Patterns of Help-Seeking Among Emerging Adult Victims of Sexual Assault, Intimate Partner Violence and Stalking

40% of emerging adults do not attend college, university, or pursue other post-secondary education, yet most research on emerging adult (age 18 - 25) victimization focuses almost exclusively on emerging adults who are enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

While many emerging adults participate in activities that may expose them to victimization, researchers have noted that those not engaged in post-secondary education may be at a greater risk.

The research highlighted here focuses on the help-seeking patterns of emerging adults who experience stalking, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, or a combination of these behaviors.

Most emerging adult victims seek informal help or no help at all. Informal help-seeking includes talking with family, friends, or romantic/sexual partners. Formal help-seeking includes talking with police, medical personnel (such as a doctor or nurse), a counselor, or crisis hotline operator.
Nearly all emerging adults who turn to a friend find them helpful regardless of enrollment status at a post-secondary institution. Emerging adults who turned to the police were equally as likely to find the police helpful as unhelpful.

Over half of emerging adult victims rely on friends, who represent the most common source of help.

Few emerging adult victims seek help from formal sources.

For example, only 8% of non-college and 13% of college emerging adult victims sought help from the police.