


*Rape prevention education:  
Towards closing the gap between  
theory & practice*



Karen J. Bachar & Mary P. Koss  
University of Arizona  
College of Public Health

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## *Objectives*

- I. To discuss current scholarship on factors related to rape vulnerability & risk
- II. To examine recent college based rape prevention education efforts (*most published evaluations*)
- III. To identify possible future directions in rape prevention education & stakeholder opportunities for primary prevention partnerships



## I. *Vulnerability & Risk*

- **Vulnerability**: A combination of societal, institutional, dyadic, & individual, level influences *thought to heighten a woman's risk for victimization*
- **Risk**: A combination of societal, institutional, dyadic, & individual, level influences *that lead to perpetration*



## *I. Vulnerability & Risk*

- Research on vulnerability can be classified according to three overarching models
- *(VC) Vulnerability-creating traumatic experiences model*
- *(SP) The social-psychological characteristics model*
- *(VE) The vulnerability-enhancing situation model*



## *I. Vulnerability & Risk*

### ■ Can we predict vulnerability?

- No evidence supports a link between attitude & personality characteristics & increased vulnerability to rape
- The relationship between alcohol/drug use and SA is complex
  - Kilpatrick, Acierno, Resnick, Saunders & Best, (1997).
  - Abbey & Harnish, (1995)
  - Norris, Nurius, & Dimeff, (1996)



# *I. Vulnerability & Risk*

Koss & Dinero (1989)

- Past victimization, multiple sexual partners, & sexual values fail to present a practical improvement over using random chance to predict victimization (19% vs. 15%).
- **Conclusion:** While a small subset of women (10%) can be classified based on the after affects of childhood Sexual Assault (SA), including influences on sexual values, drinking, & level of sexual activity appears to increase the risk of rape. SA is generally not predictable



## *Points to Ponder...*

- *Can we help prevent rape perpetration by focusing on vulnerability factors?*
- *Can we help women to avoid rape by focusing on vulnerability factors?*



# I. *Vulnerability & Risk*

- Risk factors that have been studied at the:
  - *Individual Level*
  - *Dyadic Level*
  - *Institutional Level*
  - *Societal Level*



## *I. Vulnerability & Risk*

- Majority of risk research based single factors
- When talking about risk important to look at the “Big Picture”
- Patterns of risk factors examined together may predict perpetration



## *I. Vulnerability & Risk*

- The Confluence Model – (Malamuth et al, 1991, 1995 & Malamuth 1998)
  - Two components
    - A man's stance towards sexual behavior
    - Hostile masculinity in supporting sexual aggression & influences human relationships
- Shaped by early life experiences, especially harsh formative experiences.



# *I. Vulnerability & Risk*

## ■ The Confluence model

- Incorporates factors from societal to individual levels
- Utilizes a developmental perspective focusing on factors that contribute to sexual & nonsexual aggression
- Posits that the likelihood of a factor occurring depends on whether previous factors have occurred
- Hypothesizes that when certain factors occur in combination perpetration is more likely than when only some factors occur

# *Risk & Prevention Education*



*"I wish you would make up your mind, Mr. Dickens.  
Was it the best of times or was it the worst of times?  
It could scarcely have been both."*



## *II. College Rape Prevention Education*

- Most prevention education programs are not published
- A recent literature review yielded 16 articles focused on college based prevention education programs published between 1994 & 1999
- Programs were developed for
  - Mixed-sex audiences (8)
  - Men (5)
  - Women(3)



## *II. College Rape Prevention Education*

### ■ Programs vary with respect to

- Length
  - 60 minutes to semester length
- Approach
  - Mixed sex, men only women only
  - Lecture, theater, video, vignettes
- Content
  - Attitudes, empathy, knowledge, supportive behaviors



## *II. College Rape Prevention Education*

- Evaluation results are reported along five broad categories
  - Attitudes
  - Behavioral intention
  - Behaviors (self reported & observed)
  - Knowledge
  - Incidence of self-reported victimization



## *II. College Rape Prevention Education*

### ■ Results

- Mixed Sex Programs
- Programs Targeting Men
- Programs Targeting Women



## *II. College Rape Prevention Education*

### ■ **Issues to consider**

- Few published evaluations
  - What are the promising practices?
- Few longitudinal studies
  - Time, labor & \$\$\$
  - Short term outcomes easier & expedient
- Utility of mixed-sex programs
  - Mutually exclusive goals



### *III. Future Directions for Prevention*

- When should we do prevention education?
  - Life span approach
- Where should interventions occur?
  - Important to develop partnerships in areas that have been avoided or underserved such as the juvenile justice system, alternative high schools, job training programs, junior colleges & programs for teen mothers



### *III. Future Directions for Prevention*

- Are there institutions we could be partnering with?
  - With youth - other anti violence, & positive communication programs
  - With teen & adults - Link drug, alcohol & tobacco programs with rape prevention education



### *III. Future Directions for Prevention*

- Who should we target
  - Prevention efforts must be directed at men & informed by research on factors that place males at risk for perpetration
  - Work with women
    - Focus on **Resistance**

*In Conclusion – What have we learned?*



*“If you were to boil your book down to a few words,  
what would be its message?”*



## *Conclusions*

- Women's behaviors are not causally related to rape
- Perpetration must be viewed as the product of many causal influences
- Factors related to the behavior of perpetrators must be used to inform prevention efforts



## *Conclusions*

- Important to create partnerships to present rape prevention & avoidance training in new contexts.
- Important to validate how much work has been done
- It is only through previous efforts that future efforts are possible.



# How did I do?

- Karen J. Bachar

University of Arizona  
College of Public Health  
2223 E. Speedway  
Tucson Az, 85716  
520-318-7211  
Karenb@u.arizona.edu



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