



# **“Sexual Assault in the Deaf Community”**

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# Stephanie Smith Bowman



- ❖ CHOICES for Victims of Domestic Violence
- ❖ Psychotherapist: 2011-2013
- ❖ Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio
- ❖ Advocate: 2005-2011
- ❖ Co-Founder of Ohio Alliance To End Sexual Violence
- ❖ Official 501c3 status: 2009
- ❖ Website: [www.oaesv.org](http://www.oaesv.org)



# Learning Objective

- ❖ Increase Awareness on Sexual Assault Within Deaf Community





# Sexual Violence



❖ Sexual violence is a socially constructed problem that we can deconstruct.

❖ Credit: Jennifer Grove, of NSVRC





# Definition of Sexual Violence

❖ Sexual assault is any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs **without explicit consent** of recipient.

❖ <http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/sexassault.h>

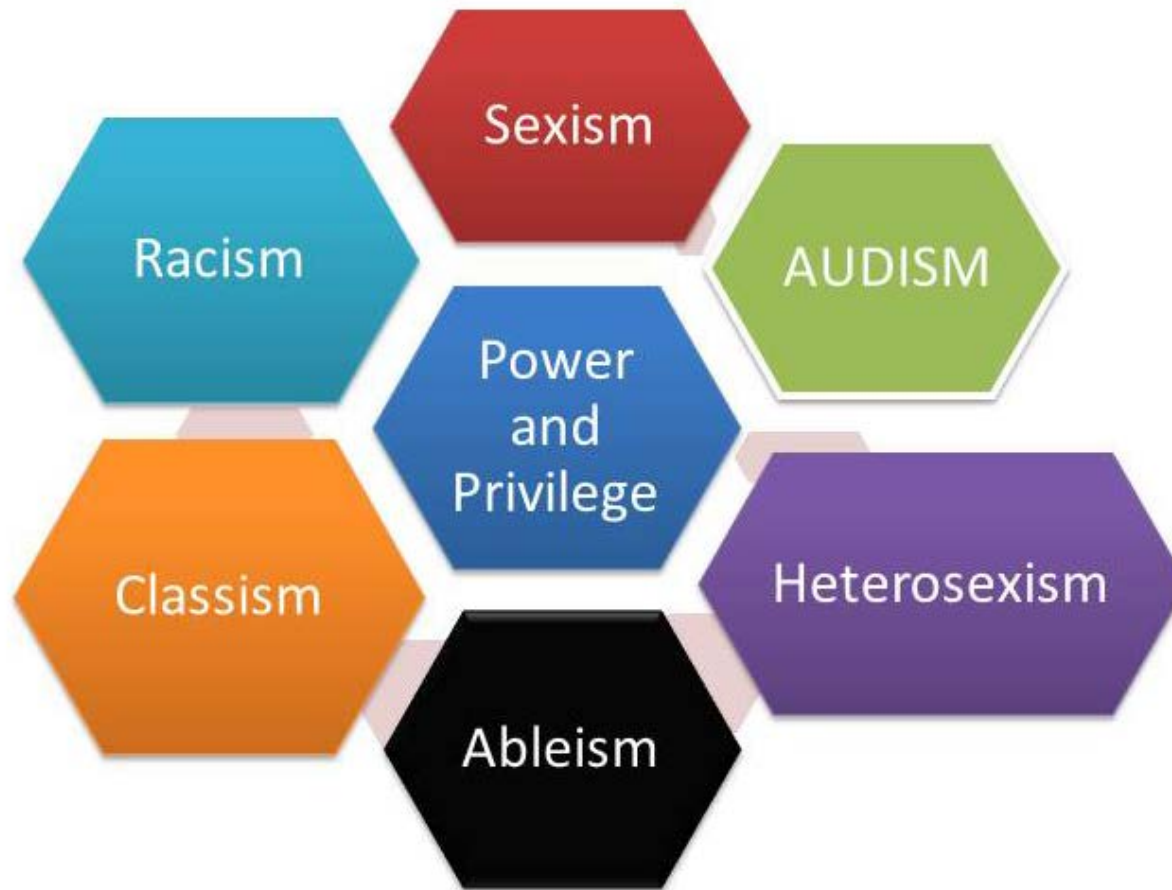
- ❖ Completed non-consensual sex act
- ❖ Attempted non-consensual sex act
- ❖ Abusive sexual contact
- ❖ Non-contact sexual abuse

❖ <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/sexualviolence/definitions.htm>





# Root of Sexual Violence: Gender inequality & Oppression





# Norms that contribute to Sexual Violence

Power & Control

Limited Roles for Women

Narrow definitions  
of masculinity

Prison of Protection

Violence

❖ Credit: Jennifer Grove, of NSVRC



# Prison of Protection = AUDISM

- ❖ Deaf students get sexuality information more often from:
  - ❖ 1). Friends (85 % vs. 67%)
  - ❖ 2). Workshops (40% vs. 9%)
  - ❖ 2). Posters (30 % vs. 18%)
- ❖ 7 times more likely to learn from one another than formal educational resources.
- ❖ 25% awareness of sexuality information comparable to hearing peers' full knowledge.



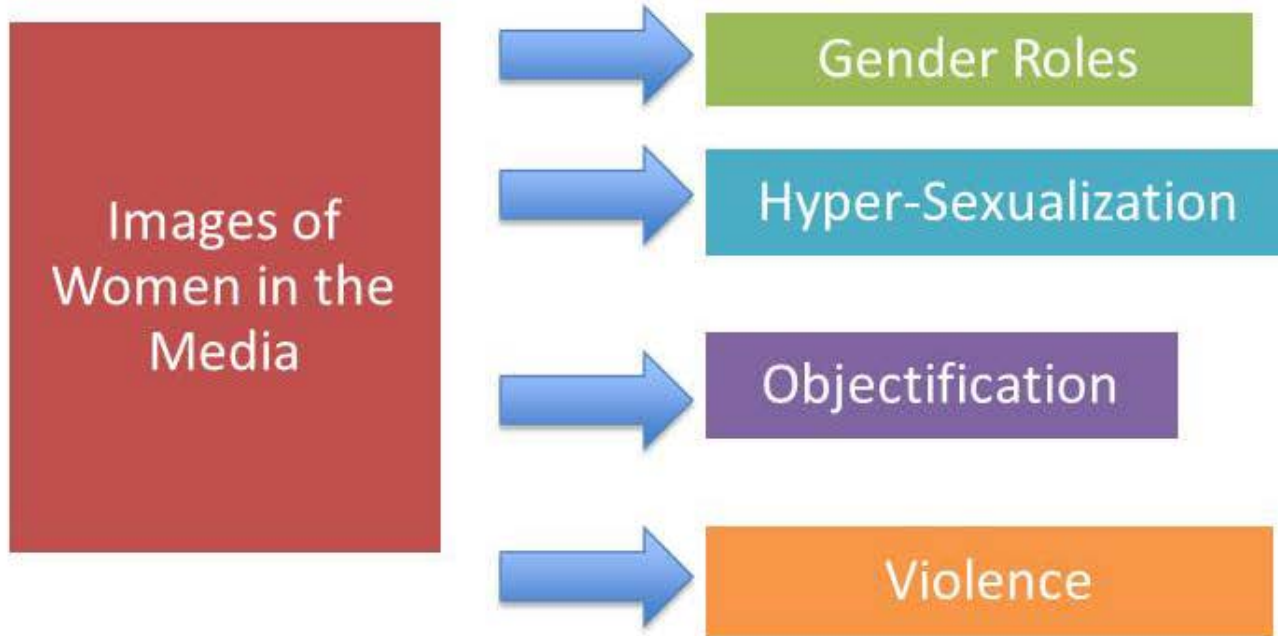
(Francavillo, 2009)



# Incidental learning: Relationships and Sex?



# Images of Women in the Media leads to Violence Against Women



❖ Credit: Jasmine Finnie, OAESV

# Impact of Media Images= RAPE CULTURE



❖ Credit: Jasmine Finnie, OAESV



## Impact of Rape Culture on Deaf Community

- Deaf Hope's Video: "[A Teen Girl's Story: Rape Culture Nurtured at Home](#)"
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlcAfXcPegtI>

- Deaf Hope's Video: "[Why is Shoshannah Stern pissed off?](#)"
- [http://youtu.be/Jel\\_9dMrOWs](http://youtu.be/Jel_9dMrOWs)





# Prevalence of Sexual Assault

- ❖ Deaf women were **3.66 times** more likely than hearing women to report experiences of unwanted sex by intimate partner.



- ❖ (Anderson, 2010)

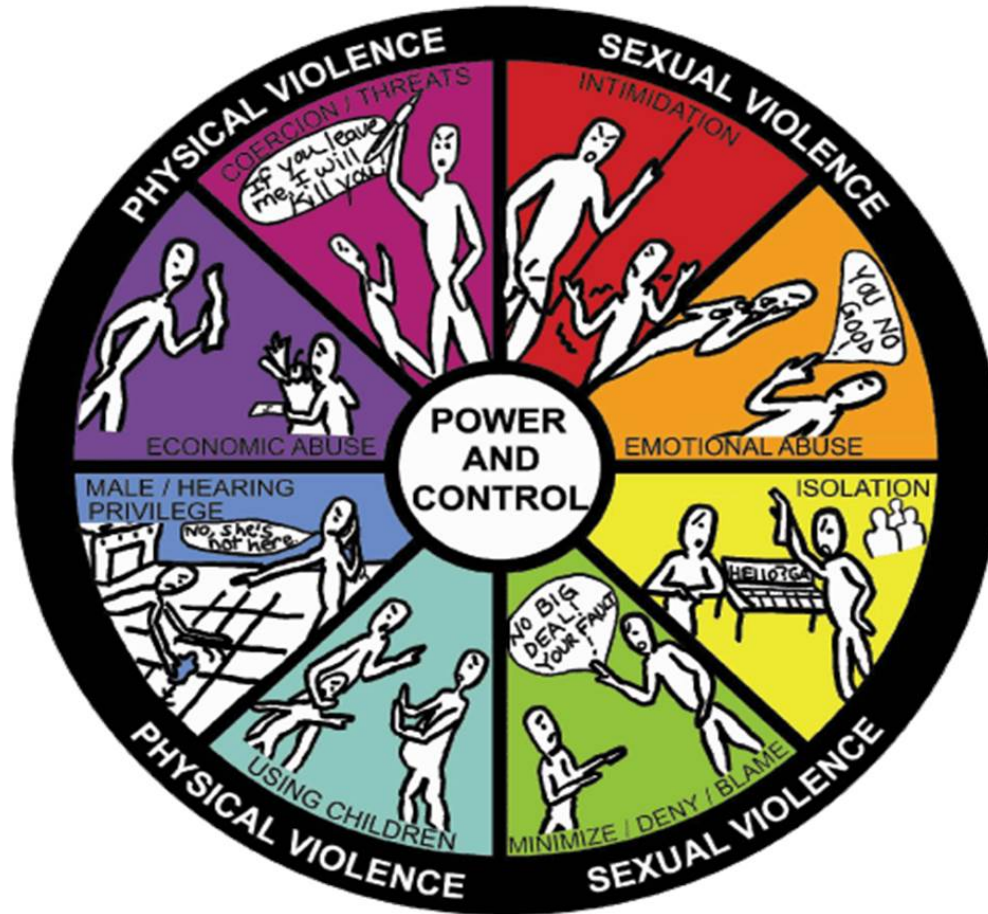
# Who are the perpetrators?

- Deaf children were more likely to be abused by hearing people than by other deaf people.

Hester, 2002



# Sexual Violence Within Deaf Community



❖ Credit: Deaf Hope, 2007



# Exercise: SV Continuum within Deaf Community







# Culture of Silence



- ❖ Reputation and Credibility
- ❖ Perpetrator's Community Standing
- ❖ Stigma
- ❖ Loyalty to Deaf Community
- ❖ Interfaith expectations

# Barriers to Reporting Sexual Assault

“Lack of certified and/or qualified ASL interpreters results in diminished ability to report violence and gain proper understanding of legal rights and processes.” - Anderson, 2010





# ASL

THAT MAN COME INTO MY  
HOUSE. ME ASLEEP, WAKE  
UP SEX. PUSH HIM OFF  
DON'T STOP. DARK IN  
HOUSE CAN'T UNDERSTAND  
HIM, MAD. SCARED. HE LEFT.



# English

A man broke into my house while I was asleep. I woke up to find him having sex with me. I tried over and over again to push him off but he wouldn't stop. It was dark in the house, so I couldn't see him clearly to read his lips but could tell he was angry.

I was terrified. He finally left.

❖ Credit: Gretchen Waech



## Interpreter & Survivor Dynamics



- ❖ Reliance on interpreters also means giving up privacy and sharing intimate details of your life with a stranger.
- ❖ Deaf women also indicated they do not have confidence in interpreters to accurately represent their words and experience.

❖ (Obinna,et.al., 2005)



# Empowerment Advocacy for Deaf Survivors of Sexual Assault



## Hospital: Emergency Room

- Culturally Specific Advocate
- Trauma Informed Interpreter
- SANE/DNA Evidence Collection Kit
- Social Worker's Discharge and Safety Planning



## Law Enforcement Interview

- Culturally Specific Advocate
- Trauma Informed Interpreter: Finding Words EAW
- Victims' Rights: Breaks and Review Initial Report
- Crime Victims Compensation Program



## Civil and Criminal Justice Processes

- Protection Orders
  - Victim Witness Advocate
  - Prosecutors
- 



# Culturally Empowering Trauma Informed Advocacy



# Culturally Affirming Empowerment Advocacy

- ❖ Deaf survivor of sexual violence is the EXPERT on their justice, safety, and healing needs.





# Your Next Steps?

- ❖ Who will you collaborate with?
- ❖ What prevention/intervention/outreach strategies to share with your collaborative partner?
- ❖ Partnering on OVW grant for culturally specific local-based or statewide anti-SV program?



# National Advocacy Services for Deaf Survivors of SA



**Justice for Deaf Victims**  
National Coalition

- ❖ [ADWAS](http://www.adwas.org) www.adwas.org (Washington State)
- ❖ [Advocacy Services for Abused Deaf Victims, Inc.](http://www.asadv.org) www.asadv.org (New York)
- ❖ [Deaf Iowans Against Abuse](http://www.csddiaa.org) www.csddiaa.org (Iowa)
- ❖ [Communication Services for the Deaf](http://www.c-s-d.org) www.c-s-d.org (Minnesota)
- ❖ [Deaf Dawn](http://www.deafdawn.org) www.deafdawn.org (Washington DC)
- ❖ [Deaf Dove](http://www.deafdove.org) www.deafdove.org (Colorado)
- ❖ [DeafHope](http://www.deaf-hope.org) www.deaf-hope.org (California)
- ❖ [Deaf Unity](http://www.deafunitywi.org) www.deafunitywi.org (Wisconsin)
- ❖ [Deaf Vermonters Advocacy Services](http://www.dvas.org) www.dvas.org (Vermont)
- ❖ [Safe Place](http://www.safe-place.org) www.safe-place.org (Texas)
- ❖ [Sego Lily Center for the Abused Deaf](http://www.slcad.org) www.slcad.org (Utah)



## Resources on working with Deaf survivors of SA

- ❖ Accessing Safety Initiative form with sample questions Author: Vera Institute of Justice
- ❖ Website: [www.accessingsafety..org](http://www.accessingsafety..org)
- ❖ SafePlace Facts and Tip Sheet
- ❖ Website: [www.safeplace.org](http://www.safeplace.org)
- ❖ Special Collections: Deaf Survivors
- ❖ Website: [www.vawnet.org](http://www.vawnet.org)





# Contact Information

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❖ Thank you for participating in  
today's workshop!

