

Nashville Sexual Assault Center trains college students

Tony Gonzalez, tgonzalez@tennessean.com 10:14 p.m. CDT September 22, 2014



(Photo: Larry McCormack, / The Tennessean)

Sharon Travis can hardly keep up with the number of Tennessee colleges that have asked her to visit their campuses to raise awareness of sexual assault.

So on Monday she invited universities to come to her instead at the [Nashville Sexual Assault Center](http://www.sacenter.org/) (<http://www.sacenter.org/>), where she oversees education programs.

Two dozen students and administrators from at least six campuses took her up on the offer. The two-hour training made for the first step toward creating new sex assault prevention programs at the schools.

"The volume of requests has been huge," Travis said. "What we know does not work is one kind of big choir presentation — it needs to be more than just, 'We had one talk.'"

The students — many of whom are peer mentors, residential advisers, or leaders in fraternities and sororities — were asked to think about the best ways to get their particular campuses to pay attention to the epidemic of sexual violence among students.

Although experts estimate that as many as 80 percent of sexual assaults are never reported to authorities, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has counted more incidents on campuses in recent years. There were [50 forcible sex crimes reported in 2013 across all Tennessee colleges and universities](#) ([/story/news/crime/2014/08/28/advocate-sexual-assault-reports-prevent-others/14758673/](#)), up from 28 in 2010.

Drawing attention to the problem might mean creating posters, hosting classes or putting on a theater performance. But it's up to each group to find the message, Travis said, and experts believe college students find the most meaning when hearing from other students.

Travis was just there to stir the discussion, often with frank talk about sex and partying, and challenging questions about what leads to sexual assault.

She specifically wants students to understand consent — that it must be given before a sex act takes place — and the role of friends and bystanders in preventing assaults.

But for starters, some universities just need to get some discussion started.

"This has not been talked about a lot on our campus," said Carrie Taylor, a sophomore at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville. "We recognized the need."

"It really hit home," said Stephen Dominy, coordinator of fraternity and sorority affairs at Austin Peay. "Instead of being a bystander, we want to lead the charge."

Reach Tony Gonzalez at 615-259-8089 and on Twitter [@tgonzalez](https://twitter.com/tgonzalez).

Get trained in sexual assault prevention

To learn more about sexual assault or to get involved in trainings, contact Nashville Sexual Assault Center Education Manager Sharon Travis at stravis@sacenter.org. Or visit the center's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nashvilleSAC (<https://www.facebook.com/nashvilleSAC>).

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Sexual assault workshop educates, raises awareness

by Don Black on SEPTEMBER 23, 2014 in NEWS

On Sept. 20, the Howard Baker Public Policy Center held S.E.A.T, the club for Sexual Empowerment and Awareness at Tennessee, which hosted a Red Zone Bye Week Workshop. They attempted to raise awareness about the Red Zone, which is the time from the beginning of the school year to Thanksgiving break during which college students are most likely to be sexually assaulted.

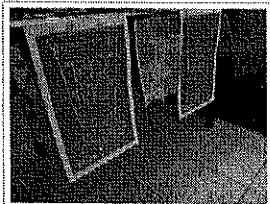
Attendants of the workshop had their choice between seven seminars, with topics ranging from sexual consent to abusive relationships. Attendants also had the opportunity to talk with organizations like Planned Parenthood and the UTPD

during their lunch, which was provided for free to anyone that registered ahead of time.

For Nickie Hackenbrack, a fourth year student in Biology and S.E.A.T, Executive Board Member, the goal of this event is to "change the conversation about sexual assault from response to prevention" as well as to "train more people about what consent and being an active bystander are."



The LGBT Outreach table during the Workshop's lunch break. /Photo by Donald Black.



RED Zone Table. / Photo by Donald Black.

Although this event has been planned since the summer, Hackenbrack is glad that the emails about the sexual assaults that have taken place on campus have raised awareness and concern over the issue.

"One out of four college women have or will be sexually assaulted," said Jill Akin, a representative from the Sexual Assault Center for East Tennessee. "And it's not always the scary person in the bushes either, 73% of sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows," Akin continued.

Akin goes on to describe the continuum of sexual violence, saying that all sexual violence "starts with our attitudes and our morals, in how we talk about and treat women."

One can only hope that events like this will help to change, or at least start a conversation.

If you are interested in learning more information about S.E.A.T, sex week or the Red Zone, click here or attend one of the weekly S.E.A.T meetings on Thursdays at 8 p.m. in HSS 104.

Edited by Ryan McGill



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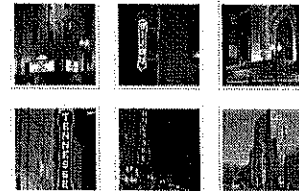
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