

# SD NETWORK AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT IMPLEMENTS SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMING at South Dakota Universities

## BACKGROUND

Sexual violence in South Dakota (SD) is a prominent issue, particularly impacting the state's adolescents and young adults. In 2021, 70% of SD rape victims and 52% of rape offenders were under the age of 30.<sup>1</sup> Sixteen SD higher education institutions released 2021 data in their annual security report per the requirements of The Clery Act.<sup>2</sup> A total of 20 forcible sex offenses and 32 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) offenses were reported on campus.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, in the United States, 26.4% of undergraduate females and 6.8% of undergraduate males experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation.<sup>3</sup> The data clearly supports the need for sexual violence prevention programming among adolescent and young adult populations in SD.

## SOLUTION

The Prevention Specialist from the SD Network Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault (SDNAFVSA) began working closely with the Rape Prevention Education (RPE) grant and the SD Department of Health (DOH) to determine action steps in providing prevention education at SD colleges and universities. To start, the Prevention Specialist reached out via email to Title IX University Coordinators throughout the state to gauge interest and need for prevention programming. Responses included positive support to incorporate more prevention programming on campuses in SD. The Title IX Coordinators also expressed urgent need for support and prevention work for their respective campuses.

While communicating with universities, the Prevention Specialist looked into many prevention program options targeted for college audiences, and selected *Sex and the Law* by C.L. Lyndsay and *Sex Signals* by Catharsis Productions. These programs aim to educate college students, faculty, staff, and community members about sexual assault prevention, legality, consensual sexual issues, bystander intervention, and myths surrounding rape.<sup>4,5</sup>

## SUMMARY

After the Prevention Specialist communicated with the Title IX Coordinators, she sent the advertisements for both *Sex and the Law* and *Sex Signals* out to the universities for review. Each university decided on a program that was most fitting for them. By facilitating coordination between schools and Bass/Schuler Entertainment, along with RPE support provided through the SD DOH, five universities opted to host *Sex and the Law* and one university chose to pursue *Sex Signals*.

In April 2023, *Sex and the Law* was presented at SD School of Mines, University of South Dakota (USD), South Dakota State University (SDSU), Black Hills State University (BHSU), and Dakota State University (DSU). A total of 176 students, faculty, staff, and community members attended *Sex and the Law*. *Sex Signals* was presented at Northern State University (NSU) with 175 attendees. A post survey was offered for attendees to complete at the conclusion of each program. *Sex and the Law* attendees that completed the post-survey found sexual assault and/or policies and bystander intervention to be the most useful topics covered in the program. Those who completed the *Sex Signals* post-survey found the following to be the most useful topics covered: myths surrounding rape and violence survivors, bystander intervention, and impacts on rape on individual and community levels.

## OUTCOMES

The relationship building between the Prevention Specialist and the Title IX Coordinators was an important outcome of the prevention education project. The newly formed relationships helped increase awareness of programming opportunities in SD regarding sexual violence prevention and education.

Following the prevention programs, the Prevention Specialist was invited to attend events on two campuses. First, the Prevention Specialist set up a table at NSU for Denim Day to provide resources and education to college students. Denim Day is a campaign to provide education and awareness about sexual assault and people who participate are encouraged to wear jeans.<sup>6</sup> The Prevention Specialist then presented at SD School of Mines during a Take Back the Night<sup>7</sup> event to discuss sexual assault prevention education currently happening in SD and goals for future education. The Prevention Specialist also received emails from Title IX Coordinators across the state requesting support to offer more prevention programming in the Fall, with most requesting the *Sex and the Law* program.

Another major outcome involved a Title IX coordinator from one university reaching out to the Prevention Specialist to share that students contacted the Title IX office to disclose or report situations after attending the program. The prevention programs offered made an impact on attendees by raising awareness, leading to disclosures of sexual assaults and other concerning situations that can now be addressed by universities and other support systems.

## LESSONS LEARNED & NEXT STEPS

Throughout the success of implementing university prevention programs, many lessons were learned for future planning. One area to consider involved the scheduling of programming. To reach as many students as possible, holding the prevention programming at night when classes are done and collaborating with student or university organizations on campus may increase attendance. Additionally, NSU promoted high attendance by handing out incentives for the first several people that showed up and requiring student athletes to attend.

The post-survey results provided other topics suggested for future programming, such as victim support, practicing safe sex, false accusations, and healthy relationships. Exploring programs that cover these topics could further enhance attendees' knowledge and awareness while addressing the educational gaps in sexual violence prevention. Overall, the positive feedback received by universities suggests interest in future offerings of prevention programming and promotes further collaboration opportunities with SDNAFVSA and SD RPE.

For more information on **Sexual Violence Prevention**, please contact **Brandi Storgaard**, Prevention Specialist, at 605-731-0041 or [brandi@sdnafvsa.com](mailto:brandi@sdnafvsa.com).

For more information on **RPE Programming**, please contact **Sarah Barclay**, Adolescent Health Coordinator, at 605-367-5212 or [sarah.barclay@state.sd.us](mailto:sarah.barclay@state.sd.us).



1. Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2021). Crime Data Explorer: South Dakota [Data tool]. Clarksburg, WV: FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program. Retrieved from <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend>
2. Walstrom, B., McMahon, T., Kerkvliet, J., Valencia, C. (July 2023). Sexual Violence in SD 2021 Data Report. Brookings, SD: South Dakota State University, Population Health Evaluation Center. Sioux Falls, SD: University of South Dakota Health Sciences Center, Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment. <https://doh.sd.gov/media/filpeoyc/2021-sexual-violence-report.pdf>
3. RAINN. (n.d.). *Campus Sexual Violence: Statistics*. Retrieved from <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/campus-sexual-violence>
4. Bass-Schuler Entertainment. *Talent Profile C.L. Lindsay: Sex and the Law*. Retrieved from <https://bass-schuler.com/talent/sex-the-law/>
5. Catharsis Productions. *Sex Signals*. Retrieved from <https://www.catharsisproductions.com/programs/sex-signals/>
6. Peace Over Violence. *Denim Day*. Retrieved from <https://www.peaceoverviolence.org/denim-day>
7. Take Back the Night Foundation. *What are TBTN Events?* Retrieved from <https://takebackthenight.org/>