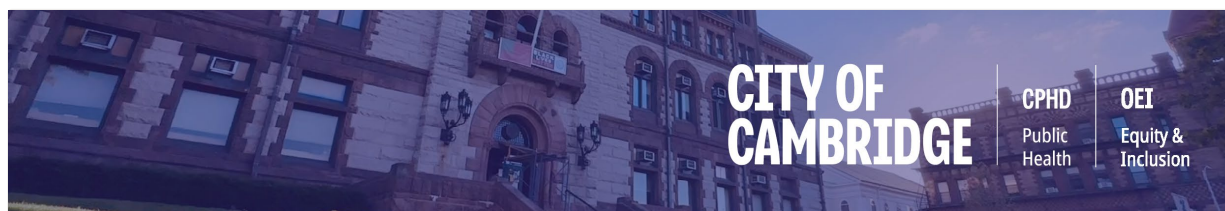


From: McNeal, Dion on behalf of CoC Internal Communications
To: General Notification List; PIOBriefs@Cambridge911.Org
Subject: Blog Series: Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)
Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2025 11:00:57 AM
Attachments: image004.png
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Blog Series: Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)

Dear City Staff,



April is **Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)**, and the Domestic/Gender-Based Violence Prevention Initiative (DGBVPI) and the Cambridge Public Health Department have partnered together to deliver an informative and educational blog series this month.

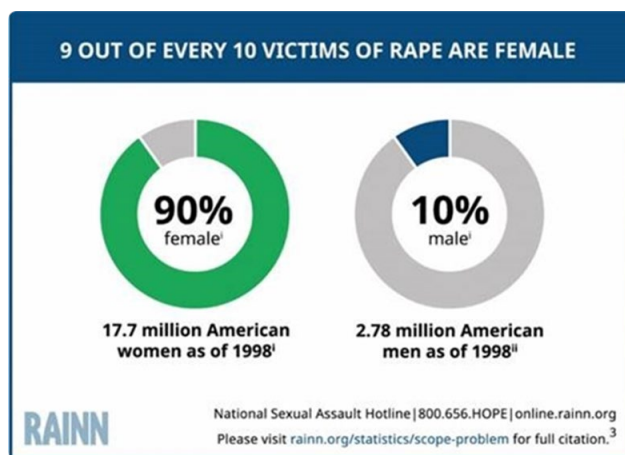
Disclaimer: *The content that we explore together may be triggering for some. We know that there are survivors among us. This blog series is not intended to and does not constitute legal advice nor is it a replacement for seeking services and support if needed.*

The Staggering Truth

Statistics from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tell us that:

1. [Over half of women and almost one in three men](#) have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact during their lifetimes.
2. Almost [1 in 2 transgender people](#) have experienced sexual violence.

These staggering numbers are why sexual violence is a public health issue and why we believe it is important to engage City staff in this month's blog post series. We hope each of you will take good care of [yourselves as you engage](#).



Inclusion and Accountability from the Start

The [legal definition of rape](#) in Massachusetts is, “whoever has sexual intercourse or unnatural sexual intercourse with a person, and compels such person to submit by force and against their will, or compels such person to submit by threat of bodily injury and if either such sexual intercourse or unnatural sexual intercourse results in or is committed with acts resulting in serious bodily injury, or is committed by a joint enterprise, or is committed during the commission or attempted commission of an offense defined in section 15 A, 15 B, 17, 19, or 26 of this chapter, section 14, 15, 16, 17, or 18 of chapter two hundred and 66 or section ten of chapter 269 shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for life or for any term of years.”

We will not be using this definition. Why? Because we believe that **“force” implies physical force only** “and unnatural sexual intercourse” is an **archaic attack on the LGBTQ+ community** that should not continue to be part of the definition. There are many other ways survivors have been threatened, coerced, and pressured in an assault. We will talk more about these things later.

We will use the broader definition of [sexual violence](#) used at the [Boston Area Rape Crisis Center \(BARCC\)](#) that accurately reflects peoples lived experiences. BARCC is our local agency dedicated to serving survivors of sexual assault. They define sexual violence as, “any form of sexual interaction that takes place without consent (or permission). Sexual violence can include: rape or sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse and incest, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and trafficking, unwanted sexual contact/touching, and more. Ultimately, sexual violence is about an offender exerting power and control over someone else”.

Rape And All Forms of Sexual Violence Are Never a Survivor’s Fault!

We will close this year’s SAAM with a virtual discussion about community action: why it is important, how our actions (or lack thereof) can either support or cause even more pain for survivors, and explore the themes and topics discussed throughout the month.

Change Begins with Education

Please feel free to reach out to us if you would like to talk further.

1. [How to Get Help from BARCC](#)
2. [How to Help A Friend](#)
3. [How to Get Help from Cambridge Police](#)

We Can Reduce Stigma Together: Shameka Gregory, Coordinator of the Domestic and Gender Based Violence Prevention Initiative for the City of Cambridge is offering [office hours](#) for anyone who wished to talk in a one-on-one session.



Hi, I’m Teakia Brown [she/her], the Director of Community Engagement at the Cambridge Public Health Department. I lead **Population Health initiatives**. I have a multidisciplinary background in violence prevention, community

engagement, and reproductive health care.

In past work, I have taught sex education classes, ran teen dating violence programs, and worked directly with people who have experienced violence as the Medical Advocate coordinator for the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center. I am deeply committed to this topic and look forward to exploring what sexual assault means to us as City employees and how we can make a meaningful impact on the communities we serve.



Hi, I'm Shameka Gregory [she/her], Coordinator of the Domestic and Gender Based Violence Prevention Initiative for the City of Cambridge. I am a licensed independent clinical social worker who has worked in the field of domestic and gender-based violence for the last decade.

The way that I think about and approach these issues has changed tremendously in my experience time. I have learned from the wisdom and experiences of survivors as a therapist and an advocate. Those are the perspectives I bring to this conversation and what I wish to share with you. As a City and a community, we must always **center** survivors and **listen to** survivors.

Until next time

We look forward to bringing you another blog post highlighting sexual awareness month.

Teakia Brown

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Shameka Gregory

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Domestic/Gender-Based Violence Prevention Initiative and CPD,
City of Cambridge

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CoC Internal Communications

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Book time to meet with me