

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH 2026

AN OVERVIEW

SEXUAL

ASSAULT

AWARENESS

MONTH



MIWSAC
Minnesota Indian Women's
Sexual Assault Coalition

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAAM

There have **always been** individuals and communities advocating for prevention and ending sexual violence.

The official acknowledgement of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) began around two decades ago, but **the fight against sexual violence has existed for much longer than that.**



A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAAM (CONTINUED)

In the U.S., movements for social change and equality began to gain traction in **the 1940s and 50s with the civil rights era**. Open discussions of the realities of sexual violence were limited, but **advocacy for equal rights began to challenge the status quo**.

Leading this movement were **Black women, Indigenous women, and other women of color**; it was these women working at **the intersection of race-based and gender-based violence** who championed the framework of what would become the movement against sexual violence.

1,2 NSVRC, “History of Sexual Assault Awareness Month.” <https://www.nsvrc.org/saam/history>



SEXUAL VIOLENCE & COLONIALISM

Indigenous communities experienced sexual violence at the hands of European colonizers beginning in the 15th century with colonial contact.

Rape and other forms of sexual violence were **used as tools of oppression and conquest against Indigenous communities**, with this legacy of violence against Native communities continuing today.

3 Gerolami, G (2016), "Rape as colonial legacy."

4 NSVRC, "Foundations of Advocacy." https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Module_4_History_of_movement.pdf



RESISTANCE & THE FIGHT AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Since colonial contact, **our communities have resisted sexual violence against our people** in tandem with resisting settler colonialism—often these forms of resistance are intertwined.



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*Access MIWSAC's SAAM
Toolkit at the link below*

miwsac.org/SAAM

