PRESS KIT FOR MEDIA PROFESSIONALS REPORTING ON SEXUAL ASSAULT





Dear Media Professional:

The Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault (UCASA) is committed to advancing a society in which sexual violence is not tolerated. As a member of Utah's media, you can help as you report on sexually violent crime in the state.

This press kit provides sexual assault resources, facts, and tips on interviewing survivors of sexual violence. Unfortunately many myths about sexual assault are still prevalent in our culture and society and those myths may stand in the way of victims and perpetrators of sexual assault from getting the help they need. Rape and sexual assault victims in Utah are 90 percent more likely to be attacked by someone they know than a stranger. Victims and perpetrators of sexual assault can be young or old, male or female, straight or gay, wealthy or poor — sexual assault is a crime that doesn't discriminate.

By educating yourself on the dynamics and facts about sexual assault in Utah and the nation, you can help inform and educate the public about this crime and help advance a society that will not tolerate sexual violence.

UCASA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and is the only organization of its kind addressing sexual violence issues statewide. UCASA serves as an umbrella coalition for rape crisis programs, victim advocate programs, and institutions and organizations that respond and provide services to victims of sexual violence. UCASA provides training and resources, and fosters a sense of community and statewide support.

UCASA believes that through social change we can influence attitudes, beliefs and standards that will change people's behavior from ignoring, excusing, condoning and even encouraging sexual violence to taking action, intervening, and promoting respect, safety and equality.

Thank you for your help in increasing public awareness and education.

Regards,
Laurel Duncan
Executive Director

Sexual Assault Awareness Press Kit

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What Is Sexual Violence?

Sexual violence occurs any time a person is forced, coerced and/or manipulated into any unwanted sexual contact, whether attempted or completed.

The spectrum of sexual violence includes:

- rape
- marital or partner rape
- sodomy
- incest
- alcohol and drug facilitated sexual assault
- child sexual abuse

- child "brides"
- statutory rape
- ritual abuse
- sexual exploitation
- human trafficking
- sexual harassment
- dating violence
- stalking

- molestation
- fondling
- sexual battery (unwanted touching)
- indecent exposure
- voyeurism

Sexual violence can happen to anyone, anywhere, anytime.

Sexual violence is not a woman's issue. It is a human issue affecting victims, their families, friends, and communities.

Sexual violence is not a crime of lust. It is a crime of power and control. In all cases of sexual violence, no one is to blame but the perpetrator, who must be held accountable for his or her actions.

No one asks or deserves to be sexually assaulted. No one.

Sexual Assault Statistics in Utah and the Nation

In Utah:

• 1 in 3 women in Utah will experience some form of sexual violence during her life. Child molestation is the most common form of sexual violence, followed closely by rape. 86.2% of victims in Utah were first assaulted before their 18th birthday.

(Rape in Utah: A Survey of Utah Women About Their Experience with Sexual Violence. Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, 2005.)

- Approximately 1 in 8 women in Utah will be raped sometime during their lifetime.
 (Rape in Utah, 2005.)
- According to the 2004 "crime clock" calculations, there is one forcible rape every 9.6 hours in the State of Utah.

(2004 Crime in Utah. Utah Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Identification.)

• In 2004, law enforcement made 241 arrests for forcible rapes and 608 arrests for sex offenses, an increase of 26% from 2003.

(2004 Crime in Utah.)

 Rape is the only category of violent crime in Utah which has a rate that exceeds the nation's average.

(Rape in Utah. 2005)

 In fact, since 1991, Utah's reported rape rate has consistently been higher than the national rate. In 2003, Utah's rape rate was 18.1% higher than the national rate.

(Sexual Violence in Utah: Analysis of Incident-Based Crime Data. Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, 2005.)

Only 21.4% of rape victims in Utah reported the offense to law enforcement.

(Shedding Light, 2002 Utah Crime Victimization Survey. Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, 2003.)

In the United States:

 2002 crime clock calculations indicate that there is one forcible rape every 5.5 minutes in the U.S.

(Federal Bureau of Investigations, *Crime in the United States, 2002*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice. 2003.)

 An estimated 302,100 women and 92,700 men are forcibly raped each year in the United States.

(Tjaden, Patricia and Thoennes, Nancy. Prevalence, Incident, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, Office of the Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. November 1998.)

• Teens 16 to 19 were three and one-half times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape or sexual assault.

(National Crime Victimization Survey. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. 1996.)

 According to the U.S. Department of Justice, an estimated 91% of the victims of rape and sexual assault are female and 9% are male. Nearly 99% of the offenders in single-victim incidents are male.

(National Crime Victimization Survey. 1996.)

• 80-90% of violent crimes against women are committed by someone of the same racial background as the victim.

(*Violence Against Women.* Rockville, Maryland: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1994.)

• The National Violence Against Women Survey found that rape is a crime committed primarily against youth. Of the women who reported being raped at some time in their lives, 21.6% were under 12 years old, 32.4% were 12-17 years old, 29% were 18-24 years old, and 16.6% were over 25 years old when they were first raped. This translates to 54% of women victims who were under 18 at the time of the first rape and 83% of women victims who were under the age of 25.

(Tjaden, Patricia and Thoennes, Nancy. 1998.)

• The exact prevalence of rape and sexual assault is difficult to determine because this crime is so underreported. In fact, many experts believe that rape is the most underreported violent crime in the United States.

(D.G. Kilpatrick, C.N. Edmunds, and A. Seymour. *Rape in America: A Report to the Nation*, Arlington, Virginia: National Victim Center, 1992.)

- In a sample of 263 adolescent females who reported unwanted sexual experiences in a 2004 national survey¹:
 - The most often cited reason for not disclosing or delaying disclosure was embarrassment.
 - Young women whose unwanted sexual experience occurred between the ages of 7 and 13 were more likely to tell an adult.
 - Older adolescents were more likely to tell a peer.
 - o Children under the age of seven at the onset of the abuse were unlikely to tell immediately.
 - o The victim's relationship to the perpetrator also impacted reporting. The closer the relationship to the perpetrator (knowing the perpetrator or the perpetrator being a family member) made immediate disclosure (within a month of occurrence) unlikely.

(Krogan, S. "Disclosing Unwanted Sexual Experiences: Results from a National Sample of Adolescent Women." *Child Abuse and Neglect*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 147-165. 2004.)

Myths and Misconceptions about Sexual Assault

- Sexual assaults are committed by strangers
- Sexual assault is an impulsive act of lust
- False reporting of sexual assault is widespread
- People can avoid being sexually assaulted

Myth: Sexual Assaults Are Committed By Strangers

In Utah, sexual assaults are rarely committed by strangers. Sexual violence is most commonly committed by a parent, family member, babysitter, roommate, friend, date, spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend — someone the victim knows and trusts.

According to the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice in 2005, 91.4% of victims of sexual assault were attacked by someone they knew.

Myth: Sexual Assault Is a an Impulsive Act of Lust

A common misconception is that perpetrators of sexual assault cannot control their sexual urges and are driven by lust to commit these crimes.

Forcing someone to engage in a sexual act against his or her will **is an act of violence and aggression**. Sex offenders are not driven by uncontrollable sexual urges, but by an inability to release feelings of anger and helplessness.

Myth: False Reporting of Sexual Assault Is Widespread

The U.S. Department of Justice has reported that false reports of rape are the same as any other major violent crime—about 2%.

While many accept that statistics for false reporting are no higher than for any other crime, there is some disagreement as to whether this statistic reflects false allegations, reports that are unfounded, or both.

There is a significant difference between a sexual assault being unfounded and a false allegation. Law enforcement officers may decide not to prosecute a case of sexual assault for many reasons, such as lack of corroborating evidence. An unfounded case does not mean that a crime was not committed. This is a dangerous assumption that contributes to the stigma associated with reporting sexual assault.

Myth: People Can Avoid Being Sexual Assaulted

While there are things people can do to help keep themselves safe, known as risk-reduction techniques, there are no perfect solutions to avoid sexual assault.

The only one that can prevent a rape is the rapist.

Note: Statements and comments presented in the media such as, "women are raped because they let their guard down" or "women just don't take the necessary precautions to protect themselves" or "she was caught off guard by the perpetrator," all suggest that victims could have done something differently to prevent the assault. These kinds of statements are victim-blaming and deflect the ultimate responsibility of perpetrating the violence from the rapist and onto the victim.

Perpetrators of Sexual Assault

Perpetrators of sexual assault are all around us. More often than not, media attention focuses on cases which reinforce stereotypes of sexual assault perpetrators as "sick," mentally ill, lower class or a member of a minority or ethnic group. This can lead the public to be skeptical when an alleged perpetrator of sexual assault does not fit this stereotype, such as a popular high school student, an attorney, or an athlete.

This, in turn, can make it difficult to get a conviction or, in some cases, even a thorough investigation.

Rapists come from all races, religions, ethnicities, and socio-economic groups. 90% of the time, he or she is the same race as the victim. U.S. Department of Justice, 1994. Violence Against Women. Rockville, Maryland: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

There is only one predominant characteristic that distinguishes perpetrators of sexual violence—statistically, they are male.

- 96.6% victims of sexual assault in Utah were attacked by a male. *Rape in Utah*, 2005.
- Overall, nearly all sex offenders in Utah are male. Sexual Violence in Utah, 2005.

Interviewing

UCASA encourages the media to seek out an advocate or specialist in the field of rape and sexual assault.

If you have questions about sexual assault, or would like to interview an expert in the field of sexual assault, UCASA would be happy to help you identify the right expert for your story. Don't hesitate to contact us at 801.746.0404 or visit our website at www.ucasa.org.

Tips on Interview Questions

When questioning a victim of rape or sexual assault, please consider the following:

- Rape is often envisioned as a "dark alley" crime committed by a lurking stranger. This image is inconsistent with the majority of sexual violence that occurs.
- Identifying the victim of a sexual assault in media coverage is unconscionable
 and finishes the humiliation and victimization the perpetrator started. Survivors of
 sexual assault may agree to be interviewed to help raise public awareness.
 However, never identify a victim without his or her explicit permission.
- In addition to physical trauma, individuals who have been victims of rape, incest, or sexual assault may feel guilty or responsible for the abuse, question their own judgment, and/or feel betrayed. When questioning alleged victims, avoid questions that imply fault on the part of the victim.

For example, avoid questions about:

- What the victim was wearing at the time of the assault.
 Rape is driven by a desire for power and control and sometimes by a desire to humiliate. It is not a crime of lust. Asking what the victim was wearing is a type of victim-blaming.
- Whether the victim was drinking alcohol or taking drugs at the time of the
 assault, unless it is directly at issue in the case.
 Rape/sexual assault is a crime. Period. A victim whose house was burgled
 wouldn't be quizzed as to whether he or she was intoxicated prior to the
 crime.
- Sexual violence between married spouses is a crime and can be one of the means by which a domestic violence perpetrator dominates and humiliates his or her victim.
- A finding of "not guilty" in a rape case does not mean that a crime was not committed and that the accused is "innocent". It means simply that a jury believed there to be reasonable doubt.
- Refrain from referring to an alleged rape in ways that imply that the contact was consensual.
- Be very careful when interviewing family, friends, and neighbors of either the victim or the accused that their statements don't blame the victim or attempt to exonerate the accused. For example, statements by witnesses that the perpetrator "is such a nice guy" or "would never do something like that" do not add to the facts of the story and only further traumatize the victim and call his or her credibility into question.

Media Resources

Publications About Sexual Assault

- Research Report on Rape and Sexual Violence. Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault, 2006.
- Rape in Utah: A Survey of Utah Women About Their Experience with Sexual Violence. Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, 2005.
- Sexual Violence in Utah: Analysis of Incident Based Crime Data. Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, 2005.

Resources for Sexual Assault Victims

When reporting, please advertise that help for victims of sexual violence is available at local rape crisis centers statewide.

UCASA recommends that you contact the rape crisis center in your area (or the area in which the crime occurred) to get the perspective of a victim advocate and also allow the rape crisis center the opportunity to talk about the available services and the best ways to access those services.

Information, assistance, and support are available for individuals who have been sexually assaulted, even if the assault occurred weeks or months in the past.

Victims can access their local rape crisis center via the **Statewide Toll-Free Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis and Information Hotline** — **1-888-421-1100**.

Utah Rape Crisis Programs

Utah Toll-Free 24-Hour Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis and Information Line: 1-888-421-1100

Community Abuse Prevention Services Agency (CAPSA) Logan, UT (435) 752-4439 www.capsa.org

Center for Women and Children in Crisis (CWCIC) Orem, UT (801) 227-5038 www.cwcic.org

Canyon Creek Women's Crisis Center Cedar City, UT (435) 867-9411

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victim Advocates (DVSAVA) Tooele, UT (435) 241-0337 www.dvsava.org DOVE Center St. George, UT (435) 628-1204

Gentle Ironhawk Shelter Blanding, UT (435) 678-2445 www.gentleironhawkshelter.co

New Horizons Crisis Center Richfield, UT (435) 896-9294 1.800.343.6302 (toll-free) www.newhorizonscrisiscenter.com

Rape Recovery Center Salt Lake City, UT (801) 467-7282 www.raperecoverycenter.org Safe Harbor Crisis Center Kaysville, UT (801) 444-3191 www.womensdvshelter.org

Seekhaven Moab, UT (435) 259-2229

Your Community Connection (YCC) Ogden, UT (801) 394-9456

Your Community in Unity (YCU) Brigham City, UT (435) 723-5600 www.ycube.org

Utah Campus Resources

Brigham Young University Women's Center Provo, UT (801) 422-4877 http://wsr.byu.edu

College of Eastern Utah Health and Wellness Center Price, UT (435) 613-5607 www.ceu.edu

Dixie State College Wellness Center St. George, UT (435) 652-7755 http://wellness.dixie.edu

Salt Lake Community College Health and Wellness Services Salt Lake City, UT (801) 957-4268 http://active.slcc.edu/hw Snow College Wellness Center Ephraim, UT (435) 283-7125 http://www.snow.edu/~studen tlife/counservice.html

Southern Utah University Wellness Center Cedar City, UT (435) 586-7718 http://ww.suu.edu/ss/wellness

Utah State University SAAVI Office Logan, UT (435) 797-1510 http://www.usu.edu/saavi

University of Utah Women's Resource Center Salt Lake City, UT (801) 581-8030 www.sa.utah.edu/women Utah Valley State College Women's Resource Center Orem, UT (801) 863-8080 www.uvsc.edu/conted/cpcd/ wrinfo.html

Weber State University Services for Women Students Ogden, UT (801) 626-6090 www.weber.edu/sws

Weber State University - Davis Campus Student Affairs, Special Populations Layton, UT (801) 395-3514 http://programs.weber.edu/d aviscampus/DavisStudentAffairs.asp

Westminster College Counseling Center Salt Lake City, UT (801) 832-2237 http://www.westminstercolleg e.edu/student_life

UCASA

Who We Are

The Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault, a non-profit organization founded in 1996, is the only non-profit organization addressing sexual violence issues statewide.

UCASA serves as an umbrella organization for rape-crisis programs, victim-advocate programs, and institutions and organizations that respond to and provide services to victims of sexual violence. UCASA provides resources and fosters a sense of community and statewide support.

UCASA supports a community willing to embrace the experiences and rights of each victim of sexual violence, to deconstruct the myths supporting sexual violence, to develop strategies for preventing rape, and to provide avenues for justice, dignity and respect for victims in and outside of the criminal justice system.

Our Mission

Our efforts will advance a society in which sexual violence is not tolerated.

UCASA believes that through social change we can influence attitudes, beliefs and standards that will change people's behavior from ignoring, excusing, condoning and even encouraging sexual violence to taking action, intervening and promoting respect, safety and equality.

What We Do

The Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault

- Trains and certifies sexual assault victim advocates through UCASA's accredited Rape Crisis Advocacy Training, which satisfies the requirements for sexual assault counselors as mandated by the Confidential Communications Act (Utah Code 78-3C).
- Assists Utah's colleges and universities in developing and improving victim services and victim response, and improving the capacity of campuses to serve students through UCASA's Campus Violence Prevention Program.
- Provides resources, technical assistance, and curriculum to high school and junior high school administrators, educators, faculty, parents and teens working to prevent sexual and dating violence among students through UCASA's Youth and Dating Violence Prevention Program.
- Empowers men and boys to work as allies with women in the prevention of sexual violence and promotes men's involvement in violence prevention through UCASA's primary prevention program, Utah Men Against Sexual Violence (UMASV).
- Provides resources, training, and technical assistance to develop and sustain
 qualified medical forensic nurse examiners, who provide compassionate care
 while collecting and documenting forensic evidence, and standardize evidence
 collection, through UCASA's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program.
- Provides resources, training and technical assistance in establishing multidisciplinary collaborative community responses to sexual assault through UCASA's Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Program.

- Conducts advanced training and professional development trainings to professionals and organizations on a wide range of topics related to sexual violence.
- Advocates for victims of sexual assault through public policy efforts, issues policy statements and works with public officials to provide resources, share information and draft legislation.
- Publishes and distributes information related to sexual assault advocacy, prevention and education through UCASA's monthly newsletters, brochures and booklets, and the Annual Research Report on Rape and Sexual Violence.
- Strives to increase public awareness through statewide media campaigns, public service announcements and joins national efforts to promote Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) by leading the effort to officially declare April as SAAM in Utah.
- Manages the UCASA Lending Library, a comprehensive collection of diverse resources on a variety of topics about sexual violence that are accessible to members and community partners.
- Participates in collaborative efforts to promote social change through local, regional, statewide and issue-specific councils and committees throughout the state, including, but not limited to, the Utah Sexual Violence Council, Utah Domestic Violence Council and the Governor's Violence Against Women and Families Cabinet Council.