**NSVRC xChange Forum Podcast with Dr. Rebecca Loya Part One**

Donna Greco: You are listening to a podcast by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. The NSVRC serves as the nation’s principle information and resource center regarding all aspects of sexual violence and its prevention. This podcast is part of the NSVRC exchange series, where research and practice converge to end sexual violence.

My name is Donna Greco, and today I am very excited to be talking with Dr. Rebecca Loya, about her research on the economic impacts of sexual violence. Understanding the economic impact of sexual violence is a crucial area of study.

Donna Greco: What drew you to focus on this topic?

Rebecca Loya: Well I had been interested in sexual violence prevention and education for many years before I went to graduate school and when I entered graduate school in social policy my focus was on inequality and poverty alleviation. So I became interested in bringing together my two areas of passion and thinking about how sexual violence interrelates with poverty and economic inequality. And what I found was that although a lot of research had examined the economic dimensions of intimate partner violence, there was almost no research looking at the economic impact of non-IPV sexual assault. So I started to explore and I went and spoke to several service providers at rape crisis centers and asked them if they thought there were important economic dimensions that hadn’t be captured by research and they strongly agreed and urged me to continue and to do some research in that area. And so that’s how I got started with the research project.

Donna Greco: Can you briefly describe your study?

Rebecca Loya: Sure, so my study examines the economic impact of what I call non-intimate partner violence or non-IPV sexual violence for survivors. And the way that I defined that for my study was rape or sexual assault that was not part of a pattern of abuse by an intimate partner. So I just think that it is important to acknowledge that the perpetrator may have been a former intimate partner or a date or someone known to the victim but that it wasn’t part of a pattern of abuse. And I just think that is important to draw our attention to because a lot of research sort of understands rape as a single incident that people just get over and don’t think about the chronic effects that it might have. So this is where my study steps in and tries to ask the question: that even if someone has only experienced rape or sexual assault once or twice, does it have some type of long term effect? And the way I studied that was using both qualitative and quantitative methods. So the quantitative portion of this study, I examined a nationally representative data set to look at the effects of rape on survivor’s income and on their welfare utilization. And for the qualitative portion of the study, I interviewed rape crisis service providers and rape survivors about the economic impact of sexual violence; including, how they affect a survivor’s ability to work to earn and to support themselves.

Donna Greco: Thank you. And what were some of your key findings?

Rebecca Loya: Well I’ll share three of the major findings with you. The first one was that rape survivors earned significantly less compared to non-victims. So even after I controlled for other income determinants, rape survivors were earning $5,000 less per year than non-victims. And this effect appeared to operate at least in part through mental health outcomes, like post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and substance abuse. And I just wanted to note that what that looks like on kind of the macro level that this seems to last, the effects seem to last in the survivor’s life up to twenty years. So if that $5,000 lower earning stayed constant over twenty years that means that the survivor is earning $100,000 less over the course of her life. And since 1.27 million women in the United States are raped each year, this would scale to $6.4 billion in lost income sort of each year in our nation. So this seems like a significant economic problem to me. The second major finding is that rape survivors are twice as likely to use welfare, which is any form of cash assistance since turning 18. And this effect also persists after controlling for the survivor’s economic well-being in childhood. So white survivors were 2.4 times as likely to have used welfare since turning 18 and black survivors were 67% more likely. So again, pretty, pretty sizable effects. And the third major finding, which was from my interviews, was just that mental and physical health effects can disrupt survivors’ ability to work and can reduce their earnings. And also that rape created a number of expenses for survivors, including things like medical care and moving expenses, which then can fuel sort of this sense of economic instability.

Donna Greco: For more information on the NSVRC, please go to [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org) or call toll free at 877-739-3895. The NSVRC was founded by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape and is funded in large part by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.