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Discussing rape and sexual assault with young people – a literature review.

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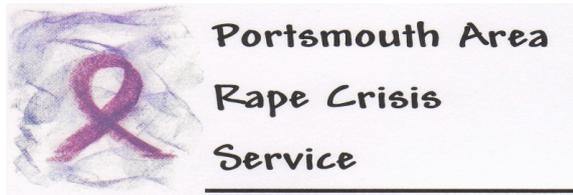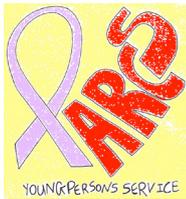A report produced by

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On behalf of

Portsmouth Area
Rape Crisis
Service

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1. Introduction

Portsmouth Area Rape Crisis (PARCS) is a charity based in Portsmouth that offers advice and support to victims of rape, sexual assault, and sexual abuse. As part of its youth service, PARCS delivers outreach sessions to local young people on issues around relationships, sex, consent, and rape. These sessions aim to educate young people about the law and to challenge some of the myths surrounding rape and sexual assault.

In 2008/2009 PARCS delivered outreach sessions to 1,609 young people, the majority of whom were aged 12 to 16 and attending secondary schools in the area.

This literature review was commissioned to assess the extent to which the youth outreach work at PARCS was up to date with the research literature. Any recommendations from the literature review were to be used to improve the work undertaken by PARCS and inform an additional study into the impact of the organisation's youth outreach work.

2. Method

The type of literature review conducted was a rapid evidence assessment. This is a time-efficient and cost-effective way to conduct a systematic search and evaluation of the research literature. Rapid evidence assessments are designed to be transparent and replicable. Information is provided on the sources that are searched and the criteria for including articles in the review. This information enables the reader to assess the quality and the limitations of the review itself.

Rapid evidence assessments also evaluate research articles that are retrieved in the search. Evaluation criteria include the relevance of any article to the research topic for the review, and the quality of the research conducted in the article. This process of evaluation enables anyone reading the review to assess both the quantity and the quality of the research before drawing any conclusions from the material.

The criteria used to select and sort articles according to their relevance are illustrated in table 1.

Primary articles most closely reflected the work carried out by PARCS and included a strong research design. Any primary articles identified were evaluated on their quality and used as the main basis for producing recommendations for PARCS.

Secondary articles had a looser association with the work carried out by PARCS and may have had a weaker research design. These articles were considered to be useful for PARCS to refer to, but were unlikely to be of adequate quality or relevance to form the basis of any recommendations.

Tertiary articles were papers that failed to meet the previous criteria but were considered to be of some relevance to PARCS. Typically tertiary articles were theoretical papers that contained no evaluation of an intervention or review of the literature, but had potentially useful information for PARCS.

Table 1: Criteria for inclusion of research articles in the literature review

	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Date of publication	1990 onwards	1990 onwards	No criteria
Language	English	English	English
Age range of participants	12 – 16 (secondary school age)	0 – 11 (primary school age) or 17 – 25 (university age)	No criteria
Intervention	Interventions clearly aimed at rape or sexual assault.	Interventions associated with rape but not focused solely on rape, e.g. domestic violence or relationships.	Related to rape and sexual assaults.
Outcome measure used	Direct measure of impact on rape or sexual assault – the paper reports on incident level of rape, changes in risk factors, or disclosure rates.	Indirect measure of impact on rape or sexual assault – paper reports on awareness, attitudes, use of support service, skills, etc.	No criteria
Research design	Use of a control group as part research design.	Use of pre- and post-intervention comparisons but no control group used.	No criteria

The process of the review

The first stage of the literature review involved searching electronic databases for relevant articles. The databases used were: Criminal Justice Abstracts, National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), PsychInfo, Social Services Abstracts, Sociology Abstracts, and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) online library.

To ensure a systematic search of the literature a record was kept of all searches, including a list of search terms, databases, and search results. When a relevant article was identified a record was made of the author and the publication details of the article. A copy of the abstract was recorded for every article selected for inclusion in the review, and where possible an electronic copy of the article was saved.

When searches of the databases failed to identify any new articles, key articles were selected for further investigation. These further investigations included searching the reference section of the article for any other relevant research, and conducting a 'cited by' search of the article to examine how many times it had been referenced by others since its publication and whether any of these more recent articles were of relevance.

In total 121 pieces of literature were recorded as part of this review. None of these were identified as primary articles, 112 were identified as secondary articles, and nine were identified as tertiary articles. The following section will discuss the findings from the literature review.

3. Results

What characteristics does the body of research have?

Despite searching thousands of articles the current literature review failed to identify any primary articles. This suggests a lack of high-quality published research in the area. In order to get a better picture of the research that was available, table 2 illustrates some of the defining characteristics of the articles that were retrieved.

Table 2: Characteristics of the articles

Country or origin	Number	% of total
Argentina	1	0.9
Canada	10	9.0
China	2	1.7
Germany	1	0.9
Holland	3	2.5
New Zealand	1	0.9
United Kingdom	2	1.7
United States of America	93	82.0

Type of article	Number	% of total
Development of a questionnaire	3	3
Evaluation of a programme	60	54
Literature review	37	33
Survey of attitudes or intentions	11	10

Outcome measure used in evaluations	Number	% of total
Behavioural outcome	4	7
Attitude or knowledge	54	93

Age of population in evaluations	Number	% of total
0 – 11	17	30
12 – 16	8	14
17 – 25	32	55
25+	1	1

Control group used in evaluation?	Number	% of total
Yes	36	67
No	18	33

Follow up used in evaluation?	Number	% of total
Yes	24	44
No	30	56

Sample size in evaluations	Number	% of total	Accumulative % total
0 – 100	12	22	22
100 – 200	15	27	49
200 – 300	6	11	60
300 – 400	9	16	76
400 – 500	2	4	80
500 – 1000	5	9	89
1000+	6	11	100

As table 2 illustrates, the vast majority (82%) of the articles were published by academics working in the USA. Only two articles were published by academics working in the UK, with only one of these being an evaluation of a UK-based programme. This UK-based programme (Warden, 1997) was conducted with 6 to 10 year-olds and focused on bullying, abduction, and child sexual abuse (CSA).

Approximately half (54%) of the articles were evaluations of interventions whereas a third of the articles were literature reviews. The fact that there are 37 literature reviews and only 60 evaluations indicates that the field needs more evaluations of programmes rather than reviews of evaluations of programmes.

Looking at the quality of the evaluations the majority (67%) of studies used a control group as part of the research design. This indicates that efforts were made to isolate the impact of the programme from other factors. Almost half of the studies (44%) assessed the longer-term impact of programmes by including a follow-up measure as part of the research design.

A significant weakness of the vast majority of the evaluations (93%) was the use of non-behavioural outcome measures. Typically these studies measured changes in attitudes or knowledge following a programme rather than measuring behavioural outcomes such as the incidence of rape. With a lack of studies that use behavioural outcomes it is not possible to assess the extent to which scores on these questionnaires are associated with changes in behaviour. In other words, the value of these studies is dependent on the accuracy of the questionnaires used, but for most studies there is no way to assess this accuracy.

Over half of the evaluations (55%) were conducted on university-age participants. This likely reflects the ease with which academic researchers can access undergraduate students, and the mandatory nature of rape interventions in US college campuses (Morrison, Hardison, Matthew & O'Neil, 2004). The heavy focus on this age range limits the extent to which the current literature is directly applicable to PARCS, which generally focuses on 12 to 16 year-olds. The main age range for the youth outreach work at PARCS receives the smallest amount of attention from the research literature, with only 14% of evaluations being conducted with participants of this age.

In summary, the amount of literature available is small and dominated by research studies looking at attitude change among US undergraduate students. The quality of the literature is limited by an over-reliance on un-validated non-behavioural outcome measures. The extent to which the literature can be directly applied to the outreach work at PARCS is limited by the lack of studies looking at the 12 to 16 age group.

What are the findings of the current literature?

If any primary articles had been identified during this review they would have been evaluated for their quality here, and recommendations for PARCS would have been drawn from them in the conclusion of this report. A lack of primary articles means that this section will discuss the research findings from the secondary and tertiary papers retrieved.

As with this literature review, the majority of authors who have reviewed the literature in this area conclude that there is a lack of high-quality evaluation studies (e.g. Adair, 2006; Barron & Topping, 2008; Breitenbacher, 2000; Morrison, et al., 2004; Schewe, 2002). When reviewing the literature most authors conclude that programmes are able to demonstrate improvement in knowledge or attitudes (Barron & Topping, 2008; Morrison et al., 2004). However, some authors note that the improvement is limited and that given the publication bias for positive results the evidence for the impact of programmes is underwhelming (Brietenbecher, 2000). As well as improving knowledge or attitudes, some authors note other positive side-effects of programmes, such as increases in confidence and assertiveness, and a reduction in social anxiety (Barron & Topping, 2008). Negative effects of programmes include increases in anxiety, dependence, fear of strangers, aggression, embarrassment, wariness of touch, and a false sense of control (Barron & Topping, 2008).

Despite a general conclusion that programmes can improve attitudes and knowledge, none of the reviewers were able to identify a link between programme outcomes and a reduction in incidents of sexual assault (Barron & Topping, 2008; Bolen, 2003; Morrison et al., 2004). This most likely reflects the difficulty in gaining access to data on sexual assault and the lack of a theoretical link between the programmes and a reduction in sexual assault.

Rather than being based on a theory of change that explains the link between knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, most programmes assume that participants lack knowledge, and that an increase in knowledge will lead to a reduction in rape and sexual assault (Barron & Topping, 2008; Morrison et al., 2004). However, Schewe (2002) concludes that the clearest message from the literature is that knowledge-based programmes are rarely effective in reducing the risk or incidence of rape. Most authors call for a greater use of theory in rape prevention or rape awareness interventions (e.g. Morrison et al., 2004; Schewe, 2002; Yeater & O'Donohue, 1999), as programmes that do contain theory are shown to be more effective (Schewe, 2002).

Current theories on sexual abuse focus on the deviant arousal of the sexual offender, the offender's rape-supportive beliefs, and the offender's lack of empathy with the victim as the causes of their sexual offending (Yeater & O'Donohue, 1999). The theoretical development in this area is based on research with successfully prosecuted sex offenders. A programme based on these theories would likely focus on challenging rape-supportive attitudes and increasing empathy amongst participants, as research indicates that sex offenders have deficits in these areas (Schewe, 2002).

Some authors, such as Bolen (2003), are concerned about the lack of understanding about sex offenders who never come to the attention of the criminal justice system. These offenders commit crimes which are either never reported to the police or have insufficient evidence for a successful prosecution. As it is estimated that only 11% of sexual offences are reported to the police, and only 6% of these continue to a successful prosecution (Stern, 2010), these offenders represent the vast majority of sexual offenders. It is likely that theories of how to prevent rape would be different if researchers had access to all sex offenders as opposed to only those offenders who are successfully prosecuted. For example, Bolen suggests that a common type of adolescent sex offender may offend for sport or as a conquest, however a lack of access to undetected offenders limits our ability to theorise in this area (Bolen, 2003).

With regard to theory, the area suffers from a series of assumptions: the assumption that participants lack appropriate knowledge or attitudes; the assumption that improving knowledge and attitudes will result in a reduction in rape; and the assumption that theories of sexual offending based on research with known-offenders provide a complete picture of sexual offending.

4. Conclusion

What guidance does the literature provide for PARCS?

This review has concluded that the majority of the research literature in this area has a limited direct application to the youth outreach work at PARCS. However, there are still a number of ways in which the research literature can provide useful information and guidance.

Target vulnerable groups

The research literature makes recommendations regarding the targeting of programmes. Morrison et al. (2004) recommend that programmes should be delivered to those who are at greater risk of being a victim or perpetrator of abuse. Many of these individuals are likely to be excluded from school and so greater effort is needed to reach them. One group whose members have an elevated risk of being victims of rape and sexual assault are those with disabilities or learning difficulties. Morrison et al. (2004) report that having a disability increases your risk of abuse by four times.

Factors that increase the risk of abuse include higher levels of compliance, poor judgement, lower communication skills, lack of education, lack of preventive skills, abuse-supportive attitudes, and living in an institution. Individuals who are at a higher risk of being a victim or perpetrator of abuse are likely to be at higher risk for other problem behaviours such as drug abuse, alcohol abuse, aggression, and delinquency. Morrison et al. (2004) recommend that agencies combine resources to tackle the common causes of these behaviours with these individuals.

Provide an age-appropriate programme

One issue for PARCS to consider is whether to focus on CSA or rape and sexual assault in their youth outreach work. Barron and Topping (2008) report that 60% of CSA victims are under the age of 12, with the average age for intra-familiar abuse being 10.8 years. Whilst these statistics are based on data from the 1980s they suggest that if PARCS wants to directly reduce the incidence of CSA amongst children they need to work with children who are younger than 10. The literature suggests that when working with children over the age of 12 it is more appropriate to focus on dealing with the impact of having been a victim of CSA, preventing rape and sexual assault, and lowering the impact of rape and sexual assault.

Improve programme delivery

The literature provides guidance on delivering programmes in a way that improves their impact. These recommendations include having a theoretical basis for any programme, targeting individuals with elevated risk, providing multiple sessions, avoiding blame, avoiding a patronising tone, providing multi-contextual examples, considering local needs, focusing on what participants should do rather than what they should not do, and 'exploring' issues rather than 'teaching' issues (Adair, 2006; Barron & Topping, 2008; Morrison et al., 2004; Schewe, 2002). Further details about these recommendations can be found in the appendices of this document.

Consider adopting the 'bystander' approach

A potentially useful approach to programmes is the 'bystander' approach. Banyard, Plante, and Moynihan (2005) suggest that programmes should treat participants as potential bystanders to sexual assault rather than treating participants as potential victims or perpetrators of abuse. According to Banyard et al. the role of the bystander is to speak out against social norms or myths which could support assault, interrupt situations which could lead to assault, and provide effective support to victims of assault (Banyard et al., 2005).

This approach has a number of potential advantages including: avoiding the problem of alienating male participants by treating them as potential perpetrators of assault; helping to engage participants in the programme as the material is seen as personally relevant; and emphasising the wider societal responsibilities around sexual assault. The approach may also be more effective at reducing the incidence and impact of rape and sexual assault, because it is more likely that the victim and perpetrator's peers will be in the proximity of any assault or be the first person a victim speaks to following an assault (Banyard et al., 2005).

Recommendations

Based on these findings this literature review makes the following recommendations for PARCS to consider should it wish to develop its youth outreach work.

1. Have a clear theory regarding the aim of PARCS youth outreach work.

The literature highlights the importance for any programme to have a clear theoretical basis. PARCS needs to consider the aim of its youth outreach work, what the intended outcomes are, and how its work is likely to achieve these outcomes.

2. Improve the effectiveness of the sessions

The literature highlights a number of ways in which PARCS may be able to improve the impact of its youth outreach work. These recommendations include providing multiple sessions; tailoring work to meet local needs; providing young people with clear information, skills, and resources; and focusing on what young people should do rather than what they should not do.

3. Extend the youth outreach work

The literature highlights the additional risk that certain groups of young people face. These include young people with disabilities, learning difficulties, and those excluded from the school system. PARCS needs to consider the extent to which its current youth outreach work reaches these young people and whether additional work with these groups can be undertaken. There is additional guidance from the literature regarding good practice when working with these groups, including co-ordinating with other agencies.

4. Publish research in the area

Having commissioned this literature review and found only one UK-based evaluation of a programme with young people, the challenge to PARCS is to address the lack of research in the area by publishing its own evaluations. PARCS should consider building a research component into any changes it makes to its outreach work with a view to publishing the findings of any evaluation and thus providing an important contribution to the research field. In keeping with the recommendations from this review any evaluation study should be conducted using robust methodology that attempts to accurately isolate and measure the impact of the sessions.

5. References

Adair, J. (2006). The efficacy of sexual violence prevention programs. *Journal of school violence*, 5(2), 87-97.

Banyard, V., Plante, E., & Moynihan, M. (2005). *Rape prevention through bystander education: bringing a broader community perspective to sexual violence prevention* (Report No. 208701). Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

Barron, I., & Topping, K. (2008). School-based child sexual abuse prevention programmes: the evidence on effectiveness. *Journal of Children's Services*, 3(3), 31-53.

Bolen, R. (2003). Child sexual abuse: Prevention or promotion? *Social Work*, 48(2), 174-185.

Breitenbecher, K. (2000). Sexual assault on college campuses: is an ounce of prevention enough? *Applied & Preventive Psychology,* 9, 23-52.

Finkelhor, D. (2007). Prevention of sexual abuse through education programs directed toward children. *Pediatrics,* 120, 640-645.

Morrison, S., Hardison, J., Matthew, A., & O'Neil, J. (2004). *An evidence-based review of sexual assault preventive intervention programs: Technical report.* (Report No. 207262). Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

Schewe, P. (2002). Guidelines for developing rape prevention and risk reduction interventions. In P. Schewe, (Ed.) *Preventing violence in relationships: Interventions across the life span.* (pp. 107-136). Washington: American Psychological Association.

Stern, V. (2010). The Stern Review. [Online]. Available: http://www.equalities.gov.uk/stern_review.aspx [Accessed: 2010, July 19]

Warden, D., Moran, E., Gillies, J., Mayes, G., & Macleod, L. (1997). An evaluation of a children's safety training programme. *Educational Psychology,* 17(4), 433-448.

Yeater, E., & O'Donohue, W. (1999). Sexual assault prevention programs: current issues, future directions, and the potential efficacy of interventions with women. *Clinical Psychology Review,* 19(7), 739-771.

Appendix 1 – Summary of selected articles

Banyard, V., Plante, E., & Moynihan, M. (2005). Rape prevention through bystander education: bringing a broader community perspective to sexual violence prevention (Report No. 208701). Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice

Summary

Considers the theory, rationale, and practice of focusing intervention efforts on 'bystanders' rather than victims or perpetrators of sexual abuse.

Theory

• Banyard et al. promote a 'community responsibility model' which emphasises on everyone's responsibility to challenge sexual abuse. Rather than targeting women as potential victims or abuse, and men as potential perpetrators of abuse, everyone is seen as a potential bystander to abuse and therefore has a role to play. The role of the bystander is to interrupt situations which could lead to assault, speak out against social norms or myths which could support assault, and provide effective support to victims.
• A negative reaction from community members can cause a secondary victimisation and add to the distress of abuse
• Victims are likely to disclose to their friends in the first instance
• Local communities expect Rape Crisis Centres to solely deal with the issue of abuse and consequently absolve the broader community of their responsibilities in relation to abuse
• Participants on programmes are less likely to focus on the material if they feel that the content has no personal relevance to them, consequently a bystander focus is likely to result in greater participant engagement.
• A bystander approach avoids a stance where gender roles and blaming can have a negative impact on the intervention

Recommendations

• Bystander interventions should aim to increase sensitivity to issues surrounding rape so that individuals are encouraged to speak out against rape supportive attitudes and provide skills to bystanders so that they can effectively intervene to prevent abuse and provide effective support to victims of abuse.
• Interventions should highlight bystander responsibility, personal safety, resources available for support, and decision-making with regard to intervening.
• Good practice with undergraduate programmes includes the use of peer educators, single sex groups, active learning, and a mixed-gender training team.
• Bystanders need skills to intervene: they need to know what to do and how to do it.
• The literature suggests that bystanders:
  - Need to be aware of a problem and the potential negative impact on the victim
  - Need to feel partially responsible for solving the problem
  - Need to see the victim as not the cause of their problem
  - Need to feel that they have the skills to intervene
  - Will conduct a cost benefit analysis before intervening which will include the reaction of their peers
  - Are less likely to intervene if the victim and offender are known to be related

Morrison, S., Hardison, J., Matthew, A., & O'Neil, J. (2004). An evidence-based review of sexual assault preventive intervention programs: Technical report. (Report No. 207262). Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

Summary of article

A good quality review of English-language programmes that target a wide age range. The study has clear inclusion criteria for studies and provides a thorough evaluation of studies. Fifty-nine studies were reviewed in total, including nine studies that looked at interventions with individual with disabilities. The report concludes that the majority of programmes are able to demonstrate improvement in attitudinal and behavioural change over the duration of the programme.

Useful background information

- 7% of sexual assaults are carried out by strangers, 76% by individuals close to the victim (family members, partners), 17% by individuals known by the victim (friends and acquaintances).
- There appears to be a high incidence of sexual assault among young people. One study found that 54% of sexual assault victims were victimised by before the age of 18, 32% of victims are between 12 and 17 at the time of the assault
- 20 to 25% of female university undergraduates in the USA experience sexual assault or attempted sexual assault their degree.
- The provision of rape education and prevention measures are mandatory in USA university campuses
- Individuals with disabilities are up to four times more vulnerable to sexual exploitation; the incidence of sexual exploitation amongst people with learning disabilities is estimated to be as high as 99%. Consequently a significant proportion of victims of sexual assault are likely to have some form of disability. Factors that increase risk of abuse include a higher level of compliance, poor judgement, lower communication skills, lack of education, poor preventive skills, attitudes that support sexual abuse, and living within an institution.
- 64% of programmes are mixed-gender, 18% male only, 18% female only.
- 70% of programmes were delivered in university campuses, 16% in high school, 8% in middle school.

Recommendations

- Programmes need to be based on a solid theory of what they aim to do and why this is beneficial to the participants in the programme.
- Individuals who are most at risk from being victims or perpetrators of abuse are likely to be excluded from schools and educational institutions, consequently greater efforts should be invested in working with those individuals who are not participating in the education system.
- In addition to delivering programmes to the general population, targeted programmes aimed at individuals who are at higher risk of being a victim or perpetrator of sexual abuse should be delivered.
- Individuals who are at higher risk are also likely to be at high risk for other problem behaviours such as drug abuse, alcohol abuse, aggression, delinquency, and school failure. Agencies should combine resources to target the common causes of these problems in order to provide a comprehensive approach to working with these individuals.
- The needs of individuals from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds should be assessed to ensure that the current suite of programmes manages to also meet their needs.
- Recommendations for programmes that target individuals with learning difficulties include
  - Having a strong focus on self-protective skills (e.g. recognising a dangerous situation, refusing to co-operate, reporting abuse)
  - Ensuring that the content and delivery is developmentally and functionally appropriate
  - Increasing the number of sessions delivered
  - Using a wide range of delivery styles including video, role play, art, and drama.
  - Ensuring the programme has the support and involvement of staff and carers.

Schewe, P. (2002). Guidelines for developing rape prevention and risk reduction interventions. In P. Schewe, (Ed.) Preventing violence in relationships: Interventions across the life span. (pp. 107-136). Washington: American Psychological Association.

Summary

A review of 33 empirical evaluations of programmes from 1984 to 2000, 31 of which were with USA university students. There is no information on the selection criteria for the studies and only limited evaluation of the quality of the studies. The review discusses the elements of an intervention and good practice rather than drawing conclusions on the overall effectiveness of interventions.

Findings

- Factual information on definition of rape, descriptions of victims and offenders, descriptions of rape trauma syndrome, and information about local resources for survivors has been found to have no effect on students' attitudes about rape or their empathy for victims. The clearest message from the literature is that knowledge-based programmes rarely work.
- Self defence has been shown to be effective in reducing the incidence and the severity of attacks.
- There is a strong theoretical link between rape myth acceptance and sexual offending, therefore rape myths should remain a target for rape prevention programmes.
- Teaching potential victims to avoid high-risk situations is one tool which can help them avoid harm. High risk situations include alcohol, hitchhiking, attending parties, frequenting fraternities, dating in isolated locations, and being involved with an older teenage man.
- Miscommunication is seen as a key cause of date rape. Rapists are poor at interpreting negative cues from women compared to violent non-rapists and non-violent non-rapists. Any misunderstanding can lead to anger which can increase the chances of rape.
- Programmes with a theory are more effective than those without any theory. No one theory seems more effective than the others in the literature. Rape-awareness programmes generally lack a theoretical orientation, programmes need to be clearly linked to the causes of rape.

Recommendations

- Common ingredients of programmes are: correcting rape myths, increasing empathy for victims, emphasising the negative consequences for the rapist, increasing rape awareness, teaching self-defence, increasing assertiveness skills, and teaching students to avoid high-risk situations.
- Good interventions avoid patronising participants for having incorrect attitudes about rape. Better practice is to explore where incorrect attitudes come from. Consequently correction alone is not sufficient, interventions need to explore attitudes rather than identify attitudes and re-educate.
- Empathy may be more effectively enhanced by using same-gender examples (i.e. male participant more likely to feel empathic towards a male victim of abuse).
- In order to reflect the reality of abuse the perpetrator of male-abuse should be depicted as a heterosexual male.
- Programmes should have a brief 'knowledge' component which includes local statistics, but mostly focus on attitude and behaviour change.
- When teaching about high risk situations an alternative behaviour needs to be provided. For example, rather than providing a list of things not to do (for example not 'don't date from the internet') provide information on how participants should behave (for example 'when you are meeting someone you don't know meet in a public place and arrange to phone a friend after the date'). Programmes need to include examples of rape with a long-term acquaintance so as to not over emphasise stranger rape.
- Programmes need to be cautious about: encouraging victim blame, teaching potential offenders that it is unlikely that they will get caught if the commit a sexual assault, and alienating male participants who are also potential victims, bystanders, and confidants.

Yeater, E, & O'Donohue, W. (1999). Sexual assault prevention programs: current issues, future directions, and the potential efficacy of interventions with women. Clinical psychology review, 19(7), 739-771.

Summary

Yeater and O'Donohue argue that programmes will not work until we are able to understand why they are supposed to work. Current theories of the causes of sexual abuse include deviant arousal, a history of abuse, poor hetero-social skills, interpersonal affective motivations, adherence to rape supportive beliefs, lack of victim empathy, and psychopathic deviance. The authors also highlight the importance of understanding that personal attributes need to be combined with certain contexts before a risk of offending is heightened. Interventions aimed at individuals at high risk of victimisation need to target dynamic factors (changeable) and pathways of interactions which are likely to increase risk – for example a history of CSA may lead to a drug addiction which in turn is likely to increase the individuals exposure to environments in which they are at higher risk of abuse and reduce their ability to identify risk and adopt risk-reducing strategies.