



1



**PREVENTING CAMPUS VIOLENCE –
UNDERSTANDING VAWA AND
INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Kasey Smith, MA
Title IX Coordinator & Executive Director of Equal Rights & Title IX
Liberty University

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

2



Learning Outcomes

-  Understand the **historical** and **legal** foundations of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and its relevance within institutions of higher education
-  **Examine** core elements of VAWA and their relationship with Title IX and Clery
-  Identify **prevention** strategies and **educational** program requirements under VAWA
-  **Recognize** common challenges in implementing VAWA provisions in Higher Education

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

3



The History of VAWA

- Enacted in 1994**
 - Established federal grants to address domestic violence and sexual assault
- Reauthorized in 2000, 2005, 2013, 2022**
 - Each reauthorization expanded protections and funding
- VAWA 2022**
 - Reauthorized most programs under VAWA until 2027

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

4



Key Requirements of VAWA

2013 & 2022 Reauthorization

- Required crime reporting
 - Expanded definitions
- Victim rights & accommodations
- Implement fair & impartial disciplinary proceedings
- Comprehensive prevention programming
- Specific training must be issued
 - Trauma informed
 - Tailored to specific populations

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

5



VAWA Crime Categories

Domestic
Violence

Dating
Violence

Stalking

Sexual
Assault

Sex
Trafficking

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

6



Domestic Violence

- A **felony or misdemeanor crime of violence** committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred.
- Includes the “use or attempted use of physical abuse or sexual abuse, or a pattern of any other coercive behavior committed, enabled, or solicited to gain or maintain power and control over a victim...” [34 U.S.C. § 12291\(a\)\(8\)](#).

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

7



Domestic Violence

Forms of Abuse:

- **Physical** – Hitting, pushing, restraining, or physical harm
- **Sexual** – Unwanted sexual contact or coercion
- **Emotional** – Manipulation, humiliation, or isolation
- **Economic*** – Controlling finances or access to resources
- **Psychological** – Threats, intimidation, or gaslighting
- **Technological*** – Monitoring, stalking, or harassment through technology

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

8



Dating Violence

- Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim
- The existence of such a relationship is determined by considering:
 - The *length* of the relationship
 - The *type* of relationship
 - The *frequency* of interaction between those involved
- Dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of abuse

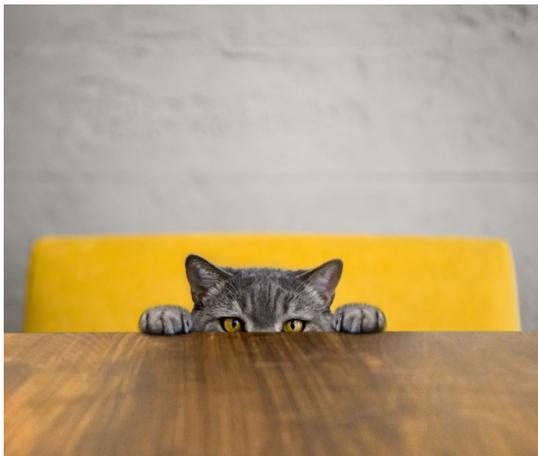
(34 C.F.R. § 668.46(a); Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013)

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

9



Stalking



A **course of conduct** directed at a specific person that would cause a *reasonable* person to:

- **Fear** for their own safety or the safety of others; **or**
- Suffer **substantial emotional distress**

Note: Each stalking case is unique and may involve **different behaviors and circumstances.**

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

10



Sexual Assault

Sex Offenses

- **Rape** – Non-consensual penetration, no matter how slight
 - Sodomy
 - With an object
- **Fondling** – Touching of private parts *without consent*
- **Incest** – Sexual activity between related individuals
- **Statutory Rape** – Sexual activity with a person below the legal age of consent

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

11



Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking is considered “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a *commercial sex act* (something of value is exchanged) induced by fear, fraud or coercion (18 U.S.C. § 1591)

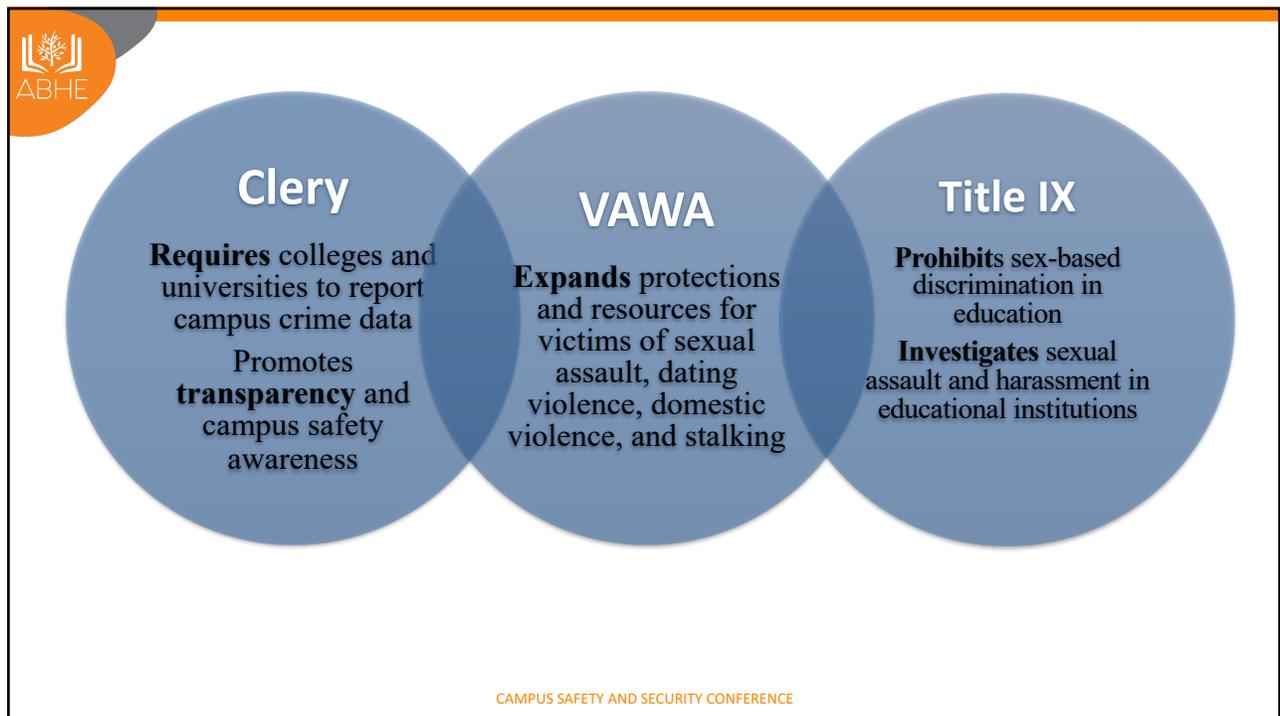
- Movement across a border is not a necessary component – Sex trafficking can occur within an individuals’ own community
- This crime hinges on the exploitation of another person
- Student populations are especially vulnerable to sex trafficking

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

12



13



14



VAWA Strengthens Clery & Title IX

- **Reporting** of sexual assaults

- *Rape*
- *Fondling*
- *Dating violence*
- *Domestic violence*
- *Stalking*



- **Investigation** of sexual assaults

- Placed new obligations on institutions to address sexual assault
- Establish specific procedures on how to address sexual misconduct
- Require a fair and neutral process
 - What is to be offered to victims
 - How communication should be sent

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

15



Notice of Rights and Options

Written Notification Must Include:

- **Reporting Options**
 - Report to **law enforcement, institutional officials, or both**
 - Option to **decline** to notify either authority
- **Protective and Legal Orders**
 - Right to seek **protective orders, no-contact directives, or similar lawful orders**
 - Information on obtaining and enforcing such orders
- **Accommodations and Adjustments**
 - Options to request changes in **academic, living, transportation, or working** situations
 - Available **regardless of whether a formal complaint** is filed
- **Supportive Resources**
 - Access to **counseling, advocacy, mental health, and medical** services
 - Provided **on campus** or through **local community partners**

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

16



Challenges in Implementing Requirements

- Staffing and limited resources
- Navigating complex and evolving regulations
- Balancing victim support with neutrality and due process
- Jurisdictional issues
- Achieving buy-in and cultural change
- Reporting dilemmas
- Training demands

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

17



Prevention and Education

- Primary prevention programs intended to stop:
 - Dating violence
 - Domestic violence
 - Sexual assault
 - Stalking
- Must **promote**:
 - **Positive** and healthy behaviors
 - **Foster** *healthy* and *mutually respectful* relationships and sexuality
 - **Encourage** bystander intervention
 - **Seek** to change behavior and social norms toward safe directions



CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

18



How to Implement Training



- Create an Education Team
- Create an Education Committee
- Consider a multi-disciplinary approach
- Identify stakeholders and network within the community
- Create “*buy-in*”
- Utilize social media
- Get students involved

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

19



Prevention and Education

Awareness Programs Purpose:

- Community-wide or audience-specific initiatives
- Increase knowledge and understanding of violence prevention
- Share information and resources to prevent violence
- Promote safety and reduce perpetration

All programs must be:

- **Culturally relevant**
- **Inclusive** of diverse communities and identities
- **Sustainable** and **responsive** to the community
- **Research-based** for value and effectiveness

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

20



Mandatory Training Requirements

Who:

- Title IX Employees
- Disciplinary Officials
- Campus Security Authorities (CSAs)
- Responsible Employees

What:

- VAWA and Clery Definitions
- Trauma-informed and impartial investigations
- Proper handling of supportive measures
- Procedures for a prompt, fair, and impartial process

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

21



The Importance of Education

Awareness & Education

- Increase knowledge of violence prevention
- Share resources and information

Prevention & Support

- Reduce risk and promote safety
- Provide assistance to those impacted

Empowerment & Support

- Encourage self-efficacy and resilience
- Strengthen community capacity to respond

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE

22



5 Key Takeaways

1. VAWA Strengthens Campus Safety

Institutions must not only comply with the law but build a culture where violence prevention and survivor support are *shared responsibilities* across the campus community.

2. Clear Definitions Guide Consistent Reporting

Understanding and accurately classifying *domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual assault, and sex trafficking* ensures institutions meet both **Clery** and **VAWA** reporting standards.

3. Rights and Options Empower Survivors

Written notifications of rights, resources, and accommodations are not optional — they are essential to survivor-centered care and institutional integrity.

4. Prevention Begins With Education

Effective prevention and awareness programs are *inclusive, research-informed, and community-based*, promoting healthy relationships and active bystander intervention.

5. Training Builds Confidence and Compliance

Regular, comprehensive training for investigators, CSAs, and responsible employees ensures fair, trauma-informed, and legally sound responses to every report.

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE