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DENISON UNIVERSITY
WOMEN'S STUDIES

A SPECIAL ISSUE ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT,
COERCION AND ASSAULT

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introduction
by bev purrington

Rape is a crime that affects all women; not just those who are actually raped, but all women. The fear of rape is something girls learn when they are young and something that even older women cannot disregard (see "Myths and Facts About Rape"). The fear of rape keeps women from taking jobs that involve night time hours; restricts women's travel plans; and encourages "strategies that keep women weak, isolated, fearful and dependent on others for protection." (CASSR, p. 36)

Traditionally, two strategies have been used to deal with the problem of rape: "victim control" and "rapist control." The first strategy, by keeping women indoors or encouraging them to have male escorts at night, ignores the social causes of rape. It also "reinforces women's helplessness...; reinforces victim blame by shifting the responsibility for attack to the women who failed to properly avoid it;...and amounts to massive control of women's lives; forcing women as a class of people to trade freedom for security." (CASSR, p.36) Rapist control measures are equally ineffectual since "prosecution as such is not prevention...; prosecution fails to deter men from raping...; and prosecution does not provide redress for women for the damaging impact of fear on our lives." (CASSR, p36)

Not surprisingly, neither of these strategies has reduced the incidence of rape. Neither of these measures focuses on the societal conditions that make women vulnerable to rape (e.g. definitions of sexuality that link it to violence; notions about masculinity; the unequal power relations between women and men; the training of young girls for passivity; and conceptions of rape which see it as an individual rather than as a collective problem).

Yet this does not mean that living with the threat of rape is inevitable. It only means that our solutions must be more complex and imaginative than those we've traditionally used. Nationally, one of the best rape prevention programs was developed by Women Against Rape (W.A.R.) of Columbus, Ohio. They conducted a four-year research and demonstration project called "Community Action Strategies to Stop Rape" (CASSR). Their suggestions for stopping rape include the following:

1. We can redefine rape: rape is not about sex, it is about violence and degradation.
2. We can refine the problem: rape should be a public issue; it affects all women, not just a few.
3. We can plan programs which will:
   a. Build women's strength
   b. Extend women's mobility
   c. Promote women's independence
   d. Guarantee women's freedom.
In the last three months Denison students, faculty and staff have sponsored a variety of programs that apply these three suggestions. The programs have dealt with a range of issues including verbal harassment, sexual coercion, acquaintance rape, and violent assault. For example:

1. over sixty women participated in rape prevention workshops during January, February, and March;
2. a group of faculty and administrators attended an informational workshop designed by Women Against Rape of Columbus;
3. an action group to combat rape and sexual harassment (Denisonians Against Rape) was formed in January;
4. several fraternities are planning educational programs for Spring;
5. some campus groups are considering the purchase of a film series on acquaintance rape.

This entire issue of the Women's Studies Newsletter is devoted to sharing some of these programs with you. Since Denison is a small community, you count: your actions can either contribute to the continuations of the problems or be an active force for change. Discuss the issues with your friends; stop by the Women's Resource Center to browse through our readings on sexual violence; plan a program for your dorm; contact Denisonians Against Rape; write something for the next issue of the Newsletter; or just stop by to talk with me.

(Note: references in this article are from:
A Group Leader's Guide: Rape Prevention Workshops written by Community Action Strategies to Stop Rape. The manual is available in the Women's Resource Center.)

myths and facts about rape

(adapted from Myths About Rape, by Women Against Rape, Columbus, Ohio, 1978.)

**MYTH:** ONLY YOUNG ATTRACTIVE WOMEN ARE RAPED

**FACT:** Regardless of age, race, economic background, or physical appearance, all women are vulnerable to rape; there is no clearly defined group of women subject to attack. What the rapist is seeking is not necessarily an attractive woman, but a woman who is easy to attack. By assuming that only young and attractive women get raped, people tend to excuse a rapist's behavior and hold the woman who was attacked responsible. Another result of this myth is that women who consider themselves out of the "at-risk" category will not see themselves as potential victims. Nor is it likely that these women will be prepared to defend themselves should they be attacked.
Recently, the Denison campus has had to confront the urgent need for rape awareness. Until now, many refused to believe that rape happened in our community. Yet it does—especially in the form of "acquaintance rape." Problems of verbal and sexual harassment at Denison are also prevalent. As women we need to stand together to defend our rights as human beings to be free from violence, physical harassment, and verbal harassment. Right now these freedoms do not exist for women at Denison.

One reason women continue to be denied basic rights of freedom (both at Denison and in the world at large) is because of myths about the sexual nature of men and women. One such myth places the blame for sexual assault on the woman—perhaps she was dressed too suggestively or left the door to her room unlocked; or "she led him on" or "she's a cocktease." Statements such as these perpetuate ideas that women deserve to be raped whenever they exhibit any kind of sexuality. Both men and women at Denison are contributors to the perpetuation of this "victim blaming." At the beginning of second semester, the Andy Warhol movie "Dracula" was shown on campus. The film was rated XXX and included several violent sex scenes, including a rape that involved oral sex. It was shocking to see women portrayed with such violence on the screen, but even more shocking was the audience reaction to this violence against women. The auditorium was filled with shouts of "get her, she loves it." These shouts were coming from women as well as from men. This disturbing display only served to enforce the myth that a woman loves violence and that she wants to be raped. If the problem of rape is to be overcome, we must realize that rape is not enjoyed by women: it is a violent crime intended to humiliate them and render them powerless.

If the occurrence of sexual harassment of women at Denison is to be combatted, several things must be recognized. First it is important to note that an act of harassment against one woman is an insult to all women. Second, acts of harassment such as cat calls and pinches are not compliments. They are degrading because the person committing these violations denies the woman respect. Finally, a problem exists in organizing women to combat the problems of rape and harassment that stems from divisions created by men who tend to divide women into two classifications: "good girls" and "bad girls." These divisions work to separate women from one another, preventing them from organizing to combat sexism. We must end such divisions and work together to stop sexual assault.

Violence against women, whether it takes the form of physical or verbal abuse, must end. The next time you see a woman being subjected to harassment support her, remembering that an insult to her is an insult to all women. By supporting one another we can begin to join forces and effectively combat problems of rape and sexual harassment, together.
A woman who has been raped feels powerless. Regardless of whether the rape is the stereotypic attack by a stranger or coerced sex by an acquaintance, the loss of control the woman experiences is the same. The integrity of her body has been violated, and she finds herself vulnerable and not in control. The primary response a raped woman needs is support to take back the lost control.

Society has taught women that they are guilty for the mistreatment they receive. Thus, it is not uncommon for a woman who has been raped to express remorse and guilt for "allowing" the rape to occur. While an observer might consider it absurd that a victim would feel guilty for being attacked, the socialization women undergo results in feelings of guilt for provoking the behavior of others. Women do not choose to be raped; they are raped, and they need support to express these feelings of guilt and responsibility if they exist.

Fear and anger are feelings that many women also experience. The feelings of fear arise from the woman's realization of her vulnerability. If this happened once, it can happen again. The reality that her body has been violated and might be again alters a woman's sense of freedom. And, the anger that might be expressed is in response to this violation. Anger directs the blame for the assault towards the rapist, as opposed to the internal blame that is associated with guilt. However, many women have been taught that it is not ok to express anger, and they cannot allow themselves to be angry.

Thus, the focus of early intervention is to support and encourage the exploration of any feelings the rape victim experiences. Although the feelings described above are typical, no two women will experience exactly the same emotions. It is important to allow the individual expression of reactions and feelings, and not to force the victim into a predictable pattern that might not fit her unique experience.

Because rape is loss of control, it is extremely important that the supporter of a rape victim not be controlling or directive. The victim often is bewildered and unsure, and it is easy to direct her behaviors. Except in case of medical emergency, it is never appropriate to insist that a rape victim act in a specified manner. She needs time to express her initial feelings, and then can be offered alternative courses of behavior from which to choose. Regardless of the values and beliefs of the person offering support, the victim must not be coerced into reporting or not reporting the attack. This is an individual choice that the victim needs to make herself. However, it is helpful if the victim can be given factual information about what she is likely to experience if she does report the rape, whether to the police or to a medical professional. This is not the appropriate format in which to elaborate on the information needed; however, it is recommended that individuals become acquainted with these procedures. Again, the information is offered to help the victim identify options, not to coerce her into a particular behavior. As the woman who has been raped makes choices and implements decisions she takes back the control that has been lost. The ability to implement decisions about her body and behavior helps restore a woman's perception of herself as in control rather than as a victim.
Joan Nelson, who founded the Feminist Self Defense and Karate Association in Lansing Michigan in 1976, came to Denison March 6-8 to lead a two-day workshop on sexual assault education and introductory self defense. The workshop had two primary goals: (1) to provide women with a nine-hour introduction to feminist consciousness-raising, and (2) basic skills for self defense. The emphasis on consciousness-raising is essential for women in dealing with harassment, as women have been socialized to be overly passive and polite. Many women do not resist their assailants (they tend to see assailants as invincible psychopaths) and often (especially when the assailant is a friend or acquaintance) they feel sorry for their attackers after the assault. The fear that women face alters their lifestyles and reduces their mobility. These fears are realistic: projected statistics show that one out of every three women has experienced rape or attempted rape. As a feminist activist, Joan has been involved for ten years in a variety of groups working to eliminate crimes of violence against women.

Joan describes the main goals of her workshops as: (1) situation analysis—the process of determining appropriate and effective responses to a variety of assailant approaches and circumstances; (2) self-empowerment and confidence building through a more accurate understanding of one's strengths and an awareness of the situational and physical weaknesses of the assailant; and (3) increased verbal and physical proficiency in dealing with violence.

Joan's clinic at Denison began Friday night with a three-hour session presenting facts about woman-assault; reasonable precautions; the pre-assaultive situation; and situation analysis. Women were presented with skills essential to determining their own responses—recognizing that no single defense tactic is appropriate in every situation. Joan stressed the importance of mental as well as physical preparation to overcome the training most women have that renders them passive and reluctant to hurt anyone (even an assailant). The workshop had an underlying message about the reality of rape: rapists seek victims who look vulnerable and they are often easily deterred by women who resist the assault.

The full day session on Saturday reviewed the topics of Friday night in more detail. The morning consisted largely of specific attention to physical self defense skills. Joan teaches a method call the "six-squared" system. This system trains women to picture an assailant reduced to six vulnerable targets: the eyes, nose, throat, solar plexus, testicles, and knees. It also teaches women to think of themselves as walking arsenals with six potential weapons: the head, upper limbs, lower limbs, and voice. Using this system, women can learn to quickly and efficiently deter assailants. Joan taught ways to break common holds, deal with attacks from the rear and the side, and to deter multiple assailants. While these tactics are only the beginnings of full self defense capabilities, they empower women to utilize...
their own strengths in quick accurate blows to vulnerable areas. Violence against women is a sad reality, and women must realize their chances to escape harm are good if they respond with determined, confident action.

Saturday afternoon was spent learning and practicing verbal confrontation skills. This portion stressed the importance of objecting firmly and loudly to unwanted advances or comments. Verbal confrontation training teaches women to name the behavior they object to rather than criticizing the person. It requires that women maintain eye contact, a calm tone of voice, and a positive, assertive attitude in confronting harassment. The participants broke up into small groups to "role play" situations of harassment on the job, on the street, and in more difficult situations (such as confronting someone the woman knows). Joan teaches women to trust their gut feelings. If a woman is at all uneasy, she should take action to avoid what could be a hazardous situation.

Approximately twenty Denison women participated in Joan's workshop, including faculty, staff, and students. The weekend clinic was sponsored by Women's Studies, Women's Emphasis, the Mellon Grant, and the Office of Student Life. This shows a dedicated effort on the part of the University and its community to take necessary steps to eliminate rape. While the institution generally feels that extra lighting and male-staffed escort systems will decrease the number of sexual assaults on campus, these solutions ignore the fact that 60-85% of reported rapes take place indoors and involve someone the victim knows.

Educational programs such as Joan's and the workshops sponsored by the Columbus Women Against Rape, together with efforts to make the judicial system more effective are important steps in assuring that the trauma of rape will begin to terrorize fewer women. Such long term solutions are critical to the elimination of rape. For these reasons, members of Denisonians Against Rape met with Joan on Sunday morning for an informal workshop on prevention strategies for Denison. With her help the group designed a short questionnaire and arranged a "call-in line" to determine the extent of sexual harassment and assault on campus. These will not be used as a basis for prosecution but rather to begin to get a realistic view of the problem. Early reports have shown shocking results: Women have described brutal rapes which occurred at Denison which they did not report. Later in the semester, the findings will be published. This deeply rooted problem must end. Until women are free from the threat of sexual assault we must ALL work to eliminate rape.

more myths

MYTH: THE RAPIST IS A STRANGER
FACT: Most of the time women are attacked by men they know; family members--fathers, husbands, brother; a friend or neighbor; the service repairman, or simply someone the woman has seen before. Women who are attacked by boyfriends, neighbors, relatives or acquaintances are less likely to report to the police, either because they fear they won't be believed, or because they fear retaliation by the attacker. The "stranger" myth serves to leave women totally unprepared when a trusted male friend or family member assaults them. Often women will feel that their own behavior is somehow at fault and fail to take any action to make the man accountable for his actions.
facts about self-defense

Copyright by Joan Nelson, 1980
Feminist Self-defense and Karate Association,
Lansing, Michigan ReSister, Inc.

1. Self Defense is a process consisting of:
   1) increasing awareness about patterns and politics of assault,
   2) taking reasonable precautions to avoid attack,
   3) preparing for the possibility of assault not only by learning self defense tactics and techniques, but also by developing the self confidence and judgment necessary to determine appropriate responses to different attack situations.

2. There are no magic formulas to deterring an assailant. Most important is to have the wherewithal to be able to assess the situation, determine the best response, and then act on it.

3. Women of all ages, ethnicity, education and life style are able to successfully resist attackers.

4. The vast majority of attacks are planned in advance. Frequently, an intended victim is watched by an assailant before he approaches.

5. According to one study, assailants frequently engaged in a selection process in choosing victims. Most assailants selected women they perceived as vulnerable or available. Physical appearance, assertive body language, and a wary, suspicious attitude often led to elimination as a prospective victim.

6. Frequently, assaults are preceeded by a casual conversation ranging from two minutes to two hours. Because these exchanges are 'typically friendly and impersonal', women often respond in a polite and amiable way. Despite friendly overtones, women who have found themselves in these situations have usually felt uneasy. Those who were likely to ignore, repress or rationalize these feelings, were more likely to be attacked.

7. According to Dr. Frank Javorek in a study conducted with Denver General Hospital Crime Prevention Unit, women in his study were able to escape weaponless attackers over 85% of the time if they 1) yelled to attract attention, and 2) resisted. He found that those women who did only one of the above, escaped over 50% of the time. Women who did neither rarely escaped.

8. Dr. James Selkin found further, that in weaponless assaults, the sooner a woman resisted, the greater the likelihood of escape. Women who bide their time may lose a strategic advantage in that while she hesitates, her assailant has time to check things out to reassure himself that help for her is not nearby.

9. In assaults involving weapons, biding one's time until an opportunity to escape presents itself, i.e., the assailant is momentarily distracted, is usually a good idea. The risks involved in resisting an armed assailant are obviously much greater than those involved in weaponless assaults.
10. Research findings suggest that rape prevention is more possible through vigorous and aggressive resistance. Passive resistance (verbal stalling, slapping, pleading) correlates highly with extreme violence.

11. Violence occurs in over 80% of all rape attempts. It's the nature of the crime in that the primary aim of the sex offender is the expression of power, dominance, and control. Non-resistance doesn't necessarily insure that violence won't occur.

12. Assailants have weaknesses that can be exploited:
   1) He has to get close.
   2) He's afraid of being caught.
   3) He fears and feels pain.
   4) He's capable of being injured.

13. Most assailants are looking for victims who will be passive and cooperative. Aggressive, vigorous victim refusal to be raped is the most effective resistance reported by both attempted rape victims and deterred assailants.

14. Women who appear to be alert and suspicious and not overwhelmed by fear and panic are more likely to prevent or escape assault. For instance, in one study none of the deterred assailants interviewed perceived their intended victims as being frightened. Actual offenders claimed that the victim's fears, i.e. crying, overt nervousness, verbal stalling, encouraged them to complete the assault.

15. All women experience fear when confronted with an assailant. However, the sooner we can move past panic and paralysis and focus on our escape, rather than the possibility of injury or death, the more effective our defense will be.

16. Women are capable of developing accurate and fast techniques and using the element of surprise in an attack to compensate for a potential and relative lack of strength. Self defense is not a sparring match.

17. Self defense is a serious, practical skill that nearly everyone is capable of learning.

18. Self defense is the process of reclaiming physical integrity that results, as Py Bateman has written, in our turning our fears into anger at intrusions upon our self-respect.

Sources:
Queen's Bench Foundation, LEAA, 1976
Forcible Rape Series, LEAA
Victim Resistance Studies, Javorek and Selkin
During January I attended a workshop, given by Women Against Rape in Columbus. The workshop consisted of four three-hour sessions, which presented self defense strategies in the context of the social and political implications of rape.

In the first workshop our two leaders, Sarah McKinley and Caroline Sparks, introduced us to the idea that women as a whole group are vulnerable to rape. They criticized the traditional approaches to preventing rape which center on the victim or the rapist, and ignore society at large: rape will only be truly eliminated when changes in society occur. They explained how we should work towards the goal of living in a society in which rape does not exist. After this lecture we learned self defense strategies that would help us to deal with the dangers all women presently must face. We learned various kicks, jabs, and methods of escaping from holds, as well as a new way to yell which is much more effective than an ordinary scream. This helped us to be better prepared in case we are ever attacked and made us more aware of what to expect.

In the second session, we went into more detail about the social and political implications of rape. Three main factors contributing to women's vulnerability to rape were discussed: women's lack of information, women's dependence upon men, and women's isolation both from each other and the community. Sarah and Caroline stressed that these areas need to be changed before rape can ever be stopped. They also emphasized that all women are oppressed regardless of their social class, and therefore rape is an issue that should concern all women. Then we went on to learn more ways of getting out of difficult holds. We practiced scenes in which we were grabbed and learned how to move quickly and effectively.

In our third session we examined the patriarchal system in our society and how rape plays a role in maintaining this system. Caroline and Sarah showed how the patriarchal system also sets up conditions for rape and at the same time justifies its existence. We then talked about what could be done that would help eliminate the three main areas that contribute to women's vulnerability to rape. We discussed how in order to understand rape, it is necessary to redefine it in terms that are not male, and to make rape a public issue so all women can know and understand how they are susceptible to rape. We then discussed power relations between men and women and how these can be altered. They emphasized that women need to be organized as a political class in order to make changes in the institutions in our society. We need to eliminate our dependence upon men by pressuring for legislative changes that would give us equal work and educational opportunities, fair rape laws, and employment benefits. Creative alternatives must be developed which allow women to live less dependently on men. Women's support groups such as health collectives, rape crisis centers, and cultural
events are examples of such alternatives. We must also change our emotional and physical reactions to rape. By learning self defense and confrontation skills, we can become more confident and see ourselves as having control over our own lives and bodies. Finally, our leaders stressed that we must end our isolation from one another. We need to organize in our work places and neighborhoods: to come together so we can support one another and make changes. Caroline emphasized how a group of women together making demands can be a very effective strategy. She stressed how important it is to join groups in which women can receive support from other women so that we can open up to each other, share, and work together. Women can also get involved in the higher level of policy changes demanding such things as better rape laws. We next looked at areas of Denison that are contributing to the oppression of women. We listed areas that need change and chose a few that we can work on this year. We considered having more education about the definitions of rape on campus and forming possible action groups. As a result of this Denisonians Against Rape (D.A.R.) was formed. We also received lessons in how to confront private and public incidents of sexual harassment—a method known as "confrontation training". Simulation groups, in which women took roles of men leering at women, taught us how to deal with crude comments and unwanted sexual advances by being verbally assertive. These role plays helped us learn to rely on our own resources and taught us how to make the man individually and/or publicly accountable for his actions.

In our fourth session we discussed rape prevention strategies in detail. Our chief goal attainable, by using these various strategies, was to empower women to stop victimization by demanding control of our own lives and bodies.

I cannot stress enough what a fantastic experience this workshop was for me. For the first time I felt a sense of real unity and understanding with a group of women. It showed me how to respond to dangerous and sexually harassing situations and thus gave me a sense of confidence that I did not have before. I now feel that I can take action instead of feeling vulnerable or carrying around suppressed anger when faced with intimidating situations. I hope there will be more workshops by Women Against Rape this semester, and I urge every woman at Denison to take advantage of this great opportunity.

**more myths**

**MYTH:** THE RAPIST IS A SEXUALLY UNFULFILLED MAN, CARRIED AWAY BY A SUDDEN UNCONTROLLABLE SEXUAL DESIRE

**FACT:** Most statistics indicate that rape is not an impulsive act. Instead, rapes tend to be well-planned events. Menachem Amir, in a Philadelphia study of forcible rape in 1968-69, found that 81% of rapes in his study were planned. Amir also found that 60% of the rapists in his study were married and having sexual relations with their wives on a regular basis. Although sex may play some part in the act of rape, it is not a primary motivation. Most men who rape have access to sexual partners.
sexual assault and the law

by joan straumanis
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Ohio's eight-year old legal code is one of the most enlightened in the nation on the subject of sexual violence and assault. Among its advanced provisions are such items as inclusion of forced oral and anal sex in the definition of 'rape', protection of the victim's right not to testify or be examined for physical evidence (such as the presence of semen), and neutral language which recognizes that both the offender and the victim in a sexual assault may be of either sex. On the other hand, Ohio (like many other states) retains the notion that forced sex with a spouse does not count as rape, however violent that incident may be. The law does allow, however, a charge of ordinary assault against a spouse.

Rape is defined by Ohio law as oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse (even slight penetration counts) when it is (1) accomplished by force (meaning violence, compulsion or physical constraint), or threat of force; or (2) when the offender gives the victim drugs or alcohol by force, threat or deception in order to prevent resistance; or (3) when the victim is less than 13 years old regardless of whether he or she consented to having sex. In order for rape to be proved, it is not necessary that the victim have resisted or been beaten.

Several kinds of sexual assault other than rape are also classified as felonies under the Ohio Code. These include such acts as inserting an object into a victim's anus or vagina, or having sexual contact (touching without penetration), when either of these happens under the three numbered conditions given in the above definition of 'rape'. These crimes are called "felonious sexual penetration" and "gross sexual imposition" respectively. Sex with a person under 15 years old by a person 18 or older is also a felony, even if the younger person consents. Still another group of sexual felonies fall into a category called "sexual battery". This includes such acts as sex under coercion (which might include, for example, threatening the victim with failure in a course, or loss of employment), sex with a person whose judgment is impaired or who doesn't understand what is happening, and sex with a person who is in the offender's care or custody, or subject to the offender's authority or supervision. If any of these conditions apply to an act of sexual contact (rather than sexual intercourse), then the crime is counted as a misdemeanor rather than a felony. Other misdemeanors include "importuning" (soliciting sex with a young person or a person of the same sex as the offender) and "voyeurism" (invasion of privacy by a "peeping Tom").

Because of laws requiring that felonies be reported to the police, the question of whether or not an act is a felony is crucial. With a few exceptions, anyone who knows that a felony was committed and fails to report it is guilty of a misdemeanor called "misprision of justice." In 1976 I was twice brought before a Licking County Grand Jury to answer questions about rapes that I had learned of through counseling Denison students. Even though I had no knowledge about the identity of the offenders (I knew only the victims) I was subject to prosecution for misprision. When I refused to give the information on the grounds of self-incrimination, the prosecutor gave me immunity from the misprision charge, but threatened me with a jail term for contempt if I continued to maintain my silence. Even
so, I refused to reveal the names of rape victims to the prosecutor. Thanks to the efforts of the American Civil Liberties Union and a Newark attorney, the case was eventually dropped, but it was clear that rape counselors were in a vulnerable position unless they were clergymen or licensed psychologists—people who are legally exempt from the duty to report felonies they learn about in the course of counseling.

Because we felt that any program of counseling must be confidential to be effective, two Denison students and I decided to try to change the law to include rape counselors in the list of those excused from the obligation to report sexual crimes. This we succeeded in doing, and our bill was signed into law by Gov. Rhodes in 1978. It was amended late in 1980, to loosen the definition of "counseling services," and it now protects the confidentiality of counselling given to victims of sex crimes, including "services provided in an informal setting by a person who, by education or experience, is competent to provide such services." This is interpreted by the Civil Liberties Union to include, among others, volunteers in a crisis center, or staff members in a college who have some degree of relevant training or experience. It would certainly include the people involved in the new "Advocate" program at Denison.

Despite my deep commitment to the idea that victims of sexual assault should have the right to confidential advice and help, I strongly favor public reporting of such assaults in order to make offenders accountable for their acts and to protect the community. But for several reasons we cannot always expect to send cases of sexual assault through the public courts.

A community like ours should be able to develop procedures which can be used to help reluctant victims and witnesses to maintain anonymity—procedures which are not available to a person involved in a criminal court case. These could include closed hearings or the readings of written and signed testimony without revealing the writer's name at the hearing.

Whether or not we condone this desire of the witness for anonymity, or wish it were otherwise, the fact is that victims reveal the facts of an assault more willingly within our community than to the public at large. This results not only from the fear of harassment but also from the well documented tendency of victims of sexual assaults to feel shame, embarrassment, guilt, and even a sense of responsibility for the crime (because they didn't do enough to prevent or stop it), or regard for the welfare of the offender (who is often a friend or an acquaintance). These factors increase the likelihood that at least some cases of sexual assault at Denison will have to be handled internally.

It is frustrating that even with the safeguards we provide at Denison to victims (and thus, by extension, to offenders) the majority of such crimes are not officially reported within our own system. When they are reported, victims or witnesses often withdraw their cooperation short of the stage at which the offender could be penalized, or try to limit the extent of the penalty. None of these responses adequately protects the community from future offenses by the same person, or deters other acts of sexual violence.

Solutions are hard to put in place. The new "Advocate" program may help victims review their options and carry out the more difficult courses of action. But the most effective solution is an enlightened community which takes assault prevention seriously and is deeply intolerant of any form of sexual violence.
Formed in January of 1981, Denisonians Against Rape (D.A.R.) is an organization of fifty-five concerned men and women, made up of students, faculty, and staff. The group formed due to concern about the level of violence inflicted upon women at Denison -- verbal and sexual harassment, and rape -- and the lack of adequate response from administrators and the judicial system when such violence occurs. The members of D.A.R. feel there is a need for more information about the problems of rape and harassment at Denison, and seek to raise the level of consciousness among administrators, professors, and students about such violence against women.

In a brief two months the group has been active. Early in the term, D.A.R. published the Ohio Code concerning rape in the "Bullsheet" in order to clarify the legal definition of rape. They are enthusiastic about the rape prevention workshops at Denison held by Women Against Rape (W.A.R.) of Columbus and by Joan Nelson of Lansing, Michigan. At the community meeting held March 9 concerning suggested reforms of the Denison judicial system, members of D.A.R. emphasized their feeling that the judicial system at Denison has not taken rape and sexual harassment seriously as offenses which endanger women's lives and deny women freedom from physical and verbal assault, and urged the creation of a safer environment for women at Denison.

D.A.R. hopes to reduce the number of assaults against women by raising the level of consciousness at Denison concerning incidents of rape and harassment. Their recent questionnaire and "call-in" line were part of this effort to gather data on the actual incidence of sexual harassment, coercion, and assault. Working with the Office of Student Life, D.A.R. has formulated a model for a more reliable community information source which will report on acts of violence against women. The names of victims will always be protected. The purpose of this information is to give all members of the Denison community accurate, reliable knowledge about rape and harassment.

D.A.R. is also offering advocacy services for victims of sexual harassment (verbal or physical), coercion and assault. For too long, Denison women have not known where to find a support system to turn to when an incident of violence occurs; therefore, many women have never revealed that they have been victimized. Many women faculty and staff have volunteered to serve as advocates. The following is a partial list of advocates (a complete list is available from Bev Purrington): Ruth Danon, English; Eileen Krimsky, Counseling; Jan Love, Political Science; Julie Mulroy, Biology; Beverly Purrington, Sociology/Anthropology; and Joan Straumanis, Philosophy. They are available to talk with women and to help them locate other services they may need (e.g., medical, legal, psychological). Of course the staff at the counseling office is always available should they prefer to contact them.

Through all these programs -- education, consciousness raising, and victim counseling, D.A.R. hopes to make the facts about rape and harassment understood to support victims of such assaults, and to decrease the occurrence of such incidents at Denison.
sources of information
by liz tynan

SEXUAL HARASSMENT


RAPE AND RELATED ISSUES

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