



THE BADASS QUARTERLY

A periodic publication of the BADASS Active Bystander Campaign & the Wellness Resource Center

Take action to make sure CC is a safe, accepting, and fun place to spend your college years

Blocks 7 & 8 2019

The BADASS campaign focuses mainly on preventing violence, responding to people in distress, and fostering inclusivity. This edition narrows in on the Be Aware component for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The theme of this year's SAAM campaign from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center is I Ask. In alignment with the BADASS program, I Ask seeks to broaden understanding of what it means to work towards a culture of consent. Consent isn't just about sex; it's relevant when you hug or touch someone and when post photos online as well. NSVRC's campaign also goes "beyond asking," questioning how power dynamics (e.g. race, age, gender, social standing) impact consent. Consent in a sexual context isn't just about asking for something and hoping to get it based on the response, it's about paying attention to your partner's body language, listening to them, demonstrating interest in their pleasure, and communicating what you like too.

Upcoming Federal Title IX Policy Changes

In November 2018, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos released a proposal for regulations outlining educational institutions' responsibilities under Title IX. Title IX is a civil rights law mandating equal access to education regardless of gender. The proposed new rules, which are currently under review, will fundamentally change the support that schools are required to, and even allowed to, give survivors of gender-based violence and discrimination. For example, the new rules instruct schools not to investigate sexual assaults that occurred off-campus. The rules also narrow the definition of sexual assault and declare that survivors have not been discriminated against under Title IX unless the behavior has tangibly and negatively affected their access to education (e.g. missing class or lower grades). These changes, along with other components of the proposal, would likely deter survivors from filing formal Title IX reports and/or discourage survivors from reporting promptly after their assaults occurred.

These changes mark a significant departure from interpretations that have been commonplace since Title IX was passed as law in 1972—that sexual violence in the form of assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking constitutes gender-based discrimination, inherently impedes access to education, and therefore violates the civil rights of an individual targeted by such behavior. Colorado College is committed to supporting survivors of sexual violence. Students concerned about these changes can connect with the Wellness Resource Center, and student survivors of sexual violence can always and continue to seek confidential resources, such as the SARC.

Intersections of Gender-Based Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health

Trauma impacts many people on a day to day basis, with varying degrees of severity. Sexual trauma has many potential psychological consequences that can affect individuals' daily experiences. Survivors of sexual assault often display depressive symptoms such as social isolation, diminished interest in academics or cocurricular activities, trouble focusing, and erratic or volatile emotions. Trauma can also trigger momentary or prolonged states of heightened arousal, which might present as heightened anxiety, easily startled or frightened, and panic attacks.

These consequences of sexual trauma leave survivors at a higher risk for other struggles such as drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders, and suicidality. One or any of these symptoms can significantly impact a survivor's ability to participate in classes, sports, clubs, and feel generally safe in dining halls, dorms, and other campus spaces. Campus confidential resources such as the SARC, Counseling Center, and the Gender and Identity Specialist are able to work with students to help make supportive changes—for example, getting extensions on classwork, changing dorms, or other modifications a survivor feels necessary—whether or not the survivor decides to pursue Title IX reporting options. In fact, confidential resources can help facilitate these changes for survivors without disclosing to professors, RAs, etc., the reason they are necessary, if that is consistent with the survivors wishes. If you or a friend are experiencing some of the symptoms above, consider how campus resources could support healing and easier daily functioning.

Racism and Sexual Violence

Talking about racism is an integral part of the conversation around sexual and gender-based violence. Race has been used as a tool of patriarchal oppression throughout U.S. history—race as a legal construct originated in 17th century anti-miscegenation laws that enforced racial segregation and oppression by criminalizing marriage between white women and men of color (Battalora, 2013).

These laws are just one example in a long history of racism maintaining patriarchy and vice versa, and women of color are doubly oppressed. People of color (and women of color especially) also face barriers in reporting sexual violence and interacting with law enforcement due to systemic discrimination and brutal violence at the hands of the criminal justice system. Gender-based violence response and prevention centers have done crucial work to provide resources for survivors, but they have also tailored their services primarily to the economic, cultural and political needs of white women (Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, 2017). Other impacts of racism, including barriers to safe housing, quality education, and employment, are all factors that increase the risk of experiencing sexual violence (CDC, 2016).

In addition to systemic inequalities and oppression, cultural narratives about women of color normalize and excuse violence against them. Black women especially are subject to racist myths and stereotypes that are rooted in the ways sexual violence was justified during slavery. Cultural myths about black women being hypersexual, promiscuous and combative contribute to victim-blaming attitudes and responses that dismiss or deny violence.

As a part of the BADASS Campaign's goal of creating a community that is inclusive, trauma-informed, and consent-oriented, it is essential to continue the work of examining how race—and whiteness in particular—functions in gender-based violence response and prevention movements and conversations.

Confidential Campus Resources:

The Sexual Assault Response Coordinator: Anna Thompson

719-227-8101; amthompson@coloradocollege.edu

On-Call Advocate: 719-602-0960

The Counseling Center: 719-389-6093

The Chaplain: 719-389-7986

The Butler Center Gender and Identity Development Specialist:

719-389-6198; ngough@coloradocollege.edu

Student Title IX Assistance and Resource Team:

start@coloradocollege.edu

New Bills in the Colorado General Assembly!

There are many bills in the Colorado General Assembly this session that relate to gender-based violence response and prevention. These are just a few that we think are especially exciting. Contact the Wellness Resource Center or visit the Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault's website for more information on the current legislative session.

- HB 1032: Comprehensive Sexuality Education
- SB 007: Prevent Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses
- HB 1129: Prohibit Conversion Therapy for A Minor
- HB 1120: Youth Mental Health Education and Suicide Prevention
- HB 1030: Unlawful Electronic Sexual Communication

There will be events throughout April for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, ranging from healing-oriented spaces to educational and activist events. Check out the Colorado College Wellness Resource Center Facebook page for more information.

BE AWARE. DECIDE TO ACT. SAY SOMETHING.

