

Group attempts to change men's attitudes towards rape

By Cami Swanson
Emerald Reporter

Because men are more likely to be rapists, they must take on the responsibility of ending violence against women, said Tim Goss, Men Against Rape coordinator.

Men Against Rape was formed three years ago in an attempt to change men's attitudes toward the crime of rape. Since then, the group has been giving lectures, sponsoring events and even making informational booklets to try to help dispel the myths of rape. The organization has also expanded its focus to include any type of domestic violence.

"Men have, in my opinion, been condoning rape... Rape is so fostered in society. Once men come out and say 'This is not acceptable,' this is going to take root," he said.

Approximately 10 men from the University and the community are currently involved in Men Against Rape, which is funded by ASUO incidental fees. The group meets once a week to discuss specific issues that are bothering the members, ranging from acquaintance rape to pornography.

"Men Against Rape is clearly not made up of perfect men. We're just normal guys who have serious concerns. Clearly, if we thought we were perfect there wouldn't be a need for a meeting," Goss said.

The second part of the weekly meeting is used to plan what the group will be doing in the future to help educate people about rape.

In the past, Men Against Rape has set up lectures in various local high schools to talk about the myths and realities of rape. The organization plans to continue to do this, and hopes to in-

clude the campus residence halls as additional locations for its lectures.

The group recently staffed an informational table at the Hult Center during the play "Extremities," which deals with a woman who is confronted by a rapist and her reactions to the situation.

Men Against Rape also sponsors various speakers and forums offered through the University. Last year, they helped put on the "Men and Masculinity" symposium lead by Martin Acker. Goss said that this year his group may be the principal sponsor of the symposium.

Another function of the organization is distributing free booklets to local bookstores. Printed on the booklets are both Men Against Rape and the Rape Crisis Network's phone numbers. Members of Men Against Rape are being trained on how to answer the RCN's crisis line.

Also on the booklets are many of the popular myths about rape, and Men Against

Rape's answers to them.

According to statistics compiled by the campus organization, one in three women will be raped in her lifetime and there is a 75 percent chance that it will be by someone she knows.

"The number one myth is that rape only happens in a dark alley," Goss said.

Goss said that many men who have committed the act of rape are not even aware they have done so because they take a woman's "no" to really mean "yes."

"A lot of times, it's a lack of communication. If the male is in the initiating role, it is his responsibility to begin communication," Goss said.

Goss said that the man's responsibility should begin at all levels of what he calls the "continuum of violence."

"Somewhere along the line men are responsible. People say, 'what's wrong with a catcall?' when in reality its part of that continuum... Men think it's OK to catcall, then it's OK to harass, then it's OK to force

yourself on someone," he said.

Another important part of Men Against Rape is helping men deal with their feelings after someone they love has been raped. Goss explained some guidelines set by his group for men whose lovers have been raped.

First, listen to her and believe her story, Goss said.

"You'd be surprised at how many people say, 'you were just too drunk and don't remember

saying yes,'" he said.

It is also important to let the victim of a rape attack make her own decisions and for the man to have patience with the recovery process.

"Let her decide when to make love again," Goss said.

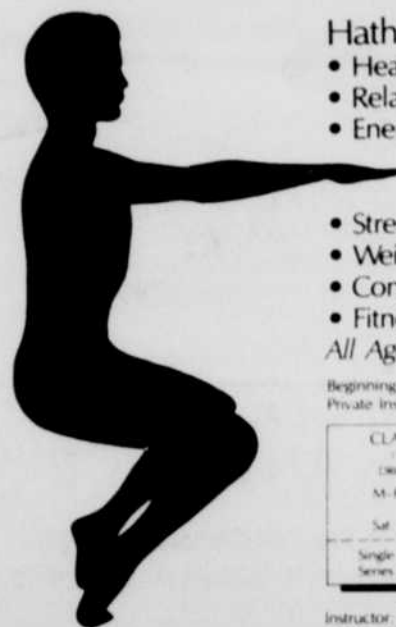
Finally, Goss said it was important for the man to take care of himself as well as being there for the victim.

"How can you be supportive when you're a mess?," he said.

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