

4-11-2017

Panther Magazine, April 6, 2017

Florida International University

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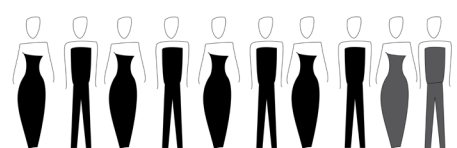
THIS IS RAPE CULTURE

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

Women’s Center hosts rally to raise awareness on sexual assault

LIZANDRA PORTAL
Contributing Writer

Sexual assault is more common on college campuses compared to other types of crimes. Among undergraduate students, 23.1 percent of females and 5.4 percent of males experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence or incapacitation, according to a report from the Association of American Universities on sexual assault and sexual misconduct.



80 PERCENT OF VICTIMS KNEW THEIR ATTACKER (FRIEND, SIGNIFICANT OTHER, ETC.)

Despite the high numbers of sexual assault victims, the AAU has also found that college-age victims of sexual violence often do not report the incidents to law enforcement. Only 20 percent of female student victims aged 18-24

report sexual assault to law enforcement, according to the Department of Justice.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month and the FIU Women’s Center will be hosting a discussion panel called “Take back the Night” to help raise awareness on sexual assault and sexual violence.

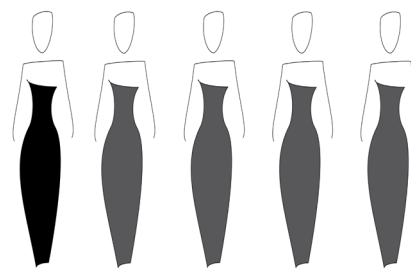
The event will take place on April 18 from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Graham Center Ballrooms and is open to students, community members, staff and faculty of the university at no charge.

“It’s great that we have a sexual assault awareness month in general because sexual assault is such a taboo subject,” said Daniel Pino, a Psychology major.

Pino, lead peer educator at the Victim Empowerment Program that works under Counseling and Psychological Services, says the program is meant to help people who are victims of not just sexual assault, but of any type of victimization.

“It’s nice to have a program that helps students with those types of issues,” Pino said. “But we also help students who have friends who have been victimized.”

The “Take Back the Night” event is geared toward helping students who are



ONE IN FIVE WOMEN ARE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED IN COLLEGE

not aware of how prevalent the issue of sexual assault is and help them get informed.

“We are providing them with all the tools they need to help stop sexual assault,” said Amy Rodriguez, a graduate higher education administration major.

Rodriguez is one of the students working in the Women’s Center helping organize the event.

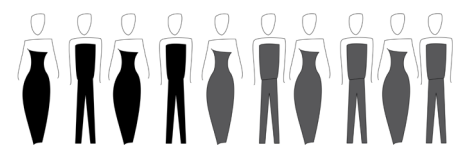
“We want students to come out of the event knowing what sexual consent is,” Rodriguez said. “We want them to educate their friends and community members of what they learned.”

“Take Back the Night” was started in 1877 and was originally supposed to be a march and rally for sexual assault awareness but it has grown a lot since then, according to Rodriguez.

This will be the 13th annual “Take Back the Night” event at the University, but instead of a march and rally, it will be a panel discussion this year.

“This year we are going to have a sexual assault survivor as one of the speakers,” Rodriguez said.

The FIU Police Department and a moderator from the Victim Empowerment program will also be guest speakers. Rodriguez also mentioned that the Women’s Center is trying to confirm two guest speakers from the Nancy J.



40 PERCENT OF VICTIMS FEAR REPRISAL BY THEIR ATTACKER

Cotterman Center, which provides crisis counseling and deals with victims of human trafficking and a guest panelist from the LGBTQA Initiatives under the Multicultural Programs and Services.

Comedian to teach students about safe and consensual sex

BARBARA BRITES
Staff Writer

Maria Falzone, comedian and one of the most sought-after college speakers, wants to teach students about sex and as part of sexual assault awareness month, the Women’s Center is bringing her to the University.

On April 13, Falzone will host a speaker series called “Sex Rules! Laugh and Learn the Rules to Greater and Safer Sex.”

“... We live in a society where sex sells, but we’re often told not to have it outside of a heterosexual marriage, so we don’t get sex advice, detailed education on consent, and how to prevent STIs apart from abstinence,

Meredith Morgan
Coordinator
Women’s Center at BBC

According to Meredith Morgan, coordinator of the Women’s Center at BBC, “Sex Rules” is a comedy show about how to have great sex that is safe and consensual, while building in topics such as self-esteem, sexual transmitted

infections and relationships. Her message is inclusive of and relevant to all genders, sexualities, and races.

Morgan also explained that they chose Maria Falzone because talking about consent is often a dreaded topic for students. The topic is often approached with a tone that everyone is a potential perpetrator of sexual violence, and this approach doesn’t empower people to be active bystanders and practice consent. Falzone uses humor and entertainment, Morgan says, to show how fun consensual sex is, what the rules are, and how to love and enjoy your sex life in a safe way for you and your partners.

As part of a larger initiative to increase awareness of sexual assault, the Women’s Center at the Biscayne Bay Campus also screened “Audrie & Daisy,” a Netflix documentary exploring rape, trauma, power, and coming of age in the world of social media on April 5.

“... We live in a society where sex sells, but we’re often told not to have it outside of a heterosexual marriage, so we don’t get sex advice, detailed education on consent, and how to prevent STIs apart from abstinence,” Morgan said.

Morgan thinks that students will be empowered to create the safe sex life they want for themselves — including abstinence, if that’s what they choose. They will learn how to communicate with potential sexual partners so that their sex is safe, fun, and consensual.

The documentary highlights the re-traumatization of victims after sexual assaults, according to

Morgan. “Audrie & Daisy” show the story of two girls who were sexually assaulted at parties at the ages of 14 and 15. After the assaults, the girls were bullied and harassed.

“It’s important that students watch this film because many people don’t think about the aftermath of sexual assault — they only think about the assault itself,” Morgan said.

Daisy was taunted in school and social media, and was shunned from her community. Pictures of Audrie’s rape were shared among her classmates. One week after Audrie’s assault, she committed suicide, and Daisy attempted suicide three times.

Morgan explained that victims are often blamed for their assault, and if they speak out about it, they are stigmatized and harassed. This can lead to dropping out of school, inability to work, and even suicide.

“It’s important that we not only work to prevent sexual assault by creating a culture of consent, but that we also work to prevent bullying — including cyberbullying — in order to properly care for victims and prevent retraumatization,” said Morgan.

The “Sex Rules” event will be held at the BBC on April 13 in Wolfe University Center ballrooms from 5 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. and MMC on April 14 in the Graham Center Ballrooms from 7 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. This and other upcoming events can be found on their social media accounts: Facebook: Women’s Center FIU and Instagram: @womenscenterfiu.

Overview of services Victim Empowerment Program

- 24-hour support, information, referrals and advocacy
- Supportive crisis counseling
- Accompaniment to court, meetings, hearings and depositions involving the criminal justice system or FIU student conduct process
- Assistance with exploration of options and accessing community resources
- Help facilitating academic accommodations
- An educational programming, social work internships, and training for students interested in participating in our peer educator program, for which students receive hourly pay.

Infographic does not include all services provided by FIU’s Victim Empowerment Program. For more information, visit vep.fiu.edu

EDITOR'S NOTE

It's our job to lead the charge against sexual violence

EDITOR IN CHIEF



CAYLA BUSH

Sexual assault happens far more often on college campuses across the nation than should be accepted.

Along with these assaults come fear, victim shaming or blaming and a furtherance of rape culture.

Rape culture is a sociological concept used to describe a setting in which rape is pervasive and normalized due to societal attitudes about gender and sexuality.

In laymen's terms, this translates to a society in which a victim is asked how much they drank prior to being violated and assaulted; a culture that tells victims that they were asking for their assault based on the clothes they wore on the way they behaved.

Rape culture is wrong.

Being that April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, it's important that we bring light

to the resources and conversations on campus.

We want to break the silence that surrounds sexual assault and rape culture.

To do that, we put together a magazine that features information from the Title IX office, from the Victim Empowerment Program and the National Organization of Women.

As an editorial board, we fight to dispel the myth of the perfect victim. Anyone, including men, can be a victim of sexual assault, regardless of their creed, religion or other background factors.

It's On Us to stop sexual assault on campus, and we at Student Media would like to lead the charge.

If you have been a victim of a sexual assault, the University's Victim Empowerment Program is equipped to assist in moving forward, regardless of if the assault is reported.

VEP is located in Student Health Center 270 at MMC and Wolfe University Center 320 by appointment only at BBC.

FIUPD offers free self-defense program

BARBARA BRITES
Staff Writer

Attackers always have a plan, and the FIU Police Department wants women to have one too.

The FIUPD offers free self-defense techniques to all female students, faculty and staff and is restricted to women only. The course runs nine to 12 hours over the course of three or four days with a minimum class of four people.

"The RAD [Rape Aggression Defense Program] is a way of giving women the means of empowerment through education and self-defense techniques," Lieutenant Peter Canino said. "It's to show them how to protect themselves and thereby, build confidence."

The training includes both a theory class and a technique class in which females are given the opportunity to test their abilities during a simulated attack.

Women learn awareness techniques, prevention, risk reduction, and avoidance strategies. They will also learn how properly throw a punch, kick, how to escape a bear hug, among more.

The program was first introduced to the University in 2009 and law enforcement officer

Sonia Meneses, a certified RAD instructor, has taught the program alongside Safety Officer Roberto Leal since its introduction.

According to the FIU Police Department, self-defense is 90 percent mental preparedness; the other 10 percent is physical.

“

Both myself and two friends enjoyed and loved the class ... They had very good information, techniques and advice. Overall, an amazing, life-changing experience,

Mayrin Ramirez
Graduate
Higher Education Administration

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"This program is realistic and practical," Canino said. "We want women to have a plan because the attacker always has one."

Self-Defense Awareness Familiarization Exchange is another self-defense course offered by the FIU Police Department. Rather than a self-defense class, this two-hour program provides personal safety information and an introduction

to basic physical techniques to teach females how to prevent an unfortunate event.

Mayrin Ramirez, Higher Education Administration, attended the S.A.F.E. self defense class with two of her best friends. Ramirez wanted to learn how to defend herself, feel safe and know what tactics use to avoid being a target.

"Both myself and two friends enjoyed and loved the class. We saw a video of a scenario, which of is one of the common scenarios we are faced with every day and how we can go about defending ourselves in each situation and we also had the opportunity to practice self-defense moves," Ramirez said. "They had very good information, techniques and advice. Overall, an amazing life-changing experience."

Women interested in any of the classes can contact Law Enforcement Officer Sonia Meneses. She can be contacted by phone: 305-348-6056 or by email: menesess@fiu.edu. They can also visit police.fiu.edu for more information on the program or the office in the PG5 Market Station.

Sonia Meneses, instructor for Rape Aggression Defense Program, declined to speak with Student Media on the program.

Consent: Continuous 'enthusiastic yes' rather than 'just a definitive no'

MARYBETH LORETTA
Contributing Writer

A seven-letter word stands between sexual assault and consensual sex, and that word is consent.

Alyssa Delgado, lead peer educator of the Counseling Center and Victim Empowerment Program at the University, said that the difference between rape and sexual assault is that rape includes penetration, where sexual assault is nonconsensual sexual contact.

According to Daniela Valdes, president of the National Organization of Women at FIU, consent has to be a "continuous yes" rather than just a definitive no.

"There's been a lot of campaigns about how 'no' means 'no' and that's ... defining what consent is but I think a better way to put it is that it has to be a continuous yes — an enthusiastic yes," said Valdes.

Delgado stated simply that consent is essentially giving your explicit permission that you are OK to start or continue in a sexual act. She also went on to explain that both people should be able to enjoy any type of sexual contact.

"Oftentimes (sic) especially [with] people in relationships, we find that you have to know how to read their body language," said Valdes. "You have to know how to read the person ... you're engaging with and if they're uncomfortable...[you have] to know that's not an enthusiastic yes. Consent would be a very happy resounding yes the whole time you're doing whatever you're doing," said Valdes.

She adds that by not defining consent, it leaves

room for miscommunication and can blur the lines of consent.

"You have people who say that if someone was drinking a certain amount, then that means that ... they're looking at the situation and not the individuals.

“

There's a lot of instances that could arise from blurring those lines ... If you don't define consent initially...if you don't know what a happy willing partner looks like then you're going to get into the realm of sexual assault really quickly,

Daniela Valdes
President
National Organization of Women

”

So, if you don't define consent initially ... if you don't know what a happy willing partner looks like, then you're going to get into the realm of sexual assault really quickly."

Both Valdes and Delgado mentioned that a person cannot give consent if they are intoxicated, passed out, disabled or a minor.

"By Florida state law, you cannot give consent if you are drunk, high, mentally disabled, asleep or

unconscious," Delgado said.

She then explained that this also applies to couples who made the decision prior to drinking.

"Let's say a sober couple agrees to have sex tonight but then they drink, even if they agreed before, that goes out the window even if you have a legal contract signed by a lawyer it is invalidated because you are no longer sober," said Delgado.

Valdes echoed that sentiment on the gray areas that may occur under the influence.

"If you have two people who are both drunk, that's the only scenario that I can think of where it could be really murky," said Valdes.

However, Valdes was reluctant to admit of a gray area because it may be used to excuse sexual violence.

"I think it [gray areas] happens most with people [who] are with a boyfriend or girlfriend ... It seems like there would be, but you have to be completely sure that the person you're with is happy and content with what you're doing," said Valdes. "When you start saying gray areas ... it makes it really easy for people to justify all of their terrible actions," said Valdes.

She then noted that sexual assault and rape are much more common and usually occur with familiar people, with 8 out of 10 victims knowing their attacker.

"It's a friend, it's a boyfriend, it's a girlfriend. It's a lot more common and it happens in more intimate spaces than you'd think. So no, I don't think there's a gray area," said Valdes.

For more information on consent, visit vep.fiu.edu or their offices at the Modesto Maidique Campus in the Student Health Center, room 270 or by appointment at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

PURPLE FLAGS TO RAISE AWARENESS



NIA YOUNG/PANTHER PRESS

“

For me, all of the events and this display... is meant to help people know that they are not alone, that it is okay to talk about [sexual assault], and that it is not the victim's fault, it's the perpetrator's fault

Bronwen Bares-Pelaez
Director
Women's Center FIU

”

FIU changes its 'application' of discrimination law

JOSHUA CEBALLOS
Assistant Entertainment
Director

FIU students who are the victims of sexual misconduct such as harassment, inappropriate touching, rape, or discrimination, can report the incidents with the office of Equal Opportunity Programs and Diversity (EOPD) in PC 321.

Shirlyon McWhorter is the director of EOPD and a Title IX coordinator. McWhorter oversees the operations of her office and others, and ensures that FIU is adhering to the Title IX law.

“Title IX is a 1972 law that's been around for quite some time. Most people are familiar with Title IX as it applies to sports... Title IX applies to any type of discrimination based on sex or gender,” said McWhorter.

Whereas people normally think of Title IX as the law that requires women's basketball teams to be treated just as fairly as men's basketball teams, FIU takes their approach to a different level, according to McWhorter.

“The law didn't change, but our application of this law has changed. Now we're looking at it holistically. Any type of behavior dealing with sexual misconduct [or] dealing with sex and gender... what Title IX says is that educational institutions, are not to discriminate or to allow discrimination at your school,” said McWhorter.

EOPD handles cases of sexual misconduct that occur between a student and a staff member, or a student and a faculty member. Cases of misconduct between

students are handled by Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, according to the sexual misconduct informational pamphlet provided by the EOPD.

“Students can report [sexual misconduct] in a number of ways... they can come in in-person; they can call us on the telephone. What we try to do is make ourselves accessible to the students so that we can contact them and

of sexual harassment, EOPD and Student Conduct makes sure that students get the proper psychological help from CAPS if necessary, helps refer students to the Victim Empowerment Program, and also accompanies victims in reporting the incident with the police department on or off campus if the student feels it is necessary.

For those who may not know where EOPD,

“

One of our concerns is not just addressing the investigation... but also, first and foremost, to make sure that that student is okay, to make sure that that student is whole

Shirlyon McWhorter
Title IX Coordinator
Equal Opportunity Programs and Diversity

”

they can contact us in the way that is most convenient to them,” said McWhorter.

McWhorter said that students normally go to Student Conduct because it's what people are familiar with. At Student Conduct, students will fill out a form about the incident and the office will conduct an investigation, and ensure that the student's needs are met.

“One of our concerns is not just addressing the investigation... but first and foremost, to make sure that that student is okay, to make sure that that student is whole,” said McWhorter.

McWhorter says that when a student reports an incident

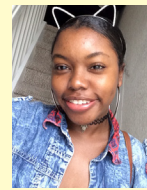
the Victim Empowerment Program, or Student Conduct is, McWhorter said that FIU is prepared to direct them.

“We've trained the university faculty and staff here at the university to deal with Title IX as well, so even if a student went to someone else and it wasn't my office... those faculty members are trained, they know about my office, they know where [students] should go,” said McWhorter.

The Resident Assistants in the FIU dorms are also trained to direct students to the EOPD according to McWhorter, so should an RA receive a complaint, they'll know what to do.

“It's On Us” to report sexual assault cases

WHAT'S UP FIU



LAQUAVIA SMITH

Approximately 23 percent of females and 5.5 percent of males experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence or incapacitation, according to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network.

RAINN, an anti-sexual violence organization that aims to enlighten, protect and provide for victims of sexual assault, rape or abuse and those who witness it, created the national “It's On Us,” campaign to address sexual assault on college campuses.

A few issues “It's On Us” aims to solve or regulate includes the stigma of a rape victim being a woman. A crime can not, in any way, shape or form, be genderized.

Rape victims and perpetrators can at any time, any place and for whatever reason, be both male and female in no relation to the other.

The “It's On Us” campaign here at FIU is consistently contributing to the culture of FIU through events, open discussions, tabling and even speakers. But, aside from our own “It's On Us” campaign, students and parents nationwide are upset, claiming that numerous universities are downplaying assault as a whole and are practicing the act of not reporting “on-campus” sexual assaults and/or rapes.

According to the Washington Post, incidents that have occurred included a “university fail[ing] to respond effectively to reports of sexual assault involving football players and

others.”

“Universities need to stop trying to treat this as a PR problem, and treat it as the civil rights and public safety issue that it is. It's happening on their campuses, undeniably. There's no use putting their heads in the sand,” Lisa Maatz, vice president of government relations at the American Association of University Women, said to the Washington Post.

However, legislative action has tried to minimize the attitude universities have towards rape. In 2016, for example, students and parents were able to access for the first time precise data on the volume of rape reports on each campus due to a modification within their disclosure rules.

Colleges were once required to disclose under the federal Clery Act the number of “forcible sex offenses,” reports which cover a variety of crimes including rape.

But, since 2016, these reports are now deciphered based on the precise act and as a separate statistic, along with modifications to the definition of rape: “Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.”

But what is new is not replacing what is broken. Despite the new changes to regulations, many rapes are still going unreported.

“Politico” did their own investigation stating, “Florida's colleges and universities report among the lowest rates of on-campus rape in the nation, and relatively few of the state's higher education institutions are under federal investigations

SEE REPORT, PAGE 5

Victim Empowerment Program seeks to ‘promote recovery’

ANGELIQUE DUCOUNGE
Staff Writer

Ninety percent of all campus rapes occur when alcohol was used by either the victim or the assailant; most victims, both male and female, are raped by an acquaintance or a romantic partner, not a stranger.

This is where the Victim Empowerment Program at FIU comes in.

“Our mission is to promote the recovery of victims of violent crimes,” said Sharon Aaron, licensed clinical social worker and director of the VEP program. “Also to prevent retraumatization in the aftermath of their victimization, and to promote awareness through prevention education for the university.”

The program focuses on relationship violence, including sexual battery or stalking, while the center’s licensed clinicians also work to provide assistance and support for victims of hate crimes and hazing.

“What we do is we explain choices and help identify needs and do safety planning,

then lay out whatever options there are depending on what’s happened or is happening with the student but we only fulfill the options that they choose,” said Aaron.

In addition to supportive crisis counseling, the center also offers accompaniment meetings which sees a licensed staff member accompanying

behind in their lives and their goals that it becomes a thing that really is disruptive and has a lasting impact on their lives,” said Aaron.

A 24-hour support hotline rotates between victim advocates to ensure someone will always be at hand to answer the phone. Depending on the severity of the situation

the fee— and are confidential. Filing a police report is not required to receive assistance and university records will never show that a student received services from the VEP.

“The number one priority for us is the safety of the student,” said Wendy X. Ordóñez, an outreach coordinator for the center. “We’re not going to force them to do anything.”

Ordóñez notes that educational events also encompass a large part of the Victim Empowerment Program, with around 170 presentations taking place throughout the year, with The Peer Education Program as a main component in their educational offerings.

The Victim Empowerment Program’s office is located in the Student Health Center, room 270. Students that attend the Biscayne Bay campus and any other student looking to schedule a regular appointment should call 305-348-2277. Services are provided to all members of the FIU community, including students, faculty, staff, and university visitors.



What we do is we explain choices, help identify needs and do safety planning. Then lay out whatever options there are... with the student but we only fulfill the options that they choose

Sharon Aaron
Director

Victim Empowerment Program



students to places like the courts or rape treatment centers.

They can provide assistance with filing for restraining orders or student conduct complaints against their assailants, as well as facilitating academic accommodations by speaking with financial aid or professors when a crisis causes disruption in a student’s academic life.

“We want to help students recover and not get so far

and the student’s needs, a professional will either schedule an appointment with the counseling center at the student’s convenience, or reach out to them in person and accompany them in seeking out medical services.

The program’s services are covered in full by the student’s mandatory health fee —FIU online students can receive services as well, if they pay

We should join state schools and report abuse

REPORT, PAGE 4

for potentially mishandling sexual violence incidents.”

Despite the positivity in the article, students and victims suggest that the sexual incidents do not correspond accurately to the reports. The article suggests that in order to collect relevant data, campuses need to issue Climate Surveys asking questions regarding rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Florida universities that have participated in these surveys include: University of Florida, University of Miami and University of South Florida.

State University is planning to issue a survey as well.

FIU has not participated in the survey, but it would be a great idea to do so. As a community we should play our part in being aware, alert and active in trying to decrease the chances of rape, sexual assault and sexual abuse. That means going against the bystander-rape, effect and reporting anything and everything.

Laquavia Smith is a staff writer for Panther Press. Her column, What’s Up FIU, is a commentary on the latest style and entertainment news.

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RAPE CANNOT BE IGNORED

Society needs to confront rape culture's toxicity

PANTHER HEALTH



MAYTINEE
KRAMER

According to a 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, "sexual violence, stalking and intimate partner violence are major health problems in the United States."

Our understanding of these forms of violence has gradually grown over the years, but rape culture is still perpetuated by society, and gives men the idea that they can get away

with things simply because "boys will be boys."

Rape culture is a complex of beliefs, but for the most part, normalizes and condones physical and emotional terrorism against women.

What people need to realize is that all forms of sexual assault and harassment are traumatic, instead of brushing them aside. In other words, there needs to be a cultural shift to fix rape culture.

As defined by the United States Department of Justice, sexual assault includes "sexual activities as forced sexual intercourse, forcible sodomy, child molestation, incest, fondling, and attempted rape."

However, most people don't know what rape culture looks like, therefore they don't understand what

rape culture is.

When talking about rape culture, we have to consider cultural practices

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The correct word for sex without consent is rape. Period.

Joe Biden
47th Vice President of the United States
Twitter

”

that we commonly engage in together as a society that excuse or tolerate sexual violence. Moreover, we need to look at the way society thinks

about rape.

It's the idea that only certain people rape — and only certain people get raped; it's reprimanding women to "be more responsible" or "don't dress a certain way"; it's the assertion that wives, sex workers and sisters can't be raped; it's the man who forces himself onto an attractive woman because "he couldn't help himself" and so much more.

All of this is the myriad ways in which rape is tacitly and overtly encouraged.

More often than not, sexual assault, rape and general violence are ignored, trivialized, normalized or made into jokes. Women and victims of rape culture are oppressed and blamed, leaving them feeling alone, trapped, and ashamed.

While it's crucial to take action

to stop rape culture from saturating our life and contributing to this toxic mindset, it's even more important that everyone has a clear understanding of what falls under the umbrella of sexual assault.

In partnership with PSA from the "It's On Us" campaign, former Vice President Joe Biden recently tweeted, "The correct word for sex without consent is rape. Period."

All incidents need to be taken seriously and treated as crimes and it's important to confront rape culture as the toxic it is.

Maytinee Kramer is the Assistant Opinion Director for Panther Press. Her column, Panther Health, is a commentary on maintaining one's health during college.

Fame not an excuse for victim-blaming

SERIOUSLY, FOLKS



CAROLINE
LOZANO

I've always admired Johnny Depp for his acting ability and the films he starred in. Some of his films like "Edward Scissorhands" and "Corpse Bride" remain among my favorites even today.

But when news about Depp's domestic abuse scandal emerged last year, I was both shocked and disappointed. I will never see Depp the same way again.

What shocked me more, however, was the unwarranted hatred that was directed at his now ex-wife, Amber Heard, mostly by his fans.

Comments ranging from "gold digger" to "attention-seeker" to describe Heard were thrown around in comment sections even after she released proof of his assaults with photos.

At first, I couldn't understand why so much anger was being forced onto the shoulders of this young woman. What exactly did Heard do to merit this type of attention?

Depp isn't perfect; he's human, despite what some of his movies may tell us. Why were people defending him so much?

If it weren't for

Depp's fame, wealth and status in Hollywood, the repercussions for his supposed actions against Heard would've destroyed his career in the blink of an eye.

The fact is, many people can't find it in themselves to believe that their beloved actor, actress or musician could commit such a horrible crime.

They raise their celebrity to the level of a deity and thus, the latter becomes untouchable.

Denial sets in and anger is then shoved onto the accuser, who is made to look like the villain.

Unfortunately, Depp's abuse towards Heard is just a number on a long list of public figures who've abused their partners.

Actors and musicians alike such as Sean Penn, John Lennon, Chris Brown and Michael Fassbender have abused or been accused of abuse by their former girlfriends and wives. And it's been happening for a long time.

In Penn's case, he committed violence against his-then wife Madonna (yes, the Material Girl) by torturing her for nine hours in 1987, according to The Huffington Post.

Without much regard about his treatment of Madonna, Penn became successful in the industry.

The same Huffington Post article states that Penn "has gone on to star in dozens of critically-acclaimed movies, won two Academy Awards, and become a champion of numerous political and

social causes."

This occurs with many celebrity cases, where the man walks away from the ordeal without so much a scratch on his career.

Casey Affleck has had several allegations of sexual harassment and verbal abuse against him and yet, he still won Actor in a Leading Role at the Academy Awards earlier this year.

Where was the outrage? Where were the avalanche of comments calling Affleck degrading names?

Heard and the other women who were brave enough to report their abusers didn't gain anything from their accusations. They risked their careers by calling out these men on their alleged behavior.

Victim-blaming only prevents a woman from reporting a crime and creates a cycle where abuse lingers. It also permits these celebrities, who are used to being accoladed with praises and awards, to continue their actions without punishment.

A line has to be drawn somewhere. People should be aware that their favorite actors, musicians, NFL players or whoever are capable of being awful people, just like anyone else.

Fame and fortune does not excuse someone for their actions.

Caroline Lozano is a contributing writer for Panther Press. Her column, Seriously, Folks, is a commentary on the arts and entertainment industry and how it relates to society today.

Women are not objects

POLITCOBUZZ



FABIENNE
FLEURANTIN

Grocery shopping should be a no brainer right? Get in, get out and bring your groceries to your respective transportation.

Well, two girls tried that approach, but it didn't turn out so well.

They just exited a Publix with a few grocery bags and as they passed a Dollar Tree on their way to the

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If we continue to perpetuate this rape culture that we've created...we will denigrate the female gender altogether.

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bus stop, the girls caught unwanted attention from two men perched on the wall beside the store.

The girls walked on, one oblivious to the sudden matching footsteps that lurked behind them while the other grew more weary because they entered an empty mall parking lot.

The two men began catcalling them, telling them to stop and wait for them, but the girls didn't slow down. Trying to be safe and secure, they headed towards the nearest store in the mall to surround themselves with people.

One of the men, however, saw the girls go inside, and continued to follow them. The girls screamed and went on their way hoping to get on the bus one way or another.

One of those girls was me.

This is something that many women and girls experience when they walk the streets alone.

Not only do we fear for our safety,

but we have to abide by the unspoken rules that we have to censor our freedom of expression in order to save ourselves.

According to stoptheharrasment.org, 75 percent of female respondents have been followed by an unknown stranger in public. More than 27 percent have been followed at least six times. About 62 percent of women say a man has purposely blocked their path at least once and 23 percent said this has happened at least six times.

Nearly 57 percent of women reported being touched or grabbed in a sexual way by a stranger in public while about 18 percent said they have been touched sexually at least six times.

It's the sad truth that some people believe women crave attention based

on the way they dress or claim they want something by the way they dance.

In reality though, we are just trying to enjoy ourselves, for ourselves, by ourselves. We don't want any extra attention.

If we continue to perpetuate this rape culture that we've created by making it okay to treat women as objects, with no sentiments or opinions and accept this behavior as normal, we will denigrate the female gender altogether.

This was never okay and we should take into account how these actions affect our society today and generations later to come.

Fabienne Fleurantin is a staff writer for Panther Press. Her column, PoliticoBuzz, is a commentary that raises awareness about political issues in the US and worldwide.

PANTHER EDITORIAL

Sexual assault can happen to anyone, anywhere

When it comes to sexual assault or harassment, there is no such thing as a “perfect” victim.

Nothing is black and white. Anyone can be assaulted and no victim of any assault should be blamed.

Men and women of all races, religions, nationalities and socioeconomic statuses are at risk of rape because no one has inherent immunity.

The fact that the idea of a standard “victim profile” for cases of rape exists is telling of blatant rape culture. No other crime profiles or shames its victim as much as rape.

A girl wearing a skirt to a party and getting raped is frequently compared to

actions like a bank leaving its safes unlocked and getting robbed, or wearing a meat dress in a shark tank and getting bitten.

“She was asking for it,” is the common phrase, and what an insensitive, untrue phrase it is. Comparing a human being to a building that is only good for storing money is a continued acceptance of the idea that women are property; that they do not have their own autonomy.

There are two major issues with these comparisons.

Firstly, the standards for what clothing is considered sexual in nature are arbitrary and have changed drastically over the centuries. In medieval

France, it would have been revealing for a woman to show her hair in public. In colonial Europe, showing legs even with hose and bloomers still on was risqué.

The 1920s saw hemlines increase almost up to the knees, which would have been nearly blasphemous twenty years prior. But society today doesn’t concur that if someone walks about with ankles bare and hair flowing in the wind he or she deserves to be raped.

What someone wears or even how someone behaves is not an excuse to attack him or her and certainly not tools with which to blame him or her if attacked.

Secondly, comparing

men (or any attacker) to a shark in a feeding frenzy would suggest that these people, particularly men, can’t control themselves and are slaves to their libidos, regardless of whatever consequences that may bring.

It’s the same as the “boys will be boys” argument. This comparison also implies that women are expected to be the adults, the bigger person, by sitting back and taking whatever comes their way because they’re too ladylike and simultaneously too weak to prevent it.

And lest we forget that men can be raped too, by either sex, this phrase also implies that men are superior and incapable of

being attacked in such a way. It is sexist on every front.

The best way to prevent sexual assault is to attack the rape culture that exists all over the world. This way, the disease, rather than symptoms — or worse, the pseudo-symptoms like arguments used in victim blaming — is stopped.

Don’t tell them that wearing what makes them feel good is the price they pay for assault. Don’t persuade them that women are the only ones allowed to be victims of sexual violence. Don’t teach them that men are to be feared and that women are inherently weak.

Instead, raise your children to respect others’

bodies and wishes. Educate them on the importance of consent. Teach them to defend themselves so they have a way to protect themselves in a situation that requires it. And if anyone you know is ever handling sexual assault, be a friend, a parent or a partner who is supportive of the victim’s recovery.

Treat it like any other crime: report it and remind the victim that he or she did nothing wrong, that they did nothing to provoke this, and that it’s nothing that makes him or her any less worthy of self-care and love.

If everyone does this, we can start a revolution in the way the world views rape cases and its victims.

Stop excusing the phrase, “Boys will be boys”

PULITZER’S
PHENOMENA



DANIELA
PEREZ

Any woman can empathize with the constant defense mechanisms used by adults to describe boys and men. Regardless of sexuality, the defending of men begins at a young age where girls may meet petulant male children.

Upon voicing their concerns to an adult, the response, “He’s only mean because he likes you,” is unfortunately the most common reply. As they grow, this gives boys the idea that they can get away with anything they want.

In an interview with Babble,

psychologist and life coach Dr. Lisa Kaplin spoke of the importance of teaching our children what love doesn’t look like.

“Depending on the child’s age we can add some explanation of why some kids might punch, hit, etc. We would explain that that is about control, not liking or caring for someone,” Kaplin said.

If that’s not what love looks like, where does this ideology even stem from? The idea that a boy may like someone if he’s violent and the connotation behind “boys will be boys” creates a societal malignant tumor.

Psychologist Elizabeth J. Meyer from Psychology Today describes the dangers behind the inclusion of terms like “boys will be boys” as a prompt to construct gender stereotypes, leading towards the formation of unconscious biases, which in the end, “limits the full expression of children; confining them to socially constructed pink and blue scripts.”

Unfortunately, these terms “harsh” considering Turner’s honored life as an athlete at Stanford. eventually follow men and women well into adulthood.

According to Persky, Turner was

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Depending on the child’s age we can add some explanation of why some kids might punch, hit, etc. We would explain

Dr. Lisa Kaplin
Psychologist and life coach
Babble

”

Just look at the recent case of Brock Turner, a rapist who also happened to be an athlete at Stanford University.

Turner’s “media popularity” stemmed from the light sentence he received; a trifling 6 months in jail as a punishment for “ruining a life” as told by Selena Strandberg from the Observer.

The judge that sentenced Turner, Aaron Persky, simply felt that anything more would have been

just trying to “have fun” and took it “too far” with his intoxication. He didn’t say “boys will be boys,” but he may as well have done so.

The Stanford case is not the first nor the last to exhibit this apathy towards rape. Many universities such as Harvard and the University of Connecticut have been called out on their aloofness towards the women who have come out to confess their abuse.

This has normalized rape culture, making rape the most underreported crime. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center “estimates that 63 percent of sexual assaults are never reported to police.”

Boys can only be boys for so long, and hostility towards another doesn’t equal love or affection. The normalization of these attitudes must be put to a halt alongside the inclusion of these terms in modern day vocabulary.

And always keep in mind that abuse towards women is intolerable by all means; not because you have a sister, a mother, or a daughter, but because she’s a human being.

Daniela Perez is a staff writer for Panther Press. Her column, Pulitzer’s Phenomena, is a commentary on human interest.

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Panther Press is published on Mondays and Thursdays during the Fall and Spring semesters and once a week during Summer B. One copy per person. Additional copies are 25 cents. *Panther Press* is not responsible for the content of ads. Ad content is the sole responsibility of the company or vendor. *Panther Press* is an editorially independent newspaper partially funded by student and services fees that are appropriated by Student Government.

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Universities must create ‘zero-tolerance policies’ for student’s safety on campus



JULIETA RODRIGO

WEEKLY WHY Former Stanford University student and swimmer Brock Turner became a household name after sexually assaulting an unconscious woman behind a dumpster in January 2015 and receiving a relatively light prison sentence. The victim released a gut-wrenching statement that drew the attention of millions around the nation and worldwide. “You don’t know me, but you’ve been inside me,” she said to Turner during trial, “and that’s why we’re here today.” In March 2016,

penetration of an intoxicated person and penetration of an unconscious person.” Turner only served three months in prison and was released in September 2016 to serve three years of probation at home. His sentencing also includes attending counseling for a minimum of one year, where his distorted views of sex and relationships with others will be psychologically examined and treated. Deputy District Attorney Alaleh Kianerci recommended a six-year prison sentence due to Turner’s evident lack of remorse and the victim’s vulnerable state. However, Judge Aaron Persky ruled that Turner’s previous lack of criminal

Turner’s light punishment sparked a national conversation about rape culture and the definition of consent, particularly after Turner’s father publicly released a letter asking the judge not to ruin his son’s life for “20 minutes of action.” Angeline Stefano, a sophomore studying chemistry, told Student Media that the Turner ruling was “unacceptable and disappointing.” Daniel Estevez, a junior studying psychology, said he’s seen the party culture at college tailgates and fraternity parties. “There is a lot of alcohol and drug use in these events, and students of both sexes prey on each other,” he said. “It’s kind of like a game to see who can get wasted and hook up with someone fastest, but the issue comes when they are so intoxicated that they can’t think clearly or express consent.”

It is obvious that the nation must demand that college campuses create zero-tolerance policies and the judicial system must hold perpetrators accountable for their felonies. Associations like Greek life and college athletics must reform their social cultures and encourage safe partying and drinking. As students involved in clubs and athletics, we must be role models for our peers and discourage these destructive attitudes regarding sexual assault, consent, college drinking, and party culture. Victims of sexual assault are among our classmates and friends, and we should protect them. FIU has to become a safe campus for all of its students, because you and I could be the next victims of assault.

Daniel Estevez
Junior
Psychology

“
There is a lot of alcohol and drug use in these events [tailgates], and students of both sexes prey on each other. It’s kind of like a game to see who can get wasted and hook up with someone fastest, but the issue comes when they are so intoxicated that they can’t think clearly or express consent.

the jury found Turner guilty of three felony counts: “assault with intent to commit rape of an intoxicated or unconscious person, history and the presence of alcohol signified that Turner was acting foolishly, but it wouldn’t likely occur again. The anger around

Julieta Rodrigo is a staff writer for Panther Press. Her column, Weekly Why, is a commentary on the latest issues in sports.

SEXUAL ASSAULT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Rape survivors are 6.2 times more likely to develop PTSD, 3 times more likely to have a major depressive episode, 26 times more likely to abuse drugs, and 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol.

1 in 5 women are victims of sexual assault during college

RAPE CULTURE

3x

Fraternity men are 3x more likely to commit rape than other college men.

Team sports, like football, basketball and hockey, have higher incidences of rape than individualized sports, like tennis and running.

95% of sexual assault incidences are not reported due to social stigma surrounding sexual assault and the fear of being blamed for “asking for it.”

74

PERCENT

Women in sororities are 74% more likely to experience rape than other college women.

41

PERCENT

Football games at home increase reports of rape by 41%.

54

PERCENT

Of student-athletes admitted coercing a partner into sex, compared to 38% of non-athletes.

Data compiled from the Association of American Universities, NASPA, FBI, Violence Against Women and the Medical University of South Carolina

GRAPHIC BY JULIETA RODRIGO

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