

10/17/2016



OFFICIAL STATEMENT: Please feel free to distribute

The Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) released this statement from ATSA President Michael Miner and Executive Director Maia Christopher on behalf of ATSA's Board of Directors in response to the recent media dialogue about unwanted sexual touching and groping.

The words and actions of individuals with status and influence within our culture have profound effects on what our society considers acceptable. When role models for our children express and encourage views that devalue women and condone and celebrate non-consensual sexual behavior, attitudes and beliefs are endorsed that seemingly give permission for sexual assault. Consequently, victims may be less likely to report an assault, and bystanders may be discouraged to intervene when they see or hear sexually abusive situations.

A society that objectifies women and encourages men to believe that wealth, social status, and celebrity entitles them to sex sends an insupportable message that sexually demeaning words and unwanted sexual actions are acceptable. We must insure that our society does not characterize statements endorsing nonconsensual touching as "locker room talk" in that this minimizes the traumatic impacts of sexual assault and endorses distorted views that promote sexually aggressive behavior.

The Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers is dedicated to the prevention of sexual abuse. Our members include the world's leading researchers about sexual violence, as well as a global network of interdisciplinary professionals who provide treatment interventions and community supervision for those who commit sexual crimes. We also engage in primary prevention programs for those at risk to cause sexual harm, we provide treatment services for victims, and we advocate for evidence based policies and practices to prevent sexual violence in our communities. Every day we observe far-reaching effects that attitudes and beliefs regarding women, violence, and consent have on individuals, families, and communities.

We are very encouraged to hear the outrage of many elected officials, athletes, and celebrities. It is the responsibility of all of us to demonstrate respectful sexual behavior, and this obligation is especially profound for those in public leadership positions. Those in positions as role models should demonstrate attitudes, values, and behaviors that advance the prevention of sexual abuse and accountability for those who engage in abusive and objectifying behavior.

If you would like more information on sexual abuse perpetration or ATSA, please visit www.atsa.com.

Michael H. Miner, PhD, President
miner001@umn.edu

Maia Christopher, Executive Director
maia@atsa.com

On behalf of the ATSA Board of Directors