

# Rape Prevention and Education: Transforming Communities to Prevent Sexual Violence



**In the U.S., about 1 in 3 women and nearly 1 in 6 men experienced some form of contact sexual violence during their lifetime. Contact sexual violence includes rape, being made to penetrate someone else, sexual coercion, and/or unwanted sexual contact.**

Source: *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report.*

Sexual violence is a significant public health problem affecting the lives of millions of people in the United States. It can lead to serious short- and long-term health consequences including physical injury, poor mental health, and chronic physical health problems. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) works to keep Americans safe and healthy and to save lives and resources through prevention. CDC's role in sexual violence prevention is unique; no other federal agency is working to prevent sexual violence before it begins. This means CDC promotes comprehensive approaches to address the factors that contribute to risk for sexual violence and foster the factors that protect against sexual violence.

## CDC's Rape Prevention and Education Program

The Violence Against Women Act, passed by Congress in 1994, established the Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) program at CDC. The RPE program seeks to develop and strengthen sexual violence prevention efforts at local, state, and national levels.

The RPE program funds state health departments in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands. RPE grantees collaborate with state sexual violence coalitions, educational institutions, law enforcement entities, rape crisis centers, community organizations, and other stakeholders to implement state sexual violence prevention efforts. These collaborations strengthen state sexual violence prevention systems by leveraging resources and enhancing prevention opportunities. CDC experts provide intensive training and technical assistance to RPE grantees to support their prevention activities and ensure evidence-informed practices across the country.

## Current Activities of the Rape Prevention and Education Program

The RPE program encourages states to implement comprehensive, evidence-based prevention strategies using a public health approach. The program includes a continuum of activities to address the way individual, relationship, community, and societal factors impact sexual violence.

This approach is more likely to prevent sexual violence across a lifetime than any single intervention alone and is more likely to benefit the largest number of people and achieve significant reductions in sexual violence.

# Rape Prevention and Education Program

RPE grantees are currently:

- Delivering school-based primary prevention programs that educate youth on healthy relationships, such as Safe Dates.
- Training students from middle school to college to intervene when they see someone engaging in unhealthy behaviors. For example, Green Dot is an evidence-based bystander intervention program being implemented on college and university campuses.
- Working with communities to implement social norms approaches to promote safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments.
- Strengthening the ability of states and communities to plan, implement, and evaluate their sexual violence prevention efforts.
- Using CDC's [STOP SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence](#) to implement evidence-based strategies and approaches in their communities.



CDC also works with states to strengthen their ability to collect evaluation data about their sexual violence prevention strategies and to use this data to improve their work. To further this effort, CDC provided additional funding to 12 RPE states and territories to expand existing evaluation capacity and increase monitoring of state-level indicators of sexual violence outcomes. Ultimately, the innovative work of RPE programs will expand our knowledge, understanding, and practice to prevent sexual violence.

## Resources

### **Rape Prevention and Education:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/rpe/index.html>

### **Sexual Violence:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/index.html>

### **STOP SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sv-prevention-technical-package.pdf>