



ENGAGING MEN: NATIONAL CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS OVERVIEW

It's On Us recognizes that, to date, no major study has been completed to evaluate what sexual assault prevention programs are in place at colleges and universities nationwide, the level of student participation in existing prevention programs, attitudes toward prevention programs, and student actions and attitudes following their participation in prevention programming.

This project is the first of its kind to explore the attitudes and perceptions of male-identifying students and their likelihood to get involved in the prevention of gender-based violence on campus.

The National Campus Sexual Assault Attitudes and Behaviors Research Project collected information on the types of prevention programming schools are conducting, as well as their effectiveness, reach, and possible gaps by using an exploratory qualitative method to better understand the experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of young college men. A benefit of qualitative research is its ability to explain behavior that cannot be easily quantified by allowing participants to detail their experiences and feelings.

It's On Us partnered with consulting and insights firm HauckEye to conduct in depth, one-on-one interviews with college men. Participants recruited were young men who represented diverse campus communities.

— This study found several important insights: —



MEN AREN'T CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROBLEM

Most participants were unaware of the extent of sexual violence on campus. While some schools have had high profile incidents, several respondents thought these were all isolated incidents. Framing the issue as solely a Greek life problem means that many participants did not think the issue affected them or their school.



CURRENT TRAININGS ARE INADEQUATE

The vast majority of participants reported that the prevention trainings they received, often online-only, were boring and ineffective. Positive prevention education experiences were in-person and included an interactive component like a certification. One student spoke highly of a comedian who came to campus and did a stand-up set about her own assault.



MEN NEED NON-MALE FRIENDS AND ROLE MODELS

The respondents most attuned to the issue of sexual violence had strong friendships with women on campus. Co-ed sports teams, for example, foster an equitable and inclusive environment on campus between participants across the gender spectrum, leading to less objectification. By contrast, respondents reported that male-only groups like fraternities incubate toxic masculinity, such as misogynistic views toward non-male peers.



MEN DON'T KNOW HOW TO HELP

The men in the study expressed a desire to help but didn't feel they had the right tools to intervene. They expressed interest in training that would teach them how to intervene and deescalate situations involving sexual violence. The majority see themselves as moral people and want to do the right thing, but they just don't know how.

It's On Us intends for this study to be used to create actionable change in campus sexual assault prevention education. Below are recommendations for colleges and universities to build more effective programs:



USE CREATIVE TRAINING METHODS:

Implement more creative training methods, such as bringing a comedian to campus. Several respondents also reported that certifications for completing training helped them feel more involved. Most respondents reported that their prevention training was boring and did not feel relevant to their campus lives.



TRAIN IN-PERSON:

Whenever possible hold trainings in-person to increase comprehension. Participants reported that online trainings were unengaging and ineffective. Several said they barely paid attention and passed the requirements easily.



COMBAT ASSUMPTIONS:

Students at smaller universities, commuter campuses, and religious schools did not think sexual violence was a major issue on their campus. Some also saw violence as solely a fraternity problem. Combating assumptions like these is key to helping men realize the extent of the problem and the need for intervention.



BUILD CONNECTIONS:

Men with strong ties to women and other non-male identifying people in their life felt more responsibility towards others and anger at other men who perpetrate violence. Ensuring that men, women, and gender nonconforming students are fully integrated on campus helps establish that non-male identifying students are seen as more than objects.



It's On Us intends to build on this research and conduct a large-scale quantitative survey. It is urgent to conduct further research and subsequently continue to develop prevention education programming that educates and empowers young men to be a part of the solution.