

PROJECT S.A.V.E ADVOCATE KIT

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Project
S.A.V.E

Survivors Against Violence Efforts
Education. Advocacy. Community

Est. 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

Introduction

02

Statistics:SV

03

Take Action

04

Statistics: IPV

05

How to support someone
dealing with IPV?

06

Building Resiliency: A Focus
on Mental Health

07

Sample Letter #1

08

Sample #2

09

Sample #3

10

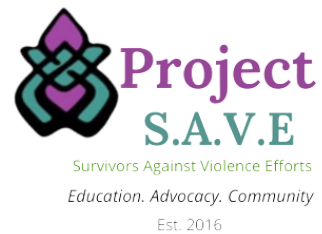
Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Project S.A.V.E.'s mission is to provide people recovering from trauma support as well as an open space to heal. We educate and advocate, working to combat sexual and domestic violence wherever it lies. Because everyone is unique, we believe in treatments tailored to individuals' needs.

Project S.A.V.E's area focus includes sexual violence, domestic violence, and mental health. Project S.A.V.E has three goals that all programs, services, and events are based on;

education.advocacy.community. This toolkit completes this goal of advocacy. Whether you are new to it or are curious about getting started, we hope this toolkit can serve as a helpful tool. In this toolkit, you will find information about sexual & domestic violence and mental health. You also will find resources for each subject as well as action steps you can take to help.



STATISTICS: SV

Sexual violence is an umbrella term to describe sexual acts, attempts to obtain a sexual act by violence or coercion, acts to traffic a person, or acts directed against a person's sexuality, regardless of the relationship to the victim. Sexual violence can happen to children, teens, adults, and elders. Those who perpetuate this crime can be family members, trusted individuals, acquaintances, and/or strangers.

- One in five women in the United States experienced completed or attempted rape during their lifetime.
- Nearly a quarter (24.8%) of men in the U.S. experienced some form of contact sexual violence in their lifetime.
- One in three female victims of completed or attempted rape experienced it for the first time between the ages of 11 and 17.
- The prevalence of false reporting for sexual assault crimes is low — between two percent and 10 percent.
- Over half (52.4%) of male victims report being raped by an acquaintance and 15.1% by a stranger.



**The estimated
lifetime cost of rape
is \$122,461 per
victim.**

TAKE ACTION

There are several action steps you can take to support survivors of sexual assault.



1) Listen and believe the survivor

Pay attention to their cues, try not to ask questions, they will share if and when they are ready.



02) Provide resources if the survivor chooses to.

www.rainn.org has many resources broken into different subgroups and topics.



03) Support the survivor whether they pursue legal action or not.

The legal system for everyone isn't always an option for numerous reasons. Supporting the survivor where they are, and listening to their wants and needs.



04) Write to politicians about important issues.

We have included a sample template for an important issue surrounding rape kits. There is estimated to be 100,000 untested rape kits. But one thing warriors, you matter, your story matters, and your case matters.

STATISTICS: IPV

"Interpersonal violence involves the intentional use of physical force or power against other persons by an individual or small group of individuals. Interpersonal violence may be physical, sexual, or psychological (also called emotional violence), and it may involve deprivation and neglect."

-On average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men.

-1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experience severe intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner contact sexual violence, and/or intimate partner stalking with impacts such as injury, fearfulness, post-traumatic stress disorder, use of victim services, contraction of sexually transmitted diseases, etc.

-1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner. This includes a range of behaviors (e.g. slapping, shoving, pushing) and in some cases might not be considered "domestic violence."

-Over 43 million women and 38 million men have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime.



One study estimates the cost of IPV to U.S. society, including health costs and productivity losses, to be \$5.8 billion, including \$4.2 billion for physical violence, \$320 million for partner rape, and \$342 million for partner stalking.

HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE DEALING WITH IPV?

Your support is important but there are some things to be mindful of when speaking to a friend/loved one dealing with IPV.

1) Speak less, listen more.



2) Don't use judgemental language "if I were you.."



3) Be patient (on average a person may leave a relationship 6-8 times before they are done.)



4) Ask permission to give information and remind them they can say no.



BUILDING RESILIENCY: A FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

When we talk about seeing a person whole, we need to include mental health. Mental Health Awareness provides a timely reminder that mental health is essential and that those living with mental health issues are deserving of care, understanding, compassion, and pathways to hope, healing, recovery, and fulfillment.

Research has shown that there are numerous interventions, methods, and solutions to live with a mental health diagnosis. A mental health diagnosis doesn't define someone and it isn't someone's identity. You are someone with a mental health diagnosis, but you are a person first.

Unfortunately, there are all types of myths out there about mental health, leaving some people to avoid seeking help. We say let's educate them.

FACT MYTH

People with mental health problems are violent and unpredictable.

FACT MYTH

Personality weakness or character flaws cause mental health problems. People with mental health problems can snap out of it if they try hard enough.

FACT MYTH

People with mental health needs, even those who are managing their mental illness, cannot tolerate the stress of holding down a job.

MYTH

MYTH

MYTH

Facts:

1. Half of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24.
2. Depression alone costs the nation about \$210.5 billion annually.
3. The average delay between the onset of mental illness symptoms and treatment is 11 years.

SAMPLE LETTER #1

Dear Governor/Senator/Representative [NAME],

I am writing to you today to ask for your leadership in our state on behalf of survivors of sexual assault. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of rape kits sit untested in police and crime lab storage facilities in the United States. Each one represents a survivor of sexual assault who underwent a lengthy and invasive exam to collect DNA evidence from their body in the aftermath of a crime. That evidence is collected in a Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit—a “rape kit.” When tested, rape kit evidence can identify an unknown assailant, reveal serial offenders, exonerate the wrongfully convicted, and offer a path to healing and justice for survivors.

Yet, all too often, a decision is made not to test this evidence. It can sit for years—even decades—without being tested. By supporting rape kit reform, you can bring violent offenders to justice, make our community safer, and support sexual assault survivors in our state. We need your leadership on this issue. Your voice in support of rape kit reform would mean so much.

Please explore END THE BACKLOG’s legislative handbook for comprehensive rape kit reform, available at: endthebacklog.org/legislative-handbook. It includes information about the untested rape kit backlog, talking points for legislators, and other resources. It also includes a drafter’s checklist for rape kit reform, which defines the six critical elements of comprehensive rape kit legislation:

- Ensuring a statewide count of untested kits
- Testing all backlogged kits
- Testing all kits moving forward so that the backlog never happens again
- Codifying rights for survivors to be notified about the status of their cases and kits
- Developing a tracking system that can follow the path of a rape kit through the entire process
- Allocating the necessary resources to test all rape kits

Rape kit reform is happening across the country and communities everywhere are seeing the value of testing all rape kits. We don’t yet have comprehensive rape kit reform in our state, but we can. Let’s make sure we’re doing everything possible to address this problem.

I know the END THE BACKLOG staff is ready and willing to assist you in championing rape kit reform. You can reach them at policy@endthebacklog.org.

Together we can end the backlog, take dangerous offenders off the streets, and help victims heal.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

SAMPLE LETTER #2

Survivors can use this sample letter if they need to get the abuser off their lease. It is called a “Request to Bifurcate Lease Agreement.” Bifurcate means taking a person off a lease without their permission, while allowing the survivor and other household members to remain in the unit.

[Tenant Name]

Address:

Date:

[Housing Provider]

Address: Re: Request to Bifurcate Lease Agreement pursuant to the Violence Against Women Act of 2013

Dear Housing Provider:

I, [Name of survivor], am writing to formally request a bifurcation of the lease agreement on my rental unit at [Address of unit], which will remove [Name of person to be removed from the lease) from the lease and end [Name of person to be removed from the lease] tenancy. As stated in the Violence Against Women Act of 2013, covered housing providers, including providers of [housing program at issue], are permitted to change the lease of any tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking (VAWA crimes), to end the abuser’s tenancy and allow the victim to remain in the home with the rest of their household. Housing providers must follow federal, state, and local laws when terminating the abuser’s tenancy. If you wish, you may request in writing that I provide documentation of my status as a victim of a VAWA crime, as stated in the Violence Against Women Act (such as a HUD self-certification form; a written and signed statement from a victim service provider, medical personnel, mental health professional, attorney, or police; or court records).

Any information provided to you must be kept strictly confidential. If you have any questions, please contact me at _____.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

SAMPLE LETTER #3

This is a sample format of how to either write a letter, call, or are emailing a legislator.

Writing a letter to a legislator:

Use the proper salutation, for example:

The Honorable (first name) (last name)

Address

City, State, Zipcode

Dear (Assembly Member / Senator) (last name)

Be courteous and informative in your communication.

State the purpose of the letter in the opening sentence and if you are referring to a bill, include the bill number, author, and topic. If you live in the elected official's district be sure to say this in the opening paragraph as well. Focus on the message and key points. Personalize the letter by including examples of how the legislation might impact you and your family. Keep the letter brief – not more than one page. Restate your request at the end of the letter, for example urging them to support or oppose the bill. Thank the legislator for his or her support and offer to address any questions that he or she might have. Be sure to include your contact information, and sign the letter.

Sending e-mail communication to a legislator:

The same guidelines apply to e-mail as to written letters. Before sending an e-mail, you might want to call the legislator's office and ask if a letter sent by e-mail is effective. If you do send an e-mail, send it to the representative. Do not copy other representatives or send a mass e-mail. Make it a brief message with no special layouts or graphics. Do not include attachments. Include your full name and address so it is clear that you are a constituent, and ask for a response. You might also want to send a hard copy of your e-mail to the legislator.

Phone calls to a legislator:

State your name and address and identify yourself as the legislator's constituent. You will often be speaking with a secretary or aide. Briefly make known your position as they keep track of the issues that people call about to report to the legislator. Have your thoughts organized in advance, which will help you to keep the call brief and to the point. It is also very helpful to share how the issue affects you personally. Thank them for their support.

Conclusion

Thank you for choosing to be an advocate. This booklet is just a small piece of a group effort. We hope that we've encouraged you to get involved in other ways and that you can champion your own warriors.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

PROVIDED BY:

Mental Health First Aid
CDC

National Alliance for Safe Housing
Institute for Women's Policy Research
End the Back Log

RAINN
NLACRC



Survivors Against Violence Efforts

Education. Advocacy. Community

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