



SPRING 2004

# SAVI Advocate

The Mount Sinai Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program



## Dear Friends,

It is remarkable to me that with this issue of the *SAVI Advocate*, 20 years have

passed since the program's inception. Twenty years of emergency room advocacy, counseling services, and outreach and educational programs throughout New York City. Approximately 2,300 Volunteer Advocates were trained to assist survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence and their loved-ones in nine New York City hospital emergency rooms. Cumulatively, they worked with over 6,000 survivors. I want to thank each and every one for selflessly giving their time. I am continuously inspired by their dedication, energy, and commitment.

I am proud to report that SAVI's dedicated clinical staff provided over 18,000 ongoing counseling sessions. Since 1984, approximately 36,000 people participated in SAVI outreach and educational programs. These activities aim to raise awareness of issues and increase sensitivity toward survivors. SAVI's message has traveled as far as South America and Asia. Staff visited

and assisted in the development of the first rape crisis center in Brazil in 1993, and from 2001-2003 trained counselors in Japan on best practice models in providing care to survivors.

SAVI's journey continues to provide new opportunities to forward the cause. We are in the process of formalizing a Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Program in the Mount Sinai Hospital Emergency Department. This allows for

*Most of all, thank you to those who gave us the opportunity to hear their stories and participate in their recovery.*

increased collaboration between Advocates, medical, legal and social service providers to better serve survivors. Due to our success in reaching the Orthodox Jewish Community via the SAVI Takanot Project, we are increasing our efforts to reach additional underserved communities.

As I reflect upon the past 20 years, I am proud to be a part of the vital role that the SAVI Program plays within the community, I am most grateful to the loyal staff, volunteer Advocates, board members and corporate and private

sponsors who believe in SAVI's mission, and are determined to be part of the solution. A note of thanks goes to the Mount Sinai Medical Center, for providing us with our home, and for their trust and faith in our cause.

I tremendously appreciate working with our colleagues in the Special Victims' Units of the District Attorneys' offices and the NYPD. To other rape crisis programs and coalitions who share our cause, "fighting the fight," it has been an amazing opportunity to grow and learn together. We have come a long way and yes, we indeed have a long way to go. Most of all, thank you to those who gave us the opportunity to hear their stories and participate in their recovery.

This is a year of celebration and reflection for SAVI. Please join us in celebrating our 20th anniversary. I look forward to seeing you at our annual Silver Whistle Dinner, Wednesday, April 28, 2004.

Warmly,

*Celebrating  
20 Years  
of Healing,  
Educating, and  
Empowering*

## Thank You!



It was only a matter of time before children began to follow in their parents' footsteps to become Volunteer Advocates. Barbara Sirota has been an Advocate for 10 years, and was joined three years ago when her daughter Abbie also became an Advocate. The Sirota family volunteers their time and when Abbie married Dr. Joshua Rothenberg in October 2003, a generous donation was made to SAVI.

## Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Update

SAVI is proud to announce that a total of 66 medical practitioners, nine from The Mount Sinai Hospital, participated in the Winter 2004 SAFE Training. The SAFE Program ensures sexual assault survivors receive state of the art medical and forensic treatment. SAVI sponsored the training that was held at The Mount Sinai Hospital. As part of the SAFE Training, the New York State Department of Health held the first certification day for all Medical Directors of SAFE Programs in New York. SAVI is honored to have been part of this historic event, and is grateful to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services for funding the SAVI SAFE program.

## Anniversaries – A Time of Reflection

Carolina Nudo

**A**pril 2004 marks the 20th anniversary of the SAVI Program. Anniversaries, like birthdays, remind us of the passage of time and give us an opportunity to reflect on the past and hope for a better future. One of SAVI's missions, similar to all rape crisis centers born out of the women's movement of the seventies, continues to be to offer services to rape survivors and educate the public about the chilling reality of rape. Over the years, treatment services for rape survivors have greatly improved, as have the consciousness-raising efforts.

Today, women report rape at a higher rate than years ago. Some of the factors that contribute to increased reporting include the support of rape crisis centers; better investigation and integration of legal, medical and social services; rape reform legislation; and society's greater understanding of the crime. Most people agree that rape is an act of violence and not an act of passion. Nonetheless, rape myths still persist: the assumption that women secretly want to be raped, that women cannot be raped against their will, that only women get raped, that rapists are abnormal, that rape is rare.

Everyday, all over the world, women's bodies continue to be battlegrounds. In peace or in war, women and girls are subjected to rape and other forms of gender-based violence. While rape is against the law and a war crime, there is not a day that goes by that we do not hear about sexual violence; yet, no one is held accountable. BBC correspondent Carolyn Dempster reports that a woman born in South Africa has a "greater chance of being raped, than learning how to read." There are countless reports on how rape in war-torn countries has been used as a weapon to humiliate and debilitate, and for ethnic cleansing. Locally, statistics

show a decrease in most crimes, except for rape where they have remained steady. The headlines seem endless when it comes to incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence.

Recently, *The Globe* revealed the identity of the woman who has accused Kobe Bryant of rape. It should be the victim's choice to come forward. This action has destroyed decades of hard work to encourage victims to come forward and feel safe. It is time for all of us to take responsibility for the actions of rapists and accept the reality that the rapist is typically someone we love and trust. The rapist is our son, our brother, our father, our uncle, the local religious leader, or the person we play golf with on weekends. The victim is our daughter, our sister, our mother, our son or our grandmother. NO, it is not about "them" but about "us." Rather than have debates over whether she really said NO, we need to ask why he did not hear the NO, and what makes it still difficult to believe that "he" would do such a thing.

Judith Herman, M.D., author of *Trauma and Recovery*, reports that it is "tempting" to side with the perpetrator because he asks us to do "nothing" and forget. The survivor on the other hand shares "the burden of pain and demands action" because it really did happen and her/his life has forever changed. So much work has gone into understanding psychological trauma and treatment models for rape survivors. Let us continue to improve these services; and let us put forth more effort into the eradication of rape. Let us look at why our society permits a person to rape.

## The Art of Healing

Rochelle Frounfelker

Survivors of childhood sexual abuse, rape and intimate partner violence use many tools to recover from damaging and life-altering experiences. Some find creative outlets such as writing and visual and performing arts to express themselves throughout their healing process. One SAVI volunteer in particular, Laura Kaminker, speaks openly and eloquently about the important role writing has played on her journey of recovery since her rape in 1982. Laura states, “I need to write to process anything—it is the way I understand my feelings.”

Laura began writing as a child and continued as an English major in college. After her assault post-college, writing took on a role in her recovery as she kept a journal that chronicled her experiences in therapy. Even when she became publicly involved in sexual assault and domestic violence programs in the late 80’s, Laura was cautious to open up about her own recovery when other writers sought out

stories from survivors. Discussing why she hesitated, Laura explains, “I couldn’t give my story away for someone else’s project.”

This all changed in 1992 when Laura wrote an essay about her assault and subsequent recovery that was published nationally in *Newsweek* magazine. Laura states she was prompted to start writing publicly at this time because the ten-year anniversary of her assault was personally meaningful to her. She explains that she re-read the journals she had kept and, for the first time, saw the process and journey of healing she went through.

After the publication of her essay, Laura began to identify more openly with being a survivor. She recalls how powerful it was to “own her story enough to share it with other people.” Equally powerful was the impact her disclosure had on others. Her essay “freed people to talk to me about their own experiences with assault.” The impact of the essay’s publica-

tion prompted Laura to start writing about sexual assault for young people. Regarding this opportunity she states, “It feels really good that I put something out there that might touch someone.”

Laura encourages people to write and journal through their recovery because it has tremendous therapeutic value. In addition, she believes it might lead survivors through a recovery process that includes writing about their experiences more publicly. As Laura states, writing is a “way to reach out and touch someone while helping yourself.”

Over twenty years after her assault, Laura continues to write publicly about childhood sexual abuse, sexual assault and intimate partner violence. Laura is currently researching and conducting interviews to write a book about SAVI. SAVI supports her efforts and the work of others who forged a path of healing through creatively expressing their survival and recovery.



SAVI Advocate Siddharth Shah, M.D. with SAVI staff Rochelle Frounfelker, Manhattan ED Coordinator and Shaireen Islam, Outreach and Training Coordinator, recruit for volunteers for the 2003 Advocate training.

## Congratulations 2003 Trainees!

Ninety new trainees graduated from SAVI’s 2003 Volunteer Advocate Training! Thanks to the new Advocates, 53 from Manhattan and 37 from Queens, we can continue to ensure survivors in Manhattan and Queens’ Hospital Emergency Rooms have emotional support and information to navigate medical and legal systems. This is a significant and essential increase of our volunteer base. The rigorous 40-hour training drew volunteers from diverse backgrounds and reminds us that violence affects all of us.

Thanks to all our new volunteers for working hard to become Emergency Room Advocates and joining the SAVI family. Your excitement renews our spirit and your advocacy builds our resolve to stop violence. We respect and admire you for being a part of the solution!

## SAVI Goes International

Rochelle Frounfelker

SAVI is excited to see the extension of its work into the international arena. Two women in our volunteer program, Francoise Ileka and Maud Edgren-Schori, decided to take the training and become active Advocates after attending a meeting hosted by SAVI for the United Nations' Ambassadors' Wives last spring.

Ms. Ileka and Ms. Edgren-Schori bring with them a history of working on humanitarian causes in their home countries prior to their involvement with SAVI.

Trained as a nurse, Ms. Ileka created an orphanage two years ago in her home country of The Democratic Republic of the Congo for 18 children who lost their parents in that country's long civil war. Ms. Edgren-Schori, a professional social worker, had not only worked with elderly and disabled individuals in her home country of Sweden, but has also been a professor of social work for many years.

Both women have different reasons for becoming actively involved with SAVI. Ms. Edgren-Schori referred back to hearing a survivor's story at the UN Ambassadors' Wives workshop as a major motivating factor. She stated, "I heard [the survivor] speak and I kept thinking about her experience. Then when I got the information about the volunteer training in the mail

something clicked. I could not forget [the survivor] and I have respect and admiration for her. This led me to choose to take the training and become an advocate." For Ms. Ileka, it was the women in her home country that inspired her to take the training. She remarked that during the war, soldiers sexually assaulted many women in the Congo, and unfortunately rape is taboo and not discussed openly or formally addressed.

Ms. Ileka and Ms. Edgren-Schori were impacted by the SAVI training and would like to implement SAVI program ideas back in their home countries. Ms. Edgren-Schori was excited to learn about a new population and get back into direct practice. She remarked that she was "very impressed by the quality and energy SAVI put into the training." While Sweden does have services for survivors of violence, Ms. Edgren-Schori stated there are no immediate emergency department response programs in place. She expressed interest in implementing the SAVI Program through non-governmental organizations in her country.

Ms. Ileka asserted, "The SAVI training changed my life" and emphatically stated, "SAVI is my program—it is going to the Congo." She wants to give her people a



(left to right) Francoise Ileka and Maud Edgren-Schori

message of hope and implement SAVI in the Congo by first forming small groups of women in villages to talk about their feelings, while making them aware there is help available. Ms. Ileka stated, "Last week I met with the president of the Congo, Joseph Kabila, and he asked me what I was doing. I told him that I was a volunteer with SAVI. We talked about the program and bringing it to the Congo."

SAVI is honored to have such compassionate and dedicated women as part of our family. We look forward to working with them here in New York City and supporting their endeavors abroad.

### In Remembrance

With great sadness we want to thank the parents of Tamar Fellner. They suffered the tragic loss of their daughter in May, 2003, and chose to have donations in her memory directed to SAVI. Tamar was an active SAVI Advocate whose commitment to helping survivors has been sustained by generous contributions from her family and friends. Tamar will always be remembered at SAVI for her desire to "make a difference" and for her dedication to our mission.

### Help Someone Begin to Heal!



Lauren Moran,  
SAVI Volunteer  
Coordinator

Compassionate women and men are needed to support survivors of rape and intimate partner violence in Manhattan and Queens. SAVI's 2004 Emergency Room Advocate Training will begin this October.

**Join our volunteer team!**  
Please call 212-423-2140.

## Rape as a Weapon of War

Lena Yacoumopoulou

Rape during war has existed ever since men first battled against each other. Rape demoralizes and destroys a community, for in the majority of cases the victims will not talk about it and if they do, they are shunned and marginalized by their communities. The character of war has changed, and this practice has become even more widespread. Where soldiers used to target other soldiers, the aim now is often to kill or terrorize civilians.

Historically, crimes of sexual violence have rarely been prosecuted as a crime against humanity. One exception was at the Tokyo World War II trial. Several Japanese officers were charged and held liable for the rape of 20,000 women during the occupation of Nanking, China in 1937. In addition, survivors of the 200,000 “comfort women” will seek justice from the Japanese government because they were subjected to sexual slavery by the Japanese military during World War II. More recently, it is estimated that when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, Iraqi soldiers raped at least 5,000 Kuwaiti women during the occupation. There have been consistent reports from Myanmar about troops raping minority women. In 1998, rape and the threat of rape caused a wave of ethnic Chinese to flee Indonesia during the riots that swept Jakarta.

Serb troops raped approximately 20,000 women during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Women were raped in sexual camps until they became pregnant and held until they were close to term. In 1996, the first indictment dealing solely with sexual violence and enslavement crimes was issued. United Nations prosecutor Dirk Ryneveld said, “This is the first case of sexual enslavement and the only one with sexual assaults and no murders.”

In Rwanda, according to the UN, at least 250,000 women were raped in 1994. Most

are not alive to tell their tales, while others are dying of AIDS contracted through the rapes. It is estimated that there are close to 5,000 children in Rwanda today who were born of the 1994 rapes. In 1998, the first rape case in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, also established by the UN Security Council, charged Jean-Paul Akayesu, the mayor of Taba commune with inciting mass rape. This is the first time that a leader has been charged for his responsibility in encouraging or allowing others to commit rape.

There is another sinister twist to the rape cases in Rwanda. Pauline Nyiramasuhuko is the first woman to be charged with genocide and using rape as a crime against humanity. She was the minister of family and women’s affairs in the former Hutu-led government. Her son is also charged with genocide and with kidnapping and raping Tutsi women. They are both charged with inciting ethnic Hutus to use rape as a systematic weapon against women.

Of late, there has been a better understanding and an increased focus on the psychosocial counseling of victims of rape in war. With ad hoc tribunals of Yugoslavia and Rwanda turning mass rape during war into a crime against humanity, a milestone has been marked in recognizing this abuse against women. It has removed any possibility of it being regarded as no more than a by-product of a conflict—a popular view amongst many armies. Significantly, this war crime has been inscribed in the statute of the permanent international criminal court, which came into force on 1 July 2002.

*(Ms. Yacoumopoulou is Features Editor of the English Unit, United Nations Radio. She entered the UN in 1977 and has held various positions both in NY and overseas including Namibia, Haiti, Croatia and Kosovo reporting on the UN’s role and covering mainly women’s issues.)*

I lose myself to the other me  
The one that only I can see  
Each time I try to let me be  
All sound and being drifts away  
A foggy image that will not stay  
And I am left with echoes of the past  
The world as is is not to be  
Just one lost person who is me  
Sometimes the one who’s strong as steel  
Others just a thin silk thread  
And somewhere in between is me  
Holding fast till this does pass  
And I return to me

Margaret Chewoney  
10/28/03

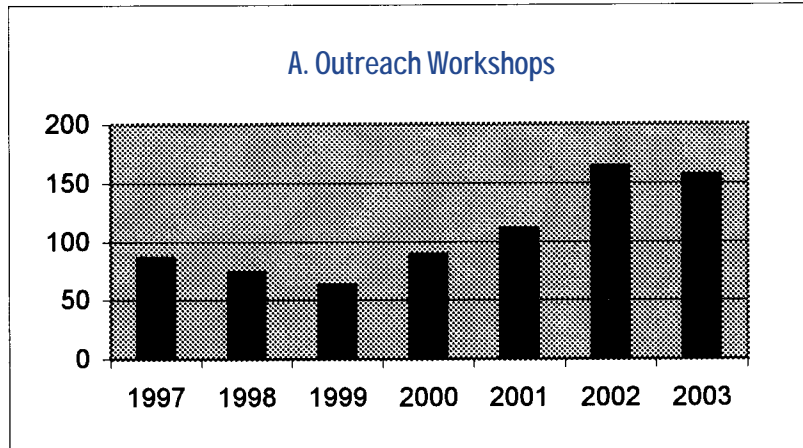
SILVER  
WHISTLE  
AWARD  
DINNER

Wednesday, April 28, 2004

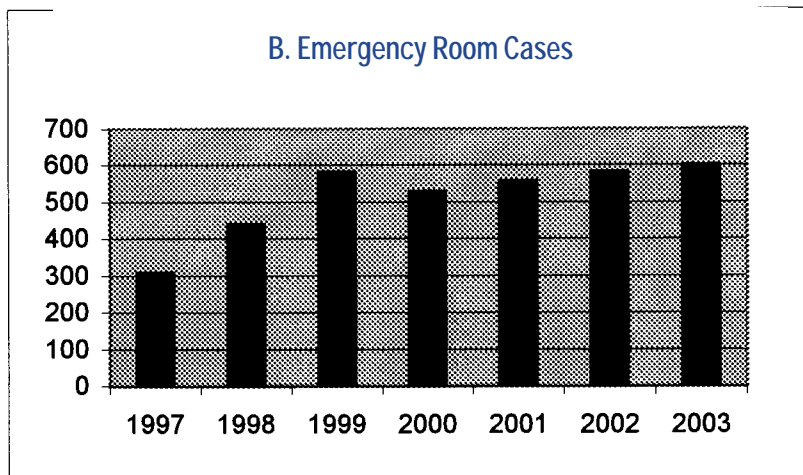
## SAVI Services at a Glance

Graph A reflects the number of outreach and educational workshops SAVI provided between 1997-2003. Graphs B and C reflect the increased number of survivors assisted by SAVI Advocates in the emergency rooms of the nine hospitals we serve, as well as an increase in the number of counseling sessions provided by SAVI clinicians. It is our belief that the increased utilization of services may be the result of increased awareness and support of survivors to come forward and seek assistance.

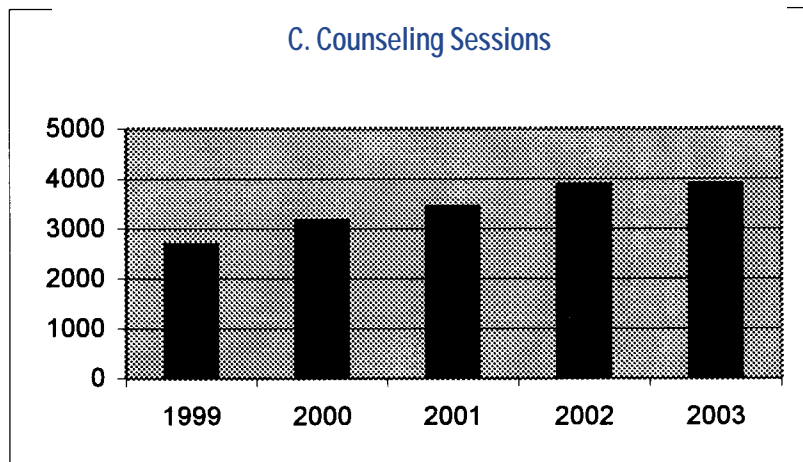
Outreach Workshops	
Year	Workshops
1997	86
1998	74
1999	63
2000	89
2001	111
2002	164
2003	157



Emergency Room Survivors Assisted	
Year	Survivors Assisted
1997	308
1998	439
1999	581
2000	528
2001	557
2002	582
2003	600



Counseling Sessions	
Year	Sessions
1999	2681
2000	3163
2001	3441
2002	3880
2003	3900



# The Most Difficult Crime to Prosecute

Diane Cochrane

Domestic violence, particularly sexual domestic violence, is the most difficult crime to prosecute, according to Lisa Friel, Chief of the Sex Crimes Unit for the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, who spoke at the Eighth Annual Conference on Domestic Violence, held at The Mount Sinai Medical Center on October 14, 2003. Her counterpart in Brooklyn, Wanda Lucibello, Chief of the Special Victims Division, agreed.

Still, things have changed for the better as the judicial system has gradually shifted its approach to domestic violence over the last two decades. For years, police officers called to a scene of domestic violence used their own discretion about arresting an abuser. Often they simply restored order and hoped that the victim and her partner would work things out for themselves. By the mid-1980s, however, a number of lawsuits forced most police departments throughout the country to adopt policies of mandatory arrests.

Mandatory arrest policies require an officer to arrest a suspect if there is probable cause to believe that an assault or battery has occurred, regardless of the victim's consent or objection. But this doesn't make prosecution easy.

To bolster the necessary evidence, Assistant District Attorneys (ADAs), ask survivors to identify anyone they might have confided in about the abuse—friends, family members, even members of the defendant's family. "There is an exception to the hearsay rule, in such cases," says Friel. If the victim told someone about the assault even a year earlier, and that person is willing to testify, this is admissible evidence.

ADAs also interview people who the victim has contact with such as employers and co-workers to determine if they saw any

changes in the victim's demeanor or noticed any injuries. And they check hospital and other medical records for signs of violence. If and when a trial is scheduled, ADAs try to weed out in the selection process any jurors who might not be open-minded. "Juries are our biggest problem," says Friel. "So we try to educate them." Domestic violence cases become even more challenging when the survivor is reluctant to participate in the legal process. Many survivors decline to testify for fear of retaliation by their abusers or because they remain hopeful that a psychological or behavioral program would curb the abusive behavior. Friel's position on this issue is that "after 20 years, I have found that programs only work if there is a hammer over the abusers' heads—the threat of going to jail."

*...victims...are more apt to stay in the criminal justice system until the case is closed if they receive support*

To counteract a victim's reluctance to testify, ADAs make sure the victim gets counseling. "Since many victims don't want to testify against their attackers, they are more apt to stay in the criminal justice system until the case is closed if they receive support," according to Friel.

The importance of keeping a victim engaged in the system was dramatically illustrated by Ms. Lucibello who described the case of a young, undocumented immigrant. The violence escalated over several years, culminating one afternoon when her husband accused her of having an affair. He tortured her for eight hours.

Finally, someone called 911, although they claimed that a "boyfriend" had assaulted the victim. When the police arrived, they arrested the husband, took the victim to the hospital and contacted the Brooklyn DA's Special Victims Division.

The family immediately brought pressure and threats of deportation on the victim. If deported, she would face an "honor killing" back in her home country. The survivor subsequently declined to testify in the criminal case against her husband. However, sufficient evidence was presented by the prosecution to convict the husband who was sentenced to three years in prison.

Lucibello and her team didn't stop with the conviction. They helped the survivor gain asylum and expanded her support system by arranging for her family members to

come to live in New York. Further, they arranged for counseling with an ethnically appropriate social service agency and forced the mother-in-law to provide her with housing.

Despite his imprisonment and the court order, the husband continued to vent his rage through letters and telephone calls. This time the survivor had been provided with

enough support that she felt able to testify. Because he violated the order of protection he was re-sentenced to six more years in prison. "We originally hoped to put this man away for ten years," Lucibello commented, "but we were satisfied with nine.

Since the mandatory arrest law went into effect, district attorneys realized a more nuanced approach was necessary to achieve their goals, while Friel commented that they never rush domestic violence cases. "They are the slowest in the system, and we use only senior ADAs to prosecute them." This is an example of how the system can work.

SAVE THE DATE!

20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

**SILVER  
WHISTLE  
AWARD  
DINNER**

Wednesday, April 28, 2004

The Puck Building  
295 Lafayette Street  
New York City

Reception: 6 o'clock  
Dinner: 7 o'clock

Information: 212-249-6188

Mount Sinai **SAVI**  
Sexual Assault & Violence Intervention Program  
One Gustave L. Levy Place, Box 1670, New York, NY 10029

## SAVE THE DATE

### SAVI's Silver Whistle Award Dinner

You are cordially invited to celebrate SAVI's 20th Anniversary at our annual dinner at SOHO's Puck Building at 295 Lafayette Street on Wednesday, April 28th. The cocktail hour begins at 6:00 pm, followed by a candlelight dinner. We hope you will be able to attend.

Please call SAVI  
212-249-6188  
for more information.

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A farewell and best wishes to a special, caring volunteer, Diane Cochrane, for serving as the editor of the SAVI Advocate for the last 15 years. Thank you, Diane, for the time, talent, and energy you gave to this publication and to SAVI!

Visit SAVI's web site at [www.mssm.edu/SAVI](http://www.mssm.edu/SAVI)

### SAVI

Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program

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