
ENHANCING VICTIM SERVICES THROUGHOUT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

2020-2021 MIDYEAR PROJECT REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Rutgers University has a long and successful history of responding to campus sexual and dating violence, and has received national recognition for related programs and research. As a direct result of the “Enhancing Victim Services Throughout Rutgers University” grant provided by a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant administered through the NJ Attorney General’s Office, Rutgers has been able to expand victim service support and education to address sexual and dating violence as well as enhance the awareness of Rutgers’ university-wide response to these issues.

Since the inception of this project in 2017, the University has been able to expand and refine the “Rutgers Model” for addressing campus sexual and dating violence. This report highlights the ways in which we have been able to achieve these goals during the September 2020-February 2021 grant period.

PROJECT GOALS



Continue to enhance the work on each of the Rutgers campuses to address sexual and dating violence



Continue to strengthen a coordinated, university-wide message about the Rutgers response to sexual and dating violence



Key Accomplishments

64

Clients new to VPVA
September 2020 -
February 2021

148

Client caseload
September 2020 -
February 2021

84.2%

Clients that have had two
visits (points of access) or
more between September
2020 and February 2021

UNIVERSITY - WIDE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Stand-alone victim services offices on each of the four Rutgers campuses continue to provide a range of support services to victims as well as education and awareness-raising to the larger campus community. Staffers from these offices meet regularly and often coordinate events and initiatives enhancing the overall Rutgers Model.
- The faculty and staff training coordinator continues to offer trainings around issues of sexual, dating, and domestic violence. These include the core 'We R Here' interpersonal violence training, which is focused on employee misconduct and supporting colleagues, as well as a specialized training for medical professionals. The coordinator also facilitated a trauma-informed interviewing training for investigators and a post-incident restorative/team-building training originally developed for Veterans Affairs. Lastly, the coordinator facilitated a microaggression training that explored linkages between gender, race, and other forms of bias and interpersonal violence.



UNIVERSITY - WIDE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) offices have had to make extra efforts to reach students in a remote environment. To enhance these initiatives, a social media consultant was hired to conduct a digital assessment. Mintz Communications examined the ways in which the audience, mission, and activities of the VPVA offices differ from one another. They also looked into the ways in which the VPVA offices formulate their missions and talk about their activities and social value. The end result will be a more cohesive and effective social media strategy and online presence for all of the VPVA offices.
- The Center and campus partners have teamed up with the NJ Victim Assistance Academy to create an educational module that can be used across all of Rutgers University to educate students about interpersonal violence on campus. The end result will not only meet federal training requirements but will also provide Rutgers-specific resources to raise awareness of victim services on campus as well as practical strategies for students to address and respond to interpersonal violence on campus.

International Women's Day

RUC Chooses to Challenge
Violence
Injustice
Inequity

RUC stands with all women on
International Women's Day

How do you
#ChoosetoChallenge?

Sugar & Spice

Does your relationship go from
sweet & spicy... to salty & bitter

Join VPVA students and staff on
Friday, December 11 from 11:00am - 12:30pm
for an interactive chat about relationships, and
craft a virtual vision board with us!

Join us here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2soop2f>
or click the link in our bio!



RUTGERS
UNIVERSITY | NEWARK
Division of Student Affairs

A Program of Destress Fest



ART OF PREVENTION

Students, staff, and faculty are invited to share photos, artwork, poems, short stories, and other art-based mediums to promote conversations about supporting survivors and violence prevention. Your submissions could make it on our social media platforms and even win you prizes!

During the month of March, the Art of Prevention will focus on empowerment. The concept of empowerment relates to power and respect. Empowerment means we respect each person and their individual autonomy; we support each other as equal members of our community; and we encourage people to practice self-determination.

Campus Consent



@run_vpva

CAMPUS PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Rutgers Biomedical & Health Sciences

Non-Credit Elective Course Trainings for RBHS Students include topics such as the root causes and dynamics of interpersonal violence, trauma-informed care (i.e., screening patients for abuse history and working with patients impacted by violence), and bystander training that focused on mistreatment from the patient's perspective. This training program originated from an RBHS VPVA volunteer.

Camden

The Healthy Relationship Series continues to provide students with a space to consider their own choices when engaging in emotional, sexual, and intimate relationships. The four-part workshop series encourages students to discuss different aspects of healthy relationships. The curriculum is infused with psychoeducational information about domestic violence. Participants learn practical communication skills to assist them within their intimate partner relationships. The Healthy Relationship Series covers starting and ending a relationship, consent, and the impact of modern technology on dating.

Newark

The WeSpeak Upstander Training Program at Rutgers-Newark trains participants on how to be an engaged "upstander" rather than a passive bystander of interpersonal violence. Participants are taught about the causes and dynamics of violence, how violence perpetuates itself, myths and facts about rape culture, and sexual consent. The objective is to increase their efficacy in safely and effectively intervening in violent or potentially violent situations among peers.

New Brunswick

Rutgers CARES (Community Action, Respect, Engagement, and Service) is a workshop that trains students to sensitively respond to and support peers who have disclosed being a victim/survivor of interpersonal violence, as well as how to confidently direct them to appropriate campus resources (such as the VPVA Office or the Office of Student Affairs Compliance & Title IX). A student who completes this training is designated a VPVA ally.

EXAMPLES OF UNIVERSITY-WIDE CAMPUS EVENTS

Each campus organized various awareness events for "Turn the Campus Purple", a domestic violence awareness campaign (October) held across all campuses exclusively virtually.

- **The Virtual 3K Run** - the four campus VPVA offices hosted a virtual 3K run to raise awareness about domestic violence. Participants were able to pick their own running location, submit photos or videos of their run, share screenshots of their map route, and send "selfies" while tagging their respective campus VPVA office. This event promotes the VPVA offices to the campus and outside communities while also motivating attendees to get involved in domestic violence awareness work.
- **Art, Advocacy, and Healing:** During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the VPVA offices sponsored Art, Advocacy and Healing at Rutgers University-New Brunswick's Zimmerli Art Museum. The event featured guest artists, Anel Flores and Cynthia Ochoa, and their work dedicated to advocacy and healing for victims/survivors of domestic violence.
- **Turn the Campus Purple** is a university-wide domestic violence awareness campaign (in October), typically a week long, with visual displays of support for victims/survivors of domestic violence, that engages students, faculty, staff and other community members on domestic violence education, how to support victims/survivors of domestic violence and on-campus resources for victims/survivors of domestic violence.

FACULTY AND STAFF TRAINING INITIATIVES

Completed university-wide needs assessment and report on faculty and staff training to enhance victim services, including:

- University-wide training inventory and review
- Assessment of gaps in training
- Best practice assessment of other Big 10 schools
- Recommendations and work plan

Training Initiatives

- Incorporated anti-oppressive, anti-racist lens into all trainings using Black feminist theory and critical race theory
- Developed corresponding evaluations for all trainings in partnership with the VOCA evaluation specialist
- Coordinated and hosted a series of workshops for faculty and staff on issues related to domestic and dating violence, sexual violence, and in particular, the intersections around race and oppression
- Delivered university-wide 'We R Here' trainings on interpersonal violence with a focus on COVID-19



EVALUATION

Ongoing evaluation and assessment of all project related activities was conducted by the Center on Violence Against Women and Children. Findings are continuously shared with the campuses as feedback loops to help them improve their services and programs.

ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED

SEPTEMBER 2020 - FEBRUARY 2021

Post Test Evaluations

- 627 students attended 19 programs across all four campuses, with 225 students completing program evaluation surveys (36% response rate).
- Posttest evaluations found an increase in knowledge of interpersonal violence, Rutgers' reporting procedures, available resources on campus, how to respond to disclosures, and how to create a safe and trauma-informed environment when working with survivors in medical settings.
- Students reported increased confidence in their ability and willingness to intervene if/when witnessing incidents of interpersonal violence off and on campus.

Client Satisfaction Surveys

- Overall, 86% of students reported feeling supported with the individual counseling services provided via phone, and 61% of students agreed that they would continue with counseling over the phone if it were offered after their return to campus.
- Additionally, almost all of the comments and statements shared by students were positive.

“
VPVA has helped me
enormously during the
pandemic
”



Empty Chair



How to support survivors of stalking.



Domestic Violence Awareness Month



2021 MID YEAR REPORT PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project team thanks the many members of the Rutgers University community who contributed to the Enhancing Victim Services project. This report and the project as a whole are the result of the enthusiastic support and participation of administrators, faculty, staff, and students across Rutgers. This report is dedicated to all those who are survivors of sexual and dating violence. We hope our efforts can help contribute to creating campus communities that are free of all forms of violence.

2020-2021 AG-VOCA ADVISORY BOARD

The AG-VOCA Advisory Board was created including representatives from all campuses.

Those members include:

Harry Agnostak, Associate Vice President for Human Resources

Enobong (Anna) Branch, Senior Vice President for Equity

Kerry Camerer, Director VPVA RBHS

Nancy Cantor, Ph.D., Chancellor, Rutgers-Newark campus*

Kenneth Cop, Chief of University Police & Executive Director of Police Services

Mary Beth Daisey, M.Ed., Associate Chancellor of Student Affairs, Rutgers-Camden campus

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Kaylin Padovano, Faculty and Staff Training Coordinator

Cathryn Potter, Ph.D., Dean School of Social Work

Judith Ryan, J.D., Institutional Compliance Officer for Title IX

Brian L. Strom, Ph.D., Chancellor, RBHS campus*

Karen Stubaus, Ph.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs and Administration

Corlisse Thomas, Ed.D., Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Newark campus

Susan Hamilton, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Title IX Coordinator, RBHS

*Chancellors and/or designees attended