Sexual Violence & Criminalized Youth

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Justice-Involved Advocacy Coordinator
Today’s Discussion

- Who/What is the CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence?
- What is sexual violence and how does it impact young people who are system-involved?
- What can we do about it?
Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence is a statewide coalition of individual sexual assault crisis programs whose mission is to end sexual violence and to ensure high-quality, comprehensive, culturally competent sexual assault victim services.

All services are free and confidential.

The sexual assault crisis programs provide:
- certified sexual assault victim advocates
- 24/7 hotline services in English and Spanish
- short-term counseling for individuals and groups
- information and referrals to other social and legal services
- accompaniment and support in hospitals, police departments and courts

Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence

Formerly CONNSACs

24-Hour, Toll-Free Hotlines:
1-888-999-5545 (English) | 1-888-568-8332 (Español)
Share your reflections!
I feel...I wonder...I think
What is Sexual Violence?
SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS ANY UNWANTED CONTACT OR NONCONTACT SEXUAL ACTS OR BEHAVIORS. SEXUAL VIOLENCE DESCRIBES A RANGE OF BEHAVIORS CARRIED OUT WITH THE USE OF COERCION, MANIPULATION, THREATS, INTIMIDATION, FORCE, OR ABUSE OF POWER. THESE INCLUDE RAPE OR ATTEMPTED RAPE; FONDLING; INCEST; EXPLOITATION; EXHIBITIONISM; OBSCENE PHONE CALLS, EMAILS, OR TEXT MESSAGES. SEXUAL CONTACT WITHOUT AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE;

IT IS NEVER THE VICTIM’S FAULT.
Impacts of Sexual Violence can include

IN GENERAL:
increased use of drugs and/or alcohol, depression, anxiety, self-harming behaviors, chronic headaches or other pain, insomnia, hypervigilance, perfectionism, people-pleasing/fawning

FOR CHILDREN:
this may include STIs, isolating themselves from friends and family, regressive behaviors, an increase in sexual behaviors and understandings of sexual topics that are not developmentally appropriate, unexplained changes in eating habits, being overly compliant, new and extreme worry or fear.

REMEMBER:
Every victim/survivor’s experience is unique, as are the ways they physically, emotionally, and behaviorally respond to their experiences.
Prevalence of Sexual Violence

1 IN 4 GIRLS AND 1 IN 13 BOYS EXPERIENCE SEXUAL VIOLENCE BEFORE THEY TURN 18

NATIONALLY, 41.3% OF FEMALES WHO EXPERIENCED A RAPE IN THEIR LIFETIME FIRST EXPERIENCED ONE PRIOR TO THE AGE OF 18;
30.1% WERE AGED 11 TO 17.


Why might a young person not share their experiences of sexual violence?
Barriers to Disclosure

- Lack of language or understanding
- Shame & Guilt
- Lack of support system & safe spaces
What About Young People Who Are System-Involved?

Girls’ rate of sexual abuse is 4 times higher than boys’ in juvenile justice, and girls’ rate of complex trauma (five or more ACEs) is nearly twice as high.

What About Young People Who Are System-Involved?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>Girls, Victims of Sexual Violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>Girls, Sexually or Physically Abused</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>Girls, Victims of Family Violence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>Girls, Victims of Dating Violence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>Girls, Sexually Abused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>Girls, Sexually &amp; Physically Abused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>Girls, Physically Abused</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Trauma to Prison Pipeline
2. Survived & Punished
3. Carceral Facilities
Crime is neutral, apolitical, and unconnected to oppression

Survivors never commit crimes and are perfectly sympathetic

Survivors want incarceration, deportation, and punishment. These things make the world safer.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ISSUES WITH THIS?
Trauma to Prison Pipeline

Many survivors are criminalized for the ways they experience & navigate trauma and survival.
Trauma to Prison Pipeline

How Victimization Creates “Pathways to Crime”

- Child Abuse, Neglect & Other Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Unmet Needs for Safety, Housing, Food & Human Connection
- Attempts to Meet Needs
  - Run away from home
  - Use drugs to cope
  - Move in with older boyfriend
  - Live on the street
  - Trade sex for money or drugs
  - Shoplifting, theft
- Domestic Violence
- Increased Vulnerability & Social Dislocation
- “Compelled to Crime”
  - Self-defense
  - Defense of children
  - Coerced into participating in abuser’s crimes
  - Confessed to abuser’s crimes because of intimidation

ARREST & CHARGING DECISION
Charging decisions are rarely nuanced enough to consider the role of domestic violence.

TRIAL & SENTENCING
Survivors are often not believed because of their addiction, prior criminal history, or prior self-defense. They may minimize the abuse. Culture, language, stereotypes, and discrimination also play a role.

SURVIVORS IN PRISON
2,664 women in IL prisons
98% physically abused
349 convicted of murder
45 serving life sentences
Survived & Punished

Bresha Meadows - Survived and Punished

BRESHA MEADOWS
SURVIVED + PUNISHED
WHAT DO WE HOPE JUVENILE DETENTION CENTERS DO?

1. Places of rehabilitation
2. Provide people with needed mental health care

- Female-only facilities had the highest rates of youth-on-youth sexual victimization (5.7%),
- Male-only facilities had the highest rates of staff sexual misconduct (8.2%).
- An estimated 92.4% of all youth who reported staff sexual misconduct said they were victimized by female facility staff.
- An estimated 9.5% of adjudicated youth in state juvenile facilities and state contract facilities (representing 1,720 youth nationwide) reported experiencing one or more incidents of sexual victimization by another youth or staff in the past 12 months or since admission, if less than 12 months.

DOES MORE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT MEAN MORE VULNERABILITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE BOTH SURVIVORS AND EXPERIENCE CRIMINALIZATION?

PRISONS ALSO FOSTER AN ATMOSPHERE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE THROUGH SECURITY PROCEDURES... THIS EMPHASIZES INCARCERATED SURVIVORS OF THEIR LACK OF POWER AND ABILITY TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM THEIR SUPPOSED PROTECTORS (RICHIE 2012, 51)

WHAT DO WE HOPE JUVENILE DETENTION CENTERS DO?

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WHEN DID YOU FIRST LEARN ABOUT CONSENT, BOUNDARIES, AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIORS?

HOW ARE YOUNG PEOPLE'S IDEAS OF VIOLENCE AND RELATIONSHIPS INTERTWINED AND IMPACTED WHEN THEY ARE SEPARATED FROM THEIR COMMUNITY AND FAMILY AND PLACED UNDER STATE SUPERVISION?
“I was locked up ten different times within a two year period. Inside juvie I met other girls like myself who were there for prostitution, running away, and truancy. All of us were from the same neighborhoods, poor families, and seemed to have the same disposition of trauma, anger mixed with hopelessness. We were not violent girls. We were girls who were hurting. Being confined to a tiny cement room was one of the hardest things I have ever had to experience. Being locked up all I could do was reflect on my life but it didn’t seem to help. I became even more withdrawn and angry.” — Nadiyah Shereff
There are no perfect victims. We are committed to serving all survivors regardless of how they’re labeled or judged by the criminal legal system. We can’t assume that the legal system is always identifying situations and the people within them correctly or ethically. Not all laws are just. We have a responsibility to support survivors against abuses of power, even when the legal system is involved in prosecuting them.

No one does the work knowing how to do it perfectly from the start. However, we do have many of the skills we need already. We don’t have all the answers, but we do have a lot to share and learn from each other.

Values to Center
ALLIANCE
Attend our trainings! Learn more about sexual violence and the way it impacts all of us.

CRISIS CENTERS
Partner with us and your local crisis center!

EARLY INTERVENTION
Diversion pathways JRB/YSB, Sequential Intercept

UNDERSTAND & ACCEPT
Survivors are not a monolith, there is no perfect survivor; trauma responses are incredibly diverse and can impact how survivors navigate their environment and how they perceive safety, harm, and authority.
People and Organizations to Learn From

- Mariame Kaba
- K Agebeyi
- Beth Richie
- Andrea Ritchie
- Survived & Punished
- Project Nia*
- Interrupting Criminalization
- Generation Five*
- Color of Violence
- Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls' Story*
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