

Sexual Assault Overview

“The love and respect we give, we also have to receive”

- “It’s very important to have love and respect. It is taught at home and when you walk out the door you will use it out there too. Some people change their actions when they go to a different area. No matter how far you go, never change your face. Be who you are wherever you go, because you will be accepted. So when I go, leave Kongiganak...I carry this along with me; to treat others just like the way I want to be treated.”



**LOVE,
HEAL,
PROTECT**

We can prevent violence from hurting our children.


Our Elders Say...

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- Julia Brown, Elder

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- **Sexual assault is a weapon of control and power. The person who commits this crime does not consider their victim as equal.**

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- Sexual assault is a crime. It is motivated by power and control and happens without the victim's permission. Sexual assault happens when one person invades another person's boundaries. Perpetrators often believe that "no" means "yes" and that their victims are less than themselves.
 - Sexual assault is a violent crime against a person's body and spirit- even when it does not result in obvious serious physical injuries to the victim.

Dynamics of Sexual Assault

In our communities, sexual assault happens by:

- **Force**—Using physical power to gain sexual contact (pushing, holding someone down, hitting, grabbing)
- **Fear of harm**—Threats of harm against a person, or their loved ones. exerting power over someone else (with verbal threats, loud voice, showing a weapon, threatening gestures)
- **Trickery**—Lying or deceiving to gain sexual contact (getting someone drunk, lying about who you are, or your role in the community)
- **Manipulation**—Using words or actions to get what you want (such as becoming angry when told no, shaming, guilt, or statements like “If you loved me, you would”)
- **Coercion**—Pressuring or bullying a person into sexual contact (begging, nagging, bribery, blackmail such as threatening someone with OCS or exposing that the victim was involved with illegal activities (like making/drinking alcohol in a dry community))

The court system uses the following definitions:

Sexual assault—Any sexual contact with another person without their consent. Can include forcing or pressuring the person into contact.


Rape—Forced penetration.

Sexual contact—Intentional touching (directly or through clothing) of the victim's genitals, anus, or female breast; intentionally causing victim to touch (directly or through clothing) of assailant's genitals, anus, or female breast.

Sexual penetration—Genital intercourse, oral intercourse, anal intercourse; any intrusion (however slight) of any object or any part of a person's body into the genital or anal opening of another's body.

Without consent--Coercion by force against a person or property (with or without resistance) and/or by expressed or implied threat of death, imminent physical danger, or kidnapping.

Incapacitated—Temporarily incapable of understanding the nature of one's own behavior and physically unable to express unwillingness to participate.

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- Victims of Sexual Assault can be men or women-children or elders. Offenders can be men or women, children or elders.
 - Victims can be anyone in any job, background or life experience. The same is true of offenders.
 - The majority (73%) of sexual assaults are committed by a friend or acquaintance.

Some data about sexual assault

- Nearly 100% of adult women and many of the men in Alaska who go into alcohol/drug abuse treatment are victims of child sexual abuse, domestic violence and/or sexual assault.
- The vast majority of sexual assaults (65-85%) are never reported.
- Over 73% of sexual assaults against women are committed by someone the victim knows – a friend, acquaintance, intimate or family member. Date rape is particularly common among teens.
- Over 60% of female rape victims are under age 18.
- Male victims represent about 5% of reported sexual assaults. Male victims do not report as frequently as female victims.
- In a national survey of high school students, 76% of the boys and 47% of the girls believed forced sex was acceptable under some circumstances. 87% of the boys and 79% of girls believed forced sex was ok if the couple was married.

More Facts.....

- Alaska Native women are at higher risk of sexual assault than any other group of people in the United States. Alaska Native women make up less than 7% of Alaska's population yet comprise over 50% of the victims of reported sexual assaults.
- Alcohol abuse is a factor in most sexual assaults in Alaska involving teens or adult women (alcohol is not a factor in most sexual assaults involving children).
- Most perpetrators appear to be normal people with normal lives. They do not rape because they can't control themselves. Instead, they choose in that moment the act of forced sex over consensual sex.

Beliefs that allow sexual assault to continue:

- Women make up stories about being raped to get back at men
- Its not really rape if there isn't any physical force or injuries involved
- Addiction such as alcoholism is a character flaw/sign of low morals.
- Women who drink and pass out at parties are basically asking to be raped.
- ANY ALCOHOL-BLAMING STATEMENT. Alcohol is the original date-rape drug. Offenders use alcohol to make their victims easier targets. Offenders are nearly always sober, or much more sober than their victims. When they are finally honest they usually admit that they knew what they were doing and planned to do it. Offenders are CHOOSING to sexually abuse others.

10 Traits of Abusers

1. **Abusers are predators** – They can spot the weak or vulnerable. Abusers identify potential targets, seek out and hunt their victims, sometimes after elaborate “grooming” or courting activity.
2. **Abusers look for easy targets**–When we allow a child or adult to be isolated, humiliated, misunderstood, dismissed or labeled, we are setting them up for victimization.
3. **Abusers plan ahead** - They go to places where they have access to victims. Child molesters and batterers will seek out jobs or volunteer where they can gain trust or authority over potential victims.
4. **Abusers feel entitled** – They believe they have the right to do what they do and that they are entitled to use and abuse people who are smaller, weaker, dependent or who have less power in our society.

10 Traits of Abusers, cont.

5. **Abusers have multiple victims** – It is not unusual for a child molester to have upwards of 100 victims over a lifetime of abuse. Batterers usually have multiple victims, going from one battering relationship to another.
6. **Abusers are two faced** - Their public face is usually different from the private one. Child molesters are often charming, articulate, well educated attractive people. Batterers may seem to be the last person you can ever imagine hitting anyone. They often appear to be soft-spoken, decent people who seem sincerely bewildered by accusations or suspicions of abuse.
7. **Abusers are master manipulators** - If there is a weak link in the process, the offender will exploit it. They are masters at playing people against one another. Offenders are very smart at figuring out who has power and who doesn't. They can size up opposition quickly and will concentrate on manipulating whoever they think has got the juice.
8. **Abusers are in denial** – They live in a fantasy world . Abusers, particularly batterers, not only deny and minimize what they do, they often come to believe they are the real victims – victims of an “seductive” child or a nagging wife.

10 Traits of Abusers, cont.

9. **Abusers are opportunists** – They will offend against what is easiest and what is available. Generally, they prefer to pick and groom their own victims but they'll take what they can get. This means that most sex offenders will abuse adults or children, depending on who is vulnerable to them, and that they may be willing to abuse either gender (male/female).
10. **Abusers are control freaks** – This works hand and glove with their general feelings of entitlement. They must be in control of the victim in order to get away with what they are doing and they use specific and documented tactics to gain and keep that control.

One last thing – Sexual abusers are usually male. OVER 90% of sexual abusers are male. Most men who rape were engaged in an ongoing intimate relationship with an adult woman at the time of the assault.

Without intervention, sexual abusers will not stop offending. For offenders, a rape or abuse is NOT a one-time thing.

About Alcohol

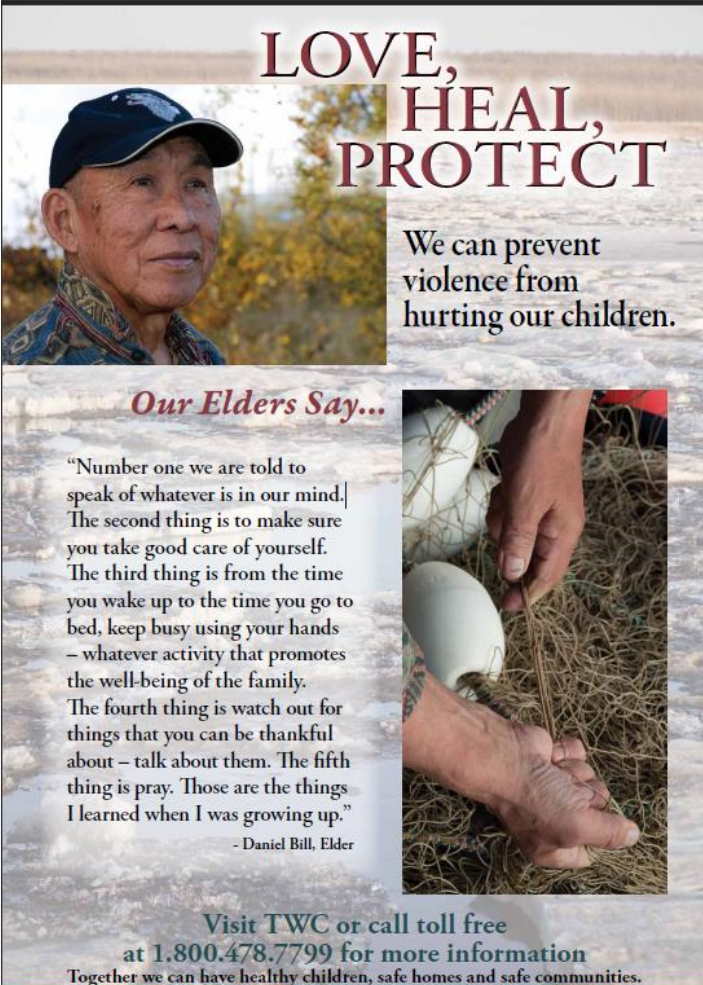
- When people use alcohol, they choose to do things they would not do when they are sober.
- We are each responsible for our own actions at all times. If we choose to use alcohol, we must do so
 - In a community where using alcohol is legal
 - Only when we can use it and our behaviors remain safe for our loved ones and other community members
 - Only when we can keep ourselves safe
 - When we can demonstrate using alcohol moderately and with limits. All of us are role models & people are watching and learning from our behaviors

Being a role model

- All first responders and helping professionals are role models.
- As we accept these positions, whether we are health aides, VPSOs, ICWA workers, social workers or something else- our community members do rely on us. We must “walk the talk” both at work and in our personal lives to be truly responsible individuals and service providers.
- Our actions- positive or negative- reflect back on us as individuals, on our fields of work, and the agencies we work for as well.

Ways of Being Healthy and in Balance

Number one we are told to speak of whatever is in our mind. The second thing is to make sure you take good care of yourself. The third thing is from the time you wake up to the time you go to bed, keep busy using your hands—whatever activity that promotes the well-being of the family. The fourth thing is watch out for things that you can be thankful about—talk about them. The fifth thing is pray. Those are the things I learned when I was growing up.”



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- Daniel Bill, Elder

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Self Care

- First responders and helpers will find themselves struggling with burnout and stress.
- How will you take care of yourself so that you can take care of others?
- What are your healthy outlets and activities that will help you maintain a healthy balance?

Issues for Victims

- Safety – their own
- Safety – their kids & family members
- Sexual & physical abuse – ongoing as well as past violence
- Unresolved grief issues
- Face stigma, being isolated and shame
- PTSD
- Lack of support

Reporting Barriers for Victims

- Confidentiality
- Fear of Retaliation
- Guilt about “sending someone to jail”
- Reluctance to be perceived as “revengeful”
- Guilt to remove a provider from the community
- Language barriers
- Negative past experiences with “systems”
- Feel uncomfortable reporting because they are from another village
- Fear that rumors and gossip will spread

Why is sexual assault difficult to talk about:

- We don't know how
- We don't believe it is “our” issue
- We are embarrassed
- We are afraid it will be disrespectful to ask
- We have mixed personal and professional feelings
- We lack knowledge of available resources to offer

How to respond to victims:

- Believe them.
- Say: No one has the right to hurt you or your children.
- It is never your fault when someone harms you even if you were drinking or using. You did not cause this, an abuser chose to be violent.
- You did not deserve this and neither do your children.
- I'm so glad you found a way to survive.
- Let victims know that using drugs or alcohol can kill pain for a while but there are safer ways of coping that can cause less grief and future problems.

Validate

- Believe them
- Listen carefully- and whenever they need to talk
- Let the person know ALL their feelings are normal
- Be confidential and respect their privacy
- Help the victim develop a safety plan
 - Their offender may still be living in the same house, or nearby
- Victims of sexual abuse need to hear over and over that the assault was not their fault

Tools to share with victims:


- Crisis Line- 1-800-478-7799
- Support Groups- in Bethel, Monday-Thurs. nights at TWC
- Local, village-based talking circles or groups
- Encourage attendance at Healthy Families or for your community to host a workshop or Healthy Families conference
- Sexual Assault Protective Orders (DV or Stalking available too)



Recovery from Sexual Assault

Each person's path to healing
is unique.

As support people, we must
be patient.



We must confront,
challenge and change the
belief systems and
practices that sustain
violence.

What a person can do:

- Get Educated! Train and talk, talk and train both adults and youth to understand the impact of sexual assault and discuss local strategies for preventing it.
- Empower the most vulnerable people in your community (children, elders, women, people with disabilities or substance abuse problems) to speak out and ask for help if they need it. Demand that others show respect to them.
- Speak Out! If community leaders/role models speak out against sexual assault, others will follow.
- Encourage victims to report. And make it safe for them to report.
- Be a safe place or person for victims to come seek help.

Consent!

- Tea Youtube video

There is always hope.

“I have seen and learned from myself and my children and from other people in my village, that there is hope for everyone. To raise children is lots of work, especially when they are sickly and not listening and in their teenage years. They will stray later, but they will always come back to the fold. There is always a place of turning around.”

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- Irene Kaganak, Elder

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