

Interpersonal Violence: Abusive Relationships, Non-Consensual Sexual Contact, and Stalking

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is Missouri's higher education substance misuse consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. The coalition is comprised of 26 public and private colleges and universities in the state working to prevent high-risk behaviors by implementing evidence-based strategies, including education, social norming campaigns, policy review and enforcement, and more. This brief includes data for the 23 4-year institutions in the coalition; 2-year campuses participate in a separate version of the survey, and their data is not included in this statewide aggregate. To measure progress and obtain data needed for the implementation of programs, PIP created the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) Survey. The MACHB is an annual, online survey that has been implemented each spring since 2007. The survey assesses the roles that alcohol, drugs (illegal and prescription), tobacco/nicotine, interpersonal violence, and mental health have on student health and wellness. This brief will focus on data related to interpersonal violence collected from the 2024 Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (sample size, N = 4956).

Abusive Relationships

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a subset of questions included in the MACHB. IPV refers to domestic violence, which includes, but is not limited to physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Examples of IPV are threats, sexual coercion, stalking, and more. The MACHB asks students to describe any IPV they have ever experienced, and any IPV they've experienced in the past 12 months, the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: IPV Occurrence

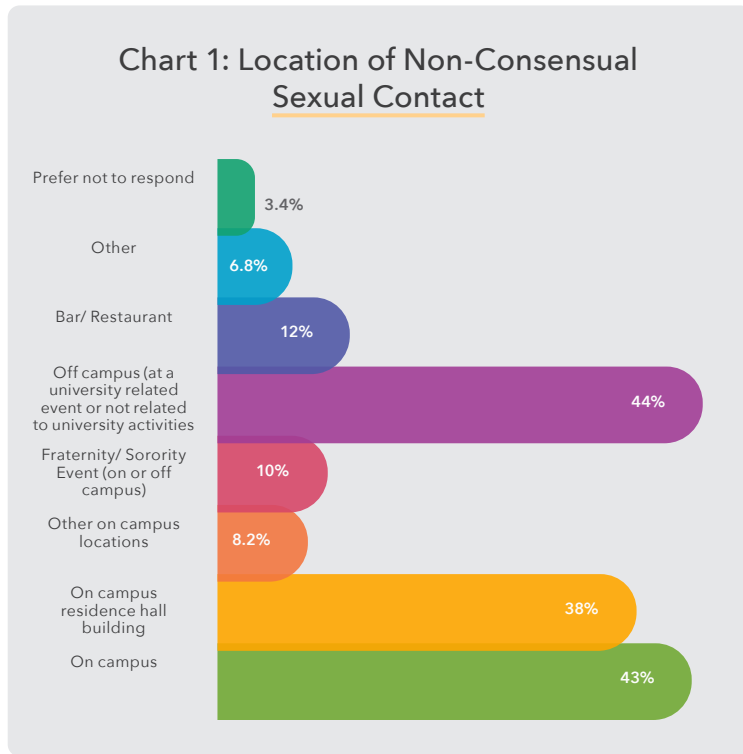
	Past 12 months	Ever
Verbally abusive (using words to demean, frighten, or control)	7.3%	17%
Sexually abusive (unwanted sexual activity, use of force/threats, sexual activity without consent)	3.2%	11%
Physically abusive (any non-accidental physical injury)	1.9%	6.9%

Emotionally/ psychologically/ mentally abusive (non-physical actions that manipulate, hurt, weaken, or frighten mentally/emotionally)	10%	22%
Financially abusive (controlling the ability to acquire, use, or maintain financial resources)	2.2%	5.1%
Using technology to abuse and/ or take advantage of (sending explicit photos without consent, online harassment, cyber-stalking)	1.7%	5.9%
Abusive in any other way/ unsure/ don't know how to define it	0.8%	1.9%
N/A (none of the above)	87%	70%
I prefer not to respond	0.6%	4.6%
Any abuse	13%	26%

Non-Consensual Sexual Contact (NCSC)

The MACHB also asks students if they have ever experienced non-consensual sexual contact (meaning

sexual contact against your will), 71% of students answered no, 25% answered yes, and 4.9% preferred to not respond. Like the question above, the MACHB also asks students if they have experienced non-consensual sexual contact within the past 12 months (as opposed to 'ever'). 94% of students answered no, 5.7% answered yes, and .3% of students preferred not to respond. The last question about non-consensual sexual contact asked where the contact occurred, results of this question can be seen in Chart 1.



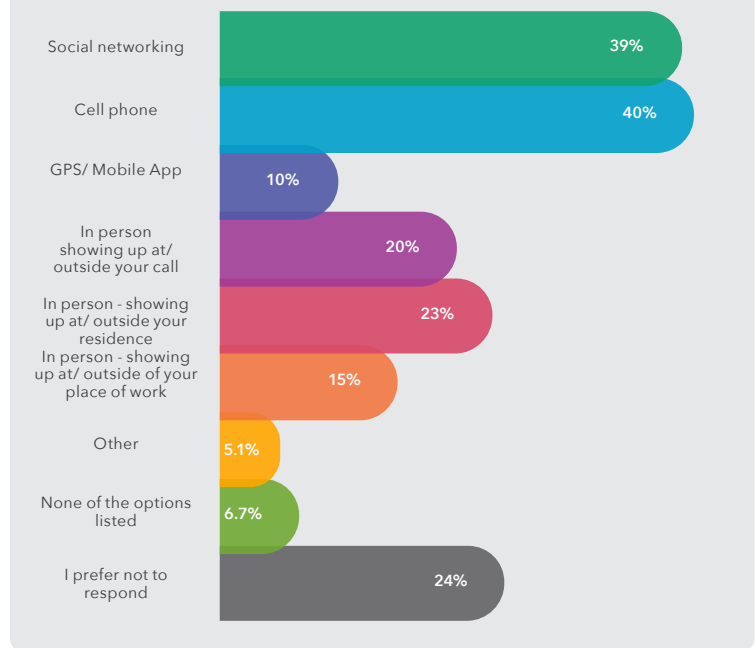
Stalking

Another form of IPV that is asked about in the MACHB is stalking, stalking is unwanted or repeated surveillance, harassment or contact by an individual or group toward another person. Students were asked if they experienced any method of stalking to make them fear fearful in the last 12 months. 91% of students answered no, 6.4% answered yes, and 2.8% preferred to not respond. It was also asked what method was used to make the victim feel fearful, results of that question are in Chart 2 below.

Summary

Research shows that interpersonal violence can have substantial negative outcomes on mental health,

Chart 2: Methods of Reported Stalking



economic security, and academic achievement.¹ Given that over 1 in 4 Missouri college students have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime and 1 in 4 students have experienced non-consensual sexual contact in their lifetime, it is critical to address and stop violence for students to be healthy, safe, and well. A multi-pronged approach to combat violence must include promoting social norms that protect against violence, teaching skills to prevent violence, providing opportunities to empower and support women, creating protective college campus environments, and supporting survivors of violence. Additionally, most Missouri college students are interested in learning how they can help stop violence – when surveyed by the 2024 MACHB and asked if they would be willing to complete an online violence prevention training program designed to reduce, prevent, or respond to harm in their community, 51% of students responded 'yes.'

Resources

Engage

Partners in Prevention created the Engage program, which is designed to introduce students to the concept that by contributing to a culture of care within their campus community, they can be a part

of creating a safer campus community. Engage provides information on the reduction of harm related to substance use, interpersonal violence, acts of bias and discrimination, and suicide/ mental well-being. The program aims to reduce chances of substance misuse, IPV, discrimination, and suicide, and teaches students how they can intervene if they know someone struggling with any of these issues. Engage is available to any higher education campus in Missouri. More information can be found at our [Engage program website](#).

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

The CDC's [Sexual Violence on Campus: Strategies for Prevention](#) and [STOP SV Technical Package](#) are two great resources for learning what works in violence prevention.

The Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MOCADSV)

The Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MOCADSV) unites Missourians with a shared value that rape and abuse must end, and advances this through education, alliance, research, and public policy. To learn more about MOCADSV visit mocadsv.org

Contact Partners in Prevention at (573) 884-7551.

Brief written by Kate Kazlauskas, PIP Program Coordinator, and Amy Dobrzycki, PIP Research Intern. Data collected and analyzed by Meg Mottola, PIP Research Coordinator and Kayleigh Greenwood, PIP Research Team Lead. Published March 2025.

1. Klencakova, L. E., Pentaraki, M., & McManus, C. (2023). The Impact of Intimate Partner Violence on Young Women's Educational Well-Being: A Systematic Review of Literature. *Trauma, violence & abuse, 24*(2), 1172-1187. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380211052244>