



National Alliance to  
End Sexual Violence

*A NATIONAL VOICE FOR STATE  
AND LOCAL ADVOCATES DEDICATED  
TO ENDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE.*

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## CDC Releases New Data

On December 14th, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the initial findings of the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS). The full 124-page report is available on the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/NISVS/index.html>. This large-scale, ongoing study is based on a nationally-representative telephone survey that collects detailed information on sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence victimization of adult women and men in the United States. The survey collects data on past-year experiences of violence as well as lifetime experiences of violence. The 2010 survey is the first year of the survey and provides baseline data that will be used to track trends in sexual violence, stalking and intimate partner violence.

According to the study:

- Nearly 1 in 5 women have been the victim of rape or attempted rape in their lifetime.
- Nearly 1 in 2 women have experienced other forms of sexual violence.
- 1.3 million women have been raped in the United States in the last 12 months.
- 1 in 5 men have experienced a form of sexual violence other than rape in their lifetime.

This data confirm what advocates know about sexual violence—that it is one of the most pervasive and serious public health issues in this country--and will help shed new light on the scope and context of our work to end sexual violence. Recent cases at Penn State and Syracuse revealed the depths of childhood sexual abuse and the lack of appropriate personal and systemic responses. These alarming events and the NISVS data underscore the urgent need for policy makers to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA supports critical victim services and criminal justice response through grant programs such as the Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) and the Services Training Officers and Prosecutors Program (STOP).

Current legislation reauthorizing VAWA goes further to address sexual assault in a more comprehensive way including initiatives to support law enforcement and prosecutors in their work to hold offenders accountable, assist communities with creating Sexual Assault Response Teams, and provide protections for victims of sexual assault who reside in public housing. We know from other research (such as the Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACE, Study,

www.cestudy.org) that child sexual abuse and other traumatic events can result in serious long-term physical and mental health problems. And NISVS confirms what previous studies have also shown – that women who were sexually abused as minors are at significantly increased risk of being raped again as adults.

We also know that Sexual violence can be prevented. More than three-quarters of female victims were raped before their 25th birthday; and more than one-quarter of male victims of completed rape were first raped when they were 10 years old or younger. Most of this violence is at the hands of someone the victim knows. It is essential that we continue strengthening sexual violence prevention with young people. We must move beyond concepts of stranger danger and have the critical conversations necessary to end this horror in our communities. VAWA must be reauthorized swiftly by Congress in 2012 to make sure programs like the Rape Prevention Education Program can continue to support cutting-edge community prevention initiatives. Since NISVS will be an annual survey, we will be able to track trends over time as new prevention programs are implemented.

The impact of sexual violence is far-reaching. Although no group is free from violence, consistent patterns have emerged showing that women, young people, and racial and ethnic minorities are the most heavily impacted by violence. That's why programs in VAWA that support outreach and services to these populations are so critical at this time. Advocates for youth and communities of color will not be able to reach those who have never gotten help if VAWA is not reauthorized.

As a member of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women, the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) urges all members of Congress to join Senators Leahy, Crapo, and Kirk and Congressmen Smith and Conyers in moving swiftly to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act immediately.