



Newsletter

APRIL 2017

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Sexual Assault Prevention in Maryland: Engaging New Voices

Erin Boguski, MS
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). The goal of SAAM is to raise public awareness about sexual violence and educate communities on how to prevent it. Sexual assault is a serious and widespread problem. Nearly one in 5 women in the U.S. have experienced rape or attempted rape some time in their lives, and one in 71 American men have experienced rape or attempted rape (Black et al., 2011).

The National SAAM theme “Engaging New Voices” seeks to encourage and inform a wider audience - including Greek Life, Coaches, Parents, and Faith Leaders - on how they can take action to promote safety, respect, and equality to stop sexual violence before it happens. The good news is that prevention is possible and it's happening. Individuals, communities, and the private sector are already using conversations, programs, policies, and research-based tools that promote safety, respect, and equality to help combat the risk of sexual violence.

In Maryland, we are strongest when we raise our voices together, and that is why the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) collaborates with and supports so many partners in this effort. In 1996, DHMH established a Rape and Sexual Assault Prevention Program (RSAPP) with funding from the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide training, education, and support to reduce the incidence of rape and sexual violence in Maryland. RSAPP funds school-based programs, rape crisis centers, college campuses, the statewide sexual assault coalition, and other special projects. Go online [here](#) to find out more about RSAPP.

By promoting safe behaviors, thoughtful policies, and healthy relationships, we can create safe and equitable communities where every person is treated with respect. Below are sections devoted to each target audience that has been designated a “New Voice” by NSVRC. For more about SAAM's theme, visit the National Sexual Violence Resource Center [NSVRC](#).

Parents of Young Children

It is important for parents to demonstrate healthy personal boundaries with children early on. Age-appropriate lessons about boundaries and consent can help shape children's values, beliefs, and guide their future behavior. Child sexual abuse is a widespread problem. According to Finkelhor et al. (2014), one in 9 girls and one in fifty-three boys under the age of 18 experience sexual abuse or assault at the hands of an adult. The effects of child sexual abuse can be long-lasting and affect the victim's mental health. The victims are more likely than non-victims to experience mental health challenges including drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and a major depressive episode as adults (Zinzow et al., 2012).

Partnership for a Safer Maryland Mission:

Advocate for injury and violence prevention and promote education and surveillance in Maryland through statewide partnerships.

Sexual Assault Prevention Continued:

A significant number of child sexual abuse victims are young children. The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics (1997) found that 34% of victims under the age of 18 are 0-11 years old. Perpetrators are rarely strangers. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, found that 93% of the perpetrators of child sexual abuse are known to the child (2012). To prevent child sexual abuse and sexual assault later in life, parents can support their children's healthy development. Here are some tips:

- Consent starts early. It is important for children to have control over their bodies. Respect each child's right to make choices about their body. For example, don't make them hug someone they don't want to, including family and friends. If a child doesn't want to hug or kiss someone, parents can suggest an alternative, like giving a high-five or friendly wave.
- Encourage children to respect the choices of others. For example, tell them to ask their friends before giving hugs, holding hands, taking pictures, etc. This practice of gaining consent for affectionate interactions with their peers sets them up to successfully communicate and gain consent in dating relationships later.
 - Teach children the correct names of their body parts, including their genitals, and teach them which parts of their body are private. This demonstrates that it is okay for them to use those words and that they can tell their parents if they're having a problem with their body.
 - Learn about age-appropriate sexual behavior and play that is common for young children, including what is normal and what could be troubling. Young children are often uninhibited, so they must be taught the cultural norms and healthy boundaries around issues privacy, nudity, and clothing as they grow.

To learn more about how to talk to young children about healthy boundaries, review [A Safer Family. A Safer World](#). To learn more about healthy childhood sexual development, check out [this page](#) from NSVRC.

Parents of Teens

As children enter adolescence, it is important to discuss healthy sexuality. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics (1997), 66% of sexual assault victims under the age of 18 are between the ages of 12-17. To prevent sexual assault and rape, especially by an acquaintance or dating partner, parents can help teens develop healthy attitudes about sexuality and become informed about their rights and their bodies. Here are some tips:

- Talk openly about sexuality and development. Say things like, "It's normal to have a lot of questions. It might feel uncomfortable to ask, but I'd rather you hear information from me."
- Practice how to respond to questions that might make you uncomfortable. For example, what would you say if your daughter asked about birth control?
- Look for opportunities in pop culture to continue the conversation

about healthy relationships. For example, when you're watching TV together, point out examples of positive relationships.

- Talk frequently about consent. You can say, "Consent should be freely given. If you pressure someone, that isn't consent – even if they haven't said 'no.' That applies in real life and online."

To learn more about how parents can talk to teens, visit [100 Conversations](#) and learn about adolescent sexual development from NSVRC [here](#).

Coaches Are Mentors, Teachers, Leaders, and Influencers

Coaches play an important role in the lives of children and young adults. Coaches are uniquely positioned to have a positive impact on the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of their players. Coaches can help the next generation foster attitudes that promote healthy relationships, equality, and respect. This can be accomplished by teaching athletes that derogatory jokes may seem harmless, but they maintain environments that support disrespect and, in some cases, violence. These comments can shape long-term attitudes that may lead team members to think it's acceptable to hurt others. Coaches can help the next generation foster healthy attitudes using the following tips:

- Set clear expectations for players. For example, have a code of conduct that outlines consequences for catcalling or players using gender or sexual orientation as an insult.
- Address inappropriate behaviors and turn them into teachable moments.
- Encourage team members to recognize and confront hurtful behavior, even if it comes from teammates.
- Help change the culture by supporting and believing student athletes who disclose sexual abuse to you.

There are some great prevention resources for coaches, including [Coaching Boys Into Men](#) and the [#TeachEarly Playbook](#). Lacrosse coaches may be interested in awareness events conducted by the [One Love Foundation](#). Football coaches may be interested in this [NFL video](#) for coaches, which includes former Baltimore Colt Joe Ehrmann.

Parents of College Students

Getting kids to college is just the beginning; with good communication parents will guide them through it. College students still need their parents' guidance. Excessive drinking can be one of the biggest issues. It is a serious problem that undermines students' health, safety, academic success, and is even a risk factor for sexual assault.

The Kaiser Family Foundation (2015) found that one in 5 women and one in sixteen men are sexually assaulted on campus. Alcohol use does not cause sexual assault, but it can be a major contributing factor. According to the Maryland Collaborative to Reduce College Drinking and Related Problems (2016), research studies have found that about half of sexual assaults on college campuses

involve a situation in which the perpetrator, the victim, or both were consuming alcohol. Sexual assaults were more likely to occur in settings where alcohol was consumed, like at parties or in bars. Potential perpetrators seek out such settings as a way of finding vulnerable individuals. Alcohol is a risk factor for—not a cause of—sexual assault. Read more about this research online [here](#).

College Parents Matter, a website for parents of college students, published a new webpage on the link between alcohol and sexual assault SAAM. Their conversation topics can be found [here](#).

Greek Life

On college campuses, sororities and fraternities have a lot to offer—their leadership and resources can be used to help prevent sexual violence on campus. When these organizations promote equality, respect, and accountability, it helps create a safer space for everyone. Here's how Greek Life can support an equal and safe campus community:

- Sponsor campus-wide awareness events that focus on consent, healthy sexuality, and bystander intervention.
- Partner with other groups on campus or in the local community that support equality, such as LGBTQ organizations, the campus women's center, or [local rape crisis centers](#).
- Educate members about what enthusiastic, affirmative consent looks like.
- Step in and speak up when rape jokes, sexual harassment, or

situations where consent hasn't been given are observed.

- Sign the [It's On Us pledge](#)

For more information, check out NSVRC's [Consent Discussion Guide](#) and RAINN's guide [Staying Safe on Campus](#).

Faith Leaders

Faith leaders help set the tone for how their community responds to sexual violence. One of the most important things faith leaders can do is be prepared to address sexual violence in their congregation. Faith leaders can support survivors and prevent sexual violence in the following ways:

- Believe survivors when they share their stories. Assure them it wasn't their fault, no matter the circumstances.
- Train staff, volunteers, and congregants to model healthy behavior and boundaries with adults and children.
- Organize educational programs on topics like healthy relationships and healthy masculinity.
- Collaborate with and support the [local rape crisis center](#). For example, post its contact information on bulletin boards.
- Create a survivor-centered policy around safe ways for people who commit sexual harm to remain part of the congregation.

Here are some national and local resources for faith leaders to use as they build their programming and response to sexual violence. [Faith Trust Institute](#) and [Religious Institute](#) are national resources and the [Guide for Faith Leaders](#) includes statewide resources.



MARYLAND'S essentials for childhood INITIATIVE

Preparing Maryland for a prosperous future begins with recognizing that our youngest residents must get what they need today to become the adults who will strengthen our communities and build our economy. Fortunately, what our children need is not a mystery. Recent advances in the science of early childhood development tell us that the early years are a time when the brain is literally building itself from the ground up, in much the same way as a house is constructed. And, it is the relationships, experiences and environments that children have early in life that are the building blocks for lifelong health, learning, employment and behavior. When children have stable responsive relationships with caring adults at home and in the community, children get off to a good start with a strong foundation for future development.

When children do not have these experiences, because of child abuse and neglect, untreated parental substance abuse (including opioid addiction), parental incarceration, parental mental illness, intimate partner violence, divorce, exposure to violence in communities, or other chronic challenges that produce what is now known as “toxic stress” or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), children suffer—and we put our well-being as a state at risk. That is why the Maryland State Council on Child Abuse & Neglect (SCCAN), The Family Tree (Maryland's Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America), DHMH partners in violence prevention, Maternal and Child Health and Early Childhood Mental Health, and the Maryland Family Network (Maryland's Community Based Child Abuse Prevention grantee) have come together to serve as the backbone support to Maryland's statewide Essentials for Childhood Initiative (EFC). Additional partners in EFC include: the American Academy of Pediatrics, the State's Attorney's Association, Advocates for Children and Youth,

Maryland's Initiative Continued:

the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children, social service agencies, child advocacy centers, mental health and public health specialists, educators, researchers, law enforcement, businesses, faith-based organizations and individuals with lived experience of ACEs. When we support coordinated cross-sector policies that promote safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments in the home, school and community for children, we are preventing such adverse experiences from becoming toxic and lasting a lifetime.

Maryland's EFC Initiative supports four broad goals statewide:

- *Raise Awareness of the Science of the Developing Brain, ACEs and Resilience & Build Commitment to Take Action to Create Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments for Children*
- *Use Data to Inform Actions*
- Create the context for healthy children and families through norms change and programs and systems integration
- Create the context for healthy children and families through policies & funding solutions

EFC Workgroups accomplishments include:

- Advocating for the inclusion of the ACE module in Maryland's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System to obtain baseline data of the prevalence of ACEs in Maryland communities.
- Bringing ACEs Interface Training to Maryland in the fall of 2017 with the generous support of the Board of The Family Tree
- Developing and advocating for comprehensive child sexual abuse prevention policies and practices within Maryland schools and youth serving organizations.

These strategies and others are building the necessary infrastructure to ensure and measure the creation of safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for Maryland's youngest citizens. It will take us all working together to ensure that our children and families have a strong foundation for their lives. Failing to support investments in the learning, health, and behavior of our youngest children, to prevent ACEs, and to build resilience, not only impacts individual children and families but also increases state spending on health care, education, child welfare, and juvenile and criminal justice; and, hampers the state's economic productivity. In 2012, the University of Maryland, School of Social Work conservatively estimated that child abuse and neglect alone costs Maryland taxpayers more than 1.5 billion dollars annually. We encourage Governor Hogan, his Cabinet, and the Maryland General Assembly to set policy that ensures cross-agency concerted effort to promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments, to prevent ACEs, to ensure trauma informed systems and to build community resilience on behalf of Maryland children.

For more information about becoming a member of Maryland's Essentials for Childhood Collective Impact Team; to be added to Maryland Essentials for Childhood email list; and/or to receive a list of examples of how your community might increase safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments for our children, please contact Claudia Remington at Claudia.remington@maryland.gov or 410-336-3820.

Webinar:

New Policy and Research on Child Abuse and Neglect in Maryland

Tuesday, May 9, 2017 at 10:00 am
(registration and link will be sent)

Maryland Child Abuse Legislation

Claudia Remington

Director of State Council on
Child Abuse & Neglect

Melissa Rock

Advocate for Children and Youth
Children Welfare Policy Director

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Maryland

Alicia Vooris

Program Evaluator of Center for Chronic Disease
Prevention and Control at DHMH

Georgette Lavetsky

BRFSS Coordinator of Center for Chronic Disease
Prevention and Control at DHMH

The Johns Hopkins Center for Injury Research and Policy Presents:

ACTION THROUGH COLLABORATION

[Register here](#)

2017 Injury and Violence Prevention
Translation Symposium

WEDNESDAY
May 3, 2017

8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Feinstone Hall (E2030)

Wolfe Street Building
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health



For more information, please visit

www.jhsph.edu/translationsymposium

30th
ANNIVERSARY

JOHNS HOPKINS CENTER for
INJURY RESEARCH and POLICY

BUCKLE UP ON EVERY TRIP. EVERY TIME. DAY AND NIGHT.

Douglas Mowbray

Maryland Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Office

Your seat belt is your best defense against unsafe drivers – buckling up is the single most important step you can take to save your life in the event of a crash. Lap and shoulder seat belts – when worn properly – lower the risk of death to passengers in the front seat by 45 percent. Seat belts also reduce the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent. More than 120 unbelted drivers and passengers are killed every year in Maryland. In 2016, the observed statewide seat belt use in Maryland was 90.8 percent, a decrease from 92.9 percent observed in 2015.



Maryland's Click It or Ticket (CIOT) Campaign will begin on May 15 and run through June 5, 2017. CIOT is a high-publicity law enforcement and media effort that gives people more of a reason to buckle up—the increased threat of a traffic ticket. For some people, it is the threat of the ticket that spurs them to put on a safety belt. Law enforcement agencies are being asked to mobilize to focus on safety belt violations and publicize the stepped-up effort through news media and advertising. Not only are tickets issued to unbelted motorists, but the surrounding publicity ensures that people know they are more likely to get a ticket. Maryland law enforcement is very active at both the state and local levels with the *Click It or Ticket* campaign.

WHY WE ENFORCE MARYLAND'S SEAT BELT LAWS:

- We all pay for the “personal freedom” of those who don't wear seat belts. The higher health care and higher insurance costs that result from unbuckled crash victims get passed along to everyone.
 - * For example, hospital care costs for an unbelted crash victim are 50 percent higher than those for a belted crash victim. Society bears 85 percent of those costs, not the individual drivers involved.
 - * Hospital charges paid by the government result in higher health care costs for everyone.
- Apart from the economic impact, unrestrained occupants of vehicles become deadly projectiles in a crash, injuring others as they are thrown around inside the vehicle—and, in many cases, ejected through a window.
- If a driver is unbuckled, 70 percent of the time the children in that vehicle will not be buckled either.
 - * A child unrestrained in a 30 MPH crash is like a child dropped from a third story window, and that force is even greater for an adult.
 - * Adults who don't buckle up are sending a deadly message to children that it's okay not to use seat belts.

Upcoming Prevention Awareness Dates

• May •

Bike Month

Electrical Safety Month

Brain Injury Awareness Month

Mental Health Awareness Month

Water Safety Month

8th — 14th Global Road Safety Week

12th — 18th Hurricane Preparedness Week

• June •

Home Safety Month

Fireworks Safety Month

Sports Hydration

Summer Safety Month

Webinar:

Emerging Issues in Motor Vehicle Safety

Thursday, April 20, 2017 at 3:00 pm
(information below)

National Prevent Child Abuse Event

Video showing:

Resilience: The Biology of Stress & The Science of Hope

Wednesday, April 26th, 11:30 am—2 pm

University of Maryland at Baltimore,
School of Social Work

[Register Here](#)

*A Webinar Presentation on
Emerging Issues in Motor Vehicle Safety*

Presented by:

**Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
The Center for Injury & Sexual Assault Prevention
Coordinator of the Great Lakes and Mid-Atlantic
Regional Network**

Thursday, April 20th 2017, 3-4 PM, EST.



Presenters:

Mr. Johnathon Ehsani

Assistant Professor,
Leon S. Robertson Faculty Development Chair in Injury Prevention
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Department of Health Policy and Management

Mr. Bill O'Leary

NHTSA, Enforcement and Justice Services, Highway Safety Specialist

Objectives:

- ⇒ Identify underlying factors of the increase in traffic fatalities nationwide
- ⇒ Discuss a range of cost-effective safety interventions and policy strategies to reduce traffic fatalities and improve traffic safety efforts
- ⇒ Discuss NHTSA's efforts around the prescription drug/opiate problem and its correlation to dangerous driving.

To Register:

<https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/1162045633478522883>

Questions? Contact Chiso.Oboite@maryland.gov or call 410-767-8102