

# Winona County Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence Community Needs Assessment Report

February 2013

*“Everyone here has a sense of community. As we look at our community. . . we want it to be a good place to live. We want it to be safe. We want people who live here and come visit us to feel safe.*

*We know that if not us, then who?”*

– Focus group member answering, “What brings you to the table?”

## Executive Summary

Stopping sexual violence is a challenge for every community. Winona County is no exception. In 2011, 26 sexual assaults were reported to Winona County Law Enforcement. Yet, it is estimated that only 12-14% of actual incidents of sexual assault are reported<sup>1</sup>. This brings the estimated number of sexual assaults in Winona County in 2011 to 162 - 216 incidents.

Winona County is at the beginning of a two-year crime prevention “Champion Community” grant developed by the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA), and the Minnesota Men’s Action Network: Alliance to Prevent Sexual and Domestic Violence (MNMN). An initial community needs assessment has been completed, based on a community survey, focus groups, and policy review.

### Key findings from this process

- Winona County survey participants are somewhat knowledgeable of the frequency of sexual violence related crime. Correct answers to related questions ranged from 12% - 49%
- Winona county survey participants feel they have a moderately high level of knowledge and skills to support primary prevention efforts.
- Winona county survey participants perceive sexual violence as an individual issue, with prevention strategies based almost exclusively on individual actions.
- There are strong primary prevention efforts currently taking place in Winona County, including the Clean Hotels policy, Primary Prevention Speakers Bureau, The MENding Project, Key Communicators, the Walk A Mile in Her Shoes event, among others. Yet participants noted there is much more to be done.
- Multiple focus group participants commented on the need for more men at the table when confronting sexual violence and the societal norms surrounding this issue.
- There is still a cultural norm in which sexual assault victims are blamed for the assaults made upon them, based on focus group comments. Participants discussed the need for jury/community education in this regard.
- Very few primary prevention policies exist in area organizations and businesses, based on a policy review. Yet a majority of survey respondents reported policies that promote primary prevention exist in many key sectors of the community.

This assessment confirms there is a foundation of understanding, compassion and commitment to end sexual violence in Winona County. Community awareness and understanding of primary prevention appears to be in the early stages of development. This is reflected in part by perceptions of sexual violence as an individual problem rather than a community problem, with community solutions. In some key sectors of the

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<sup>1</sup> National Sexual Violence Resource Center

community, the existence of primary prevention policies are perceived to be quite high. The community policy review, however, suggests that very few primary prevention policies actually exist. Most policies included protocol related to appropriate responses to sexual violence incidents after they had occurred, which constitutes an “intervention” policy. Exceptions to this rule included the “Clean Hotels” policy adopted by Winona County and other prominent non-profit organizations. This misunderstanding or misperception of primary prevention policy is not unusual. Primary prevention policy development is in its infancy throughout the United States and many individuals and organizations are not familiar with the criteria which would distinguish a primary prevention policy. These findings indicate a need for future policy development and increased community awareness and understanding of the potential for community solutions, to this community problem.

Efforts to change the social norms, which contribute to sexual violence, will take time, tenacity, creative thinking, organizing, collaboration, and the resources necessary to address this enormous problem. Winona County has shown itself to be well poised to meet this challenge.

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## Introduction

In June 2012, Winona County received funding through a two-year crime prevention “Champion Community” grant developed by the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA), and the Minnesota Men’s Action Network: Alliance to Prevent Sexual and Domestic Violence (MNMAN). This grant was awarded by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs, to implement primary prevention activities in our community. Beyond Tough Guise, Inc. and the Winona County Sexual and Domestic Violence Primary Prevention Project have formed the Winona County Champion Community Work Group to collaborate with MNCASA and MNMAN to support a “Minnesota Champion Community” in Winona. The vision of a “Minnesota Champion Community” is to focus collaborative energy toward developing community action plans, policy change at the local (city, county, school board, religious council board, etc.) levels, and organizational practice changes which will support the growth of healthy communities and decrease the likelihood that the perpetration of sexual violence will occur.

An initial task of the Winona County Champion Community Work Group was to conduct a community needs assessment to determine:

- 1) The level of awareness regarding the frequency of sexual violence related crime;
- 2) The prevalence of individual knowledge and skills necessary to promote the primary prevention of sexual violence;
- 3) Awareness and perceptions of current activities and local coordination of primary prevention efforts;
- 4) Reports of primary prevention training and/or education in key sectors of the community; and
- 5) The presence of primary prevention policies within those key sectors.

The Community Needs Assessment Survey explained primary prevention in this way:

*“Stopping harm before it occurs in our community is the goal of primary prevention. This crime prevention and public health model focuses on changing aspects of social environments which support crime and/or threaten our health and well being. Raising public awareness, educating practitioners, building coalitions, prompting organizational practice changes, and developing effective public policy are key aspects of primary prevention initiatives. Anti-smoking efforts and child safety seat mandates are good examples of primary prevention public health models.”*

This community needs assessment report has been developed as a working document to inform and guide primary prevention activities for the Winona County Champion Community Work Group (CCW).

## Assessment Methods

### Community Survey

As part of the community-wide needs assessment, a survey was created and distributed throughout Winona County. Approximately 1,739 people received the survey via e-mail directly from their employer and 2,900 received it through an organizational email newsletter. Consequently, it is estimated that 4,639 individuals

received the survey request directly. In addition, The Winona Daily News and the Winona Post, the predominant local news papers who have similar coverage/distributions of 24,000 households, also distributed information regarding the survey. The survey was open for a total of 24 days starting November 28, 2012 and was closed on December 21, 2012. There were a total of 235 respondents.

## **Focus Groups**

Two focus groups were facilitated in Winona. The first group (*Affiliated Professionals*) consisted of twelve individuals who are very familiar with primary prevention concepts and are involved in primary prevention efforts in Winona County. The second group (*Community Professionals*) consisted of six members who had not been involved in primary prevention work specifically. The purpose of the focus groups was to gather information from community members on their perception and insights about Winona County's current and past prevention efforts; the strengths and challenges of prevention efforts, opportunities for collaboration; and future primary prevention efforts to undertake as a champion community.

## **Policy Review**

The CCW performed a materials review of policies from local government agencies, education systems, businesses/corporations, and nonprofit organizations throughout Winona County. The work group reviewed a sample of human resource department policies from local government agencies, education systems, businesses/corporations, and nonprofit organizations throughout Winona County. The goal was to determine if the primary prevention of sexual assault is being addressed through institutional policy. Policies from three government agencies, five education systems, two businesses, and two nonprofit organizations were reviewed.

## **Overview of Findings**

The level of community engagement for this assessment was quite extensive. Local government, universities, business organizations, non-profits, the health industry, and local news organizations distributed the survey broadly throughout the Winona area. Their involvement and cooperation provided the data necessary to assist in future planning for primary prevention initiatives which can have significant impact on changing aspects of the social environment which currently contribute to sexual violence-related crime.

Two hundred and thirty five (235) individuals responded to the community survey. Of those that responded, 78% were female and 22% were male. Most respondents were between the ages of 30 and 65 years of age with 62% over the age of forty. Twenty eight percent (28%) of respondents reported a history of participation in primary prevention activities within the last three years. The largest demographic sectors responding to the survey by profession were Medical and Health at 29%, Education, College/University at 16%, Government Services at 12% and Other at 21%.

When focus group members who had a history of involvement in primary prevention action were asked "What brought you to the table and what keeps you there?" one respondent answered,

*"Everyone here has a sense of community. As we look at our community. . . we want it to be a good place to live. We want it to be safe. We want people who live here and come visit us to feel safe. We know that if not us then who? If you are a part of the community and care about it, you have to step up to the plate sometimes and put in the time, put in the effort to make a difference. Even if is a teeny tiny difference, it is still a difference and it makes your community better today than it was yesterday. You endeavor to move forward with that in whatever way you can, in whatever role you can play and*

*keeping that going. We are fairly optimistic people who see that it can be better. Whether it's seatbelts or smoking. It took a long time, but we saw a positive difference. If you hang in there long enough, if you care enough and are with other people who care you can push it forward and make a difference. We keep coming back to the table, keep talking, keep trying to do things. We do want to make a difference. We do want to make it a better community."*

## **1. The Level of Awareness Regarding the Frequency of Sexual Violence Related Crime.**

Question number one of the survey asked participants, "In Minnesota, what are the chances of a woman becoming a victim of sexual assault in her lifetime?" Thirty four percent (34%) answered the question correctly. According to the February 2012 report, "Status of Women and Girls in Minnesota", 1 in 3 Minnesota women will experience a sexual assault within her lifetime<sup>2</sup>. Forty nine percent (49%) of respondents correctly identified that 1 in 5 girls will be the victims of sexual violence before the age of 18<sup>3</sup> and 25% of respondents answered correctly that 1 in 10 boys will be victims of sexual violence before the age of 18 as well<sup>4</sup>. When asked about the numbers of sexual assaults reported to Winona County law enforcement in 2011, 13% of respondents answered correctly that 24 to 29 assaults had been reported. When asked to identify what percentage of total assaults are actually reported to law enforcement, 25% answered correctly that reported sexual assaults account for only 12% to 14% of total assaults committed<sup>5</sup>.

## **2. The Prevalence of Individual Knowledge and Skills Needed To Promote the Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence.**

When asked whether they had the individual knowledge and skill necessary to promote primary prevention efforts to end sexual violence, 68% of respondents answered affirmatively that they had "fair", "good", or "excellent" **knowledge** to support primary prevention efforts. Sixty Seven percent (67%) of respondents indicated they had "fair", "good", or "excellent" **skills** to promote primary prevention.

**Note:** This seemed to be a higher level of knowledge and skills than anticipated. Because the primary prevention of sexual violence is fairly new in the country, there were questions by survey analysts as to whether respondents clearly understood what primary prevention was, as they answered this question. Responses to the next survey question provided additional information.

When asked in the survey whether respondents had incorporated primary prevention efforts in their families, 59% answered "yes". The comments attached to this question provided us the answer to our previous question about respondents' knowledge of primary prevention. Those comments made it clear that respondents did understand what primary prevention entailed, however, they also indicated a narrow understanding of effective primary prevention strategies. The comments predominantly revealed a perception of sexual violence as an individual issue, as both potential victims and perpetrators were referenced. Consequently, primary prevention strategies were based almost solely on individual actions related to:

- Conversations with children about "good touch bad touch", boundaries, respect, open communication;

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<sup>2</sup> "Status of Women and Girls in Minnesota", February 2012 Report, University of MN Humphrey School's Center on Women and Public Policy in partnership with the Women's Foundation of Minnesota

<sup>3</sup> David Finkelhor, Crimes Against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> National Sexual Violence Resource Center

- Risk reduction for girls and women. For example, parents being careful to know the adults their children are with; no walking after dark for females; teaching females to be aware of their surroundings; teaching self defense; carrying mace, etc.;
- Teaching boys to respect girls and women.

These comments are consistent with a recent national survey<sup>6</sup> that showed the general population perceives sexual violence to be an individual problem, rather than a community problem, with a community solution. Historically, primary prevention initiatives are predicated on an understanding that widespread incidences of illness, contamination, and/or crime are associated with the social environments in which they occur. To have the greatest impact, the focus must be on changing that environment. Applying this model to sexual violence requires a shift from thinking and acting individualistically to expanding efforts that get at the social environment which contributes to the endemic levels of sexual violence. Two respondents did indicate this broader understanding of the underlying social causes related to sexual violence by focusing on the environment which supports the sexual exploitation and subordination of women, girls and boys. They wrote:

- “We talk about the ways media, advertising, and pornography create an environment which encourages sexual violence”.
- “Discourage the use of pornography, talk about relationship violence when it occurs and determine ways to help change the norms & environment which led to it”.

Several focus group members from the *Affiliated Professionals* group bemoaned the consistency with which sexual assault victims continue to be blamed for the assaults made upon them. A focus group member talked about the need for jury education in order to improve conviction rates since a great deal of victim blaming (focus on what the victims was wearing, how she acted, who she was with or how she was dancing with the man who later raped her) occurs and the defense attorneys use that to their advantage to get their clients off, even when the prosecutor has strong evidence to indicate guilt. “We don’t do this with any other crime victim. Wallet stolen, the victim is not blamed”.

Another member relayed her experience of doing public speaking on the topic and having to regularly address men’s defensiveness from the audience. She stated, “What does that say about our society and culture if you are going out into the community to do these presentations and men immediately assume we are talking about them?” When speaking about involving men, a male participant remarked, “I’m wondering if maybe subconsciously or unconsciously they are not feeling this as a challenge to male dominance. Abuse is really a power relationship. Men enjoy that power and benefit from it. They deny that they are thinking of male dominance underlying it all. The defensiveness may be an outpouring of feeling the challenge to male dominance.”

### **3. Awareness and Perceptions of Current Activities and Local Coordination of Primary Prevention Efforts.**

Twenty eight percent (28%) of survey respondents (n= 64) indicated they had “participated within the last three years in primary prevention efforts.”

Survey participants were asked to rate their level of awareness of primary prevention efforts to stop sexual violence in their community. Fifty six percent (56%) rated their awareness as “fair”, “good”, or “excellent”. Forty four percent (44%) answered “none” or “poor”.

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<sup>6</sup> “Americans Perceptions of Sexual Violence”, Frameworks Institute

When asked to rate the current coordination of primary prevention efforts in their community 72% rated that coordination as “fair” (51%), “good” (19%), or “excellent” (2%).

Focus group members were asked “What is your fondest memory of the primary prevention work that has occurred in Winona County so far?” The *Affiliated Professionals* focus group uniformly noted the success of working with local government officials to pass the Winona County Clean Hotels Policy for county government employees, who not only approved the policy but also became articulate spokespeople and allies for the initiative. Through their discussions about the importance of the policy with affected employees and the media, focus group participants believed public awareness and acceptance was enhanced exponentially. Others noted the increased interest in primary prevention in the community. One participant reflected on her first presentation as a member of the primary prevention speaker’s bureau where she spoke to approximately 20 individuals. She noted the rewards of talking to people who had previously been largely unaware of county prevention efforts and how they showed a great interest in the topic. Something she had not anticipated. Increased college involvement was also noted: a participant reported an increased interest from the university’s Greek/fraternity community in changing their public image and using their power to help with the cause of primary prevention.

The *Community Professionals* focus group were asked the same question about “their fondest memory of primary prevention work.” Most were unaware, however, some spoke of their experience participating in related sexual assault awareness activities. Others generally expressed excitement about being at the table. For example:

- One participant noted that “it’s good to see men finally stepping forward” to participate in the *Walk A Mile in Her Shoes* event.
- Another male participant noted “it’s very profound to hear survivors tell their stories” at *Take Back the Night*.
- Someone stated, “I’m just excited to even be part of this discussion!”
- Other responses included “not much” and “never heard of the primary prevention program”

Both focus groups were then asked what they thought were the most significant primary prevention changes they’ve seen in Winona County in the past 5 years.

The *Affiliated Professionals* group appeared to grapple with this question. The very first response was “very few I think”. From there a number of people discussed the difficulty of quantifying the work since the violence continues to occur and is highlighted in the newspaper daily. Gradually, the group started to discuss some positive changes they could identify, including:

- The topic has been introduced at the school district level
- The general public is having conversations about primary prevention
- The media is now seeking out members of the Winona County Primary Prevention Project and Work Group to do news articles.
- The positive work that came out of the Youth Action Theater. (An interactive high school performance developed by students focusing on bystander intervention strategies to interrupt inappropriate social interactions which contribute to a social climate where sexual violence occurs and/or is tolerated.)
- That *Walk A Mile In Her Shoes*, brings college-aged and other men out in public support of ending sexual and domestic violence.
- The growth in the number of people coming to the table and increased partnerships and networks.

The discussion about the positive changes was interspersed with discussion about the ongoing needs and gaps they see. One person stated, “Education and awareness is very, very important and needs to be constant, but even looking at the Prevention Institute’s Spectrum of Primary Prevention, two (out of six categories of engagement) of these are education. We’ve been doing that now since the 1970s. It’s been 40 years and we still haven’t really seen any progress made. Education is incredibly important, but one tool in our tool belt. One tiny piece. We keep going back to it, but not seeing the change. What else can we do?”

The group discussed the need for constant primary prevention efforts or there is a chance efforts will be lost or backslide. Several people voiced the need for more men to be at the table. They felt that men “need to be given something to do without asking them to donate their life to it (the cause).”

Throughout the discussion, the challenging nature of the work came up, such as the challenge affiliated with “having conversations about violence that uses sex.” The group compared sexual violence prevention to other prevention efforts. One participant noted, “Smoking and seat belts are very safe, things that can be said without a whole lot of preconceived notions. It doesn’t make people feel uncomfortable. There aren’t bad guys. Discussion about primary prevention of sexual violence, however, makes people very uncomfortable.” The very nature of sexual assault is so personal and “human sexuality is so dear to us as a person” that it is a difficult subject for people to talk about. “How do we ever share when we are hurt? How deep does that go?”

When asked about their vision for the future, several participants mentioned *The MENDING Project*. One participant noted that with the introduction of “*The MENDING project*, one of the benefits is that the community is talking about the problem more than they ever have before. There is a new opportunity to engage (men) in conversation and challenge beliefs around violence.” Others mentioned the *Youth Action Theater’s* final performance. “Parents were so blown away by the performances and the subjects.” “Families of the at-risk youth-actors had such pride” It was “so well received.” “(We need to) move forward to do things that are engaging and interactive.”

The *Community Professionals* noted the positive presence of the Women’s Resource Center, the involvement of the Winona County Sheriff’s Office at community events, and improved shared custody exchanges at Matty’s Place.

There were significant differences in engagement and knowledge of the issues between the two focus groups. It is notable that the *Affiliated Professionals* group focused on having a broader sense of community, perceiving sexual violence as a community issue with community solutions. In contrast, the *Community Professionals* focused on the challenges of working in silos, individual commitment, and individual buy-in. While this group started to broaden the conversation to needing communitywide support, a majority of the conversation focused on the individual or family level.

#### **4. Reports of Primary Prevention Training and/or Education in Key Sectors of the Community.**

Question 13 of the survey is: “In the past three years, my community (represented by the categories listed below) has PROVIDED PRIMARY PREVENTION TRAINING AND/OR EDUCATION.

**Note:** Answer options for this question included Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very Often, Not Sure, and NA (Not Applicable meant the respondent was uninvolved or unfamiliar with a particular sector.)”



**Combined scores – “Sometimes, Often, Very Often” (% of total, excluding NA responses)<sup>7</sup>** were combined in the grid below to show the total percentages of those respondents who are familiar with a given sector and the extent to which primary prevention training and/or education occurs within it.

Workplace and business	57%	County Gov	38%	Soc/Rec	25%
College/Univ	57%	Com Org	36%	School Board	23%
School (K-12)	40%	Faith Com	25%	City Gov	22%

**Combined scores for “Not Sure” and “NA”.**

Workplace and business	36%	School (K-12)	62%	Faith Com	66%
College/Univ	52%	Com Org	64%	School Board	71%
County Gov	60%	Soc/Rec	65%	City Gov	72%

These scores for “Not Sure” and “NA” represent the level of awareness of prevention training and education. “Workplace and business” has the lowest score and consequently indicates that category with the most community awareness and familiarity.

Please note that the community categories Workplace and Business, College/University, School (K-12), and County Government are predominantly the top four sectors that respondents are most familiar with, and are those categories in the community that the most significant training and education is perceived to be taking place. The highest percentages were attributed to the workplace and universities.

Also, the needs assessment did not independently verify the level in which primary prevention training and/or education is occurring. For that reason, cautious interpretation requires that the responses are understood as a measure of the perceptions of the respondents answering this question.

**5. The Presence of Primary Prevention Policies Within Key Sectors of the Community.**

Question 14 of the survey is: “My community (represented by the categories listed below) HAS POLICIES AND/OR RULES which promote primary prevention of sexual violence.”

**Note:** Answer options for this question included Yes, No, Not Sure, and NA (Not Applicable meant respondent was uninvolved or unfamiliar with, a particular sector.)

**Yes scores** in the grid below show the total percentage of respondents who are familiar with a given sector and the extent to which prevention policies exist within it. (% of total, excluding NA responses)<sup>8</sup>

Workplace and business	74%	School (K-12)	56%	Com Org	30%
College/Univ	65%	City Gov	53%	Faith Com	27%
County Gov	62%	School Board	43%	Soc/Rec	18%

<sup>7</sup> To identify respondents who were more informed about the sector, NA responses, which indicated lack of involvement or familiarity were eliminated from the total for purposes of this section.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

## Combined scores for “Not Sure” and “NA”.

Workplace and business	31%	School (K-12)	54%	Faith Com	73%
College/Univ	43%	School Board	64%	Com Org	74%
County Gov	48%	City Gov	66%	Soc/Rec	77%

These scores for “Not Sure” and “NA” represent the level of awareness of primary prevention policies. Again, Workplace and Business, College/University, County Government, and School (K-12) has the lowest scores indicating the highest level of awareness in the community.

**Note:** While in some sectors the appearance of primary prevention policies are perceived to be quite high, the community policy review suggests that very few primary prevention policies actually exist. Many of the policies made available for this study were in fact policies which outlined how to appropriately respond to sexual violence incidents and consequently were “intervention” rather than “primary prevention” policies. Exceptions to this rule included the “Clean Hotels” policy which was adopted by Winona County and other prominent non-profit organizations. This misunderstanding or misperception of primary prevention policy is not unusual. Primary prevention policy development is in its infancy throughout the United States and many individuals and organizations are not familiar with the criteria which would distinguish a primary prevention policy.

## Limitations

It is important to note that we cannot conclude this data represents the entire Winona County community, based on the survey methodology used. There were a disproportionate number of women survey participants compared to male participants. Over sixty percent of survey respondents were over 40 years old. Additionally, certain sectors of the community are more strongly represented than others. This does not diminish the value of this data. Rather, taking into consideration the demographics it represents strengthens our understanding of the data and directs us to further questions.

## Conclusion

Conclusions resulting from this community needs assessment will no doubt be in continuous development as the data is reflected upon and subsequent questions asked and answered. These conclusions will be left predominantly to the CCW for ongoing review and analysis as they use this information to formulate action plans for future initiatives in Winona County. At this time, the authors will share preliminary observations and hope they are useful in future planning.

This assessment confirms that there is understanding, compassion and commitment to end sexual violence in Winona County with significant efforts (particularly compared to other communities) underway to do so. This is reflected by the community support and interest during the assessment process and by the survey results indicating a majority of survey respondents have an awareness of community primary prevention efforts and are incorporating primary prevention activities within their lives.

At the same time, the survey responses and focus group comments also indicated a narrow understanding of effective primary prevention strategies. Responses revealed a perception of sexual violence as an individual issue. Consequently, primary prevention strategies were based almost solely on individual actions. These comments are consistent with a recent national survey<sup>9</sup> that showed the general population perceives sexual

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<sup>9</sup> “Americans Perceptions of Sexual Violence”, Frameworks Institute

violence to be an individual problem, rather than a community problem, with a community solution. Historically, primary prevention initiatives are predicated on an understanding that widespread incidences of illness, contamination, and/or crime are associated with the social environments in which they occur. To have the greatest impact, the focus must be on changing that environment. Applying this model to sexual violence requires a shift from thinking and acting individualistically to expanding efforts that get at the social environment which contributes to the endemic levels of sexual violence.

While in some sectors the appearance of primary prevention policies are perceived to be quite high, the community policy review suggests that very few primary prevention policies actually exist. Many of the policies made available for this study were in fact policies which outlined how to appropriately respond to sexual violence incidents and consequently were “intervention” rather than “primary prevention” policies. Exceptions to this rule included the “Clean Hotels” policy which was adopted by Winona County and other prominent non-profit organizations. This misunderstanding or misperception of primary prevention policy is not unusual. Primary prevention policy development is in its infancy throughout the United States and many individuals and organizations are not familiar with the criteria which would distinguish a primary prevention policy.

It is clear that efforts to change the social norms which contribute to sexual violence will take time, tenacity, creative thinking, organizing, and the resources necessary to address this enormous problem.

Historically, Winona County primary prevention efforts have been undertaken with little or no funding and are provided in the community through volunteer time and effort. The current level of community awareness and engagement is a testimony to the hard work and dedication of those individuals responsible for bringing primary prevention initiatives forward into the community. Their efforts appear to have built a foundation upon which future development and collaborative action on crime prevention can be constructed.

While past efforts by the CCW have been significant, it is clear these efforts are in their early stages and much more needs to be done. Primary prevention policies and protocol development are needed. An increased understanding of sexual violence as a community problem which requires community solutions will bolster the capacity of local officials and citizens to think critically and take the action necessary, in all sectors of society, to create community norms which encourage respect, gender equality, and a healthy vital community where every individual has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Lastly, while there is a small collection of Winona County men who are clearly committed to ending men’s violence against women and children, it appears, from the survey demographics, that men in the community do not fully appreciate their unique opportunity and/or responsibility to prevent sexual violence. It is critical that men increasingly understand that sexual violence is a man’s issue and to engage themselves (in partnership with women) in the profound process of identifying and then changing those social messages and institutional incentives encouraging boys and men to sexually objectify, exploit, dominate, and disregard the humanity of women and children. As men increase their participation in the prevention of sexual (and domestic) violence, the social norm of male complacency will evaporate and a new sense of community will emerge and be realized.