

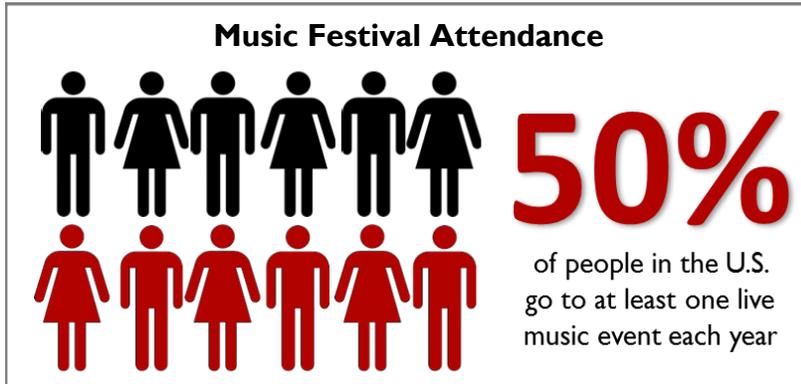
Sexual Harassment and Violence at Music Concerts and Festivals

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Sexual harassment and violence frequently occur at music events in the United States, as well as internationally. Crowd dynamics, inadequate crowd monitoring, alcohol consumption, and other factors may contribute to the prevalence of harassment and assault in live music settings.

Key Stats

1

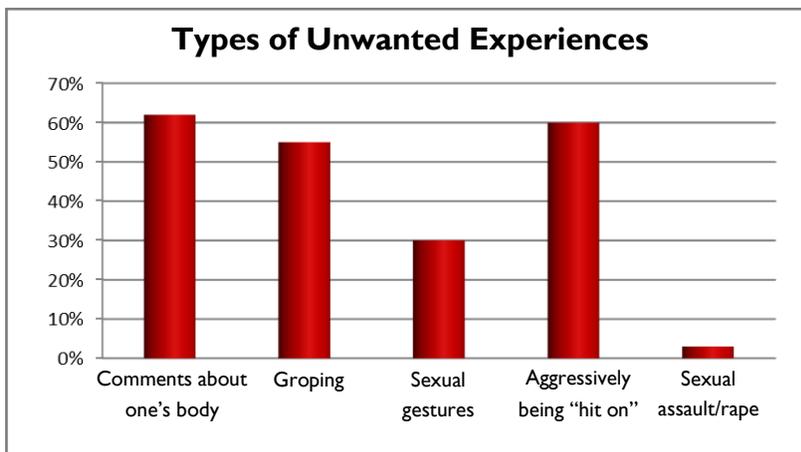


Source: Nielsen Music 360, 2017

Sexual violence occurs each year at music festivals across the United States.

Half of the U.S. population goes to live music events each year, with 33% going to concerts and 18% going to festivals (Nielsen Music 360, 2017). Given how many people attend live music events, it is likely that hundreds of thousands are sexually harassed and assaulted at music events every year.

2

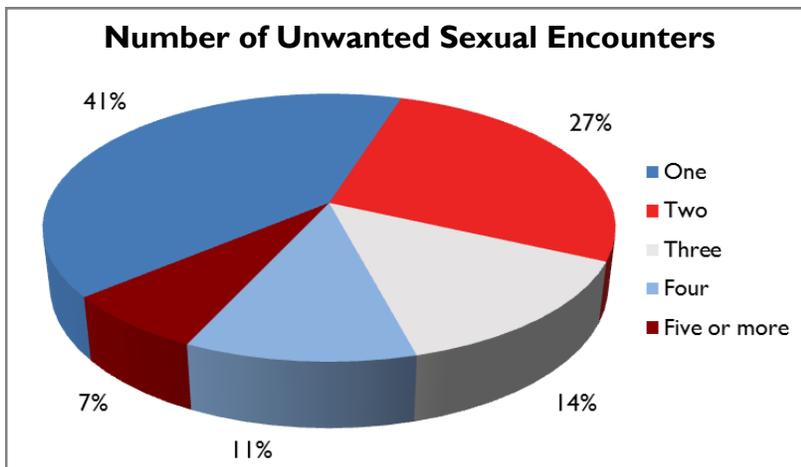


Source: Our Music My Body Survey, 2017

Ninety-two percent of female fans in a recent survey reported experiencing harassment at a music festival.

Among survey respondents who reported some type of harassment at a music event, 62% received unsolicited comments about their body, 55% had been groped, and 3% had been sexually assaulted or raped (OMMB, 2017). Similar trends occur in other countries (i.e., United Kingdom).

3



Source: YouGov, 2018

Victims may have multiple experiences of unwanted behavior at events.

A recent survey revealed that 30% of women have experienced some type of unwanted sexual behavior while at a festival. The majority of these women experience multiple unwanted encounters. Forty-one percent of women have experienced 2 or 3 forms of unwanted sexual behavior, and 18% have experienced 4 or more.

Music concerts and festivals draw millions of attendees in Nevada, the United States, as well as internationally, every year. Despite the fact that these events provide security for the safety of performers and attendees, the context of these events create settings that may facilitate sexual assaults.

The prevalence of sexual assaults at music events is reflected in the finding that over half (55%) of individuals in a recent survey (OMMB, 2017) reported being groped at a music festival or concert. For example, a reporter for *TeenVogue* was groped 22 times in 10 hours at *Coachella* in 2018 while writing a story on sexual assault at music festivals (Papisova, 2018). Further, in the past 10 years, *Coachella* has had 7 reported and verified sexual assaults (Tadayon, 2017). *Bravalla*, Sweden's largest music festival, was cancelled for 2018 after there were 23 sexual assaults and 4 rapes reported from 2017 (The Guardian, 2017). Given that sexual assaults are underreported, it is highly likely that many more of these crimes are actually committed at music concerts.

Contributing Factors

Several factors may contribute to sexual violence at festivals including crowd size and seating plan. Thousands of people attend concerts and music festivals, and events may have as many as 125,000 individuals per day (e.g., *Coachella*). General admission is used to increase attendees at an event, which produces densely packed crowds that may be difficult for security personnel to adequately monitor. Crowd surveillance becomes more challenging with decreased lighting during music sets. Further, dancing and crowd surfing increase opportunities for unwanted physical contact. Some festivals, such as *Burning Man* in Nevada, have sexual expression as a key component. Combined, these factors increase the likelihood of sexual violence occurring.

In addition, a recent survey shows that 75.5% of people have consumed alcohol at a music festival (TickPick, 2018). Approximately half of sexual assaults occur when alcohol is used by the victim, perpetrator or both (Abbey et al., 2001). Although the problem of alcohol consumption is present at many music concerts, it may be an even greater issue at music festivals where attendees can consume alcohol for the better part of a day.



Potential Solutions

A variety of solutions for reducing sexual offenses at music concerts and festivals have been proposed. These include:

- Promoting an explicit anti-harassment policy
- Increasing bystander intervention
- Creating a centralized place for help and reporting
- Providing cell phone applications for contacting security
- Training staff to identify and respond to nonconsensual behavior
- Increased surveillance via technology or elevated positions
- Imbedding individuals in the crowd to provide monitoring and allow immediate reporting
- Managing alcohol intake

Venues and concert promoters may feel increased pressure to implement effective techniques for sexual assault prevention and reporting as a reflection of the *#metoo* movement. Further research needs to be done to test these and other potential solutions and identify the most effective approaches.

For references in this Stat Sheet, see the CCJP website: www.unlv.edu/CCJP

Stat Sheets are produced by the Center for Crime and Justice Policy at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The Center is housed in the Department of Criminal Justice, which is located in the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs. *Stat Sheets* provide summaries of various criminal justice system practices in Nevada and other states.