

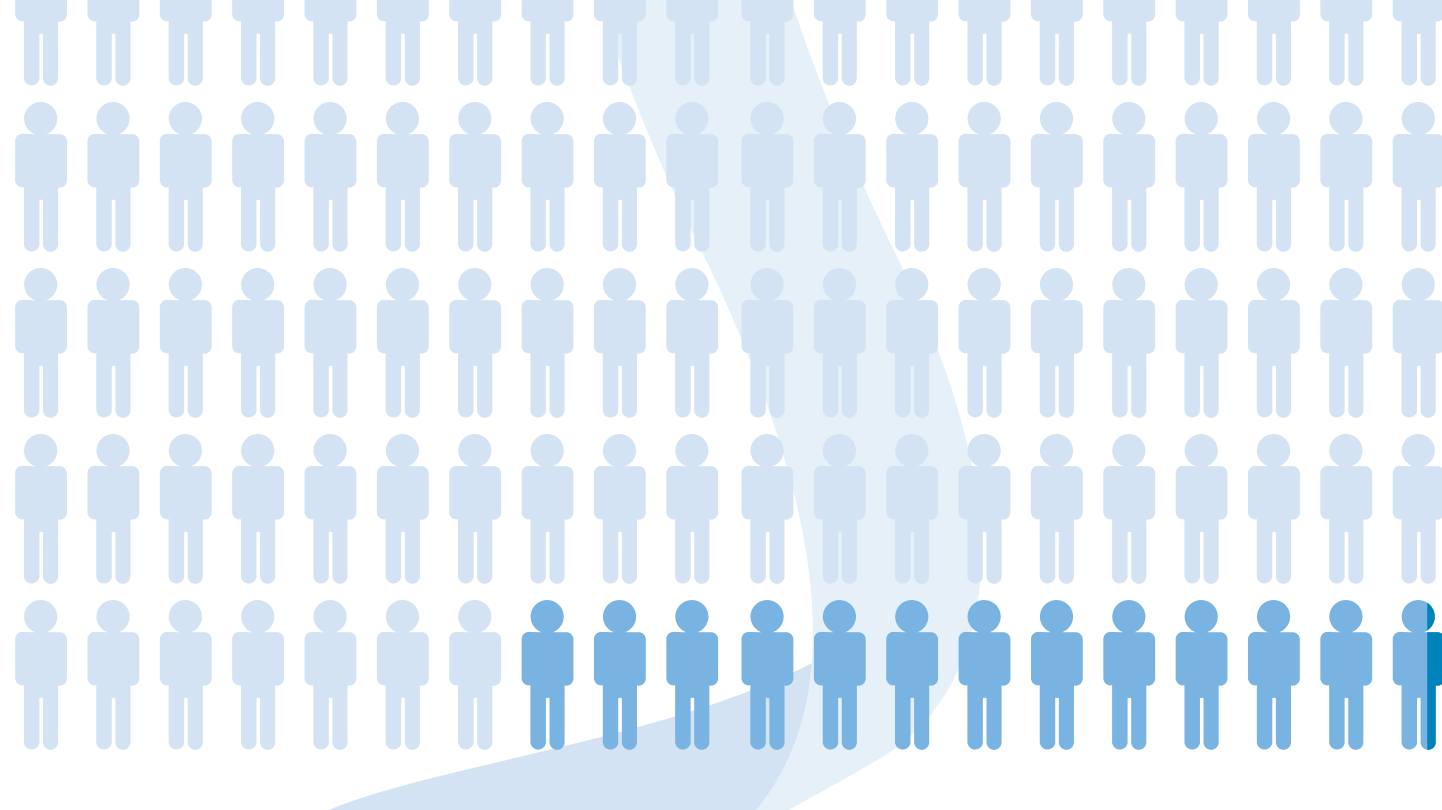
-LET'S TALK- THE UNDERREPORTING OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AT MU

BY THE NUMBERS

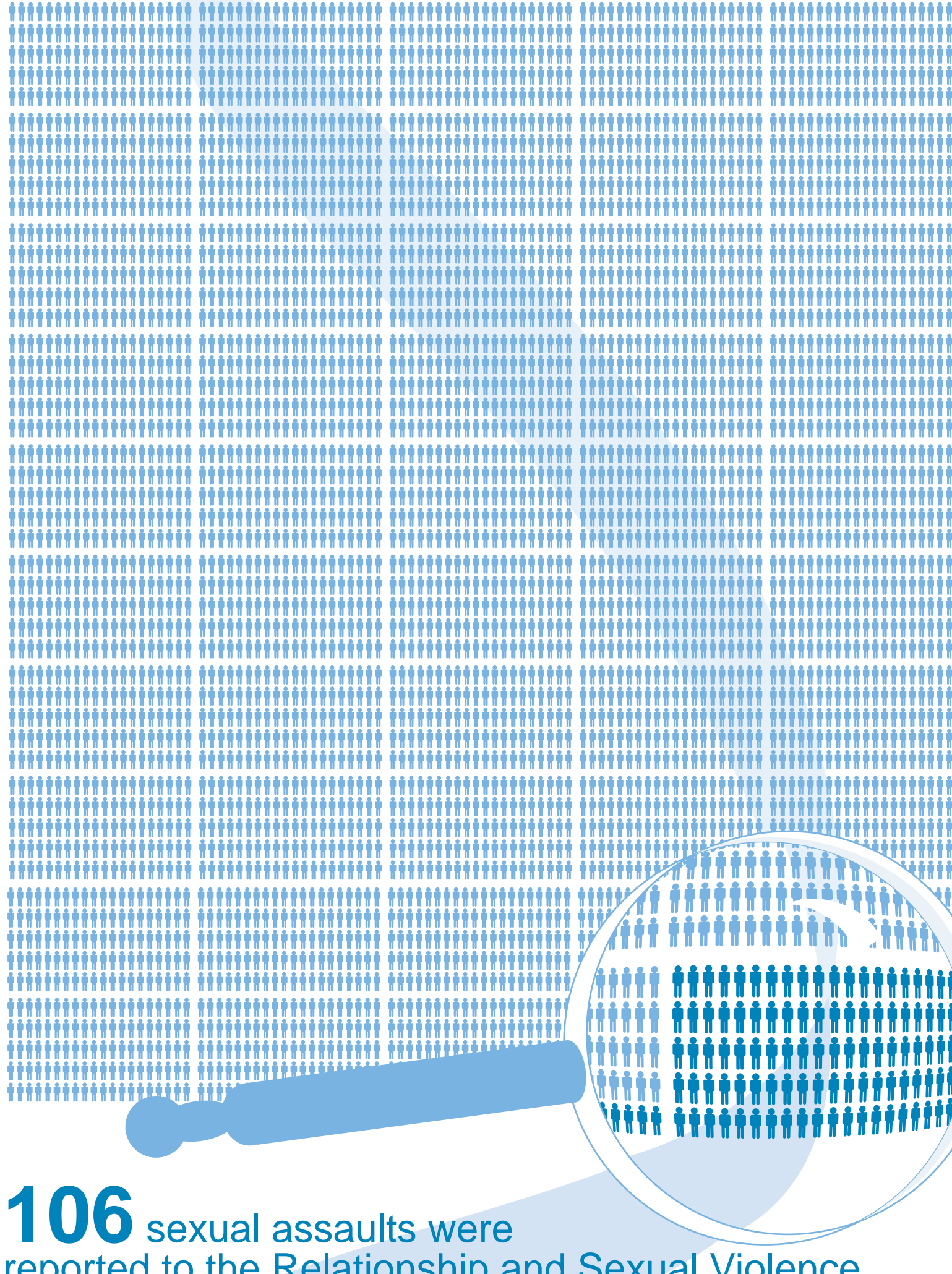
A recent study at one university found

16 of every **100** college students were victims of unwanted sexual contact in an academic year.

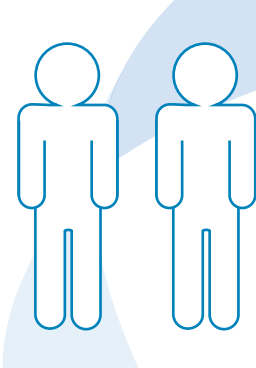
Only **2** percent of the victims told the police or sexual assault center.



On a campus of MU's size, that would be more than **5,000** victimizations in one academic year.



106 sexual assaults were reported to the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center and MU Police Department in 2012.



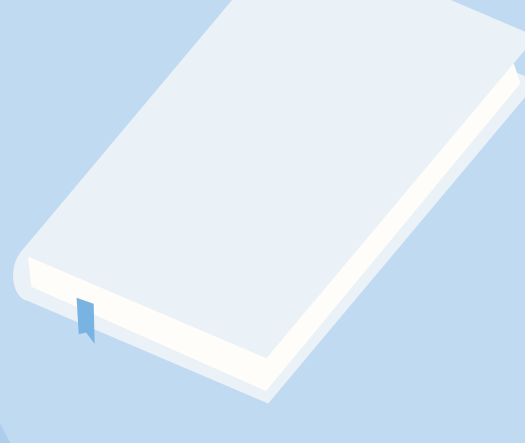
Two reports of "nonconsensual sexual behavior" were filed with the MU Office of Student Conduct the same year. Both resulted in penalties for the offenders.

WHY THE SILENCE?

1 Defining the crime: Many students minimize or deny cases of sexual assault because of misconceptions about what the crime actually is. The UM System code of student conduct defines it as any "nonconsensual sexual behavior," but Missouri law is far more specific. A perpetrator of sexual assault is commonly an acquaintance of the victim, and the act is not necessarily violent.

"Everyone is still in this mindset that it has to be someone jumping out of the bushes."

-Donnell Young, former coordinator for MU Office of Student Conduct



2 A trying trial: The lengthy and often difficult process of prosecuting sexual assault can be daunting for victims. The use of drugs such as alcohol or "roofies" and the common lack of eyewitnesses can complicate cases. The public nature of a trial and fear of having to relive the experience turn many victims away from prosecution.

3 Culture of blame: Victims of sexual assault can face disbelief and blame from their peers and community at large. In 2012, an MU student withdrew from the university after receiving social media criticism for accusing basketball player Michael Dixon of rape.

"It is hard enough to report your attack without the harassment of your entire community."

- From MU's Feminist Student Union in a November 2012 op-ed



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What is sexual assault?

Have you gone beyond stereotypical depictions of rape to more broadly consider the matter of consent? Legal terminology, medical jargon and college culture are often not in alignment on basic definitions and perceptions.

Who's already talking about sexual assault, and who should be talking about it?

Whom do you wish you could have an open discussion with, and what would make that conversation possible? Is there anything you wish law enforcement officials would do differently? How about campus officials? How about students? How about people you enter into romantic relationships with?

How can our culture evolve to make victims feel more comfortable speaking about sexual assault?

What do you think would lower the barriers for victims deciding whether to share their experiences with law enforcement, friends and family?

What else should we all be asking?

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