

# Sexual Assault Awareness

## WA State Employee Assistance Program

April 2017

**A**pril is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Sexual violence includes any type of unwanted sexual contact, including words and actions of a sexual nature against a person's will and without their consent. For many, it is not easy to talk about sex, let alone sexual abuse and rape. This can lead to survivors of abuse feeling isolated or ashamed.

National surveys show that nearly one in five women and one in 71 men are victims of sexual assault, with one in five women and one in 16 men experiencing assault while in college. Rates of childhood sexual abuse are even higher, with one in four girls and one in six boys experiencing sexual abuse before they turn 18. If you have experienced sexual violence, you are not alone. It affects people of all genders, ages, races, religions, incomes, abilities, professions, ethnicities, and sexual orientations.\*



## What Can I Do?

All of us can play a role in preventing sexual violence in our community. Our actions, from modeling healthy behavior to speaking up when someone does inappropriate conduct, can have a ripple effect on those we teach, guide, and influence. Everyone can make a difference through fostering attitudes that promote healthy relationships, equality, and respect.

Changing beliefs that contribute to sexual violence starts with believing survivors of sexual violence when they share their stories. You can help by calling out victim-blaming comments or rape jokes if you see them online or hear them in the workplace. Remind those around you that sexual assault is never the victim's fault. Small actions like this make a critical impact.

## What Help is Available?

If you or someone you know experiences sexual assault, the impact can be felt in all aspects of their lives, often making it difficult to concentrate or feel safe at work. Many higher education campuses offer victim advocacy through campus wellness or violence prevention programs. Community Sexual Assault Programs across the state offer free and confidential help including 24/7 crisis support, accompaniment to medical exams after an assault, and safety planning.

Everyone deserves a workplace free from sexual harassment. Agencies and campuses can take action to implement policies that promote safety, respect, and equality. Federal and state laws protect people from sexual harassment in the workplace. If you are a victim of workplace sexual misconduct, it is important to know your rights and to receive support. The WA State EAP is a compassionate resource to help address these concerns and offers you free and confidential short-term counseling and referrals to ongoing resources for your wellbeing.

---

\*Information was obtained from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

### Resources

[Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs](#)

[Washington Coalition of Crime Victim Advocates](#)

Washington State Employee Assistance Program (EAP) helps employees and their family members resolve personal or work-related problems. [www.eap.wa.gov](http://www.eap.wa.gov) Toll-free 1-877-313-4455