CHAPTER 13
Violence Against Women

Similarities Among Sexual Harassment, Rape, & Abuse

- All involve some form of violence—either physical or emotional
- Men typically possess more power than women
- All represent a tragic exaggeration of traditional gender roles
- Men have a sense of entitlement
- Women are left feeling even less powerful after the violence
- Legal procedures are often embarrassing and humiliating; invading a woman's right to privacy even further
- The acts of violence encourage women to become more silent and more invisible
- People often blame the victim

Sexual Harassment

Quid pro quo harassment
Hostile environment
Examples

Why Is Sexual Harassment an Important Issue?

1. Sexual harassment emphasizes that men typically have more power than women in our society.
2. Sexual demands are often coercive because women are offered economic or academic advantages if they comply and harmful consequences if they say no.
3. Sexual harassment dehumanizes women and treats them in a sexist fashion; women are seen primarily as sexual beings rather than as intelligent and skilled employees or students.
4. Women are often forced to be silent victims because they are afraid and they need to continue either in the workplace or at school.
5. If sexual harassment occurs in a public setting, without condemnation from supervisors, many onlookers will conclude that sexist behavior is acceptable.

**How Often Does Sexual Harassment Occur?**

**Women's Reactions to Being Sexually Harassed**
- Effects on employment and education
- Emotional responses

**The Public's Attitudes About Sexual Harassment**
- Gender differences

**What To Do About Sexual Harassment**

**Individual Action**
1. Become familiar with your campus’s policy on sexual harassment, and know which officials are responsible for complaints.
2. If a professor’s behavior seems questionable, review the situation objectively with someone you trust.
3. If the problem persists, consider telling the harasser directly that his sexual harassment makes you feel uncomfortable. Another possible strategy is to send a formal letter to the harasser, describing your objections to the incident, and stating clearly that you want the actions to stop. Many harassment policies cannot be legally applied unless the harasser has been informed that the behavior is unwanted and inappropriate.
4. Keep records of all occurrences, and keep copies of all correspondence.
5. If the problem persists, report it to the appropriate officials on campus. An institution that takes no action is responsible if another act of harassment occurs after an incident is reported.
6. Join a feminist group on campus, or help to start one. A strong support group can encourage real empowerment, reduce the chances that other students will experience sexual harassment, and help to change campus policy on this important issue.

**How Men Can Help**
- Avoid behaviors that might be perceived as sexual harassment
- Speak up when you see sexual harassment

**Society's Response to the Harassment Problem**
- Institutional commitment to change
• Develop clear policies about sexual harassment; publicize the policies; hold training programs
• Work to change public opinion
• Change the uneven distribution of power that encourages sexual harassment

**Sexual Assault and Rape**

Sexual assault
Rape
Acquaintance rape more frequent than stranger rape
Marital rape
Rape as a weapon of war

*How Often Does Rape Occur?*

**Acquaintance Rape**

• 85% of rape victims knew the man who raped them
• 50% to 55% of women will experience some form of sexual assault from an acquaintance
• Miscommunication

**The Role of Alcohol and Drugs**

• Role of alcohol
• Rohypnol and other "date rape drugs"

**Women’s Reactions to Rape**

Short-Term Adjustment
Long-Term Adjustment
  Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

**Fear of Rape**

**The Public’s Attitudes About Rape**

Blaming the Victim
Gender roles
Gender
Circumstances surrounding the assault

**Myths About Rape**

*Myth 1:* Rapists are strangers – that is, people unknown to the victim.
*Myth 2:* Only deviant men would consider raping a woman.
*Myth 3:* Women ask to be raped; they could avoid rape if they wanted to.
*Myth 4:* Pornography has no effect on men’s likelihood to rape.
Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse
Incest

The Effects of Child Sexual Abuse

The Recovered-Memory/False-Memory Controversy

Recovered-Memory Perspective
False-Memory Perspective

Current Compromise

1. In many cases, children can provide accurate testimonies about how they have been abused sexually (for instance, by a stranger), and they resist "remembering" false information that someone presented to them.

2. In some cases, people who have truly experienced childhood sexual abuse may forget about the abuse for decades. Later, they may suddenly recover that memory. This recovered memory is especially likely when the abuser was a close relative or other trusted adult.

3. In some other cases, a therapist, a relative, or another person can implant misinformation about child sexual abuse, and an individual can mistakenly "remember" it. This false memory is especially likely when the misinformation is plausible and when it focuses on relatively trivial details. Unfortunately, however, some individuals can “remember” an elaborate history of child abuse that did not actually happen.

The Prevention of Sexual Assault and Rape

Individuals’ Prevention of Rape by Strangers

Precautions—an unjust situation
Fighting back
Training in self-defense

Individuals’ Prevention of Acquaintance Rape

Avoid sexist men
Dating precautions
Communication
Assertiveness

Society’s Prevention of Rape

1. Professionals who work with children need to be alert for evidence of child sexual abuse. Schools also need to teach children about the sexual-abuse problem.
2. Hospitals and medical providers should be sensitive to the emotional and physical needs of girls and women who have been raped.

3. Laws must be reformed so that the legal process is less stressful and more supportive for the victims.

4. Education about rape needs to be improved, beginning in junior high or high school. Rape-prevention programs must emphasize that men can control their sexual impulses and that women are not to be blamed for rape.

5. Men’s groups must become more involved in rape prevention.

6. Violence must be less glorified in the media.

7. Ultimately, our society must direct more attention toward the needs of women.

The Abuse of Women

How Often Does the Abuse of Women Occur?
• 20-35% of women in the United States and Canada will experience abuse during their lifetime (2-3 million women each year)
• 30-55% of women treated in U.S. emergency departments have injuries related to domestic violence
• dating violence occurs from elementary school through high school and college

Cross-cultural evidence

The Dynamics of Abuse
Abuse cycle
   Tension building phase
   Acute battering phase
   Loving phase

Women’s Reactions to Abuse
Emotional Reactions
Physical Problems

Characteristics Related to Abusive Relationships
Family Variables Associated with Abuse
Personal Characteristics of Male Abusers
   Entitlement
   Traditional gender roles
   Situational factors
Alcohol

The Public’s Attitudes About the Abuse of Women

Myths About the Abuse of Women

Myth 1: Abused women enjoy being beaten.

Myth 2: Abused women deserve to be beaten and humiliated.

Myth 3: Abused women could easily leave, if they really wanted to.

How Abused Women Take Action

Therapy

Deciding to Leave a Relationship

Services for Abused Women

Society’s Response to the Problem of Abuse

• Government policies should be consistent with addressing the problem
• Community organizations should take on the problem of abuse
• Medical organizations should continue their progress in increasing awareness of the issue of abuse of women
• Individual men can become aware and involved
• World-wide awareness needs to increase
• The power imbalance in relationships reflects the power imbalance in our society
• Work toward a world in which violence is not directed at women as a group in order to keep them powerless.