



April is Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month

Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

Nationally, April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). The goal of SAAM is to raise public awareness about sexual violence and educate communities on how to prevent it.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE OCCURS MORE FREQUENTLY THAN MOST PEOPLE REALIZE. THERE IS AN AVERAGE OF 207,754 VICTIMS (AGE 12 OR OLDER) OF RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT EACH YEAR.

Sexual violence occurs more frequently than most people realize. There is an average of 207,754 victims (age 12 or older) of rape and sexual assault each year.

One out of every 6 women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime, and about 3 percent of men have experienced an attempted or completed rape in their lifetimes.

Survivors of sexual abuse face lifelong consequences including mental health issues, substance abuse, PTSD, lost wages and more. While this information is grim, 95% of sexual abuse IS preventable through education and awareness.



“Our Nation must continue to confront rape and other forms of sexual violence as a deplorable crime. Too many victims suffer unaided, and too many offenders elude justice. As we mark National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, we recommit to building a society where no woman, man, or child endures the fear of assault or the pain of an attack on their physical well-being and basic human dignity....”



Sexual harassment, assault, and abuse can happen anywhere, including in online spaces. As we connect online, we can learn how to practice digital consent, intervene when we see harmful content or behaviors, and ensure that online spaces — whether they be workspaces, classrooms, social media platforms, or otherwise — are respectful and safe.

As our use and dependence on technology grows, younger audiences have begun using the internet, online games, chats, and video calls more frequently. While these are often opportunities for kids and teens to learn, they can also be opportunities for abuse to happen. It is important that the caring adults in kids’ lives know how to recognize when abuse may be happening online or in-person and how to prevent it.

Spotting signs of abuse virtually for caring adults and educators

A victim in an abusive situation at home, especially a child, may not be able to directly communicate about what is happening to them. Caring adults outside of the home, such as neighbors, extended family, friends, educators, and employers can look out for red flags that may indicate domestic or sexual violence.

Possible red flags that may indicate abuse:

- Yelling in the background of video or phone calls
- Behavior changes such as social withdrawal, difficulty concentrating, or loss of interest in usual activities
- Unexplained absences
- Complaints about soreness, pain, or trouble sleeping

If you are concerned that a child is in an unsafe situation at home, you can contact the [Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline](#) for local resources and referrals.

Children are not the only ones who may be vulnerable within the home. If you suspect that someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, you can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline [over the phone or via live chat](#). Advocates can help you to identify abuse and talk through options for next steps.

Keeping kids and teens safe online for parents

Parents and caregivers can help to keep teens and kids safe while they interact and connect with others online. You can have age-appropriate conversations with teens and younger children about red flags to look out for that indicate an online friend may not be trustworthy.

People who sexually offend will target potential victims on platforms like social media, through online multiplayer games, or on chat apps. These offenders may send or ask for sexual content — meaning that victimization can happen completely behind a screen and within the victim's own home.



People who sexually offend often test boundaries and manipulate potential victims before committing outright sexual abuse — this process is called grooming.

Grooming is the process in which perpetrators judge how far they can push boundaries and exploit someone's trust.

During the grooming process, people who commit sexual abuse will manipulate a victim's trust by passing off inappropriate behaviors as normal or no big deal.

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Parents can help keep teens and younger children safe by talking about some of the red flag behaviors that are indicative of the grooming process.

Parents can help kids identify red flags that indicate online grooming:

- Asking to keep the relationship secret
- Making suggestive or sexual comments
- Asking the child about their sexual background (have they been kissed, are they a virgin, etc.)
- Sending links to suggestive images, memes, or porn
- Asking the child to only contact them on certain apps
- Asking the child to close the door when speaking with them, only wanting to chat at certain times (like at night), or asking if their parents are around.
- Making conditions on their relationship. For instance, saying they will only continue to talk to the child if the child does something in return for them, like sending photos
- Discussing the child's appearance or requesting to see more photos of them
- Sending the child online gifts, like gifting items in games

Parents should also always take their child seriously if they share that they had an uncomfortable online exchange with someone. Parents can also contact [local law enforcement](#) if any predatory behavior towards a child is taking place.

1 U.S. Department of Justice. National Crime Victimization Survey. 2006-2010.

2 National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, 2011, by The President of the United States of America, A Proclamation



For more information, please visit:

<https://www.nsvrc.org/saam/about/faqs>

<https://www.rainn.org/national-resources-sexual-assault-survivors-and-their-loved-ones>

<https://nomore.org/campaigns/saam/>

<https://laurenkids.org/april-national-sexual-assault-awareness-month-saam-national-child-abuse-prevention-month/>

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