

Rutgers' general vision on sexual and gender based violence

Rutgers believes that all people, regardless of their sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, cultural background and socio-economic status, health status and disability have equal rights. One of these rights is the freedom to make sexual and reproductive choices, respecting the rights of others, and being safeguarded from gender based and/or sexual violence in any form, offline and online. This includes violence directed to people because of their gender, gender expression or gender identity, and violence that is sexual in nature, defined as "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting" (WHO). Prevention of sexual and gender based violence is therefore a thematic priority in Rutgers' strategy.

Sexual and gender based violence is rooted in socially constructed sexual and gender norms, in power imbalances and gender inequality. These norms are expressed in, and enhanced by, individual, interpersonal, cultural, institutional and political factors. The prevention of sexual and gender based violence aims for changing the underlying culture of harmful sexual and gender norms and behavior. This is therefore a matter of men, women and those who do not identify as either, including people with diverse sexual orientation.

In addition, Rutgers views the prevention of sexual and gender based violence in the context of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The broader perspective of sexuality as a fundamental, healthy and pleasurable aspect of life is an important starting point. Apart from stressing the importance of setting and respecting boundaries of others, the freedom of expression of sexual wishes and choices will be a key element in Rutgers' prevention programmes.