

## SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS FOR SAAM

---

- ❑ *Sexual Assault Awareness Month* is a time for us to reflect on how sexual assault affects every person in our communities, and to take action to stop sexual assault.
- ❑ Approximately 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually assaulted before the age of 18.<sup>1</sup> As adults it is our responsibility to protect children – it is time for us to stop the abuse before it happens.
- ❑ In up to 90% of all child sexual abuse cases, the child knew the offender. Preventing child sexual abuse is not just teaching children the danger of strangers.<sup>2</sup> Because you'd do anything to protect your child, start the conversation – talk to your child about sexual abuse.
- ❑ Sexual assault affects every part of our communities. Studies show that an estimated 12.1 million women have been raped in the US.<sup>3</sup> Sexual assault permeates and deteriorates society as a whole. The impact of its deterioration can be found in our schools, on our playgrounds, campuses, families, workplace, and threaded throughout our culture. *Sexual Assault Awareness Month* is a continuum of our efforts to bring about change, promote healing, justice, and to create a tomorrow free of sexual violence.
- ❑ More than one-third of all women in Washington State have been sexually assaulted in their lifetime.<sup>3</sup> As a community, we can no longer afford to remain silent about this devastating and harmful crime. It is time to end the silence about sexual violence and create safe, healthy communities.
- ❑ According to a recent study, 69% of rape victims reported feeling at least somewhat or extremely concerned that others would blame them or hold them responsible for the rape.<sup>3</sup> A significant part of the trauma that sexual assault victims face is the shame and stigma associated with the crime. It is our responsibility to show survivors that we hold offenders, not victims, accountable for sexual assault.
- ❑ Most media coverage of sexual assault examines the victims, and what individual victims could have done to avoid the assault. No amount of individual precaution is going to stop sexual assault from happening. Instead of thinking about avoidance strategies we need to be thinking about prevention strategies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Russell, Diana E.H. "The Incidence and Prevalence of Intrafamilial and Extrafamilial Sexual Abuse of Female Children," in *Handbook on Sexual Abuse of Children*, edited by Lenore E.A. Walker. Springer Publishing Co., 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Greenfeld, L. *Sex Offenses and Offenders: An Analysis of Data on Rape and Sexual Assault*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. 1997.

<sup>3</sup> "Rape in America: A Report to the Nation," National Victim Center and the Crime Victims Research & Treatment Center, 1992.