**TOPIC: INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT ON PATIENTS**

**SUBMITTED BY: Iowa Association of Nursing Students**

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WHEREAS, Sexual assault is defined as any sexual act that is perpetrated against one’s will; including rape, abusive sexual contact and non-contact sexual abuse (Chang, Fowler, Hirsch, Jilani, Kahle, Lin, Yu, & Yu, 2015, p. 211); and

WHEREAS, Sexual assault has many negative, long-term effects including but not limited to: chronic pain, genital injuries, migraines, gastrointestinal disorders, cognitive and social dysfunction, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, low self-esteem, and poor coping mechanisms leading to suicidal ideation and self-harm post-assault (Hellman, 2014, p. 2, 5); and

WHEREAS, In a qualitative study, it was found that sexual assault survivors may experience symptoms of PTSD twenty years after the initial assault, with the most critical of these being avoidance and emotional numbing (Elklit, Hansen, Hyland, Murphy, Shevlin, & Vallieres, 2015, p. 503); and

WHEREAS, In a quantitative study, it was found that women manifested more anxiety

and social protective behaviors, whereas men exhibited more depression

following the sexual assault (Ponce-Garcia, Madewell, & Brown, 2016, p.

541); and

WEHERAS, Of 378 sexual assault survivors, 47.3% suffered from depression versus 16.7% of 4508 non-sexual assault victims having depression (Faseru, Hart, Haskett, Johnson, Santaularia, & Welsh, 2014, p. 8); and

WHEREAS, Fear of revictimization is common among sexual assault survivors, leading to higher instances of post-traumatic stress disorder, and therefore stronger long-term negative reactions (Ullman & Peter-Hagene, 2016, p. 3); and

WHEREAS, 50% of sexual assault survivors were found to become less religious after

their assault (*attack*) (Hellmen, 2014, p. 5); and

WHEREAS, If a survivor is met with support, acceptance, and lack of judgment by a listener, there tends to be greater help-seeking behaviors, which lessens the severity of the long-term effects of PTSD including self-blame, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation (Hellman, 2014, p. 5); therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the National Student Nurses’ Association (NSNA) encourages state nursing associations and nursing schools to provide education to nursing students on the long-term effects that a previous sexual assault can have on a client by notifying state nursing associations of this resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NSNA recognizes that nurses’ demeanors and lack of judgement can impact a survivor’s care due to the long-term effects of sexual assault may have on the survivor’s health and well-being; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NSNA will demonstrate a commitment to increasing awareness of the long-term effects of sexual assault on patients by providing educational breakout sessions and other resources deemed appropriate by NSNA at the Mid-Year or Annual conventions, if feasible; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NSNA publishes resources and/or articles written by the Iowa Association of Student nurses about the importance of bringing awareness to the long-term effects of sexual assault to their website, in *Imprint*, and on social media, if feasible; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NSNA send a copy of this resolution to: American Nurses Association, Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses, American Forensic Nurses, Emergency Nurses Association, and all others deemed appropriate by the NSNA Board of Directors.