance, "Incidents involving forced or unwanted sexual acts are often difficult to talk about. Have you been forced or coerced to engage in unwanted sexual activity by (a) someone you didn't know before, (b) a casual acquaintance? OR (c) someone you know well?"

The screener is then followed by an incident form that captures detailed information about the incident, including the type of injury, presence of a weapon, offender characteristics, and reporting to police.

Even if the respondent does not respond affirmatively to the specific screeners on rape and unwanted sexual contact, the respondent could still be classified as a rape or sexual assault victim if a rape or unwanted sexual contact is reported during the stage-two incident report.

(Continued on next page)

⁴National Research Council. (2014). *Estimating the incidence of rape and sexual assault*. Panel on Measuring Rape and Sexual Assault in Bureau of Justice Statistics Household Surveys, C. Kruttschnitt, W.D. Kalsbeek, and C.C. House, Editors. Committee on National Statistics, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=18605&page=R1, p. 86.

⁵Krebs, C.P., Lindquist, C.H., Warner, T.D., Fisher, B.S., & Martin, S.L. (2007). The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) study. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/221153.pdf>, p. 1–3.

Comparing the NCVS and other surveys that measure rape and sexual assault in a college-age population (continued)

Unlike the NCVS, which uses terms like rape and unwanted sexual activity to identify victims of rape and sexual assault, the NISVS and CSA use behaviorally specific questions to ascertain whether the respondent experienced rape or sexual assault. These surveys ask about an exhaustive list of explicit types of unwanted sexual contact a victim may have experienced, such as being made to perform or receive anal or oral sex.

- Mode and response rates.** Collection mode and response rates can impact data quality. The NCVS uses in-person and telephone interviews to collect data and has an 88% person and 74% overall response rate. The 2011 NISVS uses random-digit dialing with a 33% response rate. The 2007 CSA is a self-administered survey with 33% to 43% response rates.

Despite the differences that exist between the surveys, a strength of the NCVS is its ability to be used to make comparisons over time and between population subgroups. The differences observed between students and nonstudents are reliable to the extent that both groups responded in a similar manner to the NCVS context and questions. Methodological differences that lead to higher estimates of rape and sexual assault in the NISVS and CSA should not affect the NCVS comparisons between groups.

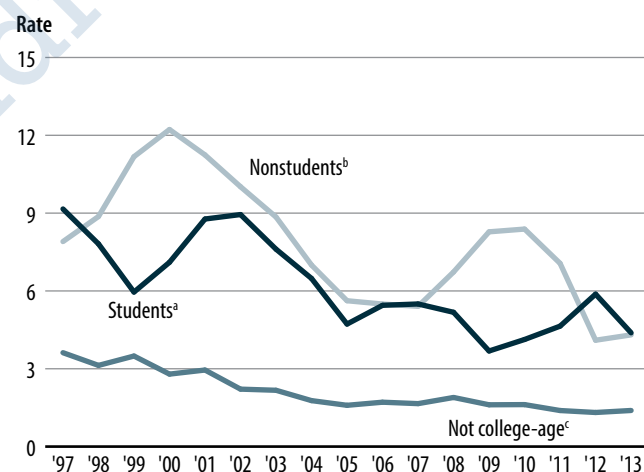
As a result, the differences in the NCVS between student and nonstudent rates and variations in the characteristics of student and nonstudent victimizations should not be affected by the methodological differences impacting the overall level of rape and sexual assault victimization in the NCVS. Because the CSA only collects data from a student population, and student status cannot be identified in the NISVS, the magnitude of difference between these subgroups cannot be ascertained.

or sexual assault (see *Methodology*). Unless otherwise noted, this report presents aggregate estimates of rape and sexual assault victimization for the period 1995 through 2013. Aggregating data across the period increases the reliability and precision of estimates and facilitates comparisons of detailed victimization characteristics.

Females ages 18 to 24 had higher rates of rape and sexual assault than females in other age groups

From 1997 to 2013, females ages 18 to 24 consistently experienced higher rates of rape and sexual assault than females in other age brackets (figure 2). In 2013, college-age females had a similar rate of rape and sexual assault regardless of enrollment status (about 4.3 victimizations per 1,000), while the victimization rate for not college-age (ages 12 to 17 and 25 or older) females was 1.4 victimizations per 1,000. For both students and nonstudents ages 18 to 24, the 2013 rates of rape and sexual assault were not significantly different from their respective rates in 1997. During the period, the rates for students did not differ significantly from one year to the next, though rates in the high years of 2001 and 2002 were slightly higher than in the low year of 2009. For nonstudents, there was more fluctuation. The rates of rape and sexual assault victimization for nonstudents were significantly higher for the period 1999–2001 than for the periods 2005–07 and 2012–13.

FIGURE 2
Rate of rape or sexual assault for females, by age and post-secondary enrollment status, 1997–2013



Note: Estimates based on 3-year rolling averages centered on the most recent year. See appendix table 1 for estimates and standard errors.

^aPer 1,000 females ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bPer 1,000 females ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

^cPer 1,000 females ages 12 to 17 and age 25 or older.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

Rate of rape and sexual assault victimization was 1.2 times higher for nonstudents than students

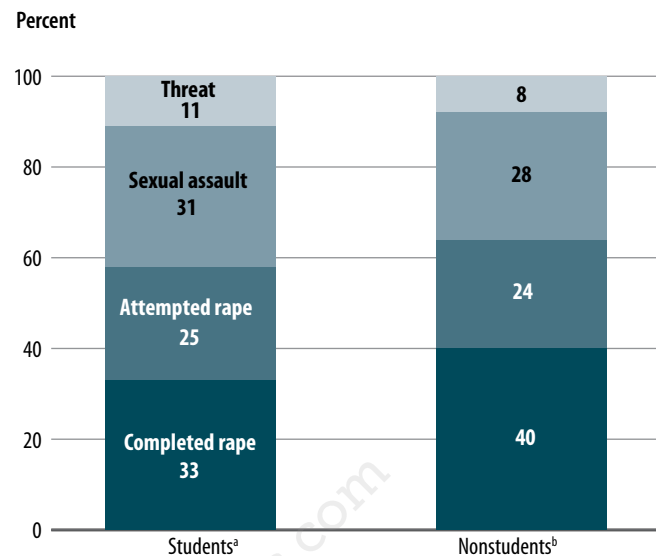
For the period 1995–2013, females ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary school were 1.2 times more likely to experience rape and sexual assault victimization (7.6 per 1,000), compared to students in the same age range (6.1 per 1,000) (table 1). Nonstudents (65,700) also accounted for more than double the number of rape and sexual assault victimizations as students (31,300).

The rate of completed rape for nonstudents (3.1 per 1,000) was 1.5 times higher than for students (2.0 per 1,000). However, there was no significant difference in the rates of female students and nonstudents who experienced attempted rape or other sexual assault. This suggests that differences in the rates of completed rape largely accounted for differences in the overall rates of rape and sexual assault between students and nonstudents.

Among female student victims ages 18 to 24, a third (33%) of the rape and sexual assault victimizations involved completed rape, while 2 in 5 nonstudent (40%) female victims experienced completed rape (figure 3). The majority of student (56%) and nonstudent (52%) victims experienced attempted rape or other sexual assault.

FIGURE 3

Type of rape or sexual assault experienced by female victims ages 18 to 24, by post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013



Note: Excludes a small number of female victims ages 18 to 24 with unknown enrollment status (less than 1%). The average annual population was 5,130,004 for students and 8,614,853 for nonstudents. See appendix table 2 for standard errors. See *Methodology* for definitions.

^aIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

TABLE 1

Rape or sexual assault victimization against females ages 18 to 24, by post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students ^a		Nonstudents ^b		Ratio of nonstudent to student rate
	Average annual number	Rate ^c	Average annual number	Rate ^d	
Total	31,302	6.1	65,668 ‡	7.6 †	1.2
Completed rape	10,237	2.0	26,369	3.1 †	1.5
Attempted rape	7,864	1.5	15,792	1.8	1.2
Sexual assault	9,714	1.9	18,260	2.1	1.1
Threat of rape or sexual assault	3,488	0.7	5,247	0.6	0.9

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. Excludes a small number of female victims ages 18 to 24 with unknown enrollment status (less than 1%). The average annual population was 5,130,004 for students and 8,614,853 for nonstudents. See appendix table 2 for standard errors. See *Methodology* for definitions.

† Nonstudent estimates are significantly different from student estimates at the 95% confidence level.

‡ Nonstudent estimates are significantly different from student estimates at the 90% confidence level.

^aIncludes females ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bIncludes females ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

^cPer 1,000 female students ages 18 to 24.

^dPer 1,000 females ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

Rates of other violence among college-age females

Across all types of violent crime, female students had a lower victimization rate than nonstudents (**table 2**). For the period 1995–2013, the rate of violent victimization was 1.6 times higher for nonstudents (73.1 per 1,000) than students (46.3 per 1,000). For both students and nonstudents, the rate of rape and sexual assault was lower than the rate of aggravated and simple assault, but higher than the rate of robbery.

TABLE 2

Rate of violent victimization among females ages 18 to 24, by post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students ^a	Nonstudents ^b	Ratio of nonstudent to student rates
Violent crime	46.3	73.1 †	1.6
Serious crime	17.8	25.8 †	1.5
Rape and sexual assault	6.1	7.6 †	1.2
Robbery	3.3	5.6 †	1.7
Aggravated assault	8.3	12.5 †	1.5
Simple assault	28.5	47.3 †	1.7

Note: Excludes a small percentage of females ages 18 to 24 with unknown enrollment status (less than 1%). See appendix table 3 for standard errors.

† Nonstudent estimates are significantly different from student estimates at the 95% confidence level.

^aPer 1,000 females ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bPer 1,000 females ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

Rape and sexual assault victimization among male students

For the period 1995–2013, the rate of rape and sexual assault victimization was lower for males ages 18 to 24 than for females, regardless of enrollment status (**table 3**). College-age male victims accounted for 17% of rape and sexual assault victimizations against students and 4% against nonstudents. However, the rate of rape and sexual assault victimization for nonstudents (0.3 per 1,000) was a fifth of the rate for students (1.4 per 1,000). Due to the relatively small number of sample cases of male victims, this report focuses exclusively on females. Estimates of male rape and sexual assault victimization from the NCVS cannot be further disaggregated by victim and incident characteristics.

TABLE 3

Rape and sexual assault victimization, by sex of victim and post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

Sex of victim	Students ^a			Nonstudents ^b			Ratio of nonstudent to student rate
	Average annual number	Percent of victimizations	Rate ^c	Average annual number	Percent of victimizations	Rate ^c	
Male	6,544	17%	1.4	2,866	4% †	0.3 †	0.2
Female	31,302	83	6.1	65,668	96 †	7.6 †	1.2

Note: Excludes a small percentage of victims with unknown enrollment status (less than 1%). See appendix table 4 for standard errors.

† Nonstudent estimates are significantly different from student estimates at the 95% confidence level.

^aIncludes victims ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bIncludes victims ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

^cPer 1,000 persons ages 18 to 24.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

Female students were more likely to experience rape or sexual assault victimization away from home, while nonstudents were more likely to be at home

For both students and nonstudents, about 70% of rape and sexual assault victimizations occurred either at the victim's home or the home of another known person (table 4).⁶ A greater percentage of the victimizations against students (29%) than nonstudents (17%) occurred at the home of a known person, such as a friend, relative, or acquaintance. In comparison, nonstudents (50%) experienced a greater proportion of rape and sexual assaults at their homes than students (38%). There were no significant differences between the percentages of students and nonstudents victimized in other places, including commercial areas, at school, or on public transportation.

The majority (51%) of student rape and sexual assault victimizations occurred while the victim was away from home pursuing leisure activities or traveling from place to place. Nonstudents (50%) were more likely than students (31%) to be sleeping or pursuing other activities at home when the victimization occurred. Nearly two-thirds of both student (65%) and nonstudent (64%) victims experienced the victimization at night (from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.).

⁶In the NCVS, the victim's home is defined as the location of residence at the time of the interview.

TABLE 4

Location, victim activity, and time of day of the rape/sexual assault victimization among females ages 18 to 24, by post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students ^a	Nonstudents ^b
Location where crime occurred	100%	100%
At or near victim's home ^c	38	50 †
At or near home of friend/relative/acquaintance	29	17 †
Commercial place/parking lot or garage	16	15
School ^d	4!	2!
Open areas/public transportation/other ^e	13	16
Activity when crime occurred	100%	100%
Traveling to or from other place/shopping or errands/leisure activity away from home	51	29 †
Sleeping/other activities at home ^c	31	50 †
Working or traveling to work	10!	16 ‡
Attending school or traveling to school ^d	5!	2! ‡
Other/unknown	3!	4
Time of day	100%	100%
Daytime (6 a.m. – 6 p.m.)	33	35
Night (6 p.m. – 6 a.m.)	65	64
Unknown	3!	1!

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. Excludes a small percentage of female victims ages 18 to 24 with unknown enrollment status (less than 1%). See appendix 5 for standard errors.

! Interpret with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

† Nonstudent estimates are significantly different from student estimates at the 95% confidence level.

‡ Nonstudent estimates are significantly different from student estimates at the 90% confidence level.

^aIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

^cIn the NCVS, the victim's home is defined as the location of residence at the time of the interview.

^dIncludes schools at any educational level regardless of whether the victim was a student at the location.

^eIncludes locations such as an apartment yard; a park, field, or playground not on school property; a location on the street other than that immediately adjacent to home of the victim, a relative, or friend; in a station or depot for bus or train; on a plane; or in an airport.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

About 1 in 10 rape and sexual assault victimizations against college-age females involved a weapon

For the period 1995–2013, the offender had a weapon in about 1 in 10 rape and sexual assault victimizations against female students (11%) and nonstudents (12%) (table 5). There were no significant differences between students and nonstudents in the percentage of rape and sexual assault victimizations in which a weapon was present.

There was also no significant difference in the percentage of student and nonstudent victims who sustained a physical injury during the rape and sexual assault victimization. The majority of student (57%) and nonstudent (63%) victims suffered an injury (e.g. cuts, bruises, internal injuries, broken bones, gunshot wounds, or rape-related injuries) during the victimization. About 4 in 10 students (40%) and nonstudents (37%) who were injured during the victimization received medical treatment for their injuries.

More than 3 in 4 student victims of rape and sexual assault knew the offender

College-age female victims knew their offender in about 80% of rape and sexual assault victimizations, regardless of their enrollment status (table 6). Nonstudents (34%) were more likely than students (24%) to experience rape or sexual assault committed by an intimate partner (i.e., a former or current spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend). For student victims, offenders were more likely to be friends or acquaintances (50%) than intimate partners (24%). Among nonstudent victims, there was no significant difference in the percentage of rape and sexual assault committed by friends or acquaintances (37%) or intimates (34%). About 1 in 5 rape and sexual assault victimizations among students (22%) and nonstudents (20%) were committed by a stranger.



TABLE 5
Presence of weapon and injury to victim in rape or sexual assault victimizations against females ages 18 to 24, by post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students ^a	Nonstudents ^b
Involving weapons	100%	100%
No weapon	82%	84%
Weapon	11!	12
Don't know	7	4
Involving injuries	100%	100%
No injury	43%	37
Injury	57	63
Treatment for injuries ^c	100%	100%
No treatment	60	63
Any treatment	40	37

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. Excludes a small percentage of female victims ages 18 to 24 with unknown enrollment status (less than 1%). See appendix table 6 for standard errors.

! Interpret with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

^aIncludes females ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

^cIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 who were injured during the victimization.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

TABLE 6
Victim–offender relationship in rape or sexual assault victimizations against females ages 18 to 24, by post-secondary enrollment status of victim, 1995–2013

Victim–offender relationship	Students ^a	Nonstudents ^b
Stranger	22%	20%
Nonstranger	78%	80%
Intimate partner ^c	24	34 †
Relative	2!	1!
Well-known/casual acquaintance	50	37 †

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. Excludes a small percentage of victimizations in which the victim-offender relationship, number of offenders, or victim enrollment status was unknown. See appendix table 7 for standard errors.

! Interpret with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

† Nonstudent estimates are significantly different from student estimates at the 95% confidence level.

^aIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

^cIncludes former or current spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

Similar percentages of student (47%) and nonstudent (40%) victims perceived that the offender was drinking or using drugs

In the NCVS, victims of rape and sexual assault are asked to provide information about the perceived characteristics of their offenders. For the period 1995–2013, more than 90% of rape and sexual victimizations of female students (95%) and nonstudents (92%) were committed by a single offender, rather than a group of offenders (table 7). Regardless of the victim’s enrollment status, more than half of female victims perceived that the offender was white. However, because the NCVS did not collect information on the Hispanic origin of the offender prior to 2012, Hispanic offenders make up an unknown portion of the white, black, and other race of offender categories. There were no significant differences between students and nonstudents in the race of the offender.

For both students and nonstudents, the vast majority of offenders were male. However, a male was the offender in a greater percentage of female student victimizations (97%) than nonstudent victimizations (91%).

There was no difference in the distribution of offender age among female student and nonstudent victims. More than half of all offenders were perceived to be between the ages of 21 and 29 in victimizations involving both students (51%) and nonstudents (53%). Student victims (25%) were less likely than nonstudent victims (36%) to believe that the offender was not under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the rape or sexual assault. However, about a quarter of student (28%) and nonstudent (24%) victims did not know whether the offender was using drugs or alcohol.

TABLE 7
Perceived offender characteristics in rape and sexual assault victimizations against females ages 18 to 24, by post-secondary enrollment status of victim, 1995–2013

Offender characteristic	Students ^a	Nonstudents ^b
Number of offenders		
One	95%	92%
Two or more	5!	5
Unknown	--!	3!
Age^c		
18–20	17%	13%
21–29	51	53
30 or older	23	23
Mixed group	2!	3
Unknown	7	7
Sex		
Male	97%	91% †
Female	1!	3! †
Mixed group/unknown	2!	5! †
Race^d		
White	63%	60%
Black	19	22
Other/mixed group ^e	10	12
Unknown	8	7
Alcohol/drug use		
Yes	47%	40%
No	25	36 †
Don't know/unknown	28	24

Note: See appendix table 8 for standard errors.

--! Less than 0.5%.

! Interpret with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

† Nonstudent estimates are significantly different from student estimates at the 95% confidence level.

^a Includes female victims ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^b Includes female victims ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

^c Detail may not sum to total due to small portion of offenders age 17 or younger.

^d Prior to 2012, victims were not asked about perceived Hispanic origin of offenders, so Hispanic offenders make up an unknown portion of the white, black, and other race of offender categories.

^e American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander, persons of two or more races, and mixed groups that may include persons of any race.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

A greater percentage of student (80%) than nonstudent (67%) rape and sexual assault victimizations were not reported to police

For the period 1995–2013, rape and sexual assault victimizations against female students (80%) were more likely to go unreported to police, compared to victimizations against nonstudents (67%) (table 8). Regardless of enrollment status, rape and sexual assault victimizations were more likely to go unreported than other types of violent crime (not shown). The NCVS does not directly collect information about whether victims reported to other officials or administrators.

The reasons for not reporting a rape or sexual assault victimization to police varied somewhat between students and nonstudents. A greater percentage of nonstudent (19%) than student (9%) victims stated that they did not report to police because the police would not or could not do anything to help. Nonstudent victims were also more likely to state that they had reported to a different official.⁷ Student victims (12%) were more likely to state that the victimization was not important enough to report, compared to nonstudent victims (5%). About a quarter of student (26%) and nonstudent (23%) victims who did not report to police believed the incident was a personal matter, and 1 in 5 (20% each) stated a fear of reprisal.

No significant difference in the proportion of student and nonstudent victims who received assistance from a victim service agency

Fewer than 1 in 5 female student (16%) and nonstudent (18%) victims of rape and sexual assault received assistance from a victim services agency for the period 1995–2013 (table 9). Victim service agencies include public or privately funded organizations that provide victims with support and services to aid their recovery, offer protection, guide them through the criminal justice system process, and assist with obtaining restitution. There was no significant difference in the proportion of victims who received assistance based on enrollment status.

⁷The NCVS does not ask victims for information about the types of other officials to which they may have reported.

TABLE 8

Rape or sexual assault victimizations against females ages 18 to 24 reported and not reported to police and reasons for not reporting, by post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students ^a	Nonstudents ^b
Reported ^c	20%	32% †
Not reported	80%	67% †
Reason for not reporting		
Reported to different official	4% !	14% †
Personal matter	26	23
Not important enough to respondent	12	5 †
Police would not or could not do anything to help	9	19 †
Did not want to get offender in trouble with law	10	10
Advised not to report	-- !	1 !
Fear of reprisal	20	20
Other reason	31	35

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to multiple reasons for not reporting. About 0.4% of student and 0.6% of nonstudent victims did not know or did not report whether the victimization was reported to police. See appendix table 9 for standard errors.

--Less than 0.5%.

! Interpret with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

† Nonstudent estimates are significantly different from student estimates at the 95% confidence level.

^aIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

^cIncludes only reports to the police, not to other officials or administrators. The NCVS does not collect information on victim reporting to parties other than law enforcement.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

TABLE 9

Receipt of assistance from a victim service agency among female rape or sexual assault victims ages 18 to 24, by post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students ^a	Nonstudents ^b
Received assistance	16%	18%
Did not receive assistance	83	82

Note: Detail does not sum to total due to a small percentage of victims who did not know whether assistance was received. Excludes a small percentage of female victims ages 18 to 24 with unknown enrollment status (less than 1%). See appendix table 10 for standard errors.

^aIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

Among females living in rural areas, the rate of rape and sexual assault victimization was almost 2 times higher for nonstudents (8.8 per 1,000) than students (4.6 per 1,000)

For the period 1995–2013, there were no significant differences in the student and nonstudent rates of rape and sexual assault for black non-Hispanics, Hispanics, or persons of other races (table 10). However, among white non-Hispanic females, the rate of victimization was 1.4 times higher for nonstudents (9.2 per 1,000) than for students (6.7 per 1,000). Among female students, the rate of rape and sexual assault was slightly higher for whites (6.7 per 1,000) than for Hispanics (4.5 per 1,000), but did not differ significantly from the rate for blacks (6.4 per 1,000).

The rate of rape and sexual assault was 1.6 times higher for females ages 18 to 19 not enrolled in college (10.4 per 1,000) than for female students in the same age group (6.6 per 1,000). Among females ages 20 to 21, the rate of victimization was 1.5 times higher for nonstudents (8.9 per 1,000) than students (5.8 per 1,000). There was no significant difference in the rate of rape and sexual assault for students and nonstudents ages 22 to 24.

Among female college students there were no significant differences in the rate of victimization by age. However, among nonstudents, the rate of victimization was lower for females ages 22 to 24 (5.4 per 1,000) than for females ages 18 to 21.

Nonstudents in the South were slightly more likely (1.4 times) to experience rape and sexual assault, compared to female students in the South. Across other regions of the country, there were no significant differences in the student and nonstudent victimization rates.

Female students in the Midwest (8.3 per 1,000) had a higher rate of rape and sexual assault, compared to students in the Northeast (5.2 per 1,000) and South (4.7 per 1,000). Similarly, among nonstudents, females in the Midwest had a higher rate of victimization than in any other region of the country.

In rural areas, the rate of rape and sexual assault was 1.9 times higher for college-age nonstudents (8.8 per 1,000) than students (4.6 per 1,000). Nonstudents in urban areas (8.7 per 1,000) also had a slightly higher rate of victimization (1.3 times), compared to students in urban areas (6.6 per 1,000). In suburban areas, there was no significant difference in the rate of rape and sexual assault between female students (6.0 per 1,000) and nonstudents (6.3 per 1,000). Among female students, there was no significant variation in rape and sexual assault rates across urban, suburban, and rural areas. Among nonstudents, females living in suburban areas had the lowest victimization rates.

TABLE 10

Rate of rape and sexual assault against female victims ages 18 to 24, by demographic characteristics and post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

Victim characteristic	Students ^a	Nonstudents ^b	Ratio of nonstudent to student rate
Age			
18–19	6.6	10.4 †	1.6
20–21	5.8	8.9 †	1.5
22–24	6.0	5.4	0.9
Race/Hispanic origin			
White ^c	6.7	9.2 †	1.4
Black ^c	6.4	6.2	1.0
Hispanic	4.5	4.5	1.0
Other ^{c,d}	3.7 !	5.9	1.6
Region^e			
Northeast	5.2	4.1	0.8
Midwest	8.3	11.0	1.3
South	4.7	6.5 ‡	1.4
West	5.9	8.0	1.4
Location of residence			
Urban	6.6	8.7 ‡	1.3
Suburban	6.0	6.3	1.0
Rural	4.6	8.8 †	1.9

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. See appendix table 11 for standard errors.

! Interpret with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

† Nonstudent estimates are significantly different from student estimates at the 95% confidence level.

‡ Nonstudent estimates are significantly different from student estimates at the 90% confidence level.

^aPer 1,000 females ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bPer 1,000 females ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

^cExcludes persons of Hispanic or Latino origin.

^dIncludes American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander, and persons of two or more races.

^eIncludes data from 1996 through 2013 because information about region was not collected prior to 1996.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

Methodology

Survey coverage

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is an annual data collection conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). The NCVS is a self-report survey in which interviewed persons are asked about the number and characteristics of victimizations experienced during the prior 6 months. The NCVS collects information on nonfatal personal crimes (rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated and simple assault, and personal larceny) and household property crimes (burglary, motor vehicle theft, and other theft) both reported and not reported to police. In addition to providing annual level and change estimates on criminal victimization, the NCVS is the primary source of information on the nature of criminal victimization incidents.

Survey respondents provide information about themselves (e.g., age, sex, race and Hispanic origin, marital status, education level, and income) and whether they experienced a victimization. The NCVS collects information for each victimization incident about the offender (e.g., age, sex, race and Hispanic origin, and victim-offender relationship), characteristics of the crime (including time and place of occurrence, use of weapons, nature of injury, and economic consequences), whether the crime was reported to police, reasons the crime was or was not reported, and victim experiences with the criminal justice system.

The NCVS is administered to persons age 12 or older from a nationally representative sample of households in the United States. The NCVS defines a household as a group of persons who all reside at a sampled address. Persons are considered household members when the sampled address is their usual place of residence at the time of the interview and when they have no usual place of residence elsewhere. Once selected, households remain in the sample for 3 years, and eligible persons in these households are interviewed every 6 months either in person or over the phone for a total of seven interviews.

All first interviews are conducted in person with subsequent interviews conducted either in person or by phone. New households rotate into the sample on an ongoing basis to replace outgoing households that have been in the sample for the 3-year period. The sample includes persons living in group quarters, such as dormitories, rooming houses, and religious group dwellings, and excludes persons living in military barracks and institutional settings such as correctional or hospital facilities, and persons who are homeless.

NCVS measurement of rape and sexual assault

This report focuses on rape and sexual assault victimizations, including completed, attempted, and threatened rape or sexual assault. Because of the sensitive nature of the topic, measuring the extent of these victimizations is often difficult, and best practices are still being determined. For the NCVS, survey respondents are asked to respond to a series of questions about the nature and characteristics of their victimization. The NCVS classifies victimizations as rape or sexual assault, even if other crimes, such as robbery or assault, occur at the same time. The NCVS then uses the following rape and sexual assault definitions:

- **Rape** is the unlawful penetration of a person against the will of the victim, with use or threatened use of force, or attempting such an act. Rape includes psychological coercion and physical force, and forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by the offender. Rape also includes incidents where penetration is from a foreign object (e.g., a bottle), victimizations against males and females, and both heterosexual and homosexual rape. Attempted rape includes verbal threats of rape.
- **Sexual assault** is defined across a wide range of victimizations separate from rape or attempted rape. These crimes include attacks or attempted attacks usually involving unwanted sexual contact between a victim and offender. Sexual assault may or may not involve force and includes grabbing or fondling.

The measurement of rape and sexual assault presents many challenges. Victims may not be willing to reveal or share their experiences with an interviewer. The level and type of sexual violence reported by victims is sensitive to how items are worded, which definitions are used, the data collection mode, and a variety of other factors related to the interview process. In addition, the legal definitions of rape and sexual assault vary across jurisdictions. The NCVS presents one approach to measuring and enumerating these incidents as well as other forms of violence and property crime.

Comparison of NCVS and National Center for Education Statistics student population statistics

This report focused on females ages 18 to 24, which account for about 32% of the total population enrolled in post-secondary institutions.⁸ To assess whether the NCVS estimates of the college student population accurately reflect the actual population of students, NCVS weighted counts of enrolled students were compared to data collected through the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

⁸National Center for Education Statistics.

From 1997 to 2011, the years of available NCES data, the NCVS estimates of the female population of college students were significantly lower than the NCES estimates in 9 of the 15 years (table 11). In the years in which the NCVS estimate differed from the IPEDS population count, the NCVS female student population was about 10% lower.

Nonresponse and weighting adjustments

In 2013, 90,630 households and 160,040 persons age 12 or older were interviewed for the NCVS. Each household was interviewed twice during the year. The response rate was 84% for households and 88% for eligible persons. Victimization that occurred outside of the United States were excluded from this report. In 2013, less than 1% of the unweighted victimizations occurred outside of the United States and were excluded from the analyses.

Estimates in this report use data from the 1995 to 2013 NCVS data files, weighted to produce annual estimates of victimization for persons age 12 or older living in U.S. households. Because the NCVS relies on a sample rather than a census of the entire U.S. population, weights are designed to inflate sample point estimates to known population totals and to compensate for survey nonresponse and other aspects of the sample design.

The NCVS data files include both person and household weights. Person weights provide an estimate of the population represented by each person in the sample. Household weights provide an estimate of the U.S. household population represented by each household in the sample. After proper adjustment, both household and person weights are also typically used to form the denominator in calculations of crime rates.

Victimization weights used in this analysis account for the number of persons present during an incident and for high-frequency repeat victimizations (i.e., series victimizations). Series victimizations are similar in type but occur with such frequency that a victim is unable to recall each individual event or describe each event in detail. Survey procedures allow NCVS interviewers to identify and classify these similar victimizations as series victimizations and to collect detailed information on only the most recent incident in the series.

The weight counts series incidents as the actual number of incidents reported by the victim, up to a maximum of 10 incidents. Including series victimizations in national rates results in large increases in the level of violent victimization; however, trends in violence are generally similar, regardless of whether series victimizations are included. In 2013, series incidents accounted for about 1% of all victimizations and 4% of all violent victimizations. Weighting series incidents as the number of incidents up to a maximum of 10 incidents

TABLE 11
Number of female students ages 18 to 24 enrolled in post-secondary institutions according to the NCVS and NCES, 1997–2011

Year	Estimate	National Crime Victimization Survey		Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System
		Lower confidence level	Upper confidence level	
1997	4,090,000	3,687,000	4,494,000	4,409,000
1998	4,122,000	3,755,000	4,489,000	4,571,000
1999	4,498,000	4,028,000	4,967,000	4,769,000
2000	4,441,000	4,035,000	4,847,000	4,959,000
2001	4,513,000	4,028,000	4,997,000	5,186,000
2002	4,874,000	4,292,000	5,456,000	5,467,000
2003	5,074,000	4,610,000	5,538,000	5,602,000
2004	5,139,000	4,606,000	5,671,000	5,713,000
2005	5,217,000	4,680,000	5,755,000	5,683,000
2006	5,297,000	4,783,000	5,810,000	5,864,000
2007	5,611,000	5,136,000	6,087,000	5,994,000
2008	5,658,000	5,195,000	6,121,000	6,208,000
2009	5,781,000	5,320,000	6,241,000	6,580,000
2010	6,262,000	5,781,000	6,743,000	6,685,000
2011	6,222,000	5,710,000	6,735,000	6,723,000

Note: See appendix table 12 for standard errors.

Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1997–2011; and National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System, 1997–2011.

produces more reliable estimates of crime levels, while the cap at 10 minimizes the effect of extreme outliers on rates. Additional information on the series enumeration is detailed in the report *Methods for Counting High-Frequency Repeat Victimization in the National Crime Victimization Survey* (NCJ 237308, BJS web, April 2012).

Standard error computations

When national estimates are derived from a sample, as with the NCVS, it is important to use caution when comparing one estimate to another estimate or when comparing estimates over time. Although one estimate may be larger than another, estimates based on a sample have some degree of sampling error. The sampling error of an estimate depends on several factors, including the amount of variation in the responses and the size of the sample. When the sampling error around an estimate is taken into account, the estimates that appear different may not be statistically different.

One measure of the sampling error associated with an estimate is the standard error. The standard error can vary from one estimate to the next. Generally, an estimate with a small standard error provides a more reliable approximation of the true value than an estimate with a large standard error. Estimates with relatively large standard errors are associated with less precision and reliability and should be interpreted with caution.

To generate standard errors around numbers and estimates from the NCVS, the Census Bureau produced generalized variance function (GVF) parameters for BJS. The GVFs take into account aspects of the NCVS complex sample design and represent the curve fitted to a selection of individual standard errors based on the Jackknife Repeated Replication technique. The GVF parameters were used to generate standard errors for each point estimate (e.g., counts, percentages, and rates) in this report.

BJS conducted tests to determine whether differences in estimated numbers, percentages, and rates in this report were statistically significant once the sampling error was taken into account. Using statistical programs developed specifically for the NCVS, all comparisons in the text were tested for significance. The primary test procedure was the Student's t-statistic, which tests the difference between two sample estimates. Differences described as higher, lower, or different passed a test at the 0.05 level of statistical significance (95% confidence level). Differences described as somewhat, slightly, or marginally different, or with some indication of difference, passed a test at the 0.10 level of statistical significance (90% confidence level). Caution must be taken when comparing estimates not explicitly discussed in this report.

Data users can use the estimates and the standard errors of the estimates provided in this report to generate a confidence interval around the estimate as a measure of the margin of error. The following example illustrates how standard errors can be used to generate confidence intervals:

According to the NCVS, for the period 1995–2013, the rate of rape and sexual assault for female students ages 18 to 24 was 6.1 per 1,000 persons (see table 1). Using the GVFs, it was determined that the estimated victimization rate has a standard error of 0.56 (see appendix table 2). A confidence interval around the estimate was generated by multiplying the standard errors by ± 1.96 (the t-score of a normal, two-tailed

distribution that excludes 2.5% at either end of the distribution). Therefore, the 95% confidence interval around the 6.1 estimate is $6.1 \pm (0.56 \times 1.96)$ or (5.0 to 7.2). In other words, if different samples using the same procedures were taken from the U.S. female student population, 95% of the time the rape and sexual assault rate would fall between 5.0 and 7.2 per 1,000 persons.

In this report, BJS also calculated a coefficient of variation (CV) for all estimates, representing the ratio of the standard error to the estimate. CVs provide a measure of reliability and a means to compare the precision of estimates across measures with differing levels or metrics. In cases in which the CV was greater than 50%, or the unweighted sample had 10 or fewer cases, the estimate was noted with a “!” symbol. (Interpret data with caution. Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or the coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.)

Methodological changes to the NCVS in 2006

Methodological changes implemented in 2006 may have affected the crime estimates for that year to such an extent that they are not comparable to estimates from other years. Evaluation of 2007 and later data from the NCVS conducted by BJS and the Census Bureau found a high degree of confidence that estimates for 2007 through 2013 are consistent with and comparable to estimates for 2005 and previous years. The reports, *Criminal Victimization, 2006*, NCJ 219413, December 2007; *Criminal Victimization, 2007*, NCJ 224390, December 2008; *Criminal Victimization, 2008*, NCJ 227777, September 2009; *Criminal Victimization, 2009*, NCJ 231327, October 2010; *Criminal Victimization, 2010*, NCJ 235508, September 2011; *Criminal Victimization, 2011*, NCJ 239437, October 2012; *Criminal Victimization, 2012*, NCJ 243389, October 2013; and *Criminal Victimization, 2013*, NCJ 247648, September 2014, are available on the BJS website.

Appendix 1

Differences between the NCVS and other surveys measuring rape and sexual assault in a college-age population

The NCVS is one of several surveys used to study rape and sexual assault in the college-age population. In addition to the NCVS, two recent survey efforts used in research on rape and sexual assault of college students are the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) and the Campus Sexual Assault Study (CSA). Each of these surveys has a different purpose and methodological approach than the NCVS. Depending on which of the three data sources are used, researchers will generate different estimates of the prevalence and frequency of rape and sexual assault victimization. Some of these differences include—

- **Survey context and scope.** In a 2014 report on the measurement of rape and sexual assault in the NCVS and other federal surveys, the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academies of Sciences described survey context as “a major contributor of differences in the estimates of rape and sexual assault” across different data collections.⁹ Survey context refers to how the survey is described to respondents through notification letters, survey questions, or the interviewer. The NCVS is an omnibus survey designed to collect information on experiences with a broad range of crimes. It is likewise presented to respondents as a survey about criminal victimization. Because victims of rape or sexual assault may not consider their victimization a crime, this context could discourage or suppress recall and reporting of those incidents.¹⁰ Additionally, because the NCVS covers a wide range of criminal victimization, the number of screening questions related to rape and sexual assault are limited.

⁹National Research Council. (2014). *Estimating the incidence of rape and sexual assault*, p. 96.

¹⁰Krebs, C.P., Lindquist, C.H., Warner, T.D., Fisher, B.S., & Martin, S.L. (2007). The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) study. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/221153.pdf>, p. 15.

In comparison, the NISVS focused on sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence and was presented as a survey collecting data on a range of behaviors that impact public health. This public health perspective may encourage respondents to recall and report on experiences that they may not typically think of as criminal victimization. It also may result in the collection of incidents that may not be considered criminal behavior. Similarly, the CSA study focused specifically on rape and sexual assault, also from a public health and safety perspective.

- **Definitions of rape and sexual assault.** The NCVS, NISVS, and CSA define rape and sexual assault slightly differently. The NCVS definition is shaped from a criminal justice perspective and includes threatened, attempted, and completed rape and sexual assault against males and females (see *Methodology*). Penetration due to coercion is included in the definition of rape, but the survey does not specifically ask about incidents in which the victim was unable to provide consent because of drug or alcohol consumption. Because the NISVS is focused on rape and sexual assault from a public health perspective, the scope of sexual violence included in NISVS is broader than the definitions used in the NCVS. In NISVS, sexual violence includes threatened, attempted, or completed rape, including incidents in which the victim was unable to provide consent due to drug or alcohol use; forced penetration of another person; sexual coercion, which includes nonphysical pressure to engage in sex; unwanted sexual contact, including forcible kissing, fondling, or grabbing; and noncontact unwanted sexual experiences, which do not involve physical contact.¹¹ The CSA definition of rape and sexual assault included unwanted sexual contact due to force and due to incapacitation, but excluded unwanted sexual contact due to verbal or emotional coercion.¹²

¹¹National Research Council. (2014). *Estimating the incidence of rape and sexual assault*, p. 86.

¹²Krebs, C.P., Lindquist, C.H., Warner, T.D., Fisher, B.S., & Martin, S.L. (2007). The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) study. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/221153.pdf>, p. 1–3.

TABLE 12
Summary of major methodological differences among the NCVS, NISVS, and CSA

	NCVS (2013)	NISVS (2011)	CSA (2007)
Purpose	To gather information on victims of crime both reported and not reported to police in the United States	To gather information related to the public health consequences of intimate partner violence; sexual violence; and related behaviors, such as stalking	To gather data on the prevalence and consequences of rape and sexual assault against college students
Population surveyed	Representative sample of persons age 12 or older residing in households in the United States	Representative sample of adults in the United States	Stratified random sample of students at two large public universities
Survey scope	A range of violent and property crimes	Sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence	Rape and sexual assault
Data collection mode	In-person and telephone interviews	Random digit dialing	Self-administered, web-based
Response rate	88% person; 74% combined	33%	33% to 43% for males and females at each of the two schools
Bounded estimates to control for telescoping	Yes	No	No

- **Longitudinal versus cross-sectional design.** Both the CSA and NISVS were cross-section data collections administered to the sample a single point in time that asked about events that occurred during a specified reference period. The NCVS is a longitudinal survey administered seven times to the same sampled household, with questions asked about events occurring since the last interview. Longitudinal surveys like the NCVS have the advantage of bounding the reference period and ensuring that events occurring outside of that reference period are not included in estimates. Since research has suggested that traumatic events, such as rape and sexual assault, may be particularly prone to telescoping (i.e., the reporting of events occurring outside of a reference period as though they occurred within the specified period), unbounded surveys may have artificially high incident rates due to events occurring outside of the reference period being telescoped in.

- **Question wording.** The language and ordering of questions in a survey may affect whether a respondent indicated that an incident occurred. The three surveys used different approaches to asking about experiences with rape and sexual assault. The NCVS used a two-phased approach to identifying incidents of rape and sexual assault. Initially, a screener was administered, with cues designed to trigger the respondent's recollection of event and ascertain whether the respondent experienced victimization during the reference period. The screener questions directly focused on rape and sexual assault were—

- (Other than any incidents already mentioned), has anyone attacked or threatened you in any of these ways:... (e) any rape, attempted rape, or other type of sexual attack;
- Incidents involving forced or unwanted sexual acts are often difficult to talk about. (Other than any incidents already mentioned), have you been forced or coerced to engage in unwanted sexual activity by (a) someone you didn't know before, (b) a casual acquaintance? OR (c) someone you know well?

Even if the respondent did not respond affirmatively to these specific screeners on rape and unwanted sexual contact, the respondent could still be classified as a rape or sexual assault victim if a rape or unwanted sexual contact was reported during the stage-two incident report.

Unlike the NCVS which used terms like rape and unwanted sexual activity to identify victims of rape and sexual assault, the NISVS and CSA used behaviorally specific questions to ascertain whether the respondent experienced rape or sexual assault. For example, one question on the NISVS survey read:

- When you were drunk, high, drugged, or passed out and unable to consent, how many people ever...

- had vaginal sex with you? By vaginal sex, we mean that {if female: a man or boy put his penis in your vagina} {if male: a women or girl made you put your penis in her vagina}.
- {if male} made you perform anal sex, meaning that they made you put your penis into their anus? made you receive anal sex, meaning they put their penis into your anus?
- made you perform oral sex, meaning that they put their penis in your mouth or made you penetrate their vagina or anus with your mouth?
- made you receive oral sex, meaning that they put their mouth on your {if male: penis} {if female: vagina} or anus?¹³

Questions on the CSA used similar behaviorally specific cues to identify victims of rape and sexual assault.

- **Survey mode.** The NCVS, NISVS, and CSA used different modes of administration. The CSA study was a self-administered web survey sent via email to students at the participating colleges. Self-administered surveys are not subject to interviewer effects, but may result in lower response rates or confusion over question wording that could otherwise be clarified by an interviewer. The NISVS was a random digit dialing telephone survey. Telephone surveys exclude respondents without a phone, may be subject to sampling bias because of multiple phones associated with particular households or individuals, and may be subject to nonresponse bias due to low response rates.¹⁴ The NCVS used a multimode design that begins with an initial in-person interview, followed by telephone follow-ups every 6 months for the 3.5 years the household is in the sample. While respondents can develop rapport with the interviewer and familiarity with the survey questions, the NCVS may be more subject to interviewer effects than the CSA or NISVS.

- **Population surveyed.** The NCVS and NISVS were administered to a national sample of noninstitutionalized persons, meaning that findings are generalizable to the noninstitutionalized U.S. population of persons ages 18 to 24 with some exceptions. The NCVS uses a household-based sample, so persons who are homeless are excluded from the scope. The NISVS was administered using random digit dialing, which excludes persons without a telephone. In comparison, the CSA was administered to a stratified random sample of students at two large public universities.¹⁵ Because of the limited population included

¹³National Research Council. (2014). *Estimating the incidence of rape and sexual assault*, p. 89.

¹⁴National Research Council. (2014). *Estimating the incidence of rape and sexual assault*, p. 102.

¹⁵Krebs, C.P., Lindquist, C.H., Warner, T.D., Fisher, B.S., & Martin, S.L. (2007). The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) study. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/221153.pdf>, p. 3–11.

in the CSA, it should not be assumed that findings from the survey are representative of the population of persons ages 18 to 24 or even to college students specifically.

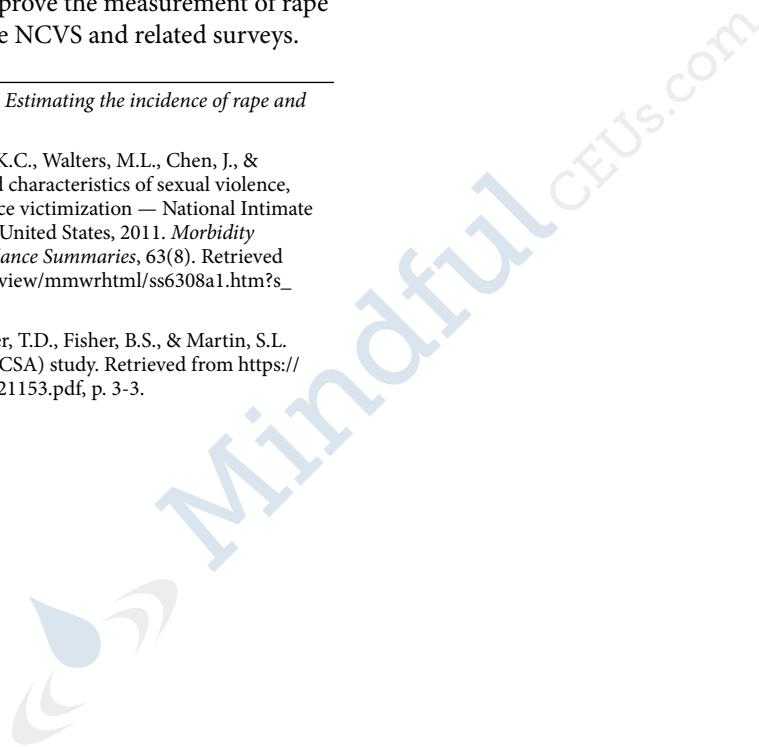
- **Survey response rates and bias.** Surveys with low response rates have an increased potential for nonresponse bias compared to surveys with higher response rates.¹⁶ Nonresponse bias means that those who participated in the survey may differ in important ways from those who did not participate, which could in turn impact the survey findings. In 2013, the NCVS had an 88% response rate for eligible persons and a combined persons and household response rate of 74%, while the 2011 NISVS had an overall response rate of 33.1%, and the CSA response rate was between 33% and 43% for males and females at the two schools.^{17,18}

Measuring rape and sexual assault victimization is an evolving field. BJS is currently engaged in a variety of projects exploring ways to improve the measurement of rape and sexual assault through the NCVS and related surveys.

¹⁶National Research Council. (2014). *Estimating the incidence of rape and sexual assault*, p. 127.

¹⁷Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Basile, K.C., Walters, M.L., Chen, J., & Merrick, M.T. (2014). Prevalence and characteristics of sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence victimization — National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Surveillance Summaries*, 63(8). Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6308a1.htm?s_cid=ss6308a1_e.

¹⁸Krebs, C.P., Lindquist, C.H., Warner, T.D., Fisher, B.S., & Martin, S.L. (2007). The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) study. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/221153.pdf>, p. 3-3.



APPENDIX TABLE 1

Estimates and standard errors for figure 2: Rate of rape or sexual assault for females, by age and post-secondary enrollment status, 1997–2013

	Estimates			Standard errors		
	Students ages 18–24 ^a	Nonstudents ages 18–24 ^b	Non-college-age females ^c	Students ages 18–24 ^a	Nonstudents ages 18–24 ^b	Non-college-age females ^c
1997	9.2	7.9	3.6	2.9	2.0	0.5
1998	7.8	8.9	3.1	2.9	2.3	0.5
1999	6.0	11.2	3.5	2.1	2.3	0.4
2000	7.1	12.2	2.8	2.3	2.5	0.4
2001	8.8	11.2	3.0	2.7	2.3	0.4
2002	8.9	10.0	2.2	2.7	2.2	0.3
2003	7.6	8.8	2.2	2.4	2.1	0.3
2004	6.5	7.0	1.8	2.4	2.0	0.3
2005	4.7	5.6	1.6	1.9	1.6	0.3
2006	5.4	5.5	1.7	2.1	1.7	0.3
2007	5.5	5.4	1.7	1.8	1.5	0.3
2008	5.2	6.7	1.9	2.1	2.0	0.3
2009	3.7	8.3	1.6	1.5	2.1	0.3
2010	4.1 !	8.4	1.6	1.8	2.3	0.3
2011	4.6	7.1	1.4	1.7	1.9	0.3
2012	5.9	4.1	1.3	2.0	1.4	0.3
2013	4.4	4.3	1.4	1.4	1.2	0.2

Note: Estimates based on 3-year rolling averages centered on the most recent year.

! Interpret with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

^aIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 enrolled part time or full time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., college or university, trade school, or vocational school).

^bIncludes female victims ages 18 to 24 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

^cIncludes females ages 12 to 17 and age 25 or older.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

APPENDIX TABLE 2

Standard errors for table 1 and figure 3: Rape or sexual assault victimization against females ages 18 to 24, by type of victimization and post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students		Nonstudents	
	Average annual number	Rate	Average annual number	Rate
Total	10,416	0.6	15,603	0.5
Completed rape	5,755	0.3	9,499	0.3
Attempted rape	5,014	0.3	7,230	0.2
Sexual assault	5,599	0.3	7,808	0.2
Threat of rape or sexual assault	3,292	0.2	4,064	0.1

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

APPENDIX TABLE 3

Standard errors for table 2: Rate of violent victimization among females ages 18 to 24, by type of violence and post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students	Nonstudents
Violent crime	2.5	2.8
Serious violence	1.0	1.1
Rape and sexual assault	0.6	0.5
Robbery	0.5	0.5
Aggravated assault	0.6	0.7
Simple assault	1.8	2.0

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

APPENDIX TABLE 4

Standard errors for table 3: Rape and sexual assault victimization, by sex of victim and post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students			Nonstudents		
	Average annual number	Percent of victimizations	Rate	Average annual number	Percent of victimizations	Rate
Male	4,557	2.7%	0.3	2,976	1.0%	0.1
Female	10,416	2.9	2.9	15,603	1.2	0.5

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

APPENDIX TABLE 5

Standard errors for table 4: Location, victim activity, and time of day of the rape/sexual assault victimization among females ages 18 to 24, by post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students	Nonstudents
Location where crime occurred		
At or near victim's home	3.9%	3.0%
At or near home of friend/relative/acquaintance	3.6	2.1
Commercial place/parking lot or garage	2.8	2.0
School	1.5!	0.7!
Open areas/public transportation/other	2.6	2.0
Activity when crime occurred		
Traveling to or from other place/shopping or errands/leisure activity away from home	4.1%	2.6%
Sleeping/other activities at home	3.7	2.9
Working or traveling to work	2.2!	2.0
Attending school or traveling to school	1.7!	0.8!
Other/unknown	1.3!	1.0
Time of day		
Daytime (6 a.m. – 6 p.m.)	3.7%	2.8%
Night (6 a.m. – 6 p.m.)	3.9	2.9
Unknown	1.2!	0.6!

! Interpret with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

APPENDIX TABLE 6

Standard errors for table 5: Presence of weapon and injury to victim in rape or sexual assault victimizations against females ages 18 to 24, by enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students	Nonstudents
Involving weapons		
No weapon	3.2%	2.2%
Weapon	2.4!	1.8
Don't know	2.0	1.1
Involving injuries		
No injury	4.0%	2.9%
Injury	4.0	2.8
Treatment for injuries		
No treatment	4.0%	2.9%
Any treatment	3.9	2.8

! Interpret with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

APPENDIX TABLE 7

Standard errors for table 6: Victim–offender relationship in rape or sexual assault victimizations against females ages 18 to 24, by post-secondary enrollment status of victim, 1995–2013

Victim–offender relationship	Students	Nonstudents
Stranger	3.2%	2.3%
Nonstranger	3.4%	2.4%
Intimate partner	3.4	2.7
Relative	0.9!	0.5!
Well-known/casual acquaintance	4.1	2.8

! Interpret with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

APPENDIX TABLE 8

Standard errors for table 7: Perceived offender characteristics in rape and sexual assault victimizations against females ages 18 to 24, by post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students	Nonstudents
Number of offenders		
One	1.9%	1.7%
Two or more	1.6!	1.1
Unknown	~	1.0!
Age		
18–20	2.9%	1.9%
21–29	4.1	3.0
30 or older	3.3	2.4
Other mixed group	1.0!	0.8
Unknown	1.9	1.3
Sex		
Male	1.4%	1.7%
Female	0.6!	0.9!
Mixed group/unknown	0.9!	1.2!
Race		
White	3.9%	2.9%
Black	3.1	2.4
Other/mixed group	2.3	1.8
Unknown	2.0	1.3
Alcohol/drug use		
Yes	4.0%	2.9%
No	3.4	2.8
Don't know/unknown	3.6	2.4

~Not applicable.

! Interpret with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013

APPENDIX TABLE 9

Standard errors for figure 1 and 8: Rape or sexual assault victimizations against females ages 18 to 24 reported and not reported to police and reasons for not reporting, by post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students	Nonstudents
Reported	3.1%	3.7%
Not reported	2.4%	2.8%
Reason for not reporting		
Reported to different official	1.5!	2.3
Personal matter	3.8	2.9
Not important enough to respondent	2.7	1.4
Police would or could not do anything to help	2.4	2.6
Did not want to get offender in trouble with law	2.6	1.9
Advised not to report	~!	0.6!
Fear of reprisal	3.5	2.7
Other reason	4.1	3.3

~Not applicable.

! Interpret with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

APPENDIX TABLE 10

Standard errors for table 9: Receipt of assistance from a victim service agency among female rape or sexual assault victims ages 18 to 24, by post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students	Nonstudents
Received assistance	2.8%	2.2%
Did not receive assistance	3.1	2.3

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

APPENDIX TABLE 11

Standard errors for table 10: Rate of rape and sexual assault against female victims ages 18 to 24, by demographic characteristics and post-secondary enrollment status, 1995–2013

	Students	Nonstudents
Age		
18–19	1.0	1.0
20–21	0.8	1.0
22–24	0.9	0.6
Race/Hispanic origin		
White	0.7	0.7
Black	1.4	1.0
Hispanic	1.1	0.7
Other	1.2	1.6
Region		
Northeast	1.1	0.8
Midwest	1.2	1.2
South	0.8	0.7
West	1.0	1.0
Location of residence		
Urban	0.8	0.8
Suburban	0.8	0.6
Rural	1.2	1.1

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1995–2013.

APPENDIX TABLE 12

Standard errors for table 11: Number of female students ages 18 to 24 enrolled in post-secondary institutions according to the NCVS and NCES, 1997–2011

Year	National Crime Victimization Survey
1997	204,417
1998	185,721
1999	237,939
2000	205,519
2001	245,489
2002	294,786
2003	235,086
2004	269,608
2005	272,300
2006	260,057
2007	240,618
2008	234,551
2009	233,346
2010	243,656
2011	259,479

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 1997–2011.



“This course was developed from the public domain document: Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action: The White House Council on Women and Girls – The White House (2014).”

“This course was developed from the public domain document: Rape and Sexual Assault Victimization Among College-Age Females, 1995-2013 U.S Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (2014).”