



# Sexual Violence on Campus: Strategies for Prevention

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
Division of Violence Prevention



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# Sexual Violence on Campus: Strategies for Prevention

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# Introduction

Sexual violence is a serious problem in the United States and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is committed to preventing sexual violence on college and university campuses. Sexual violence includes a continuum of behaviors such as attempted or completed rape, sexual coercion, unwanted contact, and non-contact unwanted experiences like harassment. Preventing sexual violence of all types requires a shift in culture and climate. Primary prevention, preventing violence before it occurs, is difficult work and change takes time. Culture change doesn't happen overnight, but culture change does happen.

Studies show that one in five women experience attempted or completed sexual assault during her college years. In recent college studies by Krebs and colleagues, sexual assault is defined to include “unwanted sexual contact that could include touching of a sexual nature, oral sex, sexual intercourse, anal sex, or sexual penetration with a finger or object” (Krebs, et al., 2009, p. 641). College women, as compared to their non-college peers and the general population, are disproportionately raped by men—often by someone they know (Krebs, et al., 2007; Krebs, et al., 2009). College men also experience sexual assault. In a 2007 study, it was noted that more than 6% of men experienced attempted or completed sexual assault in college (Krebs, et al., 2007). In a more recent study of 9 colleges, Krebs et al. found the prevalence rate for completed sexual assault (as defined above) experienced by undergraduate women was 10.3%, and the prevalence rate for completed rape among undergraduate women was 4.1%. For men, the study showed 3.1% experienced completed sexual assault and 0.8% experienced rape (Krebs, et al., 2016).

To address this problem, in 2014, the White House established the Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault. The Task Force had a mandate to strengthen federal enforcement efforts and provide schools with additional tools to help prevent sexual violence on their campuses (White House, 2014). Representatives from several federal departments and agencies, including CDC, were assembled to develop and implement steps to address the following goals:

- Identify the scope of the problem on college campuses;
- Help prevent campus sexual assault;
- Help schools respond effectively when a student is assaulted; and
- Improve, and make more transparent, the federal government's Title IX enforcement efforts.

The White House asked CDC to convene a panel of experts, in collaboration with the Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART) Office, and the Department of Education, in an effort to identify emerging, promising practices to prevent sexual violence on U.S. college and university campuses.

## The Think Tank and Action Planning Meetings

The Think Tank was held on May 5-6, 2015. The goal of the Think Tank was to gather and share information to inform the development of sexual violence prevention resources for Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) program grantees as well as college and university campuses. CDC co-sponsored the meeting with the American Public Health Association (APHA) which brought public health



knowledge and expertise in convening diverse partners. CDC and APHA invited over 30 subject matter experts to participate in a working meeting with key constituencies including sexual violence prevention practitioners, college and university administrators, college and university sexual violence prevention educators, students, researchers, law enforcement, CDC's RPE grantees, federal partners, and sexual violence resource centers. Attendees participated in robust brainstorming sessions to determine what was currently being implemented to prevent sexual violence on college and university campuses, emerging best practices, future directions for program and policy, and an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for prevention. PreventConnect staff, a project of the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, conducted a scan of current sexual violence prevention work taking place across the United States and provided an overview of their findings at the Think Tank. A Think Tank summary document was developed which framed critical areas for campus-based sexual violence prevention compiled during the Think Tank meeting. The Think Tank summary document was used during the Action Planning meeting to facilitate discussion and frame planning.

The Action Planning Meeting was held on July 21-22, 2015. The purpose of the Action Planning meeting was to convene CDC's RPE grantees and their state teams to provide an opportunity to use the Think Tank summary document to guide the development of multi-year actionable plans to prevent sexual violence on campuses. Fifteen Action Planning Teams attended the meeting and had the opportunity to review the summary and provide feedback based on their experiences with prevention work. Teams were made up of the RPE coordinator from the state health department, staff from the state sexual violence coalition, and representation from colleges or universities. CDC, APHA, OVW, and PreventConnect provided on-site coaching and technical assistance to guide the work of the state teams. Teams walked through a strategic planning process that included developing a mission statement and vision statement for their work, taking stock of current activities, and developing action plans that outlined next steps for their state's prevention work. Following the meeting, state teams continued to collaborate to fine-tune and operationalize their action plans.

This technical assistance document, *Sexual Violence on Campus: Strategies for Prevention* combines the findings from the Think Tank and Action Planning Meetings with the best available evidence on sexual violence prevention and reflects CDC's current thinking about how to prevent sexual violence on college and university campuses. This information is intended to be a starting place for sexual violence practitioners and their campus partners to begin planning for and implementing sexual violence prevention strategies in a college or university setting.

In the Department of Education Title IX guidelines, prevention is outlined in the federal guidance colleges and universities must follow. It is important for colleges and universities to move beyond compliance in order to create culture change. Implementing a robust prevention effort is invaluable to fulfilling the spirit of complying with federal guidelines. *Sexual Violence on Campus: Strategies for Prevention* outlines a framework for campus sexual violence prevention efforts that includes five components: comprehensive prevention, audience, infrastructure, partnerships and sustainability, and evaluation. This document defines each component and includes considerations for how to incorporate best practices into prevention planning and implementation. Based on CDC's [\*STOP SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence\*](#), evidence-based strategies and approaches that may be implemented on a college or university campus are also included. Finally, examples are shared from states implementing sexual violence prevention efforts on college campuses.

# A Framework for Campus Sexual Violence Prevention Efforts

There are five components that embody the key takeaway messages informed by both the Think Tank and Action Planning meetings. These components represent a framework (Figure 1) for CDC's approach to campus sexual violence prevention efforts. The integration of all five components offers an opportunity to implement prevention efforts to have greater impact on the reduction and prevention of sexual violence on campus.

The components include,

- **Comprehensive Prevention:** Strategies and approaches that complement and reinforce one another across the social ecological model, see below.
- **Infrastructure:** The basic organizational systems and structures needed to effectively implement sexual violence prevention strategies on a college or university campus.
- **Audience:** Broadly refers to the targeted audience. This includes recipients and observers of the prevention messages, campaigns, or strategies.
- **Partnerships and Sustainability:** Development of healthy working relationships with community stakeholders and partners can strengthen, coordinate, and align prevention efforts in order for them to be more sustainable over time.
- **Evaluation:** Essential public health practice that identifies what is working and what is not working with the programs, policies, or practices.

Figure 1. Five Component Framework





## Planning for a Comprehensive Approach to Campus Prevention

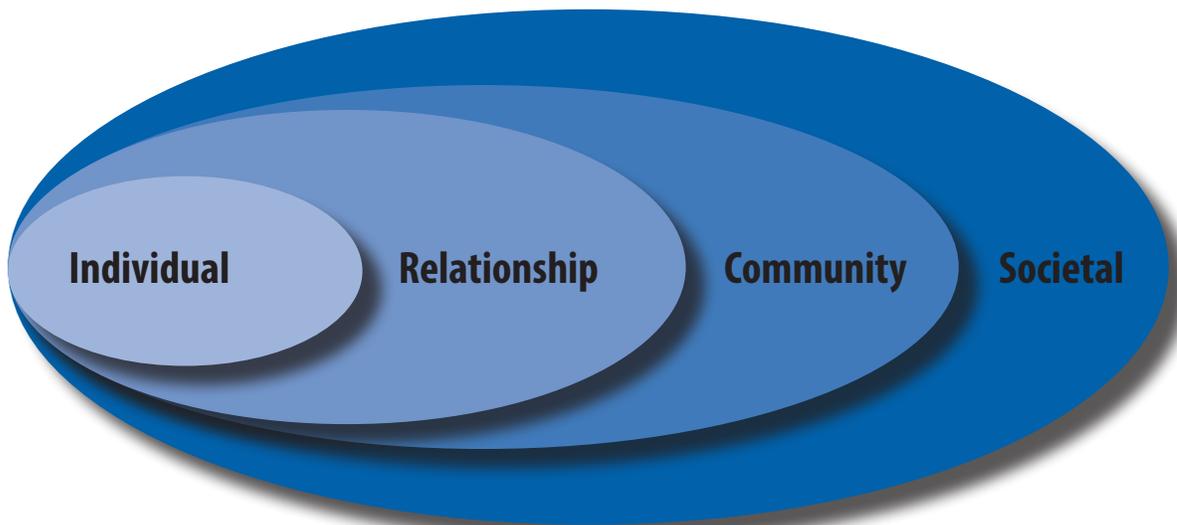
CDC addresses sexual violence by focusing on primary prevention, or preventing violence before it occurs, with emphasis on reducing rates of sexual violence at the population level rather than solely focusing on the health or safety of the individual (CDC, 2014). In violence prevention, the term “comprehensive” has come to take on different meanings. For the purposes of this document, comprehensive refers to strategies and approaches that complement and reinforce one another across the social ecological model.

CDC uses a four-level social ecological model (Figure 2) to promote understanding of the potential effect of violence prevention strategies. The model demonstrates the connection between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. The overlapping rings in the model illustrate how factors at one level influence factors at another level (Dahlberg, et al., 2002).

While violence prevention strategies can effectively take place at multiple levels of the model, CDC emphasizes the importance of incorporating societal, community and relationship level initiatives. These high-level changes, particularly at the college and university levels, may have the potential for a broader and more sustainable campus impact than a sole focus on individually-oriented approaches to violence prevention. It is important to consider a broad range of prevention strategies and ensure that risk and protective factors for sexual violence are being addressed at each level of the social ecological model.

For a campus to have a comprehensive approach, strategies should be in place to prevent violence as well as respond to violence after it has occurred. Primary prevention of sexual violence should complement secondary prevention strategies that address the immediate needs of a survivor after an assault, and tertiary prevention strategies that address longer-term follow up and support.

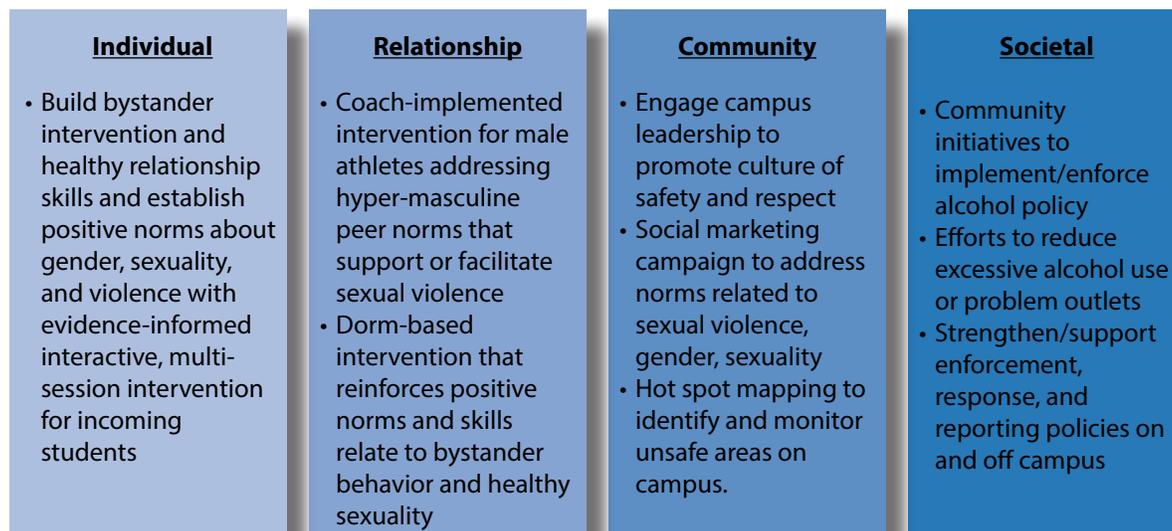
**Figure 2. Social Ecological Model**



Opportunities for action for campus comprehensive prevention include:

- **Implement prevention efforts across the social ecological model:** Activities and strategies should take place at the individual level, the relationship level, the community level, and at the societal level. Activities across the social ecology can complement and reinforce each other. For example, a bystander intervention program could be supported by a policy that mandates that incoming freshman receive training on sexual assault prevention resources. However, it is best to not limit prevention to one type of activity – a one hour online class or a one-time theater performance is not sufficient. Stand-alone activities are ineffective and not supported by evidence. Below is an example of a Comprehensive Campus-Based Primary Prevention Strategy for Sexual Violence Prevention (Figure 3, CDC, 2014).
- **Incorporate principles of prevention:** Prevention strategies should strive to incorporate the principles of effective prevention programs, which include being comprehensive, making certain that the audience receives messages multiple times to ensure a sufficient dose of and exposure to the intervention, using well-trained staff, using varied teaching methods, being theory-driven, being developmentally appropriate for the audience, being socio-culturally relevant to the audience, focusing on positive relationships, and using outcome evaluation to determine whether a policy or program worked (Nation, et al., 2003).

**Figure 3. Example of a Comprehensive Campus-Based Prevention Strategy**



**Consistent messages across campus policies and programs**



- **Use data to make decisions:** Public health uses data-informed decision making to plan, implement, and evaluate prevention strategies. Data also help make the case for the need for staff positions and policies. Using data and research findings about sexual violence on campus, such as demographics, needs assessments, prevalence, reporting data, or climate surveys, can be used to tailor activities to specific communities on campus to be more impactful. Climate surveys, for example, can tell campuses about their students' perceptions of safety, knowledge of services and resources, and attitudes about prevention. Understanding the climate can help prevention staff tailor prevention efforts to specific communities on campus.
- **Employ a multi-sector approach:** Public health recognizes that it takes multiple perspectives and areas of expertise to address a complicated health and safety issue like sexual violence. A campus community is already made up of multiple disciplines and sectors which can be leveraged to create prevention-focused community response teams (Please see List of Potential Prevention Partners in the appendices).
- **Coordinate efforts across prevention and response:** Prevention and response are equally important partners in the goal to end sexual violence on college and university campuses. Prevention staff should be abreast of relevant policies and practices when it comes to responding to sexual violence when it occurs on campus. Prevention staff should be able to make appropriate referrals on and off campus to meet the needs of survivors. Staff focused on responding to violence when it occurs should be able to promote prevention messages, as well. Cross-training with staff to understand the roles and responsibilities of other staff is important. Finally, both prevention and response should always be trauma-informed. There may be students and/or staff and faculty who are survivors in the audience and prevention and response efforts need to be sensitive to that fact by not re-traumatizing survivors or blaming the victim.
- **Partner with community organizations and rape crisis centers:** Collaborating with community-based rape crisis centers can ensure coordination of sexual violence prevention strategies in the community and on campus. In addition to rape crisis centers, other community organizations with which to partner include local law enforcement, organizations that serve the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) community, victim service centers, legal aid, social services, health centers, and domestic violence shelters.
- **Work to address gender-based violence:** Campuses can work to counter messages and attitudes that adhere to traditional gender norms. Prevention strategies can use a gender equity perspective, where males and females are treated fairly and similarly, and work to promote healthy sexuality and healthy intimate relationships on campuses. Additionally, strategies to address gender violence should be intersectional (working to disrupt multiple systems of oppression like sexism, racism, and homophobia) and include individuals and survivors who identify across the spectrum of gender identities that includes, but is not limited to male, female, transgender, and queer.



## Building the Prevention Infrastructure to Prevent Campus Sexual Violence



Infrastructure refers to the basic organizational systems and structures needed to effectively implement sexual violence prevention strategies on a college or university campus. This includes staffing, office space, and the existence of policies on a college campus that enable and enhance prevention work.

Opportunities for action for campus infrastructure include:

- **Use well trained staff:** It is important to have staff who are trained in the area of violence prevention. Violence prevention competencies can include knowledge of the public health approach, the social ecological model, program evaluation, and current evidence on strategies that prevent sexual violence.
- **Use standardized training:** In addition to well-trained staff, ensure that students, staff, and administrators are receiving appropriate training for their role in prevention, and that prevention messages across different audiences are consistent and reinforced over time. Provide prevention training to incoming students and new employees, but don't limit it to a one-time lesson. Prevention education should be ongoing and delivered in multiple ways.
- **Hire dedicated prevention staff:** Designate a full time staff person to focus on prevention. Ideally, this person would be part of a team that can respond to violence when it occurs, as well as work on shifting the culture of the campus to prevent violence from happening in the first place.
- **Institutionalize prevention:** Institutionalized prevention means that prevention is an integrated priority into the campus' organizational framework. Make prevention a part of everyone's job on campus. From students to staff and administrators, there should be a common language around prevention. Are leadership, staff, and students talking about primary prevention? Are leadership and staff knowledgeable about primary prevention concepts and principles? Are prevention messages and policies a part of the fabric of the organization and communication?
- **Create a team/workgroup/committee:** Collaboration across campus is important for a number of reasons. Create a multi-disciplinary team focused on prevention to ensure consistent messages, involve more people in the solution, and make prevention visible across campus. The following people and communities can be included: students, Title IX Coordinator, Greek life, women's center, victim advocates, LGBTQ and multi-cultural centers, campus safety, student conduct, student life, law enforcement, athletics, local rape crisis centers or community based organizations, etc.
- **Foster relationships with referral services:** Inevitably, survivors will be in the audience as prevention programs are implemented which means that a strong relationship with support services, counselors, community rape crisis centers, and advocates is necessary. Part of the training for prevention staff should be learning about available resources to provide for survivors if they come forward and strategies for self-care to keep themselves healthy.

- **Incorporate violence prevention with other prevention programs:** Form partnerships with wellness centers and programs that address shared risk factors for violence. Drug and alcohol abuse prevention, pregnancy prevention, and sexually transmitted infection prevention are just a few areas to explore. When partnering around the association between drug and alcohol use and violence, make it clear that alcohol and other drugs do not cause violence, but that the use of alcohol and drugs can contribute to perpetration and victimization. Victim-blaming should never occur and always be taken into consideration when developing prevention messages.
- **Use a trauma-informed approach:** Ensure that programming for prevention and response is survivor-centered and trauma-informed. While prevention programming doesn't target survivors specifically, survivors will be in the audience. This means prevention efforts should strive to support survivors' needs, avoid victim blaming, and not re-traumatize a survivor. For example, sufficient reporting structures and well-trained staff within campus conduct boards/panels are needed to promote and improve reporting and response processes. Survivors should be made to feel supported and connected to resources on campus and in the community.
- **Work across all the types of violence:** On a college or university campus, multiple forms of violence can occur. It is important to coordinate and collaborate to prevent all forms of violence including sexual violence, intimate partner violence, bullying, suicide, and stalking.



## Appealing to Diverse Audiences to Reach Prevention Goals

In prevention practice, the *audience* can broadly refer to the targeted audience, the recipients and observers, of the prevention messages, campaigns, or strategies. A campus community is not a homogenous group. It is made up of large and small communities, with various diverse members and stakeholders. The audience for campus sexual violence prevention ranges from the entire college and university stakeholder population (i.e., students, faculty, staff, administrators, parents), to specific sexual violence prevention strategy recipients (i.e., dorm residents participating in a bystander program).

Opportunities for action for campus audience include:

- **Identify champions:** Throughout different sectors and communities on campus, identify champions who can make and keep prevention visible. Champions can be leadership, staff, or students who elevate prevention in public conversation and ensure resources are available to continue the work.
- **Remember that the messenger matters:** In addition to having consistent messages throughout campus, be mindful of where the audience receives their messages. The messenger matters when it comes to the message being heard. For some, it may be important for the message to come from leadership. For others, it may be more effectively heard from a trusted peer.

- **Tailor prevention efforts to specific communities:** There is no one size fits all primary prevention programming. Each community on campus has different needs, and those needs should be met with programming that is culturally informed and specific to the community. Be intentional to include historically marginalized communities on campus. This includes immigrants, people of color, LGBTQ, disabled, and other marginalized students. This also includes international students and study-abroad students on campus. Include the target audience in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programming.
- **Plan for differences in types of institutions:** Characteristics of schools should be taken into consideration when thinking through specific strategies and policies to implement. A state university may have different needs than a community college. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) with residential students may have different needs than a rural campus with students who commute. Similarly, considerations should be made for community campuses, non-traditional campuses, community colleges, military schools, technical colleges, four-year private, four-year public, and religiously affiliated schools.
- **Engage parents as an audience:** Parents are an important audience for prevention messages. Messages are received and reinforced by parents. Students may look to their parents for guidance and support, and parents want their children to have healthy, safe, successful college experiences. Parents are sometimes reluctant to send a child to a school that has high rates of sexual violence, but parents and students can be educated that a higher rate of sexual violence on a campus may coincide with a responsive, trusting, and safe environment for reporting and seeking support services. Schools can help parents and students understand the positive norms around healthy and respectful communication, healthy relationships, and positive campus culture that is supportive and responsive.
- **Use proactive and social media:** Meet the students where they are, and where they are is on social media. Although traditional media venues (e.g., radio and television for public service announcements) still have some utility, social media (social networking, picture sharing, geo-mapping, blogs, games, microblogs, etc.) is a particularly relevant way to reach 21<sup>st</sup> century students with the modes of information sharing and messaging to which they are most accustomed. Include students in prevention message development and social media.
- **Encourage active and visible bystanders:** Engage the whole campus as proactive bystanders standing up and speaking out against violence. Teach potential bystanders that they have a role in changing the culture around tolerating violence and can learn to safely intervene in potentially harmful situations. By encouraging a culture where sexual violence is not tolerated, a safer campus is more likely to be achieved.



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## Building Key Partnerships to Sustain Prevention Efforts

Critically important to campus sexual violence prevention work is partnering with various stakeholders both on and off campus. These partnerships can strengthen, coordinate, and align prevention efforts. Prevention work cannot be accomplished in a vacuum. Sustained, collaborative prevention efforts and activities which are continued over time are necessary in order to achieve a reduction in violence.

Opportunities for action for campus partnerships and for sustainability include:

- **Develop MOUs with community partners:** Outline the specific roles and responsibilities in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Agreement. An MOU is an agreement between two or more parties for a course of action. The existence of the MOU helps to illustrate each entity's shared belief in the importance of preventing sexual violence. Creation of the MOU allows for thoughtful discussion and helps define what each agency will do, together and as separate organizations, to mutually promote sexual violence prevention and response. The purpose of developing an MOU between the campus and local rape crisis center or local law enforcement, for example, is to clarify the roles of each organization as it relates to the implementation of primary prevention strategies and responding to violence.
- **Ensure leadership buy-in:** Create opportunities to include campus leadership in strategies to build buy-in and support. Campus administrators and Board of Regents are particularly important when considering developing a full-time prevention position. Leadership doesn't just mean administrators, but includes student leaders, staff and faculty leaders, and community members.
- **Create permanent staff positions:** Create permanent staff positions that can be sustained without temporary grant funding to ensure that prevention is sustained and supported. It is even more beneficial to have more than one prevention position in a campus structure so that there are multiple voices for prevention and that staff is not siloed and isolated, although this may not be feasible on all campuses. Prevention efforts should be integrated and coordinated across all aspects of campus programming and practices.
- **Engage students in planning and programming:** Students have a meaningful role to play in the development, implementation, and evaluation of prevention programming. Create roles for them at every point. Students can be a great asset to creating messages that resonate and will be heard by different campus audiences. Additionally, students can act as peer educators and advisors.
- **Partner with health services:** Additional partnerships that are important for sexual violence prevention and services on college and university campuses include their student health departments, wellness centers, and local emergency departments. These entities are often the frontline for sexual assault survivors.

## Evaluating Prevention Efforts



Evaluation is defined as the systematic investigation of the merit, worth or significance of an object (Scriven, 1999). Evaluation is an essential practice in public health that lets practitioners know what is working and what is not working in their policies and programs. Evaluation findings should be used on an ongoing basis to inform improvements and course corrections of campus policies and practices.

Opportunities for action for evaluation of campus efforts include:

- **Rigorously evaluate promising prevention programs, practices, and policies:** In order to understand if what is being implemented is working, it is important to evaluate the intervention. This means developing and implementing an evaluation plan alongside a work plan for prevention. An evaluation plan should include evaluation questions, indicators, data sources and data collection methods, and staff responsible. It should also include a process for communicating the results back to the community.
- **Focus outcomes on reductions in perpetration:** When evaluating prevention programming, outcomes should go beyond knowledge acquisition, skill building, and attitude change to include outcomes that focus on behavior change and a reduction in perpetration, ideally, and also victimization.
- **Create capacity for evaluation:** Building capacity for evaluation can occur at multiple levels. Prevention staff can work with campus faculty to develop evaluation tools and techniques to ensure that evaluation is occurring along the way. Students and staff can become proficient in program evaluation in order to monitor and evaluate what is being implemented. Student interns could serve as short-term or project-focused evaluators.
- **Value participatory research:** Include the intended audience in the research planning and evaluation of prevention programming. The goal is to develop the prevention process out of a convergence of perspectives which will lead to the information generated reflecting multiple viewpoints.
- **Require logic models and theories of change:** Sound theories of change and logic models are key to prevention planning. Mapping out what will change, by when, and how, is a critical way to know if you are achieving expected results. Logic models and theories of change should be in alignment with each other and support the evaluation questions in an evaluation plan.
- **Build connections between research and practice:** A college campus is the perfect place to bridge research and practice because both staff and faculty are invested in the success of students, and partnerships can be formed to rigorously evaluate prevention programming.



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# Evidence-based Strategies to Prevent Sexual Violence on College and University Campuses

The evidence for sexual violence prevention is still emerging, but the problem is too urgent to wait until the field has perfect solutions. CDC's *STOP SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence* outlines strategies and approaches for preventing sexual violence in communities (Basile, et al., 2016). A technical package is a collection of strategies that represent the current best available evidence to prevent or reduce public health problems like violence. They can help improve the health and well-being of communities by outlining activities that public health and other stakeholders can implement to see reductions in violence or violence-related risk factors in their communities. The *STOP SV* technical package includes primary prevention strategies as well as approaches for responding to sexual violence after it occurs (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Stop SV Technical Package Overview**

	Strategy	Approach
<b>S</b>	Promote <b>Social Norms</b> that Protect Against Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bystander approaches</li> <li>• Mobilizing men and boys as allies</li> </ul>
<b>T</b>	<b>Teach Skills</b> to Prevent Sexual Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social-emotional learning</li> <li>• Teaching healthy, safe dating and intimate relationship skills to adolescents</li> <li>• Promoting healthy sexuality</li> <li>• Empowerment-based training</li> </ul>
<b>O</b>	Provide <b>Opportunities</b> to Empower and Support Girls and Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening economic supports for women and families</li> <li>• Strengthening leadership and opportunities for girls</li> </ul>
<b>P</b>	Create <b>Protective</b> Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving safety and monitoring in schools</li> <li>• Establishing and consistently applying workplace policies</li> <li>• Addressing community-level risks through environmental approaches</li> </ul>
<b>SV</b>	<b>Support Victims/Survivors</b> to Lessen Harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victim-centered services</li> <li>• Treatment for victims of SV</li> <li>• Treatment for at-risk children and families to prevent problem behavior including sex offending</li> </ul>

On a college or university campus, it is important to implement strategies and approaches that have evidence of effectiveness or have shown impact on risk and protective factors for sexual violence. In the technical package, there are strategies that could be applied in a campus setting. The approaches listed in the technical package may not have efficacy evidence in a campus context, but many approaches can be tailored for the setting and still be promising for sexual violence outcomes. What follows are examples of some of the strategies in the STOP SV Technical Package currently being implemented on college and university campuses.

### **Promote Social Norms that Protect Against Violence**

- Bystander training is an evidence-based approach to preventing sexual assault on college campuses. These programs are useful because they engage both men and women as potential witnesses to behaviors that can increase risks for violence and train them to safely intervene or speak out against social norms that support violence. Providing bystander skills training for students, faculty, staff, and administrators is an important part of any comprehensive prevention plan. Campuses could also implement media campaigns that model appropriate student behavior and conduct, like bystander skills and consent.
- Mobilizing men and boys is an approach that could be tailored to fit a campus setting. Prevention efforts can engage male coaches, sports teams, and fraternity men to learn positive, healthy norms about masculinity to prevent perpetration and learn how to support survivors in their community.

### **Teach Skills to Prevent Sexual Violence**

- Campuses are teaching students about healthy sexuality practices and providing definitions of consent. One way that campuses are doing so is by implementing affirmative consent policies. Affirmative consent means that consent to agreed-upon sexual activity is freely given by all parties involved by words or actions. An affirmative consent policy outlines the definition of consent and makes it known to students, staff, and faculty.

### **Provide Opportunities to Empower and Support Girls and Women**

- Leadership programs for women on campus that build confidence and leadership skills can mean better education outcomes while in school and better employment outcomes after college. This may contribute to women being more engaged in their community and in politics. Sorority women could implement programs to emphasize strong voices and leadership skills to change gender and social norms in Greek Life that may contribute to sexual violence.
- Women's Centers and Departments of Women's and Gender Studies are places that promote gender equity on campus, provide women with leadership opportunities in order to reach their full potential, and a safe space to learn and research sexual violence prevention efforts. The presence of women's center programming and gender studies courses on campus promote awareness of social constructs like social justice, gender, race, economic status, sexual orientation, and women's health.



**The evidence for sexual violence prevention is still emerging, but the problem is too urgent to wait until the field has perfect solutions.**



## Create Protective Environments

- Enact a policy that includes prevention messages in new and transfer student orientations and on campus tours is one opportunity to start the prevention conversation. Keep the conversation on campus going by including prevention messages in classroom trainings, social norms campaigns, and events throughout the school year.
- Have strong student codes of conduct widely available in student handbooks. Student leaders, administrators, faculty, and staff should reinforce these codes of conduct by modeling the appropriate behavior. School leadership should consistently and fairly enforce the student code of conduct.
- Sexual assault policies and reporting procedures should be easy to find and navigate on a college or university website.
- Policies that reduce access to alcohol on campus and in surrounding communities may be useful for reducing rates of sexual assault. Although alcohol use does not cause sexual violence, excessive use can increase the risk for perpetration or victimization. For example, colleges can work with partners and advocates in the community to limit the number of alcohol outlets adjacent to campus or to increase enforcement of laws to reduce underage drinking and over-service. Or, campuses can enact dry campus policies as to not allow any alcohol to be consumed on a campus and therefore decrease binge drinking. Colleges may institute drug and/or alcohol amnesty for sexual violence victims or bystanders to decrease barriers for students to come forward and report sexual violence.

## Support Victims/Survivors to Lessen Harms

- Campus staff and faculty should be trained on trauma-informed response and campus policy and practices to compassionately and effectively handle disclosures when they occur. Faculty and staff should be prepared to provide a list of resources available to students and make appropriate referrals to counseling centers and advocacy centers, student wellness, and campus or community law enforcement.
- Survivors of sexual violence who seek help or intervention from their college or university should encounter a system that provides coordinated, confidential support and addresses their needs in a non-judgmental environment. Students should be made to feel confident and safe in reporting policies and accessing available resources.
- Perpetrators should be held accountable. This means making the student conduct process and consequences transparent to students. It also means ensuring that faculty, staff, students, and campus law enforcement are knowledgeable about sexual violence policies and the adjudication process. There is also the option to hold perpetrators accountable through the local criminal justice process, separate from campus procedures.



# Campus Efforts to Prevent Sexual Violence

## Before it Starts

The following are a few examples of how the Action Planning state teams are moving from planning to action.

### **Minnesota Campus Sexual Violence Prevention Summit**

The Minnesota team that attended the Action Planning Meeting was comprised of representatives from the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Metropolitan State University, St. Cloud State University and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. The team left the meeting with a clear goal for its action plan: to convene a statewide college campus sexual violence prevention summit. Held in St. Paul, Minnesota in June of 2016, the goals of the summit were to:

- Implement effective, comprehensive prevention programs
- Share learnings across campuses that call out resources and highlight successful programs
- Foster relationships among campus professionals who work to address sexual violence

Over 300 people attended the Summit, including campus administrators, Title IX coordinators, campus prevention and sexual assault advocates, campus security, and students. Over 55 Minnesota college campuses were in attendance.

### **The North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence Model Campus Policy**

The North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV) released [\*Guidance for Creating College and University Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking, and Sexual Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs and Policies for Students\*](#) in June of 2015. NCCADV developed and disseminated the comprehensive model campus policy guidance document and template to support college and university campuses in North Carolina in meeting and exceeding Federal, state, and local requirements for intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking prevention and response. The guidance lays the groundwork for comprehensive campus-based programs and strategies to prevent intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking. NCCADV's guidance supports its work with the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA) and the North Carolina Campus Consortium. The Campus Consortium is an organizing body for colleges and universities across the state currently addressing or interested in addressing sexual violence and/or intimate partner violence prevention on their campuses. NCCADV partners with NCCASA and the RPE Program at the Department of Health and Human Services as part of the Consortium.

## Affirmative Consent Policy within the State University of New York (SUNY) System

One of the goals defined by the New York team that attended the action planning meeting was to ensure SUNY campuses implement policies consistent with New York's "Enough is Enough" law. The law was enacted in July 2015 and, among other things, requires all New York college campuses to mandate affirmative consent for sexual encounters, offer students amnesty for certain campus policy violations (e.g., alcohol abuse) when they report sexual assault acts, adopt a victims bill of rights, and provide sexual violence prevention training to incoming freshman, student leaders, athletes and sorority and fraternity members. The SUNY system's definition of affirmative consent is, "...a knowing, voluntary, and mutual decision among all participants to engage in sexual activity. Consent can be given by words or actions, as long as those words or actions create clear permission regarding willingness to engage in the sexual activity. Silence or lack of resistance, in and of itself, does not demonstrate consent. The definition of consent does not vary based upon a participant's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression" (The State University of New York, 2015). This policy applies to the 64 SUNY institutions and approximately 460,000 students.

## Conclusion



Sexual violence is a significant public health issue that impacts many people, with college and university students being particularly at risk. Recent national attention to sexual violence on U.S. campuses presents an opportunity to act to address this problem. While the state of the evidence about what works to prevent sexual violence is still developing, this document is informed by the best thinking in the field. Prevention practitioners and college administrators can use this document with different types of campuses as broad guidance to help shape their prevention planning, program development, and related efforts toward sexual violence prevention on college or university campuses in their areas. Ultimately, applying the content of this document toward the foundational development of prevention plans will lead to the important development, collaborations, implementation, and evaluation of sexual violence prevention efforts for colleges and universities, which will be a much-needed contribution to the field.



# Appendices

## List of Potential Prevention Partners

- CDC's Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) Program, State Department of Health
- Local Rape Crisis Centers, Domestic Violence Shelters, and Victim Service Centers
- Local Emergency Medical Departments
- Community organizations
  - LGBTQ Centers
  - Legal Aid
  - City or County Health Departments
  - Social Services (food stamps, housing assistance, etc.)
- College and University Partners:
  - Office of the President
  - Sexual Assault Prevention Programs and Services
  - Title IX Coordinators
  - Campus/University Administrators
  - Board of Regents
  - Student Health Department/Office
  - Campus Police and Advocacy Centers
  - Women's Centers
  - Athletic Programs
  - Sororities/Fraternities
  - Alumni Associations



## Sample Action Plan

<b>Goal 1:</b>				
<b>Action Step:</b> (What will be done to bring about the change?)	<b>Person(s) Responsible:</b> (By whom?)	<b>Date Completed:</b> (By when?)	<b>Resources Required:</b> (At what cost?)	<b>Communication/ Collaborators:</b> (Who should know about this?)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				



## Resources

- **The National Sexual Violence Resource Center**  
[www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)
- **PreventConnect**  
[www.preventconnect.org](http://www.preventconnect.org)
- **PreventConnect's Sexual Assault Prevention on U.S. College Campuses: A National Scan**  
[www.preventconnect.org/2016/05/sexual-assault-prevention-on-u-s-college-campuses-a-national-scan/](http://www.preventconnect.org/2016/05/sexual-assault-prevention-on-u-s-college-campuses-a-national-scan/)
- **Not Alone**  
[www.notalone.gov](http://www.notalone.gov)
- **CDC's Report to the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault**  
[www.notalone.gov/assets/preventing-sexual-violence-on-college-campuses-lessons-from-research-and-practice.pdf](http://www.notalone.gov/assets/preventing-sexual-violence-on-college-campuses-lessons-from-research-and-practice.pdf)
- **It's On Us**  
[www.itsonus.org](http://www.itsonus.org)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Violence Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/index.html)
- **Rape Prevention and Education Program**  
[www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/RPE/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/RPE/index.html)



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## For more information

To learn more about sexual violence prevention, call 1-800-CDC-INFO or visit CDC's violence prevention pages at [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention).

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
Division of Violence Prevention

