

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK NEWS

Special Edition • Spring 2018



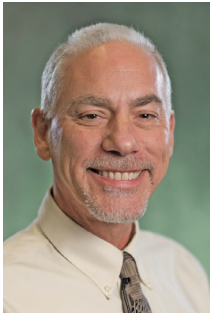
END
SEXUAL ASSAULT

SUPPORT
RESILIENCE

EFFECT
**CULTURE
CHANGE**

CONDUCT
ADVOCACY

PROMOTE
EQUITY AND JUSTICE



Dr. John Mooradian

Crisis Opens Door for **Crucial Change**

Dear Friends of the MSU School of Social Work,

Acknowledgment of decades of sexual abuse and sexual assault and the systems that enabled and perpetuated them has induced an overdue crisis in our community. I embrace the belief that this crisis creates a crucial opportunity for change.

Our School's students, staff, and faculty have united to support survivors and to build robust systems that provide protection, intervention, and advocacy. We helped plan and conduct a Dean's Town Hall for students. We worked with MSU Health4U, Work-Life Office, and Office of Institutional Equity to plan and conduct Reflect and Connect sessions for faculty, staff, and students. We continue to provide concrete support to our colleagues and their clients in MSU's Sexual Assault Program. We presented workshops to MSU faculty and staff to increase knowledge of sexual assault and respond to survivors, and recognize the grooming process used by perpetrators. Our students painted the rock and marched to build public awareness and support for survivors. Our faculty members continue to publish their research on violence against women, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and organizational structures, as well as policy advocacy. We are making recommendations to the top level of University administration, including the need for additional clinical resources for students. We are committed to ongoing support and effective social action.

As an extension of these efforts, we developed this special edition of the *School of Social Work News*. Within the confines of available space, we offer this special edition as an educational tool and resource.

You will find short articles that address topics related to sexual assault and systemic responses. We want you to recognize the tactics of predators, to understand the language of sexual violence and misconduct, and to build organizational structures and processes to prevent sexual assault. We want you to empathize with survivors of sexual trauma, know how to talk with survivors even if you're not a clinician, and be able to support individual and community resilience. We want you to know how to advocate for change when systems fail and require reorganization.

Here, you will also find messages from our BASW, MSW, and PhD students, and our staff. We hope these messages inspire you and encourage you to contribute to positive change.

We hope this edition encourages you to honor the courage of survivors who report sexual assault and to join our efforts to ensure social justice.

Best regards,

John Mooradian, PhD
Interim Director and Associate Professor
School of Social Work

A Mission of Social Justice and Positive Change: The MSU School of Social Work is dedicated to educating students for ethical, competent, responsive, and innovative social work practice, and to conducting and disseminating high quality research that improves the well-being of the most vulnerable in society. Our teaching, research, and outreach synergistically promote social justice, positive change, and solutions to the problems facing diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

“Survivors, Thank You for Your Bravery”

On January 24, 2018, Larry Nassar was sentenced to serve 40 to 175 years in prison on seven sexual assault charges. Over the course of seven days, 156 survivors gave victim-impact statements to the court before Judge Rosemarie Aquilina announced the sentence that would guarantee Nassar remains in prison for the rest of his life.

In response to the courage of the women who recounted their experiences, three social work students made the decision to honor the survivors by painting the iconic rock at the center of campus. BASW student Taylor Bonner and MSW students LaKeshia Bortz and Hermance Akono sent a message of appreciation along with names of many of the women who came forward and brought national attention to the issue of sexual assault.

Many of the victims felt betrayed by administrators, and Bonner stated that, “We painted the rock because we wanted to thank the survivors for being so brave. We also wanted to send the message that although the administration may not have supported them; we do.” Bonner added, “The three of us

just decided that in the midst of everything going on, we had to do something. The rock is a huge staple on MSU’s campus so we decided to bring awareness and show support through one of the most recognized places on campus.”

LaKeshia Bortz said, “To see how many others are also supportive and the impact the rock has made has been the best feeling. My hope is that students will continue to show their support for the survivors, not only of the Nassar case, but for all survivors of sexual assault.”

Hermance Akono said, “I’m still amazed at the response that we got and how such a small act turned out to mean a lot to our Spartan community. As a member of the MSU community, I am confident that we can mold the recent events into a learning experience and move on in harmony; moving forward is what I see as the most effective approach during this time, and there’s no doubt in my mind that the Spartan community will continue to do amazing things.”

Akono added, “We must never be silent on matters that harm members of our society.”



Photos credit: Charles Benoit and *The State News*

Below, front to back: **Hermance Akono, Taylor Bonner, and LaKeshia Bortz** write the names of the survivors.

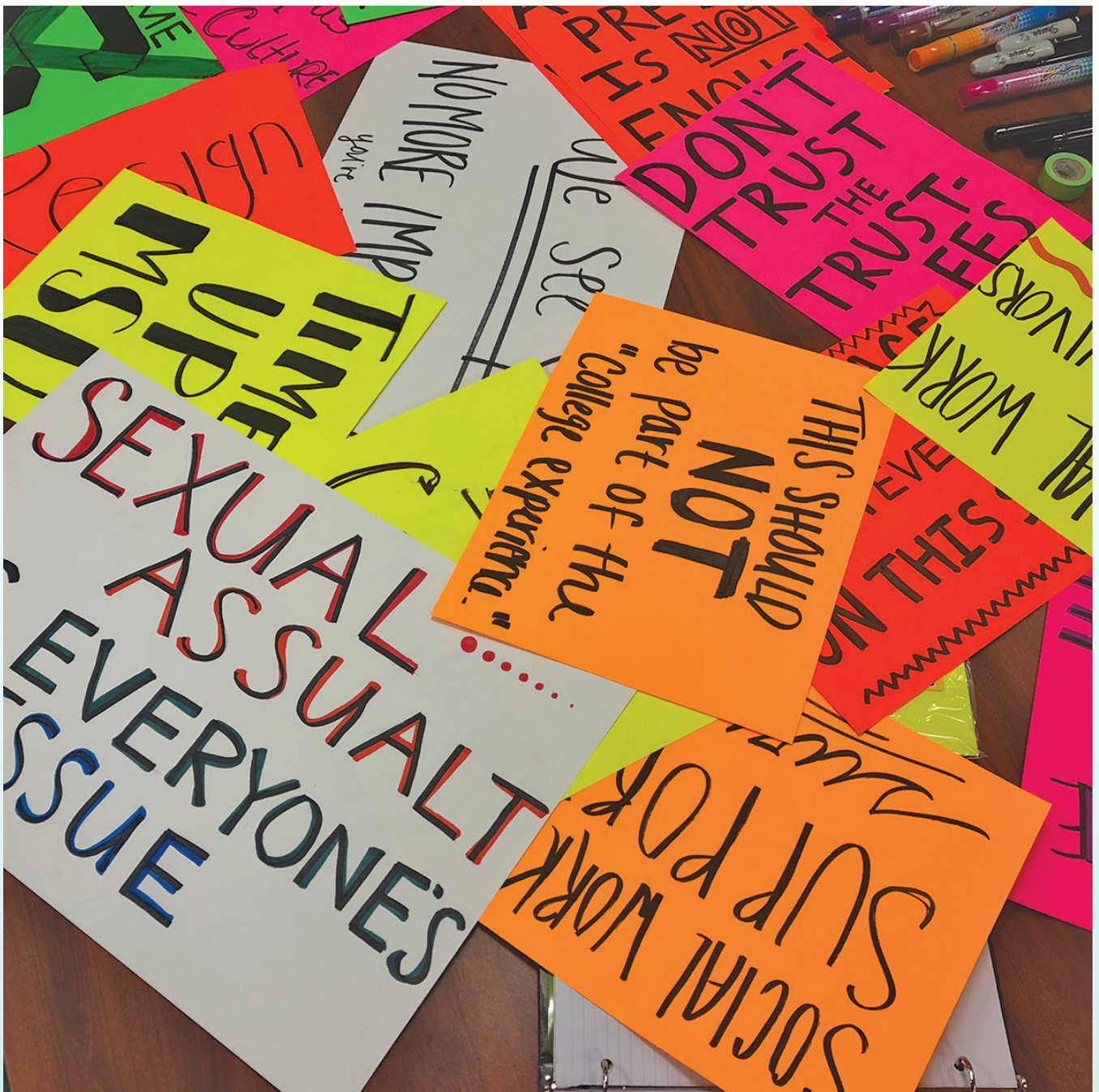


MSW Student LaKeshia Bortz:

“To see how many others are also supportive and the impact the rock has made has been the best feeling. My hope is that students will continue to show their support for the survivors, not only of the Nassar case, but for all survivors of sexual assault.”



Faculty, staff, and students from the School of Social Work and the College of Education converge at the Administration Building, advocating for representation and culture change with University leadership.



What Do We Know About Perpetrators of Sexual Violence?

By Angie Kennedy, PhD*



Dr. Angie Kennedy

Nearly one in five women in the U.S. has been raped in her lifetime, while one in 71 men report being raped; perpetrators are overwhelmingly likely to be male and known to the victim.¹ Age is a risk factor, with 80% of female victims first raped by the age of 24.¹ Survivors may experience self-blame and shame, and be met with disbelief and victim-blaming when they disclose what happened.²

Perpetrators of sexual violence against youth under 18 are typically family members, acquaintances, or dating partners; between 30-40% are minors themselves.^{3,4} *Individual-level risk factors* for perpetration include social deficits, sexualized coping, substance abuse, aggression, antisocial personality disorder, and cognitions that minimize responsibility or support offending. At the *family level*, key risk factors include the perpetrator's own history of sexual abuse, childhood experiences of physical abuse and/or harsh discipline within the family, family discord, poor caregiver-child attachment, and dysfunctional communication.^{5,6}

What tactics do perpetrators against minors use? *Adult offenders* can be categorized into two core groups: situational offenders, which are more common, and preferential offenders.⁷ *Situational offenders* include men who may be experiencing external stressors, such as unemployment; they tend to target victims who are easily accessible such as family members, may or may not prefer minors over adults, and tend to use people indiscriminately to further their own interests. *Preferential adult offenders* include men who prefer sex with minors. They may be compulsively fixated on prepubescent children (i.e., pedophiles); groom children or adolescents by giving them affection, gifts, and so on, in order to gain their trust, isolate them, and have a "relationship" with them; or behave sadistically, targeting stranger victims.⁷ *Juvenile offenders* typically have a different behavioral profile than adults, and include those who target prepubescent children and use bribes, threats, and tricks to obtain access to victims, usually family members, as well as perpetrators who victimize female peers, including acquaintances and dating partners.^{7,8}

Perpetrators against adult women are typically either intimate partners or acquaintances/friends; they may use coercion, force, or the threat of force, or the victim may be unable to give consent due to drugs or alcohol.¹ *Individual-level risk factors for perpetration* include sex-related behaviors such as impersonal attitudes toward sex, exposure to sexually explicit media, and arousal to deviant/aggressive stimuli; factors in the cognitive domain include victim blaming, lack of empathy, traditional rape-supportive, hypermasculine, and adversarial attitudes, and acceptance of violence; additionally, alcohol is a risk factor.⁹ At the *family level*, risks include child maltreatment, exposure to family violence, and poor relationship with parents.⁹ *Peer influences* also play a role, with hypermasculine, all-male peer groups (e.g., fraternities, athletic teams, gangs) linked to social norms that support objectification of women and sexual violence.⁹ Finally, within *intimate partner relationships*, risks for perpetration of sexual violence include the use of coercive control and other forms of violence within the relationship, as well as poor communication and avoidance coping.⁹

¹Black MC, Basile KC, Breiding MJ, et al. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 summary report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC 2011.

²Kennedy AC, Prock KA. "I still feel like I am not normal": A review of the role of stigma and stigmatization among female survivors of child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 2016; advance online publication: doi: 10.1177/1524838016673601.

³Douglas EM, Finkelhor D. Childhood sexual abuse fact sheet. Durham, NH: Crimes Against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire 2005.

⁴Drake G, McGarrell E. Child sexual victimization: Michigan's Incident Crime Reporting (MICR) 2013. East Lansing, MI: Michigan Statistical Analysis Center, MSU, and the Michigan State Police 2013.

⁵Whitaker D, Le B, Hanson RK, et al. Risk factors for the perpetration of child sexual abuse: A review and meta-analysis. *Child Abuse & Neglect* 2008; 32: 529-548.

⁶Wurtele SK, Kenny MC. Preventing child sexual abuse: An ecological approach. In P. Goodyear-Brown (Ed.), *Handbook of child sexual abuse: Identification, assessment, and treatment* (pp. 531-566). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons 2012.

⁷Robertiello G, Terry KJ. Can we profile sex offenders? A review of sex offender typologies. *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 2007; 12: 508-518.

⁸Hunter JA, Figueredo AJ, Malamuth NM, et al. Juvenile sex offenders: Toward the development of a typology. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment* 2003; 15: 27-48.

⁹Teten Tharp A, DeGue S, Valle LA, et al. A systematic qualitative review of risk and protective factors for sexual violence perpetration. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 2012; 14: 133-167.

*The information on sexual violence against minors has been adapted from the report, which I co-authored, from the Michigan Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children:

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/ReportRecommendations_491970_7.pdf

Conducting Safe Classroom Discussions on Sexual Assault

By Carrie Moylan, PhD



Dr. Carrie Moylan

As social workers, many of us have heard the adage to ask clients “What happened to you?” instead of “What is wrong with you?” Implicit in this is the assumption that the surface-level behaviors, actions, and emotions of clients are often symptoms of deeper, traumatic, and difficult life experiences. Understanding that the present is fueled by underlying hurts enables us to be more compassionate and ultimately more successful in assisting clients in their healing. In other words, the saying encourages that we take a

trauma-informed approach to our work. SAMHSA defines a trauma-informed approach as one that: (1) realizes both how widespread trauma is and the impact it has, (2) recognizes the symptoms of trauma, (3) responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and (4) actively resists re-traumatization.

In the wake of the trial of Larry Nassar, the MSU community began reckoning with how abuse of this nature and on this scale was perpetrated in our community. I found myself teaching a class on organization and community crisis intervention at the very moment that the MSU community was experiencing this crisis of immense proportions. Prior to becoming a professor, I worked for seven years as a counselor and advocate with survivors of sexual and domestic violence, and I have spent the last decade researching how communities and campuses prevent and respond to sexual violence. In other words, I felt prepared to make a safe space for my students to talk about what was happening in our community. We had a productive, enlightening, and hopefully empowering conversation that left me feeling proud and hopeful about the future of social work in the hands of our students.

The experience also left me wondering how others sympathetic to the need to help our students process this crisis, but who bring less experience, training, and knowledge about the dynamics of sexual violence, were managing these conversations. As others across the University similarly identified a need for support for faculty and staff engaging in conversations with students, I was invited to provide a workshop on a trauma-informed approach to classroom discussions about sexual assault. Following the four pillars of a trauma-informed approach, I focused the workshop on helping faculty understand the extent of sexual assault among college students, recognizing the impact of trauma, and how to incorporate this knowledge into classroom discussions in a way that limits re-traumatization of student survivors.

Numerous rigorous studies have found that 20% of female college students and 6% of male students experience sexual assault, defined as an unwanted sexual encounter such as unwanted touching, attempted rape, or completed rape. Rates are higher for gay, bisexual, and transgender students, disabled students, and others with intersecting minority identities. Sexual assault is consistently linked to depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, relationship difficulties, and poor academic performance.

Research also shows that survivors can be positively or negatively impacted by the nature of the responses they receive from those with whom they share their experience. When friends, family, and helping professionals respond with compassion, belief, and support, survivors are more likely to seek additional help. However, if survivors are

Concrete tips for a trauma-informed classroom discussion include:

- Give students **advance warning** of a discussion so survivors are not caught off guard.
- **Structure the discussion** so students opt in, which allows survivors who are concerned about their ability to participate without being triggered to opt out of the discussion without drawing attention to themselves (as they might if they had to get up and leave class).
- Notify students up front about **faculty duty to be a mandatory reporter** so that students understand what will happen if they disclose an experience.
- **Share campus resources**, including confidential resources where students can disclose without triggering an official report.
- Infuse the discussion with **research-based information** about sexual assault and be prepared to dismantle common myths about sexual assault.
- **Consider how you will intervene** if students engage in victim blaming or other potentially damaging discussion.
- Understand your reporting responsibilities and **be prepared to respond** to survivors with empathy and caring.
- Offer **opportunities for students to debrief** with you after the classroom discussion.



L-R: Junior **Sadie Shattuck** and Seniors **Anya Niehaus** and **Claire Plagens**.

responded to with victim blaming, disbelief, or an attempt to control or limit their choices, survivors can experience heightened trauma symptoms. Researchers have recently identified a phenomenon called “institutional betrayal,” or the feeling that an institution was negligent in its obligation to prevent or adequately respond to sexual assault. Research shows that trauma symptoms are worse for survivors who experience institutional betrayal, and that some students, such as LGBT students, are more likely to report institutional betrayal.

Every college classroom and every group of students likely includes survivors, and, therefore, our classroom discussions become opportunities to either promote healing or potentially create re-traumatization. As instructors, we bear some responsibility for creating structures that incorporate an understanding of trauma and limit re-traumatization.

For more information about how to effectively manage safe conversations, we recommend:

- Moylan, C. A. & Javorka, M. (2018). Widening the lens: An ecological review of campus sexual assault. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. doi: 10.1177/1524838018756121
- Moylan, C. A. (2017). “I fear I’m a checkbox”: College and university victim advocates’ perspectives of campus rape reforms. *Violence Against Women*, 23, 1122-1139. doi: 10.1177/1077801216655623

Tips for Responding to Disclosure

Address and establish safety

- Find a private space to talk.
- Be open and listen. Avoid asking directive or leading questions.
- Follow the lead of the survivor and go at their pace.
- Avoid physical touch.
- Maintain open body language and use non-verbal skills to show you are listening.

Believe the survivor and offer support

- “I believe you.”
- “I am glad you are telling me.”

Provide support for overwhelming emotion

- Normalize the emotions.
- Provide an opportunity for grounding (deep breathing, engage senses).
- Brainstorm other coping methods such as relaxation, meditation, yoga.

How to Prevent Sexual Violence and Respond Effectively at the Systems Level

By Angie Kennedy, PhD, and Carrie Moylan, PhD



Dr. Angie Kennedy

In order for prevention efforts to be effective, they must be comprehensive and evidence-based, address community norms, and emphasize outcomes and accountability.^{1,2} It is also crucial to shift prevention efforts from a focus on victims to a focus on perpetrators;² systems responses must be victim-centered and trauma-informed—believing survivors when they come

forward is the first, critical step. A promising approach to *preventing sexual violence against minors* is the Spectrum of Prevention approach.³ This model has been used to address injury prevention, child deaths, violence prevention, safe driving among adolescents, and other social problems. Its core components are:

- Influencing policy and legislation
- Changing organizational practices
- Fostering coalitions and networks
- Educating providers
- Promoting community education
- Strengthening individual knowledge and skills^{3,4}

Communities and organizations can *respond effectively to sexual violence against minors* by developing a coordinated, systems-level protocol that includes identifying key community partners, prioritizing the needs and well-being of survivors, holding perpetrators accountable for their actions, understanding community norms and available resources, and institutionalizing and monitoring their coordinated response efforts.⁵ Schools and other youth-serving organizations should focus on identifying and appropriately responding to reports of abuse: Staff play a critical role in believing and supporting survivors, as well as reporting abuse to the proper authorities. Further, these organizations have a role in responding to alleged perpetrators who are employees, volunteers, or participants in the organization.⁵

The public health field has demonstrated that *effective primary prevention programs*, meaning programs targeted at stopping violence before it happens, have a number of characteristics in common. Effective programs are comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, socio-culturally relevant, include positive relationship development, use



Dr. Carrie Moylan



Sadie Shattuck, dual major in the Residential College for the Arts and Humanities and School of Social Work:

“Before I participated in the making of the advocacy posters and the march, I was feeling very helpless to the whole situation. I had mixed feelings, as I was happy that Nassar had been sentenced the week before, but yet our university seemed farther away from healed than it was before the sentence. The space of creating the posters and participating in the march was the first time I felt like I could make a difference on campus, let my voice be heard, and that there was a space for me in this movement. Afterwards, I felt empowered to get more involved and since, I have done exactly that.”

If the young women abused by Dr. Nassar had been believed and supported when allegations first arose in the 1990s, and MSU and other involved institutions had responded appropriately to the alleged perpetration, many young women would have been spared.

varied teaching methods, are administered by well-trained staff, are of sufficient dosage, and are driven by theory and evaluation.⁶ The *most promising primary sexual assault prevention program for college aged populations* is bystander intervention, which teaches participants how to recognize situations that are potentially risky, overcome barriers to intervening, and select (and implement) actions meant to intervene in the risk.⁷ Increasingly, research is finding that these pro-social bystander intervention programs may reduce victimization rates on campuses when it is delivered in a way that is consistent with these principles of effective prevention.⁸

In addition to adopting comprehensive, evidence-based primary prevention programs, campuses also have obligations to create response systems that adequately address the harms of sexual violence, as outlined in federal laws like Title IX. One of the lessons of the conversations about campus sexual assault that have occurred in the last seven years is that when campuses fail to uphold their responsibilities, either by failing to prevent sexual assault or by responding inadequately after it has occurred, they create the potential for survivors to feel a sense of institutional betrayal, which research shows is associated with increased trauma symptoms.⁹

Building organizations that take seriously the institutional responsibility to prevent and respond to sexual assault

takes institutional courage. Institutions can show courage by listening to survivors and believing them, designing policies and programs that account for the impact of trauma and resist re-traumatizing survivors, acknowledging campus characteristics that may increase risk, and striving for innovative ways to both meet legal mandates and respond to survivors in ways that acknowledge their self-determination, humanity, and worth.

¹Wandersman A, Florin P. Community interventions and effective prevention. *American Psychologist* 2003; 58: 441-448.

²Wurtele S K. Preventing sexual abuse of children in the twenty-first century: Preparing for challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 2009; 18: 1-18.

³Lyles A, Cohen L, Brown M. Transforming communities to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation: A primary prevention approach. Oakland, CA: Prevention Institute 2009.

⁴Kenny M C, Wurtele SK. Preventing childhood sexual abuse: An ecological approach. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 2012; 21: 361-367.

⁵Report of the Michigan Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children. Available: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/ReportRecommendations_491970_7.pdf

⁶Nation M et al. What works in prevention: Principles of effective prevention programs. *American Psychologist* 2003; 58: 449.

⁷DeGue S, et al. A systematic review of primary prevention strategies for sexual violence perpetration. *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 2014; 19: 346-362.

⁸Coker A, et al. Evaluation of the Green Dot bystander intervention to reduce interpersonal violence among college students across three campuses. *Violence Against Women* 2015; 21:1507-1527.

⁹Smith CP, Freyd JJ. Dangerous safe havens: Institutional betrayal exacerbates sexual trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 2013; 26: 119-124.



Anya Niehaus, School of Social Work:

“I think it’s important to keep pushing for change at MSU; just because President Simon resigned does not mean that other necessary changes are being made in how the University handles sexual assault. Through continued marches and other activities, hopefully the administration realizes that we as a student body are still paying attention and expect them to take our concerns seriously. I think these efforts are also a way to show support to survivors, which is equally important.”

Understanding and Responding to Sexual Assault Through a Trauma Lens

By Amanda Dubey-Zerka, LMSW; Cheryl Williams-Hecksel, LMSW; and Tana Fedewa, LMSW, Sexual Assault Program Coordinator

The initial response to sexual abuse or assault is often denial and shock. Reactions to traumatic events vary, and exposure to traumatic stress can overwhelm a person's ability to cope and lead to symptoms that include avoidance, hyper-arousal and re-experiencing.

Factors that influence the likelihood of developing symptoms include the severity of the incident, the response of others to the incident and report, community supports, exposure to other trauma, personal protective factors, and resilience.



Amanda Dubey-Zerka



Cheryl Williams-Hecksel



Tana Fedewa

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is the emotional and physical stress that results when an individual hears about or is exposed to the first-hand trauma experiences of another (NCTSN.org). Service providers,

family members and other members of the community experience this exposure, which can lead to symptoms that mirror trauma reactions.

Common Reactions to Trauma

- Fear, shame and hopelessness
- Feeling unsafe and an exaggerated fear response
- Unpredictable and overwhelming emotions
- Numbing or disconnecting from experiences
- Nightmares, flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, and memories
- Physical symptoms such as headaches and nausea
- Anxiety and depression
- Strained relationships and difficulties with trust

How to Choose a Therapist

- Ask for referrals from trusted friends, colleagues, or medical professionals
- Meet with the therapist or do a phone interview prior to your first session to assess the fit
- Inquire about their experience and preparation for treating trauma

Strategies to Prevent and Manage Secondary Traumatic Stress

Individually

- Establish and maintain diverse interests, activities and relationships
- Stress management strategies including relaxation, meditation, exercise, yoga, etc
- Use reflective practices to develop awareness around signs and symptoms of secondary traumatic stress exposure
- Develop and maintain personal self-care plan that includes healthy diet, exercise, sleep and strategies to reduce the impact of stress
- Develop and maintain personal and professional support systems
- Engage in activities that are empowering and promote recovery from trauma for self and others

What Organizations Can Do

- Keep work and caseload manageable
- Provide supports and supervision
- Allow staff control over their work
- Provide adequate time off
- Provide and promote opportunities for self-care during the work day



Trauma-informed Response

Trauma informed responses use active listening and empathy to establish safety and provide support. It is also important to connect the person disclosing to an advocate who can provide education about rights, options for reporting, medical intervention, resources, and other supports.

The MSU School of Social Work Continuing Education Program will provide clinical training in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), and Seeking Safety in the summer and fall of 2018. To learn more, visit <https://socialwork.msu.edu/ceu/catalog.php> or email us at swkce@msu.edu.

Access to Therapy

High quality therapy provides a safe space to process reactions, identify coping skills, and in time, heal from trauma. Finding a well-trained therapist can be a challenge, especially if this is the first time one is accessing services. When seeking therapy services for a survivor, or for yourself, there are a number of factors to consider (see previous page).

Evidence-based Practice for Trauma Treatment

A number of models for trauma treatment have research evidence to support their effectiveness. Evidence-based practice models have a number of common elements, which include a focus on establishing and maintaining safety, managing overwhelming emotions, processing and making meaning of the traumatic experience, and enhancing social and emotional functioning (Cook et. al.)

You can learn more about specific evidence-based models for treating both child and adult trauma on the webpage of the California Evidence Based Clearinghouse, <http://www.cebc4cw.org/>.

Take Action to Support Healthy Relationships



For you



For your loved ones



For your community

Why Do Healthy Relationships Matter?

21%

21% of female and 10% of male high school students who date reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence from a dating partner in the last 12 months.¹

23% of women and 15% of men who reported physical or sexual violence or stalking from an intimate partner said they first experienced this violence before age 18.²

23%

5 Keys of Healthy Relationships



Respect

Promote & model healthy attitudes & relationships

“ My actions show my values. I treat others the way I want to be treated. ”



Learn

Access credible information and resources to promote your overall health

“ When I have a question I find information from a trusted source. ”



Empower

Everyone has the right to set limits, feel safe, and get support - including you

“ I deserve to be respected and listened to. ”



Consent

Seek mutual agreement without fear or pressure

“ I ask for consent. If it's not clear I ask, "Are you comfortable? Is this ok?" ”



Communicate

Express yourself to partners, peers, and family

“ I can talk openly and honestly with people I trust. If I notice something is wrong, I speak up. ”

Prevention is possible!

We can all help create a culture of respect and equity.

Show your support for Sexual Assault Awareness Month
Learn more: www.nsvrc.org/saam



¹Naji, K. J., Olsen, E. O. M., Basile, K. C., & Vivolo-Kantor, A. M. (2015). Teen dating violence (physical and sexual) among US high school students: findings from the 2013 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey. *JAMA pediatrics*, 169(3), 494-498.

²Reidling, M. J. (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* (Washington, DC: 2002), 63(8), 1.



Dr. Sacha Klein

Advocating for **Better Campus Sexual Assault Policy**

By Sacha Klein, PhD

Students, staff, alumni, faculty, and administrators can influence campus sexual assault policies and practices. The following action steps outline how to advocate for policies to prevent sexual assault and support the needs of survivors.

Assess Adequacy of Existing Policies and Practices¹

- Does the institution have a specific sexual assault policy?
- Does the policy include a comprehensive definition of sexual assault and related concepts like “consent” and “incapacity”?
- How accessible is the policy to diverse members of the campus community (e.g., individuals with disabilities and non-English speakers)?
- Does the policy stipulate that those leading institutional investigations or hearings must be trained on issues of sexual violence?
- Does the policy address conflict of interest for those responsible for investigating and following up on a report of sexual assault?
- Does the institution’s policy spell out exactly what will happen when a sexual assault complaint is made by a member of the campus community and how the institution will respond to the person making the complaint?
- Does the policy detail the complainant’s rights in both reporting sexual assault and in the institution’s follow-up process, for instance through a Survivor/Victim’s Bill of Rights?
- Contrary to best practice, does the policy include mediation as a potential response to a complaint?





- Does the policy outline the measures the institution will take to protect complainants and the campus community while a complaint is being investigated?
- Does the investigation and/or hearing process force complainants to be involved in the adjudication process?
- Does the policy state that the complainant, not just the accused, has the right to representation, a support person or an advocate in hearings and/or investigations?
- Does the policy state that lesser violations of institutional policies on the part of the complainant (e.g., alcohol policies) will be excused in a case of sexual assault?
- Does the policy explicitly prevent irrelevant inquiries into the complainant's sexual history?
- Does the policy say a complainant has the right to be informed of the result of an investigation, hearing, or disciplinary process?
- Does the policy say a complainant, as well as the accused, has the right to appeal the decision of hearings, and/or investigations?
- Is there a robust process for monitoring the school's adherence to the policy and meaningful consequences for failure to do so?
- Are all members of the campus community, including recently matriculated students, routinely trained and regularly re-trained on the policy?
- Do members of the campus community receive evidence-informed "bystander" training regarding how to intervene to prevent sexual assault in a timely fashion?

Identify a Policy Change Goal

Identify a specific policy and how it needs to be changed or a policy that should exist but doesn't. Your goal may stem from your assessment, input from survivors, a policy implemented by another institution, or your own creative thinking. Regardless of the source, you should review this goal with people who will be most affected (e.g., survivors and their family members).

Identify Your Change Target(s)

Determine who has the power to make the policy change. Is it the university president, provost, board of trustees, residential life office, law enforcement, counseling center, or someone else? Also identify a secondary change target that has power over your primary target.

Select and Implement Tactics

Tactics are specific activities designed to convince or pressure change target(s) to make a policy change. Consider which types of tactics are likely to work best in your specific situation and how you will escalate tactics, if necessary, as well as social costs associated with them.

- Educational tactics provide information to a change target (including factsheets, infographics, policy briefs grounded in research, and/or a face-to-face meeting) to summarize the strongest evidence, using stories and data.
- Positive pressure tactics reward a change target (including favorable press, endorsement, and partnership) for implementing the policy change.
- Conflict tactics punish or threaten to punish a change target (including marches, rallies, sit-ins, walk-outs, strikes, boycotts, funding withdrawal, and demands that a change target resign or be fired) until they make the policy change.

Assess and Regroup

Change, particularly meaningful change, is rarely easy and almost always requires persistence. If your first efforts to advocate for better sexual assault policies on campus fail, don't give up. Critically review your efforts, identify what went wrong, gather your allies, strategize ways to expand your coalition, try new tactics, and ask for help from sympathetic experts (e.g., social workers, public policy experts, lawyers), many of whom are members of your institution.

For more information about how to effectively advocate for policy change, we recommend:

- Lane, S.R., & Pritzker, S. (2018). *Political social work: Using power to create social change*. New York: Springer.
- Community Toolbox: Chapters 30-35 and the "Advocating for Change" toolkit.

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When Leadership Listens: Engaging with Students Around Issues of Sexual Assault, Systemic Power and Control, and Oppression

By Stephanie McCann, LMSW

Town Halls are occurring at MSU in many disciplines as a result of the need to listen to students after Larry Nassar's sexual abuse. MSU students are demanding to be heard by the Board of Trustees, the administration, and by the collective MSU community. Students are speaking their truth in complete authenticity. They are demanding answers about why women of color, and queer and trans women are not valued, heard, or protected on campus. They are speaking out about micro-aggressions on campus, biases against students of color, and blatant racism. They are sharing their experiences living within a system that has thrived on power and control.

When leadership, specifically administrators, are holding Town Halls for students to share their truth, they must remember that the lived experiences of one do not need to be fully understood by another in order for empathy, listening, and action to occur. Administrators have an opportunity to be agents of change when they listen to students and enact change as a result of listening.

Administrators need to welcome students' voices without enforcing polite rules, allowing students to speak authentically. Administrators need to be transparent, communicating to students if the Town Hall is recorded, if notes are being taken, or if the event is live streamed. Students need to know that there are no promises of confidentiality during a Town Hall. Students need to know who is attending the Town Hall and who is responding to their statements.

They need to know that they are heard and valued through the administrator's empathy and active listening. Students need to know that there are no repercussions for sharing during the Town Hall. Students need to be met with faculty and staff at the Town Hall who represent their own diversity. Students need to understand the process for filing a Title IX report. Students need a safe place to go if they are triggered by the discussion, including a separate room next to the Town Hall where trauma-informed mental health providers are available. Students need supportive resources both on and off campus. Students need to know what the administrator's next steps are.

When administrators hold Town Halls, they need to be prepared to listen to stories of betrayal, stories of survivors, and stories of oppression. And they need to be prepared to respond.



Stephanie McCann

A message to MSU Alumni

By Stephanie McCann, LMSW

Editor's note: This message communicates one Spartan's reaction to disclosures of the scale of sexual assaults and institutional responses in our MSU community. It is included here to encourage other Spartans to raise their own voices.

The actions of a perpetrator are not MSU. The actions of administrators are not MSU. The institutional trauma created by a culture of avoidance is not MSU. The alumni who dedicate their lives to bettering society, the students we teach, the faculty we work with, and the staff who support every corner of this community—WE are MSU.

How do we reconcile being a Spartan with the harm caused to so many people at the hands of someone who called himself a Spartan? How do we put on our Green and not feel embarrassment, anger, or shame?

It is in remembering that a perpetrator does not have the power to define the MSU community. It is in remembering that people who may have covered up a perpetrator's abuse do not have the power to define the MSU community.

I am reaffirming what it means to be a Spartan. Being a Spartan means having deep empathy, it means speaking our truth, it means believing one another, and it means showing up when we feel most vulnerable. No one gets to push me out of MSU.

I am an MSU alumna, an MSU faculty member, and an MSU parent. I am a social worker who strives to help others find their healthiest self. I am a therapist who works with families when child sexual abuse occurs.

To say that sexual abuse at MSU is personal to me would be an understatement. It is betrayal. It is a reminder of my own empathy for the courage it takes to speak one's truth without attachment to the judgment of others. I am a Spartan, and I still bleed Green. Spartans Listen. Spartans Believe Others. Spartans Show Empathy.

A Message to the MSU Community from **Grad SAC**

This past September, the Graduate Student Advisory Committee (Grad SAC) formed with the hopes of creating a sense of community for students and raising the visibility of our program on and off campus. Our efforts began at a crucial time, as we have since been profoundly affected by knowledge of the horrible abuses that occurred at MSU and the heartbreaking stories of the survivors.

Driven by social work values and ethics, it is *Grad SAC's* intention to be at the forefront of addressing the issue of sexual assault on campus, while simultaneously creating a space where students are encouraged to voice their concerns and work together toward solutions.

To that end, we have sponsored a number of community organizing initiatives, including the Radical Roots, Radical Directions discussion series, which launched with a conversation on sexual assault. Grad SAC also conducted a poll to determine MSW student concerns related to sexual assault on campus, which ultimately informed the creation of a collaborative statement from the MSU MSW student community to be sent to the Board of Trustees, as well as an op-ed addressing the systemic barriers to sexual assault treatment and prevention.

For more information on Grad SAC or to join our efforts, please contact swgsac@msu.edu.

MSU School of Social Work **PhD** Students speak out

Over the past year, the #MeToo movement has gained significant traction and turned the national spotlight on the high prevalence of sexual assault within the public discourse. Yet, Tarana Burke founded #MeToo in 2007. #MeToo started with one individual but snowballed into a collective national reckoning with sexual assault over the past decade.

Larry Nassar is one individual that systematically sexually assaulted countless young girls and women spanning decades; it is now glaringly apparent that there were routine individual and institutional factors that failed to stop his crimes. Emerging research in this area has demonstrated that campus-level factors correlate to campus sexual assault perpetration rates; MSU is not immune to this.

As doctoral students that specifically chose MSU School of Social Work because of the highly revered faculty and their expertise on sexual assault at the individual and institutional levels, as well as supporting vulnerable populations, we too are committed to this mission. As future faculty and academic scholars, we will support and hear the testimony of sexual assault survivors, shed light on the dynamics of sexual assault, and advocate for radical change in a broken system.

We see you. We hear you. We will support you.

Ongoing Support **Post-Disclosure**

- **Empower the survivor** and focus on strengths.
- **Offer choices** and avoid telling the survivor what they need to do or say.
- **Follow the lead** of the survivor and go at their pace.
- **Be present** and available.

Dear MSU Community,

As support staff within the MSU School of Social Work, we are here to support others in any way possible. With so many layers to these prolonged injustices, we find ourselves at a loss in wondering how we can be of service. Although we may not have the clinical background to provide direct support, we are joining the call for solidarity. We are committed to providing our resourcefulness in helping direct individuals to appropriate sources for assistance. Collectively, we have a great deal of knowledge within the School of Social Work and vow to confidentially assist in helping to identify the appropriate faculty resource within that can provide the best support for the situation at hand. *Ask us—we can help!*

Respectfully sincere,

The MSU School of Social Work Support Staff

Mary Aymor, Administrative Assistant, Continuing Education
Tony Beyers, Communications Director
Amanda Cartter, Academic Program Coordinator, Graduate Office
Nancy Gray, Business Manager, Office Supervisor
Quinn Kroll, Academic Program Coordinator, Graduate Office
Bart Moore, Research Administrator
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Brooke Pline, Secretary, Main Office 2nd Floor
Aubree Rogers, Administrative Assistant, Field Education
Pat Talbot, Executive Secretary, Director's Office
Debbie Vasicek, Secretary, Undergraduate Office
Tim Woods, IT Technology Manager

Creating Space to Reflect and Connect to **Support Resilience**

By Lisa Laughman, LMSW, Emotional Wellness Consultant, MSU Health4U Program



Lisa Laughman

When something traumatic happens, people tend to turn inward. People suffer in isolation, and the resulting sense of disconnection can lead to depression, anger, and/or hopelessness. People are at risk of developing a case of “terminal uniqueness” in that they think they are the only ones feeling what they feel, thinking what they think, or acting like they are acting.

The field of critical incident stress debriefing indicates that talking to others to process experience and receive empathy lessens the likelihood of post-traumatic stress.

In response to many difficult national and local events, including awareness of systematic sexual assaults, MSU faculty and staff members have been coming together in Reflect and Connect sessions organized by the MSU Worklife Office, Employee Assistance Program, and the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives. Most recently, a Reflect and Connect session called “A moment of pause” was held for faculty and staff. A student version of Reflect and Connect called “IDK What to Do!” was also held to provide space for students to be in community together around these issues.

Creating intentional spaces for people to reflect on what is happening and connect together in a sense of community is a vital part of increasing the resilience of any system or organization. Social workers can play a key role in creating intentional spaces for people to come together to reflect and connect.

For more information on the Reflect and Connect Model being used at Michigan State University, created in partnership by the MSU Employee Assistance Program, Worklife Office, and Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives, contact **Lisa Laughman**, LMSW, laughman@msu.edu, 517-355-4673.

Things to consider when creating an **intentional healing and conversation space**

- Be clear about what the space is intended for (and what it isn't intended for).
- Be specific about the focus of the conversation.
- Create, or have the participants create, agreed-upon guidelines for safety (recognizing that there is no guarantee for safety that you can provide).
- Identify key questions for the small group discussions and provide time frames for discussion of each question.
- Structure large-group sharing about feelings and stress reactions so that these can be “normalized” by facilitators.
- Have clinically trained professionals available should someone need support.
- Close the conversation with a review of self-care strategies and available emotional support resources.

School of Social Work news **when, where, and how you want it**



Resources

Available 24 hours/day • Confidential service

RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE RESOURCES

MSU Safe Place

- Business office (517) 355-1100 ext. 2
- Shelter or immediate support (517) 355-1100
- Advocacy and follow-up (517) 432-9570 or (517) 353-9999
- Community education, volunteer opportunities, counseling, support group, temporary emergency shelter, and advocacy.
- All services are free and confidential.

End Violent Encounters, Inc. [EVE, Inc.] (517) 372-5572

- Shelter, support & community education programs for the Greater Lansing area.
- All services are free and confidential.

SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCES

MSU Sexual Assault 24-Hour Hotline (517) 372-6666

- Support, advocacy, and information for all members of the campus community.
- All services are free and confidential.

MSU Sexual Assault Program (517) 355-3551

- Individual and group counseling, consultation regarding sexual assault trauma, and educational programs offered.
- All services are free and confidential.

Office of Institutional Equity (517) 353-3922

Where to report sexual assault on campus; sexual assault investigations.

Olin Health Center (517) 353-1733

- The Center for Sexual Health Promotion at Olin aims to provide accurate information about sexual wellness.
- Confidential HIV and STI testing.

Sparrow Hospital Sexual Assault Clinic (517) 364-3641 or (517) 285-2203 Emergency (517) 364-3729

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) on staff. Go to Sparrow ER and ask for a SANE nurse if assault is less than 72 hours old.

CRISIS HELP LINES & COUNSELING SERVICES

MSU Sexual Assault 24-Hour Hotline (517) 372-6666

MSU Safe Place (517) 355-1100

LBGT Hotline (517) 332-3200

MSU Counseling Center (517) 355-8270

EVE, Inc. (517) 372-5572

LEGAL SERVICES

Legal Services of South Central Michigan (517) 394-3121

Provides custody and divorce assistance.

Personal Protection Order Office (517) 483-6545

- For Ingham County residents, free support on obtaining a personal protection order through the courts and signed by a judge.
- Assists victims in filling out orders at no charge, only open during business hours.

EVE, Inc. (517) 372-5572 or MSU Safe Place (517) 355-1100

Can accompany victims to court hearings or explain the legal process.

ASMSU Legal Services (517) 355-8266

Provides MSU students with completely free legal consultation. Lawyers can give advice and represent you in court.

POLICE SERVICES EMERGENCY: 911

MSU Department of Police and Public Safety (517) 355-2221

East Lansing Police Department (517) 351-4220

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Ingham County Emergency Services (517) 372-8460 or (800) 372-8460

Sparrow Hospital Mental Health Center (517) 482-6570

SEXUAL HARASSMENT RESOURCES

Office of Institutional Equity (517) 353-3922

MSU Sexual Assault Program (517) 355-3551

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Night Owl (517) 432-8888

Provides late night/early morning campus service at times when other CATA bus services are not running.

Self Defense (517) 355-5250

Free self-defense workshop provides common sense and practical information regarding sexual assault prevention.

MSU Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Office (517) 353-3903

The ATOD Program is committed to reducing the negative impact associated with substance abuse, while cultivating a health-affirming environment at MSU.

MSU Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (517) 432-2471

File a formal complaint or seek conflict resolution.

National Sexual Assault Hotline 800-656-HOPE

Operated by RAINN, serves people affected by sexual violence, automatically routes the caller to their nearest sexual assault service provider.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-TALK (8255); Spanish line call 888-628-9454; TTY: 800-799-4TTY (4889)

Provides crisis suicide intervention, self-harm counseling and assistance, and local mental health referrals. Calls are routed to local centers.

Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy

Glossary

Michigan State University Office of Institutional Equity (Revised: January 2018)

Key terms used in the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy are defined below and in relevant sections throughout the Policy.

An Act of Violence: An instance of physical force against another person.

Coercion: The use of an unreasonable amount of pressure to gain sexual access. Coercion goes beyond efforts to persuade, entice, or attract another person. When a person makes it clear that they have decided not to participate in our continue participating in a particular sexual act or engage in sexual contact or that they do not wish to go beyond a particular sexual act or type of sexual contact, continued pressure can be coercive.

In evaluation whether coercion was used, the University will consider: (i) the frequency of the application of the pressure, (ii) the intensity of the pressure, (iii) the degree of isolation of the person being pressured, and (iv) the duration of the pressure.

Consent: The voluntary, willful, and unambiguous agreement to engage in a specific sexual activity during a sexual encounter. For more information, review section X.E. of the RVSM Policy.

Continuing Adverse Effect: Causing or threatening to cause a substantial negative impact on the safety of the University community or the functions, services, or property of the University. This would include, but is not limited to, causing an unreasonable interference with the educational or work environment of members of the University community. This includes causing a continuing adverse effect on (1) an individual or (2) on the campus generally. The assessment of continuing adverse effect will consider effects at any time following the incident including at the time the incident is reported.

Course of Conduct: Two or more acts directed at a person or persons.

Dating Violence: An act of violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic, sexual, or intimate nature with the victim that does not fall within the definition of “domestic violence.” For the purposes of this definition:

- Whether the relationship is of a romantic, sexual, or intimate nature is determined by a variety of factors, including the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
- A relationship of a romantic, sexual, or intimate nature is characterized by ongoing or past physical and/or emotional intimacy between the parties.

Domestic Violence: An act of violence committed by any of the following individuals:

- A current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim.
- A person with whom the victim shares a child in common.
- A person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner.
- A resident or former resident of the victim’s household.

Gender Discrimination and Harassment: Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 prohibits gender discrimination at institutions of higher education. The University prohibits gender discrimination in any of its programs or activities. Sexual harassment, including sexual assault and other kinds of sexual violence, is a form of gender discrimination. MSU’s policy and its related procedures apply to complaints alleging all forms of gender discrimination (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual violence) against employees, students, and third parties. For the purposes of this policy, references to sexual misconduct include all forms of sex discrimination, including sexual and gender-based harassment, assault, and violence.

Incapacitation: A state where an individual cannot make an informed and rational decision to consent to engage in sexual activity because the individual lacks conscious knowledge of the nature of the act (e.g., to understand the “who, what, where, when, why or how” of the sexual interaction) and/or is physically or mentally helpless. An individual is also considered incapacitated, and therefore unable to give consent, when asleep, unconscious, or otherwise unaware that sexual activity is occurring.

Interim Measures: Interim measures are those services, accommodations, and other assistance the University puts in place after receiving notice of alleged relationship violence, stalking, or sexual misconduct but before any final outcomes (investigatory, disciplinary, or remedial) have been determined.

Objectively Offensive: An action or statement, which would cause a reasonable person in the claimant’s position to feel displeasure, resentment, or fear.

Persistent: Repeatedly engaging in conduct.

Pervasive: Having a widespread presence in or impact on an environment.

Preponderance of the Evidence: The amount of evidence that causes one to conclude than an allegations is probably true (more likely true than not true). If the

evidence on a particular allegation is equally balanced, then that allegation has not been proven by a preponderance of the evidence.

Predominant Aggressor: The predominant aggressor is the individual, in a relationship violence incident, whose violence is used to exert power and/or control over the other individual. The predominant aggressor may not necessarily be the party to initiate the violence, particularly in cases where a victim has used violence in self-defense, to obtain withheld property, in an attempt to flee, or to interrupt an act of violence.

Preliminary Investigation Report: A draft version of the investigation report, which is provided to the claimant and respondent for their review and feedback. The preliminary investigation is provided before OIE analyzes the case or makes a finding decision.

Rape: Is a form of sexual assault that includes:

- Non-consensual penetration, no matter how slight, of the victim's genital opening, anus, or mouth with any body part or object.
- Non-consensual use of the sex organ of the victim to penetrate, no matter how slight, the genital opening, anus, or mouth, of another person.

Relationship Violence: Relationship violence is a broad term that encompasses domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

Reasonable Person: The term "reasonable person" is a legal term that the courts have generally defined as a prudent, hypothetical person with ordinary sensitivities who embodies a community ideal of reasonable behavior.

Retaliation: An act or attempted act taken because of a person's participation in a protected activity that would discourage a reasonable person from engaging in protected activity. Protected activity includes a person's good faith (1) opposition to prohibited conduct, (2) report of prohibited conduct to the University; and (3) participation (or reasonable expectation of participation) in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, hearing, or Interim Measure under this Policy. Retaliation requires an adverse action or adverse treatment against an individual, by an individual because of the individual's participation in the investigation.

Retreat: To physically withdraw from a situation.

Sexual Assault: Sexually penetrating or attempting to sexually penetrate or have sexual contact with another individual by force or threat of force; without consent; or where the victim is incapacitated.

Sexual Contact: Intentional contact of a sexual nature with the body parts of another, causing another to touch one's intimate parts, or disrobing or exposure of another without permission. This can include contact of a sexual nature with intimate body parts such as the breasts, genitals, buttocks, groin, and mouth; however, sexual contact can occur with any part of the body that is touched in a sexual manner.

Sexual Exploitation: When an individual takes or attempts to take non-consensual or abusive sexual advantage of another for one's own advantage or benefit, or to benefit or advantage anyone other than the one being exploited.

Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome requests for sexual favors, or other unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that is severe, persistent, or pervasive.

Sexual Misconduct: A broad term that encompasses sexual harassment, sexual violence, and sexual exploitation.

Sexual Violence: A physical sexual act perpetrated without consent. A number of different acts can fall within the definition of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, and sexual contact.

Severe: Of a great degree, significantly more than minimal.

Stalking: Engaging in a course of conduct that is directed at a specific person or persons that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear for themselves or for the safety of others, or to suffer substantial emotional distress.

Substantial Emotional Distress: Significant mental suffering or anguish that is so severe that it may, but does not necessarily, require medical treatment or professional counseling.

Third Party: A third party is an individual who is not a member of the University community (faculty, staff, or student). Examples of third parties include visitor, guests, alumni, and students from other institutions.

Visit the School on the web: socialwork.msu.edu

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