

Convention Presentation Summaries

Each year, CCAPS sponsors several programs for continuing education credits for psychologists. At this year's convention in Las Vegas, we sponsored 28 programs. If you couldn't make all the programs you wanted to attend or weren't able to attend the convention this year, you can still find out more about some of the quality presentations that were sponsored. Below are descriptions of several presentations from this year's convention.



Rape as All-Encompassing: The Lived Experience of Sexual Assault Survival for Women in College

Mollie M. Monahan-Kreishman

From the floor of an unlit off-campus bathroom, a sexual assault survivor tries in vain to calm her paralyzing anxiety. Another survivor cannot escape the din of an erupting stadium filled with thousands of college fans cheering for him. Terrorized and traumatized, do we really know what college sexual assault survivors go through after rape ends and life after rape begins?

While there exists a wealth of research on sexual assault, the available information is either positivistic in nature (e.g., Greenfield, 1997; Johnson & Sigler, 2000; Kilpatrick, Edmunds, & Seymour, 1992; Koss, 1988; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000) or is based on accounts of stranger rape (e.g., Lueders, 2006; Raine, 1998; Sebold, 1999, 2002). The existing works on the topic are essential. However, little is published that shares personal accounts of survivors in college who have been raped by someone they know and also seeks to make meaning of the lived experience.

The purpose of Dr. Monahan-Kreishman's research is to share the powerful and visceral lived experience of sexual assault survival for women in college. Within the professional competency of Advising and Helping, this program will help faculty and staff to better understand, and therefore better serve their students who are living through the aftermath of rape. In terms of the critical issue of Cultivating Critical Discourse, this presentation will start a powerful and compelling conversation on the topic that can be translated and put to use on any college campus. The presenter, a phenomenological researcher with over 15 years of professional experience in student affairs, shares the insight uncovered by her research, and the meaning that can be made from it. Phenomenological research seeks to show those who are outside the lived experience what it is like inside the lived experience (van Manen, 1990) without actually having to go through it for themselves.

As many as one in four (Geschmay-Linn, 1999; Koss, 1988; Kilpatrick et al, 2007; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000) women will experience rape or attempted rape in their lifetime. Eight out of ten rape victims know their attacker (Tjaden & Thonnes, 2000). Approximately 683,000 women are raped each year (Kilpatrick et al, 1992). In college, 13.3% of women indicated being raped in a "dating situation" (Johnson & Sigler, 2000). Numerous powerful memoirs have been written by women who have experienced rape at the hands of strangers (Lueders, 2006; Raine, 1998; Sebold, 1999, 2000). While knowing these statistics and reading the memoirs help us to understand the prevalence and certain aspects of the issue, they do not give us insight into the lived experience of sexual assault survival for women in college. This research is a contribution to the existing body of knowledge, and exists as an effort to show the deep pain and compelling resilience of these women and women like them.

This research uncovers the lived experience of six women as they struggled through college after rape. Using their chosen pseudonyms, the experiences of Pink, Beth, Aeryn, Lulita, Sweetie and Chloe will shed powerful insight into the daily existence of rape survivors. Pink was raped by a well-known football player at a neighboring school soon after transferring her Junior year. Beth was raped during new student orientation. Aeryn, as a first-year student, was raped by a fellow honors student, and the future student body president. Lulita was stalked and raped repeatedly by her attacker throughout the first two and a half years of her college experience. Sweetie was a first-year student when she was raped by a popular football player at her school. Chloe was raped in her own bedroom by her ex-boyfriend during her senior year of college. All of these women have different things to share about their experiences surviving rape in college. We will explore their lives after rape, including their challenges and successes. Most importantly, we will do this in a way that will help program participants viscerally connect with the lived experience through the survivors' words, and the meaning made from them.

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