

Proposal Document

Increasing Sexual Assault Support/Awareness/Education at ASU

The need for ASU to have rape crisis center has existed since at least the 1900s, and continues to exist as evidenced by the American College Health Association's 2019 ASU Assessment, and the Association of American University's 2019 report which found that 13% of college students (about 15,593 ASU students) experience nonconsensual sexual contact. The problem at hand is that we here at ASU need a better way to transfer the information on support and resources; victims don't know where to go because all the information is scattered and not well known/composed on the ASU website. To find adequate victim support, a student has to comb through the ASU website by searching through the resource page, clicking on the ASU police tab, click on the safety link, then scroll through and click victim services, then click the sexual assault link where the available resources are scattered between health services, the ASU police department, and ASU counseling services. Furthermore, as the college with the number one innovation, the majority of support for students who have just been sexually assaulted, are various hotlines and centers that are not a part of ASU and are not even in Tempe. The majority of ASU students are from out of state and some students do not bring their cars so just providing the bare minimum of hotline numbers for a college campus where sexual assault comes with the territory, is not enough support. For our college campus, we need to improve marketing and access so that there is one place that consolidates all of ASU's current resources on victim support and prevention so

that students will know exactly where to go, who to talk to and it will all be here, physically on campus. Sexual assault is something that never goes away, and is what people have to learn to live with for the rest of their lives. We need a place that can help them and the survivors that are facing it as we speak. Moreover, many students either don't know how to identify sexual assault and violence, or if they do, face struggles when trying to reach out for help or assistance. An important factor when trying to create a healthy community is education, which is something many college campuses should work on improving. As first year college students, we notice that not only ourselves, but our peers only know about Arizona State University's sexual assault resources if it was required as a part of a course, or in the unfortunate circumstance that they become a victim. This is something that needs to be addressed because this information and resources are a big part in maintaining a healthy and safe college environment. Many ASU students are aware of the required sexual assault course, however it is brief at best and mainly focuses on prevention. While prevention is just as important, we know that sexual violence is happening, so we need our students to have resources they can depend on when facing such traumatic events.

We believe that the solution to this problem is to greatly improve the response, access, and marketing of ASU's sexual assault resources in order to support these victims and their traumatic experiences. We believe that in order to increase victim awareness, along with educating victims on how they can get instant help, there should be a Sexual Assault Center with trained staff for the purpose of coaching/counseling/supporting victims. Moreover, there should be more students able to recover from their traumas and thus improve the narrative of the victim sphere. The ethos of victim focus is to challenge victim blaming and to push the agenda of a

trauma informed, strength based, anti victim blaming approach in our practice, in our policy and generally in the way we operate here at ASU. The relevance of this problem impacts not only college students who attend ASU, but college students everywhere. This issue obviously affects more than just students on college campuses, but the focus of this project is to educate students and their peers on the aftermath of sexual assault and the resources that are available to them.

One of the most common issues that occurs with sexual assault on campus is underreporting and one of our goals with this project is to make resources more known to students to prevent this from happening. A big misconception about sexual assault is that it only happens to women which is very untrue. Although the statistics are slightly higher for women, nearly 1.4% of men have experienced sexual assault at some point in their life. This is an issue that affects all genders, races, and social classes. Young adults ages 18-34 are at highest risk for sexual assault, which encompasses most college students. Statistics also show students are at greater risk for sexual assault their first and second semesters at college. This means that information that could prevent and educate student on sexual assault resources is most beneficial when delivered to students as Freshman, and continued to be enforced. Although ASU does provide some education for students on sexual assault prevention, there is a lack of sense of community and safety when it comes to reporting and dealing with the aftermath of a sexual assault. We know for a fact that there have been more than one instance where an Arizona State student has been extremely disappointed and let down by the way ASU handled their sexual assault situations. ASU has faced many sexual violence cases where victims have been outspoken about the lack of assistance the university could provide. This means that clearly, there are things that are missing from ASU's response to sexual assault, and that further education for both students and faculty could help victims feel more understood and safe.

Recent headlines and social media have highlighted that victims of sexual assault feel that they do not have the support they need. In our survey, we found that 49% stated that if they were a victim, they would be most comfortable confiding in another student. Over 50% do not know what ASU resources exist to support victims and only 16% would know who to contact after a sexual assault incident. Moreover, 13% of students (15,593 asu students) experience rape or sexual assault, 23.1% of trans, genderqueer/nonconforming college students have been sexually assaulted, 43% of dating college women report experiencing violent and abusive dating behaviors, 57% of college students who reported experiencing dating violence said it occurred in college, male college-age students (18-24) are 78% more likely than non-students of the same age range to be a victim of rape or sexual assault.

Our proposed solution is the ASU Sexual Assault Crisis Center. The SAC Center will be an ASU-managed, peer-to-peer team of survivor support advocates. This would include existing peer support groups and provide a location and university funding and professional guidance. The physical location would give victims a place to go along with a 24-hour phone hotline for on-call response. The center will coordinate access to existing ASU resources with confidential, trauma-informed peers. These peers can also provide training and workshops to campus organizations. The Center would partner with ASU's Title IX office, counseling, and ASU lawyers to ensure we provide services that meet legal requirements. Similar centers at other universities can serve as a guide for our Center. As a cornerstone of support for ASU students, faculty, and staff, we will create an environment and culture here on campus that prevents sexual violence and supports survivors. We are proposing that our center be located in the Student

Services building and we have calculated the logistics/budgeting for what our center needs. We are asking for an answering service, a Director with 5-10 years of experience who has training and licensure, three Program Managers, and twenty student workers. Our staff layout combined with the costs for technology and furnishing, the estimated cost to start up the SAC Center will be around \$700,317 (please see our google spreadsheet below). We are thinking of having grads and undergrads being able to train under the professionals and be able to get their hours in/ work there for trauma counseling so it is multifaceted in benefiting ASU students. Currently, ASU employs just two ASU PD crime victim advocates to serve 119,951 students across multiple campuses. dedicated to intimate partner violence, sexual assault, violence and stalking, prevention and victim advocacy.

As innovative leaders, ASU should take this initiative against sexual violence prevention and response by investing in creating In addition to a team of survivor support confidential advocates; have prevention directors for the various parts of campus (faculty/staff, graduates/undergrads) who work with campus partners and campus members to train on sexual violence prevention and consult with leadership to implememnt intervention. ASU needs a centralized, confidential, easily accessible, full-time advocated dedicated to providing services for sexual harassment and rape victims of all cultural backgrounds. There could be a potential that some cases havn't happened at college (highschool or before they got to college; (getting away their abusers) and moreover some indivisuals might not have had the best sex ed (because there is so way to standardise sex ed in the US) or it could be first time for students being sexually active or they need to be taught how to treat their partners. This center would have staff who provide training for all of that and again, it's confidential. There is a lot of shame

surrounding survivors, and a healthy way to reflect on what has happened to them is to be able to have a support system here at ASU where all the resources they need are consolidated in one space. Moreover, society is very punishment based (not focused on healing) and pressured with what you should do (law or outside pressure) and only reporting the incident does not equate healing. Services of victim advocates should include: come with you to the hospital to get a rape kit with you or to court with you to testify, or get your dorm room changed bc of your perpetrator/ if your perpetrator knows where you live, or can advocate for you to have days off work.) The advocate's job is to provide support since a lot of survivors don't know who to talk to. There should be a peer education program as well as a Care Line, the 24/7 crisis line for the University.

As students at Arizona State University, we believe that we need a better way to transfer the information on support and resources to victims and the overall student population. The Health Center, Asu Police Department, and Asu Counseling services are here and open for all students to use but the issue with that is the difficulty in finding these resources on campus and on the website. We need to improve marketing and access so that there is one place that consolidates all of ASU's current resources on victim support and prevention so that students will know exactly where to go, who to talk to, and it will all be here, physically on campus as well as online. The safety of the student body is of the utmost importance and we believe that with the creativity and innovative capabilities ASU has to offer we can make this campus an even more safer place for all students now and in the future.

Links/Citations

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