

Experiencing Sexual Assault on ASU's Campus

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Abstract

Sexual assault and rape is a common problem at ASU. Oftentimes victims are unsure on what to do after a traumatic experience and what support is provided. We created a survey to understand what is causing this issue on campus and what changes should be made. We gathered responses from 31 participants, which includes ASU students and student workers. Our analysis shows that survey participants feel unsafe due to lack of lighting on campus. Participants also expressed discomfort with ASU's response to victims and how little resources there are on campus for victims. We concluded that there are many simple fixes that would harbor a safer and more comfortable environment for students, student workers, and faculty. This can look like a sexual assault crisis center that is accesible, increased lighting on campus, and actual justice for victims who were brave enough to share their story.

Keywords: Sexual assault, ASU, victim, rape

Briefing

This form contains information on the ASU policies on Sexual Assault. This form is purposed to protect victims and their stories, while combating their perpetrators.

What is Sexual Assault:

Sexual assault is also called sexual violence or abuse. Sexual Assault is unwanted sexual touching with no consent, forcing sexual performances, and even kissing (National Sexual Violence Resource Center). Sexual assault can happen to someone of any age or gender.

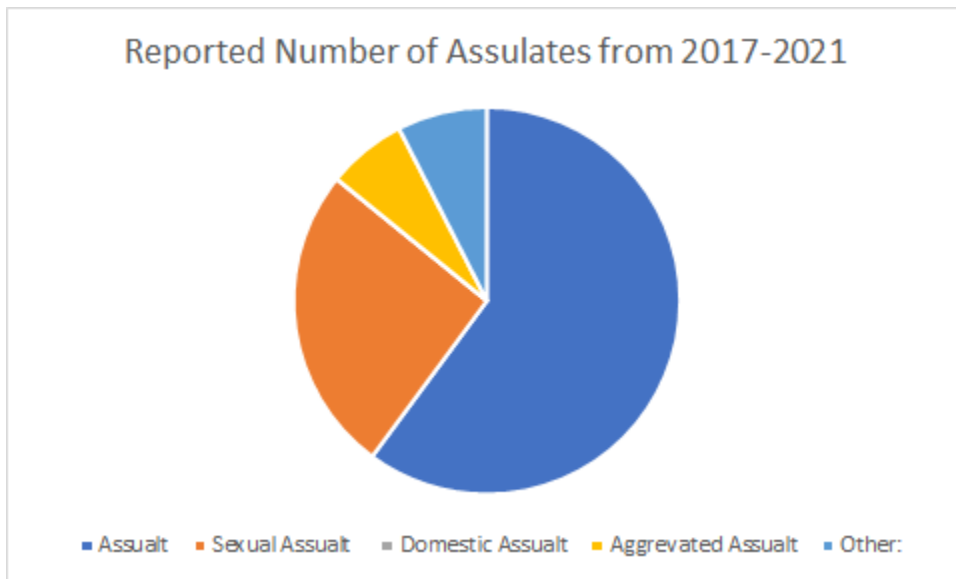
Sexual Assault Includes:

There are many types of sexual assault and they include unwanted sexual touching, forcing another person to perform sexual acts and attempting or performing rape (RAINN).

Why it is important

ASU has a sexual assault problem, as do many college campuses. This stems from various services and accommodations that the campus is lacking, in this case we are focusing mainly on Tempe. For example, as a group, we surveyed 31 students/student workers and 61% felt that ASU does not do enough when it comes to addressing sexual assault. Most participants mentioned that the lack of lighting on campus at night is what fueled feelings of insecurity.

From 2017-2019, 68 incidents of rape were reported and not a single case was prosecuted at the county level (Myskow, Onodera, Hansen). Rape and sexual assault is not taken seriously nor is it dealt with in an appropriate manner. Without proper responses or consequences the culture continues and is fueled. From our survey, 87% said they knew someone affected by sexual assault. This is a terrifying number and acknowledging the problem is when change can begin. To further back the over statement, there was a reported number of 89 sexual assaults from 2017-2021 by the Arizona State police department. Very few of these reported sexual assault cases clarified whether they were rape. It is also important to note that from 2017-2021, there was a total number of 203 assaults; this number does not include aggravated assaults (ASU Fire and Crime Logs).



(2017-2021 data was collected through the ASU crime and fire public logs)

Support to Students and Staff

ASU usually prides itself on innovation, therefore innovation must not only come from ground breaking ideas but also essential values. ASU values every victim and every story. While ASU teaches on consent, the effort needs to go farther. ASU should provide a safe environment for victims of sexual assault and plan to promote the acceptance of their stories. Support, amnesty, care, attention and understanding should be given to every victim of sexual assault because they are entitled to it. The resources available should make the victim feel comfortable and safe. “Helgason said ASU employees, including officers, "bombarded" her with questions at the student health center and pressured her to immediately report the rape” (Frank 32). There needs to be better counselling services for when a student reports an assault and advocates to help victims recover from a traumatic experience. Social workers, psychiatrists and therapists for rape victims should all be available at ASU when sexual assault cases happen.

If Conduct is Violated:

If in the case, a student, staff or student worker violates the consent of another in an uncomfortable or sexual manner, the person will be subject to confrontation with the ASU Disciplinary Offices. An Investigation then will immediately be placed on the situation and privately handled in the protection of the victim. All statements and evidence presented by the victim and suspect will be taken into consideration and analyzed legally. If proven to be guilty, the suspect will face legal prosecution as well as exclusion from all ASU connections (Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention).

While ASU may have processes in place in case of a traumatic experience, like rape or sexual assault, there is still more to be done. Many students have reported feeling disappointed in ASU’s response to their experience due to no on-campus forensic exams. “Forensic exams can’t

be performed at ASU Health Services, and that their website was misleading” (Parrish 2). Forensic exams are vital to justice for the victim because they provide evidence of the assault. This is problematic because forensic exams need to be performed within 72 hours of the assault. “According to one ASU victim’s statement, she was directed to go to Yavapai Family Advocacy Center in North Scottsdale, 15 miles from ASU’s campus, in order to receive a forensic examination” (Parrish 29). Many students do not have reliable and flexible transportation and cannot get themselves to a proper facility in the right amount of time. ASU may have a system in place to help victims brave enough to come forward, but victim’s statements prove that these systems fall short in delivering justice.

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