Say Hello to SAAM

SAAM is a designated time to honor survivors of sexual violence and bring awareness to how we all can work to address violence in our own communities. Sexual violence encompasses many different forms of unwanted conduct, including harassment, physical assault, stalking, invasion of personal space, and exploitation. Nationwide, organizations and campuses hold SAAM events and activities during the month of April to expand the year-long efforts and engage more people in quality discussions regarding sexual violence.

Here are some common themes for this important month:

- **Respect boundaries.** To prevent sexual violence, we all can play a part by valuing the personal and emotional boundaries of others. This can include different choices for personal space, physical touch, and what can be shared online. Be comfortable in asking for what an individual’s boundaries are, and honor those answers.

- **Acknowledge that your voice matters.** The people around you notice how and if you talk about sexual violence. If you contribute to jokes or stereotypes that condone assault, people around you may determine that you are unsafe. However, if you speak about supporting survivors or challenge others when they make victim-blaming comments, you’re letting those around you know that you can be trusted and they are not alone.

- **Keep your virtual presence in mind, too!** Consider what posts you are liking, sharing, or commenting on. What messages are you sending by participating in online conversations that make light of assault versus conversations that support survivors? Be an ally by sharing resources like @NSVRC, @NJCASA and @NJCEDV; this may make survivors who follow you more comfortable reaching out for help if needed!

UPCOMING EVENTS

We are taking on SAAM virtually! Throughout April, we will be hosting events like the Empty Chair Campaign, The Clothesline Project, Turn the Campus Teal, Denim Day, & the NSVRC’s 30 Days of SAAM Challenge—all online!

If you are interested in learning more & participating, check out https://go.rutgers.edu/saam20. Join us to speak up for survivors, speak out against violence, & win a prize or two along the way. We will be using Instagram & Twitter to run our social media contents so make sure to follow us! #RBHSSAAM20

STAY IN TOUCH

- vpva@rbhs.rutgers.edu
- go.rutgers.edu/rbhsvpva
- @rbhs_vpva
- 973-972-4636
- RBHS VPVA
#RBHSSAAM20

VPVA will host programming during SAAM to further discuss the above themes. We’ll be updating the website with our scheduled activities throughout the month, so check back often at go.rutgers.edu/saam20.

For more information about nation-wide ways to address sexual violence, visit nsvrc.org/saam.

VPVA OFFICE UPDATE DURING COVID-19

RBHS VPVA is offering remote emotional support and counseling sessions via phone to our students who are in need. If you have a history of harassment or violence and need assistance during this time, call our office line at 973-972-4636 or schedule an appointment via email at vpva@rbhs.rutgers.edu.

Notice

The RBHS VPVA staff recognizes that these are stressful and uncertain times, and that we all play a part in keeping our communities safe. Our office is offering remote emotional support and counseling sessions via phone to RBHS students in need. If you have a history of harassment or violence and are experiencing distress, reach out to us for support at 973-972-4636 or vpva@rbhs.rutgers.edu.

There also might be loved ones in your life that are experiencing violence in their relationships or families, with increased safety risks caused by these social isolation guidelines. Remember to stay connected with them and check in to see what support you can provide. For more tips on addressing relationship safety in this challenging time, visit go.rutgers.edu/rbhsvpva.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAAM

Although SAAM did not officially begin until 2001, sexual violence prevention and awareness has been happening for over a century.

1944
Rosa Parks created the Equal Justice committee with Recy Taylor to address sexual violence against black women

1950s-1960s
Activists for equal rights began to challenge the status quo

1975
Against Our Will by Susan Brownmiller was published, highlighting role of rape in maintaining social control

1985
Campus assault received attention through Dr. Mary Koss’ research and Ms. article “Date Rape: A Campus Epidemic”

1990
The first Clothesline Project display honored women who have experienced a range of violence

1993
Violence Against Women Act of 1993 (VAWA) was signed into legislation

1999
The first Denim Day event occurred in U.S. after victim-blaming court ruling

2000
National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) was established

2000s
SAAM was dedicated focus on prevention in communities, workplaces, and college campuses.

2010s
2010 SAAM expanded to both English and Spanish campaigns and toolkits
SAAM centered new focus on consent, healthy relationships, and bystander intervention.

2020
April 2020 marks the 19th anniversary of Sexual Assault Awareness Month

For more information about nation-wide ways to address sexual violence, visit nsvrc.org/saam.

Continuing Support

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**How To Support a Survivor of Sexual Violence**

*Contribution by Kezia Boban, SPH student and RBHS VPVA Ambassador*

“So often survivors have had their experiences denied, trivialized, or distorted.”
-The Courage to Heal by Ellen Bass & Laura Davis

It takes great courage for those who have experienced violence to come forward and share their stories. The response they receive from the people they disclose to can greatly impact what they do or how they feel afterward.

**What can we do to help a survivor?**

There are no perfect words to express our empathy and it is common to worry about what to say. But taking time and effort to listen is the best way to support a survivor. Listening takes patience and giving undivided attention. Through empathy, you’re connecting with a person by giving them the space to explain what the experience has meant to them, without judgment. Still unsure of what to say? Here are some suggestions:

- “I believe you.”
- “I appreciate you trusting me with this.”
- “It’s not your fault.”
- “You didn’t do anything to deserve this.”
- “You are not alone.”
- “I care about you and am here to listen or help in any way I can.”
- “I’m sorry this happened.”

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**Other ways to help**

Survivors of violence are often incredibly resilient; however, the healing process can be a long journey. Therefore, our nonjudgmental and continuous support is crucial. You can further provide assistance by discussing professional support resources that exist in their area, whether it be local sexual or domestic violence programs or medical services. If you’re comfortable, you can offer to call or go with them to these services. Knowing your resources, like the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance allows you to empower them with options and extend their support system.

“If you are here today... you are a survivor. Those who have made it through hell and are standing still are warriors.” -Lori Goodwin

**Spotlight on RBHS VPVA’s new Education & Programming Coordinator: Taylor Miller**

Taylor has broad experience as a Confidential Sexual Violence Advocate, former Prevention Coordinator at Rutgers Newark, a two-time TEDx Speaker, and RAINN Speaker Bureau member. Her favorite quote is one from Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, “The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen.” You can find the last line tattooed on her forearm as her constant reminder to remember what beauty can encompass. She looks forward to engaging the campus community in joining the movement to end interpersonal violence!
Word Search

Need a break? Visit https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/963670/ to do our SAAM Word Search. Each time you visit, the search changes!

SAAM Search

References


