



The Case for Sexual Assault Victim Advocacy & Prevention

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Sexual Assault Victim Advocacy Works

Trained sexual assault advocates provide crucial services to survivors of sexual violence, resulting in reduced mental and physical distress, increased offender accountability, and reduced long-term costs to communities.

- Survivors assisted by advocates:ⁱ
 - are more likely to report their assaults to police
 - experience less physical health challenges, self-blame, guilt, and depression than survivors without advocates
 - experience less secondary trauma or re-victimization during involvement with the medical and criminal justice systems
 - are more likely to receive information about and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases
 - are less reluctant to seek further help

The Human and Economic Costs of Sexual Violence Are Staggering

- As a result of sexual assault, survivors are:ⁱⁱ
 - 3 times more likely to suffer from depression
 - 6 times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder
 - 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol
 - 26 times more likely to abuse drugs
 - 4 times more likely to contemplate suicide
- Survivors of childhood sexual abuse experience significant problems with educational attainment, job performance, and earnings.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Several studies have calculated the economic costs of rape, ranging from **\$87,000 to \$240,776 per sexual assault**, accounting for medical and victim services, loss of productivity, decreased quality of life, and law enforcement resources.^{iv}
- Overall, rape has the **highest annual victim costs at \$127 billion per year** (excluding child sex abuse), followed by assault at \$93 billion, murder (excluding arson and drunk driving deaths) at \$71 billion, drunk driving (including fatalities) at \$61 billion, and child abuse at \$56 billion.^v

One Example of Effective Violence Prevention Programing

A systematic review of 53 studies focused on universal school-based programs to reduce violence (for both victimization and perpetration) found the following:^{vi}

- For all grades combined, the median effect was a 15% relative reduction in violent behavior among students who received the program.
- By school level, the median effects on violent behavior were as follows.
 - High school students: median relative reduction of 29.2%
 - Middle school students: median relative reduction of 7.3%
 - Elementary school students: median relative reduction of 18%

- Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students: median relative reduction of 32.4%
- All intervention strategies (e.g., informational, cognitive/affective, and social skills building) were associated with a reduction in violent behavior.
- Programs appeared to be effective in reducing violent behavior among students in all school environments, regardless of socioeconomic status or crime rate.
- Programs were also effective among all school populations, regardless of the predominant ethnicity of students.

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Inc. (WCASA) is a membership agency comprised of 50 sexual assault service providers across the state, other organizations, and individuals working to end sexual violence in Wisconsin. WCASA works to ensure that every victim in Wisconsin gets the support and care they need. WCASA's mission is to create the social change necessary to end sexual violence.

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ⁱ Campbell, R. (2006). Rape survivors' experiences with the legal and medical systems: Do rape victim advocates make a difference? *Violence Against Women*, 12, 30-45. <http://vaw.sagepub.com/content/12/1/30.abstract>

ⁱⁱ World Health Organization, 2002. <https://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/sexual-assault-victims>

ⁱⁱⁱ MacMillan, R. (2000). Adolescent victimization and income deficits in adulthood: Rethinking the costs of criminal violence from a life-course perspective, *Criminology*, 38, 553-588. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.2000.tb00899.x

Anda, R. F., Fleisher, V. I., Felitti, V. J., Edwards, V. J., Whitfield, C. L., Dube, S. R., & Williamson, D. F. (2004). Childhood abuse, household dysfunction, and indicators of impaired worker performance in adulthood. *The Permanente Journal*, 8(1), 30-38. Retrieved from: <http://xnet.kp.org/permanentejournal/winter04/childhood.pdf>

^{iv} Each study uses a slightly different methodology.

- The White House Council on Women and Girls. "Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action." January 2014. http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/sexual_assault_report_1-21-14.pdf

Actual citations for the numbers:

- Miller, T.R., Cohen, M.A., & Wiersema, B. (1996). Victim costs and consequences: A new look. National Institute of Justice. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/victcost.pdf>
- Delisi, M. (2010). Murder by numbers: Monetary costs imposed by a sample of homicide offenders. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 21, 501-513.
- Cohen, M. A., and Piquero, A.R. (2009) "New Evidence on the Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 25(1), 25-49.
- French, Michael T., Kathryn E. McCollister, and David Reznik (2010) *The Cost of Crime to Society: New Crime-Specific Estimates for Policy and Program Evaluation*. *Drug Alcohol Dependence*, 108(1-2), 98-109.

^v Although it is an older source, "Victim Costs and Consequences" is helpful because it compares the costs of sexual assault to that of other violent crimes. This study's data was also included in the White House report.

- Miller, T. R., Cohen, M. A., & Wiersema, B. (1996). Victim costs and consequences: A new look (NCJ 155282). Retrieved from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/victcost.pdf>

^{vi} Guide to Community Preventive Services. School-based programs to reduce violence. Last updated: June 2005. www.thecommunityguide.org/violence/schoolbasedprograms.html