

RBHS VPVA

Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences
Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance Newsletter

April is
Sexual Assault
Awareness Month



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](https://www.instagram.com/rbhs_vpva)

 973-972-4636

 RBHS VPVA

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAAM

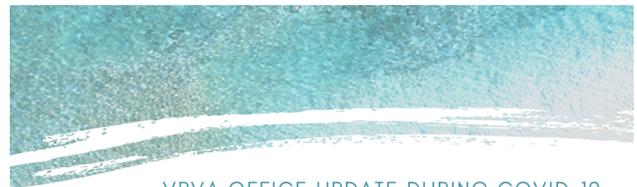
Although **SAAM** did not officially begin until 2001, sexual violence prevention and awareness has been happening for **over a century**.



#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

continuing support

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.

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.”



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

E	C	H	A	N	E	L	M	I	L	L	E	R	E
R	I	T	N	K	S	A	I	P	K	Y	P	M	T
E	O	M	N	A	B	A	I	D	E	D	Y	N	A
P	T	V	S	E	E	E	P	S	B	P	A	O	R
T	T	A	I	A	S	E	L	R	Y	C	D	A	A
N	T	K	C	V	C	N	M	I	I	O	M	E	N
E	R	E	O	O	R	T	O	A	E	L	I	R	A
I	O	R	O	A	V	U	I	C	A	V	N	A	B
L	P	E	T	H	E	D	S	V	M	S	E	C	U
I	P	S	E	L	A	I	A	M	I	E	D	F	R
S	U	P	M	A	A	R	N	M	R	S	C	L	K
E	S	O	L	E	E	N	D	C	R	D	T	E	E
R	A	N	P	T	I	O	R	V	O	T	E	S	O
L	V	D	C	O	M	M	U	N	I	T	Y	F	A

CHANELMILLER
DENIMDAY
CONSENT
TEAL
SELFCARE
ADVOCATE
IASK
APRIL
ACTIVIST
METOO
TARANABURKE
SUPPORT
RESILIENT
COMMUNITY
BELIEVE
SURVIVOR
RESPOND
SAAM

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/963670/>

References

Bass, E., & Davis, L. (1988). *The courage to heal: A guide for women survivors of child sexual abuse*. Perennial Library/Harper & Row Publishers.

National Sexual Violence Resource Center. (2018, January). *Sexual Assault Awareness Month Campaign Guide*. https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/action_kit_final508.pdf

National Sexual Violence Resource Center. (n.d.). *History of Sexual Assault Awareness Month*. <https://www.nsvrc.org/saam/history>.

Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs. (2020, March 16). *History of the Movement*. <https://www.wcsap.org/advocacy/program-management/new-directors/history/history-movement>