

April is

SEXUAL
ASSAULT
AWARENESS
MONTH



Flora Stone Mather Center for Women

What is SAAM?

Sexual Assault Awareness Month
was first observed in 2001,
but its themes were
widespread for decades prior,
especially within the
civil rights and women's
rights movements.

What is Sexual Assault?

The term sexual assault refers to sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim.

Some forms of sexual assault include:

- Attempted rape
- Fondling or unwanted sexual touching
- Forcing a victim to perform sexual acts
- Penetration of the victim's body, also known as rape

What is the impact of Sexual Assault?

The impact of sexual violence extends beyond the individual survivor and reaches all of society.

Each survivor reacts to sexual violence in their own way and healing and justice looks different for each survivor. Healing is an ongoing process, and everyone heals in their own way.

What is the impact of Sexual Assault?

Common emotional reactions include: guilt, shame, fear, numbness, shock, and feelings of isolation.

Physical impacts may include: personal injuries, concerns about pregnancy, or risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection.

Economic impacts may include: medical and other expenses in addition to things like time off work.

Why don't people report?

- 26% believed it was a personal matter
- 20% had a fear of reprisal
- 12% believed it was not important enough to report
- 10% did not want the perpetrator to get in trouble
- 9% believe police would not or could not do anything to help
- 4% reported, but not to police
- 31% other reasons

Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey
on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct



Myth

If someone recants (takes back) their report of sexual assault, they must be lying.



Fact

Survivors face many challenges when reporting, including financial burden, shame, judgement from members of their community, fear of retaliation, and more. Recanting does not mean a victim lied.



Myth

Wearing revealing clothing, behaving provocatively, or drinking a lot means the victim was “asking for it”.



Fact

Perpetrators make a choice to harm others; the victim's behavior or clothing choices are NOT consent to sexual activity.



Myth

A lot of victims lie about being raped or give false reports.



Fact

Only 2-8% of rapes are falsely reported, the same percentage as for any other felony.



Myth

If a victim of sexual assault does not fight back, they must have thought the assault was not that bad or they wanted it.



Fact

Many survivors experience tonic immobility or a “freeze response” during an assault where they physically cannot move or speak.



Myth

People with disabilities are at low risk for sexual assault.



Fact

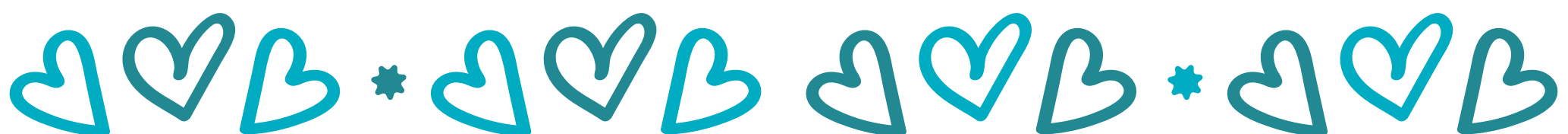
People with disabilities are victims of sexual assault twice as much as people without disabilities.





Ways to support someone you care about:

- Let the survivor know that you love them and support them.
- Do not blame the survivor.
- Do not press for details.
- Understand that there are a variety of ways survivors may react.
- Resist overprotecting.
- Understand and respect their need for privacy.
- Don't feel or act as though you have to have all the answers. That is not your role.





Things you can say:

- “I’m sorry this happened to you.”
- “I don’t want to force you to talk about this when you don’t want to. I just want you to know that I’m here to listen if you decide that you do.”
- “It wasn’t your fault.”
- “I want you to know that I don’t know what to say, but I care about you, I believe you, and I will support whatever decisions you make.”
- “How can I help you?”
- “Thank you for telling me.”



The image features a teal graphic design on a white background. On the left, a vertical chain of five heart outlines is connected by a thin teal line. At the top left, there are two more heart outlines and a textured teal heart shape. In the upper center, there is a sketchy teal rectangular frame. A teal ribbon is tied in a bow above the text. Another teal ribbon starts from the top right and extends diagonally across the right side of the image. The text "Sexual Assault Awareness Month" is centered in a teal serif font, with "Sexual Assault" on the first line, "Awareness" on the second, and "Month" on the third.

Sexual Assault
Awareness
Month