Sexual Assault and Abuse: Caring for the Adolescent Patient

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Objectives today:

- Differentiate between myths and facts regarding adolescent sexual assault, including sex trafficking
- Understand the steps and process around obtaining sexual assault evaluations
- Review pertinent Washington state laws regarding adolescents, sexual assault and related care
- Describe ways to support adolescents and their families following sexual assault
Please be aware...and take care of yourself
What is a SANE?

- 40 hour didactic training
- Approximately ten proctored cases
- Ongoing training through peer review and continuing education
- Strangulation training
- Testifying
- Forensic photography
- Interviewing
- STIs
- Physical examination
- Special populations
How common is sexual assault and abuse in teens?

- Over a lifetime, 1 in 4 females and 1 in 5 males experiences unwanted sexual touching. Those rates are higher among transgender people.
- Generally, less than 10% of all sexual assaults are reported.
- Teens with disabilities are even more vulnerable.

ANYONE can be sexually assaulted. There are factors that may increase the risk.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factors</th>
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<td>Poor parent child relationships</td>
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<td>Chaos in the home (substance use, domestic violence, sexual abuse)</td>
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<td>Poverty</td>
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<td>Disability</td>
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<td>Poor supervision (internet, no one checking in generally)</td>
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<td>Lack of opportunities for engagement in the community</td>
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<td>Mental health issues</td>
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<td>Substance use</td>
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<td>Cultural and community behaviors that may normalize sexual violence</td>
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Protective Factors

- Engagement with school
- Engagement with pro-social activities outside of school
- Positive relationship with an adult outside of family
- Relationships with pro-social friend group
- Access to food and shelter
- Access to mental health, medical care and substance use treatment
- Cultural and community norms that support safety
We envision a world that is free of violence and one where survivors of trauma will always be supported in their recovery.
Sexual Assault Care is available 24/7 at several area hospitals

- Seattle Children’s, Harborview Medical Center, University of Washington Montlake, Swedish First Hill, Virginia Mason Seattle and Valley Medical Center (HATC coverage)
- Providence Everett
- Tacoma General
- Tele SANE Project
- Care provided by a qualified SANE may be difficult to obtain in smaller communities, particularly for pediatric patients
Process

- Present to an ED to receive care following a sexual assault (less than 120 hours following assault).
- In robust programs, a trained social worker helps assess situation. Medical clearance exam. Consultation with SCAN in many circumstances.
- Law enforcement and CPS are involved.
- SANE is called in to perform exam, collect evidence.
- Follow up care, counseling is provided.
- Covered by Crime Victims Compensation fund.
Exam and Evidence Collection

- No internal exam (no speculum!) is used on a pre-pubertal female.
- Generally, no speculum is used on older patients unless medically indicated.
- Head to toe exam administered in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- Mostly moistened cotton swabs, visual examination and photo documentation as indicated.
- Clothing, urine, blood as indicated.
- Great care is taken to avoid further trauma.
Relationship to Offender: SCH
Risk Factors: SCH

- Substance Use: 17%
- Mental Health Condition: 34%
- Homeless: 4%

MH + SU = 13%
MH + H = 1%
SU + H = 1%
MH + SU + H = 0%
Relationship to Offender: All Sites
Risk Factors: All Sites

- Substance Use: 70%
- Mental Health Condition: 94%
- Homeless: 47%

MH + SU = 52%
MH + H = 37%
SU + H = 25%
MH + S + H = 21%
Indicators of Possible Trafficking

- Unexplained injuries (black eyes, unexplained bruises, hickies)
- Evidence of controlling or dominating relationships, especially with an older partner
- Unusual items of value showing up without explanation
- Signs a teen may be lying about their age
- Secrecy about whereabouts
- Frequent STIs
Trafficked Teens

- May still be living at home
- May still be attending school
- May be someone you know
- Might be waiting for someone to ask the right questions
ALL hospitals with emergency rooms must provide emergency contraception

People of ANY AGE may consent to birth control, abortion and abortion related services and prenatal care.

People 14 and over may consent to tests and treatment for STIs (Public Health SKC will test and treat any age due to mandate to control STIs)

Sexual assault exams are NOT considered part of STI care and legally a guardian must consent, unless a parent is considered non-protective or the teen can be considered a “mature minor.”
Mature Minor Law in WA

- Mature Minor Factors (must meet one or more)
- Freedom from parents or guardian? Lives apart, manages their own affairs?
- Age and maturity? Provides reliable information and makes informed choices.
- Self-supporting? Financially independent.
- Training and experience? Able to make an informed decision about care.
- General conduct as an adult?
### WA State Laws Regarding Consent

**REMEMBER:** Sexual assault is sexual assault no matter the age difference.

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<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Limitation</th>
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<td>Someone 12 and under (less than 2 years age difference)</td>
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<td>Someone 12-13 (less than 3 years age difference)</td>
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<td>Someone 14-15 (less than four years age difference)</td>
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<td>Someone who is 16 may, in most cases, consent to sexual activity with anyone.</td>
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**Caveats:** No sexual contact with someone in authority even if within the age bracket.
How to Help

Understand the teen brain is still developing, and thus more vulnerable to the effects of trauma.

Trauma impacts memory. This affects recall of events and daytime function.

Listen, and let the teen know they can talk to you anytime.

It is ok to let the teen know about resources, but do not force them to seek specific care. KNOW your local resources.

Be honest about your role as a mandated reporter.

Never make assumptions about who gets assaulted and who assaults whom.

Encourage family and friends to care for themselves. Secondary trauma can be overwhelming.

Work to promote a culture that is safe and positive for everyone. Be brave in discussing these issues.
Thank you for your interest and attention!
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