DSVRT to establish sexual referral network in Unilag

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In line with the mandate of the Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode to embark on various sensitisation and enlightenment campaigns, the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team (DSVRT) recently engaged University of Lagos (UNILAG) students on Sexual Assault Prevention, Rape and Domestic Violence.  
  
The Sexual Assault Prevention Drive for Higher Institutions organised by DSVRT in partnership with the Pastor Bimbo Odukoya Foundation is aimed at addressing issues of sexual harassment, date rape, safety on campus, the role of a bystander and prevention. The first drive held during the week, coincided with the orientation session for new students.  
  
The Students were given tips on how to avoid being victims of sexual assault. They were also informed on how to stay safe in social settings, some of which include making a plan B for emergency exits from a place, protecting their drinks, avoiding clubs or parties that charge men but let women enter and drink for free.  
  
  
  
Students were also informed and educated on the legal implications of committing sexual assault offences, and some were surprised to hear that these crimes carry up to life imprisonment.  
  
Conversely, students were informed of their roles as bystanders, in intervening and assisting to prevent sexual assault. They were taught to CARE: Create a distraction, Ask directly, Refer the matter to an authority and Enlist others.  
  
Students were also given tips on how to date smart, some of which include setting limits and being clear on them, being mindful of behaviours of their partners some of which include degrading mannerisms, extreme jokes or language, violent tendencies, and controlling or overbearing tendencies.  
  
A Manual on Sexual Assault prevention, which encapsulates all the issues, raised at the interaction was prepared by DSVRT and distributed to all the students present. Most importantly, DSVRT is working on establishing a referral network in UNILAG to ensure that willing students are trained and empowered to act as first responders to sexual assault cases, which occur on campus.  
  
The Guidance and Counselling Department of the University of Lagos assured the Team of their commitment to continue to partner with DSVRT in addressing these issues.