

I have been a victim of violence, violence that is not visible.

A zine about sex, consent, and
violence in the BSC. Spring 2009.

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by Alix Black

I am an eighteen-year-old college freshman, and I am very, very drunk. At another point tonight, I will make out with a drugged-out, dreadlocked individual on the basis that something in his face reminds me vaguely of hipster idol Devendra Banhart, but that will come later. Right now, I am about to be raped.

I have just begun my first year at the University of California, Berkeley, which has been my dream school since a visit with my father on my fourteenth birthday. I am on cloud nine. Here I am, 3000 miles from my Atlanta home, at one of the best schools in the country, with a few thousand other kids who are taking advantage of the total lack of supervision to get wasted three nights a week.

I was not a heavy drinker for most of high school, and I have no idea what I am doing. The boy in front of me is not unattractive, but neither is he particularly appealing, and I recoil when he kisses me. There are people on all sides of us—we are at the infamous Room-to-Room party at Cloyne Court, a 150-person student cooperative—but no one notices my desperation to escape, and here is why: the object of this party is to visit each of 30 or more rooms and take a drink in all of them. So it is no wonder that I am quite intoxicated. Many months from now, I will realize that the consumption of alcohol frequently leads to poor decisions on my part—indeed, it has already led to three different frat boys from Georgia Tech during my senior year of high school—but for now, I am deeply in denial, and I love the rush that comes from being so drunk I can hardly stand.

The boy, whose name I know is Israel because he has creeped me out before, asks if I like music. He rattles off the names of a few bands I enjoy. Of course I like music. Would I like to go to his room to listen to music, he wonders aloud. Maybe I would. Maybe I've misjudged him. His room is just across the hall from where we are standing. So smashed

I'm game for anything, I nod and follow him inside, and for some reason it does not concern me when he locks the door behind us.

Israel sits down in front of his computer to put on some music, and I take the only available seat, which is the bed. I am starting to feel slightly uncomfortable as we sit there in silence. Finally, he chooses a song and joins me on the bed. He kisses me again, even as I shake my head.

"Come on, baby," he says. I have always hated being called 'baby'. I shake my head again, but he ignores me and unbuttons his jeans, pushes my leggings off. I am so drunk that I don't know which way is up, and I have no idea how to make this stop. I want it to stop.

The fragments of this scene that I remember clearly will replay themselves over and over again in my head, but not from my own perspective. No, it will be as if I am watching a movie of what is happening. In my journal, I will compare the terrible sex that ensues to a scene from *Amélie* in which she laughs at how badly her partner is performing.

But there is a difference between my life and that movie, and it is that I am not a willing participant in this act. I will later describe it as "pathetic" and feel intensely grateful that I am not too drunk to insist on a condom.

We are both undressed now, with little help on my part. Prophylactic on, Israel thrusts into me, and I detach. I am floating free. I am not connected to my body in any way.

"You like that, baby?" he asks, but I am silent. He finishes laughably quickly, and I wordlessly replace my clothes and return to the party. Eventually, I wind up with the dreaded Devendra doppelganger on a bench in the courtyard, trying to distract myself from what has just happened to me.

The worst thing about tonight is that I am not the only one who will be a victim of sexual battery. My adorable roommate will also be forcibly kissed, and more. We try not to talk about our experiences, thinking it's for the best. We should bury tonight in the deepest recesses of our memories.

And that is what I attempt to do.

Tips on being a male ally - adapted from NASCO

I understand that empowerment of non-male identified people **does not threaten my strength** as a man.

I am willing and able to **call other men out** on their actions, words, and issues.

I **model positive behavior** for my friends and other men by setting an example.

I practice **listening to women and non-male identified people** and their realities without trying to fix the problem myself.

I work on coming to a place where I am not struggling with my manhood, and **do not need to prove my masculinity** to others.

I am present at meetings to make sure **male privilege and gender oppression** are part of the discussion.

I demonstrate **knowledge and awareness** of the issues of gender oppression.

I use the **language** and political worldview of **gender equality**.

I continually **educate myself and others** about gender oppression.

I recognize my own limitations as a male identified person doing anti-sexist work.

I raise issues about gender oppression over and over, both in public and in private.

I **can identify sexism and gender oppression** as it is happening.

I can strategize and work in coalition with others to advance anti-sexist work.

I attend to group dynamics to ensure the inclusion of all.

I **support and validate** the comments and actions of non-male identified people and other allies.

I strive to **share power with women and other non-male identified people**.

I take a personal interest in the lives and welfare of individual non-male identified people.

I **listen carefully** so that I am more likely to understand the needs of non-male identified people.

I can adopt and articulate the point of view of non-male identified people when it may be helpful.

I can **accept and encourage leadership** from non-male identified people.

I understand that non-male identified people often have **valid experiences that cause them to feel distrustful, wary, or angry at men**. I do not take it as a personal attack. Nor do I try to make them feel guilty for feeling these things about men. I remember that **"it's not all about me."**

I recognize that **patriarchy has created a lot of internalized oppression** in non-male identified people. Even if non-male identified people express sexist views about other non-male identified people, I realize it does not make it alright for me to act in a sexist way.

I recognize that patriarchy and male privilege also involve domination and oppression of children. I know that being a male ally applies to children as well, because young children often suffer their first experiences of oppression due to patriarchal domination in households.

I realize that **men also experience patriarchal violence**, including sexual assault. I know that being a male ally means recognizing the oppression that men perpetrate on others, including other men.

To My Male Allies

To the male managers, presidents, and board reps- thank you for hearing me out, believing me, and taking me seriously. Thank you for struggling to understand how our house dynamics contribute to violence, and for working to create positive change in our homes. Thank you for being strong enough to confront perpetrators on my behalf.

To my male partners and friends - by respecting me, my needs and my boundaries, you've taught me to value and respect myself. Thank you for supporting me through crises and being strong with me when I could not be strong alone.

To the male perpetrators I've worked with - Thank you for being strong enough to seriously question your behavior. Thank you for taking responsibility for your actions, for hearing women's voices, for actively learning and teaching consent, while unlearning abuse and violence.

Daria

Lessons from My Father by Anonymous

I have always been known as flirtatious or boy-crazy. Innocent characterizations.

When I examination my stockpile of childhood memories more closely, though, I see that from a obscenely young age I was also obsessed with sex. I remember innocently kissing boys in the rose bushes during break at preschool, incessantly gazing at my naked Barbie dolls and being fascinated by soft-

core porn once my parents got cable. My fixation on sex, though mostly private and simple during my younger years, was a stifled cry for love.

My father, the most present male figure of my childhood, my role model for future romantic partners, taught me very quickly to fear men. The small number of memories from my childhood involving my parents revolve around feelings of smallness and desperate fear. I was frequently yelled at, called stupid and threatened with physical violence. I felt worthless and spent most of my time hopelessly striving to win affection and approval from my father by excelling in academics, music and other extracurriculars. I was irreparably flawed.

I went through an incredibly tragic awkward stage during middle school, complete with braces and a stick-like body that made me look sickly. However, almost immediately upon becoming a teenager I realized that my appearance was more normal, perhaps even attractive? I figured out that by using my sexuality (as much as a 7th grader can use their sexuality through clothing and make-up) I could make men like me more. I felt better about myself knowing that I was sexually desirable.

This discovery was coupled with some painful consequences.

My first sexual experience occurred with a relative, who touched me and asked me about my sexual history while preventing me from leaving the room. I was 12 and too ashamed to tell my parents what had happened. I was sure that they wouldn't believe or wouldn't care. My father didn't understand my fear when I started to cry the next time I saw him after the assault. He assumed I was whining and told me to stop being so selfish. The next year, a boy that I was seeing pressured me into giving him oral sex in a movie theatre.

These experiences filled me with more grief about interacting with men, meanwhile I hadn't shed my lingering feelings of inadequacy. I became disgusted with myself, convinced I had created the circumstances for assault, and severely paranoid. Every man in my life presented potential to be taken advantage of sexually, for they were only seeing me as my body, my sexuality. I could not trust any partners who treated me respectfully, and would become frantic when they expressed interest in physical contact. During high school, my friends thought I was strange for being so hesitant in sexual interactions even though I was in a committed relationship. Instead I gravitated toward destructive relationships I felt I deserved, most recently during my sophomore year of college when I was involved with a partner who would drink and remind me of my father as he yelled at me, then pressure me into having sex with him after he apologized.

During these experiences, I never felt like I had adequate emotional support from friends or family, partially because of my own feelings of shame. Only recently have I begun to confront these feelings and memories, many of which I was too young to process when they occurred and others which I never acknowledged. Understanding that my experiences and emotions are valid, even though my story is not unusual and may not be as disturbing as others, has been key to my healing. I realize and accept that I have been a victim of violence, violence that is not visible. I understand now that it is Ok to still feel pain, vulnerability and sadness from my experiences.

I continue to struggle with self-confidence, especially with romantic partners. However, my time in the co-ops has allowed me to meet respectful, amazing men who have listened to my stories and have helped me feel more beautiful as I am than I have ever felt.

"fault lines" by Alix Black

I think that it is almost definitely because of the fact that my rape did not take place in a back alley with a stranger, or in the park where I had been out jogging, that people don't take me for a legitimate victim. Couldn't I have just kicked him, or screamed, or told him to stop? When he was on top of me, what was I doing? Why didn't I do anything? And that's the danger of any attempt to classify such an experience of pure terror. I felt like I wasn't entitled to kick him, or to scream, or to do anything but lie there and accept this thing I had brought on myself anyway with my drunken eighteen-year-old beauty.

Because even if we love each other we can hurt.

When I first started contemplating spaces of consent, I had no idea how intricate the process and context of consent giving was like. Two years ago I met my then partner at a museum. I was in need of heart mending and our energies gravitated towards each other with a soft intensity. I wrote poems and wooed them with my wit and laughter. I teased them

and seduced them. At the time I had been exploring new spaces of play in sex and was excited to have found someone I clicked with. The first night we slept together we talked about our likes our dislikes, briefly in the heat of the moment we agreed to what things we were comfortable with. Great. I thought proud that I had vocalized and exchanged consent and boundaries. As the relationship progressed I would periodically check in, as my partner did not usually approach the subject. 'Is this ok', 'do you want to try this', 'how do you feel about (blank)', 'what turns you on'. And their answer was always the same: 'I love your body, I love seeing you happy, what turns me on is what turns you on'. It sounded sweet at the time; I felt that they were being open with me in a way that no one had ever been with me before. We explored intense spaces together, feeling out our comfort spaces. We never had to use the safe word.

Fast forward 8 months, I am breaking up with them, we just have nothing to keep our relationship together except for sex. I couldn't invest in the relationship anymore. A month later we are still in the same place, incredible sex, complete void of all else, I don't think that we were even friends by then. I just continued to make excuses to be with them, make them want me. One day we were having a particularly heavy conversation, in bed none the less. It's so important to not be in intimate spaces when you have serious relationship conversations. Stupidly, I pressed on. 'I just don't think that you're hearing me right' I exclaimed in desperation that they could not understand my needs for more than just physical interaction. And then out of no where, they sighed and uttered, 'I don't like the way I bruise you, I don't like seeing the marks I make on your body, I just don't want to do this anymore.' They said this in such a serious tone with such a grave expression on their face that I was taken a back. Hold up. What did they say? We had talked about it so many times; they knew that they could talk to me about anything. Why would they say this now? None of my questions were answered because I was so stunned I walked away from the situation completely without asking a single question.

That night I thought long and hard. Why had they participated in acts that they were truly uncomfortable with? Why did they go along with playing? And then it occurred to me that each time we introduced a new element into our sex lives, I had gotten non explicit consent. And after that I assumed that whenever that space was revisited it was consented to before. Consent once is consent always right? I never took a moment to think about how I had always just assumed that they wanted to do the things we were doing. It was absolutely possible that they may have agreed to once but grudgingly did it to please me there after. This was hard to process because I really see myself as positively engaged in safe spaces and open communication. But I realized that my partner had felt pressure to please me in the way that I asked. They had not agreed to have their consent once to be misconstrued as consent on the books. I was heart broken that I had unknowingly violated their space. Even though I approached the subject many times, the power dynamics of our relationship disallowed my partner to feel comfortable enough to tell me the truth about how they felt.

This experience showed me that I have a lot still to learn about communication and cultivating spaces of equal footing and growth. I think back now, over a year later, and wonder how things could have been different if I were actually more open and receptive. Even in communicated relationships consent is really crucial, because things change and flow and the only way to be sure is to talk about it. Broaching issues around consent might be difficult because sometimes it's hard to vocalize the things that we want and need from our partners. Taking small steps and approaching conversations about boundaries and communication can help to ease the tension to talk about more intense subjects. If your partner is not receptive, or you feel like you aren't being heard, try again. Sometimes repetition and practice is the only thing that can really fix something into your life. - H.

A Cooperative Perspective on Confronting Sexual Harassment by David

Martha Langelan has written a book called *Back Off! How To Confront and Stop Sexual Harassment and Harassers*. In it, she details many ways of confronting a man who is sexually harassing you. I would like to reflect on these because they apply not only to a woman who is being sexually harassed, but anybody, male or female, who is victim to, or witnesses sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment in public space may be:

-an interaction that makes you feel sexualized, intimidated, embarrassed, objectified, violated, attacked, or unsafe.

-an interaction that restricts your movement or makes you modify your behavior in an attempt to avoid the possibility of being verbally and/or physically harassed.

The following are Langelan's strategies for confronting sexual harassment.

1. Do the unexpected: Name the behavior. Whatever he's just done, say it, and be specific. Call it what it is - harassment, leering, staring, grabbing, groping, objectifying, sexualizing, threatening...

Naming behaviors not only confronts a harasser with their actions, it also establishes that other people know what's going on as well. For example, if you see someone making lewd propositions to someone who is not responding in kind or even showing signs of unease you can say "Why are you asking her those things? She is clearly not interested." Making the offender come to terms with the situation can sometimes be all it takes to diffuse it.

2. Hold the harasser accountable for his actions. Don't make excuses for him; don't pretend it didn't really happen. Take charge of the encounter and let people know what he did. Privacy protects harassers, but visibility undermines them.

Holding harassers accountable for their actions ensures that collective slacking (leaving the duty of confronting harassment to someone else) does not occur and helps keep harassment out of the co-ops.

3. Make honest, direct statements. Speak the truth (no threats, no insults, no obscenities, no appeasing verbal fluff and padding). Be serious, straightforward, and blunt. Demand respect.

Making direct statements is a good way to avoid a fight, if the harasser can't turn it personal then the problem won't be diverted. Going back to the example, if you are diffident and say something like "Stop being a pervert" then there is room for them to defend themselves and accuse you of being unduly hostile. The truth is on your side. Use it.

4. Demand that the harassment stop. Say something like "stop (his behavior)."

5. Make it clear that all women have the right to be free from sexual harassment. Objecting to harassment is a matter of principle.

Establishing objection to harassment as a matter of principle focuses scrutiny on the harassment at hand and does not allow the harasser to question the validity of your intervention. If the offender asks, "What business is this of yours?" it is perfectly valid for you to reply, "I think harassment is wrong."

5. Stick to your own agenda. Don't respond to the harasser's excuses or diversionary tactics.

6. His behavior is the issue. Say what you have to say, and repeat it if he persists.

Reinforce your statements with strong, self-respecting body language: eye contact, head up, shoulders back, a strong, serious stance. Don't smile. Timid, submissive body language will undermine your message.

7. Respond at the appropriate level. Use a combined verbal and physical response to physical harassment.

The most useful way of interpreting this is "don't respond with excessive force, if a conflict isn't physical, don't be the one to make it so." We want to confront an issue, not become aggressors ourselves.

8. End the interaction on your own terms, with a strong closing statement: "You heard me. Stop harassing women."

No one person is the victim of harassment and it should not be the responsibility of just one person to deal with it. If you are witness, acknowledge it, confront it, stop it!

Cockblocking

The co-ops' Central Office recently handed down a directive to managers that they ought to be more watchful at parties, especially in regards to sex and sexual harassment.

"I just want to remind you that if you're really drunk or under the influence of a drug, you can't consent to having sex with someone," said our social manager. People rolled their eyes and made snide comments. "They're encouraging managers to watch out for people who seem really drunk at parties," she added.

"So managers should cockblock," one member suggested jestingly.

"Maybe we should have a cockblocking workshop," another member shouted, and the majority of the room laughed.

They thought it was a joke. I shrank into myself. It wasn't a joke to me. I wish someone had been watching out for kids who seemed really drunk the night I was raped. Maybe it wouldn't have happened if someone had seen me, falling all over myself, and asked me to think about what I was doing, going into the room of some random guy. If I'd just had a little time to consider what I was doing...

I spoke to a girl later who said she never would have had the guts to hook up with her current partner if they hadn't both been wasted. Am I the only one to whom that seems somewhat disturbing? I think that if you aren't ready to have at least a semi-sober conversation with the object of your affections about those affections, you probably aren't ready to be involved emotionally or physically with the person. Love and sex and everything they encompass can really mess you up if you don't pay them the respect they warrant.

I'm not trying to sound condescending. I've made my share of drunken mistakes, but I like to think I'm more considerate now. Consent is something that has become really integral to my life. Who wants to wake up next to a partner with one or both of you regretting something that has passed between you? Besides, consent can be really sexy—"Do you want me to _____ you?" a partner asked me once, and I swear it was one of the hottest moments of my life.

Obviously, everyone has a different take on how drunk is too drunk, and what consent means, and so on. I'm not asking anyone to understand these things differently. I'm just asking you to take a minute to think about your definition of consent and its importance to you.

It will get better

This might sound trite to you if your pain is fresh - if someone said this to me 2.5 years ago I'd want to slap them. What do you know of my pain? The truth is that everyone's pain is theirs and theirs only; we can't compare nor should we judge.

I was raped the day I moved into my co-op. I'd hung out there the semester before, and it was such a thrill - these were the people I'd wanted to meet in college. Crazy yet smart, not like the highly stressed, motivated-only-by-grades people I lived with in the dorms.

How had I gotten in that position? Well, I'd broken up with a long-term boyfriend that day and started pounding drinks. Before long, I was flirting with a boy I'd met previously while hanging out at the co-op I'd just moved into.

I felt pretty good - stoned and drunk, and hanging out with a boy who seemed interested in me. We were hanging out with friends of his, and they were very nice to me. I felt included and excited. As the night wore on the friends left, 'til it was just the two of us in his room.

There isn't a need to go into detail here. I did get in his bed, yes, but my pleas to stop were ignored. My boundaries were ignored. The only kindness here was that I was so drunk I barely remembered or felt anything. I got out of the bed and said I was returning to my room, only to have him say to me "You know we just had sex." Until that point, I really didn't.

I didn't tell anyone for a long time, except for an online friend who had no connection to my day-to-day life. I'd always felt like a smart girl. I always felt like the sexes

were equal and got pissed when "crazy feminists" talked about the inequality of the sexes, because I felt like I was just as good, strong, and intelligent as any male. I still believe that I am as good as any man, but I've realized that the prevalence of violence against women is a clear indicator that the sexes are not on equal footings in our society.

The really shitty thing was that the guy who raped me lived 2 doors down from me. Gradually, I told people I trusted. One friend told me about a friend from home who reported her rape to the police. Another girl from my co-op who'd been raped (not in the co-ops) tried to help me by sharing her story. It was very helpful until she told me, while we were driving in her car, that I should take some responsibility for the situation because I'd been so drunk. I wanted to jump out of the car right then and there. Here was someone who'd been in my situation, yet was still blaming the victim. I know it's dumb to imbibe to the point that you can't handle the situation you are in, but to me that was like saying there is no blame in raping a cripple who can't get away from you because...well... they should've been able to walk away! Ok, that might not be the best analogy, but to me it was shocking that a girl who was trying to show empathy instead ended up blaming me for what happened.

I eventually told my house manager. That was hard. I eventually talked to CO, which was also hard. But he was kicked out. I'd previously gone to the police, which was depressing. Rape is hard to prosecute - I hadn't gone to the hospital the night of to have DNA samples taken, etc. so my case was pretty much just my word. I reported what happened to me, but without any evidence all I had was that: a report. It never went to court or anything of that sort. So when he was kicked out of the co-op it was a big relief - no more running into him in the halls or kitchen. He kept coming back after moving out, and I had to get him PNG'd, but that was actually pretty easy...there was a wonderful girl who really supported

me; she was older and had leverage in the house, and made my case for me while I remained anonymous.

It was weird hearing house members wonder aloud about why this guy was kicked out. Sometimes I wanted to scream "BECAUSE HE RAPED ME!" but of course I never did. I was (and still am) pretty nervous about people finding out that *that* happened to me... there is so much shame associated with rape. What a double whammy - you are hurt, and then are worried that people just knowing of your hurt will do something to compound it.

I wanted to drop out of school that semester but I didn't. I took easy classes. Before he was kicked out (he was in the house for about a semester before I had the nerve to get him out of there) I contemplated shooting him in the balls or the head or wherever (not that I'd ever shot a gun...) I contemplated shooting myself. I felt awful. I'd sit in my bed and cry and cry and cry. The fact of what had happened to me would just run through my head uncontrollably, making me feel awful at any time of the day. I would wake up, and feel fine, and then I'd remember what had happened. It was always a question of how long in a day it would take me before I remembered what had happened - and once I remembered my day would suck.

As to rape in the co-ops - yep, it happens! Sadly, I know many other people, primarily female (though I've heard of it happening to a male as well), who've been raped in the co-ops, and I know of even more cases of sexual harassment. It can feel like this can't happen in the co-ops; we're the antithesis of the frats, we live outside the evils of mainstream society, so that can't go down here! Right? Unfortunately, it can and it does. Until the sexes are equal, and until people relate to each other as equals, there will be assault and harassment in all realms of our lives.

But what I really want to tell people is that, one day, you will feel better. What happened will never go away, it

happened to you/me, and there is no point in denying it. But as trite as this might sound, time lessens all pains. Watch out for self-medicating with drugs and alcohol, because that won't fix what happened. I saw a counselor but that really didn't help, but you can see one for free at Tang even if you don't have SHIP. If it's another co-oper: get that person out of the co-ops ASAP. If you don't feel comfortable talking to a house manager take it to CO, and know that everything can remain anonymous. But my main message is just give yourself time. This needn't define your life, and it won't, although it can drive you crazy and make you depressed for a (long) while. Just know that one day, it will get better.

Partner violence.

I check my voicemail at midnight:

"Daria, I know it's late, but I really need you right now. Something happened, and I don't think I can handle it. Will you come over?" He's crying.

I leave the party for my partner's house. He opens the door. He's slumped over, his eyes are bloodshot, he smells like he's been drinking.

"How are you feeling?" I listen to his worries and his fears; I take on some of his pain.

He kisses me. I oblige, but I tell him

"I don't want to have sex tonight." We fall asleep.

In the middle of the night, he climbs on top of me. I lay still, partly asleep. He assaults me, rolls over and falls asleep.

I lay in the dark, staring at the ceiling.

I can't sleep. Its three am.

I crawl out of bed, silently put on my clothes, and walk back to Davis.

Several weeks pass.

I broke up with him. He told me he loved me and I hurt him. I couldn't stand the sight of him. I didn't answer his calls.

I asked him to meet me at the park. I asked him to hear me out, not to interrupt me.

"I came over that night to support you, you assaulted me. You got off on my still, silent body. You did not ask for my consent. You did not ask me what I wanted or needed. You did not say a word. What does that say about how much I am worth to you?"

"The person who initiates sexual contact must verbally ask for consent. Silence is not consent. Sleeping next to you is not consent. Having had sex with you before is not consent."

"I need you to understand consent, and promise me you will use it with all the women in your life. I want you to promise that you will never do what you did to me to anyone, ever again."

He promised. He apologized, he said he understood.

But did he? Did he really understand? Can I forgive him? How can I learn to trust men again? I am afraid.

I myself have intentionally and unintentionally hurt partners. How can I learn to take responsibility for my own violent behavior?

He and I are human, vulnerable, capable of love and violence. If I can learn to hold myself accountable, if I can learn to act thoughtfully and intentionally, then I will know without doubt that he can, too. Then I will be able to forgive him.

BSC Consent Workshop - 10/21/08

Facilitated by Andy Olson and Daria Garina

Twenty BSC members and managers explored sexual consent and strategized about incorporating consent into our communities.

CONSENT - what are the integral parts of consent?

- Being clear both to yourself and your partner about your intentions. Setting boundaries and respecting them. Being conscious of your own actions and intentions.
- Checking in with yourself - Do I consent to what is going on?
- Mutual agreement and active participation from both parties - silence is not consent
- Dispelling any doubt that arises through verbal communication - the best and only way to know if consent is given, is to ask
- Being in a clear and stable state to understand what you are consenting to. Emotional distress, fatigue, and intoxication are obstacles to giving consent.
- Being accountable for one's own actions - the person who initiates sexual contact is responsible for asking for consent
- Atmosphere must be free of real or perceived threat or coercion.
- Communication - the more communication occurs between two people, the more likely the situation will be consensual. Communication can be physical, but verbal communication is clearer. It is important to start communicating about intentions and needs before the heat of the moment

starts. Communication should be open ended - What do you want to do? In the heat of the moment, communication and understandings about sexual style (dominance, submission, etc.) will make sex fulfilling for both parties.

- Clarity of expectations about future the future relationship between two people involved, ex. Are we hooking up for just one night? Or am I set with a partner for life?
- Consent must be given each time- for each act. Consenting to kissing isn't consenting to touching. Consenting to touching isn't consenting to sex.
- Knowledge about risks of STI transmission and pregnancy. Open agreement about the use of barrier and contraceptive methods and disclosure of STI status.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time

OBSTACLES to consent -

- Intoxication - the use of alcohol and other drugs by groups and individuals. Prevents people from being clear about their own needs and intentions. Prevents people from clearly understanding the needs and intentions of others.
- Taboo - being unable to initiate group and individual dialogue about sex, without being viewed as predatory, aggressive, and inappropriate.
- Discomfort and fear
 - Being afraid to ask for consent or withdraw consent, due to overt or covert coercion and

threats. Fear of physical violence (like abuse) and emotional violence (shame, rumors, guilt).

- Discomfort resulting from the other party assuming, or deciding for you, what you want to do. Asking questions that make assumptions: "Do you want to go to my room or yours?" leaves no room to say - no, I don't want to go anywhere. Other examples of assuming questions are "Do you want to be on top or bottom? Do you have a condom? How do you like to have sex?"
- Fear of saying something or using language that will unintentionally hurt or offend your partner. People use different words for different acts and different body parts - fuck, have sex, make love, get it on, vagina, cunt, penis, dick, semen, cum, etc.
- Community precedents and peer pressure -
 - Gender roles and sexism - expecting men to always initiate sex puts pressure on them to make situations sexual, expecting women to submissively consent prevents women from actively initiating sex or actively withdrawing consent (saying no)
 - Events and situations set up with the assumption to there will be "hookups" and sex puts pressure on individuals to either have sexual interactions, or leave and not be part of a community event

STRATEGIES to using consent -

- Setting positive community precedents and expectations - expecting members of a community to actively communicate about boundaries and respect each other. Creating formal and informal spaces to talk about consent, sex, and sexual violence (men's and women's meetings, consent workshops, council, dinner, discussions between friends and between partners).
- Integrating consent into foreplay with your partner - consent can be very erotic and increased communication makes sex more satisfying.
- Teaching friends and partners about consent - demonstrate the use of consent to your partner, model the use of consent to your friends and community
- Checking in with yourself about what your needs, intentions and boundaries are, before going out and before becoming intoxicated.
- Communicating with friends about intentions and boundaries before going out and becoming intoxicated. Check in with your friend when you see them crossing their own boundaries, remind them of the decisions they made when they were sober and removed from the situation. Ex. If you see a friend having more drinks than they intended, or being led off by another person when they decided not to sexually engage with anyone that night, ask them if they're okay with what's going, if they would do this if they were sober.
- Asking for consent in an open ended way and giving a person the opportunity to say no - What do you want to do? What do you like? Do you want to have sex? Can I go down on you? Can I kiss you? How are you feeling?

- Taking responsibility for your own substance use and level of intoxication.
- Questioning your assumptions about what your partner wants and expects, and checking in with them frequently.
- Being aware of unequal power dynamics that exist in our communities and compensating for them. Men can have more power than women, managers can have more power than residents, old co-ops can have more power than new members

My Contribution

Reading the 84 questions about consent at anarcha.org simultaneously surprised me and seemed like old news. I read them, knowing what the "right" answer to a lot of them was and realized that there were still several that I answered "wrong". It is hard to think of consent on so many levels in everyday life. I almost think we are trained to perform certain behaviors that bypass consent and allow us wiggle room and a way to not be held accountable for our actions. For instance, most people would probably say that they do initiate contact through things like dancing or sleeping next to each other or drinking because they think the other person might be uncomfortable with that contact in other, less ambiguous situations. A lot of people would probably also admit (if being honest) that they have or would answer questions about STIs vaguely with something like "I've been tested recently".

I was recently talking to a friend who was crushing on a friend of theirs and was trying to go about things without making their relationship weird... in so doing, performing some of these behaviors that sidestep asking for consent, and thereby creating a space of ambiguity. I have also known

myself to do these things... "wanna exchange backrubs?"... in the hopes that it would lead to something more.

I believe that we are trained to manipulate to get the things that we want. I have noticed this more lately as I try to practice getting consent more frequently. When I stop and ask if people are ok with the contact that we're having, or the relationship we're forming, people get weirded out. They think I am really awkward. They tell me that it's weird to ask if we can cuddle beforehand and that it should just happen organically. I think it is a fine line. While I enjoy the things that just kind of develop, I also enjoy people asking me if I am comfortable because, sadly, I am still one of those people that has a ridiculously hard time speaking up. It is easier for me to talk about what I want and don't want when asked and I imagine it's easier for others too. I wish more people practiced getting such straightforward consent. It seems to me that a lack of ambiguity and reassurance that you are both (all) doing what you want to be doing would be helpful. We are not mind-readers as much as we would like to think we are. I do not *know* what you want and you do not *know* what I want unless we tell each other. And wouldn't it all be so much better if we could just do what each other wanted, without any discomfort or awkwardness surrounding guessing? I think so.

Sadly, many people do not even know the real definition of consent or what is required for it and I think that needs to change. If I can tell my housemates what consent is and how to get it, we can (hopefully) all start communicating our true desires to each other and then we will *know* what each other wants and we will *know* that we really want to be doing it with each other. I do not want to guess and be worried that my partner(s) is or is not into me and does or does not want to be doing something. If we just communicate what we want and what we are comfortable with we can all be at ease and be confident that what we are doing is mutually enjoyable.

In the pursuit of such a space and attitude around consent, I think it is important to facilitate discussions (in addition to dancing and love). The more we all talk, the more we all know about each other and think about the issues around consent. Clearly, as co-ops we care about each other and would never rape our passed out, resisting housemates, but too often people do not know that coercing, convincing, or calming someone down (via drugs) is not consent.

We live in a society that is very individualistic. We are taught how to get what we want. We are taught how to debate and convince. We are not taught how to communicate what we want. We are not taught how to ask for what we want. We are not taught to accept without arguing someone's differing ideas and opinions. It is precisely this site, though, where open conversations must happen. This is where we need to do our work. These are the things we need to unlearn and learn. This is where facilitating discussions and giving concrete definitions will have the most impact. This is a space that I, as a co-oper, need to facilitate. And that is what this piece is about. by Caitlyn Kelly-Kilgore

What to Do If You are Sexually Assaulted/Raped

Adapted from University Health Services

- **IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, CALL 911.**
- **Go to a safe place.** This is not the time to be alone. At the very least, you need emotional support. If there is no one to go to, then call someone you can talk to, no matter how late it is. Call Bay Area Women Against Rape, they have a 24 hour hotline that offers you support and information about how you can proceed. **(510) 845 Rape (7273)**
- **Get medical attention.** As soon as possible, go to a hospital or the Urgent Care center at Tang to be examined and treated for any injuries. If you decide to report to the police, physical specimens collected soon after the incident will be valuable evidence. Do not shower or clean yourself first. The Tang Center is not an "evidence collection" site, so if you do want to file charges, arrangements will be made for you to go to Highland Hospital, which is designated as the "evidence collection" site for sexual assaults that occur in the Berkeley/Oakland area.
- **Consider reporting the assault to police and university officials, whether or not you plan to file charges.** Reporting a rape does not commit you to filing charges. When you make your report, you may take someone with you. You can go the next day, but the sooner the better.
- **Consider whether you want to file charges with the police and/or with the campus authorities if your alleged assailant is a student.** Pressing charges can be a long, painful process. Each person must decide for themselves, based on their own circumstances, whether it makes sense to go through it. Social Services staff are available to help you consider the pros and

cons of filing charges. You may also speak with the UC Police about what will happen before making your decision.

- **Make space for healing.** You have been through a trauma and need to make space for your own emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual healing. You may be overwhelmed by many different emotions - fear, grief, guilt, shame, rage. It is important to seek support. There are many different options, such as talking with a counselor, joining a survivors group or talking with a friend. People who receive counseling tend to recover from their experiences faster and with fewer lasting effects than those who get no help. Recovery from rape doesn't mean that it's as if the rape never happened. Recovery does mean that, over time, the survivor is not thinking about the rape-their emotions are not dominated by it. The survivor is able to envision a future, to set goals and work to achieve them. Their life moves forward.

- **Do not blame yourself.** Be compassionate with yourself. You need to be assured that you are not to blame for the rape. Even if your body responded sexually to the rapist, it does not mean you "enjoyed" the experience or that it is your fault. Even if you believe you were naïve, not cautious, or even foolish, it is not your fault. Your behavior did not cause the rape; the rapist caused the rape.

How to Be a Supportive Listener For a Relative, Friend or Lover Who Is a Survivor of Incest or Other Sexual Assault

Most survivors, female or male, never tell anyone. © 1991
JOSEPH WEINBERG & ASSOCIATES
<http://teachingsexualethics.org/writing/howto.html>

Things you can do:

- Believe them – they are telling you the truth.
- Tell them you are sorry this happened, that it wasn't their fault.
- Really listen; don't jump to solutions. For example, something not to say is "What you (the survivor) should do now is..."
- Ask what kind of help they would like. If they don't know, that's okay.
- Don't distract yourself with heroic fantasies of beating up the perpetrator.
- Offer to make appointments with them and accompany them to counselor, clergy, police...
- All of us have the right as human beings to define ourselves and our experiences as we wish to. Don't insist that anyone identify their experience as assault if they are resistant to doing so. You won't be helping the survivor if you force them to submit to your opinion.
- Don't say that you understand or know how they feel. You don't, even if you are a survivor yourself. Your experience was not identical to theirs. It might be okay to say, "I remember feeling really scared (angry, ashamed, etc.) when I was sexually assaulted."
- Suggest counseling in addition to talking with you. You are not a professional, and your knowledge and experience are limited.
- There is no limit to how long the healing process takes. It is very individual. Saying things like, "You've got to forget about this," or "When are you going to pull yourself

together?" won't help and may harm recovery. In fact, they may stop confiding in you, and pretend that everything is "okay."

- Be aware of your school and local survivor support resources and share those.
- Sometimes you can't "do" what seems to you very much, but the "little" that you know may be wonderful, at least sufficient for the survivor now. Don't assume for them.
- Don't abandon them. Assuming they want to be left alone, without checking in, may be you "covering" for your unwillingness to get involved.
- Give them time and room and space. If you are talking more than they are, you are probably not helping.
- Don't give advice, even if asked for it. Survivors of incest or other sexual assault have had their power taken from them in a very profound way. Making decisions for them is not helpful. It over-protects them and may send a message that you think they're incompetent. Help them problem-solve by offering all the possible options. Offer to support whatever decision they make, then do it.
- Get support for yourself too the more you care, the more you are affected, too. Look inward now, pay attention to your own feelings, and take care of yourself too. Your needs are also valid. Seek support for yourself, if for no other reason than so you can be better support for the survivor.
- Respect their need for absolute confidentiality. This is their life. Do not play God by deciding that you know better what they need. As they see it, not making their secret public may be the only safe thing for them to do. If you get support for yourself as an affected 'significant other,' do not recklessly tell the details of the abuse to anyone. If the person who you confide in presses you to identify the

survivor, do not tell them. The identity of the survivor is none of their business. NONE. Whatever your intention, if you help make the details of the assault public, assume you will do the survivor harm.

- Check in with a person before leaping into an intense follow-up discussion. Don't assume that the level of disclosure or intensity of intimacy that you shared yesterday is acceptable today or sometime later when you next talk to that person. If you want to talk further, recognize that this might not be a good time for them to talk. For example, you might say, "Yesterday you brought up some difficult things. I thought a lot about what you were talking about. I'd like to talk more. We definitely don't have to though. If you'd like to talk, you set the ground rules."

- Some people will seek out someone they don't know well to tell their story to. Some survivors may feel safer telling their story to someone they think they won't ever see again. They feel safer with the anonymity that this stranger provides.

- Sometimes a friend/lover/relative will share the information that they were assaulted by someone. Some will then proceed never to bring it up again. If they refuse to talk further about it, or even avoid you, this doesn't necessarily have anything to do with you. You might, for example, be the only person they have confided in and every time they see you or think of you they recall their abuse. Don't punish them for your feelings (feeling bereft, confused, angry or used among others) if that is how you feel. Similarly, you may choose to approach them at a private time and ask them if they want to talk further. If they don't, that should be fine with you. If they do want to talk, that's also fine as long as you both feel comfortable and safe. The worst-case scenario: That you bully the survivor into a course of action against their will "for their own good."

- If you are a survivor and you are feeling those painful, familiar feelings again, there are caring resources available in your community. Even if your abuse occurred years ago, it is never too late for you to get support.

Sexual acts without consent constitute sexual harassment, assault, or rape, and will not be tolerated by the BSC.

The BSC encourages members and employees to report instances of sexual harassment in order to promote a living and work place free of intimidation. All calls and complaints will be handled discreetly.

Familiarize yourself with the BSC sexual harassment policy and reporting procedures, found online at:

<http://bsc.coop/home/policies/sexual-harassment/policy>

If you experience sexual harassment, assault, or rape, **central office is here to provide support and be your advocate**. We will support you in finding resources for your mental and physical health.

For help, you can contact:

Your house managers and health workers.

Monique Guerrero, Member Resources Supervisor

mguerrero@bsc.coop

Coordinator for Outreach, Diversity, and Anti-Discrimination

(CODA) **CODA@bsc.coop**

Health Education Coordinators **hec@usca.coop**

Any Central Level Supervisor at 848-1936

If you would like to report the incident to CO, document all facts regarding the complaint. Be sure to include who, what, where, when, and how the conduct occurred. Names of persons who may have witnessed the conduct are helpful. Any employee or member who sexually harasses another employee or member will be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment or membership. Corrective actions/options may include advising, counseling and training.

Resources for survivors and the community.

Bay Area Women Against Rape: Support for Men and Women

24 Hour Crisis Hotline: (510) 845 Rape (7273)
BAWAR is a Full Service Rape Crisis Center

Bay Area Woman Against Rape, the nation's first rape crisis center, was formed in 1971 to provide 24-hour comprehensive services for survivors of sexual assault and their significant others. A full range of intervention and prevention/awareness programs are offered. **All counseling services are CONFIDENTIAL, and offered FREE of charge to women, children, and men.**

Services Offered by BAWAR • 24-hour sexual assault hotline (510) 845-RAPE (7273). • Liaison/escort to hospital, police and courtroom. • Individual counseling for survivors and significant others. • Information, referrals, written

materials, and bibliographies. • Community education speakings. • Neighborhood organizing.

For information referrals or services, please call the BAWAR office: Bay Area Women Against Rape (BAWAR) 7700 Edgewater Drive Suite 630 Oakland, CA 94621 (510) 430-1298

UC Berkeley Health Services Tang Center Services for Sexual Assault and Rape

2222 Bancroft Way #4300 Berkeley, CA 94720-4300
Open Monday-Friday, 8 am -6 pm
uhs.berkeley.edu

Medical Care for Sexual Assault and Rape:

Come to Urgent Care during regular business hours. Tang Center provides general medical care for students who have been sexually assaulted. **Services include treatment for injuries sustained during the assault, and testing for pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections including HIV. Referrals are made to local hospitals for evidence collection; arrangements can be made for the survivor to be accompanied.**

When Tang is closed: Call Bay Area Women Against Rape: (510) 845-7273 or the Sexual Assault Hotline at Highland Hospital: (510) 534-9291 or call After Hours Assistance at 643-7197

Crisis and aftermath counseling

Call Social Services at 642-6074 during regular business hours or After Hours Assistance at 643-7197 when Tang Center is closed. Immediate response to survivors is our priority. We offer confidential crisis counseling and follow-up support. **Individual and group counseling are available on a short-term**

basis. Referrals are provided for other services. Services are available for recent survivors and those working to recover from a past assault or an attempted assault.

We also provide short term individual and group counseling and education sessions for friends, family, housemates and co-workers of the survivor.

Advocacy and assistance Call Social Services at 642-6074 to schedule an appointment. Staff will provide assistance and advocacy for sexual assault survivors as needed with the initial medical evaluation, legal and police procedures, and academic and housing issues.

What can a survivor expect from counseling at the Tang Center?

- A safe, nonjudgmental, consistent, and client-centered environment.
- Normalization of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder reactions: intrusive thoughts/images, distressing dreams, avoidance of stimuli associated with trauma, sleep disturbances, irritability/anger, hyper vigilance, exaggerated startled response, etc.
- Acceptance of various forms of coping, healing, and recovery as well as exploration of new methods,
- Reinforcement that the assault was not the survivors fault
- Help with problem solving
- Assistance with identifying coping strategies, soothing activities, strengths, and resiliencies of the survivor
- Reminding the survivor of the right to care for him or herself

- Efforts to reduce self-blame; process anger, anxiety, and other feelings
- Improve self image and current and future relationships
- Exploration of how a survivor wants to proceed with their life, ongoing recovery, and future possibilities for helping other survivors

Highland Hospital Sexual Assault Center

Highland Sexual Assault Response Team Highland Hospital Campus 1411 East 31st Street Oakland, CA. 94602

The Sexual Assault Center can be reached 24-hours a day at (510) 534-9290 or (510) 534-9291.

Since 1994, the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) at Highland's Emergency Department has been available 24-hours-a-day to assist victims of sexual assault. Unlike other local hospitals, sexual assault victims brought to Highland are treated as priority patients by a designated staff member who has specialized training in their care and treatment.

The goal is to create a situation where the victims feel supported, can tell their story and have their injuries cared for while evidence is carefully collected and documented. The team of physician assistants, specially trained nurses, social workers, and forensic examiners treats 25 patients each month, about ten times the number of assault patients seen in any other local emergency department.

SART also uses the latest technology to interpret its findings and works closely with the local police and district attorney's office. Since the beginning of SART, cases that historically could not be prosecuted, are now not only being charged, but are resulting in convictions with significant prison time.

The innovative program is also acclaimed nationally and is a model for similar units in emergency rooms around the country.

What will happen to a survivor at the hospital?

There are four sites in the Bay Area that one can go to where a SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) will be able to assist the survivor with the collection of evidence: ValleyCare, Washington, Children's Hospital, and Highland (which is closest to Berkeley). Once the survivor arrives at the hospital the Emergency staff or a police officer will call BAWAR (Bay Area Women Against Rape) who will arrive within thirty minutes. The staff will take care of them and treat any of their injuries. Next, the survivor will be taken by a physician's assistant (PA) and a BAWAR rep to a safe, quiet area of the hospital called a SART room, to protect the privacy of the individual and the incident. In this room there will be a law enforcement officer, a PA, anyone the survivor would like for support, and a BAWAR advocate (who makes sure the PA and officer are sensitive to the survivor's needs and emotional state. The PA will ask personal questions about the assault and explain the options available at that time. If one chooses to have evidence collected, a Sexual Assault Care Team doctor will be called in.

One always has the right to refuse forensic testing and police involvement but once the word rape is used, then law enforcement is automatically concerned and a report is made. Medical care can include examination and treatment of any physical injuries, including medication to treat sexually transmitted infections. Pregnancy prevention medication (emergency contraception) is also provided. Collection and recording of physical evidence can occur if the survivor chooses to take legal action.

How is physical evidence collected?

The survivor will go into the exam room, which is located in the SART room, to begin the examination. A Sexual Assault Examination Kit is used to collect medical evidence from the body and clothing to assist in legal proceedings. This evidence can be collected within 72 hours after the assault. A monitor is used to magnify the area so as to see what areas are bruised or torn so the evidence may be used in court if the charges are brought. The PA will tell the survivor what is occurring, step by step, while taking the forensic analysis which covers the entire body looking for evidence. Medication for pregnancy or STI's are then offered. It is asked if a HIV test is wanted, it can be taken right then and is confidential. Remember, Highland hospital must report a sexual assault to the police but charges are brought only after the decision of the survivor. Counseling can begin right then, and BAWAR offers up to ten free counseling appointments afterward.

When the survivor leaves the hospital...

A nurse will provide the survivor with information about thoughts, feelings, and reactions commonly experienced after sexual assault. They will be given some recommendations for follow-up treatment and the names of the nurse and physician who cared for them. Information on the legal system will also be provided. The BAWAR advocate will call in about 3 days to answer questions, give test results, help arrange any follow up care that may be needed, and to check up on the survivor and their condition.

Community United Against Violence

Address: 170A Capp Street San Francisco, CA 94110
(located between 16th and 17th Streets)

Via Public Transport: BART: 16th Street Mission MUNI:
14, 22, 33, 49

Business Phone: 415.777.5500 Fax: 415.777.5565 24-hour
Crisis Line: 415.333.HELP (4357)

General Inquiries: info@cuav.org

Founded in 1979, Community United Against Violence (CUAV) is a multicultural, anti-oppression organization working to end violence against and within our diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) communities.

24 Hour Crisis Line

Our diverse volunteers and staff are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to support LGBTQQ people facing harassment, threats, attacks, and abuse. Our Crisis Line Counselors are certified in California to provide Domestic Violence and Crisis Peer-Counseling. They respond to over 1,200 callers annually, providing emotional support, service referrals, and safety planning to LGBTQQ looking to find safety and healing. Many of these callers seek further assistance and services through our direct service programs.

If you are in need of immediate support, please call **(415) 333-HELP (4357)**, or come to our walk-in hours 11am-1pm Monday, Wednesday, or Friday at 170A Capp Street, between 16th St. and 17th St.

Domestic Violence Survivor Program / Hate Violence Survivor Program

Our staff advocates offer case management and peer-based counseling to approximately 160 LGBTQQ survivors of domestic violence and hate violence, as well as their family and friends, annually. We provide emergency shelter assistance, safety planning, and systems advocacy to help survivors find short-term safety and long-term healing.

Gender Equity Center

250 Cesar Chavez
Monday-Friday 9am - 5pm (510) 643-5730

All services are completely confidential
students.berkeley.edu/osl/geneq.asp

GenEq provides counseling, information, and advocacy to survivors of sexual violence. Provides education and workshops around sexual and relationship violence, gender discrimination, sexual orientation and LGBT issues. Helps students with event-planning and group-forming challenges.