LGBTQ Center Training on Sexual Assault and Dating Violence

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Sexual Assault and Dating Violence

What Constitutes Sexual Assault in RI:

*Age of Consent is 16*

- First Degree: Sexual penetration of any part of the victim’s body by any part of the offender’s body or by an object
  - Gender Neutral
  - No statute of limitations
  - No spousal exemption since 1987
- Second Degree: Sexual contact without penetration for sexual gratification
  - Three-year statute of limitations
- Third Degree: One party over the age of 18 engages in sexual penetration with person between the ages of 14 and 16
  - Consent of younger party not a defense
  - Three-year statute of limitations

Examples of Abuse

- Telling you what to do, where you can go, whom you can talk to, etc.
- Punching things, throwing things, etc. to scare you.
- Making you feel responsible for everything (bad moods, things going wrong, etc.).
- Threats
- Physical or sexual assaults & activities against your will.

Dating Abuse is a pattern of coercive behaviors, including emotional, physical and sexual attacks that people use against their dating partners to maintain power & control in the relationship.

Stalking

- Harassing, threatening or obscene phone calls, e-mails, IM’s, Facebook messages, texts, etc.
- Following or being there before the victim arrives
- Vandalism/damage to personal property
- Unwanted gifts or objects

Stalking is strongly linked to domestic violence

Possible Signs of Dating Violence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Physical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guilt/Self-Blame</td>
<td>Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame</td>
<td>Sleep Disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Eating Disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Sexual Behavior Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betrayal</td>
<td>Increased use of drugs and alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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What Can You Do:

- Listen – you may be the first person ze has told. Your role is not to blame hir – just to be nonjudgmental & supportive.
- Provide info. – it may be hard for hir to reach out to anyone else. Give resource numbers, fliers, and anything else that’s useful. (VPAS 874-5222 or 874-9131)
- Respect hir fears – don’t assume ze is overreacting and don’t promise full protection. Get professionals involved if there is danger
- Discuss the situation with your hall director, RA, supervisor, Peer Advocate, etc.
- Tell hir often that: *IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT*

Hypothetical Convo:

- Listen and support – ask how you can help.
- Tell hir that you’re sorry and it wasn’t hir fault.
- Refer hir to their RA and/or the Counseling Center for help.
- Be patient – ze may not yet be ready to end the relationship. Don’t tell hir that it’s wrong or give up - it will further isolate hir. Tell hir you are there to support hir whenever ze is ready, but that you worry about hir safety.