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Speaker uses humor to discuss rape

Tue, Feb 24, 2004

KARI INGERSOLL
Observer-Dispatch

HERKIMER -- Mike Domitrz remembers that phone call he got one day while at college as if it were yesterday. The chilling news from home -- his youngest sister was brutally raped.

More than 100 students gathered Monday at Herkimer County Community College to listen to Domitrz who speaks nationally on sexual assault in his program called "Can I Kiss You?"

In 1990, Domitrz began his program, which forces audiences to take a look at their own dating patterns through interactive participation and real life situations.

Even with the severity of the topic, Domitrz balances his program with real life and humor, which includes audience participation and role-playing.

"Most people come to the program with their guard up. I start with humor to bring the audience in," Domitrz said.

When it comes to the seriousness of sexual assault, however, it's no joke for Domitrz.

Wendy Marchese, a counselor at HCCC, said the college provides students with several programs a year dealing with sexual assault awareness, including several focused on binge drinking and substance abuse.

In addition, she said, students can go to the counseling office any time during their office hours for free, confidential service. Students are also provided a 24-hour rape crisis phone number for emergencies after the office is closed.

The main thing, Domitrz said, is if you are not comfortable talking about something, how could you be comfortable doing it?

MIKE DOMITRZ

* **Web site:** canikissyou.com.

* **Book:** May I Kiss You? A Candid look at Dating, communication, respect and Sexual Assault Awareness

24-Hour Rape Crisis Hotlines:

* **Oneida County:** 797-7740

* **Herkimer County:** 866-4120

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