

C.A.R.E. Chronicle

SPRING 2018

Victim Blaming and Rape Culture – *Embrace Your Voice and Speak Up!*

Do you blame a person who has a wallet stolen for being a robbery victim? Do you blame your grandfather who has been targeted by a handyman for being a victim of scamming? I hope not. So why do so many people blame victims of rape for bringing it on themselves?

Rape culture exists in a society when sexual violence is normalized and excused. The use of misogynistic language, objectifying women's bodies and glamorizing sexual violence creates a culture that habitually disregards women's safety. Some examples are:

- Trivializing rape and sexual assault and blaming victims
- Tolerance of sexual harassment and sexually explicit jokes
- Scrutinizing a victim's dress, mental state, social life, and personal history
- Gratuitous violence in movies, television and video games
- Putting pressure on men to "score" to be a man
- Assuming only *promiscuous* women get raped or that only *weak* men get raped
- Teaching women to avoid getting raped

When a victim is labeled by others, those people think of themselves as different from the victim. People, particularly other women, reassure themselves by thinking, "because I am not like the victim, because I did not act like she did, rape will never happen to me". In fact, women, men and children of all ages, races, religions and economic classes can be and have been victims of rape and sexual assault. It happens in rural areas, towns and large cities. It is estimated that one in three girls and one in six boys will be sexually assaulted before the age of 18. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, a rape or attempted rape occurs every 5 minutes in our country.

Victim blaming reinforces the myth that victims are at fault for the assault, and this attitude shifts responsibility and blame from the assailant to the victim. This attitude allows the perpetrator to continue to rape while avoiding accountability for his/her actions. Victims realize they are being blamed; it is no wonder that they do not feel safe to

report or talk about sexual assault.

Sexual assault and rape are NEVER the victim's fault. Rape is a violent attack on a person and it is a crime. Most sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows, and most happen in places considered to be safe, such as homes, offices and cars. Studies show 80-90% of women reporting sexual assaults knew their assailant. Men can be sexually assaulted, too. Current statistics indicate one in six men are sexually assaulted in their lifetimes, and this is a greatly under-reported crime.

Offenders come from all educational, occupational, racial and cultural backgrounds. They look "normal" and they use power and control over victims to inflict violence, humiliation and degradation. Perpetrators commit rape and sexual assault because they believe they are entitled to do so. They totally disregard any person's right to consent.

Many people have heard about the fight or flight response to dangerous situations, but it is actually fight, flight or freeze. Freezing while experiencing fearful situations is a neurobiological response. It is uncontrollable and not something a person decides to do. Research shows that about 50% of victims freeze during an assault – this does not mean the act is consensual in any way. Anytime anyone is forced into sex against their will that is sexual assault. The victim may not have been able to fight back or say "no" and society blames them again. There are many reasons why a victim may not physically fight back against an attacker including fear, threats, shock or the size/strength of the attacker.

Other misconceptions about sexual assault include the following false impressions. Consumption of alcohol does not cause rape, but perpetrators may use alcohol or other drugs to facilitate an assault. Or that women entice men by dressing provocatively when what a person is wearing in no way makes them responsible for the assault. Or if someone is raped, they would not be talking to the person who assaulted them the next day, when the survivor may not be able to avoid the person because they have class

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Education Resources – Sexual Violence

- C.A.R.E. – www.carefl.org
- Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCSAV) – www.fcasv.org
- Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) – www.rainn.org
- MeToo Movement – www.metoomvmt.org or #MeToo
- Time Person of the Year 2017
<http://time.com/time-person-of-the-year-2017-silence-breakers/>
- National Association of Men and Women Committed to Ending Violence Against Women – www.acalltomen.org
- http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/jurisprudence/2013/06/why_cops_dont_believe_rape_victims_and_how_brain_science_can_solve_the.html
- <https://www.nccpsafety.org/training-technical-assistance/trauma-informed-sexual-assault-investigation-and-adjudication>
- <http://www.evawintl.org/PAGEID19/Best-Practices/Resources/Neurobiology-of-Trauma>
- <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/recovering-from-rape-and-sexual-trauma.htm>
- <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/5-building-strong-cases/53-victim-interview-preparation/trauma-informed-victim-interviewing/>
- <http://www.care.org/work/womens-empowerment/child-marriage>
- <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/how-can-we-end-child-marriage/>
- <https://www.hrw.org/EndChildMarriage>
- <https://polarisproject.org/>
- <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>
- <https://www.zonta.org/>

Book Titles

Lived Through This – Anne K. Ream (stories of sexual violence survivors)
Rape Recovery Self Help - <http://www.hopeforhealing.org/books.html>

Thank you to Our Board!



Recent beautification efforts by the C.A.R.E. Board finished off the courtyard and upgraded the play area at our Shelter

Recent

C.A.R.E Ball 30th Anniversary

FSW Intimate Partner
Violence/Consent Seminar
April 4, 2018

Englewood Networking Meeting
April 5, 2018

In Her Shoes – Charlotte Technical Center
April 11, 2018

SAAM Lunch & Learn
Homeless Coalition
April 12, 2017

Boys' Council – Men of Honor
at Crossroads Academy
April 16, 2018

Ongoing

Domestic Violence Support Group
Saturdays at 10:00 AM

Sexual Violence Support Group
Thursdays at 6:30 PM

Girls' Circle Group
Boys & Girls Club and The Academy

ReUse Stores
www.carefl.org/reuse-stores

Upcoming

SAAM Breakfast
Englewood United Methodist Church
April 20, 2018
call 941-639-5499 to reserve a seat

SAAM Tabling Event
Charlotte Stone Crabs
April 21, 2018

SAAM "Embrace Your Voice" Event
PC Town Center Mall
April 24, 2018, 2:00 to 7:00 PM

Denim Day
April 25, 2018

Green Dot Active Bystander Training
May 10, 2018
call 941-979-7711 or email
Chris.Hall@carefl.org



Paula Hess

Paula E. Hess, founding C.A.R.E. Board member, Chair Emeritus, and the first Champion Circle of Compassion legacy society member died April 6, 2018 at her home. Paula was a community activist and she dedicated her time and leadership talent to the city of Punta Gorda, the county, and League of Women Voters in addition to The Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies. At the 30th Anniversary C.A.R.E. Ball in January, the Paula Hess Humanitarian Scholarship Award was announced to benefit survivors of violence who received services from our agency. Paula was unpretentious and worked tirelessly to make sure that the C.A.R.E. Victims' Service Agency had resources in place to help victims and survivors with shelter and services at any time of the day or night. We honor the memory of Paula Hess, and her guiding hand will be missed.



Stop by and visit C.A.R.E. at the Port Charlotte Town Center Mall in our new space with the CCSO Crime Prevention Unit.



C.A.R.E. Outreach at the Women's Health Expo at the Cultural Center in February.

YES, I would like to help survivors of violence in Charlotte County.

You can count on my support to help families stay safe.

- \$18 provides a 20-minute crisis hotline call for a victim of sexual assault
- \$23 sponsors a survivor safety/legal services screening with a paralegal
- \$50 provides a week's supply of paper goods, laundry and cleaning supplies for the shelter
- \$90 supports private counseling services for a child victim
- \$121 provides for replacement of critical documents for a family of 4 (birth certificates, ID card)
- \$325 provides a consultation with a domestic violence attorney for injunctive representation

Other amount \$ _____ in honor of _____

For: Birthday Anniversary Other occasion _____

Your Name _____ Email address _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

To make a credit card donation, please go to www.carefl.org OR

- Please bill my credit card. VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER AMERICAN EXPRESS

Name on card _____ CC# _____

Expiration Date ____/____/____ CW# _____ The Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies, Inc. PO Box 510234, Punta Gorda, FL 33951-0234



Legacy Giving – Champion Circle of Compassion

Charitable gifts can be made by anyone. A person does not require great wealth to become a philanthropist. One can make a large gift to a favorite charity...just not now. In fact, for middle-class households, a bequest will typically be the largest gift ever made by the family. Planning for your current and future financial needs is a must. Plan for contingencies in life, kids and grandkids, and long-term health care. Your plans will be flexible and can be changed to meet the unknown. Think about what is left after your lifetime expenses are covered. Put a plan in place to use what is left over to good use and in service to others. Make a gift to an organization that you have supported, and that has a place in your heart. C.A.R.E. would be honored to be the recipient of your charitable gift. Contact Linda Lusk at 941-639-5499 for more information.

Estate planning with trusted professionals creates benefits for you as a donor; reduces income, estate and gift taxes, avoids capital gains taxes, puts capital to work, increases cash flow, and provides for diversification of

assets. Our goal is to help you as a donor combine your philanthropic planning goals with your personal, trusted advisors to achieve your financial and tax planning objectives. You can include language in your will or trust that specifically designates a gift be made to C.A.R.E. as part of your estate plan, in addition to taking care of your family or future health needs. This is a bequest, and it is one of the easiest gifts you can make as part of your legacy. Once you have your estate plan in place, it can be updated should your circumstances change. You have the flexibility you need. Your attorney can help you determine how to make a gift of a specific asset or dollar amount, or a percentage of your estate, or the residual balance of your estate. Potential benefits are:

- An estate tax charitable deduction
- Reduced tax implications for your heirs
- Leave a lasting legacy to your favorite charity

You can choose your legacy by making a gift that costs you nothing during your lifetime!



C.A.R.E. Advocates presented a panel discussion about Intimate Partner Violence and Consent at Florida Southwestern State College during Sexual Assault Awareness Month



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together, work together, or live together. The survivor might even be trying to understand what happened to her/him and dealing with social pressure to act like nothing happened. Sexual assault is a trauma! Each survivor copes with the trauma of the assault in a different way and can exhibit a variety of emotions.

Sexual assault is not an exaggerated problem in our community or country. According to a 2015 campus study about sexual misconduct by the University of Michigan, 11.4% of all students experienced some form of non-consensual touching, kissing, or penetration; including 22.5% of undergraduate females and 6.8% of undergraduate males. The same study found that only 3.6% of students who experienced sexual misconduct

reported the experience to the University or to law enforcement. Reasons for not reporting were self-blame, feeling embarrassed and ashamed, did not want to get someone in trouble, or did not think it was serious enough to merit a report to University officials. However, 46% did tell a roommate or a friend.

We must remove barriers faced by survivors by creating a culture in which victims are not blamed, where disclosures of rape are taken seriously and investigated to hold perpetrators accountable. This must happen on campuses and in the communities in which we live. Let's stop blaming victims and learn to be supportive and knowledgeable about resources to help survivors, friends, and their families connect with the services needed to help them heal.

**Article by Melissa Jeltsen, Huffington Post*