



Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault

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MEDIA RELEASE

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WCASA Works with Colleges and Universities Statewide to Address Sexual Violence on Campus

Madison – The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Inc. has partnered with UW system and private colleges to address the persistent problem of sexual violence on campus. On September 29 and 30 WCASA will hold the first ever Conference on Sexual Violence and the College Campus at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center in Stevens Point.

This conference brings together local, state and national experts on the response to and prevention of sexual violence in the campus setting. Speakers at the conference include Dr David Lisak, Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts – Boston and author of the much heralded article “The Undetected Rapist.” Dr. Lisak will discuss his research on rapists including their motives and characteristics. Also featured will be Brett Sokolow, JD, a specialist in campus safety, security, and sexual assault policy and law and president for the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management.

“Colleges nationwide are awakening to the epidemic of sexual violence. Recent high profile cases such as those in Colorado and Utah and even cases such as the recent gang assault at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee highlight the need for victim services, education and prevention from the campus community. This conference marks a groundbreaking collaboration by experts in sexual violence response and prevention, campus life, and college and university administration. Such a model should be of interest to other states looking to address the problem of sexual violence on the college campus.”- Maggie Thurs, Public Awareness Coordinator, WCASA

Sexual violence on college and university campuses is occurring at an alarming rate. The most vulnerable population for campus rape is freshman girls during the first few months of school. The majority of these assaults are date/acquaintance rapes perpetrated against women by men. Statistics for Wisconsin released by the Office of Justice Assistance (2003) suggest that 93% of all sexual assaults were perpetrated by someone the victim knew. National statistics indicate that over 27% of college women have been the victim of rape or attempted rape (Journal of Consulting and

Clinical Psychology, 1987;55(2): 162-170.) If this statistic holds true it means that 1 in 4 women in Wisconsin colleges and universities this year will be raped or the victim of attempted rape. Other studies of interest indicate that 1 out of 15 male college students raped or attempted to rape a woman.

(Weitzman, E., DeJong, W., and Finn, P. Alcohol and Acquaintance Rape: Strategies to Protect Yourself and Each Other. U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Only 12% of undergraduate women whose experiences fit the definition of rape, identified themselves as rape victims. (Schwartz, M., Leggett, M. Bad dates or Emotional Trauma – the Aftermath of Campus Sexual Assault.). And 84% of men whose actions matched the legal definition of rape, said that what they did was definitely not rape. (Koss, M.P. 1998. Hidden Rape).

Registration to the conference is open to anyone interested in learning more about the issue of sexual violence on the college campus. Administrators, safety officers, health care providers, student leaders, sexual assault victim advocates, legislators, community leaders and even parents will find the conference useful. For more information and an online brochure visit www.wcasa.org. Or contact WCASA by phone at 608-267-1516.

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