

RSAC

IS A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER THAT
DISCUSSES A VARIETY OF TOPICS
DEALING WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT AND
ABUSE AND HOW TO SUPPORT
SURVIVORS.

January 2019

RSAC

Issue: Sexual Arousal and Sexual Abuse



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Happy New Year Everyone!

Welcome to 2019!

I hope that everyone was able to do some self-care, appreciate time spent with family, and enjoy the holidays!

We are demonstrating our "New Year New Me" mentality with the implementation of our new monthly newsletter at RSAC. The newsletter will feature the good work that our staff are doing within the community, upcoming events, exciting news, and a portion that focuses on a specific topic with interpersonal violence and helpful notes for survivors of this type of violence.

The newsletter will be sent to volunteers, staff, clients and other community-based organizations to create networks of support for individuals who have experienced sexual violence, and the agencies that support them.

Please feel free to submit feedback, or suggestions for topics around sexual violence that you would like to see covered in future RSAC Newsletters to kristin.rsac@sasktel.net with the subject line RSAC newsletter!

What We Have Been Up To

Let's start with September!

On September 11th the Annual General Meeting was held to review a successful year for RSAC. Kristina Kaminski will remain our president, with only a few minor changes to the Board.

Staff members have also begun, and tackled, a full day of policy planning to better serve our clients and community.

Kids on The Block has officially started up with tons of requests for presentations from us! In fact, 50+!! This means we are always appreciative of extra help from volunteer in assisting this program!

We also welcome our very own volunteer, Morgan, to RSAC as she will be completing her social work practicum with us until December!

October was an extremely busy month for us in terms of being out in the community!

October 13th/25th- First Responder training for SaskHealth Authority nursing staff

October 18th/19th- First Responder Course in MJ

October 16th- Sask Polytech Health Fair

October 16/17th - Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan Fall Member Gathering in Regina

What We Have Been Up To

October 19th- Power of You Youth Conference: Brennan and Amanda S. presented on topics such as rape culture, consent, and messages that media portrays.

October 19 - Staff and community partner presented at the RESOLVE Research Day

October 22 - 25 - Tad Milmine, of Bullying Ends Here, supported by the Kids on the Block program, presentations in 7 Regina schools

October 24th- U of R Volunteer Fair

October 31st - Hospital Tour Training @ General

The Kids on the Block program is in full swing! If any individuals are interested in presenting to elementary level children on topics such as personal safety, bullying and abuse prevention volunteer with KOTB!

November 14th- C.O.A.S.T. presentation 10 AM

November 20th- Staff presentation at Eden Care Communities Lutheran Home about Trauma Informed Care

November 28th- Maternal Mental Health Workshop

December 4th- Lunch'n'Learn about our organization at Sask Polytech

RESOLVE Research Day

Sarah and Kate (along with our partner, Sara Beckel, Doula and founder of Family First Maternal Wellness Centre) presented information on the intersection between survivors of sexual violence and maternal mental health risks for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMAD). The presentation also outlined a two-pronged approach to addressing the need for greater awareness of PMAD and the specific risks for survivors of sexual violence. Building off of our learning at the Maternal Mental Health conference in May of 2018 (hosted by the Saskatchewan Health Authority), we proposed a short-term workshop to equip soon-to-be-moms with self-care, self-compassion, and mindfulness skills, and a long-term therapeutic group intervention to provide psycho-education about trauma, affect-regulation, and attachment needs of infants. The ultimate goal is to engage in interventions that will mitigate the effects of intergenerational trauma.

Eden Care Trauma-Informed Educational Training

Sarah and Kate offered two, 45 minute educational training sessions to a total of 20 care aides and administrators at the Eden Care Communities Lutheran Home in Regina. The training was intended to provide an overview of the prevalence of trauma in seniors (65+), and the importance of shifting perceptions of trauma responses from "maladaptive behaviours" to "creative coping", while recognizing the coping strategies have been effective in the past, are automatic, and the normal result of traumatic experiences. Strategies for addressing triggers and shaping more helpful behaviours were offered. Recommendations were made about taking a trauma history when possible and approaching elders from a strengths-based perspective.

Maternal Mental Health Workshop

Sarah and Kate (hosted by Sara Beckel at the Family First Maternal Wellness Centre) will be offering a monthly 1-hour workshop to moms-to-be addressing overall wellness approaches through mindfulness, self-compassion, and self-care activities. In the context of the known risk of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (1 in 5 women), we are offering this workshop to begin skill-building before the baby is born. The hope is to flag at-risk moms, and especially, for the longer-term, at risk survivors of sexual violence so that more psycho-education and supports can be offered down the road (ie: the second prong of our proposal from the RESOLVE conference).

It Couldn't Have Been Abuse Part 1: Sexual Arousal Nonconcordance

It couldn't have been abuse, I became wet. When an individual's body expresses stimulation in response to sexual abuse, it can be very difficult and confusing. The reaction conveys pleasure and enjoyment that leave conflicting thoughts and feelings about whether they had really been subjected to sexual abuse since their body said otherwise. Stimulation to sexual activity can express pleasure, but can also be independently attributed to human biology without the pleasure concept. The reality is your body is reacting the way it was designed to act in response to sexual stimulation (Sexual Arousal & Sexual Assault, 2009). Take into consideration the interrelationship of your brain and your neurons. The brain's reward centre is made up of three similar, but different systems: liking, wanting and learning. Pavlov's classical conditioning is an example of the separateness from wanting, liking and learning. Pavlov demonstrates over time that the association of a food stimulus with a bell stimulus can create a learned response such as salivating to only the bell stimuli. Just because the dog is responding to the bell, does not mean that the dog wants or likes the bell. This can be compared to the biological response to sex-related stimuli. Research has proven that blood flow to the genital area may increase when subjected to a sexual stimulus. "Genital responses mean it was a sex-related stimulus; it does not mean it was wanted or liked, and it certainly does not mean it was consented to" (Nagoski, 2018).

Resources

Nagoski, Emily. "The Truth about Unwanted Arousal." TED: Ideas Worth Spreading, www.ted.com/talks/emily_nagoski_the_truth_about_unwanted_arousal?language=en.

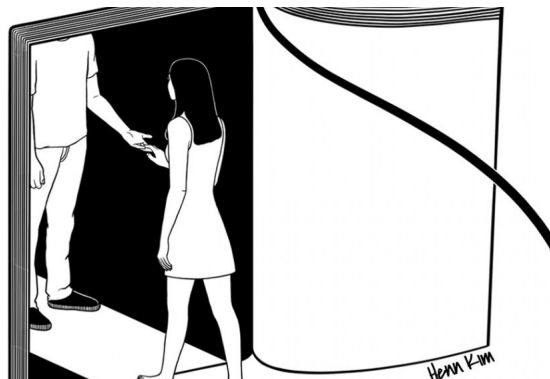
Sexual Arousal & Sexual Assault. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://pandys.org/articles/arousalandassault.html>

Helpful notes on unwanted sexual arousal:

- Sexual arousal does not convey consent
- Sexual arousal is a biological response to sexual stimuli that is completely normal
- This is common for some, but not all occurrences of sexual abuse
- We are socialized to understand sexual stimulation as pleasure, therefore when our body becomes stimulated in an undesirable situation, we believe that deep down we are "broken" or "messed up"
- If you experience physical responses, it does not automatically express desire or mutuality
- Use Pavlov and his examples of classical conditioning to put in it perspective



illustrations done by Henn Kim



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