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The Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act (EAAAA) Sexual Assault Resistance Program
EAAA*

- Designed for youngest women in university (1st yr, <25)
- Four 3-hr sessions – Assess, Acknowledge, Act, Relationships & Sexuality
- One weekend or 4 weeknights

- Two well-trained "expert peer" facilitators (< 30)
- Small groups of 15 to 20 women

* program created by Senn (2008; 2015) – AAA name and idea from Rozée & Koss (2001). Built with the assistance of many graduate and former graduate student facilitators since 2005
Think about this situation …
Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act (EAAA) Sexual Assault Resistance program

- is framed within a positive sexuality context and designed to reduce the likelihood that young women will experience completed sexual assault when they come in contact with coercive men by:
  - Decreasing the time they need to assess the situation as dangerous and take action;
  - Reducing the emotional obstacles to taking the action necessary to get away;
  - Maximizing the chance they will use the verbal and physical self-defence tactics most likely to be effective.
RCT Demonstrates that EAAA works

- 893 1st year students at 3 Canadian Universities
- Surveys pre-, post-, every 6 months for up to 2 years
  - Retention 95% at 1-year
- >90% of those assigned to EAAA attended 3 or more units
Knowledge, Attitude & Belief Effects (maintained at least 24 months)

- Increased perceptions of personal risk of acquaintance rape
- Increased self-defense self-efficacy
- Increased use of “most effective” self-defense tactics in hypothetical situations (and at earlier stage of coercion)
- Decreased woman-blame (belief in female precipitation)
- Decreased self-blame if rape experienced in post-intervention period
This makes the EAAA program the ONLY intervention that actually decreases the sexual violence women experience while they are in university.
Example of activity from Unit 3: ACT
What are the obstacles to successful resistance in response to men’s sexual coercion?

- Little knowledge of real risk factors in situations and men’s behaviour
- Hard to see danger in social situations
- Hard to see man you know as threat

So ... time to detect danger is increased when from acquaintances in social situations

- Women’s socialization to preserve relationships, not to hurt, not to focus on own sexual rights
  - increased use of ineffective strategies with acquaintances

- Lack of knowledge of what really works in self-defence
ASSESS

- Provides information on, and practice identifying, the (empirically supported) risk cues in situations and in men’s behaviour.
ACKNOWLEDGE

- Provides information and practice in identifying and overcoming emotional barriers to acknowledging risk cues when they are present in situations and men’s behaviour
- Practice responding to common verbal coercive tactics
- Debunks “miscommunication hypothesis”
• Provides necessary physical and emotional preparation, knowledge, and skills to help women defend their sexual and physical rights.

• Debunks self-defense myths and presents evidence of most effective self-defense tactics (i.e., forceful verbal & physical resistance)

• 2 hours of self-defense focused on acquaintance situations (based on WenDo Women’s Self-defense)
RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY
Adapted From Our Whole Lives (for Adults: Kimball, 2000; for grades 10-12: Goldfarb & Casparian, 2000)

• Unit provides opportunity to increase ...
  • Comfort talking about sex
  • Knowledge of the range of sexual behaviors possible – expand definition of ‘sex’
  • Self-knowledge related to personal values about sexual behavior and romantic/sexual relationships
  • Skills in negotiating desired sex (safer sex as well as specific sexual acts)

• NOTE: This unit was carefully adapted to be inclusive of asexual women and women who are not sexually active.
EAAA undermines woman-blaming

- Sends a clear message that:
  - ‘Risk' is only present when a man willing to behave in a coercive way is present, and
  - Women are the best judge of what they can do in any given situation
  - Survival IS successful resistance
- It does NOT:
  - tell women what they 'should' do, or
  - hold women responsible for men's behaviour.
One Survivor’s Feedback

“Thank you for giving me my freedom back.”
Contact me at cseinn@uwindsor.ca or for more information about EAAA go to SARECentre.org

Questions or Comments?