

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH {SAAM} {PART 2 OF 2}

The month of April has been designated Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). The goal of SAAM is to raise public awareness about sexual violence (focusing on sexual assault and rape) and to educate communities and individuals on how to prevent sexual violence.

Here on the SAAM site, you will find information and materials for both the upcoming SAAM campaign as well as past campaigns. While the [National Sexual Violence Resource Center \(NSVRC\)](#) creates these campaign materials for SAAM, we encourage state and local organizations and groups focused on sexual violence awareness and prevention to tailor these campaign materials to their local communities.

By working together and pooling our resources during the month of April, we can highlight sexual violence as a major public health issue and reinforce the need for prevention efforts.

SAAM HISTORY

Women's organized protests against violence began in the late 1970s in England with [Take Back the Night](#) marches. These women-only protests emerged in direct response to the violence that women encountered as they walked the streets at night. These activities became more coordinated and soon developed into a movement that extended to the United States and, in 1978, the first Take Back the Night events in the U.S. were held in San Francisco and New York City. Over time, sexual assault awareness activities expanded to include the issue of sexual violence against men and men's participation in ending sexual violence.

By the early 1980s, there was increased interest in coordinating activities to raise awareness of violence against women. As a result, time was set aside during October to raise awareness of violence against women issues. Over time, October became the principle focus of domestic violence awareness activities. Sexual assault advocates looked for a separate time to focus attention on sexual assault issues.

In the late 1980s, the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCASA) informally polled state sexual assault coalitions to determine when to have a national Sexual Assault Awareness Week. A week in April was selected. Over time, some advocates began focusing attention on sexual violence throughout the month of April. In the late 1990s, many advocates began coordinating

activities throughout the month of April on a regular basis, promoting an idea for a nationally recognized month for sexual violence awareness activities.

From 2000-2001, the [Resource Sharing Project \(RSP\)](#) and the [National Sexual Violence Resource Center \(NSVRC\)](#) polled state, territory, and tribal coalitions and found that the color teal was the preferred color for sexual assault awareness and prevention and that April was the preferred month to coordinate national sexual assault awareness activities. As a result, Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) was first observed nationally in April 2001.

Since then, the NSVRC has continued to promote a degree of national unity in voice and action regarding SAAM activities, to encourage interaction and feedback from across the nation, and to build momentum based on previous years' activities. The NSVRC has provided resources to advocates nationwide to help them plan SAAM activities in their communities during April and throughout the year. These resources have included publications (e.g., newsletters, booklets, and directories); prevention materials (e.g., palm cards and online resources); and awareness-raising products (e.g., pins, posters, stickers, and postcards).

Additionally, the NSVRC has taken an active role in making sexual violence awareness and prevention resources available to the U.S. territories and the healthcare community. Over the last few years, the NSVRC has placed increasing emphasis on the prevention of sexual violence. As a result, the SAAM campaigns have included a greater focus on prevention.

CURRENT 2010 SAAM CAMPAIGN

Theme: Prevent Sexual Violence...on our campuses

[SAAM Day of Action: Tuesday, April 20, 2010](#)

See: <http://www.nsvrc.org/saam/current-campaign/day-of-action>

About the Campaign

The April 2010 Sexual Assault Awareness Month campaign focuses on preventing sexual violence on higher education campuses. College students experience disproportionately high rates of sexual violence – 1 in 5 college women will be a victim of sexual assault by the time she graduates. In addition to serving the many survivors on campus, there exists an opportunity for prevention and social change that will have a lasting effect on students throughout their lives. This year's SAAM brings together resources and information across a variety of campus-related

topics, with an emphasis on incorporating primary prevention efforts into the work. The campaign is built around the *Spectrum of Prevention framework*, developed by Larry Cohen of the *Prevention Institute*, that places public health problems, including sexual violence, within a larger context, beyond individual behaviors, to highlight the community and societal factors that influence the issue.

The document entitled "Sexual Assault Awareness Month and the Spectrum of Prevention" is the centerpiece of the 2010 campaign and includes information on how to use the *Spectrum* strategically in planning SAAM and prevention efforts on campus. We strongly encourage you to read through this document first. It can be viewed at:

<http://preventioninstitute.org/publications.html> .

If you would like a CD with all of the 2010 resources, or have additional questions, please contact the NSVRC at 1-877-739-3895, or resources@nsvrc.org.

Source: <http://www.nsvrc.org/saam/what-is-saam>

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