



Sexual Violence Resources for students who identify as Women of Color

The CARE Office is dedicated to understanding the unique challenges students of color face. The office continues to educate staff members, volunteers, and the campus community on the experiences POC face when seeking services. A history of sexual violence, racism and sexism is intertwined with the history of the United States as a whole. To better understand the experiences of POC, CARE recognizes the historical trauma that is intertwined within the interpersonal violence experienced by survivors. POC are often blamed for the sexual violence they suffer, and institutionalized racism and sexism among systems that respond to sexual violence discourage survivors of color from reporting their assaults. In some instances, survivors do not receive the supportive services they deserve. It is the goal of the CARE office to provide confidential culturally competent advocacy and support services to all persons in the UC Merced community.

Supporting Survivors who are POC:

- Understanding diversity within communities: there are differences between and within communities of color.
- Understanding sexual violence: how rape and other forms of sexual violence may be off-limits as topics and that terminology may vary between cultures and communities.
- Cultural responses: communities and individuals have different expectations and methods of reporting. For some cultures, rape can bring shame to their family and community. Others are expected to keep sexual violence private or within the family/community.
- Legal status: some immigrant women of color become targets due to their legal status and fear retaliation or discrimination if they report.
- Distrust of “white” systems: the majority of advocates, healthcare professionals, criminal justice officials, and mental health providers are white, and the larger systems in which these individuals operate are dominated by white-defined laws, policies, and practices. Women of color have historically been ignored, devalued and, or delegitimized by these systems.
- Trauma and adverse economic and health outcomes: There is significant historical trauma in the lives of people of color, who are also more likely to suffer multiple traumas and adverse economic and health issues than white people.

- Barriers to access: People of color often face numerous barriers to access resources, which prevent or discourage them from reporting sexual violence or receiving supportive services. These barriers include: language access; lack of diversity of among services staff; transportation difficulties; and lack of service structures that honor their cultural identities, needs, beliefs, and styles of expression.
- Resilience: People of Color- as a whole, culturally, and individually- possess resilience from surviving historical trauma to managing present-day institutionalized racism, and sexism. Advocacy and support services should acknowledge how people of color thrive in spite of their harsh realities and incorporate this resilience into service structures.

African American/Black Community:

Stereotypes regarding African American women's sexuality perpetuate the notion that African American women are willing participants in their own victimization. These myths serve to demean, obstruct appropriate legal remedies, and minimize seriousness of sexual violence.

- For every African American/Black woman that reports her rape, at least 15 African American/Black women do not report theirs.
- ~40% of Black women report coercive contact of sexual nature by age 18.
- The National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) found that 18.8% of African American women reported rape in their lifetime.

Asian/Pacific Islander:

In Asian & Pacific Islander (API) communities, women are prone to sexual violence because of human trafficking, labor and sexual exploitation, forced marriages, and virginity examinations. Similar to other women of color, API women experience derogatory and demeaning stereotypes. Myths that API women are "submissive", "elusive", and/or "sexually available" make API women vulnerable to pervasive sexual harassment in the workplace, religious institutions, schools, and by law enforcement.

- NVAWS found the 6.8% of Asian/Pacific Islander women reported rape in their lifetime.
- API women report lower rates of rape & other forms of sexual violence than do women and men from other minority groups. (Possibly due to traditional Asian values which may discourage them from disclosing, even in a confidential setting).

Hispanic/Latino Community:

Myths and stereotypes that all Hispanics/Latinas speak the same language or are in the U.S. illegally preclude victim service providers and law enforcement from providing appropriate assistance, as well as deter victims from reporting their abuse or seeking help. Additionally, in many Hispanic/Latino cultures a woman or girl who loses her virginity to rape, incest, or molestation is seen as a 'promiscuous' woman. Consequently, self-blame and fear of the stigma associated with sexual violence can be a strong deterrent for women and girls to seek help.

- According to a U.S Study of violence between intimate partners, Latinas report rape at a 2.2% higher level than white women.
- ~7.9% of Latinas will be raped by a spouse, boyfriend or ex-boyfriend during their lifetime.
- Married Hispanic/Latinas are less likely than other women to immediately define their experiences of forced sex as rape and terminate their relationships; some view sex as a marital obligation.

Native American/Alaskan Indian Community:

A Native American/Alaskan Indian woman may have deep-rooted distrust of white agencies and help providers that stems from a history of social and personal oppression, making it more difficult for her to report her crime or seek help. The fear of being ostracized by her family and tribe, along with complicated jurisdictional issues, further obscure NA/AI women from reporting their victimization.

- The NVAWS found that 34.1% of NA/AI women report rape in their lifetime.
- 90% of Native American women in chemical dependency treatment are victims of rape and childhood sexual abuse.
- It is estimated that 9 out 10 Native American survivors of rape or sexual assault had perpetrators who were white or black.
- 92% of Native American girls who have had sexual intercourse reported having been forced against their will to have sex.
- 44% of Indian Health Service emergency rooms reported not having an accessible protocol, or trained personnel in place of sexual assault.

Statistical References:

<http://www.oaesv.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Sexual-Violence-Women-of-Color.pdf>

http://www.doj.state.or.us/victims/pdf/women_of_color_network_facts_sexual_violence_2006.pdf

Women of Color Network:

<http://www.wocninc.org/>