



WSPTA understands that sexual violence impacts students and families, and is a systemic problem needing far more room than one page to address cause, effect and potential “solutions”. As one of our tribal resources explains, “Sexual assault is not an exclusive act of aggression but should be considered as part of a continuum of attitudes, beliefs, and actions that support sexual violence. Sexual violence is an outgrowth of the larger issue of sexism. In order to have an impact on sexual violence, a community must take steps that address smaller issues as they relate to the larger issue.”¹

Background

- In the Washington Healthy Youth Survey, 8% of eighth graders, 15% of tenth graders, and 17% of twelfth graders answered YES to “Have you ever been in a situation where someone made you engage in kissing, sexual touch or intercourse when you did not want to?”²
- Children with disabilities are nearly three times more likely than children without disabilities to be sexually abused. Children with intellectual and mental health disabilities appear to be the most at risk, with 4.6 times the risk of sexual abuse as their peers without disabilities.³
- Domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and children. In 2012, the largest subpopulation of homeless persons in Washington state was victims of domestic violence.⁴
- Most young people have never spoken with their parents or educators about “being sure your partner wants to have sex and is comfortable doing so before having sex” (61%) and “the importance of not pressuring someone to have sex with you” (56%) or “the importance of not continuing to ask someone to have sex after they have said no” (62%) or “too intoxicated to make a decision” (57%).⁵
- The effects of sexual assault can last a lifetime, rippling out to family members, school and work, communities and down through generations.^{6,7}
- Current data indicates that one out of three girls/women WILL be raped in Washington during their lifetime. Women aged 18-24 experience higher rates of sexual assault than any other age group.⁸

Proposed Solutions

WSPTA shall initiate, partner and/or support legislation or policies that:

1. Recognize the need for **gender bias and consent education** from numerous sectors of the state and its communities, beginning at an early age.^{9,10,11}
2. **Prioritize victim-based services**; and place the financial, judicial and consent burden on the perpetrator, without questioning sexual history or victim blaming.^{12,13}
3. Include training on the **responsibilities of Washington’s higher learning institutions and the rights of victims under Title IX**.¹⁴
4. Develop **strategies that focus on promoting social norms, teaching skills to prevent sexual violence**. Provide opportunities, both economic and social, to empower and support girls and women, while encouraging boys and men to demystify toxic masculinity.^{15,16}

For More Information

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Citations

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**For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our website (www.wastatepta.org)*