



National Alliance to End Sexual Violence

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New Sexual Violence Data from the CDC Confirms: Sexual Violence Remains a Widespread and Devastating Public Health Crisis

Washington, D.C.-- *"From the first release of 2010 data, The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention has become our nation's pre-eminent data on the prevalence and impact of sexual violence. The field relies heavily on NISVS. The release of the new report on sexual violence based on data collected in 2016 and 2017 confirms what advocates know: the problem of sexual violence is widespread, devastating, and disproportionately impacts the young and vulnerable,"* President and CEO Monika Johnson Hostler.

It is difficult to collect accurate data on sexual violence, and NAESV is grateful to the CDC researchers for their rigorous and ethical approach to methodology. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) provides critically important data. Sexual violence is a complex problem. Social norms related to gender, a culture that persists in victim blaming attitudes, and the significant traumatic impacts of sexual violence make it difficult for survivors to freely share their experiences. We must resist the urge to seek a definitive answer about whether or not the overall rates of sexual violence are rising or declining. While we cannot compare data from this report to previous reports, this new data reveals that sexual violence remains a sweeping and deeply rooted public health crisis with devastating impacts on survivors.

According to this report, 26.8% of women and 3% of men have experienced a completed or attempted rape in their lifetime. Almost half of women and almost a quarter of men have experienced other forms of unwanted sexual contact. Almost 9.5 million women and almost 4.5 million men experienced sexual violence in the past year. Sexual violence continues to happen

at a young age: 48.7% of female victims of rape were first raped before the age of 18 and 40.9% of male victims made to penetrate were first victimized before age 18. New data also confirms that the vast majority of victims know the perpetrator with most incidents being committed by an acquaintance or intimate partner. Rates of sexual violence are particularly high for American Indian, Alaska Native, and multiracial women.

NISVS confirms that sexual violence has severe short and long term impacts. Among females, 1 in 7 victims contracted a sexually transmitted infection; 1 in 3 were injured; 2 in 3 were concerned for safety; 2 in 3 were fearful; and 1 in 7 became pregnant. Among male victims made to penetrate, 1 in 25 contracted a sexually transmitted infection; 1 in 18 were injured; 1 in 5 were concerned for safety; and 1 in 5 were fearful. Additionally, several health conditions were more prevalent in sexual violence victims including asthma, frequent headaches, chronic pain, and difficulty sleeping.

Ms. Johnson Hostler added, *“As we continue to acknowledge the scale of the problem of sexual violence, we must also remember that we have the tools, knowledge and compassion to address and end sexual violence. Everyone has a role to play.”*

Policy makers must fully fund federal, state and local programs that support survivor services and prevention like the Sexual Assault Services Program at the Office on Violence Against Women and the Rape Prevention and Education Program at the CDC. We need experts like a Special Advisor on Sexual Violence at HHS and guidance like the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence to address this widespread problem across the federal government. We need leadership from the private sector to address employee and customer safety and well-being. And as we know from the evidence base about bystander intervention, each of us has a role to play. Leadership and our individual action and courage are essential.

Updated data helps us remember how many people have been deeply hurt by sexual violence and just how important it is for us all to prioritize this work. Together, we CAN change the social norms around sexual violence, help survivors heal, and move forward in ending sexual violence.

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The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence is the voice in Washington for the 56 state and territorial sexual assault coalitions and 1500 rape crisis centers working to end sexual violence and support survivors.