

# ADOLESCENT SEXUAL COERCION FACT SHEET

*“Sexual coercion is the act of persuading or coercing a minor into engaging in an unwanted sexual activity through physical force, threat of physical force, or emotional manipulation. It differs from rape in that the coerced individual consents to the sexual activity for a variety of reasons. The coerced individual feels it is easier to consent to sexual activity than decline due to an imbalance of power. Coercive situations may not be obvious, even to the coerced individual.*

*Many young girls consent to sex without thinking they have a choice, often due to age and inexperience. Coercive situations may use threats, humiliation, and anger as means to convince a partner to consent to sexual behavior. The coerced individual often consents to the activity because she does not feel she is able to say “no” and have that decision be respected.” (3)*

Adolescents with a history of sexual abuse are five times more likely to report coercive sex with a friend or date than their nonabused peers. (1)

Among students who reported that they had sex before age 15, 41.5% of females reported being forced to have sex compared to 5.5% of males. (2)

Students ever forced to have sex were significantly less likely to use condoms and had lower protective factors including parents’ knowledge of activities and connections to school and community. (2)

Students who first had sex before age 15 were seven times more likely to report being forced to have sex as students who first had sex after age 15. (2)

Sexual pressure behaviors and tactics create or enhance power differences. Power differences increase the likelihood of unwanted sex and unhealthy relationships. (2)

Sexually active 11<sup>th</sup> grade students were nearly 4 times more likely to have been hit by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past year and more than twice as likely to have been harassed with unwanted sexual attention or due to perceived sexual orientation. (2)

If one partner performs a sexual act that is not pleasurable or that crosses a boundary the other has set, the probability of further violation is very strong. There may be some shame in discussing this. (3)

Any time that a partner refers to women in a derogatory way, judges women, uses disturbing language about women or views violent or degrading pornography, young women should be suspicious. (3)

# 2007 Oregon Healthy Teens Survey Results

“During the past 12 months, did your boyfriend or girlfriend ever hit, slap, or physically hurt you on purpose?”

11<sup>th</sup> grade “Yes” 10.5% Sexually active 2.9% Not sexually active

“During the past 30 days, have you ever been harassed at school (or on the way to or from school) with unwanted sexual comments or attention?”

11<sup>th</sup> grade “Yes” 10.5% Sexually active 6.2% Not sexually active

“During the past 30 days, have you ever been harassed at school (or on the way to or from school) because someone thought you were gay, lesbian, or bisexual?”

11<sup>th</sup> grade “Yes” 5.1% Sexually active 3.8% Not sexually active

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“Have you ever given in to sexual activity when you didn’t want to because of pressure?”

11<sup>th</sup> grade “Yes” 21.4% Females 6.7% Males

“Have you ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse when you did not want to?”

11<sup>th</sup> grade “Yes” 9.1% Females 3.2% Males

“During your life, has any adult ever had sexual contact with you?”

11<sup>th</sup> grade “Yes” 12.4% Females 5.9% Males

“During the past 12 months, did your boyfriend or girlfriend ever hit, slap, or physically hurt you on purpose?”

11<sup>th</sup> grade “Yes” 6.2% Females 6.6% Males

“During your life, has any adult ever intentionally hit or physically hurt you?”

11<sup>th</sup> grade “Yes” 30.3% Females 28.0% Males

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(1) Abbey A, Zawacki T, Buck PO, et al. *Alcohol and sexual assault*. Alcohol Res Health. 2001; 25:43-51

(2) Oregon Department of Human Services, Center for Health Statistics, *Oregon Health Trends*; Series No. 60; September 2003

(3) *Preventing Sexual Coercion Among Adolescents: A Training Guide for the Family Planning Provider*, Emory University Regional Training Center 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition - 2003

January 2008