

A **SplashCreative**
Research Findings Report
Memphis Says NO MORE
Focus Groups, Phase I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Splash Creative conducted three focus groups. The sessions were held on June 22, June 24 and July 20. They lasted 90 minutes, 94 minutes and 88 minutes, respectively.

The first two sessions took place at a former public library, now a University of Memphis facility. The third focus group was conducted at West Memorials, an office space on Broad Avenue. An observer attended the first two sessions, and was introduced at the end of each. She then explained in detail the reason for the focus group research, and answered questions from the participants. All attendees were paid a \$50 stipend for their time, and as an incentive to participate.

Altogether, 28 people participated in the sessions. Attendees came from neighborhoods across the city, including Midtown, Frayser, Orange Mound, East Memphis, Berclair, Downtown, North Memphis, Bennington Park, Southeast Memphis, Binghampton, the University of Memphis area, and Raleigh; one participant came from each of these cities: Germantown, Bartlett, and Collierville. A wide range in ages, gender and race background were represented. The racial and gender breakdown:

Men: 15	Women: 13
Caucasian: 12	African American: 16

Each session made use of the same prepared script. Some questions brought out more discussion than others, from session to session, as will be seen.

Sessions 1 and 2 contained a mix of men and women. Session 3 included nine men only. The latter session was added because focus group facilitators noticed some hesitancy among the men in the first two sessions to speak up on one or two occasions (as women were animated, men grew quiet). This reticence did not show up in the third group, when no women were present. Each session took place around a table.

Where possible, light-hearted humor was interjected by the facilitator to counteract expected difficult moments. A safe place atmosphere was maintained throughout, even when sharp disagreements came up.

The focus results show a high awareness generally about the problems of domestic violence and sexual assault and rape, and considerable knowledge that there is an ongoing rape kit testing issue, although many of the details on that issue were only vaguely known by most.

Results also demonstrate that the city and its citizens are effectively a blank slate as the Memphis Says NO MORE campaign gets under way. Only 6 of the 28 respondents had heard of NO MORE, and only four of them were aware of a Memphis edition.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

First Questionnaire

Participants were asked whether the following nine civic problems in our city are “major” problems or “minor” problems (or don’t know).

The items listed were in no particular order; domestic violence and sexual assault/rape were placed apart from each other in the list so as to be considered separately. (Boldface emphasis here was not included in the questionnaires passed out.) Results:

Poverty	Major 82%	Minor 18%	Don’t Know 0%
Local Gov. Finances	Major 61%	Minor 25%	Don’t Know 14%
Domestic Violence	Major 77%	Minor 19%	Don’t Know 4%
Abandoned Prop/Blight	Major 68%	Minor 25%	Don’t Know 7%
Public Education	Major 79%	Minor 17%	Don’t Know 4%
Unemployment	Major 64%	Minor 25%	Don’t Know 9%*
Race Relations	Major 82%	Minor 18%	Don’t Know 0%
Sexual Assault/Rape	Major 75%	Minor 21%	Don’t Know 4%
Homelessness	Major 57%	Minor 36%	Don’t Know 7%
Crime	Major 82%	Minor 11%	Don’t Know 7%
Drugs	Major 50%	Minor 39%	Don’t Know 11%
Transportation	Major 43%	Minor 36%	Don’t Know 11%

The responses show that poverty, race relations, crime and public education were believed to be the biggest problems facing the city, closely followed by domestic violence and then sexual assault/rape. However, the participants were not asked to rank the problems, even though the problems were listed together. Participants were asked to decide whether they are “major” or “minor.” Therefore, taken from another point of view, one-fifth of the participants rated DV and sexual assault/rape as minor problems in Memphis.

** Two of the respondents did not give an answer about “unemployment.”*

Second Questionnaire

Participants were asked to mark on the second sheet whether certain statements are “true” or “false” or to mark “don’t know.” Results:

Most victims of domestic violence are women

True 89% False 11% Don’t Know 0%

Men are not victims of domestic violence.

True 0% False 93% Don’t Know 7%

Domestic violence only happens in poor neighborhoods.

True 0% False 93% Don’t Know 7%

Domestic violence only happens to minority groups.

True 0% False 100% Don’t Know 0%

Domestic violence happens among same-sex partners.

True 68% False 11% Don’t Know 21%

Most victims of sexual assault/rape are women.

True 82% False 18% Don’t Know 0%

Most sexual assaults/rapes are committed by strangers.

True 4% False 85% Don’t Know 11%

“Date Rape” just means the girl or woman changed her mind later.

True 0% False 90% Don’t Know 10%

Most cases of sexual assaults/rape are never reported to authorities.

True 82% False 4% Don’t Know 14%

It will be critically informative to see if the awareness and educational campaign may be able to show some movement on the sixth statement (that most victims are women), as 18% of the focus group attendees considered that a falsehood. Can there be an increase in the “True” choice after the campaign has penetrated the market place? It also can be expected that there will be movement (that is, decreases in percentages) on several of the “Don’t Know” responses if there is across-the-board increase in knowledge on the issues.

Third Questionnaire

This exercise asked participants to tell whether they were familiar with (had ever heard of) certain product or campaign slogans, and whether they could name the organization behind each slogan. “No More” was placed in the list two-thirds from the top. This questionnaire served to break the seriousness of the sessions, but also to determine any knowledge or familiarity with the No More positioning statement/brand. (Boldface for emphasis here only.)

Results:

	Familiar	Not Familiar	Name
Eat Mor Chikin	93%	7%	79%
Absolutely, Positively	55%	45%	18%
Just Do It	79%	21%	77%
I Am A Man	64%	36%	61%
Got Milk?	75%	25%	32%
It’s The Real Thing	64%	36%	53%
Let’s Move	43%	57%	14%
No More	21%	79%	14%
Friendly Skies	50%	50%	7%
A Little Dab Will Do Ya	46%	54%	7%
Ultimate Driving Machine	36%	64%	7%

“No More” was recognized by 6 of 28 participants either because of a close watching of local events or because of national advertising during a major sports event (NBA tournament). One person works in Shelby County government.

Four individuals wrote on their sheets a local connection as the organization behind the slogan. The four listed the following: “Domestic Violence Campaign”; “Domestic Violence Campaign/NFL?”; “Campaign Against Sexual Assault?”, and “Mayor Wharton DV Campaign.”

Since nearly four-fifths of focus group participants had never heard of NO MORE, there is much room for growth in awareness.

Fourth Questionnaire

This hand-out, aimed primarily at existing attitudes and behaviors, asked participants to decide if they agreed with, disagreed with or found “some truth” in statements about DV or sexual assault/rape. After the sheets were handed in, and discussion ensued, a re-emphasis on the last part of the sentence led some to see a few of the statements in a different light.

The biggest examples of this are the phrases “She shouldn’t dress in sexy clothes” and “Women shouldn’t stay out late at night.” But even after seeing those sentences purely in the light of rape or abuse, some men, mainly, couldn’t quite disagree with them.

Also, some had a hard time abandoning the statement “She should just leave!” Men in particular (five of six who agreed were men) liked the statement or saw some truth in it, and they often explained that it would be best if a woman victim didn’t “have” to live with her abuser. But when others would point out the difficulty for many women to leave (children, fear, lack of transportation or money, etc.), most men saw the statement differently.

One man: “I always saw it as making a choice to stay”

One woman’s retort: “So many don’t feel they have a choice”

Another man: “But don’t some know they have a choice and still stay?”

Second woman: “That’s true. But the thing is, it’s isn’t just a simple thing”

Third woman: “Listen to the difference in saying ‘She should leave’ and saying ‘She should just leave’”

Results:

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Some Truth</u>
She shouldn't dress in sexy clothes	17%	44%	39%
These are only women's issues	0%	89%	11%
But he's really a nice guy	5%	73%	22%
Boys will be boys	0%	78%	22%
It doesn't happen in good families	0%	89%	11%
She should just leave	33%	33%	33%
Next time I'll say something	33%	39%	28%
Women shouldn't stay out late	11%	39%	50%
Sometimes women are asking for it	11%	73%	16%
She seemed fine afterwards	0%	83%	17%
He warned her!	5%	95%	0%
It's not any of my business	5%	61%	34%

It is interesting that no one marked "agree" on four of the statements, demonstrating a high degree of sensitivity about those four.

As there were quite a few votes for "some truth" on seven of the statements (22% or higher), it seems likely that attitudes could be adjusted with a concerted educational effort, with the Memphis Says NO MORE campaign as the centerpiece.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

After Welcome, Introductions and Setting the Stage for participants in each session, the first questionnaire was passed out in which participants were asked to decide whether 12 specific civic issues were major or minor problems in the city... "We are going to pass out a sheet of paper containing a list of social issues that face Memphis and most communities. Please mark whether you think these problems are major or minor in our city. Or if you don't know, mark that."

Upon completion and a verbal listing of their beliefs <see Quantitative section>, people were asked to define "domestic violence." These were the typical answers and participants often elaborated on others' responses:

- "Mental and physical abuse involving a family member"**
- "Someone you are intimate with"**
- "It can be a spouse or your live-in or anyone in the house"**
- "It's assault"**
- "It's abuse of any kind"**
- "An abusive relationship"**
- "It can be verbal, too"**
- "Verbal and emotional abuse"**
- "Control issues when violence is involved"**
- "Child abuse and neglect"**
- "We see a lot of domestic violence from men to women, but it's also the other way around"**

Participants were asked to list other words or phrases they know or have heard that refer to violence in the home or among relatives and friends.

- "Battery"**
- "I think it's often a misunderstanding"**
- "It's called wife beating"**
- "Assault"**
- "It's a crime, basically"**

*Participants were asked next to define “sexual assault.”
People listed the following definitions:*

“Any type of nonconsensual physical assault”

“Rape”

“Harassment”

“Sex after someone says ‘no’”

“Uninvited attention.”

“Forced relations or intimacy”

Next the participants were given a sheet of paper (second questionnaire) and asked to mark whether they believe the nine statements it contained to be true or false or if they don’t know. In most cases, most of the respondents supplied similar answers, but there were some “hot button” topics related to how women dress or act. All three groups were very animated during these discussions and attitude differences were apparent between men and women, and between older women and younger women.

From Focus Group 1:

Man: “I’ve seen the way some women dress and it’s like they are asking for it.”

Woman, responding hotly: “If there’s a woman walking down the street naked, it doesn’t give you the right —“

Other women:

“What I find conservative might be sexy to some”

“This is a very sensitive issue for a lot of women”

“What’s required is self-control”

“It’s all about perspective: what I wear is my choice”

“I’m not Mother Teresa, but I sometimes dress the way some people might call ‘sexy’”

“Even if you cross the line in how you dress, it doesn’t give you the right”

Men started out participating in the conversation, but then the women talked and the men went quiet.

From Focus Group 2:

Man: “You have to understand men are very visual”

Older woman to other women in the group: “Right, they are. If you don’t want that type of attention, don’t dress that way”

Second woman: “I’m sorry, but just because I look appealing doesn’t mean you have the right to take ‘it’ from me”

Second man: “Think of it this way: if it’s my daughter, I don’t want her going out wearing the wrong thing, or staying out by herself late at night. I’m a dad”

Woman: “Different issue. No man, whether he’s a ‘nice guy’ or not, can take what he wants just because he wants to”

The rest of the men stayed quiet as other women strongly chimed in with similar statements.

From Focus Group 3 (all male):

“Going out late at night, or getting drunk or dressing provocatively — these are real problems”

“Women shouldn’t put themselves in a situation where they can get hurt”

“Drinking and carousing make for trouble”

“You know what we’re saying when we say this: it’s the victim’s fault”

“No. Just that it might bring on the problem”

“The problem is men sexually abusing and raping women, isn’t it?”

“Well, those are wrong”

“Men have to learn to respect women”

“Not all men are going to behave themselves”

“Look, we agreed before: those who assault women are committing crimes”

Participants were asked whether they considered domestic violence and sexual assault/rape more a public issue or more a private matter. Responses were across the board in all of the sessions and confusion reigned about whether the issue is private or public. In the first session, three quick responses came.

“It’s public”

“A private matter”

“A little of both”

Several people then spoke at once and the facilitator asked people to take turns.

“Why do we consider it a private issue at all? A lot (of assaults) take place in public areas”

“Call it a toss-up. But if it happens publicly, you want people to be aware.”

“If it happened in the home, wouldn’t it be a private matter?”

“But if it’s not dealt with, it can happen again.”

“Why treat sexual assaults and rape different? A crime is a crime, and so it’s a public issue.”

“Isn’t it up to the person and then the police to bring it up to the public?”

“Remember, people who are assault are ashamed. They may want to tell but they may want it to stay private too”

Most people in the second session found that rape and sexual assault are private and public matters.

“Generally, I’d consider it a public issue but a private matter”

“Thing is, it’s a matter of public policy and the law and how many law enforcement resources are allocated to helping”

“But it’s a private matter if it happened to people in a private setting”

“Or it starts as a private matter but becomes a public issue later when authorities are informed and step in”

“But even if no one knows about it, it’s a legal violation”

“And it’s a duty (under the law) to report if you suspect a child’s been hurt or violated”

“Also, the public has a right to know if they live around any rapists or abusers”

In the third session, participants generally agreed that sexual assault and rape are public concerns and a public issue arising out of a private incident. This agreement came after one man spoke up quickly and forcefully:

“If you rob a bank, it’s a public issue; it’s the same for rape and assault”

The following mildly heated exchange took place between two participants as recorded in the third session as the group discussed domestic violence specifically:

First man: “Let’s be honest, okay? It’s not always the man’s fault when a fight’s going on and the police are called”

Second man: “Well, its men that are the ones doing the violence most of the time, don’t you think?”

Third man: “My brother used to be a policeman and he said a lot of women call just to get even with the husband — or whatever he is”

Second Man: “Isn’t that what’s called the exception proving the rule?”

First man: “I don’t know about that, but I know that men have got to be given a break some times. Domestic violence — that’s what it is, domestic”

Second man: “Doesn’t matter where it takes place, if a man hits a woman or does some other violence to her, it’s wrong! That’s the understanding people have to have”

Third man: “Yeah, I’m not saying it’s right for anyone to get violent, and all the rapes are bad, but shoot! Men are taking a lot of heat, it seems to me”

Facilitator: “Let’s decide. Are men the majority of perpetrators of the violence?”

Three men at once: “Absolutely” “You bet” “Yes, they are”

The third questionnaire concerning slogans was passed out.

After that exercise the facilitator told participants that experts believe it is true that only one in four cases of domestic violence and sexual assault/rape are reported. They were asked why they think that would be so.

Participants in the three sessions gave much the same answers (women listed more reasons than did the men) and they included:

Fear of public shaming

Embarrassment

Fear of retaliation

Young persons not being sure of definitions of assault, even rape

Stigma in the work place, from co-workers, employers

Complicated family ties

Denial

Monetary costs of pursuing justice

Publicity

Scrutiny or interrogation

Not being believed

Medical exams are too invasive

Police can be hostile to a victim

Said one woman: “Some victims will tell you that police questioning is almost getting assaulted all over again”

*Participants were asked what they know about a local issue surrounding “rape kits.” The vast majority of the 28 people had heard of the issue, but most could not explain it well. Some people thought it was an issue resulting from a “lack of money” to keep up with testing. One individual in session two took it upon herself to explain that... **“there was a break-down in the system and something like 6,000 rape kits have never been tested to see who the rapists are.”***

*The only person in the third focus group who spoke up to explain the issue said, **“They have a problem getting labs to do all the testing.”***

It is interesting — and informative for communication purposes — that after many months news coverage of the rape kits backlog, so few of 28 people from across the city could explain what the issue is about, and those who thought they knew were mostly inaccurate on the details.

The fourth questionnaire containing statements made about DV and sexual assault/rape was passed to the attendees. Lengthy discussions occurred, especially on items where people marked “some truth” to the statements. <See Quantitative section.>

Participants were asked if they knew of any community resources to help victims of domestic violence or assault and rape.

Group one participants listed the following (some of which exist by the names mentioned and some of which do not):

Family Safety Center
Women’s Foundation
Women’s Shelter for Domestic Violence
Crime Victim’s Center
Family Exchange Center
YWCA
Caritas House

Group two listed:

Women’s Shelter
Women’s Hotline
Rape crisis Center
CAC
YWCA
MIFA
Police

Group three listed:

**Rape Crisis Center
Shelters for women
Police DV Unit**

The facilitator ended each session with an open-ended question that he told the group would not have a “yes” or “no” answer: In your opinions what can or should be done to stop domestic violence and sexual assault/rape?

The responses were broad but largely the same across all three focus groups. The reporter listened and recorded any key phrases (education, communication, more police, men should be more outspoken, solve underlying issues, or “Women should ...”

Educating the Public (voiced by eight people)

“Cut the head off the snake earlier”

“Educate earlier about sex and what is acceptable, starting with children”

“Put more value on personhood”

“Define for people exactly what are domestic violence and assault and even what is rape”

Leadership and Communication (four people voiced)

“Help the public understand all the problems”

“Tell the truth”

Better resources

“More police will help”

“And police training”

Solve the Big Issues

“We have to solve the problems behind these issues”

“Solve the problems that underlie the issues — poverty, hopelessness — and then we’ll have less crime all the way down the line”

CONCLUSION

A small number of participants (6 of 28) knew about Memphis Says NO MORE or the national NO MORE.