

# END THE CRIMINALIZATION OF TRAUMA: QUICK FACTS

Women and girls are affected by sexual violence at an alarmingly high rate in the U.S. This violence is ignored on a cultural and institutional level, and often begins when women and girls are in middle and high school. Men in power are not held accountable for their actions while millions of women and girls are forced to suffer in silence. Moreover, women and girls who are victims of violence are often criminalized and incarcerated for behaviors stemming from their abuse.

**NOW is committed to ending violence of all forms against women and girls.** Below we break down the cycles of violence and break down which communities are most impacted by violence against women.

## MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS

*In middle and high schools across the country, too many girls who are survivors of sexual assault are being routinely denied an equal education opportunity. They are penalized for trauma-induced behavior instead of being recognized as survivors of trauma and receiving the wraparound trauma-informed services that they need.*

### Young Women and Girls & Sexual Violence

- One in three teenaged girls in the U.S. report being a survivor of sexual violence, with young women of color and those who identify as LGBTQIA+ being particularly vulnerable. <sup>1</sup>
- Girls are sexually abused at a rate 4.4 times higher than boys, and their behavioral reaction to trauma is often criminalized. <sup>2</sup>
- Fifteen percent of sexual assault and rape victims are under the age of 12. <sup>3</sup>
- Nearly half of all female rape survivors were assaulted before the age of 18. <sup>4</sup>
- And girls between the ages of 16 and 19 are four times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault. <sup>5</sup>

### Young Women and Girls & the Juvenile Justice System

- Traumatic experiences are frequently the cause for youth involvement in the criminal justice system, with 31% of girls having been victims of sexual violence, 41% being physically abused, and 84% experiencing family violence. <sup>6</sup>

- Black girls are almost six times more likely to be suspended than white girls, and three times more likely to be suspended than Black boys for the same behavior. Students suspended or expelled are in turn three times more likely to be drawn into the juvenile justice system the following year. <sup>7</sup>
- The number of girls in the juvenile justice system is on the rise. In 1992, according to the report Gender Injustice, girls made up 20% of the children arrested in the U.S. In 2012, girls accounted for 29% of children arrested, a near 50% increase. <sup>8</sup>

## **SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES**

- One in five women and one in sixteen men are sexually assaulted while in college. <sup>9</sup>
- 21% of Transgender college students have been sexually assaulted. <sup>10</sup>
- 84% of female survivors report being sexually assaulted during their first four semesters on campus, colloquially know as the “red zone”. <sup>11</sup>
- 33% of college student survivors have experienced depression and 34% have experienced PTSD. <sup>12</sup>

## **SEXUAL VIOLENCE & MARGINALIZED WOMEN**

*Sexual violence disproportionately impacts marginalized women. As the conversation around sexual abuse and harassment continues to expand, it is important to understand how different communities are impacted by sexual violence.*

- 40-60% of black women report being subjected to coercive sexual contact by age 18. <sup>13</sup>
- A National Violence Against Women Survey found that 21.2% of Latina women have experienced sexual assault. It is believed that by the year 2050, 10.8 million Latinas in the U.S. will be survivors of sexual violence. <sup>14</sup>
- 21-55% of Asian women report experiencing intimate physical and/or sexual violence during their lifetime. This figure skews low due to the fact that Asian American women are the least likely to report rape and physical assault of any racial or ethnic group. <sup>15</sup>
- One in three American Indian women will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime and 84% of American Indian women have faced some form of violence. <sup>16</sup>
- Transgender women were 1.8 times more likely to experience sexual violence when compared with other survivors. <sup>17</sup>
- Women with disabilities have a 40 percent greater chance of intimate partner violence than women without disabilities. <sup>18</sup>

- 44% of lesbians and 61% of bisexual women experience rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner, compared to 35 percent of heterosexual women.

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