

**PASSAIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE**  
**SEXUAL ASSAULT EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY**



The Passaic County Prosecutor's Office (PCPO), under the leadership of Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes, is dedicated to continuing to provide community outreach events to the residents of Passaic County. Specifically, the Passaic County Sexual Investigations, Special Victims and Domestic Violence Units are committed to bringing educational forums regarding sexual assault to its schools, colleges and community centers. The goal is to educate the community, specifically our teenagers and young adults, about the sexual assault laws, how to report an incident of sexual assault, and what services are available to a sexual assault survivor for her/his health and protection.

**Past Practices**

PCPO has presented for the past ten years to schools, colleges and community centers on the topic of sexual assault, as well as dating violence, cyberstalking, the dangers of sexting, internet safety, and bystander mentality. These presentations have been held for an audience of students, faculty, law enforcement and the community. In our presentations we define these respective crimes, and all related crimes and offenses, in relevant language for our target audience. Our forums are designed to promote healthy discussions about intimate partner relationships while explaining how certain intimate conduct, without affirmative consent of one's partner, can result in criminal charges.

During the fall of 2018, in conjunction with the annual Domestic Violence mandatory law enforcement trainings, PCPO presented a segment entitled "Sexual Assault Investigations 101" to municipal, county and university police officers. The training consisted of basic steps on how to conduct a sexual assault investigation from the initial disclosure to completion. The continuous theme highlighted the need to treat alleged victims with patience, compassion and respect.

In May of 2019, PCPO participated in the "Arrive Alive Senior Assembly" at Lakeland Regional High School, which included a presentation on the concept of date rape to a class of 250 graduating seniors and faculty. With the support of the local school administration and law enforcement, PCPO helped bring a timely message to the graduating class regarding intimate partner relationships prior to students embarking on prom, graduation and college. The discussion included how an intoxicated person, whether due to alcohol or drug use, is incapable of providing consent to engage in consensual sexual relations.

## Educational Plan

To further our community outreach commitment, PCPO is planning to expand its educational efforts to bring more sexual assault forums to high school and college students. The goal will be to raise student awareness about sexual violence and educate them on how to prevent it. PCPO intends on holding events at Montclair State University, William Paterson University and Passaic County Community College during Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April of 2020. The target audiences will be smaller groups that include fraternities, sororities, sports teams and other clubs and organizations. Forums will be conducted by assistant prosecutors, detectives, and victim advocates specifically trained in sexual assault investigations and prosecutions. This proactive response to the topic of sexual assault is designed to promote candid discussions amongst attendees in an informal setting.

The forum's objective will be to empower all persons, who are seeking to be sexually active with another, to obtain consent first. The presentations will illustrate how asking for consent must always be the norm. **"Consent First"** will be explained to be the rule, as opposed to the exception, when engaging in sexual conduct. It will be both clarified and underscored that consent is a necessary part of a healthy sexual encounter that allows two people to engage in permissible conduct. False perceptions of male and female roles, including men acting as the aggressor and women being submissive, will be discussed in detail. Furthermore, services for survivors, including Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) activation, reporting confidentiality and victim's rights will be explained.

PCPO will continue its **"Consent First"** message by presenting to high school students, faculty, and law enforcement throughout the year at events to be determined. We are confident that these forums will better serve the immediate and long term needs of sexual assault survivors while further educating the public on preventative measures.